

Islamist Antisemitism: A Neglected Hate

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Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Foreword | 2 |
| Executive summary | 3 |
| Terminological note: The meaning of the words ‘antisemitism’ and ‘Islamism’ | 5 |
| 1. Introduction | 6 |
| 2. Background: antisemitism and Islamist extremism in the UK, 2000–2022 | 12 |
| 3. Study I: A brief history of antisemitism and Islamism | 16 |
| 3.1 Abstract | 16 |
| 3.2 Introduction | 16 |
| 3.3 The nature of modern antisemitism. | 18 |
| 3.4 Stages in the development of Islamist antisemitism | 20 |
| 3.4.1 Muslim–Jewish relations before the fall of the Ottoman Empire | 20 |
| 3.4.2 Arab nationalism and the remaking of Muslim antisemitism | 24 |
| 3.4.3 Antisemitism and the Muslim Brotherhood | 30 |
| 3.4.4 Antisemitism and Salafi–Jihadism | 33 |
| 3.4.5 Antisemitism and Shi’i Islamism | 37 |
| 3.4.6 Hamas | 40 |
| 3.5 Discussion | 44 |
| 3.6 Scope for future research. | 45 |
| 4. Study II: Thematic analysis of expert interviews with researchers and practitioners | 45 |
| 4.1 Abstract | 45 |
| 4.2 Introduction | 45 |
| 4.3 Methodology | 46 |
| 4.4 Themes | 46 |
| 4.4.1 Radicalisation and the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. | 46 |
| 4.4.2 Presentation of Israel’s existence as an affront to Muslims | 48 |
| 4.4.3 Sermons as radicalising discourse. | 50 |
| 4.4.4 A bigger issue than Islamist ideologues and organisations | 51 |
| 4.4.5 Lack of institutional understanding of Islamist antisemitism | 55 |
| 4.5 Discussion | 58 |
| 4.6 Scope for future research. | 59 |
| 5. Study III: Statistical association between antisemitism and sympathy for Islamist extremism | 59 |
| 5.1 Abstract | 59 |
| 5.2 Introduction | 60 |
| 5.3 Sample. | 61 |
| 5.3.1 Data collection methodology | 61 |
| 5.3.2 Demographic descriptive statistics | 62 |
| 5.4 Materials | 63 |
| 5.4.1 Measures of antisemitic and extremist attitudes | 63 |
| 5.4.2 Internal reliability of scale measures | 65 |
| 5.5 Analytic methodology | 65 |
| 5.6 Findings. | 67 |
| 5.6.1 Confirmatory analysis | 67 |
| 5.6.2 Exploratory analysis | 70 |
| 5.7 Discussion. | 73 |
| 5.8 Scope for future research. | 74 |
| 6. Conclusion | 74 |
| Acknowledgements | 76 |
| References | 76 |
| About the author | 92 |

Foreword

Back in 1998, when there were terrorist attacks on US embassies in East Africa, there was a degree of complacency which failed to take the well-funded and franchised movement that became Al Qaeda sufficiently seriously. The world changed forever on the 11th of September 2001, when the terrorists launched their audacious attack on the World Trade Centre, bringing down the towers and launching further attacks in Washington. Suddenly, the threat to democratic values, to the economic, social and cultural life of the West, took on a wholly new significance.

Three months earlier, I had become Britain's Home Secretary. My task, post-11th September, was twofold: To prepare, through whatever measures were necessary, the protection of the country, its economy and wider well-being; and to reinforce social cohesion and dampen the immediate divisions, eruption of prejudices on all sides and the hatred that went with it.

Twenty-four years later, the Taliban, who had been removed by international intervention in Afghanistan, are back in charge of that country. Divisions and conflict in the Middle East are commanding the attention of the world for all the wrong reasons. So, whilst it might seem counterintuitive to publish a report concentrating on Islamic terrorism, the truth is that understanding the enormous and ongoing threat to our well-being, as Tony Blair did in his Chicago speech of 1999, requires both analysis and ongoing vigilance.

As my good friend John (Lord) Cryer pointed out in his thoughtful speech in a parliamentary debate about antisemitism on university campuses, the aftermath of the horrendous terrorist attack by Hamas on innocent Israeli citizens on 7th October 2023 saw some really disturbing incidents of hatred against the Jewish people.

Yes, it is a small minority, and we should always keep the numerical size of the threat in perspective, whilst avoiding the mistake of believing that this does not constitute a genuine and present evil. In getting the balance right, we protect ourselves from much worse.

Whilst it is legitimate for people of goodwill to be deeply concerned about the conduct of the government of Israel, led by Benjamin Netanyahu, in relation to the retaliation in Gaza, allowing any excuse for antisemitism would be unforgivable.

Jewish men and women, both inside as well as beyond the boundaries of Israel, have been able to express their concerns about the conduct of the Israeli state. The fact that expressions of deep humanitarian feeling about the death of civilian women and children can be heard in Israel is a testament to the strength of their democracy, not least given such powerful feelings that Hamas, whose whole *raison d'être* is the elimination of the Israeli state, should be destroyed once and for all.

So, chronicling the genuine danger of allowing antisemitism to emerge wherever and whenever the historic roots of hatred show themselves is a valuable contribution to warnings for the future by reflecting on the past.

Our love of freedom and democracy, our values of pluralism and integration, allow us to distinguish between the highly dangerous but small groups constituting Islamic terror on the one hand, and those of Islamic faith committed to peace and common humanity on the other.

The Rt Hon. the Lord Blunkett

Executive summary

- » The Independent Review of Prevent by Sir William Shawcross observes that many individuals of radicalisation concern appear to harbour antisemitic beliefs, in some cases expressing the intent to assault and kill members of the Jewish community. The Review consequently recommends that Prevent begin to address the anti-Jewish component of both Islamist and Extreme Right-Wing ideology.
- » Lack of prior acknowledgement of this problem can be seen in context of a widespread failure to recognise the extensive recent history of antisemitic incidents involving Islamists in the UK. Although many such events have been reported in the media, policymakers have not viewed them comprehensively, nor as a distinct phenomenon.
- » British institutions tasked with countering extremism should develop a far better understanding of Islamist antisemitism and its role in radicalisation to violence, better enabling practitioners and the policy community to tackle this particularly pernicious and powerful component of extremism. This report provides a resource to assist in the development of such an understanding, combining historical scholarship with statistical analysis and a summary of opinion from a diverse group of experts.
- » Work on this report began in September 2023, but it was inevitably shaped by the massacres which Hamas perpetrated in Israel the following month. Events occurring during the immediate aftermath of the 7 October attacks, and throughout the first months of the subsequent war in Gaza (such as the lethal Hartlepool attack of 15 October 2023), have not only served to demonstrate the threat which Islamist antisemitism presents to the UK's national security, but also provided insights that are reflected in this report's findings.
- » This report demonstrates the futility of attempts to rationalise Islamist antisemitism as a response to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Throughout the history of the Islamic world, Jews were a marginalised group frequently subjected to severe persecution. After the First World War, antisemitism became an ideological rallying point for many Islamists and proto-Islamists in the Middle East. These extremists recognised that the national self-determination movement known as Zionism could enable the region's Jews to break free of their longstanding subordinate status – an outcome which they sought to prevent.
- » Shared hatred of Jews and opposition to Zionism facilitated the formation of alliances between key figures in the development of Islamism and the Austro-German Nazi regime. These alliances not only played a major role in the genesis of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but also led to cultural exchanges which embedded Nazi-style conspiracy theories in Islamist thought and propaganda.
- » The relationship between Islamism and Nazism continued even after the fall of the Third Reich, with highly influential Islamists either denying the Holocaust or presenting it as unfinished business to be carried to its conclusion by Muslims.
- » Some of this report's most important findings arise from a series of interviews with experts, including counter extremism practitioners, representatives of Jewish communal organisations, and former Islamist extremists.
- » Subject matter experts argued that Islamist radicalisation depends upon grievance narratives, amongst which, those relating to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict hold pride of place. They also argued that periodic escalations in the ongoing war between Hamas and Israel provide Islamists with greater opportunities for organisation and recruitment than are available during intervening periods of relative quiet.

- » Israel's mere existence was argued to be irreconcilable with Islamist ideology. Interviewees emphasised that, while Islamists exploit Palestinian suffering for propagandist purposes, their true concerns are on a different level: for Islamists, the presence of a Jewish state in the Middle East is an intolerable challenge to the divinely-ordained political order.
- » In the UK, Islamist narratives about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict often combine theological discourse on jihad with a superficially secular political framing which draws on the language of human rights and anti-colonialism. Although this language enables Islamists to build coalitions with organisations on the Western far left, their explicit goal is the establishment of a theocratic empire built on the principle of Islamic religious supremacy.
- » Speakers in certain mosques have promoted the idea that Allah is pleased by the killing of Jews, led prayers for the Mujahideen (without directly naming Hamas), and promulgated conspiracy theories about the 7 October atrocities. The implication often appears to be that attacks on Israeli civilians amount to self-defence.
- » Where antisemitic sermons go unchallenged by mosque leaders and trustees, this is argued to create a permissive environment for radicalisation. Even if the preachers responsible for the sermons make no direct effort to recruit, Islamist organisations – including Muslim Brotherhood affiliates, Salafi-Jihadist groups, and Hizb ut-Tahrir – may be able to weaponise the anger which such sermons appear designed to inspire. The explicit targets of the preachers' anger usually lie overseas. However, their sermons typically fail to draw a distinction between Israel and Jewish communities in the UK.
- » Within Muslim communities, neither circulation of antisemitic ideas nor mobilisation of anti-Jewish activism depend solely on the agency of formal Islamist organisations. The latter are now joined by independent social media influencers, as well as by non-Islamist organisations embedded in some Deobandi and Bareilwi communities. Interviewees variously analysed this decentralising tendency as 'grassroots Islamism' or as an extremism divorced from classic Islamist political goals.
- » In an echo of the Independent Review of Prevent, experts interviewed for this report further argued that state and other institutions tasked with counter extremism have failed to recognise and understand Islamist antisemitism.
- » Analysis of polling data originally collected in British Muslim communities by ICM for Channel 4 in 2015 finds a highly statistically significant positive association between antisemitism and several measures of extremism. That is, those British Muslims who were most sympathetic to extremism tended to exhibit elevated levels of antisemitism, relative to other British Muslims. This relationship was particularly clear among the small minority who expressed strong support for Islamic State. This finding not only provides broad support for the arguments made by experts interviewed for the report, but also suggests that anti-semitic views should be considered a major risk factor for radicalisation.

Terminological note: The meaning of the words 'antisemitism' and 'Islamism'

In the UK, the term 'antisemitism' is officially understood in relation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Antisemitism, popularly referred to as the IHRA Definition,¹ which has been officially adopted by the Government, the Labour Party, the Conservative Party, and the College of Policing. According to the IHRA Definition, antisemitism is 'a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews'.² This focus on perception as well as hatred is important, because antisemitism as it exists today appears to be constituted in the form of beliefs and attitudes, grounded in a sense of threat and sometimes (but not invariably) acting to motivate behaviour.³ Antisemitism is remarkably persistent, because antisemitic representations — above all, fantasies about secretive and malign Jewish power — form part of the 'deep cultural patrimony' of large parts of the contemporary world, and as such offer a 'path of least resistance' in thinking or speaking of anything related to Jews, or even of anything stereotypically associated with Jewishness.⁴ Controversy over antisemitism exists on many levels, but the principal innovation of the IHRA Definition, i.e. its recognition (via some of its examples) that statements about or behaviour taken in relation to Israel may be antisemitic, is adopted by both of its main competitors, i.e. the Jerusalem Declaration and the Nexus Document,⁵ and accords with the repeat finding of a statistical association between attitudes to Israel and its supporters and attitudes to Jews identified as Jews.⁶

The term 'Islamism' strictly applies only to pan-Islamic organisations in the tradition of the Muslim Brotherhood and Jamaat-e-Islami (including both Sunni organisations such as Islamic State and Shi'i organisations such as Hezbollah). While Islamism, especially in its Salafi-Jihadist variant,⁷ has represented the greatest terror threat to the UK and its allies, a narrow focus on Islamist organisations carries a risk of neglect for other forms of extremism deriving legitimacy from readings of Islamic texts or traditions. The use of violence or credible threats of violence against those perceived to have transgressed Islamic norms, for example with regard to speech, representation of the Prophet Muhammed, or treatment of the Quran, is not, for example, confined to Islamists.⁸ Much of what is written in this report relates to Islamism, but much is more general, and should not be understood as referring to Islamism exclusively. Various terms are used to cover other forms of extremism whose ideological basis is broadly Islamic, including proto-Islamist movements

1. IHRA, 'Working Definition of Antisemitism', (Bucharest: International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, 26 May 2016), <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism>.
2. IHRA, n.p.
3. Rusi Jaspal, 'The Social Psychology of Contemporary Antisemitism', *Israel Affairs* 29, no. 1, (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537121.2023.2166203>, pp. 31–51.
4. Dov Waxman, David Schraub, and Adam Hosein, 'Arguing about Antisemitism: Why We Disagree about Antisemitism, and What We Can Do about It', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 45, no. 9, (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2021.1960407>, pp. 1816–17.
5. Daniel Allington, David Hirsh, and Louise Katz, 'Correlation Between Coronavirus Conspiracism and Antisemitism: A Cross-Sectional Study in the United Kingdom', *Scientific Reports*, no. 21104, (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-41794-y>, p. 2; for further commentary on the IHRA Definition, see Bernard Harrison and Lesley Klaff, 'In Defence of the IHRA Definition', *Fathom* January, (2020), <https://fathomjournal.org/in-defence-of-the-ihra-definition/>; Bernard Harrison, 'In Defense of the IHRA Definition (Despite Its Defects as a Definition)', *Journal of Contemporary Antisemitism* 5, no. 2, (2022), <https://doi.org/10.26613/jca.5.2.115>, pp. 43–66.
6. W. Frindte, S. Wettig, and D. Wammetsberger, 'Old and New Anti-Semitic Attitudes in the Context of Authoritarianism and Social Dominance Orientation: Two Studies in Germany', *Peace Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 11, no. 3, (2005), https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327949pac1103_3, pp. 239–66; E. H. Kaplan and C. A. Small, 'Anti-Israel Sentiment Predicts Anti-Semitism in Europe', *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50, no. 548, (2006), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27638506>, pp. 548–61; Steven K. Baum and Masato Nakazawa, 'Anti-Semitism Versus Anti-Israeli Sentiment', *Journal of Religion and Society* 9, (2007), pp. 1–8; Florette Cohen et al., 'Modern Anti-Semitism and Anti-Israeli Attitudes', *Journal of Personal and Social Psychology* 97, no. 2, (2009), <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015338>, pp. 290–306; Peter Beattie, 'Anti-Semitism and Opposition to Israeli Government Policies: The Roles of Prejudice and Information', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40, no. 15, (2017), <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2016.1260751>, pp. 2749–67; L. Daniel Staetsky, 'The Left, the Right, Christians, Muslims, and Detractors of Israel: Who Is Antisemitic in Great Britain in the Early 21st Century?', *Contemporary Jewry* 40, (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12397-020-09335-1>, pp. 259–92; Daniel Allington, David Hirsh, and Louise Katz, 'The Generalised Antisemitism (GeAs) Scale: Validity and Factor Structure', *Journal of Contemporary Antisemitism* 5, no. 2, (2022), <https://doi.org/10.26613/jca.5.2.113>, pp. 1–28.
7. See Shiraz Maher, *Salafi-Jihadism: The History of an Idea*, (London: Penguin, 2017 [2016]).
8. See Liam Duffy, 'Why Britain's Blasphemy Controversies Are Here to Stay: In Wakefield, the State Is Confronting a Problem It Doesn't Know How to Solve', *New Statesman*, 6 March 2023, <https://www.newstatesman.com/quickfire/2023/03/great-britain-blasphemy-controversies>.

predating the Muslim Brotherhood as well as contemporary extremist movements such as the Tehreek-e-Labbaik, which are not strictly Islamist yet still promote violence on religious grounds.

1. Introduction

This report is an attempt to gather together the best available evidence on the relationship between antisemitism and Islamism. It was primarily occasioned by the observation, made by the Independent Reviewer of Prevent, that '[i]ndividuals discussed at Channel panels tended to harbour violent and fanatical beliefs about Jews, often expressing an intent to kill, assault, or blow up members of the Jewish community' and that 'Prevent should ... better address the anti-Jewish component of both Islamist and Extreme Right-Wing ideology'.⁹

The centrality of antisemitism to certain forms of right-wing extremism — especially the form of fascism known as Nazism or National Socialism — is widely recognised. Antisemitism, as expressed in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, was a core component of the ideology of the Austro-German Nazi regime, the far-right terrorist movements from which it emerged, and the movements that it inspired around the world.¹⁰ Recent years have seen the rise of the misleading idea that the historic antisemitism of extreme right-wing movements has been 'more or less completely replaced' by 'anti-Muslim beliefs and Islamophobia',¹¹ when it would be more accurate to say that older, more socially conservative, and intrinsically antisemitic forms of right-wing extremism founded on ideas of race (e.g. Nazism, white supremacism, and white nationalism) now face competition from largely non-violent cultural nationalist forms of right-wing populism which oppose Islam in the name of liberal values such as LGBT rights and respect for the Jewish minority.¹² However, it remains true that '[c]ontemporary neo-Nazis and neo-fascists ... are easily recognised as antisemitic'.¹³ By contrast, research specifically focusing on the topic of Islamism and antisemitism is relatively lacking — despite the fact that polling in the Jewish community has for years indicated that it is perceived as the greater threat.¹⁴ The purpose of this report is to begin to fill that gap for readers in the policy community.

That purpose gained a great deal of urgency after work had already begun on this report. On 7 October 2023, Hamas terrorists and Palestinian civilians entered Israel from Gaza and killed around 1200 people, mostly Israeli civilians, also kidnapping more than 240.¹⁵ Many victims, including women, girls, and a number of young boys, appear to have been tortured and raped before being shot, stabbed, or dismembered, often

9. William Shawcross, *Independent Review of Prevent*, (London: House of Commons, 2023), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-prevents-report-and-government-response>, p. 7.

10. See Norman S. Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World-Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1967); Michael Billig, *Fascists: Social Psychological View of the National Front*, (London / New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978); Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *The Devil That Never Dies: The Rise and Threat of Global Antisemitism*, (New York / Boston / London: Back Bay Books, 1996); Jeffrey Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda During World War II*, (Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 2008 [2006]).

11. Ruth Wodak, 'The Radical Right and Antisemitism', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right*, ed. Jens Rydgren, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 61.

12. Lars Erik Berntzen, *Liberal Roots of Far Right Activism: The Anti-Islamic Movement in the 21st Century*, (London / New York: Routledge, 2020), p. 12.

13. Waxman, Schraub, and Hosein, 'Arguing about Antisemitism', p. 1806.

14. CAA, *Antisemitism Barometer 2017*, (London: Campaign Against Antisemitism, 2017), <https://antisemitism.org/barometer/#2016-2017>, p. 15; CAA, *Antisemitism Barometer 2019*, (London: Campaign Against Antisemitism, 2019), <https://antisemitism.org/barometer/#2018-2019>, p. 33; CAA, *Antisemitism Barometer 2020*, (London: Campaign Against Antisemitism, 2020), <https://antisemitism.org/barometer/#2020>, p. 28; CAA, *Antisemitism Barometer 2021*, (London: Campaign Against Antisemitism, 2021), <https://antisemitism.org/barometer/#2021>, p. 26.

15. BBC, 'What Is Happening in Israel and Gaza, and What Is Hamas?', *BBC News*, 15 November 2023, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-67039975>; Mia Bloom and Edna Erez, 'When Sexually Assaulted Women are not Believed: "Ideal Victims" and Political Relativity in the October 7 Hamas Attack', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2024.2354955>, p. 3

in front of their closest relatives, with some having been burned alive.¹⁶ In one of the first images to emerge from the atrocity, the semi-naked corpse of a young German-Israeli woman was paraded through the streets of Gaza to be spat upon.¹⁷ It was one of the many crimes committed that day where the primary evidence consisted of video footage recorded and shared in a spirit of jubilation. These were acts of exceptional brutality which — like the sexual slavery to which some kidnapped Israelis were later subjected — bear comparison with atrocities committed by Islamic State.¹⁸ Some intelligence sources have alleged that planning of the attacks was carried out with senior figures in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps — a branch of the Iranian state — and Hezbollah, and there is evidence that the latter may have provided training.¹⁹

It was the largest number of Jews murdered on any single day since the Holocaust, and yet the massacre was followed in the UK by carnivalesque displays of public support. The day after the massacre, people in London were filmed dancing and waving Palestinian flags,²⁰ and the day after that, protestors set off fireworks and flares in the colours of the Palestinian flag outside the Israeli embassy.²¹ Early demonstrations were observed to feature shouts of ‘Allahu akbar!’ (‘God is great!’), calls for *jihād*, and chanting of the slogans ‘From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free’, which looks forward to the complete replacement of Israel by Palestine, as well as ‘*Khaybar, Khaybar, Yā Yahūd*’ (‘Khaybar, Khaybar, O Jews’), which remembers Muhammad’s military defeat of one particular group of Jews as if it had been an attack on Jews in general (see Section 3.4.1), and ‘From London to Gaza, we’ll have an intifada’, with its apparent implication of a British uprising.²²

Importantly, the earliest of these demonstrations preceded any Israeli retaliation for the attacks, and thus cannot be construed as protests against the manner in which that retaliation was conducted. At University College London, the University of Warwick, and the School of Oriental and African Studies, student societies set up to support the Palestinian cause ‘expressed praise [for the attacks] on social media[,] ... describ[ing] the

16. Bloom and Erez, p. 3 and *passim*; Sam Jones, ‘Murdered in Cold Blood’: Stories Emerge of Israelis Killed at Gaza Border: Friends and Relatives Say Hamas Killed a Grandmother, Parents Protecting Their Children, and an Entire Family During Raids’, *Guardian*, 10 October 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/oct/10/murdered-in-cold-blood-stories-emerge-of-israelis-killed-at-gaza-border-hamas-israel>; Reuters, ‘Israeli Forensic Teams Describe Signs of Torture, Abuse’, *Reuters*, 15 October 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-forensic-teams-describe-signs-torture-abuse-2023-10-15/>; Julia Frankel, ‘Israeli Video Compilation Shows the Savagery and Ease of Hamas’ Attack’, *Associated Press*, 17 October 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-hamas-attack-military-war-a8f63b07641212f0de61861844e5e71e>; Emily Rose and Herbert Villarraga, ‘Rescue Workers Recount Horrors Found in Kibbutz Attacked by Hamas’, *Reuters*, 17 October 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/rescue-workers-recount-horrors-found-kibbutz-attacked-by-hamas-2023-10-17/>; Rory Carroll, ‘Israel Shows Footage of Hamas Killings “to Counter Denial of Atrocities”: Video from Security Cameras, Mobile Phones and Body Cameras Screened to Journalists’, *Guardian*, 23 October 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/oct/23/israel-shows-footage-of-hamas-killings-to-counter-denial-of-atrocities>; Anna Foster, ‘Hamas Said They Wouldn’t Shoot, Then Murdered My Daughter’, *BBC News*, 23 October 2023, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-67192885>
17. James Callery, ‘Kidnapped Shani Louk Is Dead, Her Family Announces. After ‘Bone from the Base of Her Skull’ Is Found Three Weeks After She Was Abducted by Hamas Terrorists and Paraded on the Back of a Truck: Shani, 22, Was Kidnapped from Israel to Gaza During the Deadly October 7 Attack’, 30 October 2023, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12687753/Kidnapped-Shani-Louk-dead-family-announces-three-weeks-abducted-Hamas-terrorists-Nova-festival-paraded-truck.html>.
18. Bloom and Erez, pp. 7, 11.
19. James Crisp, ‘Iran-Backed Hizbollah Trained Hamas in Paragliding for Terror Attack on Israel: Claims Come as Antony Blinken, the US Secretary of State, Makes High-Stakes Diplomatic Tour of Middle East in Attempt to Prevent All-Out War’, *Daily Telegraph*, 23 October 2023, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/10/13/hizbollah-trained-hamas-paragliding-terror-attack-israel/>; Kim Ghattas, ‘A Message from Iran: For Hamas and Iran, Yesterday’s Violence Was a Demonstration of Newfound Power.’, *The Atlantic*, 2023, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2023/10/iran-hamas-israel-gaza-attack/675582/>; Summer Said, Benoit Faucon, and Stephen Kalin, ‘Iran Helped Plot Attack on Israel over Several Weeks: The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Gave the Final Go-Ahead Last Monday in Beirut’, *Wall Street Journal*, 8 October 2023, <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/iran-israel-hamas-strike-planning-bbe07b25>.
20. Abul Taher, ‘Horns Blaring and Triumphant Flag-Waving on the Streets of Britain After Hamas’s Attack: Rachel Riley Leads Backlash Against Celebratory Scenes Following Bloody Massacre in Israel’, *Daily Mail*, 2023, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12606271/Horns-blaring-tri-umphant-flag-waving-streets-Britain-Hamas-attack-Rachel-Riley-leads-backlash-against-celebratory-scenes-following-bloody-massacre-Israel.html>.
21. Kit Heren, ‘Palestine Supporters Set Off Fireworks Outside Israeli Embassy, as British Jews Hold Vigil for Victims of Hamas Attack’, *LBC*, 2023, <https://www.lbc.co.uk/news/london-vigil-protest-israel-palestine-hamas/>.
22. Robin Simcox, ‘Countering Extremist Threats in the UK: An Address by Robin Simcox’, (London: Royal United Services Institute, 19 October 2023), <https://my.rusi.org/events/countering-extremist-threats-in-the-uk-an-address-by-robin-simcox.html>; Steve Bird and Henry Bodkin, ‘Watch: Pro-Palestinian Protesters Call for ‘Intifada from London to Gaza’: Thousands of Pro-Palestinian Protesters Are Gathering in Central London’, *Daily Telegraph*, 28 October 2023, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/10/28/palestine-protest-london-gaza-chant-israel/>; Nick Timothy, ‘British Society Will Pay a Terrible Price for Indulging Extremism: We Have Imported Hatreds and Lost Our Common Identity. Policy Will Have to Be More Muscular as a Result’, *Sunday Telegraph*, 29 October 2023, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/10/29/british-society-will-pay-a-terrible-price-for-indulging-ext/>.

scenes as a “heroic fight” by “the martyrs” against “fascist and criminal settlers”;²³ while members of the University College London branch of the Universities and College Union voted in favour of a motion (reportedly drafted by members of the Trotskyist group, Socialist Appeal) which called for a ‘mass uprising on both sides of the green line and across the Middle East’ and concluded with the slogan, ‘Intifada until victory!’.²⁴ (With regard to the use of the term ‘criminal settlers’ to describe the victims of the Hamas assault, it is important to note that the attacks of 7 October were made upon civilians living legally within the 1948 borders of Israel. To refer to the victims of those attacks as ‘criminal settlers’ and to the attacks themselves as a ‘heroic fight’ implies that the *entire* state of Israel is illegitimate and that *all* of its Jewish inhabitants are criminals against whom even rape and child murder can constitute acts of heroism.) A statement condemning Israel’s military response to the massacre as ‘genocidal’, while making no reference at all to the massacre itself, received thousands of signatures from students at British universities.²⁵

Between 7 and 10 October alone, the Community Security Trust recorded six antisemitic assaults, three instances of damage to Jewish property, and 44 examples of offline abusive antisemitic behaviour, including one case in which individuals shouted ‘Kill Jews’ and ‘Death to Israel’ while waving a Palestinian flag from a car that was being driven slowly past a synagogue;²⁶ between 30 September and 13 October, the Metropolitan Police recorded 105 antisemitic incidents and 75 antisemitic offences, as compared to 14 incidents and 12 offences in the same period of the previous year.²⁷ A number of arrests were made for terror offences at pro-Palestinian demonstrations, and, at one point, the Metropolitan Police asked the public for help in identifying a man spotted waving a placard emblazoned with the words ‘I fully support Hamas’.²⁸ However, there was also much pro-Hamas discourse which was considered to fall below the criminal threshold. For example, the same police force took the view that no offence had been committed by the man who was filmed tearing down posters of Israelis kidnapped by Hamas and saying ‘Hamas, my *mujahideen* brothers. I love them, I support them, I pray for them. Put this video on YouTube and tell Rishi Sunak we love them and pray for them’.²⁹ Nearly three months after the attack on Israel, a BBC journalist reported as follows:

There has been an unprecedented 12-fold increase in hateful social media content being referred to specialist police officers since Hamas attacked Israel on 7 October, according to the UK’s Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit.

