

# THE BARRIERS COME DOWN: ANTISEMITISM AND COALITIONS OF EXTREMES

By Dave Rich

These are strange times for the British far right. Long left alone on the political extremes where they obsessed about secret Jewish machinations behind every government policy, all of a sudden they think they have noticed the most unlikely people agreeing with them. The British National Party advised its members to read *The Guardian* for information about “the Zionist cabal around President Bush<sup>1</sup>”. Followers of the neo-Nazi Combat 18 have found themselves publicly supporting the President of Malaysia, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, while the National Front found itself in sympathy with Labour MP Tam Dalyell. No wonder John Tyndall, former leader of the British National Party, wrote gleefully that “certain things are coming out into the open which not long ago would have been tightly censored and suppressed... We are witnessing a gigantic conspiracy being unveiled<sup>2</sup>”. But are the antisemites of Britain’s far right correct in thinking that their view of a Jewish-controlled world is becoming accepted across the political spectrum?

This excitement amongst Britain’s neo-Nazis has been fuelled by the widespread theory that the war in Iraq was devised and executed by pro-Israeli, mainly Jewish, neo-conservative lobbyists in Washington D.C.; that this is only one example of how American foreign policy has been hijacked by a Jewish or Zionist cabal; and that these neo-cons are pro-Israeli to the point that they did this not for the good of America, but purely for the interests of Israel and, by extension, Jews. This idea, which is far from the preserve of extremists, has been discussed at length in the mainstream media, and is accepted as fact by many in the anti-war movement. *The Guardian* published a briefing on the subject that described neo-conservatism as “Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution mingled with the far-right Likud strain of Zionism”; referred to one of the leading neo-cons, Richard Perle, as a “high priest”; and warned that this alien ideology has “no precedents in American culture or political history.<sup>3</sup>” The BBC broadcast a Panorama documentary on the subject, much of which was devoted to the alleged Jewish or Israeli interests of “the small and unelected group of right-wingers, who critics claim have hijacked the White House.<sup>4</sup>” The notion that Jews secretly drive non-Jews into war, from which Jews can benefit, has long been a staple of antisemites. Both World Wars, the Boer War, the Russian and French Revolutions, amongst others, have all been attributed by antisemites to secret Jewish conspiracies. So it is no surprise that many on the far right have seen the neo-con theory as vindicating their long-held beliefs. After the Panorama investigation was broadcast, one C18 supporter wrote on the C18 website that “Z.O.G [the Zionist Occupied Government] ... has been caught red handed interfering (sic) with the most powerfull (sic) nation on the planet... allow me to introduce you to the biggest puppet masters of them all The Neo Conservatives. There must be something in it if fucking PANORAMA went sniffing around Washington.<sup>5</sup>” The message was accompanied by a series of articles about the alleged Jewish origins of neo-conservatism, and a link to the BBC website where the full transcript of the Panorama documentary could be found. There is no doubt that *The Guardian* and the BBC would be horrified at the thought that they had encouraged the violent antisemites of Combat 18, but for neo-Nazis, the neo-con theory fits neatly into their worldview in which shadowy Jewish hands pull the strings of our elected leaders. Indeed, there is no reason for the far right to see the neo-con theory as anything other than the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in action, and to expect some benefit from it, even if

the subscribers to the theory include those on the left and in the Muslim community who would consider the far right to be their political enemy.