...

[Counter-terrorism officers] show me several different screen grabs — with handles blurred — from X, TikTok and a messaging channel. They include messages of support for Hamas and requests for funds to travel to join the group ... There are also hateful posts directed at Jewish people.

23. Ewan Somerville, ‘Left-Wing Student Groups Accused of ‘Glorifying’ Hamas Attacks on Israel: Palestine Societies at a Number of British Universities Have Expressed Praise on Social Media After the Attack’, *Sunday Telegraph*, 8 October 2023, <https://archive.ph/8aEBZ>, n.p.

24. Felix Pope, ‘Jewish Students Face Death Threats as Academics Back an ‘Intifada’’, *Jewish Chronicle*, 3 November 2023, p. 3.

25. Dominic Lawson, ‘Adolf Eichmann Was Genocidal. Hamas Is Too. Israel, No: Since the Atrocities, the Abuse of Language Has Become Almost Orwellian’, *The Sunday Times*, 5 November 2023, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/adolf-eichmann-was-genocidal-hamas-is-too-israel-no-rhd7v6s8w>.

26. Emily McGarvey, ‘Antisemitic Incidents ‘Quadruple in UK’ Since Hamas Attack in Israel’, *British Broadcasting Corporation*, 12 October 2023, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-67085625>.

27. Sky News, ‘Massive Increase in Antisemitism in London Since Israel-Hamas War, Say Police: Rishi Sunak Says People Inciting Hatred, or Violence, or Racist Activity, Intimidating or Threatening Behaviour Will Not Be Tolerated and Will Be ‘Met with the Full Force of the Law’’, *Sky News*, 2023, <https://news.sky.com/story/massive-increase-in-antisemitism-in-london-since-israel-hamas-war-began-say-police-12983620>.

28. Jess Warren, ‘Two Women Arrested in London on Suspicion of Terrorism Offences’, *British Broadcasting Corporation*, 10 October 2023, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-67268825>.

29. Richard Ferrer, ‘Police Say Man Professing ‘Love’ for Hamas Was Just ‘Amicably Arguing’ for His Cause: EXCLUSIVE: Jewish News Supplied Video of the Incident on Oxford Street to the Police Along with the Man’s Mobile Number and Email Address. Police Have Refused to Investigate, Saying the Proud Terrorist Sympathiser Was Legally “Supporting His Own View”’, *Jewish News*, 31 December 2023, <https://www.jewishnews.co.uk/police-say-man-professing-love-for-hamas-was-just-amicably-arguing-for-his-cause/>, n.p.

‘The platforms people are using are X, Instagram and TikTok. A lot of the posts are text-based’, one officer says. ‘Posts are often reckless, reactive and emotional — made by youngsters very comfortable using these social media sites.’

What stands out, they say, is how many of the profiles have never posted this type of content before. They believe unsuspecting people are becoming ‘swept up’ in sharing ‘naked antisemitism’.

...

‘There’s been much more antisemitic material [referred to us] than Islamophobi[c] material. It’s quite marked’, another officer says. ‘We’ve had material in from far-right groups, [but that] has tended to be very pro-Israel.’³⁰

No positive indication was made in the above report with regard to the ideological affiliation of the sources of this flood of antisemitic material, but it is worth noting the explicit signal that the far right — as discussed above, the ‘usual suspect’ when it comes to anti-Jewish agitation — was not to blame. For this reason, it is worth focusing carefully on those media outlets and religious institutions which chose to give a platform to reports or speeches which appeared to portray the attacks on Israel in positive terms. For example, the 5Pillars website, which describes itself as ‘the only regulated Muslim news site in Europe, Australia, and the Americas’ (an apparent reference to its voluntary regulation by the independent British regulator, IMPRESS), uncritically quoted a writer’s characterisation of 7 October as ‘a turning point where the oppressed ... are beginning to respond in a more strategic, organised way, with the backing of their people and millions and millions of Muslims’, in an article published the day after the massacre and entitled ‘The Palestinian resistance go [sic] on the offensive’.³¹ The London-based newspaper, *The New Arab* published an article arguing that ‘injunctions of Western governments and mainstream media to condemn Hamas’s actions should not be entertained’ as ‘the violence used by the oppressor to maintain its structures of dominations and subjugations should never be compared to, or put on a similar level to the violence of the oppressed attempting to restore its own dignity and seeking to have its existence remembered’.³² At mosques in Bradford, London, and Manchester, imams responded to the upsurge in violence by praying for ‘Muslims [to] get their victory over the usurping Jews’, for the ‘purification of] the Al-Aqsa mosque from the filth of the Jews’, and for ‘the victory of the mujahideen fighting Israel’,³³ while a mosque in Oldham posted a YouTube video of an imam calling upon Allah to ‘give victory to our brothers in Palestine and Gaza’ and declaring ‘God rid us of the Jews’, whom he referred to as ‘brothers of monkeys and apes’, and an imam at a mosque in Northampton prayed for Allah to ‘destroy’ the Jews, ‘count them and kill them’, and ‘make them war booty for the Muslims’.³⁴ In apparent response to negative attention received by sermons of this nature, the British branch of the Islamic Council of Europe, which has been identified as a Muslim Brotherhood-linked organisation,³⁵ issued guidance to the effect that ‘seeking to report imams to the authorities for their prayers is a form of Islamophobia and must be challenged’.³⁶ (It should be emphasised that no arrests appear to have been made as a result of such reports.)

30. Marianna Spring, ‘Young Britons Exposed to Online Radicalisation Following Hamas Attack’, *BBC News*, 6 January 2024, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-67884785>, n.p.

31. HG, ‘The Palestinian Resistance Go on the Offensive’, *5Pillars*, 8 October 2023, <https://5pillarsuk.com/2023/10/08/a-turning-point-for-the-oppressed/>, n.p.

32. Joseph Daher, ‘Gaza: We Must Defend Palestinians’ Right to Resistance: Western States Supporting Israel as It Wages Catastrophic Deadly Attacks on Gaza Are Perpetuating the Narrative That the Oppressor Has Rights over the Oppressed to ‘Defence’. It Is Palestinians Who Have the Right to Resist, Argues Joseph Daher’, *New Arab*, 11 October 2023, <https://www.newarab.com/opinion/gaza-we-must-defend-palestinians-right-resistance>, n.p.

33. David Rose, ‘Brazen Support for Hamas Spreading Across Britain’, *Jewish Chronicle*, 27 October 2023, p. 3.

34. David Rose, ‘Shameless Extremism Still Sweeping Britain’, *Jewish Chronicle*, 3 November 2023, p. 3.

35. Lorenzo Vidino, *The Muslim Brotherhood in the United Kingdom*, (Washington, DC: Program on Extremism, George Washington University, 2015), <https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs5746/files/downloads/MB%20in%20the%20UK.pdf>, p. 8.

36. Islamic Council, *Guidance for Imams and Community Leaders on the Palestinian Crisis: From Education to Empowerment*, (London: Islamic Council, 2023), <https://online.iceurope.org/palestineguidance>, p. 30.

Some of these statements appear, on the face of it, to combine antisemitism with glorification of terrorism.³⁷ However, this interpretation has not been obvious to everybody. For example, a prominent intellectual writing in the left-leaning *Guardian* newspaper felt the need to urge her readers to ‘recognise that when Israeli Jews are killed in their homes and it is celebrated by people who claim to be anti-racists and anti-fascists, that is experienced as antisemitism by a great many Jews’.³⁸ The question of how else her readers might have expected them to experience it, and why, was not addressed.

Clearly, the question which this report was designed to address is one which has often been avoided. The issue of inter-minority prejudice is often regarded as too sensitive to address, and may not even be recognised for what it is, given a widespread understanding of racism as exclusively related to colonialism, which focuses attention on expressions of bigotry by relatively powerful light-skinned people against relatively powerless dark-skinned people,³⁹ and at times blurs into the highly problematic assumption that ‘Jews are members of the elite and therefore cannot be ... the victims of discrimination’.⁴⁰ This tendency may have reached an extreme in the response of many Western feminist organisations to the widespread sexual violence perpetrated during the 7 October attacks, with a number of organisations devoted to opposition to violence against women and girls being observed to adopt a strategy of ‘keep[ing] quiet, ... disbeliev[ing] the victims, or ... insinuat[ing that] they deserved their fate’, and with Jewish Women’s Aid appearing to have been the only British charity operating in that space to condemn Hamas’s violence.⁴¹ In a peer-reviewed article published as this report was going to press, Middle East specialist Mia Bloom and criminologist Edna Erez argue that widespread reluctance to acknowledge crimes against Israelis is explained by failure of the latter to conform to an arbitrary image of the ‘ideal victim’: as they observe, while ‘the international community usually does not hesitate to call out perpetrators’ in ‘other conflict zones’, the UN Women executive director and Under-Secretary General took more than six weeks to mention that she was ‘greatly alarmed by reports of sexual and gender-based violence’, even then failing to mention that ‘the culprit was Hamas and the victims [were] Israeli and foreign nationals’.⁴² This was despite the horrific nature of the violence in question:

Just like in the DRC–Congo war or the Rwanda Genocide, women were not just raped but were penetrated with sharp objects, knives, and other weapons. Some bodies had indicators of torture, nails driven into the thighs and in the groin area. Female IDF soldiers stationed in the southern outposts had their uniforms ripped off, their trousers [were left] around their ankles, and their underwear was ripped and bloodied. Many of the female soldiers were also shot in the groin or butchered with box cutters. Women were mutilated and their breasts cut off. Hamas fighters reportedly tossed the breasts around and played with them. Others had collected severed heads of Israeli women as trophies.⁴³

As Bloom and Erez observe, widespread denial of the facts of this violence, together with an evident tendency to withhold from Israelis the ‘recognition, compassion, and sympathy that other victims of wartime sexual violence have received’,⁴⁴ stand in stark contrast not only to the international response to the atrocities committed in context of the two aforementioned African conflicts, but also to ‘[t]he almost universal con-

37. For the opinion of the UK’s Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation on a number of speeches made at pro-Palestine rallies following the 7 October attacks, see Ed Thomas, ‘Glorify Hamas and You Break Law, Says UK Terror Watchdog’, 14 October 2023, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-67100274>.

38. Naomi Klein, ‘In Gaza and Israel, Side with the Child over the Gun: Some Continue to Minimize Massacres of Israeli Civilians — This Only Fuels Militant Zionism’, *Guardian*, 11 October 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/oct/11/why-are-some-of-the-left-celebrating-the-killings-of-israeli-jews>, n.p.

39. David Hirsh, *Contemporary Left Antisemitism*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), p. 57; Dave Rich, *The Left’s Jewish Problem: Jeremy Corbyn, Israel, and Anti-semitism*, (London: Biteback, 2018 [2016]), pp. 205–6.

40. Deborah Lipstadt, *Antisemitism: Here and Now*, (London / Victoria: Scribe Publications, 2019), p. 94.

41. Nicole Lampert, ‘MeToo Unless You’re a Jew: Feminist Groups Are Whitewashing Hamas’s Crimes’, *UnHerd*, 2023, <https://unherd.com/2023/11/metoo-unless-youre-a-jew/>.

42. Bloom and Erez, p. 13.

43. Bloom and Erez, p. 10.

44. Bloom and Erez, p. 3.

demnation of ISIS's kidnapping and sexual abuse of Yazidi women and girls from Mount Sinjar, or the global sympathy for kidnapped schoolgirls in Chibok by Boko Haram'.⁴⁵ Thus, there appear to be specific difficulties in condemning violence committed by Islamists against citizens of the world's only Jewish state — and even in acknowledging that such violence has occurred. In addition, leading scholars of antisemitism and Islamism have long noted specific difficulties with regard to the study of Muslim attitudes towards Jews: Esther Webman observes that 'the study of antisemitism in ... the Muslim world [has historically been] considered as treading on dangerous ground',⁴⁶ while Bassam Tibi complains that those who criticise Islamist antisemitism 'are accused of bashing Islam and charged with Islamophobia',⁴⁷ and Matthias Küntzel argues that fear of being accused of racism or Islamophobia has led to an avoidance of the topic of antisemitism where Muslims are concerned, with overt expressions of antisemitism, including admiration for Hitler and denial of the Holocaust, often being excused by Western experts if they are made by Muslims.⁴⁸ Arguing that the combination of Islamist anti-Westernism with the 'anti-racist binary' supposed to exist between powerful, white, Western oppressors and powerless, non-white, non-Western victims acts to prevent many on the left from recognising the antisemitism of Islamists, Dave Rich observes that the convenor of the Stop the War Coalition (which has returned to prominence since 7 October thanks to its role in the organisation of pro-Palestinian protests) responded to the murder of three Jewish children and a teacher by an Islamist by 'blam[ing] the shooting on racism against French Muslims and the legacy of French colonialism in Algeria' in an article which 'did not mention antisemitism'.⁴⁹ Yet this reticence coexists with considerable evidence of antisemitism within the Muslim population. Polling of British Muslims appears to indicate substantially higher levels of anti-Jewish and anti-Israeli attitudes than are to be observed in the general British population.⁵⁰ Moreover, while one recent survey found support for Islamic State to be roughly comparable among British Muslims and the general British public, with only one in 50 members of either population declaring a 'very positive' view of the group, it found attitudes towards Hamas — a terrorist group constitutionally devoted to religious warfare against Jews (see Section 3.4.6) — to be much more divergent, with fewer than one in 30 members of the general public, but nearly one in six Muslims, reporting a 'very positive' attitude.⁵¹

The intersection of reluctance to identify support for terrorist organisations which target Israel as extremist with a resistance to discussion of antisemitism among Muslims — even if the Muslims in question are extremists who rape, murder, and mutilate Jews — would seem to make it very difficult to talk about the relationship between antisemitism and Islamism: a difficulty which perhaps explains the relative lack of research on this topic, whose importance has sadly become clearer than ever since the 7 October atrocities and their international reception. To put it bluntly, the fear, expressed by a number of commentators, that 'should anti-Muslim sentiments in the West not be curbed, the situation could even deteriorate to another Holocaust, only this time against Muslims',⁵² should no longer blind us to the fact that there are Islamist organisations — in some cases with what appears to be considerable support in the West — which are explicitly devoted to the perpetration of another Holocaust, *this time once again against Jews*.

The current report presents three studies. The first consists of a history of antisemitism and extremism in the Muslim world, primarily compiled from scholarly sources; the second consists of a thematic analysis of interviews with expert informants; and the third consists of an original statistical analysis of survey data. All three find strong evidence of a link between antisemitism and extremism in the Muslim world. These are

45. Bloom and Erez, p. 1.

46. Esther Webman, 'The Challenge of Assessing Arab/Islamic Antisemitism', *Middle Eastern Studies* 46, no. 5, (2010), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20775070>, p. 677.

47. Bassam Tibi, 'From Sayyid Qutb to Hamas: The Middle East Conflict and the Islamisation of Antisemitism', in *The Yale Papers: Antisemitism in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Charles Asher Small, (New York: Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism; Policy, 2015 [2010]), p. 479.

48. Matthias Küntzel, *Nazis, Islamic Antisemitism, and the Middle East: The 1948 Arab War Against Israel and the Aftershocks of World War II*, trans. Colin Meade, (Abingdon / New York: Routledge, 2024 [2019]), pp. 3, 99–103.

49. Rich, *The Left's Jewish Problem*, p. 208.

50. Staetsky, 'The Left, the Right, Christians, Muslims, and Detractors of Israel'.

51. J.L. Partners, *British Muslim and General Public Attitudes Polling*, (London: Henry Jackson Society, n.d.), <https://henryjacksonsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/HJS-Deck-200324-Final.pdf>, p. 24.

52. Uriya Shavit, 'Muslims Are the New Jews' in the West: Reflections on Contemporary Parallelisms', in *Confronting Antisemitism in the Modern Media, the Legal and Political Worlds*, ed. Armin Lange et al., (Berlin / Boston: De Gruyter, 2021), p. 290.

contextualised by the following section, which provides a summary of recent events providing background to the phenomenon as it has manifested in the UK and among British citizens from 2000 to 2022.

2. Background: antisemitism and Islamist extremism in the UK, 2000-2022

Recent decades have seen a series of incidents that point to the significance of antisemitic ideas for Islamist and Islamist-influenced individuals in the UK. This significance is most clearly apparent in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, although theological arguments, traditional prejudices, and appeals to Islamic history are often invoked. At times, these incidents have been brought to public attention in the mainstream press and have even become a matter of political comment and controversy. When they are taken together rather than being viewed in isolation, a clear pattern emerges, which this report argues should be better recognised in the policy community. The current section of this report therefore provides an overview of significant Islamist incidents involving UK-based individuals which appear to involve an antisemitic element.

In the mid-1990s, the anti-Jewish activities of Hizb ut-Tahrir activists became the focus of some press reports,⁵³ as for example when group activists in Redbridge were cautioned for distributing antisemitic materials.⁵⁴ During the 1990s, the organisation became particularly active on UK university campuses, where the group in some cases fell foul of 'No Platform' policies for its antisemitic and homophobic messages on specific campuses until 2004, when the National Union of Students implemented a national ban on the group.⁵⁵ Al-Muhajiroun, founded by the Syrian Islamist Omar Bakri Mohammed when he defected from the leadership of Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain in 1996, had already been banned by the National Union of Students in 2001, following a campaign in which the group had distributed posters proclaiming that 'The last hour will not come until the Muslims fight the Jews and the Muslims kill the Jews':⁵⁶ an idea which also forms part of the Hamas Charter (see Section 3.4.6). One of Al-Muhajiroun's followers at the time, Iftikhar Ali, was found guilty of inciting racial hatred when he distributed materials on Whitechapel quoting from Hadiths about killing Jews.⁵⁷

Islamist antisemitism was a focus of the Channel 4 Undercover Mosque Dispatches documentaries in 2007 and 2008.⁵⁸ These recordings of sermons and lectures at British mosques, mostly in London and the Midlands, showed speakers promoting extreme and violent narratives, with antisemitism being one among several prominent themes. For example, Sheikh Feiz reportedly used pig noises to denigrate Jewish people and claimed that there would be a mass extermination of the Jews on the 'day of judgement',⁵⁹ and a preacher in Birmingham reportedly claimed that both Christians and Jews are the enemies of Islam.⁶⁰ Also in 2008, Sheikh Yusuf Qaradawi, the spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood (see Sections 3.4.3 and 3.4.6), was banned from coming to the UK.⁶¹ The ban brought greater public attention to Qaradawi's antisemitism and

53. Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, 'British Muslims Monthly Survey, March 1994' II, no. 3, (1994), <https://artsweb.colbham.ac.uk/bmms/1994/03March94.html>.

54. Houriya Ahmed and Hannah Stuart, 'Hizb ut-Tahrir: Ideology and Strategy', (London: Centre for Social Cohesion, 2009), <https://henryjacksonsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/HIZB.pdf>, p. 65.

55. Hannah Stuart and Houriya Ahmed, 'Profile: Hizb ut-Tahrir in the UK', (Washington, DC: Hudson Institute, 2010), <https://www.hudson.org/national-security-defense/profile-hizb-ut-tahrir-in-the-uk->.

56. David Byers, 'In Depth: Al Muhajiroun', *Times*, 11 March 2009, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/in-depth-al-muhajiroun-5c23htdjkq9>.

57. BBC, 'Muslim Guilty of Inciting Racial Hatred', *British Broadcasting Corporation*, 3 May 2002, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/1966839.stm>.

58. Tara Conlan, 'Channel 4 Announces Return of Undercover Mosque', *Guardian*, 22 August 2008, <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2008/aug/22/channel4.islam>.

59. Jonny Paul, 'TV Documentary Exposes Extremism in UK Mosques: An Undercover Reporter Joins Islamic Worshippers and Captures Alarming Sermons', *Jerusalem Post*, 17 January 2007, <https://www.jpost.com/international/tv-documentary-exposes-extremism-in-uk-mosques>.

60. Yaakov Lappin, 'UK TV Uncovers 'Islamic Supremacism': Documentary Goes Undercover in British Mosques, Finds 'Ideology of Bigotry'', *ynetnews*, 16 January 2007, <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0.7340.L-3353122.00.html>.

61. Vikram Dodd, 'Controversial Muslim Cleric Banned from Britain', *Guardian*, 7 February 2008, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2008/feb/07/reli-gion.politics>.

his support for suicide bombings against civilian targets.⁶² At the time, Muhammad Abdul Bari, the Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain, claimed that the Government had bowed to the ‘pro-Zionist and neo-conservative lobby’.⁶³

The following year, antisemitism became a focal point in the severing of engagement between the UK Government and the Muslim Council of Britain. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government at the time, Hazel Blears, withdrew government support after it became clear that the Deputy Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain had signed the Istanbul Declaration, a document which could be used to mandate attacks on the British armed forces if they helped stop weapons going to Hamas in Gaza, as well as attacks on Jewish communities and supporters of Israel.⁶⁴

This was not the first time that the Muslim Council of Britain had been the subject of controversy around antisemitism. Between 2001 and 2007, the organisation had maintained a boycott of Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations.⁶⁵ Controversially, in 2001, the Muslim Council of Britain opposed the Government’s proscription of a number of Islamist terrorist organisations, including the global jihadist group, al-Qaeda, as well as groups with a more localised focus, such as Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hamas’s Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, and the military wing of Hezbollah.⁶⁶ Yousuf Bhailok, the Muslim Council of Britain’s Secretary General at the time, interpreted the decision in what might be considered conspiratorial terms, writing that ‘it is clear that our government has allowed itself to be unduly influenced by external forces at the expense of the basic civil rights of its own citizens’, and that the Home Secretary had ‘failed to distinguish between legitimate resistance movements who fight against the illegal occupation of their own land and organisations like the IRA which have targeted mainland Britain’.⁶⁷

Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership of the Labour Party from 2015 to 2020 was dogged by national discussion of antisemitism on the British far left. However, a number of the controversies which gave rise to such discussion stemmed from Corbyn’s ties with Islamists. As well as having made comments indicating that he had friends in Hamas and Hezbollah,⁶⁸ Corbyn had also invited the Palestinian cleric Sheikh Raed Salah to Parliament in 2012, despite Salah’s having promoted the blood libel, i.e. the accusation that Jews consume the blood of non-Jewish children (see Sections 3.3 and 3.4.1).⁶⁹ Further public attention was brought to questions of Islamist antisemitism by reports of Corbyn’s past attendance at Al Quds Day rallies in London. These events,

62. Dodd; Sarah Schlesinger, ‘A History of Hatred: The Muslim Brotherhood and Anti-Semitism’, (Washington, D.C.: Hudson Institute, 2011), <https://www.hudson.org/human-rights/a-history-of-hatred-the-muslim-brotherhood-and-anti-semitism>.

63. Dodd, ‘Controversial Muslim Cleric Banned from Britain’; MailOnline, ‘Brown Bans Muslim Preacher Who Praised Suicide Bombers as ‘Martyrs’ from Britain’, *MailOnline*, 7 February 2008, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-512811/Brown-bans-Muslim-preacher-praised-suicide-bombers-martyrs-Britain.html>.

64. Hazel Blears, ‘Our Shunning of the MCB Is Not Grandstanding: The MCB Deputy Secretary General Has Signed a Declaration Supporting Violence Against Troops and Jewish Communities’, *Guardian*, 25 March 2009, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2009/mar/25/islam-terrorism>; Jonathan Fighele, ‘The Jihad ‘Istanbul Declaration’ and the Gaza Flotilla’, (Herzliya: Reichman University International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, 2010), <https://ict.org.il/the-jihad-istanbul-declaration-and-the-gaza-flotilla/>.

65. Fran Yeoman, ‘Muslim Council to End Its Boycott of Holocaust Day’, *Times*, 12 December 2007, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/muslim-council-to-end-its-boycott-of-holocaust-day-9xtqzj9zpn3>.

66. Richard Norton-Taylor, ‘21 Groups Banned Under New Terror Law’, *Guardian*, 1 March 2001, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2001/mar/01/ukcrime.humanrights>.

67. MCB, ‘MCB Says ‘Terrorist List’ Is Ill-Conceived’, 2001, <https://mcb.org.uk/mcb-says-terrorist-list-is-ill-conceived/>.

68. Tamar Pileggi, ‘UK Labour Candidate Defends Calling Hamas, Hezbollah ‘Friends’: Would-Be Opposition Leader Jeremy Corbyn Says He Doesn’t Agree with Islamist Groups, but Doesn’t Apologize for Inviting Them to Parliament’, 2015, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/uk-labour-candidate-defends-calling-hamas-hezbollah-friends/>.

69. TOI STAFF and JTA, ‘UK Labour Frontrunner Invited Radical Israeli-Muslim Cleric to Parliament for Tea: Jeremy Corbyn Praised Oft-Jailed Islamic Movement’s Sheikh Raed Salah, Who Defied a Ban to Visit UK in 2012, as ‘a Voice That Must Be Heard’’, *Times of Israel*, n.d., <https://www.timesofisrael.com/uk-labour-frontrunner-invited-radical-israeli-muslim-cleric-to-parliament-for-tea/>; JC Reporter, ‘‘Blood Libel’ Cleric Who Was Praised by Corbyn Is Jailed in Israel for Inciting Violence: Raed Salah Was Handed a 28-Month Sentence on Monday After Being Convicted Last Year’, *Jewish Chronicle*, 10 February 2020, <https://www.thejc.com/news/israel/blood-libel-cleric-who-was-praised-by-corbyn-is-jailed-in-israel-for-inciting-violence-jvzldm5o>.

organised by the Islamic Human Rights Commission — a group supportive of the Iranian regime — have repeatedly seen displays of antisemitism and open support for Hezbollah.⁷⁰

During the Gaza conflict of May 2021, several other key incidents highlighted the significance of anti-Jewish themes in Islamist ideology. Much of this occurred during protests in London. The most publicised of these saw a car convoy from Bradford driving through an area of North London with a prominent Jewish community, with one member of the convoy filmed shouting from a loudspeaker, 'Free Palestine' and 'Fuck the Jews, rape their daughters'.⁷¹ Another incident that was filmed took place close to the London Israeli Embassy, where an activist was recorded shouting, 'We'll find some Jews here ... We want the Zionists, we want their blood!'.⁷² Demonstrators at that protest had been addressed by the online influencer Mohammed Hijab, who had told listeners, 'We are with the brothers and sisters of Palestine, and we will get our vengeance in this dunya [world] or the akhirah [hereafter]'.⁷³ Drawing on specifically religious sentiments about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as a spiritual war between Muslims and Jews, Hijab announced,

The difference between us [Muslims] and them [Jews] is this ... We believe that life begins with death. We don't care about death. We love death, and if you think that our people in Palestine or across the Arab and Muslim world will let go of the struggle and our sacred places, like [the] Al-Aqsa [mosque in Jerusalem], you are grossly mistaken.⁷⁴

Also during the 2021 Gaza protests, another influencer, who uses the name Ali Dawah, took an advertising van to Golders Green — a London neighbourhood known for its substantial Orthodox Jewish population — during the Jewish Sabbath.⁷⁵ The van displayed what appeared to be an image from a Nazi death camp with the words, 'Did we not learn from the Holocaust?'.⁷⁶ It was reported that the men filmed themselves harassing Jews walking from synagogue, as well as their attempts to provoke the latter.⁷⁷ Several people were arrested at the time of the May 2021 demonstrations at the Israeli embassy; two of them for the antisemitic chant 'Khaybar, Khaybar, Ya Yahud, Jaish Mohammed Sauf Ya'ud',⁷⁸ which invokes the story of the massacre of the Arabian Jewish tribes of Khaybar (see Sections 1, 3.4.1, and 4.4.4).