Unsurprisingly, the history of friendly contact and cooperation between the British far right on the one hand, and either the far left or Muslim and Islamist organisations on the other, is minimal to say the least. Nor is this likely to change, given the Islamophobic nature of contemporary far right propaganda, and the centrality of anti-fascism to the far left's self-definition. But what has happened is that the rhetoric of far left and Islamist organisations is increasingly similar to that of the far right whenever Israel, Zionism, Jewish political activity and the Iraq war are mentioned. The day after the British National Party claimed that US policy was being driven by "the Zionist and Christian fundamentalist zealots around Bush"<sup>6</sup>, the Muslim Council of Britain described the war as "part of a plan to redraw the map of the Middle East in accordance with the agenda of Zionists and American neo-Conservatives."<sup>7</sup> The Muslim Public Affairs Committee and the National Front both used an identical photo of George Bush standing in front of an Israeli flag to illustrate their belief that he is influenced or controlled by a Zionist or Jewish lobby<sup>8</sup>. The Revolutionary Communist Group, which organises Boycott Israeli Goods pickets outside branches of Marks & Spencer, published an investigation into the neo-cons which claimed that Christian Zionists in America are "More Zionist than the Zionists, they are fervent supporters of Israel and some even practice Jewish culture." The article went on: "Given the affinity between Zionism and right wing ideology within the US ruling class, it is no surprise that so many of the NeoCons are pro-Israeli Jews", and listed "Leading Neo-Cons in the Bush Administration", most of whom were, of course, Jewish<sup>9</sup>. Tam Dalyell MP complained about the pressure on Tony Blair from a "Jewish cabal"; Paul Foot of the Socialist Workers Party argued that "obviously he is wrong to complain about Jewish pressure on Blair and Bush when he means Zionist pressure"<sup>10</sup>, however, a posting on the National front's Internet guestbook offered another perspective. "[Dalyell's] crime is that he dared tell the truth which is that people like Lord Levy whose first loyalty is to Israel dominate the Blair government"<sup>11</sup>. Neither Tam Dalyell nor the National Front are party to the details of Lord Levy's work on behalf of Tony Blair in the Middle East; both, however, condemned him as favouring Israel's interests over those of Britain, purely because he is publicly identified as Jewish.

The idea that antisemitism is the commonality of totalitarianisms is amply demonstrated in the sharing of material by groups who would never stand next to each other on a demonstration or share a platform at a public meeting. The Muslim Association of Britain and the General Union of Palestinian Students have both, since the start of the intifada, published *The Franklin 'Prophecy'*, an antisemitic hoax manufactured by the American Nazi William Dudley Pelley and first published in his own publication, *Liberation*, in February 1934<sup>12</sup>. The Muslim Public Affairs Committee have used their website to reproduce material taken from the sites of both David Irving and The Heretical Press (a far right publisher based in Hull), while the pro-Hamas *Palestine Times* has promoted work by Michael Hoffman II, a revisionist historian whose website has links to Holocaust denial material<sup>13</sup>. Often when Islamist organisations use far right sources it reveals a deeper antisemitism. The Muslim Public Affairs Committee's reproduction of material from the far right sits on their website alongside open support for Holocaust denier David Irving, accusations of Zionist media and political control, lists of Jewish donors to New Labour and an investigation into whether the Talmud is "the most Powerful and Racist book in the world". In one example which neatly illustrates the growing commonalities between political extremes, the Islamist Muslim Public Affairs Committee published an article by Professor Kevin MacDonald – who appeared as a witness for David Irving in his failed libel action against Professor Deborah Lipstadt – on the

subject which is currently of so much interest to the far left and the anti-war movement: the “International Jewish Origins of Neoconservatism”<sup>14</sup>.

Nor is this traffic one way. Far right websites, particularly those of the National Front, Combat 18 and the White Nationalist Party, have in 2003 reproduced articles by John Pilger and the Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir; antisemitic cartoons taken from Arab websites; a call for White Nationalist Party members to phone the Malaysian embassy in London and express their support for Mahathir Mohamad after he claimed that “Jews rule the world”; calls to boycott Marks & Spencer; boycott lists from Islamist or anti-Zionist websites of, as one White Nationalist Party supporter put it, “Jewish controlled companies, used to prop up Zionism around the world”; and frequent use of the logo of the Boycott Israeli Goods campaign, an Israeli flag in a red circle with a line through it<sup>15</sup>. *Spearhead* reprinted a column from *The Observer* in which the columnist, Richard Ingrams, claimed not to read letters in support of the Israeli Government “if the writer has a Jewish name.”<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile David Irving, at his “Real History 2003” conference in Cincinnati, showed parts of a BBC documentary about Israel’s nuclear weapons programme alongside the usual Holocaust Denial presentations<sup>17</sup>. While it can be safely assumed that the BBC and *The Observer* did not give their permission to *Spearhead* or David Irving to use their material, and are probably unaware that they even did so, for the far right it is encouragement enough that they ever appeared in such mainstream media: as one message on the Combat 18 guestbook put it, “There are people who, due to the actions of Israel are already avowed ‘anti-Zionists’. All they need is a good solid argument to push them over the edge into full anti-semitism – something that we should be able to provide.”<sup>18</sup> However this new, if limited, harmony with far left and especially Islamist ideas has confused many on the far right, contradicting the certainties on which their ideology is based. While a faction of the National Front did court Iran, Libya and their UK-based followers in the mid-1980s, for most of the British far right the idea of supporting anything Muslim is inconceivable, especially as their recent electoral success has been built on exploiting conflict between whites and South Asian Muslims in Britain. Thus in Summer 2003 the White Nationalist Party website featured a lengthy debate over whether or not it was possible to support Hamas against Israel, while opposing any Muslim presence in the UK<sup>19</sup>.