The prominence of antisemitism in Islamist ideology has also found expression in terrorism, with British Islamist terrorists targeting Jewish people with plots and attacks. Islamist terrorists in the UK have not succeeded in perpetrating anti-Jewish terror attacks on the scale of some of those witnessed in Europe, such as the attacks at the Toulouse Jewish school (2012), the Brussels Jewish Museum (2014), a Hypercacher kosher supermarket in Paris (2015), and the Great Synagogue of Copenhagen (2015). While there has not been a comparative attack targeting Jews on British soil, British Islamist terrorists have carried out attacks targeting Jews overseas. In February 2002, Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, a British Pakistani who had studied at the

70. IHRC, 'International Al Quds Day 2023 Rally', (Islamic Human Rights Commission, 14 February 2023), <https://www.ihrc.org.uk/international-al-al-quds-day-2023-rally/>; Emma Fox, *Islamic Human Rights Commission: Advocating for the Ayatollahs*, (Henry Jackson Society, 2019), <https://henryjacksonsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/HJS-IHRC-Report-WEB.pdf>; Lee Harpin, 'Jeremy Corbyn Not Expected to Attend This Year's Al Quds Day March: The Labour Leader Previously Addressed the Controversial Annual Pro-Palestinian Event Where Hamas and Hezbollah Flags Have Been Displayed', *Jewish Chronicle*, n.d., <https://www.thejc.com/news/jeremy-corbyn-not-expected-to-attend-this-years-al-quds-day-march-fevr-0buu>; David Kurten and Sadiq Khan, 'Al Quds Day March (6)', *Questions to the Mayor*, no. 2017/2673, (2017), <https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/questions-mayor/find-an-answer/al-quds-day-march-6>.

71. JC Reporter, 'Convoy Tours North London with Speaker Shouting 'F**k the Jews, Rape Their Daughters': WATCH: Jewish Areas of London Targeted by Pro-Palestine 'Protesters'', *Jewish Chronicle*, 16 May 2021, <https://www.thejc.com/news/convoy-tours-north-london-with-speaker-shouting-fk-the-jews-rape-their-daughters-pos6xmtn>.

72. Dipesh Gadhler, 'Embassy Protester Demanded 'Jewish Blood': Police Are Hunting a Masked Extremist Who Was Filmed Chanting Vile Antisemitic Slogans on a Pro-Palestinian March', *Sunday Times*, 30 May 2021, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/embassy-protester-demanded-jewish-blood-fmqhb8fxc>.

73. Gadhler.

74. Gadhler.

75. Noa Hoffman, 'WATCH: Muslim Men Film Themselves Targeting Jews for Their Views on 'Child Killing': Standing in Front of a Billboard Saying, 'Did We Not Learn from the Holocaust?', the Three YouTubers Force Passers-by to Cross the Street to Avoid Them', *Jewish Chronicle*, 26 May 2021, <https://www.thejc.com/news/watch-muslim-men-film-themselves-targeting-jews-for-their-views-on-child-killing-vtlxtp3y>.

76. Hoffman.

77. Hoffman.

78. Hoffman.

London School of Economics, took part in the abduction and murder of the Jewish journalist Daniel Pearl in Pakistan,⁷⁹ and in April 2003, Asif Mohammed Hanif and Omar Khan Sharif, from Derby and Hounslow — both of whom were connected to Al Muhajiroun — perpetrated a suicide bombing attack at the Mike's Place bar in Tel Aviv.⁸⁰

In January 2022, Faisal Akram from Blackburn took hostages at a synagogue in Colleyville, Texas.⁸¹ While Akram identified his motive as being the release of the convicted terrorist Aafia Siddiqui,⁸² his choice of target likely speaks to conspiratorial notions of Jewish control of US defence and foreign policy. A year earlier, Akram had been reported to police in the UK for comments that Jews should be punished and should be bombed,⁸³ and during the attack, Akram made comments about Muslims being attacked in US foreign policy, before saying, 'I'm setting a precedent ... maybe they'll have compassion for fucking Jews'.⁸⁴

Some recent Islamist terrorist attacks in the UK itself also appear to have had antisemitic dimensions, even though Jews were not directly targeted. Ali Harbi Ali, who murdered the non-Jewish MP, Sir David Amess, in October 2021, said that the MP's membership of the Conservative Friends of Israel was a 'big problem' for him,⁸⁵ and Ali is also known to have carried out reconnaissance in preparation for a planned attack on Mike Freer:⁸⁶ the non-Jewish MP for Finchley and Golders Green (as mentioned above, a heavily Jewish area of London). In December 2020, Munawar Hussain attempted a knife attack with terrorist motives at a Marks & Spencer store in Burnley, because of his belief that the retail chain in some way funded alleged Israeli persecution of Palestinians⁸⁷ — a belief which appears explicable only in relation to the well-publicised Jewish ethnicity of the company's founder.⁸⁸ At the time of the attack, Hussain had with him a piece of paper bearing an Urdu text which stated, 'O Israel, you are inflicting atrocities on Palestinians and Marks Spencer [sic] helping you financially'.⁸⁹ In 2024, Ahmed Ali Alid — a Moroccan asylum seeker resident in Hartlepool — was found guilty of murder, attempted murder, and assaulting emergency workers in an attack which his own comments indicated to have been 'motivated by the Israel-Hamas conflict'.⁹⁰

In addition, the British authorities have also disrupted several Islamist terrorism plots against Jewish targets. In 2011, police uncovered a terror plot by husband-and-wife duo Mohammed Sajid Khan and Shasta

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79. Secunder Kermani, 'Daniel Pearl: Pakistan Court Acquits Men Accused of Murder', *BBC News*, 28 January 2021, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-55735869>.
80. Richard Norton-Taylor and Jamie Wilson, 'Suicide Bombers Were Known to MI5', *Guardian*, 5 May 2003, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2003/may/05/terrorism.israelandthepalestinians>.
81. BBC, 'Texas Synagogue Siege: Teens Held in UK as Briton Named as Hostage-Taker', *BBC News*, 17 January 2022, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-60019251>; Sky News, 'Texas Synagogue Siege: British Hostage Taker Named as Malik Faisal Akram — as Two Teenagers Arrested in Manchester: The 44-Year-Old Was Not Living in the United States but Had Recently Travelled There Before Carrying Out the Attack on the Synagogue in Colleyville on Saturday, Sky News Understands', *Sky News*, 17 January 2022, <https://news.sky.com/story/texas-synagogue-siege-british-hostage-taker-named-as-malik-faisal-akram-12517905>.
82. BBC, 'Texas Synagogue Siege'; Sky News, 'Texas Synagogue Siege: Aafia Siddiqui — Who Is the Pakistani Prisoner at the Centre of the Incident? Aafia Siddiqui Is Serving an 86-Year Prison Sentence After Being Convicted in 2010 on Charges That She Sought to Shoot US Military Officers While Being Detained in Afghanistan Two Years Earlier', *Sky News*, 17 January 2022, <https://news.sky.com/story/texas-synagogue-siege-aafia-siddiqui-who-is-the-pakistani-prisoner-at-the-centre-of-the-incident-12518233>.
83. JC Reporter, 'Riots Outside Israel's Embassy in Jordan as Relations Cool with Arab State: All Embassy Staff Were Confirmed Safe', 2024, <https://www.thejc.com/news/world/riots-outside-israels-embassy-in-jordan-as-relations-cool-with-arab-state-g3zom6bi>.
84. JC Investigations Team, 'EXCLUSIVE: Texas Synagogue Terrorist Ranted about 'f***ing Jews' in Last Call to Family Made During Siege: He Said Said He Was 'Opening the Doors' to Further Attacks', 2022, <https://www.thejc.com/news/world/exclusive-texas-synagogue-terrorist-ranted-about-fing-jews-in-last-call-to-family-made-during-siege-lqkwm5e2>.
85. BBC, 'Sir David Amess: Terror Suspect Tells Court He Killed MP over Syria Vote', *BBC News*, 2022, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-essex-60996062>.
86. David Mercer, 'Sir David Amess Murder: MP Mike Freer to Wear Stab Vest After Being Target of Killer Ali Harbi Ali: Mike Freer Said He Was 'Much More Mindful' of People Around Him After It Emerged Ali Harbi Ali Carried Out Reconnaissance at a Location Where He Was Due to Meet Constituents', *Sky News*, 2022, <https://news.sky.com/story/sir-david-amess-murder-mp-mike-freer-to-wear-stab-vest-after-being-target-of-killer-ali-harbi-ali-12589374>.
87. BBC, 'Burnley M&S Knifeman Had Terrorist Motives, Court Hears', *BBC News*, 1 February 2022, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lancashire-60216439>.
88. 'The M&S Story: 1884', (London: Marks & Spencer, n.d.), <https://archive.marksandspencer.com/timeline/the-ms-story/>.
89. BBC, 'Burnley M&S Knifeman Had Terrorist Motives, Court Hears'.
90. Counter Terrorism Policing North East, 'Hartlepool Attacker Guilty of Murder, Attempted Murder and Assaulting Emergency Workers', (London: Counter Terrorism Policing, 2024), <https://www.counterterrorism.police.uk/hartlepool-attacker-guilty-of-murder-attempted-murder-and-assaulting-emergency-workers/>.

Khan, who had been taking steps to build an explosive device, and had been looking for Jewish targets in Northern England.⁹¹ Two further Islamist anti-Jewish terror plots were stopped in 2017. In March of that year, police arrested Ummariyat Mirza, and later also his wife Madihah Taheer, for Islamic State-inspired terror plots whose intended targets were premises connected to the military and the Jewish community.⁹² Two months later, counter-terrorism officers detained Aweys Shikhey, who had been attempting to join Islamic State, and had spoken of wanting to attack Jews in the London neighbourhood of Stamford Hill, as well as of shooting Tottenham football fans, whom he considered to be Jewish.⁹³

As this paper has already shown, the attacks of 7 October 2023 have led to striking displays of antisemitism both from British Islamists and from people associated with the UK far left (see Section 1). However, the current section of the paper shows that this did not occur in a vacuum, as Jewish communities, both in the UK and overseas, had long been at risk from the antisemitic extremism of Islamist and Islamist-influenced individuals based in the UK. The remainder of this report explores the social, historical, political, and theological basis for this neglected hate.

3. Study I: A brief history of antisemitism and Islamism

3.1 Abstract

This study presents a historical account of the development of antisemitism as a facet of Islamist ideology. It outlines the different strains of Jew-hate which developed in the Muslim and in the Christian worlds, and the ways in which these were hybridised as a result of alliances between European and Middle Eastern antisemites — most prominently, Muhammad Amin al-Husseini, the Nazi collaborator who served as Mufti of Jerusalem from 1922 to 1937. In practice, this meant the adoption by some Muslims of originally Christian conspiracy theories about Jews and Zionists, together with genocidal ambitions previously unknown in the Muslim world. As this study shows, the resulting hybrid form of antisemitism — developed in slightly different directions by Salafi-Jihadists, Shi'i Islamists, and the Muslim Brotherhood — has become deeply embedded in multiple forms of Islamist ideology whilst disguising itself for progressive audiences in the West with a superficially 'anti-colonial' framing that was (paradoxically) inherited from Nazi propaganda.

3.2 Introduction

The celebratory reception with which the mass murder of Israeli Jews was met by some in the West recalls the analysis of the contemporary German commentator who wrote of 'an Islamic pop culture ... in Europe, which is no longer dependent on the Middle East', and which 'reduces Islam to a few simple credos', one of the most powerful of which being 'the belief that Muslims have been the perpetual victims of aggression by the West and the Jews'.⁹⁴ This belief — fundamentally a conspiracy theory — is not new. It is, for example, clearly articulated, and taken to its logical conclusion, in many of the pronouncements made by Osama bin Laden in his capacity as leader of the Salafi-Jihadist organisation, Al-Qaeda (see Section 3.4.4):

91. BBC, 'Jewish Community Terrorist Attack Plan Couple Jailed', *British Broadcasting Corporation*, 20 July 2012, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-eng-land-manchester-18892693>.

92. Fiona Hamilton and Duncan Gardham, 'Ummariyat Mirza and Madihah Taheer Jailed over Knife Terror Plot: Husband and Wife Ummariyat Mirza and Madihah Taheer Have Been Jailed. He Researched Attacks on an RAF Careers Office and Barracks in Birmingham', *Times*, 14 December 2017, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ummariyat-mirza-and-madiah-taheer-jailed-over-knife-terror-plot-xscdnmrzr>.

93. Connor Boyd, 'Terrorist Hiding in Plain Sight': Delivery Driver Who Chatted with a Fellow Extremist over WhatsApp about Attacking the Queen and Spurs Fans Faces Jail for Trying to Join ISIS: Aweys Shikhey, 38, Spoke of Shooting Spurs Fans with AK47s as They Left Stadium; Also Discussed Killing Jews in Stamford Hill, North London, in Encrypted Texts; Detained at Stansted Airport on May 23 Last Year Boarding a Flight to Istanbul; Prosecutor Barnaby Jameson Said He Hid Extremist Agenda Beneath the Surface', *MailOnline*, 20 February 2018, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5413651/Somalian-born-Aweys-Shikhey-guilty-trying-join-ISIS.html>; 'Delivery Man Talked of Killing David Cameron and Queen, Court Hears: Aweys Shikhey Allegedly Led Double Life and Dreamed of Jihad, Old Bailey Hears', n.d.; 'ISIS Plotter Aweys Shikhey Who Wanted to Kill Queen and Football Fans Jailed for Eight Years', *Times*, 2018, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/isis-plotter-aweys-shikhey-who-wanted-to-kill-queen-and-football-fans-jailed-for-eight-years-vnrbbtrcm>.

94. Daniel Rickenbacher, 'Pop Islam: How Germany Is Tackling the New Islamic Antisemitism', *Fathom* December, (2018), <https://fathomjournal.org/pop-islam-how-germany-is-tackling-the-new-islamic-antisemitism/>, n.p.

My message is to urge *jihad* to repulse the grand plots hatched against our nation, such as the occupation of Baghdad ... and the fierce attempt to destroy the *jihad* in beloved Palestine by employing the trick of the road map and the Geneva peace initiative.

The Americans' intentions have also become clear in statements about the need to change the beliefs and morals of Muslims to become more tolerant, as they put it.

In truth, this is a religious-economic war. The occupation of Iraq is a link in the Zionist-crusader chain of evil. Then comes the full occupation of the rest of the Gulf states to set the stage for controlling and dominating the whole world.

...

The struggle between us and them began centuries ago, and will continue. There can be no dialogue with occupiers except through arms. ...

Jihad is the path, so seek it.⁹⁵

Twenty years after the publication of the above in the UK's left-leaning *Guardian* newspaper, a survey found nearly half of British Muslims (as compared to a fifth or less of the general British population) to believe that Jews have an excessive influence on US foreign policy and UK government policy,⁹⁶ indicating what would appear to be widespread credence in the same sort of conspiratorial thinking.

How did ideas which at one time might have been considered the preserve of the Western far right come to have such currency for Muslims? There is controversy over whether antisemitism among Muslims in general and Palestinian Muslims in particular is a response to the Arab-Israeli conflict, an import from European culture, or a longstanding prejudice predating the 20th century.⁹⁷ Some scholars, such as Edward Said, vigorously deny that antisemitism or racism exists in any part of Palestinian society.⁹⁸ Some argue that while the notion of a 'Judeo-Christian (or Zionist-Crusader) conspiracy against Islam' has gained purchase, it can only be traced back to the beginnings of a religious re-framing of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the context of the Six Day War of 1968,⁹⁹ while others argue that it is one of the 'essential segments' of Islamism.¹⁰⁰ Continuities between contemporary Islamist antisemitism and pre-20th century attitudes to Jews in the Arab world have been emphasised by some experts,¹⁰¹ while others have noted the later influence of Soviet propaganda created for the region, which from the 1960s onwards employed 'overtly antisemitic conspiracy theories and demonic portrayals of Jews and Zionists'.¹⁰² However, the general consensus appears to indicate that a form of antisemitism specifically tailored to an Islamic cultural context was co-created during the years leading up to the Second World War by Muslim allies of the Austro-German Nazi regime, together with regime propagandists. This form of antisemitism, which crosses the Shia-Sunni divide, appears to have had great importance in shaping the history of the region. It is founded on both Western and Muslim elements.

The core finding of this study is that, since the end of the First World War, when Muslim dominance over the territory corresponding to contemporary Israel was challenged for the first time in centuries, various

95. Osama bin Laden, 'Resist the New Rome', *Guardian*, 6 January 2004, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/jan/06/terrorism.comment>, n.p.

96. J.L. Partners, *British Muslim and General Public Attitudes Polling*, p. 17.

97. Webman, 'The Challenge of Assessing Arab/Islamic Antisemitism', pp. 678–79.

98. Joseph S. Spoerl, 'Islamic Antisemitism in the Arab-Israeli Conflict', *Journal for the Study of Antisemitism* 4, (2012), p. 595.

99. Yvonne Haddad, 'Islamists and the 'Problem of Israel': The 1967 Awakening', *Middle East Journal* 46, no. 2, (1992), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4328433>, p. 281.

100. Bassam Tibi, 'The Totalitarianism of Jihadist Islamism and Its Challenge to Europe and to Islam', *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 8, no. 1, (2007), <https://doi.org/10.1080/14690760601121630>, p. 45.

101. E.g. Efraim Karsh, 'The Long Trail of Palestinian Antisemitism', *Israel Affairs* 29, no. 1, (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537121.2023.2162259>, pp. 120–36.

102. Rich, *The Left's Jewish Problem*, p. 53.

political actors have sought to weaponise elements of Islamic thought, memory, and identity in support of an explicit or implicit project to return the Muslim world to a *status quo ante* in which Jews held a precarious and marginalised position. For example, conflicts between Muhammad and various local tribes which *happened* to be Jewish have been decontextualised in order to create the impression of an ancient religious war between Muslims and Jews — a fiction which was never even imagined until the 20th century, and which can be viewed as a reinvention, for Muslim audiences, of the apocalyptic racial fantasies of Adolf Hitler.

3.3 The nature of modern antisemitism

Although antisemitism is often described as a form of racism, it has certain key differences from the other forms of prejudice which fall under that umbrella. As Dave Rich writes, while racism ‘tends to depict non-white people as dirty, poor, diseased, and even subhuman, antisemitism accords Jews massive power, wealth, political influence, and media control’.¹⁰³ The Holocaust, for example, was motivated by the idea ‘that Jews and their conspiracies so threatened the security of the world that they needed to be excluded, expelled, or exterminated’.¹⁰⁴ Antisemitism is not therefore reducible to dislike of Jews; rather, it is an ideology which purports to explain almost everything about the world, and which holds Jews to blame for much or all that is wrong with it. Bernard Harrison and Lesley Klaff have summarised its essential elements as follows:

PA1. The Jewish community is organised to pursue goals of its own at whatever cost to the lives and interests of non-Jewish groups. In consequence, it is directly and solely responsible for human suffering on a scale far exceeding anything that can be alleged against any other human group.

PA2. The Jewish community is conspiratorially organised in the pursuit of its self-seeking and heinous goals to an extent that endows it with demonic powers not to be suspected from the weak and harmless appearance of its individual members.

PA3. Through the efficacy of its conspiratorial organization, and through its quasi-miraculous ability to acquire and manage money, the Jewish community has been able to acquire secret control over most of the main social, commercial, political and governmental institutions of non-Jewish society.

PA4. Given the secret control exercised by the World Jewry over (only apparently) non-Jewish institutions, and given the obsessive concern of the Jewish community with its own interests to the exclusion of those of non-Jews, it is simply not feasible to remedy the evils occasioned by the presence of the Jews in non-Jewish society by any means short of the total elimination of the Jews.

PA5. Since the evils that the Jews do in the world owe their existence solely to Jewish wickedness, the elimination of the Jews will cause those evils to cease, without the need for any further action on the part of non-Jews, whose world will, in the nature of things, return forthwith to the perfect state of order natural to it, from which it would never have lapsed had it not been for the mischievous interventions of the Jews.¹⁰⁵

This ideology is essentially a holdover from Medieval Europe. It has roots in the ‘misanthropy, impiety, lawlessness, and universal enmity’ attributed to Jews by some ancient authors,¹⁰⁶ as well as in the ‘detailed knowledge of magic’ with which Jews came to be credited in late antiquity.¹⁰⁷ However, it was predominantly shaped by Christian traditions which, drawing upon Biblical narratives of argument between Jesus and the

103. Rich, p. 202.

104. David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The History of a Way of Thinking*, (London: Head of Zeus, 2018 [2013]), p. 465.

105. Bernard Harrison and Lesley Klaff, ‘The IHRA Definition and Its Critics’, in *Contending with Antisemitism in a Rapidly Changing Political Climate*, (Bloomington (IN): Indiana University Press, 2021), n.p.

106. Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism*, p. 46.

107. Peter Maxwell-Stuart, ‘Magic in the Ancient World’, ed. Owen Davies, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023 [2017]), pp. 13–14.

Jewish religious authorities of his day and assigning responsibility for Roman persecution of early Christians (most of whom were Jewish) to other Jews, positioned Jews as enemies of Christ and the Church.¹⁰⁸ The result was that Jews fell victim to incessant persecution by a Christian majority which held them to be engaged in sorcery, devil-worship, and a particular form of cannibalism wherein Christian children were supposed to be ritually murdered in order to facilitate the consumption of their blood.¹⁰⁹ The latter accusation, known as the ‘blood libel’, would later be imported to the Muslim world via Christian minorities, who used it as a pretext for violence against Jews, in some cases with the support of Muslims.¹¹⁰

At the same time, Jews were restricted from owning land and from entering into many professions, and were treated as chattels of Christian rulers, who exploited them as a means of extracting revenue from their Christian subjects: both through literal employment as tax collectors and through permission to lend money at interest, generating profits which the rulers would then expropriate.¹¹¹ This led to an association of Jews with avarice, usury, and the most hated aspects of political power: an association which carried through into the modern era, even as the attendant demonological superstitions were transformed through a secularised reframing of Jews as manipulators and deceivers of the public through alleged conspiratorial use of the powers of finance, political corruption, and the mass media.¹¹²

The key event in this secularisation of medieval antisemitism was the aftermath of the French Revolution, which emancipated the Jews but also left those who mourned the *ancien régime* in search of scapegoats: the myth of a centuries-old conspiracy between the Freemasons, the Illuminati, and (soon afterwards) the Jews arose and was elaborated through successive rounds of plagiarism until it reached its definitive form in early 20th-century Russia as the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.¹¹³ This hackneyed literary forgery, purporting to reveal ‘a strategic plan, ... worked out by the leaders of the Jewish people during the many centuries of dispersion, and finally presented to the Council of Elders by ... Theodor Herzl at the time of the first Zionist congress ... at Basel in August 1897’,¹¹⁴ became popular among White Russian elites, who took it with them when they went into exile, exporting it first to Germany and then to the rest of the world.¹¹⁵

The *Protocols* became a key ideological influence on Adolf Hitler and other leading members of the National Socialist or Nazi Party, inspiring and supporting them in their belief that the industrial extermination of world Jewry was a necessary act of self-defence.¹¹⁶ While the Nazi movement was able to draw upon widespread prejudice against Jews,¹¹⁷ it was allegations of Jewish or ‘Zionist’ conspiracy which proved ‘most important in fostering [the] radical, genocidal implications’ of 20th century antisemitism:¹¹⁸ even Hitler ‘conced[ed] that many Jews were personally innocent of the crimes he ascribed generally to the Jews’,¹¹⁹ but it was the Jewish collective which appeared to present a threat, thanks to its supposed proclivity for secretive and malign forms of organisation. The genocidal antisemitism of the Nazis in turn provided licence to other fascist movements in their drive to eliminate Jewish participation from majority-Christian nation states.¹²⁰

Conspiratorial antisemitism began to appear in the Muslim world thanks to Arabic translations of French works published in the late 19th century,¹²¹ but it did not become greatly influential until the emergence of

108. Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism*, pp. 78–86, 92–93.

109. Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and Its Relation to Modern Antisemitism*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943).

110. Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, (Princeton / Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1987 [1984]), pp. 158–59, 168; Martin Gilbert, *In Ishmael's House: A History of Jews in Muslim Lands*, (New Haven / London: Yale University Press, 2011), pp. 89–90.

111. Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism*, pp. 191–97.

112. Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide*, pp. 22–23, 41–42.

113. Cohn, pp. 29–105.

114. Quoted Cohn, p. 69.

115. Cohn, pp. 123–29.

116. Cohn, pp. 137–209.

117. Goldhagen, *The Devil That Never Dies*.

118. Herf, *The Jewish Enemy*, p. 10.

119. Billig, *Fascists*, p. 177.

120. A. Kallis, *Genocide and Fascism: The Eliminationist Drive in Fascist Europe*, (London / New York: Routledge, 2009).

121. Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, p. 185.

alliances between certain Muslim leaders and the Nazis, whose genocidal ambitions for world Jewry were translated into an Islamic idiom at the same point (see Section 3.4.2). Before that historical moment, Muslim treatment of Jews was by no means motivated by ideas of conspiratorial threat, with Jews being thought of not as an eternal antagonist against whom one must perpetually be on guard but as a long-subjugated former adversary whose temporary opposition had been forever quelled by the Prophet of Islam. Moreover, while local massacres of Jews frequently occurred in the Muslim world, the idea of killing all Jews everywhere simply did not exist as a political project. However, while the conspiratorial and genocidal elements of Islamist antisemitism can thus accurately be seen as Western in origin, antisemitic traditions native to the Muslim world provided vigorous historical root-stock onto which those elements could be grafted.

3.4 Stages in the development of Islamist antisemitism

3.4.1 Muslim-Jewish relations before the fall of the Ottoman Empire

The image of the Jew as an ‘irredeemably destructive, conspiratorial agent, hostile ... to humanity at large’ was largely alien to the Muslim world until the early 20th century.¹²² However, this does not mean that Muslim-Jewish relations were entirely harmonious before European prejudices came onto the scene, nor that the specific form of antisemitism promoted by Islamists had no Islamic foundation on which to build. The current section of Study I will explain why the opposite was in fact the case.

Islamic understandings of Jews were until recently shaped by two principal contingencies, one theological and one political, both of them dating back to the very beginnings of Islam. The first of these was that the Quran is presented as the final, perfect iteration of a revelatory tradition begun by a succession of Jewish prophets, from Abraham to Jesus. The second was that Muhammad began his prophetic career in a locality within which the major powers were polytheistic Arab tribes and monotheistic Jewish tribes, with Christians only forming a significant part of the story later on.

The first of these two contingencies had two primary implications. On the one hand, if the Jewish prophets were true messengers of God’s word, then this implied a positive view of Judaism. On the other hand, Islam was a rival religion, and as such necessarily had to be presented as superior to Judaism.¹²³ In the Quran, this was done by ‘declar[ing] the new revelation’s continuity with Moses’s message, but ... simultaneously accus[ing] the Jewish communities that preserved that earlier message of disobedience, misreading, and even falsification’.¹²⁴ Such arguments are not unique to the Quran. Early Christianity stood in a similar relationship to Judaism, as it had begun as a Jewish sect and explicitly adopted the Hebrew Bible as its Old Testament. Thus, its proselytisers had similarly accused the Jews of hypocrisy and of having betrayed their own scriptural traditions.¹²⁵ To declare such arguments in themselves to be a form of antisemitism would clearly be problematic: a religion or sect which made no claim for the superiority of its teachings over those available elsewhere would in all likelihood gain few adherents — and indeed, there were many Jewish sects of the Second Temple period whose members expressed comparable enmity towards all other Jews.¹²⁶ However, this is not to say that antisemitic use cannot be made of such arguments by continuing to engage in them once a position of religious supremacy has been established.

The second of these contingencies was more straightforward in its implications. Conflict between Muhammad and various local powers necessarily involved conflict with Jews, alongside polytheists and (later) Christians, and the various arguments, battles, massacres, treaties, etc to which these conflicts gave rise at the time have lived on in Islamic consciousness.¹²⁷ A parallel may be drawn with the ways in which the events of Jesus’s biography — including his (non-military) conflicts with Jewish and Roman authorities — have lived on in the consciousness of Christians worldwide. It is important to emphasise that there is nothing intrinsi-

122. Webman, ‘The Challenge of Assessing Arab/Islamic Antisemitism’, p. 679.

123. Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism*, p. 137.

124. Nirenberg, p. 140.

125. Nirenberg, pp. 82–85, 143–45.

126. Nirenberg, p. 68.

127. Nirenberg, pp. 154–64.

cally antisemitic about this. All religious groups — and indeed all peoples — have histories of conflict, and it is hardly surprising to find such histories set down in a way that is less than flattering to those remembered as adversaries. However, important questions can be raised concerning the political use made of such cultural memories — especially by those in a position of relative power.