While Islamists and the far right will use each other’s material but won’t actually work together, the far right and far left won’t even go that far; for both, the idea of giving any credibility to the worldview and political positions of the other is unthinkable. Yet as their views converge on the issues of Iraq, Israel, Zionism and U.S. foreign policy, even the proudest anti-fascists have found themselves latching onto conspiracy theories developed on the far right. The story of the Office of Special Plans, a supposed secret unit inside the Pentagon which, the theory goes, acts as a backdoor channel for Israel, via the neo-cons, to manipulate American foreign policy, first appeared in Lyndon LaRouche’s *Executive Intelligence Review*, a magazine replete with far right, antisemitic conspiracy theories<sup>20</sup>. This story, despite its dubious origin, has since appeared in the *Guardian*, the *New Statesman* and the *Morning Star* – the latter two written by John Pilger<sup>21</sup>. Even if Pilger et al were unaware of the far right origin of this particular conspiracy theory, the simple fact that they were so receptive to its content is itself indicative of how much things have changed.

For Islamists and the far left – the third side of this totalitarian triangle – there has been a headlong tumble into each other’s arms. A series of anti-war rallies in 2003 – Britain’s biggest ever political demonstrations – were organised jointly by The Stop the War Coalition, which is led by Lindsey German of the Socialist Workers Party and Andrew Murray of the

Communist Party of Britain, and the Muslim Association of Britain, an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood. The apparent contradictions of socialists and Islamists forming political coalitions have been either ignored or overcome in their desire to form a broad political front. While the majority of marchers on the anti-war rallies were ordinary, non-political people for whom these doctrinal differences do not matter, the leaders of the Stop The War Coalition and the Muslim Association of Britain have had to put aside serious differences over, for instance, homosexuality and women's rights, in order to work together. Until recently, the far left ignored the Muslim community, and particularly political Islamists, as possible allies, viewing them with suspicion as not only religious but also socially reactionary. This changed with the start of the second intifada, when the far left and Islamist groups regularly found themselves on the same anti-Israel demonstrations. Many on the far left view Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad as being in the romantic tradition of anti-imperialist liberation movements, despite the fact that their radical Islamist ideology and agenda are entirely at odds with those of the left. *Spark*, published by the youth wing of Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party, hailed Asif Mohammed Hanif, a British Muslim who carried out a suicide bombing in Tel Aviv in April 2003, as a "hero of the revolutionary youth" who carried out his bombing "in the spirit of internationalism"<sup>22</sup>. A British delegation from the Che-Leila Youth Brigade, a radical left wing student group named after Che Guevara and Leila Khaled, held a meeting with Palestinian Islamic Jihad the day after an Islamic Jihad suicide bomber had killed 17 people on a bus in Megiddo in June 2002<sup>23</sup>.

The irony of this coalition is that the far left sometimes ends up working with groups whose antisemitism is no different from that of the far right. The Boycott Israeli Goods pickets outside Marks & Spencer stores are regularly staffed by activists from the Revolutionary Communist Group and its offshoot Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!, on the one hand, and the Holocaust Deniers of the Muslim Public Affairs Committee on the other. It does appear that Islamist Holocaust Denial is a blind spot for many on the left. When George Galloway MP wrote the Guest Editorial for *The Missing Pages*, a magazine published by the Islamist group Students for Justice in Palestine, he may have been embarrassed to discover that the magazine recommended Roger Garaudy's *Founding Myths of the State of Israel* - the book for which Garaudy was found guilty of Holocaust Denial in France - for a "thorough understanding of the Israeli Palestinian conflict"<sup>24</sup>. Another problem for British anti-war activists is that the movement in other countries is not always as strict about excluding fascists. When Galloway led a British delegation to a conference in Baghdad in May 2002, he may not have expected that his fellow speakers would include Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, French far right activist Serge Thion and James Thring, a friend and confidant of the late Lady Jane Birdwood, a veteran hate propagandist of the British far right<sup>25</sup>. But perhaps Galloway should not have been surprised: at a conference in Italy the previous month, he appears to have participated in a round-table discussion with Olivier Wyssa, an elected official of the French Front National, and Belgian Vlaams Blok MP Francis van den Eynde<sup>26</sup>.