To reiterate, it should not be considered hateful to argue that the religious traditions with which one identifies are better or truer than others. And nor should it be considered hateful to commemorate military victories or defeats from the distant past. Despite this, theological arguments and memories of long-concluded battles have obvious utility to those seeking to perpetuate communal tensions or to rationalise the persecution of minorities, Jewish or otherwise. This can be seen in the way that particular understandings of the teachings and biography of Muhammad have served to shape Muslim-Jewish relations from the Middle Ages until the 20th century, just as it can be seen in the way that particular understandings of the teachings and biography of Jesus served to shape Christian-Jewish relations throughout the same period (see Section 3.3). In the Muslim world no less than in Christendom, those relations can accurately be characterised in terms of the subjugation and persecution of the Jewish minority by the religious majority, although — again, no less than in Christendom — the extent of persecution varied considerably across time and geography. The remainder of this section provides an overview of the fate of Jewish communities in the Muslim world, from the time of Muhammad until the end of the First World War.

The first to oppose Muhammad were members of his own tribe, the Quraysh, but, according to Islamic tradition, it was Jews who provided them with their scriptural arguments.¹²⁸ Indeed, much of the traditional biography of Muhammad is shaped by conflict with Jews.¹²⁹ After Muhammad fled from Mecca to become the ruler of the city now known as Medina, he and his followers came into conflict with the three local Jewish tribes, killing and enslaving one and presenting the others with a choice between conversion to Islam and exile.¹³⁰ Some of the exiles settled in the oasis of Khaybar, and, when this was later captured by Muhammad and his followers, its inhabitants were permitted both to remain and to continue to practise their faith subject to an agreement that they would provide a 50% share of all their agricultural produce to their conquerors, who would remain free to expel them if they should choose to do so at any point in the future.¹³¹ (Decontextualised references to the Battle of Khaybar, as discussed in Sections 1 and 2, are a paragon example of the way in which contemporary extremists weaponise events in early Islamic history — in this case by deploying the memory of Muhammad's defeat of a rival military power which *happened* to be Jewish in such a way as to imply that a similar fate awaits all Jews everywhere.)

This agreement appears to have set the precedent for the subsequent system of *dhimma*, under which, both Christians and Jews — as representatives of scriptural traditions which Muslims regarded as genuine but defective — were suffered to practise their religion in the lands of Islam as *dhimmi* — that is, as non-Muslims under the legal protection of the ruler — provided that they accepted their subordinate status and paid a special tax known as the *jizya*. Importantly, no such provision was made for polytheists. As Bernard Lewis observes, 'the *jizya* was not only a tax, but also a symbolic expression of subordination', and — both in the Quran and in Islamic tradition — 'the word *dhull* or *dhilla* (humiliation or abasement) [is used] to indicate the status [which] God has assigned to those who reject Muhammad, and in which they should be kept so long as they persist in that rejection'.¹³² Thus, Jews were regarded as contemptible rather than as powerful or dangerous:¹³³ by no means an enviable reputation, but one far from the terrifying demonic image which Medieval European Christians projected onto their Jewish neighbours. For this reason, large-scale massacres and expulsions of Jews, such as the 1066 slaughter of several thousand Jews in Muslim-ruled Granada, were relatively rare.¹³⁴

128. Nirenberg, p. 155.

129. Nirenberg, pp. 156–58.

130. Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, pp. 10, 83; Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism*, pp. 159–60.

131. Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, pp. 10–11; Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism*, pp. 162–63.

132. Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, p. 14.

133. Lewis, p. 33; Webman, 'The Challenge of Assessing Arab/Islamic Antisemitism', p. 681; Kuntzel, *Nazis, Islamic Antisemitism, and the Middle East*, 2024 [2019], p. 12.

134. Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism*, pp. 181–82.

Conditions for Jews were historically very poor in Central Asia, North Africa, and Iran, but better in the Ottoman Empire, where the authorities regarded Jews as useful, affording them a level of acceptance and freedom that was not to be found elsewhere in the world, including in Christendom.¹³⁵ In consequence, many European Jews fled to Turkey as a refuge from persecution from the 14th to the 16th century.¹³⁶ However, the level of tolerance and security afforded to Ottoman Jews was only relative. As Martin Gilbert writes,

Jews who lived within [the] borders [of the Ottoman Empire] remained under the ominous shadow of *dhimmi* status. They inherited the fundamental uncertainty of life under Muslim rule: the dual prospects of opportunity and restriction, protection and persecution. ...

On the one hand, Jews in the Ottoman Empire could aspire to high office and reputation. ... On the other hand, Jews in Ottoman lands lived with the constant prospect of discrimination. At any time, entire communities could suffer hardship at the whim of a Muslim ruler or a local official.¹³⁷

Such insecurity was the norm for Jews living throughout the Muslim world. For example, at certain points in the 18th century, favourable conditions emerged for Jews in Libya and Morocco, but these brief periods of respite contrasted with periods of bitter oppression.¹³⁸ An expulsion of Jews from Jeddah took place from 1770 to 1786, and a massacre of Jews took place in the Moroccan city of Tetuan just a few years later in 1790.¹³⁹ In 1813, Jewish community leaders in Hebron were held for ransom and tortured by Arab sheikhs,¹⁴⁰ and, from 1817 until 1831, the governor of Baghdad persecuted the local Jewish community so severely that hundreds of Jewish families fled,¹⁴¹ with an outright massacre occurring in 1828.¹⁴² In 1820, Jews in the Moroccan city of Fez were attacked by Muslims from outside the city who subjected them to robbery, murder, torture, kidnapping, and rape.¹⁴³ Conditions for Jews in the region were so bad that they aroused the concern of Jews and non-Jews alike in Europe, and a report prepared for the British Foreign Secretary by the British Vice-Consul in Jerusalem in 1839 compared the position of a Jew in the city to that of a 'miserable dog without an owner' who 'thinks it better to endure [mistreatment] than to live in expectation of his complaint being revenged upon him'.¹⁴⁴ Gilbert summarises the observations of two European travellers thus:

When the English traveller John Lowthian visited Jerusalem in 1843, Jews made up more than half of the city's population, yet still their situation seemed lamentable. 'What a painful change has passed over the circumstances and condition of the poor Jew,' Lowthian wrote, 'that, in his own city, and close by where his temple stood, he has to suffer oppression and persecution'. Should a Jew have 'a little of this world's good in his possession, he is oppressed and robbed by the Turks in a most unmerciful manner; in short, for him, there is neither law nor justice'. Lowthian's words were reinforced two decades later, when an Italian geographer, Ermete Pierotti, spent a number of months in Jerusalem, where he observed that the local Muslims 'unfortunately hold the opinion that to injure a Jew is a work well pleasing in the sight of God'.¹⁴⁵

135. Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, pp. 106, 148–53; Gilbert, *In Ishmael's House*, pp. 74–75, 82–86.

136. Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, pp. 136–40; Gilbert, *In Ishmael's House*, pp. 75–82.

137. Gilbert, *In Ishmael's House*, pp. 87–88.

138. Gilbert, pp. 95–97.

139. Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, p. 168.

140. Gilbert, *In Ishmael's House*, p. 99.

141. Gilbert, p. 100.

142. Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, p. 168.

143. Gilbert, *In Ishmael's House*, p. 99.

144. Quoted in Gilbert, pp. 106–7.

145. Gilbert, pp. 106–7.

From the mid-19th century until its collapse following the First World War, the modernising Ottoman regime did much to protect Jews against violence and persecution from local Muslims.¹⁴⁶ In 1840, Sultan Abdul Mejid outlawed the blood libel and declared that Jews should possess the same rights as other nations within the Ottoman Empire, and, 16 years later, he went so far as to abolish the repressive institution of *dhimma*.¹⁴⁷ His successor, Sultan Abdul Aziz, decreed in 1875 that cases involving both Muslims and non-Muslims would henceforth be heard in civil rather than Islamic courts, thus for the first time allowing Jews and Christians to give evidence against Muslims, and, in 1876, he established the first Ottoman Parliament, in which the representative for Baghdad happened to be a Jew.¹⁴⁸ Jewish communities thrived under these new freedoms, and were swelled by immigration, with Russian Jews now seeing the Ottoman Empire as a refuge from Tsarist persecution.¹⁴⁹ However, official toleration did not necessarily produce a happy multicultural environment. As late as 1909, the British vice consul in Mosul wrote that '[t]he attitude of the Muslims towards the Christians and Jews ... is that of a master towards slaves whom he treats with a certain lordly tolerance so long as they keep their place', and gave an example of casual and unprovoked violence towards Jews which he had witnessed only a few days previously.¹⁵⁰

For the Jews of Persia (modern-day Iran), conditions were worse. In 1839, there was a massacre and forced conversion of Jews in Meshed,¹⁵¹ and, in 1850, a Romanian-born historian observed that the Jews of Persia were regularly 'pelted ... with stones and dirt', spat upon, and 'beat[en] ... unmercifully', as well as having to operate under severe restrictions when buying and selling goods and being subject to frequent robbery and the constant threat of murder and undeserved punishment.¹⁵² In 1886, a British traveller wrote of a popular form of public entertainment at festivals which consisted of hurling Jews into a water tank and watching them 'crawl out, half-drowned and covered with mud',¹⁵³ and, in 1892, the future Lord Curzon wrote as follows:

In Isfahan, where there are said to be 3,700 [Jews], and where they occupy a relatively better status than elsewhere in Persia, they are [nonetheless] not permitted to wear the *kolah* or Persian head-dress, to have shops in the bazaar, to build the walls of their houses as high as a Muslim neighbour's, or to ride in the streets. ... In Shiraz, they are very badly off. At Bushire, they are prosperous and free from persecution. As soon, however, as any outburst of bigotry takes place ... , the Jews are apt to be the first victims. Every man's hand is then against them, and woe betide the luckless Hebrew who is the first to encounter a Persian street mob.¹⁵⁴

This was the same year in which the religious authorities in Hamadan issued a set of rules for Jews which both revived and added to traditional restrictions for people of *dhimma* — for example, imposing the death penalty on any Jew who appeared in the streets while suspected of drinking spirits — and only repealed this legislation following an international outcry.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, discriminatory treatment of Iranian Jews persisted well into the 20th century. For example, when a Muslim resident of Shiraz was lightly punished for the murder, in 1910, of a Jewish man who had tried to prevent him from beating two elderly Jews with a chain, his supporters protested the three-month sentence that he received with an anti-Jewish riot in which 12 Jews were killed, and at least 5000 were robbed of all their possessions.¹⁵⁶ It was not until the coronation of Reza Shah Pahlavi

146. Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, p. 169.

147. Gilbert, *In Ishmael's House*, pp. 109–10.

148. Gilbert, pp. 110–11.

149. Gilbert, pp. 111–16.

150. Quoted in Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, p. 166.

151. Lewis, p. 168; Gilbert, *In Ishmael's House*, p. 101.

152. Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, pp. 181–83; Gilbert, *In Ishmael's House*, p. 105.

153. Quoted in Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, p. 105.

154. Quoted in Lewis, p. 167.

155. Gilbert, *In Ishmael's House*, pp. 121–23.

156. Gilbert, pp. 129–31.

that Jewish rights were seriously protected in Iran¹⁵⁷ — and even this relative ‘golden age’ suffered a setback when Pahlavi turned towards Hitler.¹⁵⁸

3.4.2 Arab nationalism and the remaking of Muslim antisemitism

With the end of the First World War came the dismantling of the empires whose rulers had taken the losing side. Among these was the Ottoman Empire. One of several territorial units created from its former lands was Mandatory Palestine, which was administered by Britain from 1920 onwards, with borders roughly corresponding to those of the modern State of Israel. This was an era in which multiple movements for national self-determination were asserting themselves against the crumbling forces of imperialism — in Europe, for example, the wholesale or partial dismantling of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires led to the founding of such nations as Czechoslovakia and Estonia and the re-establishment of such nations as Poland and Lithuania, while in Asia, many Jews saw in the fall of the Ottomans an opportunity to free themselves from domination by Muslims and Christians alike. This was not in itself remarkable: not only Israel, but also the neighbouring states of Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon all owe their existence to national liberation movements emerging in the latter days of the Ottoman Empire, and all went through intervening periods of administration by the British and/or French authorities.

Zionism — the movement for the establishment (and now the maintenance) of a Jewish national homeland on the site of the ancient Jewish kingdoms of Israel and Judah, to which the Romans gave the name of Palestine — was founded by Theodor Herzl in 1897, and is for that reason often thought of as a European project. However, there had been a continuing Jewish presence in Palestine from Biblical times, and Jews throughout the Muslim world had always maintained strong ties to Palestine, with documented migrations there from such places as Yemen, Bukhara, Iran, and modern-day Iraq at various points in the 19th century.¹⁵⁹ Thus it should be no surprise that the Zionist movement had a foothold in the Muslim world from the very beginning, with two Algerian Jews being present at the first Zionist Congress, and with Zionist groups and associations soon forming across North Africa and the Arab lands.¹⁶⁰ In the years before and after the First World War, many Jews fled to Palestine in order to escape persecution and forced conversion by Muslims elsewhere.¹⁶¹ However, Muslims remained politically dominant in Mandatory Palestine, just as they had been under the Ottomans, even though they had long been recognised to constitute a minority in the capital, Jerusalem.

The key figure in the translation of conspiratorial and genocidal antisemitism from a European to an Islamic idiom is Muhammad Amin al-Husseini, who served as Mufti — or chief Islamic jurist — of Jerusalem from 1921. Husseini was not, strictly speaking, an Islamist, but a politician whose authority was in large part religious, and who employed religious arguments in the service of an essentially nationalist agenda. His primary political goals were local, being initially limited to the project of ending Jewish immigration and thwarting the existing Mandatory Palestinian Jewish community’s ambitions towards national self-determination: a project in which he had a strong self-interest, given the position of power which he held with regard to the local Muslim population, both as a religious authority and as the head of the most powerful Arab clan in Jerusalem. Although by no means a scholar, al-Husseini can be understood in relation to an intellectual tradition of exclusionary nationalism influenced by Islamic revivalism, which emerged in opposition first to the conditions prevailing within the modernising Ottoman Empire and subsequently to the British and French authorities which took control of much of the latter’s territory following its breakup. As Colin Shindler writes, ‘Zionism was seen by Arab nationalists as ... [a] challenge both [to] authority and tradition in the Arab world’, as ‘[t]he Zionist did not fit the *dhimmi* image of the Jew who had to be kept in an inferior position’.¹⁶²

157. Gilbert, pp. 149–50.

158. Gilbert, p. 186.

159. Gilbert, pp. 119–21.

160. Gilbert, pp. 135–39.

161. Gilbert, pp. 131, 147, 157–58.

162. Colin Shindler, *Israel and the European Left: Between Solidarity and Delegitimization*, (New York / London: Continuum, 2012), p. 55, see Section 3.4.1 of the current document on the institution of *dhimma*.

Al-Husseini appears to have begun drawing on the *Protocols* for purposes of anti-Jewish agitation in the 1920s,¹⁶³ and was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment for his alleged role in the anti-Jewish pogrom which took place near Jerusalem in April 1920, claiming the lives of five Jews and causing injury to over 200, although he was pardoned by the British authorities.¹⁶⁴ He is also often blamed for the pogrom of August 1929, which killed 133 Jews and injured many more,¹⁶⁵ as it appears to have been triggered by his inflammatory claim that Jews intended to destroy the al-Aqsa Mosque,¹⁶⁶ although some historians emphasise that he played no role in organising the violence.¹⁶⁷ While al-Husseini's demonstrations and political campaigns were supported by the pro-Kremlin Palestine Communist Party during the early Stalin era, al-Husseini showed no interest in working together with the latter, which turned against him following the bloodshed of the 1929 pogrom before backtracking and blaming Zionists for the death of Jews.¹⁶⁸ There is evidence that al-Husseini was initially supportive of the British authorities, as his wealthy and influential family had previously been of the Ottomans, and that he turned to militancy only once the general population had already begun moving in that direction under the influence of more radical figures such as 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam:¹⁶⁹ the Islamic revivalist leader after whom the armed wing of Hamas is named (see Section 3.4.6).

In the 1930s, al-Husseini cultivated a relationship with Nazi officials, who promoted what they called 'the effort by the Arabs to use terrorism to intimidate the Jews and at the same time put pressure on the English [sic]¹⁷⁰ by furnishing him both with funds and with explosive devices for use in the riots of the so-called 'Arab uprising' of 1936-1939, in which he appears to have played a leading role. A total of 80 Jews were killed, and a vast acreage of Jewish agricultural land was burned.¹⁷¹ In the course of the uprising, al-Husseini attempted to consolidate his power by 'assassinat[ing] and terroris[ing] his political opponents, [which] included any Palestinian Arabs not categorically rejecting cooperation with the Jews'.¹⁷² The rioters were primarily concerned to prevent the arrival of further Jews, which had greatly accelerated since Hitler's ascension to power in Germany: 134,000 had entered Mandatory Palestine in the three years since 1933, in contrast to the mere 20,000 who had made their way to the territory in the nine years from 1922 to 1931.¹⁷³ Despite this rise in Jewish immigration, more Arabs than Jews immigrated to Palestine from 1922 to 1939, and so Winston Churchill was probably correct in arguing that Arab anxieties on the issue were being 'inflamed by Nazi and Fascist propaganda'.¹⁷⁴ Nonetheless, the British parliament chose to appease Arab opinion by voting to prevent further Jewish refugees from seeking safety in the Mandate.

The 1937 pamphlet, *Judaism and Islam*, which was either authored or endorsed by al-Husseini, was written in order to undermine the British authorities' first attempts at a two-state solution and was circulated at the first ever Pan-Arab conference, organised by al-Husseini in the Syrian village of Bloudan, where the assembled dignitaries elected him president of the new organisation.¹⁷⁵ This can be regarded as an early example of the way in which al-Husseini employed religious and antisemitic arguments in order to enhance his standing in the world beyond the boundaries of his family's traditional sphere of influence. However, the pamphlet would have far greater influence than al-Husseini is likely to have realised at the time, as it was

163. Joseph S. Spoerl, 'Parallels Between Nazi and Islamist Anti-Semitism', *Jewish Political Studies Review* 31, no. 1/2, (2020), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26870795>, p. 212.

164. Karsh, 'The Long Trail of Palestinian Antisemitism', p. 123.

165. Karsh, p. 123.

166. Gilbert, *In Ishmael's House*, p. 159.

167. Philip Mattar, 'The Mufti of Jerusalem and the Politics of Palestine', *Middle East Journal* 42, no. 2, (1988), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4327735>, p. 231.

168. Shindler, *Israel and the European Left*, pp. 57, 61-62.

169. Mattar, 'The Mufti of Jerusalem and the Politics of Palestine', p. 235.

170. Quoted in Kuntzel, *Nazis, Islamic Antisemitism, and the Middle East*, 2024 [2019], p. 33; see also Spoerl, 'Islamic Antisemitism in the Arab-Israeli Conflict', p. 597.

171. Gilbert, *In Ishmael's House*, p. 172.

172. Spoerl, 'Islamic Antisemitism in the Arab-Israeli Conflict', p. 597.

173. Gilbert, *In Ishmael's House*, pp. 172, 175.

174. Gilbert, pp. 174-75.

175. Kuntzel, *Nazis, Islamic Antisemitism, and the Middle East*, 2024 [2019], pp. 36-37; Jeffrey Herf, 'Haj Amin Al-Husseini, the Nazis and the Holocaust: The Origins, Nature and Aftereffects of Collaboration', *Jewish Political Studies Review*, 2014, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43922000>, p. 15; Gilbert, *In Ishmael's House*, p. 173.

subsequently given wide distribution by the Nazis, who regarded antizionist propaganda as an expedient way of turning the Arab peoples against the United States,¹⁷⁶ and who had come to realise that an overtly Islamic form of antisemitism would be better received in the Arab world than the racial form of antisemitism which they employed in propaganda at home.¹⁷⁷ The pamphlet ends as follows:

To my Muslim brothers of the whole world, I present the history and true experience that Jews cannot deny. The verses from the Quran and the hadiths prove to you that the Jews have been the most bitter foes of Islam and are still trying to destroy it. Do not believe them, they know only hypocrisy and guile.

Keep together, fight for the Islamic idea, fight for your religion and existence! Do not rest until your land is free from the Jews!

Do not tolerate the partition plan, for Palestine has been for centuries an Arab country and must remain so.¹⁷⁸

The careful reader may wish to note how closely the above prefigures later Islamist arguments in its portrayal of Jews, its advocacy of violence against them, its justification of such violence as defensive, and its refusal of compromise, including and especially a two-state solution which would give Jews sovereignty in any part of the territory then known as Mandatory Palestine (see Sections 3.4.4 and 3.4.6).

Having evaded arrest by the British authorities, al-Husseini fled to Iraq in 1939, where he raised funds (including through extortion from Jews) to support the uprising in Mandatory Palestine and campaigned on behalf of the Nazis, whose growing influence led to the shutting down of Baghdad's three Jewish newspapers and the imposition of educational restrictions on Jews.¹⁷⁹ Al-Husseini was a leading supporter of the coup by the Nazi-sympathising Rashid Ali al-Gaylani, and the two men fled together to Iran when British forces reached Baghdad,¹⁸⁰ leaving their supporters to carry out a pogrom which saw hundreds of Jewish women and girls raped and claimed the lives of 187 identifiable Iraqi Jews, as well as those of around 600 more who were buried in mass graves — although the systematic slaughter of Baghdadi Jews planned by Ali's successor was averted by the city's Muslim mayor after a plea from the Chief Rabbi.¹⁸¹

When al-Husseini arrived in Iran, it was still ruled by the pro-Nazi Reza Shah (see Section 3.4.1). After the latter was ousted by British and Soviet forces, al-Husseini made the journey first to Fascist Italy and then to Nazi Germany, spending the rest of the war in Axis-controlled Europe. Among Nazi collaborators, al-Husseini appears to have been unusual in the apparently unconditional nature of his collaboration.¹⁸² Historical evidence suggests that he had knowledge of the Final Solution from 1942 onwards and approved Hitler's plan to expand it to Africa and the Middle East, although (contrary to claims made in some quarters) he had no decision-making role in the Nazi turn towards genocide.¹⁸³ Al-Husseini made major contributions to Nazi propaganda efforts in the Middle East, assisted with the recruitment of Bosnian Muslims to the Waffen-SS, and acted to block the escape of tens of thousands of Jews from death at the hands of the Nazis.¹⁸⁴ He also played a

176. Jeffrey Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World*, (New Haven / London: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 160.

177. Küntzel, *Nazis, Islamic Antisemitism, and the Middle East*, 2024 [2019], pp. 37–38.

178. Translation published in Küntzel, p. 136.

179. Gilbert, *In Ishmael's House*, pp. 176–77.

180. Gilbert, pp. 187–88.

181. Gilbert, pp. 189–93; Küntzel, *Nazis, Islamic Antisemitism, and the Middle East*, 2024 [2019], pp. 53–54.

182. Johannes Houwink ten Cate, 'Collaboration with the Third Reich: The Wider Historical Debate and the Role of Haj Amin Al-Husseini, Mufti of Jerusalem', *Jewish Political Studies Review* 26, no. 3/4, (2014), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43922004>, pp. 91–113.

183. Spoerl, 'Islamic Antisemitism in the Arab-Israeli Conflict', p. 599; Herf, 'Haj Amin Al-Husseini, the Nazis and the Holocaust'; Michael A. Sells, 'HOLOCAUST ABUSE: The Case of Hajj Muhammad Amin Al-Husayni', *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 43, no. 4, (2015), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24586167>, pp. 723–59.

184. Matthias Küntzel, *Jihad and Jew-Hatred: Islamism, Nazism, and the Roots of 9/11*, trans. Colin Meads, (New York: Telos Press, 2007 [2002]), p. 36; Küntzel, *Nazis, Islamic Antisemitism, and the Middle East*, 2024 [2019], p. 69.

key role in the planning of a failed German special forces mission to kill Mandatory Palestinian Jews in 1944, one of the participants in which later told his interrogators of al-Husseini's aim 'to organise an anti-Jewish movement in all the Arabic world'.¹⁸⁵ In an article primarily written *against* exaggeration of al-Husseini's role in the Holocaust, Michael Sells argues as follows:

The most incriminating document regarding Husseini's role in World War II may be one written by [al-Husseini] himself: his *Memoirs (Mudhakkirat)* ...

...

... [The text of al-Husseini's] *Memoirs* demonstrates with verifiable detail that, at least from the time he settled in Berlin, [al-Husseini] admired Himmler in particular and Nazism in general, shared or came to share Himmler's hatred and fear of Jews, and did everything in his power to promote the Axis cause among Arabs and Muslims.¹⁸⁶

Although he appears to have been the origin of the (frequently repeated) claim that a Jewish state would threaten the Al-Aqsa Mosque,¹⁸⁷ al-Husseini's principal ideological innovation was the myth of an ancient and irreconcilable religious war between Muslims and Jews, in which the Second World War was only the latest stage.¹⁸⁸ He argued that Germans and Muslims had a shared interest in their 'common battle against the Jewish danger', to which he commended the Germans for having 'decided to find a definitive solution',¹⁸⁹ i.e. genocide, and he exaggerated the importance of Arab-Jewish territorial disputes in Mandatory Palestine by identifying his personal political goal of establishing authority over the entire area with the spiritual needs of the worldwide Muslim community:¹⁹⁰ a rhetorical step which perfectly suited the Nazis, who saw the export of al-Husseini's vendetta against the Jews of Palestine and the Arabs who desired peace with them as an effective means of promoting antisemitism elsewhere in the Arab world (see Section 3.4.3).

Even as the Nazis were engaged in the genocide of European Jewry, Nazi propaganda broadcasts to the Arab world propagated the fiction that the Jews were preparing a genocide of Palestinian Arabs:¹⁹¹ an absurd lie whose echo has from that time onwards never ceased to resonate. At the same time, systematic (and probably Nazi-inspired) persecution of Jews across much of the Muslim world motivated increased efforts by the Jews of the region to immigrate to Palestine, despite the difficulties of doing so under wartime conditions.¹⁹² Once it was clear that the Axis powers were losing the battle for Africa, Nazi propaganda for the region picked up on these themes by focusing on the dire consequences which would supposedly follow victory for 'the British, the Jews, and their Allies', and warning Arabs to prepare for future war against these 'imperialists',¹⁹³ insisting that 'there is no room on earth for both Arabs and the Jews',¹⁹⁴ and that 'the world will never be at peace until the Jewish race is exterminated'.¹⁹⁵ Thus, the Nazis appear to have anticipated the establishment of a Jewish state in Mandatory Palestine and to have taken pre-emptive steps to oppose it by encouraging Pal-

185. Quoted in Marc Goldberg, 'Operation Atlas Casts Light on Nazi Attempts to Squelch the Jewish State: The Untold Story of How a Team of Nazi Commandos Teamed up with Palestinian Arab Leader Haj Amin Al-Husseini to Kill Jews', *Tablet Magazine*, 15 April 2021, <https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/history/articles/nazi-paratroopers>, n.p.

186. Sells, 'HOLOCAUST ABUSE', pp. 725–26.

187. Herf, 'Haj Amin Al-Husseini, the Nazis and the Holocaust', p. 30.

188. Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World*, pp. 170–71.

189. Quoted in Herf, p. 187.

190. Herf, p. 214.

191. Herf, pp. 216–17.

192. Gilbert, *In Ishmael's House*, pp. 199–200.

193. Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World*, p. 172.

194. Herf, p. 173.

195. Herf, p. 184.

estinian Arabs to continue the military struggle of the Axis powers in taking up arms against the Jews.¹⁹⁶ This legacy-building approach naturally suited al-Husseini, who issued the following exhortation on 1 March 1944:

*Arabs! Rise as one and fight for your sacred rights. Kill the Jews wherever you find them. This pleases God, history and religion. This serves your honour. God is with you.*¹⁹⁷

Following the end of the war, al-Husseini was again able to escape justice, and settled in Egypt. His followers in Mandatory Palestine killed prominent Arabs who sought compromise with the Jewish community (including al-Husseini's own cousin, Fawzi Darwish al-Husseini), and threatened to kill anyone who cooperated with the fact-finding mission sent by the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine.¹⁹⁸ A prominent Libyan newspaper reported that a meeting of Muslim leaders had responded to the idea of a partition of Palestine by expressing support for 'any action aimed at eliminating the Jews from Arab countries',¹⁹⁹ and the United Nations representatives of Egypt and of the Palestinian Arab Higher Committee predicted or threatened that the imposition of a two-state solution would trigger mob violence throughout the Muslim world which might lead to what one representative referred to as 'the massacre of the large number of Jews' currently living there.²⁰⁰ Nonetheless, the United Nations voted by a two-thirds majority in support of a resolution which would have partitioned Mandatory Palestine into roughly equal-sized Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem under international control.²⁰¹ Jews in Mandatory Palestine supported the plan. However, Arab irregular forces — in particular, the Jihad Army, which was founded by al-Husseini and led in part by another Nazi collaborator, and the Arab Liberation Army, which was founded by the Arab League and led by a former officer of the Wehrmacht — began a civil war in response, with the assistance of members of the Muslim SS Divisions.²⁰² In December 1947, anti-Jewish riots broke out across the Muslim world. In the capital of Bahrain, the synagogue was destroyed, Jewish shops and homes were looted, and many Jews were beaten, with one woman dying from her injuries.²⁰³ Muslims rioted against Jews in two Yemeni cities, in one of which, 82 Jews were killed, the Jewish school was partially demolished, a synagogue was seriously damaged, and the great majority of Jewish-owned shops were destroyed.²⁰⁴ In the same month, anti-Jewish riots broke out in Cairo, and rioters destroyed every synagogue in Aleppo, along with the buildings housing many other Jewish communal institutions, including five schools, the youth club, and the orphanage.²⁰⁵

The British Mandate ended with the Israeli Declaration of Independence in early 1948, to which the Political Committee of the Arab League initially responded by drafting a law declaring all Jewish citizens of Arab League countries to be 'members of the minority Jewish state of Palestine'.²⁰⁶ Following the Declaration, there were further attacks on the Jewish Quarter of Cairo, including a multiple bombing attack that killed 22 Jews,²⁰⁷ and over 600 Egyptian Jews were arrested, their property being confiscated by the state, with others being held in internment camps.²⁰⁸ In Iraq, Zionism was criminalised, 95% of Jews holding official positions were removed from their posts, and over 300 Jews were arrested and given fines or prison sentences for the alleged crime of supporting Israel, with one being both fined and publicly executed for allegedly selling

196. Küntzel, *Nazis, Islamic Antisemitism, and the Middle East*, 2024 [2019], p. 2.

197. Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World*, p. 213, emphasis in original.

198. Küntzel, *Nazis, Islamic Antisemitism, and the Middle East*, 2024 [2019], p. 70.

199. Gilbert, *In Ishmael's House*, p. 201.

200. Gilbert, p. 208.

201. 'Resolution Adopted on the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question: 181 (II). Future Government of Palestine', (1947), <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/038/88/PDF/NR003888.pdf?OpenElement>.

202. Küntzel, *Nazis, Islamic Antisemitism, and the Middle East*, 2024 [2019], pp. 72–74.

203. Gilbert, *In Ishmael's House*, p. 214.

204. Gilbert, pp. 209–11.

205. Gilbert, pp. 211–12.

206. Avi Beker, 'The Forgotten Narrative: Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries', *Jewish Political Studies Review* 17, no. 3/4, (2005), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25834637>, pp. 7–8.

207. Gilbert, *In Ishmael's House*, p. 224.

208. Gilbert, pp. 218–21.

arms to Israel, despite no evidence of the sale being provided.²⁰⁹ 34 Jews were killed in mob violence in two Moroccan towns, where Jewish shops and homes were also looted and destroyed.²¹⁰ In Libya, 18 Jews were murdered even before the outbreak of riots which killed a further 14 and made over 1600 homeless, with 300 families losing all their possessions.²¹¹ In Yemen, ancient laws of *dhimma* were revived that forbade Jews from practising certain ordinary professions and even from wearing shoes, and subjected Jewish orphans to forced conversion to Islam.²¹²

The conflict already being fought in Israel by irregular forces was then escalated through simultaneous land invasion of the newly-founded country by Arab troops from Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, and Iraq. The consequences which might have followed had the Arab forces prevailed can only be imagined, given the war aim of preventing the establishment of a Jewish state on any part of Mandatory Palestine, as well as the leading role played in the conflict by individuals on the Palestinian side who had supported the Nazi Holocaust of the Jews. However, those forces were defeated and for the most part repulsed, with Egypt and Jordan each annexing a portion of the territory that had comprised Mandatory Palestine. Once the war was over, the persecution of Jews outside Israel intensified: in Iraq, for example, Jews suspected of Zionism were tortured with hot irons and boiling water, some being mutilated beyond recognition.²¹³

The war established the 1948 borders of Israel and led to the displacement of between 850,000 and 900,000 Jews from other Middle Eastern countries, about 580,000 of whom settled in Israel alongside an estimated 100,000 Holocaust survivors from Europe. It also led to the displacement of about 726,000 Arabs from Palestine, most of whom arrived in Mandatory Palestinian territories annexed by Israel's neighbours or in the neighbouring countries themselves,²¹⁴ where they and their descendants have since been held in permanent refugee camps as a growing population of stateless persons or 'temporary citizens'.²¹⁵ This was the event which Islamist and pro-Palestinian accounts customarily decontextualise as *al-Nakba* ('the catastrophe'): a term which serves both to obfuscate Palestinian agency and to set the occurrence apart from other traumatic population exchanges which also took place in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War (in particular, the much larger displacements in Central and Eastern Europe and on the Indian subcontinent). Arbitrarily dating the conflict back only as far as this, focusing only on Arab and not on Jewish refugees, and neglecting even the most basic elements of context (in particular, the Arab invasion, the guerrilla war which led up to it, the Arab rejection of the United Nations resolution which would have partitioned Mandatory Palestine between Arabs and Jews, and the decades of conflict and persecution to which that resolution was intended to bring an end), creates the false impression that the displacement of Palestinian Arabs was an Israeli caprice, and that everything done since that time by various elements of the anti-Israeli coalition has been no more than a reaction to that initial arbitrary act: a narrative well-suited to Islamist extremists and their fellow travellers. For example, a guide released by Muslim Engagement and Development (MEND) and purporting to provide its readers with 'facts and counter-narratives necessary to pushing back against ... disinformation'²¹⁶ asserts that 'the October 7 attack did not occur against a blank canvas', as 'the conflict began over 70 years ago ... [i]n 1948, with the expulsion of the majority of historic Palestine's Arab inhabitants'.²¹⁷ (Although highly successful in its cultivation of civil society support in the UK, MEND is essentially

209. Gilbert, pp. 221–22.

210. Gilbert, p. 223.

211. Gilbert, p. 224.

212. Gilbert, p. 231.

213. Gilbert, pp. 238–39.

214. Beker, 'The Forgotten Narrative'; Gilbert, *In Ishmael's House*, pp. 235–36.

215. Jalal Al Hussein and Riccardo Bocco, 'The Status of the Palestinian Refugees in the Near East: The Right of Return and UNWRA in Perspective', *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 28, no. 2/3, (2009), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45054394>, pp. 262–66.

216. MEND, *Israel–Palestine: Separating Reality from Myth*, (Muslim Engagement; Development, 2023), <https://www.mend.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/MythBusting-Israel-Palestine.pdf>, p. 2.

217. MEND, p. 3.

an Islamist advocacy organisation).²¹⁸ The news channel Al-Jazeera, a Qatari instrument of soft power, has gone even further in using the term *nakba* to refer to the entire period of the Mandate, characterising the latter in terms of ‘violence meted out against the Palestinian Arab population’ and making no mention of Arab violence against Jews, nor indeed of anything that might suggest an element of Arab agency.²¹⁹ Today, support for diplomatic recognition of Israel runs at between 0–20% in Arab nations, with nearly half of those opposed citing reasons such as the ‘coloni[sation]’ of Palestine and the ‘dispossession’ of Palestinians.²²⁰ This is in marked contrast with the situation following many other population exchanges, such as that which took place between India and Pakistan following their partition in 1947: despite the immense scale of the latter exchange, the staggering loss of life which attended it, and the continuing dispute between the two countries over the Muslim-majority territory of Kashmir, there are no demands for a Muslim ‘right of return’ to India, and diplomatic recognition of India by Muslim nations does not even arise as a question.

A number of observations follow from the above. Firstly, the idea of a Jewish genocide of Palestinian Arabs predates the foundation of the State of Israel, and has its origins in Nazi propaganda. Secondly, the idea that Arab-Jewish territorial disputes are a matter of overwhelming significance for Muslims everywhere was conceived by a Nazi collaborator in order to garner support for his own political ambitions. Thirdly, the idea of an ancient religious conflict between Muslims and Jews, resolvable only through extermination of one group by the other, was first set out in a document written or endorsed by the same collaborator and served as a central plank of Nazi propaganda for Muslim audiences, effectively providing a means of translating European conspiracy fantasies about Jews into an Islamic idiom. Fourthly, the first Arab-Israeli war was effectively a continuation of the Second World War, temporarily held in abeyance by the presence of occupying British forces, and was at least partly motivated by the success of the aforementioned propaganda in mobilising both military and political action in the Muslim world. Finally, ignorance of the events leading up to the foundation of the State of Israel and the establishment of its 1948 borders supports a decontextualised understanding of Israeli-Arab and Jewish-Muslim relations which is favourable to Islamists.

3.4.3 Antisemitism and the Muslim Brotherhood

The first Islamist organisation was the Muslim Brotherhood, which was founded in Egypt by Hassan al-Banna in 1928. Under King Fuad, who ruled from 1917 to 1936, Jews were officially accepted, even being appointed to important political positions, and there was both sympathy for the Zionist movement and hostility to Nazism.²²¹ The Nazi regime sought to change this: overtly through a threatened boycott of Egyptian cotton by German textile manufacturers,²²² but also by seeking ideological influence through the promotion of anti-semitism. When the Nazis’ initial attempts at racial propaganda failed, their representatives in Cairo explicitly recommended that ‘[t]he conflict between Arabs and Jews [in Palestine] ... be transplanted to Egypt’.²²³ Here, al-Banna and the Muslim Brotherhood played a key role.

Al-Banna’s ideology was founded on that of Rashid Rida:²²⁴ not only an inspiration to Arab nationalists (see Section 3.4.2), but also a proponent of Salafism, i.e. the view that the society founded by Muhammad and his companions was perfect, but only endured in its pure state throughout the lifetime of the first three generations of Muslims, and was now in need of restoration. The core principles of Salafism are as follows:

218. See Usama Hasan, David Toube, and Muna Khan, *Mainstreaming Islamism: Islamist Institutions and Civil Society Organisations*, (London: Commission for Countering Extremism, 2019), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mainstreaming-islamism-islamist-institutions-and-civil-society-organisations>, pp. 21–30.

219. Ramzy Baroud, ‘How Israel’s Violent Birth Destroyed Palestine: Nearly 70 Years After the Founding of Israel, the Past Is Still Looming Large’, 1 May 2017, www.aljazeera.com/amp/features/2017/5/1/how-israels-violent-birth-destroyed-palestine, n.p., see Section 3.4.6 on the relationship of Al-Jazeera and the Qatari regime to Hamas.

220. Arab Center, ‘Arab Opinion Index 2022: Executive Summary’, 19 January 2023, <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/arab-opinion-index-2022-executive-summary/>, figures figs 27, 28.

221. Küntzel, *Jihad and Jew-Hatred*, 2007 [2002], pp. 16–19.

222. Küntzel, p. 19.

223. Quoted in Küntzel, p. 20.

224. Küntzel, p. 9.

In regard to the strict literal interpretation of the Quran and Sunnah, Salafists do not accept innovations ... in Islam such as worshipping Allah in ways not mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah or celebrating events that were not celebrated during the time of Muhammad and the *Salafus-Saalih*, the 'pious ancestors' who adhered to pure Islam from the period of 610–855 CE until the death of Islamic scholar, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, the father of the Hanbali school of *fiqh*. In accordance with this concept, Salafists reject human reasoning ... to interpret the Quran and Sunnah or accepting Islamic schools of interpretation ... from Islamic scholars which do not adhere to the literal interpretation practiced by the *Salafus-Saalih*. Salafists only accept the Hanbali school of *fiqh* [i.e. jurisprudence] which advocates the strict literal interpretation of the Quran and Sunnah, professed by Islamic scholars such as Taqi ad-Din Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, and Abdul Aziz bin Abdullah bin Baz.²²⁵

One of the key ideas in Islamist ideology is that of the Caliphate: the political entity ruled over by an individual positioned as the successor to Mohammad and theoretically holding both spiritual and temporal authority over the entire Muslim world. The last institution widely accepted as a caliphate was the Ottoman Empire,²²⁶ although Islamists and their precursors took the view that it had substantially decayed by the late 19th century due to modernising reforms (this study has already noted the abolition of *dhimma*; see Section 3.4.1). The Ottoman Empire was dismantled and the Caliphate formally abolished in the aftermath of the First World War, and the Muslim Brotherhood was from the outset committed to the long-term goal of re-establishing the Caliphate by implementing Sharia law in every Muslim-majority state.²²⁷ Today, the re-establishment of the Caliphate, or some equivalent, remains one of the core goals of all Islamist movements:²²⁸ while some branches of the Muslim Brotherhood no longer advocate for the re-establishment of the Caliphate, instead advocating for the establishment of a modern political union possessing what are argued to be the essential characteristics of a caliphate,²²⁹ the Brotherhood is still widely seen in the Middle East as devoted to 'the establishment of a transnational Islamic state, through incremental but ultimately revolutionary political activism, using tactical violence if necessary'^{230 / 231}

The combination of this goal with the idea of a return to the glories of early Islam raises clear parallels with the contemporaneous rise of the European extreme right, with its dreams of restored transnational might after recent wartime humiliations on the basis of a mythic golden age of the distant past.²³² Although the ideology which inspired al-Banna is one of religious rather than racial supremacy, he appears to have modelled the Muslim Brotherhood on the German Nazi and Italian Fascist Parties, even creating sub-organisations equivalent to the Brown Shirts and Black Shirts.²³³ Indeed, the movement which al-Banna built had in its early days much in common with the forms of right-wing extremism that were gaining strength in Europe. The Austro-German Nazis and Italian Fascists sought the establishment of empires built on the principle of Aryan supremacy; the Muslim Brotherhood sought the establishment of an empire built on the principle of Muslim supremacy. And, like the Nazi Party, the Muslim Brotherhood was antizionist from the beginning,

225. Muhammad Haniff Hassan, 'The Danger of Takfir (Excommunication): Exposing IS's Takfiri Ideology', *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 9, no. 4, (2017), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26351508>, p. 6.

226. Vernie Liebl, 'The Caliphate', *Middle Eastern Studies* 45, no. 3, (2009), <https://doi.org/10.1080/00263200902853355>, p. 383.

227. Mohamed Sayed, 'The Muslim Brotherhood: From the Caliphate to the Modern Civic State', *Muslim Politics Review*, no. 2, (2022), <https://journal.uu.ac.id/index.php/mpr/article/view/63/103>, pp. 245–46.

228. Hasan, Toubé, and Khan, *Mainstreaming Islamism*, p. 4.

229. Sayed, 'The Muslim Brotherhood', pp. 255–56.

230. John Jenkins, 'Something in Disguise: The Case of Qatar', in *Qatar: Friend or Frenemy?*, (London: Policy Exchange, 2022), <https://policyexchange.org.uk/publication/qatar-friend-or-frenemy/>, p. 18.

231. For Shii Islamists, the equivalent of the Caliphate is the Imamate, see Hasan, Toubé, and Khan, *Mainstreaming Islamism*, p. 4.

232. Jan Nelis, 'Constructing Fascist Identity: Benito Mussolini and the Myth of 'Romanità'', *The Classical World* 100, no. 4, (2007), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25434050>, pp. 391–415.

233. Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World*, p. 225.

with the topic of the first debate that it organised in 1928 — two decades before the establishment of the State of Israel — being '[t]he subject of Palestine and the necessity of jihad'.²³⁴

Through the German Embassy in Cairo, the Nazi regime supported the Muslim Brotherhood's propaganda campaigns for as long as possible, with this support apparently being coordinated by al-Husseini's Cairo associates, and with meetings between German officials and al-Banna being held to discuss the issue of Palestine.²³⁵ In 1938, the Muslim Brotherhood called for a boycott of non-Muslim products and 'jihad in defence of the Al-Aqsa mosque', and in 1939, bombing attacks were attempted upon Jewish homes and a synagogue in Cairo.²³⁶ Six months after the Second World War had ended, al-Banna led a demonstration which culminated in a pogrom in Cairo's Jewish Quarter,²³⁷ and it has been observed that the Muslim Brotherhood's political programme in the immediate post-war period was closely based on that which had been followed by the Nazi Party, especially with respect to economic and cultural policy.²³⁸

The Muslim Brotherhood thus had both similarities and ties to the Nazi movement. Moreover, it responded to criticism of al-Husseini's collaboration with the Nazis in 1946 by arguing that, in working with them, he had been 'perform[ing] jihad',²³⁹ and al-Banna used the occasion of al-Husseini's arrival in Cairo to issue the following eulogy:

The Mufti is worth the people of a whole nation put together. The Mufti is Palestine and Palestine is the Mufti. Oh Amin! What a great, stubborn, terrific, wonderful man you are! All these years of exile did not affect your fighting spirit.

Hitler's and Mussolini's defeat did not frighten you. Your hair did not turn grey of fright and you are still full of life and fight.

... Yes, this hero who challenged an empire and fought Zionism, with the help of Hitler and Germany. Germany and Hitler are gone, but Amin al-Husseini will continue the struggle.

... The armies of colonisation occupied Germany and hoped to catch Amin, but he was too clever for them. He managed to escape to France and now he returns to his people to resume the struggle against the criminal British and against Zionism.²⁴⁰

In the above, al-Husseini receives unambiguous praise for collaborating with the Nazis, and his cause (and, by extension, that of the Muslim Brotherhood) is identified with that of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini. All three are presented as fighting against *Zionism* — which is to say that al-Husseini's activities and those of his European partners are presented as two workstreams in a single project, one of which had — to al-Banna's regret — been abandoned, but the other of which would continue with his evident blessing. All three are, moreover, presented as fighting against colonialism — but, here, the phrase 'the armies of colonisation' evidently means no more nor less than 'the Allied Powers' — which implies that, for al-Banna, anti-colonialism simply meant membership of the Axis.

As these observations suggest, antizionism and identification of West European (and perhaps also American) powers as 'imperialist' or 'colonialist' served as an ideological bridge between Nazis, Islamists, and Arab Nationalists, who shared both war goals — including elimination of Jews — and ideological principles — including antisemitism. Indeed, under the leadership of Gamal Abdel Nasser, an Arab Nationalist first supported and then opposed by the Muslim Brotherhood, the Egyptian government would later publish an edition

234. Gilbert, *In Ishmael's House*, p. 157.

235. Küntzel, *Nazis, Islamic Antisemitism, and the Middle East*, 2024 [2019], p. 32.

236. Küntzel, *Jihad and Jew-Hatred*, 2007 [2002], p. 23.

237. Küntzel, *Nazis, Islamic Antisemitism, and the Middle East*, 2024 [2019], p. 81.

238. Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World*, pp. 250–51.

239. Küntzel, *Nazis, Islamic Antisemitism, and the Middle East*, 2024 [2019], p. 84.

240. Quoted in Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World*, p. 244.

of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and hire a leading Nazi-era propagandist to work on its antizionist campaigns.²⁴¹ As for al-Husseini, al-Banna appointed him leader in exile of the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine in 1947.²⁴² Moreover, the Muslim Brotherhood actively promoted anti-Jewish measures: in December 1947, the Brotherhood called for the restoration of long-abolished laws relating to *dhimma*, and it also instigated most of the 1952 mob violence against Egyptian Jews.²⁴³

Although the Muslim Brotherhood has in some cases adopted the most extreme forms of violence — as in the case of its Palestinian offshoot, Hamas (see Section 3.4.6) — it has, for the most part, advocated for the takeover of Muslim-majority countries through *dawa* or missionary outreach. In countries such as the UK, this goal is implicitly replaced with that of achieving a position of ideological and institutional dominance within Muslim minority communities, as well as within local and national government, public bodies, and civil society organisations. It has been argued that '[Muslim] Brotherhood networks have ... shown an enormous ability to monopolise the Islamic discourse' in Britain, to such an extent that their preferred 'concepts and frames have become adopted, almost subconsciously, by a large number of British Muslims who have no affiliation or contact with the Brotherhood'²⁴⁴ — although it should be noted that this appears to have been achieved less through organisational control than through ideological influence on the more numerous British organisations tracing their lineage to the Jamaat-e-Islami,²⁴⁵ which was at one point identified as the third-largest movement in British Islam by number of mosques.²⁴⁶ The extent to which the Muslim Brotherhood's activities may have contributed to the popularisation of antisemitic ideas in the UK is currently impossible to assess, particularly given the difficulty of disentangling its influence from traditional beliefs about Jews which may already have been embedded within particular cultures. For example, one of the very rare studies of antisemitism in South Asia asserts that '[a] degree of antipathy towards Jews has almost always existed among the Muslims of [that] region' and also that 'Muslim institutions of religious learning [in the region] have regularly produced hate literature against Jews, and Muslim seminaries worldwide subscribe to the curricula they prescribe'.²⁴⁷

3.4.4 Antisemitism and Salafi-Jihadism

The next stage in the evolution of Islamist extremism and antisemitism in the Muslim world was wrought by the Egyptian intellectual, Sayyid Qutb. From 1949 to 1951, Qutb lived in the United States, in the employ of the Egyptian government; on his return, he joined the Muslim Brotherhood, quickly ascending to its highest levels.²⁴⁸ He was strongly influenced by Abul A'la al-Maududi, the founder of the Brotherhood's sister movement in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, i.e. the Jamaat-e-Islami, from whom he absorbed the idea that secularism, exported by the West through colonialism, was causing moral decline that could only be reversed through Islamic revival.²⁴⁹ Qutb's ideology diverged from al-Banna's in a number of respects, but most importantly in that he sought 'not to modify the existing order to make it "Islamic", but to create a new order that enforces Islam throughout all social, economic, and political domains'.²⁵⁰ After his execution in 1966 by the Egyptian state, Qutb became a martyr figure for the Muslim Brotherhood and for the Islamist movement more generally.

Qutb's writings inspired the development of what is usually termed 'Salafi-Jihadism'. While classical Islamic jurisprudence divided the world into *dar al-Islam*, the abode of Islam, and *dar al-harb*, the abode of

241. Herf, p. 260.

242. Spoerl, 'Islamic Antisemitism in the Arab-Israeli Conflict', p. 601.

243. Gilbert, *In Ishmael's House*, pp. 213, 252.

244. Vidino, *The Muslim Brotherhood in the United Kingdom*, p. 15.

245. Vidino, pp. 12–13.

246. Change Institute, *The Pakistani Muslim Community in England: Understanding Muslim Ethnic Communities*, (London: Ministry of Communities; Local Government, 2009), <https://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1170952.pdf>, p. 39.

247. Navras Jaat Aafreedi, 'Muslim Antisemitism and Anti-Zionism in South Asia: A Case Study of Lucknow', in *Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism*, ed. Alvin H. Rosenfeld, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2019), pp. 454–55.

248. Küntzel, *Jihad and Jew-Hatred*, 2007 [2002], p. 81.

249. Maher, *Salafi-Jihadism*, pp. 177–80.

250. Sayed, 'The Muslim Brotherhood', p. 247.

war,²⁵¹ Qutb took the view that the entire world had been plunged into a state of pre-Islamic *jahiliyya* or ignorance, and thus ‘provided the doctrinal basis for acts of violence, not only against non-Muslims, but also, and perhaps especially, against Muslims’.²⁵² Key to this was his view that anyone responsible for the maintenance of *jahiliyya* — including all current leaders of Muslim countries — should be put to death for apostasy.²⁵³ For Salafi-Jihadists, merely supporting the ruler of a modern nation state is considered a form of apostasy on the grounds that such a state is ‘a heretical and artificial unit’ within which ‘temporal legislation usurps God’s sovereignty’.²⁵⁴

According to Qutb, the task of building a truly Islamic polity fell to a revolutionary vanguard movement, which would also be responsible for executing these death sentences.²⁵⁵ Muslims who do not follow the principles of Salafism (see Section 3.4.3) have been frequent targets of *takfir*, or accusations of apostasy, from Salafi-Jihadists,²⁵⁶ as have Muslims who disagree with such accusations and Muslims who are not members of the accuser’s group.²⁵⁷ For Qutb and those he influenced, violence in the service of Islam is a religious duty: the essential elements of Qutb’s ideology are that human history has been defined by the cosmic struggle between Islam and *jahiliyya*, that the latter is now dominant in that humans have rejected God’s laws, and ‘the means to fight the currently prevailing *jahiliyya* is the *jihad*’, where *jihad* (a word which in other contexts can have several meanings) is explicitly identified with the use of ‘physical force’,²⁵⁸ which is accorded a spiritual function in that, ‘[b]y fighting and destroying the external enemy, the faithful Muslim overcomes his own fear of death and consequently his own inclination towards materialism’.²⁵⁹ In this way, ‘innovating ideologists’ in the tradition begun by Qutb have been able to utilise Islam as what Simon Cottee calls a ‘legitimising resource’ in justifying the employment of lethal violence against people who would otherwise have been regarded as innocent non-combatants.²⁶⁰ The commitment to violence, both as a means to an end and for its own sake, and the use of *takfir* in order to justify violence even against fellow believers, distinguishes Salafi-Jihadist movements from other Islamist movements such as Hizb ut-Tahrir and the Muslim Brotherhood, which are very willing to countenance violence — especially where it is carried out by a government operating in accordance with their interpretation of Islamic law — but do not regard it as a spiritual necessity. Furthermore, Salafi-Jihadists circumvent many Islamic checks on the exercise of violence by arguing that defensive *jihad* ‘requir[es] no central authority’,²⁶¹ and by interpreting the conditions required for violence to qualify as ‘defensive’ very broadly indeed: a point to which we shall return below.

Antisemitism is woven into Qutb’s worldview, according to which, ‘evil was born in ancient Israel’, when ‘God ... made a covenant with the leaders of the 12 tribes, which was broken by the Jews’ when ‘[t]hey refused to follow God’s commandments and were too cowardly to fight the *jihad*’, later ‘crucif[ying] the prophet who had been sent by God to renew the covenant’, i.e. Jesus, such that ‘[i]t was only with the arrival of the prophet Muhammad that the initial covenant was renewed, when he assembled the ideal community’.²⁶² This ideal community is the Caliphate (see Section 3.4.3), in which humans submit to (a particular conception of) God’s

251. So named because of an early imperative to expand the former through conquest, Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, p. 21.

252. Moussa Abou Ramadan, ‘Muslim Jurists’ Criteria for the Division of the World into Dar Al-Harb and Dar Al-Islam’, in *International Law and Religion: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Martti Koskeniemi, Mónica García-Salmones Rovira, and Paolo Amorosa, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 234.

253. Küntzel, *Jihad and Jew-Hatred*, 2007 [2002], p. 83.

254. Maher, *Salafi-Jihadism*, p. 11.

255. Ramadan, ‘Muslim Jurists’ Criteria for the Division of the World into Dar Al-Harb and Dar Al-Islam’, p. 234; Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens, Blyth Crawford, and Valentin Wutke, *Rise of the Reactionaries: The Ideologies of Salafi-Jihadism and White Supremacist Extremism*, (Washington, DC: Program on Extremism, 2021), <https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs5746/files/Rise%20of%20the%20Reactionaries.pdf>, pp. 72–73.

256. Darion Rhodes, ‘Salafist-Takfiri Jihadism: The Ideology of the Caucasus Emirate’, 2014, <http://www.jstor.com/stable/resrep09453>, p. 6.

257. Hassan, ‘The Danger of Takfir (Excommunication)’, p. 4.

258. Hendrik Hansen and Peter Kainz, ‘Radical Islamism and Totalitarian Ideology: A Comparison of Sayyid Qutb’s Islamism with Marxism and National Socialism’, *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 8, no. 1, (2007), <https://doi.org/10.1080/14690760601121648>, p. 58.