What the far left and Islamist groups have found is that the areas they agree on are mainly international issues: opposition to Israel, opposition to the war in Iraq, and, at a more general level, opposition to American and British foreign policy and how it impacts on the Muslim world. Throw in a more general anti-Americanism and also anti-globalisation, and you have a common set of positions - although not policies - not only for the far left and Islamists, but for the far right as well. Yet the views of each extreme do differ in subtle but important ways. For the far right, for instance, their opposition to Israel is wholly a consequence of their overt antisemitism: Israel is Jewish, therefore they don't like it. Deeper and more complex analyses of Israel and its place in the global Jewish conspiracy emanate from this initial position. For

the far left, on the other hand, it is the other way around: expressions of antisemitism are usually a consequence of their opposition to Israel, which then strays into areas which slander or offend Jews *per se* – the comparison of Israel with Nazi Germany being a prime example. Islamist antisemitism bears undeniable similarities to that of the far right. Their belief in Jewish conspiracy theories, for instance, even uses the same texts: the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and *The International Jew* are more easily purchased from Muslim bookshops than from far right booklists in present-day Britain. Islamist opposition to Israel is driven by theological belief rather than the political analysis of the left, and is therefore less amenable to compromise or change. Islamists do lack the racial antisemitism of the far right, although this does not stop al-Qaeda from pursuing their murderous antisemitism, nor does it prevent British Islamist groups like al-Muhajiroun or Hizb ut-Tahrir from calling for Jews to be killed.

Again, while all three extremes see America as either a danger or an enemy, the particularities of their hatred of America differs for each. All three are contemptuous of, or even disgusted by, American society. The far right sees an America that is multiracial, multicultural, riven by ethnic violence and run by Jews. As for how this impacts on the rest of the world, the two totems of American cultural and financial dominance, Hollywood and Wall Street, are seen as central tools of the Jewish conspiracy, and symbols of everything that is not only wrong, but also dangerous, about America. Islamists see nothing but decadence, corruption and perversity in American materialism and sexual freedoms; but, more acutely, they feel humiliation at the weakness of the Muslim world in the face of Western military, economic and technological dominance, and believe America is leading the Western effort to permanently subdue, and eventually destroy, Islam. Whereas the far right sees America as the vanguard of the multicultural assault on the purity of the white race, Islamists believe the United States is leading the West's economic, imperialist and socio-cultural attack on the Muslim world. Like the far right, Islamists believe that those parts of American policy they consider hostile to their interests are the result of Jewish influence or control. For the far left, America is the epitome of consumer capitalism, and its engine on a global scale. At a deeper level, though, many on the left are still in the grip of the cold war politics that shaped their axiomatic anti-Americanism; indeed, the cold war is one that the left cannot forgive America for winning. George Galloway, for one, is clear about this: "I did support the Soviet Union, and I think the disappearance of the Soviet Union is the biggest catastrophe of my life"<sup>27</sup>. The far left will always support third world peoples against what they view as an imperialist West, led by America. The interesting thing is where antisemitism fits into the far left's anti-Americanism.

That antisemitism should be a consequence of far left hostility to America is not necessarily a coincidence. According to Ion Mihai Pacepa, a former Romanian intelligence officer who defected to the United States, "'imperial-Zionism' was a Moscow invention, a modern adaptation of the 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion', and long a favorite (sic) tool of Russian intelligence to foment ethnic hatred. The KGB always regarded anti-Semitism plus anti-imperialism as a rich source of anti-Americanism"<sup>28</sup>. Differing views of the relationship between America and Israel reveal much about the relationship between anti-Americanism and antisemitism. The traditional far left view was usually that Israel was a creation of the imperialist powers, left behind in the Middle East to look after their interests. This naturally led to the idea that Israel was a servant of American policy, most clearly expressed in the Socialist Workers Party pamphlet, *Israel: The Hijack State, America's watchdog in the Middle East*. This theory has been shaken up by the Iraq war and the wider War on Terror, which are supposedly – according to the new conspiracy theory – driven by Israel and its