259. Hansen and Kainz, p. 61.

260. Simon Cottee, ‘What ISIS Really Wants’ Revisited: Religion Matters in Jihadist Violence, but How?’, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 40, no. 6, (2017), <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2016.1221258>, p. 448.

261. Maher, *Salafi-Jihadism*, p. 40.

262. Hansen and Kainz, ‘Radical Islamism and Totalitarian Ideology’, p. 60.

will, rather than subjecting themselves to the tyranny of rule by other humans. One of Qutb's earliest publications was the antisemitic work, *Our Struggle with the Jews*, which first appeared in 1950. In this book, 'Islamic civilisation is viewed as [a] victim, besieged by an imaginary world Jewry', where 'the "Jew" [is] an "evil-doer" who pulls the strings and is therefore responsible for all the wrongdoings to which Islam has been exposed ... from the birth of the Islamic polity in 622 all the way up to the present'.²⁶³ Although distinguished from historically European variants of antisemitism by the use of Islamic terms, Qutb's conception of Jewry closely matches the conspiratorial and genocidal ideology which developed from the Medieval Christian form of antisemitism in the modern age (see Section 3.3). As Küntzel writes,

Qutb's message is internally consistent: the Jew is the source of evil in the world, the Shoah [was] therefore no crime, and Israel deserves to be erased from the map. ...

In Qutb's fantasyland, not only is everything Jewish evil, but everything evil is Jewish. ...

Muslim leaders who deviate even slightly from the pure teaching of the *sharia* and the Quran are regarded with special loathing. ... [I]n Qutb's view, such creatures can only be one thing: Zionist agents.²⁶⁴

It has been argued that explicitly pro-Nazi voices such as al-Husseini had limited influence and that the virulent antisemitism of Qutb's writings may have had other sources.²⁶⁵ But, while it is true that there is no 'smoking gun' in the form of a definitive acknowledgement on Qutb's part of an intellectual debt to al-Husseini and the other Nazi propagandists, *Our Struggle with the Jews* can be seen as a retelling of the same story which al-Husseini devised for the purpose of mobilising Muslim opinion, firstly in service of his own political ambitions, and secondly in service of the war goals of the Axis. Moreover, the Muslim Brotherhood was (as we have seen from the above) an unashamedly pro-Nazi organisation that had venerated al-Husseini, such that it would seem highly unlikely that a figure as deeply embedded within it as Qutb would have failed to encounter his ideas. And indeed, Qutb wrote favourably of Hitler, arguing that he was sent by Allah to punish the Jews.²⁶⁶

Following Qutb, Salafi-Jihadists understand the entire non-Muslim world, as well as much of the Muslim world, to be engaged in an anti-Islamic conspiracy.²⁶⁷ This has been especially true since the 1990s, when the followers of Abdallah Azzam began to argue that Muslim countries — including those which had never been colonised by the West, such as Saudi Arabia — were subject to a secret and invisible form of colonialism thanks to the control of their rulers by the West, and that '[a]ll of the contemporary problems of the Muslim world, including corruption, nepotism, political instability, and repression, were therefore the products of a Western conspiracy to contain Islam and keep Muslims in check'.²⁶⁸ Under this worldview, attacks on both military and civilian targets in or associated with the West can be justified as 'defensive *jihad*', not only in context of an attack upon the putative defender's community but also in context of an attack upon Muslims anywhere in the world, and *even in the absence of any already-existing military conflict*. Thus, the accusation of conspiracy provides *carte blanche* for violence against the broadly-defined West by redefining all Muslim suffering as the product of overt or covert Western aggression, even where it is inflicted by other Muslims.

The deep and enduring relationship between conspiracy theory and antisemitism in the West, especially but not exclusively among right wing extremists, has been extensively documented in the research litera-

263. Tibi, 'From Sayyid Qutb to Hamas', p. 472.

264. Küntzel, *Jihad and Jew-Hatred*, 2007 [2002], pp. 84–85.

265. Mia Lee, 'Nazis in the Middle East: Assessing Links Between Nazism and Islam', *Contemporary European History* 27, no. 1, (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777316000333>, p. 129.

266. Küntzel, *Jihad and Jew-Hatred*, 2007 [2002], p. 84.

267. Meleagrou-Hitchens, Crawford, and Wutke, *Rise of the Reactionaries*, pp. 37–38.

268. Maher, *Salafi-Jihadism*, p. 42.

ture.²⁶⁹ Thus, it is unsurprising that the conspiratorial outlook adopted by Salafi-Jihadists should have been accompanied by enthusiastic embrace of the core tropes of antisemitism in its original Western form (see Section 3.3). For example, many take the view that — just as the United States purportedly controls Muslim governments — Jews control the United States government, and direct it in its supposed colonial domination of the globe,²⁷⁰ and bin Laden's famous 'letter to America' after the terror attacks of 11 September 2001 — a document which tellingly makes approving reference to a long-debunked text authored by Nazi supporters in the United States and falsely attributed to Benjamin Franklin²⁷¹ — informs Americans that 'the Jews have taken control of your economy, through which they have then taken control of your media, and now control all aspects of your life, making you their servants and achieving their aims at your expense', and provides, as its very first justification for attacks on the United States, the idea that '[t]he creation of Israel is a crime which must be erased' such that '[e]ach and every person whose hands have become polluted in the contribution towards this crime must pay its price, and pay for it heavily'.²⁷² The list of those who bin Laden argues must 'pay' is very extensive indeed, because of the view, by that point widely adopted by Salafi-Jihadists, that the citizenry of a democratic state is culpable in its entirety for the actions of its government.²⁷³ Such an understanding implies that any attack on Israel and its allies — even an attack that intentionally targets civilians — is defensive *jihad*: a specific example of the general pattern of conspiratorial justification described above. Accordingly, bin Laden separately insisted that 'seeking to kill Americans and Jews everywhere in the world is one of the greatest duties' for Muslims and the 'most preferred by Allah'.²⁷⁴

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the Jordanian leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq, diverged from bin Laden in prioritising attacks on enemies closer to home, creating a split within Salafi-Jihadism that contributed to the rise of Islamic State.²⁷⁵ While most Islamists seek to institute Sharia-based government in multiple nation states which would then come together under a single religio-political structure, thus holding out the Caliphate — or an entity understood to be equivalent to the Caliphate — as a long-term ambition, Islamic State adopted a very different methodology in declaring itself to be the Caliphate and aiming to expand its borders through conquest until they encompassed the entire globe.²⁷⁶ Although Islamic State fighters subjected the Yazidi population to genocide and mass rape,²⁷⁷ few if any Jews resided in the territory that they controlled.²⁷⁸ However, the remnants of Islamic State responded to the 7 October 2023 massacre with an article entitled 'Practical Steps for Fighting the Jews', which made the sinister promise that 'the Jews haven't experienced the

269. For classic studies, see Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide*; and Billig, *Fascists*; for historical accounts, see Michael Barkun, *A Culture of Conspiracy: Apocalyptic Visions in Contemporary America*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003); and Jovan Byford, *Conspiracy Theories: A Critical Introduction*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, n.d.); for a brief review of the psychological literature, see Karen M. Douglas et al., 'Understanding Conspiracy Theories', *Advances in Political Psychology* 40, no. sup. 1, (2019), <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12568>, p. 18; for more recent quantitative research, see Daniel Allington and Tanvi Joshi, 'What Others Dare Not Say: An Antisemitic Conspiracy Fantasy and Its YouTube Audience', *Journal of Contemporary Antisemitism* 3, no. 1, (2020), <https://doi.org/10.26613/3.1.42>, pp. 35–53; Daniel Allington, Beatriz L. Buarque, and Daniel Barker Flores, 'Antisemitic Conspiracy Fantasy in the Age of Digital Media: Three "Conspiracy Theorists" and Their YouTube Audiences', *Language and Literature* 30, no. 1, (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963947020971997>, pp. 78–102; Daniel Allington, David Hirsh, and Louise Katz, 'Antisemitism Is Predicted by Anti-Hierarchical Aggression, Totalitarianism, and Belief in Malevolent Global Conspiracies', *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 10, no. 155, (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-01624-y>; Daniel Allington, David Hirsh, and Louise Katz, 'The Relationship Between Antisemitic Attitudes and Conspiracy Beliefs: A Cross-Sectional Study of UK-Resident Adults', *Contemporary Jewry*, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12397-023-09518-6>, Allington, Hirsh, and Katz, 'Correlation Between Coronavirus Conspiracism and Antisemitism'.

270. Küntzel, *Jihad and Jew-Hatred*, 2007 [2002], pp. 129–30.

271. See AJC, *Benjamin Franklin Vindicated: An Exposure of the Franklin 'Prophecy' by American Scholars*, (New York: American Jewish Congress, 1938).

272. Osama bin Laden, 'Full Text: Bin Laden's 'Letter to America': Online Document: The Full Text of Osama Bin Laden's 'Letter to the American People', Reported in Today's Observer. The Letter First Appeared on the Internet in Arabic and Has Since Been Translated and Circulated by Islamists in Britain', *Observer*, 24 November 2002, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/nov/24/theobserver>, n.p.

273. Maher, *Salafi-Jihadism*, pp. 57–58.

274. Quoted in Webman, 'The Challenge of Assessing Arab/Islamic Antisemitism', p. 689.

275. Meleagrou-Hitchens, Crawford, and Wutke, *Rise of the Reactionaries*, p. 64.

276. Ramadan, 'Muslim Jurists' Criteria for the Division of the World into Dar Al-Harb and Dar Al-Islam', p. 235.

277. Liam Duffy, *Western Foreign Fighters and the Yazidi Genocide*, (London: Counter Extremism Project, 2021), <https://www.counterextremism.com/press/cep-launches-report-highlighting-role-western-foreign-fighters-yazidi-genocide>.

278. Meleagrou-Hitchens, Crawford, and Wutke, *Rise of the Reactionaries*, p. 77.

Holocaust yet'.²⁷⁹ Thus, Islamic State's lack of attacks on Jewish targets was strategic rather than ideological: it was only that the opportunity did not arise.

3.4.5 Antisemitism and Shi'i Islamism

The Shi'i form of Islamism is the official ideology of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and was largely shaped by the latter state's first Supreme Leader: the Ayatollah Khomeini. Khomeini held meetings with the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1930s, and admired Sayyed Muhammad Navab-Safavi, leader of the Fida'iyan-i Islam, who met with Qutb and was instrumental in promoting the ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood — in particular, the idea of an Islamic state from which foreign influences had been expelled — in Iran; his successor, the Ayatollah Khamenei, was one of several influential Iranian activists who translated Qutb's works into Farsi.²⁸⁰ Like most aspects of this form of Islamism, the antisemitism of Shi'i Islamists was strongly shaped by Khomeini's personality and beliefs.²⁸¹ In the late 1930s, Khomeini was a keen follower of Nazi propaganda broadcasts,²⁸² and his early writings are replete with references to the supposed Jewish enemy.²⁸³ He also held traditional Iranian prejudices against Jews, and often attacked Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi by falsely identifying him as a Jew.²⁸⁴

In contrast to Khomeini — and indeed to the rulers of most states in the region — Reza Pahlavi (who took the throne in 1941 on the promise to reverse his father's turn towards the Axis)²⁸⁵ did not adopt antizionist policies and imposed no special restrictions on the Jews of Iran, allowing the Jewish community there to flourish and to contribute to the national life and economy until his overthrow in 1978.²⁸⁶ However, *dhimmi* restrictions were restored by the revolutionary Islamic government,²⁸⁷ and antizionism has been described as 'a key ideological building block of the Islamic Republic', with '[t]he antizionist rhetoric of Iranian politicians frequently draw[ing] upon overt antisemitic imagery'.²⁸⁸ In theory, Iranian Jews are protected by Khomeini's declaration that they "have nothing to do with" what he called "[t]he pharaoh-like Zionists who run Israel", and that the regime "recognise[s] [Iran's] Jews as separate from those godless, bloodsucking Zionists";²⁸⁹ but the distinction between Jews and Zionists is not strictly adhered to in regime propaganda, and anti-Jewish statements by leading figures in the regime are common.²⁹⁰ For example, in 2007, Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani — at that time a former President of Iran — stated that the Nazis were justified in trying to rid Europe of the controlling influence of the 'Zionists', while in 2010, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Iran's then president, denied that Jews were human.²⁹¹

In common with other Islamist organisations, the Tehran regime is opposed to a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine, insisting instead that the 'the State of Israel should be dismantled in order to accommodate an (Islamic) Palestinian state in the whole of present-day Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank'.²⁹² It can hardly be imagined that Iranian politicians are unaware of the material consequences which such a development

279. Guy Fiennes, 'Islamist Groups Unite Around Israel Attack, Diverge on Hamas', *Institute for Strategic Dialogue: Digital Dispatches*, 6 November 2023, https://www.isdglobal.org/digital_dispatches/islamist-groups-unite-around-israel-attack-diverge-on-hamas/, n.p.

280. Spoerl, 'Parallels Between Nazi and Islamist Anti-Semitism', p. 221; Yusuf Unal, 'Sayyid Qutb in Iran: Translating the Islamist Ideologue in the Islamic Republic', *Journal of Islamic and Muslim Studies* 1, (2016), <https://doi.org/10.2979/jims.1.2.04>.

281. Tibi, 'From Sayyid Qutb to Hamas', pp. 457, 461.

282. Stephan Grigat, in *Confronting Antisemitism in the Modern Media, the Legal and Political Worlds*, ed. Armin Lange et al., (Berlin / Boston: De Gruyter, 2021), p. 157.

283. Kuntzel, *Nazis, Islamic Antisemitism, and the Middle East*, 2024 [2019], p. 61.

284. Grigat, p. 158.

285. Gilbert, *In Ishmael's House*, p. 186, see Section 3.4.2 of the current document.

286. Gilbert, pp. 229–30, 348.

287. Gilbert, p. 353.

288. Jaspal, 'The Social Psychology of Contemporary Antisemitism', p. 41.

289. Quoted in Jack Staples-Butler, 'Did a Corbyn-Led Government Pose an "Existential Threat to Jewish Life" in the UK? Revolutionary States and the Destruction of Jewish Communities', *Journal of Contemporary Antisemitism* 3, no. 1, (2020), <https://doi.org/10.26613/jca/3.1.47>, p. 114.

290. Grigat, p. 159.

291. Spoerl, 'Parallels Between Nazi and Islamist Anti-Semitism', p. 222.

292. Rusi Jaspal, 'Israel in the Iranian Media: Demonizing the "Zionist Regime"', *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 7, no. 1, (2013), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23739770.2013.11446536>, p. 81.

would entail for Israeli Jews. Indeed, Rafsanjani once delivered a sermon in which he declared that '[t]he Jews should in truth be expecting the day on which this superfluous limb [Israel] will be torn away from the body of the Muslim region and Muslim world, and all the people assembled in Israel will once again be scattered all over the world and become refugees'.²⁹³ Moreover, popular religious discourse in Iran often flirts with genocidal antisemitism: in the last two decades, a number of Shi'i religious authorities have begun to argue that Jews are seeking to prevent the arrival of the Mahdi — the prophesied future leader under whom Shi'i tradition holds that the entire world will be Islamicised — and therefore must be defeated in order to bring about his reign, with some predicting that the Mahdi will annihilate the Jews.²⁹⁴

The fictional nature of the distinction between antizionism and antisemitism in Iranian propaganda becomes particularly apparent when we consider the role of Holocaust denial in the official state ideology. Ahmadinejad, Rafsanjani, and Mohammed Khatami — whose term as president fell between those of the former two — are or (in the case of the late Rafsanjani) were all Holocaust deniers, as is Khamenei,²⁹⁵ who in 2001 claimed that the death toll of the Final Solution had been 'fabricated to solicit the sympathy of world public opinion, lay the ground for the occupation of Palestine, and justify the atrocities of the Zionists'.²⁹⁶ Antisemitism, in the form of Holocaust denial, thus forms a key part of the Tehran regime's antizionism. Like commitment to the destruction of the Jewish state, denial of the Holocaust has enabled the Tehran regime to build bridges across the Shi'i-Sunni divide,²⁹⁷ but it also facilitates the building of bridges with figures isolated within the West by their positive assessment of the Nazi legacy,²⁹⁸ as we see from the fact that the 2006 International Conference to Review the Global Vision of the Holocaust, hosted by Ahmedinejad in Tehran, featured a list of speakers which included such figures as the white supremacist and former Ku Klux Klan leader, David Duke.²⁹⁹ This is achieved through appeal to conspiracy theories which support the manufacture of a shared grievance against Jews. Social psychologist Rusi Jaspal observes that

the Iranian media have given wide coverage to the social ostracising of, and, in some cases, legal action against, European Holocaust deniers, such as Fredrick Toben and Roger Garaudy. More specifically, the media have strategically constructed the actions of these men as seeking to 'prove the falsehood of this historical allegation [the Holocaust] on the basis of reliable evidence'. Moreover, it is implied, and often explicitly argued, that Western condemnation of those who question the reality of the Holocaust demonstrates that the Holocaust must constitute a 'Jewish-Western conspiracy'. Thus, while the Western media condemn these men as racist Holocaust deniers, the Iranian regime habitually re-constructs the legitimacy of Western evaluations, implying that the Western media too are at the mercy of the 'Jewish-Western conspiracy' ...

By emphasising the collective opposition of ... Western institutions to Iranian attempts to 'forward the field of social science' through their 'critical evaluation' of the Holocaust, the Islamist regime is able to encourage feelings of solidarity and mutual acceptance between Western and Iranian 'researchers' of the Holocaust. The crucial point is that [these groups], an 'oppressed' minority, are allegedly silenced by a much more powerful out-group committed to the 'Jewish conspiracy'. ... [T]he fact that Western Holocaust deniers are largely considered to be racist neo-Nazis with little scholarly

293. Quoted in Rusi Jaspal, 'Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism in Iran', *Israel Affairs* 19, no. 2, (2013), <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537121.2013.778085>, p. 243.

294. Meir Litvak, in *Confronting Antisemitism in the Modern Media, the Legal and Political Worlds*, ed. Armin Lange et al., (Berlin / Boston: De Gruyter, 2021), p. 146.

295. Grigat, p. 152.

296. USHMM, *Holocaust Denial and Distortion from Iranian Government and Official Media Sources, 1998–2016*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d.), <https://www.ushmm.org/antisemitism/holocaust-denial-and-distortion/holocaust-denial-antisemitism-iran/2016-holocaust-cartoon-contests-in-iran/timeline>.

297. Jaspal, 'Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism in Iran', p. 239.

298. Jaspal, p. 240.

299. Robert Tait, 'Holocaust Deniers Gather in Iran for 'Scientific' Conference: Visitors Include Ex-KKK Chief and Radical Rabbis; Israel Calls for Action Against 'Sick Phenomenon'', *Guardian*, 12 December 2006, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/dec/12/iran.israel>; Rusi Jaspal, 'Delegitimizing Jews and Israel in Iran's International Holocaust Cartoon Contest', *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 13, no. 2, (2014), <https://doi.org/10.1080/14725886.2014.919804>, p. 170; USHMM, *Holocaust Denial and Distortion from Iranian Government and Official Media Sources, 1998–2016*.

credibility becomes irrelevant in the Iranian context, given [the regime's] strategic rejection of 'Western criteria' in relation to this particular matter.³⁰⁰

Iran's ideological commitment to Holocaust denial attracted worldwide media attention in 2006, when *Ham-shahri* — a newspaper owned by the local government of Tehran — responded to the publication of a series of satirical depictions of Mohammad by the Danish newspaper, *Jyllands-Posten*, by holding the first International Holocaust Cartoon Contest, whose winning entries were exhibited at the Palestine Museum of Contemporary Art in Tehran.³⁰¹ (A second such contest was held in 2016, with selected entries being exhibited by the Islamic Propaganda Organisation in Tehran.)³⁰² The organisers' claim that the purpose of the contest was 'antizionist and not antisemitic'³⁰³ serves as an unintentional *reductio ad absurdum* of attempts to draw a distinction between antisemitism and antizionism in Islamist propaganda: if even Holocaust denial is not antisemitic but antizionist, then *everything* which has hitherto been regarded as antisemitic is now antizionist, and 'antizionism' is simply the form that antisemitism takes in the contemporary world. As one analysis shows, the antisemitism of the exhibited entries was absolutely undisguised:

In many cases, the cartoons connect the symbols and icons of the Nazis to Israel, thereby equating Israel's treatment of Palestinian Muslims to the Nazi's treatment of Jews during World War II. In some cases, they present the Holocaust as a false story created and manipulated by Israelis and Jews to justify the occupation of Palestine. A few cartoons directly address the Jews by depicting common antisemitic stereotypes such as the hook nose and greedy face and using metaphorical images that represent Jews as occupiers and oppressors.³⁰⁴

In practice, conditions in Iran are highly unfavourable for all religious minorities, and have made it impossible for the Jewish community to thrive; its size may have declined by as much as 90% since the Islamic revolution.³⁰⁵ The position of Jews in the country is precarious and perpetually under threat: a hostage community without autonomy, 'acutely aware of the fact that any real or suspected allegiance to the "Zionist entity" is punishable by death'.³⁰⁶ Thanks to the arbitrary nature of state power in Iran, this threat is very real. In 1999, for example, 13 Iranian Jews were arrested on suspicion of spying for Israel and the United States. After more than a year in prison, they were given a closed trial in which the judge also acted as prosecutor; despite the total lack of evidence beside their own 'confessions', 10 were found guilty.³⁰⁷ Moreover, the Tehran regime has long been an important sponsor of terror attacks against Jewish targets outside Israel, and remains a key distributor of antisemitic propaganda through its international English-language broadcasting arm, Press TV.³⁰⁸ Each year, it provides hundreds of millions of dollars in funding to paramilitary proxy forces throughout the Middle East, including the Shi'i militia known as Hezbollah, which is based in and largely controls the state of Lebanon, and the Sunni militia known as Hamas, which is based in and completely controls Gaza (except

300. Jaspal, 'Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism in Iran', p. 240.

301. Jaspal, 'Delegitimizing Jews and Israel in Iran's International Holocaust Cartoon Contest', pp. 169–70; USHMM, *Holocaust Denial: Iran Holocaust Cartoon Exhibition*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d.), <https://www.ushmm.org/antisemitism/holocaust-denial-and-distortion/holocaust-denial-antisemitism-iran/2016-holocaust-cartoon-contests-in-iran>.

302. USHMM, *Holocaust Denial*.

303. Jaspal, 'Delegitimizing Jews and Israel in Iran's International Holocaust Cartoon Contest', p. 184.

304. Mahdijeh Meidani, 'Holocaust Cartoons as Ideographs: Visual and Rhetorical Analysis of Holocaust Cartoons', *SAGE Open*, July 2015, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244015597727>, p. 11.

305. Staples-Butler, 'Did a Corbyn-Led Government Pose an "Existential Threat to Jewish Life" in the UK? Revolutionary States and the Destruction of Jewish Communities', p. 115.

306. Jaspal, 'Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism in Iran', p. 245.

307. Gilbert, *In Ishmael's House*, pp. 349–50.

308. CST, 'Written Evidence from Community Security Trust (IRN0003)', 2014, <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/47713/html/>; Alex Farber, 'Facebook and Twitter Urged to Ban Iran-Backed Press TV: Broadcaster Promotes Antisemitic Conspiracy Theories, Anti-Hate Group Warns', 27 April 2023, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/press-tv-iran-twitter-facebook-tv-uk-f28nr0k3l>.

where its control has been disrupted by Israeli retaliations following the 7 October massacre).³⁰⁹ In Yemen, Houthi rebels — another Shi'i militia supported by Tehran, albeit to a much more limited extent³¹⁰ — threaten the few remaining Jews in that country, giving them a choice between emigration, death, and conversion to Islam.³¹¹

It was Hezbollah that pioneered suicide bombing as a tactic, after it was legitimated for use against Israel by its spiritual leader, Ayatollah Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah.³¹² Following the most spectacular suicide attack of all, i.e. the 11 September attacks on the United States by members of al-Qaeda, Khamenei convened a conference 'at which the suicide murderer, as the "highest expression of courage, honour, and worth of a nation", was contrasted to the "cancer" of Israel, which must be obliterated'.³¹³ As already noted, there are indications that elements within the regime may have approved and assisted in the planning of the 7 October massacre (see Section 1): an atrocity which the Iranian parliament in any case endorsed by responding to the news that it had taken place with a chant of 'Death to Israel'.³¹⁴

3.4.6 Hamas

'Hamas' is an acronym for *Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya*, which is Arabic for 'Islamic Resistance Movement'. The organisation was formed in 1987 as a rival to Palestinian Islamic Jihad, with which it competed for support during the First Intifada, ultimately emerging as the most popular Palestinian Islamist organisation, in part due to the greater success of its suicide bombing campaigns.³¹⁵ Its ideology and aims are clearly laid out in Hamas's founding Charter or Covenant. This document identifies Hamas as 'one of the wings of Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine',³¹⁶ and traces its origins back to the Arab Revolt of 1936–1939 (which, as we have seen, was both ideologically and materially supported by the Nazis) as well as the 1947–1948 and 1968 wars (the former of which had considerable Nazi involvement), specifically associating all three of these historical events with the Muslim Brotherhood³¹⁷ — an organisation modelled on the Fascist and Nazi movements of Italy and Austro-Germany, and supported almost from its inception by the Nazi regime (see Section 3.4.2).

Although Hamas is a Sunni Islamist movement, and takes a less radical position on many issues than do the Salafi-Jihadists,³¹⁸ it is openly funded by the Shi'i Islamist regime in Iran (see Section 3.4.5), and its operatives have trained both with the Shi'i Hezbollah (see Section 1) and with the Salafi-Jihadist al-Qaeda.³¹⁹ It is unusual among branches of the Muslim Brotherhood both in its insistence on *jihad* as a primary duty of Muslims and in its arguments that this refers only to 'combative warlike operations', and not also to spiritual forms of struggle, but it nonetheless rejects the Salafi-Jihadist practice of declaring Muslims to be apostates and making them a target for *jihad*.³²⁰ This may perhaps explain Hamas's far greater popularity among British

309. Grigat, pp. 163–64; Colin P. Clarke, 'Why the World Is Watching Iran', *New York Times*, 23 October 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/23/opinion/gaza-hamas-hezbollah-iran.html>.

310. Thomas Juneau, 'Iran's Policy Towards the Houthis in Yemen: A Limited Return on a Modest Investment', *International Affairs* 92, no. 3, (2016), <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.12599>, pp. 647–63; Tom Walsh, 'Securitisation Imperatives and the Exaggeration of Iranian Involvement with the Houthi Movement by International Actors', *Global Affairs* 14, no. 2, (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.13204>, pp. 385–295.

311. Gilbert, *In Ishmael's House*, p. 341.

312. Assaf Moghadam, 'Motives for Martyrdom: Al-Qaida, Salafi Jihad, and the Spread of Suicide Attacks', *International Security* 33, no. 3, (2008/2009), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40972077>, p. 624.

313. Küntzel, *Jihad and Jew-Hatred*, 2007 [2002], p. 140.

314. Ghattas, 'A Message from Iran', n.p.

315. Tristan Dunning, 'Islam and Resistance: Hamas, Ideology and Islamic Values in Palestine', *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 8, no. 2, (2015), <https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2015.1042304>, pp. 291–93.

316. Hamas, *The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement*, 1988, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp, art. 2.

317. Hamas, art. 7.

318. Dunning, 'Islam and Resistance', pp. 292, 295–96.

319. Douglas Frantz and Chris Hedges, 'A Nation Challenged: Shoe-Bomb Investigation; Faintly Connected Dots Portray Al-Qaeda Man', *New York Times*, 11 January 2002, <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/01/11/world/nation-challenged-shoe-bomb-investigation-faintly-connected-dots-portray-qaeda.html>, p. 10; Küntzel, *Jihad and Jew-Hatred*, 2007 [2002], p. 134.

320. Meir Litvak, 'Martyrdom Is Life': Jihad and Martyrdom in the Ideology of Hamas', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 33, no. 8, (2010), <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2010.494170>, pp. 718–19; in this connection, it is worth noting that Islamic State considers all members of Hamas to be apostates, Marcy Oster, 'Hamas and ISIS Hate Israel — and Each Other: Years-Long Conflict Between Terror Groups Resurfaces as 3 Hamas Policemen in Gaza Killed This Week in Suicide Attack Blamed on Islamic State', *Times of Israel*, 2019, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-and-isis-hate-israel-and-each-other/>.

Muslims, as compared to the Salafi-Jihadist Islamic State (see Section 1). Hamas also insists on the core importance of the Israel-Palestine issue to the achievement of fundamental Islamist goals, taking the position that '[j]ihad in the name of Palestine is ... essential in order to bring about the unification of the Islamic world and the establishment of a future Caliphate'.³²¹

In this as in all other matters, Hamas follows the ideological direction set by Yusuf al-Qaradawi (see Section 2). Until his death in 2022, al-Qaradawi was not only the spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood but also one of the most popular figures in the Sunni world, in part thanks to his regular broadcasts on Al-Jazeera: ³²² the controversial global news channel controlled by the ruling family of al-Qaradawi's adoptive home of Qatar, which has not only supported Hamas rhetorically, through Al-Jazeera, but also been its primary funder, whilst simultaneously hosting the Hamas Politburo since 2012. ³²³ The Qatari coalition led by al-Qaradawi is believed to have provided Hamas with the majority of the donations it received from 2001-2008, funneling hundreds of millions of dollars from donors in Europe, the United States, and the Arab world to the terror group. ³²⁴

Al-Qaradawi has been presented as a progressive voice by some in the West — including Ken Livingstone when the latter hosted him at City Hall while serving as the elected Mayor of London³²⁵ — but, in the Muslim world, he was perceived to occupy the middle ground between moderate or progressive Islam and Salafism. ³²⁶ A good example of this middle ground is al-Qaradawi's position on the division of the world's territories: while genuine moderates follow jurists such as Muhammad Abu Zahra in believing that the world is no longer divided into the abode of Islam and the abode of war, now being comprised of an undifferentiated abode of truce, ³²⁷ and Salafi-Jihadists take the position that most nominally Muslim states are no longer the abode of Islam and must be opposed militarily (see Section 3.4.4), al-Qaradawi took the view that all Muslim-majority states are the abode of Islam, while almost everywhere else is the abode of truce, and Israel alone is the abode of war. ³²⁸ Although more moderate than the Salafi-Jihadist position, this is very far from being a progressive position, singling out Israel among all the territories of the world where Muslims are in conflict — including parts of the abode of truce in which Qaradawi was under certain circumstances willing to call for *jihad* ³²⁹ — as a special site of permanent holy war. Identifying the struggle with Israel with a prophesied apocalyptic war of annihilation against the Jews, and arguing that the latter have a special status in Islamic law which prohibits any final agreement, such as a land-for-peace deal, al-Qaradawi argues that *jihad* must be fought by every available means until Israel no longer exists, with any peace agreement being no more than a temporary arrangement tactically adopted *en route* to this longer-term goal. ³³⁰

The following words, broadcast on Al-Jazeera in 2009, make al-Qaradawi's antisemitism very clear:

Throughout history, Allah has imposed on the Jews people who would punish them for their corruption. The last punishment was carried out by Hitler ... even though they exaggerated this issue. He managed to put them in their place. This was divine punishment for them. Allah willing, the next time will be at the hands of the believers. ³³¹

321. Litvak, 'Martyrdom Is Life', p. 722.

322. Spoerl, 'Islamic Antisemitism in the Arab-Israeli Conflict', p. 610; Shaul Bartal, 'Sheikh Qaradawi and the Internal Palestinian Struggle: Issues Preventing Reconciliation Between Fatah and Hamas and the Influence of the Qaradawi Era over the Struggle Between the Organizations', *Middle Eastern Studies* 51, no. 4, (2015), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4457662>, p. 585.

323. Jenkins, 'Something in Disguise', pp. 21, 28; Damon L. Perry and Paul Stott, 'Problematic Qatar: A Chronology', in *Qatar: Friend or Frenemy?*, (London: Policy Exchange, 2022), <https://policyexchange.org.uk/publication/qatar-friend-or-frenemy/>, p. 81.

324. Shaul Bartal, 'The Danger of Israel According to Sheikh Yusuf Qaradawi', *Israel Affairs* 22, (2016), <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537121.2016.1140343>, p. 482.

325. Hirsh, *Contemporary Left Antisemitism*, p. 20.

326. Bartal, 'Sheikh Qaradawi and the Internal Palestinian Struggle', p. 585.

327. I.e. *dar al-'ahd*, Ramadan, 'Muslim Jurists' Criteria for the Division of the World into Dar Al-Harb and Dar Al-Islam', pp. 232-33.

328. Ramadan, p. 234.

329. Reuters, 'Leading Sunni Muslim Cleric Calls for Jihad' in Syria', 2013, <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSBRE9500CO/>.

330. Bartal, 'The Danger of Israel According to Sheikh Yusuf Qaradawi', pp. 486-88.

331. Quoted in Spoerl, 'Islamic Antisemitism in the Arab-Israeli Conflict', p. 611.

Presenting Hitler as a tool in the hand of God, the above combines Holocaust minimisation with Holocaust justification, leading from both to an expression of desire for a new Holocaust, to be carried out by Muslims. Only complete ignorance of statements such as the above — or perhaps a misguided inclination to interpret them as figurative — can explain surprise at the behaviour of the Hamas terrorists who breached Israel's security fence on 7 October 2023, or at the fervour with which that behaviour was celebrated in some quarters (see Section 1).

Although some commentators argue that the Hamas Charter (also known as the Hamas Covenant) has been superseded, it has never been revoked.³³² It is therefore worth considering its text in some detail. On the grounds that the land now known as Israel is a *waqf* or charitable bequest 'consecrated for future Muslim generations until Judgement Day', the Charter presents any sort of two-state solution as illegitimate,³³³ and argues that '[i]n face of the Jews' usurpation of Palestine, it is compulsory that the banner of *ljlihad* be raised'.³³⁴ As this suggests, the Charter unambiguously commits Hamas to religious warfare, which it presents as 'the only way to liberate Palestine', declaring all 'so-called peaceful solutions' to be 'in contradiction to the principles of the Islamic Resistance Movement' as '[t]here is no solution for the Palestinian question except through *ljlihad*'.³³⁵

The Charter is openly antisemitic, several times identifying the enemy as 'Jews' or 'World Zionism'. The antisemitism of the Charter is partly based in a reading of Islamic tradition — for example, the Charter quotes from a hadith which states that '[t]he Day of Judgement will not come about until Muslims fight the Jews (killing the Jews)'³³⁶ — and it invokes Qutb's idea of an ancient religious war between Muslims and Jews, stating that 'Israel, Judaism, and Jews challenge Islam and the Muslim people' before issuing the curse: 'May the cowards never sleep'.³³⁷ However, it also rehashes the claim, originating in Nazi wartime propaganda, that Israel is only the beginning of the Zionist territorial ambitions, which will eventually take in the entire Arab world, and in doing so it even draws upon the *Protocols* for authority:

The Zionist plan is limitless. After Palestine, the Zionists aspire to expand from the Nile to the Euphrates. When they will have digested the region they overtook, they will aspire to further expansion, and so on. Their plan is embodied in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and their present conduct is the best proof of what we are saying.

The Islamic Resistance Movement considers itself to be the spearhead of the circle of struggle with world Zionism and a step on the road. The Movement adds its efforts to the efforts of all those who are active in the Palestinian arena. Arab and Islamic Peoples should augment [this struggle] by further steps on their part; Islamic groupings all over the Arab world should also do the same, since all of these are the best-equipped for the future role in the fight with the warmongering Jews.³³⁸

The above quotation alone should be enough to dispel any idea that Hamas understands itself to be involved in a political or territorial dispute that could even theoretically be resolved through negotiation and compromise. The idea that it presents is, rather, that of the supposed eternal struggle between Muslims and Jews, first concocted by al-Husseini in order to garner Arab support for his and his Nazi backers' political aims, and subsequently elaborated by Qutb — an idea which it openly recombines with the same antisemitic mythology that motivated the Nazis.

332. Spoerl, 'Parallels Between Nazi and Islamist Anti-Semitism', p. 217.

333. Hamas, *The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement*, art. 11.

334. Hamas, art. 15.

335. Hamas, art. 34 and 13.

336. Hamas, art. 7.

337. Hamas, art. 28.

338. Hamas, art. 32.

Claims resembling those in the *Protocols* are repeated as fact elsewhere in the Charter, which warns of ‘the Zionist influence in many countries exercised through financial and media control’³³⁹ and accuses Zionists of having founded ‘secret societies ... for the purpose of sabotaging societies and achieving Zionist interests’, of having ‘[taken] control of the world media, news agencies, the press, publishing houses, broadcasting stations, and others’, and of having been ‘behind the French Revolution, the Communist revolution, and most of the revolutions we heard and hear about, here and there.’³⁴⁰ Like the *Protocols* themselves, the Hamas Charter makes a mockery of the idea that the use of the word ‘Zionist’ implies a legitimate critique of Israeli government policy: the words ‘Zionist’ and ‘Jewish’ are used interchangeably throughout the document, and it is only through recognition of this point that sense can be made of the allegation that ‘Zionist’ interests were behind the French Revolution, which predated the foundation of the real-world Zionist movement by more than a century.

In an echo of Qutb’s *Our Struggle with the Jews*, the Hamas Charter ‘accuses the Jews of wanting to destroy Islam’, suggests that ‘the ... salvation of the Muslims is ... dependent on the murder of Jews’, and presents Jews ‘as the rulers of the world.’³⁴¹ Importantly, the enemy is conceived as ‘world Zionism’, such that the territorial conflict with Israel is framed merely ‘as part of a cosmic war against what Qutb described as “world Jewry”’.³⁴² Given such premises, it is unsurprising that, for leading figures in Hamas such as Mushin al-Antabawi, all Jews should be seen as implicated in an opposition to Islam so intractable that ‘the solution for Palestine can only be brought by a generation mobilised against the Jews on the grounds of a combination of the Quran with the gun’.³⁴³ In a 2010 broadcast on Al-Aqsa TV, Mahmoud al-Zahar, at that time the Foreign Minister of the Hamas government in Gaza, expressed a wish not to be outdone by the Nazis:

We are no weaker or less honourable than the people that expelled and annihilated the Jews. ... We have learnt the lesson — there is no place for you among us, and you have no future among the nations of the world. You are headed to annihilation.³⁴⁴

Despite all the above, Islamist antisemitism has often been mistaken for a form of liberation theology by non-Muslim westerners on the political left.³⁴⁵ This is in part because of a left-wing tendency, dating back to the 1960s, to treat ‘any movement that is fighting against America or one of its allies ... as progressive and on the right side of the global struggle against imperialism, irrespective of its actual character,’³⁴⁶ itself an echo of the earlier Soviet decision to support Arab nationalism for geopolitical reasons.³⁴⁷ However, it may also show the influence of deliberate outreach by Hamas: Lorenzo Vidino observes that Hamas and its activist networks in the West are able to ‘frame the conflict in religious terms to local Muslim communities, labeling Israelis as “infidels” and evoking hadiths about the killing of Jews’, whilst ‘us[ing] the language of postcolonial theory to tar the Israelis as “European settlers”’ for secular campus audiences.³⁴⁸ Like so much else in Hamas propaganda, this rhetorical strategy draws on arguments made by al-Qaradawi, who characterised the Israel–Palestinian conflict ‘not only [as] an ongoing struggle between the exploited and the exploiters, between usurping colonialist and ... victimised native society, but also [as] a religious struggle which has been raging since the time of the prophet Muhammad’.³⁴⁹

339. Hamas, art. 30.

340. Hamas, art. 22.

341. Küntzel, *Nazis, Islamic Antisemitism, and the Middle East*, 2024 [2019], pp. 17–18.

342. Tibi, ‘From Sayyid Qutb to Hamas’, p. 476.

343. Quoted in Tibi, p. 474.

344. Quoted in Spoerl, ‘Parallels Between Nazi and Islamist Anti-Semitism’, p. 220.

345. Bassam Tibi, *Islamism and Islam*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 67.

346. Rich, *The Left’s Jewish Problem*, p. 17; see also Shindler, *Israel and the European Left*, pp. 194–298.

347. See Shindler, *Israel and the European Left*, pp. 50–64.

348. Lorenzo Vidino, ‘How Hamas Won Hearts and Minds on the American Left: For 30 Years, the Terror Organization Has Made a Concerted Effort to Appeal to Western Intellectuals’, 2 November 2023, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-hamas-won-hearts-and-minds-on-the-american-left-labafc2f>, n.p.

349. Bartal, ‘The Danger of Israel According to Sheikh Yusuf Qaradawi’, p. 480.

On a strictly rational level, the ‘European settler’ argument makes little sense, as the bulk of the State of Israel’s early arrivals were Jewish refugees from the Muslim world (see Section 3.4.1), and today there remain more Jews of Middle Eastern than of European and Russian heritage living in Israel.³⁵⁰ But — as with the accusation of genocide, which is regularly made against Israel and yet not against states whose actions have led to vastly higher numbers of Muslim deaths,³⁵¹ and in spite of the fact that it is Hamas, and not Israel, that is constitutionally committed to genocide — the purpose of the settler-colonial accusation is rhetorical rather than analytical, serving to rationalise and normalise Islamist demands through a discourse shared with many on the Western political left.³⁵²

This anti-colonial and anti-genocidal rhetoric is paradoxical both in that it seems able to acknowledge violence only in the actions of a single party to the Israel-Palestine conflict, and in that it appears to accord that violence an evil above and beyond that of any conflict occurring elsewhere in the world. Although today it appeals to political progressives, and in certain respects echoes earlier and less successful Soviet appeals to Arab nationalists,³⁵³ its origins can be traced back to Nazi propaganda, which presented the Axis powers as an anti-imperialist force even as they were fighting to expand and defend their own empires (for further discussion of the use of anti-colonial rhetoric by Islamists, see Section 4.4.1), and presented Jews as a genocidal threat even while they were being murdered on an industrial scale in the vast infrastructure of death which the Nazis had constructed throughout occupied Eastern Europe (for more on which, see Sections 3.4.2 and 3.4.3). Hamas has no such infrastructure, but the crimes of its members and the pronouncements of its ideologues should leave us in no doubt that the only thing preventing it from carrying out a Holocaust of its own has been the Israeli state.

3.5 Discussion

As this study has shown, genocidal and conspiracist antisemitism — as opposed to mere denigration and persecution of Jews, such as was practised in much of the Muslim world for over a thousand years — is ideologically ‘baked into’ several forms of Islamism, especially with regard to the way in which their adherents understand the Israel-Palestine conflict, and the exaggerated importance which they place upon that conflict. Furthermore, this study has additionally shown that the specific forms of genocidal and conspiracist antisemitism adopted by Islamists are both genetically related to and ideologically distinct from older forms of antisemitism in the Muslim and Western worlds, having been forged from a variety of influences, both Western and Islamic, with the latter including not only longstanding traditions but also anachronistic inventions, such as the ahistorical fantasy of an ancient religious war between Muslims and Jews.

Recent though it is in origin, the conspiracist and genocidal antisemitism of today’s Islamists predates the foundation of the State of Israel, having emerged through a confluence of interests between the Mandate-era Mufti of Jerusalem and the Austro-German Nazi regime. Indeed, far from being a product of the Israel-Palestine conflict, their antisemitism appears to have played a major role in *creating* that conflict, by preventing the acceptance of a two-state solution by Arab leaders in 1947. Moreover, the influence of Nazism and the *Protocols* did not end with the Second World War, as Nazi personnel continued to be involved in propaganda (and even in military action) for some years, and the *Protocols* were not only published in the region but cited as an authority in the Hamas Charter.

The Muslim supremacist character of much ‘pro-Palestinian’ discourse, as well as the genocidal ideology of some of the extremist organisations involved in the conflict, are unfortunately misrecognised by many in the Western world, in part because of the persistence of counter-accusations of genocide and an ‘anti-colonial’ framing for antisemitic actions, both of which have their origins in Nazi propaganda. Thus, while Küntzel

350. Noah Lewin-Epstein and Yinon Cohen, ‘Ethnic Origin and Identity in the Jewish Population of Israel’, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 45, no. 11, (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2018.1492370>, pp. 2118–37.

351. For example, during the period of the 2014 war in Gaza, roughly 100 times more Muslims were killed by the Assad regime just over the border in Syria, Robert Fine and Philip Spencer, *Antisemitism and the Left: On the Return of the Jewish Question*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), p. 113.

352. John Jenkins, *Islamism and the Left: An Essay in Two Parts*, (London: Policy Exchange, 2021), <https://policyexchange.org.uk/publication/islamism-and-the-left/>.

353. Shindler, *Israel and the European Left*, pp. 52–53.

analyses the 1947–1948 war as an ‘aftershock’ of the Second World War,³⁵⁴ one could go further, seeing the extremist movements which the Nazis nurtured and inspired in the Muslim world — some of which have since taken control of states or state-like entities — as the last remnants of the Axis, still fighting Hitler and al-Husseini’s war against the Jews. Paradoxically, it is this Nazi heritage which has enabled Islamists to build bridges with sections of the Western left, whose history of demonising and delegitimising Israel combines a superficially compatible opposition to Western imperialism and colonialism with specifically left-wing forms of conspiratorial antisemitism dating back to the 19th century.³⁵⁵

3.6 Scope for future research

This study has focused on the development and role of antisemitism in Jewish–Muslim relations in the Middle East: a topic which is relatively well-researched in its different aspects, as may be seen from the sheer number of published studies on which it has been possible to draw, even if there is little awareness of the findings of such studies outside academia. By contrast, there has been very little scholarship on antisemitism with regard to Muslims in South Asia or the West. The remaining two studies in this document attempt to fill the latter part of that gap through expert interviews and the analysis of survey data. However, there is vast scope for historical research — perhaps especially in the form of oral history — in the West, as well as for ethnographic research conducted both among Jews and among Muslims. Although even to conduct such research is likely to be considered controversial, it is very difficult to see how community relations may be improved without detailed attention to the communities themselves, to their history of interactions, and to their perceptions of one another.

4. Study II: Thematic analysis of expert interviews with researchers and practitioners

4.1 Abstract

This study presents themes arising from unstructured interviews with six subject matter experts: two former Islamists, two extremism researchers, and two representatives of Jewish communal organisations. Although interviewees did not always interpret or explain events in the same way, a particular group of themes emerged across the interviews. These included the importance of the Israel–Palestinian conflict for Islamist radicalisation, the irreconcilable problem which Israel’s existence poses for Islamists and their supremacist worldview, the growing problem of radicalising discourse in sermons and the difficulty of establishing what to do about it, the recognition that — both in action and in discourse — much antisemitism within the Muslim community has no direct connection to Islamist organisations, and the lack of understanding of Islamist antisemitism on the part of individuals working within multiple institutions, including educational institutions, the police, and the Prevent programme.

4.2 Introduction

This study consists of an analysis of themes arising from expert interviews with members of the counter-extremism researcher–practitioner community who have engaged with issues of Islamist antisemitism in the UK. The interviewees do not constitute a representative sample. Rather, they constitute individuals whom the researcher knew to be knowledgeable in the area or to whom the researcher was introduced when seeking out those with knowledge of the area. They comprised two former members of Islamist organisations who now work as counter-extremism practitioners (one male and one female), two researchers employed by think tanks or government agencies (one male and one female), and two representatives of Jewish communal organisations (both male). A larger number of interviewees was originally intended, but time pressures

354. Küntzel, *Nazis, Islamic Antisemitism, and the Middle East*, 2024 [2019].

355. See Shindler, *Israel and the European Left*, pp. 50–64, 73–76, 173–281; Rich, *The Left’s Jewish Problem*, pp. 31–109, 159–93, and 200–204.

resulting from the crisis following the 7 October 2023 atrocities made a number of potential interviewees unavailable.

4.3 Methodology

Interviews were unstructured, as the intention was for the interviewees to educate the researcher. Interviews lasted for approximately one hour and were conducted by the researcher via the researcher's personal Zoom and WhatsApp accounts, with audio recordings being transcribed by hand in order to avoid the errors which typically result from digital transcription. Interview transcripts were then scrutinised in order to extract salient quotations, which were combined into a single document for editing, summarisation, and organisation into themes.

4.4 Themes

4.4.1 Radicalisation and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

All interviewees emphasised the important role played in radicalisation by the instrumentalisation of grievance narratives. As one interviewee noted, '[the] grievances may well exist [independently], but it's the narrative framework that tells you how to think and feel about [them]'. Interviewees emphasised that a range of grievances are exploited by Islamists and other Muslim extremists in their radicalisation efforts, for example around sex education, blasphemy against Islam (including slights on the honour of its prophet), and tolerance of homosexuality. In this context, the Israel-Palestine conflict is one source among many of images and ideas which can be used to generate feelings of grievance that can in turn be employed in radicalisation:

[O]ne of the greatest motivating factors for Islamist radicalisation is the depiction of Muslim suffering elsewhere ... [and] the narrative that ... 'Your co-religionist is suffering, is being oppressed and ... we have to go out and defend them because the nation states aren't going to, the Arab states ... [are] shields of the West'. ... [A]nd I think that those types of images, the idea that young children, innocent Muslims are being killed and suffering, that is a key radicalising narrative that we have seen has motivated individuals to become involved in more hardline Islamist groups.

Such images have been drawn from many conflicts around the world in which Muslims have suffered. However, all interviewees suggested that the Israel-Palestine conflict has pride of place among those for Islamists, and one interviewee with close contacts in multiple police forces indicated that the police too have come to recognise extremist narratives around this issue as a particularly powerful 'engine of radicalisation'. All interviewees agreed that open war between Israel and Hamas provides Islamists with opportunities that do not exist during periods of relative peace, when recruitment and organising must be undertaken at a slower pace, and publicity is harder to come by. One interviewee argued that a cyclical process has been underway for many years:

[War between Israel and Hamas is] used as an excuse to express these forms of hatred and this ideology more openly, and it's also used as a recruiting [tool]. ... [So w]hat we seem to see is Islamist organisations working hard between ... rounds of fighting ... and then really surging their activities during [phases of armed] conflict, so ... they are constantly active, they constantly use the conflict as a means of propagating their ideology and of claiming that there is a crisis all of the time, and then, when ... fighting is active, then they surge their activities and start gathering out on the street.

What it basically means is that ... when there is [armed] conflict, [Islamist antisemitism] suddenly shoots up and then ... after [that,] ... expressions of the ideology come back down again ... but never to the previous level, so you end up with this sort of ratcheting up where each [armed] conflict sees a surge and then a new normal which is worse than before.

All interviewees noted that the importance placed on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is paradoxical, as it is (in strictly objective terms) one of the more minor of the many conflicts around the world in which Muslims are being hurt. For example, the current round of hostilities in Gaza – by far the bloodiest in recent history – had, on the account of the Hamas authorities, claimed the lives of over 30,000 Gazans, including Hamas fighters, by the end of February 2024, when this report was completed, while the civil war in Yemen had already claimed an estimated 377,000 lives, i.e. more than 12 times as many, by the end of 2021 (for further discussion, see Section 3.4.6).³⁵⁶ Most interviewees argued that the conflict is a particularly attractive issue for Islamists because it has the potential to unite all sects and movements within the Muslim world, which is not the case where both parties to a conflict are Muslim. Some noted that even in conflicts where Muslims are persecuted by a non-Muslim aggressor, there may be further reasons for relative neglect in Islamist propaganda: as one interviewee put it, the genocide of the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar is of much lesser interest to Islamists, despite the enormous scale of the persecution and ethnic cleansing, because, in contrast to Israel and Palestine, Myanmar is ‘not an emotional base for the entire [world] Muslim population of 1.6 billion people’ as ‘there’s [nothing] ... [from] the Quran ... in Myanmar, but there is in al-Aqsa’. Another put it more simply, arguing that ‘because Jews are already hated by Islamists, it’s much easier to unite people around the Israel-Palestinian conflict rather than, let’s say, the plight of Muslims in China’. In some cases, lack of symbolic significance or existing animosity may combine with geopolitical reasons for inattention: a different interviewee noted that the genocide against the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang is being conducted by the Chinese state, which is a major foreign investor in Pakistan³⁵⁷ and a key ally of Qatar.³⁵⁸

All of these are plausible although partial explanations. However, the most detailed exposition of the conflict’s special utility to extremists was provided by the interviewee who characterised it thus:

It’s a story that’s easily simplified ... from what is a very complex conflict: good guys and bad guys; poor oppressed Muslims getting killed by evil Jews. And, like I say, it’s made much more simple and much more powerful the fact that the oppressors are not themselves Muslims so it’s different from Syria and Yemen. It also ... keys into very longstanding ways of thinking about Jews and the kind of symbolic role that Jews have always been given in the European civilisation as the kind of demonic Other and in Islamic thought as a kind of inferior – to be respected, but always to be treated as inferior – and these two things have merged and blended, and, when you look at the kind of anti-semitism that you get from British Islamists, it’s always a mixture of these ideas. It’s never straightforward Islamic sources and it’s never straightforward *Protocols* or whatever: it’s a combination, but this combination of ‘Jews are inferior and need to be kept in their place’ with ‘Jews are this all-powerful string-pulling demonic presence in society that represents all that is evil and bad’ – when they merge together, that’s incredibly powerful. And when you blend that with the reality of loads of Palestinians being killed by the Israeli military then of course it radicalises.

This suggests that the conflict’s potential for instrumentalisation by Islamists (a process which Study I has found to have been underway decades before the foundation of the State of Israel, see Section 3.4.2) is to a great extent the product of Western antisemitic ideas about Jewish power (see Section 3.3) and the subordinate position which Jews were historically assigned in the Muslim world (see Section 3.4.1), as these appear to provide both an explanation and a solution to the reality of collateral damage caused by Israeli military action against Hamas – especially given the unusual prominence which one interviewee observed the British and international news media to give the conflict and its casualties:

356. AFP, ‘Yemen War Will Have Killed 377000 by Year’s End: UN’, *France24*, 2021, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20211123-yemen-war-will-have-killed-377-000-by-year-s-end-un>; Yolande Knell, ‘More Than 30000 Killed in Gaza, Hamas-Run Health Ministry Says’, BBC, 2024, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-68430925>.

357. From which the largest group of British Muslims can claim heritage, CREST, *British Muslims: Demography and Communities*, (Lancaster: Centre for Research; Evidence on Security Threats, 2018), <https://crestresearch.ac.uk/download/2331/18-011-01-british-muslims-communities.pdf>, p. 2.

358. A major funder of British mosques and other institutions allegedly linked to the Muslim Brotherhood, Jenkins, ‘Something in Disguise’, p. 23, see also Section 3.4.6.

[Firstly, there's] the sheer quantity of the reporting compared to other conflicts, so — the war in Yemen for example, you never had daily updates about how many Yemenis had been killed by the Saudis or by the Houthis or whatever. You never get the constant flow of images of Yemeni children who are killed that you get — it's just not, it's the intensity and the tempo and the focus is different from any other conflict.

... The second thing is ... I do think that a lot of the media framing ... [has] a subtext ... that Palestinian violence is understandable and Israeli violence is unjustifiable. Even in a story where it's showing Hamas attacked first [and] Israel retaliated So, [in] the reporting of the hospital that wasn't bombed by Israel, every media organisation jumped to accept that framing that Israel had bombed a hospital and 400 people had died. They were so quick to do that. And I think the reason why so many media organisations just accepted that at face value was because it fitted with what they think they know about how this conflict works, so basically they had no reason to question it.

... [On the other hand,] since the 7th of October, Hezbollah has been shooting at mainly civilian targets in northern Israel, and something like 80,000 Israelis have not been able to live in their homes in the north for two months, and a lot of people I think treat this as just normal, like '[O]f course they do, of course Hezbollah shoot at Israel, big deal, Israel should just sort of put up with it', and so I think it's that level of — whether it's kind of the racism of low [expectations] or just the lack of interest, I do think there's a disparity in the way that the media really interrogate, not just the claims but the actions of the respective parties.

However, as the same interviewee noted, the most radicalised individuals are probably getting their information through non-mainstream sources, which again suggests that centralised solutions (such as a more sensitive reporting policy on the part of certain news organisations) would by themselves be unlikely to resolve the problem of extremist instrumentalisation of the conflict for purposes of radicalisation, even if they did succeed in reducing levels of credence given to extremist narratives in wider society.