surrogates the neo-cons. The policy of the anti-war movement to link the issues of Iraq and Israel/Palestine has raised questions about whether Israel or America is the main enemy; who is pulling whose strings; to what extent the respective occupations are part of a single phenomenon; and, equally, to what extent 'resistance' in Iraq and Israel are part of the same struggle. Some on the left still cling to the old analysis: Jeremy Corbyn MP argued that Israel/Palestine and Iraq "are inextricably linked because of the issue of US policy that runs through them"<sup>29</sup>. Others have added new twists: the New Communist Party insist that there is no Zionist lobby dictating American policy, but still can't resist a good conspiracy theory, arguing that the myth of the Zionist lobby is actually all part of the imperialist plan: "The tail doesn't wag the dog and Israel and the American 'Zionist lobby' does not dictate American foreign policy. They serve it. They provide Anglo-American imperialism with a convenient alibi to play the role of 'honest broker' in the Middle East. They enable the feudal Arab oil princes whose thrones are propped up by imperialist bayonets to claim that the Arabs' enemy is not imperialism as such but Israel and this supposedly all-powerful 'Zionist lobby' which pulls the strings in the United States."<sup>30</sup> For the Revolutionary Communist Group, American arms manufacturers are an important plank in the relationship, using the Israeli army for "live fire testing of weapons systems" on Palestinians<sup>31</sup>. For Islamists, though, Zionist or Jewish control of America plays a much more dominant role in the relationship. Sheikh Yusuf al Qaradawi, spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, who has visited the UK several times at the invitation of the Muslim Association of Britain, claimed that America wanted "to destroy [Iraq] for the interest of Israel." As for who was controlling whom, he thought this was a meaningless question: "Israel and America are intermixed like a chemical compound. America is Israel, and Israel is America."<sup>32</sup> Rashid al-Ghannouchi, a Tunisian Islamist based in the UK, described "the war hawks in the Pentagon" as "a mixture of Zionists and Zionised evangelists, weapon traders, oil companies, and others", and argued that the Palestinian intifada is "the main source of inspiration for the resistance against American and Zionist hegemonic plans" in Iraq<sup>33</sup>. Even within al-Qaeda's amorphous global network, there are differences of opinion over the America-Israel relationship. While one of the 9/11 hijackers, Sa'id al-Ghamidi, claimed in his video will that "The enemies of Islam, including Jews, Christians and others, are arms of an octopus, whose head is represented by the United States, and branches of a tree, whose trunk is the United States"<sup>34</sup>, the radical Indonesian cleric Abu Bakar Bashir thought differently: "I hate the American Government", he said, "but not the American people because they are being manipulated by Jews to fight against Islam."<sup>35</sup>

Not everyone on the far left supported the idea of working with Islamists in the anti-war movement. The Alliance for Workers' Liberty, a Trotskyite faction in the Stop The War Coalition, objected to working with the Muslim Association of Britain due to its links to the Muslim Brotherhood, and argued that the left should be working with secular, progressive Muslim groups instead<sup>36</sup>. The *Weekly Worker* newspaper took a similar stand, pointing out in one article that "At the same time as our secularist and Marxist comrades are being murdered by groups allied to the MAB, we are lining ourselves up as co-sponsors of demonstrations. This is like communists lining up with Nazis sympathisers on demonstrations during World War II, because we are both against British imperialism"<sup>37</sup>. There were also Islamists who objected not just to working with the left, but also to the very idea of engaging with Western-style secular democratic politics. Muhammad al-Mas'ari, a Saudi Islamist living in London, is one who believes that democratic politics, by giving primacy to the will of the people, stands in direct contradiction to the Islamic belief that Allah is the ultimate source of authority<sup>38</sup>. Hizb ut-Tahrir objected to any Muslims marching under the Stop The War Coalition banner: "It is clear that many of the heads of the Stop the War campaign are atheists, communists, anarchists and believers in sexual freedoms. These are people who

believe that Allah does not exist, that the Prophet Muhammad was an impostor, and that religions such as Islam are barbaric, oppress women, forbid sexual expression and remain as the 'opium of the masses'...their agenda and vision for what values, systems and policies Iraq should have, are as corrupt to Muslims as any right wing hawk residing in Washington<sup>39</sup>". The Islamist writer Iqbal Siddiqui noted that "The anti-US trend [amongst non-Muslims] is strongest among those who are also the most anti-religious and – in particular – anti-Islam", and that persuading such people "that Islamic principles offer a better basis for creating moral and just societies is perhaps unrealistic."<sup>40</sup> Siddiqui's last comment hints at the subtext to this alliance: that both sides see it as an opportunity to convert members of the other, from one set of fixed certainties to another. Islamists and the far left are both opportunistic by nature, tactically entryist and proselytise to all who will listen. However incongruous it may seem, both will view the other as a source of potential converts.

Undeterred, the Socialist Workers Party and the Muslim Association of Britain, enthused by their ability to mobilise hundreds of thousands of people to demonstrate against the war, have gone a step further and taken their new alliance to the electorate in the form of Respect, the Unity Coalition, led by George Galloway. For those on both sides of this red-green coalition, this involved the prospect of dropping policies and principles that had previously been central to their worldview. Lindsey German, when challenged on the attitude of Islamists to homosexuality, told a Socialist Workers Party conference that "I'm in favour of defending gay rights, but I am not prepared to have it as a shibboleth<sup>41</sup>". The same principle applies, in reverse, for the Muslim side of the coalition: clauses in Respect's founding declaration opposing discrimination on grounds of gender, religious beliefs (or lack of them) and sexual orientation, and specifically insisting on the right to self-determination in sexual choices, represent serious compromises for the Islamist side of this alliance<sup>42</sup>. The reasons why both sides are prepared to make these compromises are not hard to fathom. For Muslim groups who have previously felt, with some justification, excluded from mainstream politics, the anti-war cause has provided an unprecedented public platform for their views. Meanwhile the anti-war movement resonated with large swathes of the British public in a way that few campaigns led by the far left ever have done, and the obvious temptation is to try and harness this into a more permanent political front. Lindsey German, Respect's candidate for London Mayor, is one who was seduced by this prospect: "The anti-war movement marks a new politics in Britain and has created an atmosphere in which socialists can build... We brought together the left, the peace movement and the Muslim community... We are prepared to discuss with the different components of the anti-war movement an electoral alliance that puts forward an anti-imperialist, anti-cuts, anti-neoliberal agenda."<sup>43</sup> While Respect's economic and social policies are largely socialist in content, it is their positions on Israel/Palestine and Iraq that form the core of their intended appeal to Muslim voters. Galloway – whose Glasgow Kelvin seat will disappear due to boundary changes at the next General Election – made this clear enough when describing which seat he will target next: "where we're strong and the Member of Parliament is a pro-war, pro-Israel activist, then we'll stand."<sup>44</sup>

Respect superseded the Socialist Alliance, Britain's previous far left electoral vehicle, and many of the SWP's former Socialist Alliance partners were aghast at the prospect, not just at working with Islamists, but at working with any religious representatives of the Muslim community. The SWP's determination to work with the MAB revealed deep divisions on the left over how to relate to both Islam and Islamism, with which the left shares several superficial positions, while having deep doctrinal differences. Asad Rehman, who worked as

Galloway's political assistant for the June 2004 elections, is obviously in favour: "My political background is Marxist, but I'm also a Muslim. In the past on the left you would have had to stay quiet if you believed in God. Now you've got people who are saying, 'I'm for the Muslim community and I also believe in the left'."<sup>45</sup> Others disagree: according to David Osler, a former Executive Committee member of the Socialist Alliance, "Revolutionary socialism and political Islam have no common cause. Some differences really are too important to split, and this is one of them."<sup>46</sup> Tony Greenstein, a founder member of the Socialist Alliance, condemned the SWP for "its desperate attempt to gain a quick fix electoral programme, [by forming] an unprincipled pact with Islamic clerics and mosques."<sup>47</sup>

In the end, Respect failed to gain a single seat in any of the European, council and London Assembly elections, and polled poorly in most areas of the country. The one area where they did get encouraging support was East London, where they polled around 20% of the votes cast. Many on the left expect Respect to be a short-lived coalition, a feeling that will be strengthened by their initial failure to win any seats. The task now facing Respect's leadership is to persuade the grassroots activists and supporters on both sides of their coalition that the political compromises they made at its formation are worth maintaining through to the next General Election and beyond. Having overcome their initial differences, Galloway will rely on their commonalities – however superficial – acting as a glue in what he hopes will be a powerful new political movement of "all those people who are against imperialism, against Zionism and against globalization (sic)"<sup>48</sup>. Of course, the far right would easily fit this description of who Galloway would welcome into Respect, but an electoral pact with the BNP may be a step too far, even for him.

Anti-globalisation is a perfect example of how these new allies may agree on the overall concept, but have totally different ideas about the details. Sheikh Qaradawi, in a lecture on "Our Islamic Rhetoric in the Globalization Era", described globalisation as "spreading the culture of seduction, sex, pornography, and deviation, the culture of abortion according to the wishes of the pregnant woman, and the culture of peace that Israel wants...economic invasion is always followed by cultural invasion by the United States and the West. There is the culture of fast-food restaurants, like McDonalds, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pizza Hut, and others...all these globalization efforts serve the interests of Israel and Zionism."<sup>49</sup> Qaradawi's opposition to abortion and sexual freedoms puts him at odds with most of the anti-globalist left (apart, interestingly, from Galloway, who has used his anti-abortion stance to attract Muslim support). Furthermore, what Qaradawi objects to is mainly cultural globalisation, whereas the anti-globalist ideas of the left are mainly economic and anti-capitalist. The far right is also opposed to globalisation, for reasons of preserving national and racial purity.

The danger is that, by working with radical Islamists, the far left risks its opposition to Israel slipping further into obviously antisemitic positions. The *Morning Star* published an article by Azzam Tamimi, a Muslim Association of Britain spokesman who previously filled the same position for the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood, in which Tamimi warned that "the end of US imperialism...will be very bad news for Israel and the Jewish lobbies that support them in the US and Europe."<sup>50</sup> A column by John Pilger in the *New Statesman* began by blaming Israel for causing the Madrid train bombings and for being "the guiding hand" behind American foreign policy, then smoothly drew "middle-class Jewish homes in Britain" into the circle of "destructive" Zionist complicity<sup>51</sup>. This kind of implicit threat against Diaspora Jewish communities will inevitably generate a more permissive attitude on the left towards anti-Jewish hostility, from which antisemitic incidents will surely follow. This may already have happened: a far left anti-capitalist march in Strasbourg in July 2002 came to a standoff

when it passed by a synagogue, with some marchers having to physically restrain others from desecrating the synagogue building<sup>52</sup>. In Britain, a Jewish Labour MP who supported the Iraq war found her constituency office daubed with swastikas and Stop The War Coalition flyers the morning after the Stop The War Coalition had picketed a dinner she attended<sup>53</sup>.

The coalescing of political extremes that were previously separate from, or even opposed to, each other, creates dangers for the Jewish community when these extremes express their unity by attacking Israel and America's support for it. This is not just because most Jews support Israel – but because a new ideological position that sees Israel and Zionism as a global danger which manifests itself through control of, or influence over, the most powerful nation on earth, unavoidably raises traditional antisemitic themes. Add in the Islamist view of Zionism as a danger to “the Islamic nation and the world... a threat to values, family and religion. It aims to get rid of everything good about humanity<sup>54</sup>”, and you have a view of Zionism, Israel and, by extension, most of diaspora Jewry that comes straight from the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. This idea that Zionism is not just limited to the arena of the Israel/Palestine conflict, but is also the malignant force behind global events, brings the far left neatly into line with far right and Islamist antisemitism. All three are wedded to belief systems that are too inflexible and ideologically sterile to keep up with the complexities of the modern world; none of them can resist the magnetic pull of the conspiracy theory to explain those events that challenge their blinkered worldviews. Perhaps the single common factor between the far left, far right and Islamists is that all three are chasing their version of a utopian society, and all see America as the biggest impediment to their creation of a better world. Once they accept the idea that American policy is set by Jews, the link to antisemitism is clear. During the first Gulf War of 1991, Colin Jordan, the godfather of the British far right, was a lone voice when he claimed the war was only being fought for the Jews. In 2003, when the United States led a second invasion of Iraq, Jordan could hardly be heard above the clamour.

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<sup>1</sup> Nick Griffin, “Back to the future”, *Identity* issue 26, Nov 2002

<sup>2</sup> John Tyndall, “Conspiracy Unveiled!”, *Spearhead* no. 414, August 2003

<sup>3</sup> Editor briefing, “The rise of the Washington ‘neo-cons’”, *The Guardian* 14 April 2003

<sup>4</sup> “The War Party”, BBC website <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/panorama/3021001.stm>

<sup>5</sup> Combat 18 website <http://www.skrewdriver.net>, 27 May 2003. “Z.O.G.” is the acronym for Zionist Occupied Government, a standard far right term for supposed Jewish control of Western governments.

<sup>6</sup> “Against the war, for our troops”, BNP website [http://www.bnp.org.uk/news/2003\\_march/news\\_mar15.htm](http://www.bnp.org.uk/news/2003_march/news_mar15.htm), 19 March 2003

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