4.4.2 Presentation of Israel's existence as an affront to Muslims

Some interviewees argued that it was not only for the sake of convenience that Islamists had — in the words of one interviewee — made 'defeating Zionism their cause célèbre'. Three interviewees noted a particular sense of discomfort aroused in many Muslims by Israel's location within the Muslim world, where Jews were historically permitted to reside as subjects, but not to enjoy political sovereignty (see Section 3.4.1). Thus, Islamists do not merely nurture secular grievances around the idea that fellow members of an identity-based community (i.e. Muslims) are suffering (e.g. as a result of Israeli military action), as they are also able to construct religious grievances on the basis of beliefs about the divinely ordained political order in historically Muslim regions of the world:

There ... [are] quotations that [Islamists] would use, like 'If you give away a handspan of Islamic land, you'll get the same amount in hellfire', they use all these justifications — it's not just that it's not a nice thing that people ... lost their homes after the formation of Israel, [it's that] ... it was up to the Muslims to have defended that land, and it was their duty to have done so, and they neglected their duty to protect the land from the Zionists And so then that, from there sprouts a whole load of other arguments and issues and justifications to fight against the State of Israel, and then the blurred lines of, well, the State of Israel is a Jewish state ... there's a lot of justification of fighting the State of Israel, not just from ... a justice perspective, but from Islamic scripture, of making sure that people are to encourage people to fight for what is theirs and to defend themselves, so this is defensive *jihad*.

...

[The idea is that] if [Palestine is] being attacked, it's your home [that] is being attacked, in fact more than your home is being attacked, and that's how it's felt by Muslims around the world, that this is a place that belonged to them ... and for it to be taken away and for it to be put into the hands of what they call 'the Jews' is completely unacceptable and it's an exceptionally emotional situation, ... and ... Islamists love people being emotional, upset, [in] pain — that's — they thrive on those emotions

The expansive nature of 'defensive *jihad*', and the range of acts which Salafi-Jihadists use it to justify, have already been noted in Study I (see Section 3.4.4). As this interviewee noted, however, such theological references may be combined with a superficially secular political framing through ideas of colonialism (see Sections 3.4.2, 3.4.3, 3.4.4, 3.4.6, and 3.5). A different interviewee argued as follows:

So I don't think anyone's going to turn around and say that an uprising against colonial powers is illegitimate, if that makes sense. ... [But, as Arab nations are no longer] being ruled directly by colonial powers, they're [now presented as being] ruled by colonial powers' agents. ... [Y]ou'll see all these lectures and videos of senior Brotherhood people who will just describe it in that way, that colonial powers and Zionists have an alliance in order to suppress Muslim nations and the way they do this is by maintaining Israeli influence in the region: [in their view,] it stops Palestinian nationhood, but it also stops ... the Muslim nation unifying in the Muslim world. ... [A]s far as they're concerned, any Jewish state on Muslim land is a problem ... they'll [say] ... 'No, Jews can live among us as people of *dhimma* who have no political sovereignty, and they can live among us as protected citizens — or as protected subjects, to be more precise' — there's that concept that's there that's fed through and that comes to all of those notions of Jewish power in connection to colonialism.

In this way, focus on Israel enables Islamists to engage in what one interviewee described as 'instrumental-isation of] the language of anti- and decoloniality and colonialism', thereby facilitating the building of coalitions with the Western political left (see Sections 3.4.6 and 3.5). However, the use of a common conceptual language does not necessarily imply a common analysis: the 'colonial' condition in this case is not literal colonisation but simply disunity among Muslims, understood as having been produced by the abolition of the Caliphate consequent upon the breakup of the Ottoman Empire (which Islamists see as having had, for all its faults, a greater legitimacy than the multitude of states which succeeded it, see Section 3.4.3), and regarded as being somehow maintained by the polluting presence of a Jewish state in one part of that empire's former territory.³⁵⁹ Moreover, the ideal in whose name this 'colonialism' is resisted is not a pluralist future in which all peoples of the region are equal, but a romanticised 'Golden Age' of the Caliphate, in which, as one interviewee summarised the Islamist view, '[Muslims] looked after Jews ... in the Islamic lands' — or, as another interviewee summarised the objective situation, 'Jews were allowed to live under Islam, as long as they were *dhimmi*'. Study I has shown that there were indeed specific periods and locations in which Jewish minorities were relatively well-treated, but it has also shown that existence at the mercy of a Muslim ruler has not for the most part been a circumstance to which historical experience would naturally incline the Jews of the region to wish to revert (see Section 3.4.1), even had a number of more recent Muslim leaders not endorsed the genocidal antisemitism of the Nazis (see in particular Sections 3.4.2, 3.4.3, and 3.4.6).

The distance of Islamist anti-colonialism from secular critiques of colonialism is therefore apparent not only in that 'colonialism' itself is understood differently but in that the alternative held up to colonialism is not national self-determination and democratic self-rule (i.e. the ideal for which historical decolonisation movements fought) but a pan-Islamic state, in which Jews would be returned to subordinate status, precariously dependent on the goodwill of their Muslim rulers and neighbours. A different interviewee suggested that traditional Islamic ideas about Jews being 'weak', 'untrustworthy', and 'disfavoured by God' (again, see Section 3.4.1) added to the perceived humiliation of a Jewish state's existence on land which was previously conquered by Muslims and brought within the Caliphate. In this way, secular ideas about the supposedly

359. Compare the view, expressed by Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, that Jews were somehow responsible for abolishing the Caliphate and dividing the Muslim nation into multiple states, Bartal, 'The Danger of Israel According to Sheikh Yusuf Qaradawi', p. 480.

unique evil of Israel combine with elements of scripture and traditional communal prejudices as well as with Islamist political goals and the novel religious forms of antisemitism which Islamists and their allies developed during the 20th century and which continue to circulate in parts of the Muslim community: as one interviewee summarised the resulting mishmash, '[t]he Jews have always been like this, the Jews conspired against the Prophet, the Jews have always been antithetical to the Muslims, the end of times prophecies have [foretold a] battle against the Jews — it's happening'. Apparently objective complaints relating to allegations of human rights violations, etc, thus serve as a cover for more emotionally resonant claims founded in religious tradition, apocalyptic prophecy, and dreams of restored Muslim supremacy (see Section 3.4.6).

4.4.3 Sermons as radicalising discourse

One interviewee spoke at length about the inflammatory sermons which have been delivered at a number of mosques, both in English and in Arabic, since 7 October 2023 (see Section 1). That particular interviewee stated that these sermons have 'all been quite similar', and opined that this may be because the imams responsible were 'working from the same sources' or adapting 'model sermons' from the Internet. The interviewee stated that one particular imam had been pictured delivering such a sermon while 'holding a briefing from Friends of Al Aqsa, which is a group which has ties to the broader Hamas support network in the [UK]',³⁶⁰ and noted that the Palestinian Scholars Organisation, which the same interviewee described as being 'even more closely tied to Hamas', had disseminated a model sermon via its website.³⁶¹

The interviewee went into considerable detail on the content of the sermons, recalling the 20th century invention of the idea of an ancient Muslim-Jewish war: an anachronism which has become a core component of Islamist ideology (see Sections 3.4.2, 3.4.4, and 3.4.6):

[On several] occasions ... the text which has been the subject of the sermon has been a hadith that was not particularly well known until really the 1930s and 40s, but it now appears in the original founding Hamas Covenant, and it's the one which predicts the end times, the final hour, so it's apocalyptic prophecy, and in that apocalyptic prophecy, Muslims fight and kill all of the Jews ... It's essentially a message which says 'If you kill Jews, God will be pleased with you'. More generally, there have been sermons which offer prayers for the success of the mujahideen, so Hamas is never or very rarely mentioned in sermons, rather the mujahideen who are fighting the Zionist Entity are the subject of prayers. There are also prayers for the destruction of God's enemies, and of course Jews are always mentioned, but polytheists and ... non-believers are [also] sometimes mentioned. ... And then a third strand of sermons which I have seen on a number of occasions are suggestions that politicians and

360. Friends of Al Aqsa (FOA) founder and leader Ismail Patel has previously made pro-Hamas statements, visited Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Gaza, praised a Hamas terrorist who killed a tour guide in Jerusalem and shared pro-Hamas content following the October 7 attacks. He has also been associated with Mohammed Sawalha, considered by US and Israel intelligence to have been a Hamas operative. The Government has previously expressed concern about FOA and connected groups having expressed support for Hamas. FOA has partnered with groups whose leaders have met with Hamas senior figures or have been banned by UK-allied states over concerns of Hamas support. Note: Screenshots of Patel's post 7/10 material can be provided on request. (David Rose, 'Leaders of Groups Behind London Pro-Palestinian March Have Links to Hamas: Pressure Mounts on Police to Block Pro-Palestine Rally After JC Reveals Several Organisers Met Terrorist Group Representatives', Jewish Chronicle, 2023, <https://www.thejc.com/news/leaders-of-groups-behind-london-pro-palestinian-march-have-links-to-hamas-ng34ql4i>; Islam Expo Ltd, 'Islam Expo Ltd Companies House record', (London: Companies House, 2004-2015), <https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/05275366/officers>; David Brown, Catherine Philip, and Richard Spencer, 'Finsbury Mosque Leader Mohammed Sawalha Part of Hamas Politburo', Times, 2017, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/finsbury-mosque-leader-mohammed-sawalha-part-of-hamas-politburo-0cdn3gs80>; Lee Harpin, 'Government Threatens to Cancel Palestinian Festival over Support for Hamas: Decision on Whether Next Month's Palestine Expo Event Can Take Place Expected Within Days — After Government Letter Stresses Friends of Al-Aqsa Support for Hamas', Jewish Chronicle, 2017, <https://www.thejc.com/news/government-threatens-to-cancel-palestinian-festival-over-support-for-hamas-a5z7mo44>; PalExpo, 'In 2017 and 2019 over 25000 People Came Together to Celebrate Palestinian Art, History and Culture at Palestine Expo. Both Events Were Held at Prestigious and World Renowned Venues, Queen Elizabeth II Centre and Olympia London', (London: Palestine Expo, n.d.), <https://www.palestineexpo.com/previous-paleexpo/>).

361. The Palestine Scholars Association (PSA) has a primary objective of supporting 'the spirit of the resistance' in Palestine. It has lauded the October 7 attacks and the 'mujahideen' who killed, wounded and captured Israelis. Spokesman Dr Hafez al-Karmi, who serves on their executive board, is considered by the Israeli Government to have previously been a member of Hamas' political bureau. ('Palestine Scholars Association Homepage, Page 4 (as of 19 June 2024)', (London: Palestine Scholars, n.d.), <https://palscholars.org/p04/>; 'Palestine Scholars Association News (as of 19 June 2024)', n.d., <https://palscholars.org/news/%d8%ae%d8%b7%d8%a8%d8%a9-%d8%ac%d9%85%d8%b9%d8%a9-%d8%b7%d9%88%d9%81%d8%a7%d9%86-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%a3%d9%82%d8%b5%d9%89-%d9%86%d8%b5%d8%b1-%d9%88%d8%b4%d9%87%d8%a7%d8%af%d8%a9/>; The Ties Between NGOs Promoting BDS and Terrorist Organizations, (Jerusalem: State of Israel Ministry of Strategic Affairs; Public Diplomacy, 2019), https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/generalpage/terrorists_in_suits/en/De-Legitimization%20Brochure.pdf).

the media are trying to fool you into thinking that Hamas committed massacres, when Hamas did not commit massacres and all of this is a lie and it's a pretext for a war and for a genocide that was always being planned and was always going to be executed by Israel, and that the suggestion that people had been murdered by Hamas was invented in order to create a justification for that conflict. So those are the three strands that I have seen in sermons. I know that they have been widely reported to the police. In all circumstances where there has been a response, the police have 'no-crimed' those reports.

This interviewee's reference to scepticism about the atrocities perpetrated by Hamas on 7 October 2023 may be seen in context of the recent survey finding (published while this report was in press) that only around one in four British Muslims, as compared to more than six out of ten members of the general population, believe that members of Hamas committed murder and rape in Israel on 7 October.³⁶² The implication — whether made by Islamists or by other Muslim extremists — that attacks on Israeli civilians constitute a form of self-defence was emphasised by all interviewees. This is unsurprising: as we have seen in Study I, defensive *jihad* has a special religious status, and Salafi-Jihadists in particular set a very low bar when it comes to the conditions under which this form of holy war may be waged (see Section 3.4.4). However, there are also secular reasons for presenting the conflict in such a way. As one interviewee put it, 'believ[ing] that what's happening in the Palestinian territory is a war crime' may lead someone to take a 'harder stance against Israel', while 'believ[ing] that it's a genocide' may lead them to see 'every means' as legitimate in opposing Israel. The same interviewee continued by explaining that, for this reason, '[i]f you're someone who already believes that the Jewish state must be destroyed, then the language of genocide is one that you embrace' as a way of talking about what Israel is doing. As noted in Study I, the fantasy of a genocide of the Arabs at the hands of the Jews has been a recurrent element of antisemitic rhetoric, and began as an element of Nazi propaganda disseminated during the actual genocide of the Jews at the hands of the Nazis (see Sections 3.4.2 and 3.4.6).

There was, however, disagreement between interviewees about whether the implication of rhetoric of this nature was that individual Jews should be targeted. One interviewee argued that the primary aim of calls for *jihad* against Jews was to arouse anger at Arab leaders for failing to launch military attacks on Israel, and another took the view that speakers may avoid drawing a distinction between Israel and diasporic Jews either out of a rhetorical imperative towards simplicity or because they 'can't be bothered to make a distinction or don't see a distinction'. However, it was admitted that such rhetoric could have the effect of inspiring individuals to attack Jewish targets in the UK, even if that was not the speakers' intention, and one interviewee took the clear view that at least some of those taking part in pro-Palestinian demonstrations 'wish[ed Jews] dead'.

The above observations suggest an exceptionally complicated situation with regard to incitement to violence and support for terrorist groups, in which it may be very challenging to determine the meaning of certain forms of speech, and also to establish responsibility for their potential implications. This may perhaps explain the 'no-criming' of reports of apparent incitement, referred to by the interviewee above, and, while one other interviewee suggested that both the police and the Charity Commission (within whose purview many mosques and other religious establishments fall) were reluctant to take action on Islamist antisemitism, it was also suggested that the UK may lack an adequate legal framework under which to deal with certain forms of incitement.³⁶³ That said, another interviewee, who was spoken to later at a later stage of the ongoing crisis, emphasised policing of the protests had become more effective by December than it had been in early October and in previous years.

4.4.4 A bigger issue than Islamist ideologues and organisations

It may be very difficult to identify the exact provenance of antisemitic ideas. One interviewee argued that it was important not to overemphasise the direct influence of particular Islamist ideologues, as the beliefs which those individuals have promoted circulate much more widely than the readership of their works would suggest, having become a recurrent theme in wider Muslim culture:

362. J.L. Partners, *British Muslim and General Public Attitudes Polling*, p. 20.

363. See also Sara Khan and Mark Rowley, *Operating with Impunity: Hateful Extremism: The Need for a Legal Framework*, (London: Commission for Countering Extremism, 2021), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/operating-with-impunity-legal-review>.

And the reason I say it's not necessarily Qutb that filters through in that way is that ... this type of thinking is very, very broad and wide, You know, it's Baathist thinking, it's traditional Arab Socialist thinking ... [The idea of] the colonialists and their agents versus the Muslims and [the idea that] Islamic society doesn't really exist, [that the current] society ... is controlled by colonialism and needs to be removed ... drip-feeds into the culture from Arab Socialism and ... through Islamism as well. And so those types of things end up within prevalent mainstream Islamist thought.

Three other interviewees emphasised a shift which they saw as having taken place in the last decade or so, whereby the circulation of ideas associated with Islamism is no longer limited to social networks built around Islamist organisations. One analysed this phenomenon as 'grassroots Islamism':

2014 was a longer conflict lasting about six weeks; 2021 I think lasted 11 days, and during that time what we saw was actually an awful lot of grassroots organising. For example, the convoys that drove through London were to a large extent grassroots organised, and deploying tactics which large organisations would struggle with. So, for example, they would post an Instagram story with a postcode on it, and that is the postcode which all of the cars in the convoy would split up and reconvene at, which made it very hard for the police to track them or to know where they're going unless they figured out which Instagram story to be following — and of course an Instagram story is ephemeral so the evidence disappears as well.

What we saw in 2021, therefore, was ... this shift from large-scale organisation through to grassroots organisation of Islamist activity, and then what we're seeing in the current conflict is again this ... sort of democratisation of Islamist activity. ... You have, straight after the October 7th attacks, the Palestine Solidarity Campaign calling for protests before Israel has even responded to the attacks and whilst there are still terrorists inside Israel carrying out massacres and rapes. And so you have the big organisations moving swiftly to mobilise people, but you also have grassroots mobilisation, such as people gathering to dance on streets, vehicles driving through cities with loud music playing, Palestinian flags flying, hooting and dancing in the cars.

Another interviewee argued that the word 'Islamism' might not strictly apply to this apparent grassroots phenomenon, and suggested that, in 2021 at least, some of the most effective organising had been done by small groups (as opposed to the familiar groups which organised the main protests):

I do think it does become a bit blurred as to whether 'Islamist' is the right term, because Islamism is a political movement with political goals, linked to the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jamaat-e-Islami, all their various splinter and successor groups and so on, and I don't know whether the people giving these sermons in these mosques and the mosques themselves really fit that category or whether they're coming from a different sort of cultural [and] religious angle ...

...

After the last conflict in Gaza in 2021, I had some interesting conversations with people who were saying that ... the antisemitism coming from Muslim communities wasn't coming from the usual organisational networks, it wasn't really coming from political Islamists, it wasn't coming from Salafis and Deobandis and the kind of streams that — a decade ago, and after 9/11 and 7/7 this was where a lot of it was coming from — and [instead] it was coming from ... Barelwi networks, from the kind of networks who were very big on the whole blasphemy issue as well, and that it was kind of a reflection of some of the political [and] religious streams in Pakistan who are very antisemitic kind of reflecting into this country in the same way as works with the whole blasphemy issue. ... What we were hearing

from our Muslim contacts was that that was where it was coming from then. ... [T]his time around, I don't know.

A third interviewee took essentially the same view, but argued more confidently for the continued relevance of these networks within the Barelwi community:

[T]en years ago, you would have seen a degree of interest [in demonstrations on the Israel-Palestine issue] but certainly no organisation from groups that we describe as Barelwi, so groups that are part of the Sufi rather than the Islamist or Deobandi or Salafi streams of [Sunni] Islamic religion and politics. ... [But v]isits from clerics and virtual communications through social media ... from Pakistan to British communities [have] resulted in, I would say, a radicalisation around the issue of the Prophet's honour, and other sectarian related issues, particularly relating to Ahmadis, to a lesser extent to do with Shias. ... And that's created ... a reservoir of people who are angry and excited, and so there is a demonstration that is taking place on Saturday, [and] one of the groups that is encouraging people to drive down from the North of England [to take part] is a group called Convoy4Palestine [, which] is the group which, in 2021, some of its members drove around the Finchley Road shouting rape threats to Jews. They are not an Islamist organisation. ... It's not an organisation which has an interest in creating a caliphate. It is more deeply embedded in the community, I think, than Islamist organisations ever were.³⁶⁴

The same interviewee also observed that some of the mosques where inflammatory sermons have been delivered 'are absolutely Islamist and are old and familiar names', while others are 'places [where] we'd never heard of these sorts of things happening before', and another interviewee expressed concern that nobody seemed to know whether any organisational link existed between the mosques in question, and identified this as a pressing area for research. In the absence of such a link, the delivery of such sermons across a wide swathe of the UK might best be regarded as a 'grassroots' phenomenon, and the interviewee who generally leaned towards that interpretation spoke as follows:

So this is, I think, the phenomenon of grassroots Islamism expressing itself, where perhaps the trustees of a mosque are not Islamists, perhaps the congregation of the mosque are not Islamists, and yet a preacher or a speaker has been allowed to take to the pulpit and that preacher or speaker has then delivered an Islamist message. That's unlikely to be happening if the entire congregation is deeply opposed to Islamism, so this again goes back to the idea that there is a deeper problem of people who are actively supportive but also people who are tacitly supportive or perhaps ambivalent towards [Islamism], and that is dangerous because, as we know with all forms of extremist ideology, they most readily pick up adherents where they aren't challenged — and that, I think, is something which we should find very concerning in this country.

All of these interpretations suggest that Islamist antisemitism — and Islamic extremism more generally — may be both growing and changing form, which is particularly worrying if (as the latter interviewee suggests) the ideologies and attitudes in question are not being robustly challenged within certain sections of the Mus-

364. Here, note that the logo of Convoy4Palestine, alongside 'IVision Charity', can be seen on the flyer advertising the car convoy / demonstration that would drive through to London from Bradford. An individual who promoted the demonstration later uploaded a statement, following the incident and appearing to have been jointly issued by both organisations, condemning bigotry and stating that those organisations will not accept such behaviour on their campaigns in the future. (David Rose, 'Organiser of Pro-Palestine "f***k the Jews" Convoy Planning New Protest on Armistice Day: Pressure Grows on the Police to Push for a Ban the 'Million March for Palestine' on Saturday', Jewish Chronicle, 2023, <https://www.thejc.com/news/organiser-of-pro-palestine-fk-the-jews-convoy-planning-new-protest-on-armistice-day-swlylpq>; Raven Saunt, 'Activists Plot New 'Convoy for Palestine' from Bradford to London on Saturday with male and female segregated buses just weeks after a group drove cars through Finchley yelling 'f*** the Jews, rape their daughters': Convoy will depart from Bradford and make two stops before arriving in London: Group will arrive to capital on segregated male and female coaches on Saturday; Will then join forces with 'Justice for Palestine Protest' outside Downing Street; The Metropolitan Police told MailOnline they are 'aware of the planned convoy', MailOnline, 2021, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9668919/Convoy-Palestine-activists-plan-new-trip-London-Saturday.html>; Razaq Hussain, '#CONVEY 4 Palestine IVision Charity', 17 May 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/razaq.hussain.9404/posts/pfbid02oAvwQbLKP539N9dfc78iqE3AqPG9Tvzpz3IULMgRlUj82VaghUow2sNkN8UtbKdMI>.)

lim community, since this could potentially lead to a situation in which they begin to appear uncontroversial. However, a fourth interviewee distinguished between ‘extremism’ and ‘extreme views’, arguing that, where these are communicated by preachers without formal ties to any particular extremist group, the agency of a ‘traditional’ Islamist organisation will be necessary in order to fully radicalise members of the congregation:

[The Israel–Palestine issue] is the most evocative [issue], it is emotional, [but] it’s a lot of hot air most of the time. [The imams are] just emotionally angry and speaking about it, and then riling up ... the people who are listening to the sermons to be just as emotional, but then they don’t know what to do with the emotion, and then Islamist groups kind of harness that pain and anger ...

...

[If] the person who’s giving the sermon [is for example] a Hizb ut-Tahrir member, ... they have an agenda, but I don’t think [most of] the imams have an agenda as such, they’re just emotionally angry and then ... riling up the people to be emotionally angry about it ... almost ... [as if] it’s a religious duty to be that upset about it as well ...

...

But I’m not sure that the imams know how to exploit it. What do they want to do with that anger? What have they got planned? A lot of them just make people angry, whereas Hizb ut-Tahrir make people angry and then they exploit that, they say ‘join us’, but what are the imams asking them to join?

This suggests that the inflammatory rhetoric heard in some mosques is generally not linked to any sort of recruitment drive or activist programme, but may nonetheless help to create a climate in which — as the same interviewee put it, ‘any group with an agenda’ (including not only Hizb ut-Tahrir, but also Salafi-Jihadist and Muslim Brotherhood-linked organisations) — ‘will use and weaponise this issue and this situation’. In a statement recalling the above-quoted description of a shift in tactics towards greater use of social media to coordinate action, a different interviewee observed that

there’s [been] a shift away from traditional organisations to social media influencers, YouTubers, podcasters in the same way there is in the way that all ... extra-parliamentary politics works now. So you can look at [REDACTED], and it’s a news website and a podcast, basically — they get a big audience. Same with [REDACTED], people like this. They may have backgrounds in this type of organisation — I think some of these people did come through Hizb ut-Tahrir at some point or other — and that will have had an influence on their thinking, but they’re operating in a much more fluid sort of non-organisational way.

All of these problems indicate that further proscription of specific Islamist organisations may not by itself have a major impact on the situation currently developing in the UK. Two interviewees emphasised that conventional organisations are still required in order to mount substantial demonstrations, but none claimed that the organisations doing so were directly responsible for much of the illegal and/or inciteful behaviour taking place at those demonstrations, and some explicitly argued that they were not:

In terms of actually putting [the demonstrations] on, deciding the messaging, and all the rest of it, that still has a kind of central organisational core, but in terms of who it is there and who’s causing the trouble, that’s individuals and small groups and small networks ... just doing their thing in the midst of a big movement without any sort of orchestration ... So you get people doing their ‘Khaybar, Khaybar’ chanting ... if you’ve got 20, 50 people [doing that] on a march of 100,000, most people on that march won’t have a clue that’s happening, won’t see it, won’t hear it — the organisers have noth-

ing to do with it, but [the demonstration] just sort of pulls in all these different people with different attitudes basically.

However the evolving relationship between Islamist organisations and the wider activist sphere is to be conceived, such developments clearly represent an immense challenge both with regard to policing and with regard to any ongoing or future attempts at counter-messaging or the promotion of community cohesion.

4.4.5 Lack of institutional understanding of Islamist antisemitism

Interviewees expressed concern that official institutions simply did not recognise or understand antisemitism as manifest in context of Islamism and other forms of Islamic extremism. One commented that ‘if [someone was] expressing admiration for Adolf Hitler, there’s no kind of second guess as to whether that person was antisemitic’, but ‘if [someone was] expressing admiration for an Islamist ideologue, ... it would [not necessarily] be seen that that particular individual was following an ideology that was inherently antisemitic’. A different interviewee observed that the police strategy of allowing demonstrations on the subject of the Israel–Palestine conflict to go ahead and only making arrests afterwards was less effective than it might have been because officers assigned to maintain order at the demonstrations often ‘simply do not understand what they are seeing’, and therefore do not necessarily recognise where offences have taken place, while covert police observers surveilling the same demonstrations appear to ‘have no idea what they are looking for’. An interviewee with experience of the local authority Channel panels to which individuals deemed to be at risk of radicalisation may be referred through the Prevent safeguarding programme spoke as follows:

Antisemitism ... was never a core focus of [a] Channel discussion ... the framing was that ‘Oh god, we’ve got some practical issues, they don’t wanna go there, we can’t put them there, because they’ll be a risk ... to the Jewish community there, so we’ve got to move him somewhere else’ ... [and] no one was going ‘Oh okay this person has expressed antisemitic sentiment, we should look into this further’

Another interviewee described the same problem at slightly greater depth:

One of the common features of pretty much all extremist ideology that Prevent is concerned with ... is antisemitism, and yet despite that being a common thread that runs right the way through those extremist ideologies, mileage varies immensely within the Prevent programme on how well people understand antisemitism — and particularly ... Islamist antisemitism. I think that there can sometimes — and I’m not saying this is necessarily the case everywhere — there are people in Prevent who really have an excellent understanding of antisemitism — but there is a tendency sometimes to focus on things like violent expressions of ideology or opposition to British values or anti-LGBT sentiment and things like that, without addressing the antisemitism properly, or [even] allowing the antisemitism to be brushed away, brushed off as actually just a form of political expression in relation to Israel which of course we know so well it is not.

Yet another interviewee made a similar point, albeit with the caveat that the problem was not at the top of the Prevent organisational hierarchy, but further down (and thus attributable to a lack of training):

I think people at the top of Prevent get it completely. [However,] I suspect and have a bit of reason to believe that, amongst ... Prevent practitioners, there’s the same sort of ignorance and misunderstanding of antisemitism as there is in wider society, and therefore that inhibits an understanding of how it works specifically within Islamist extremism.

These comments suggest that institutional awareness of antisemitism as a component of Islamist ideology may be low within the organisations tasked with mitigating the problem of extremism in the UK, at least at the level at which those organisations deal with individual people of concern. If that is the case, then it is

likely both that such organisations may have been less than optimally effective in their interventions and that they may be unaware of the scale of a problem which the British state will eventually have to face up to. In the recent absence of the sort of investigative reporting that has been applied to other forms of extremism — one interviewee observed that, ‘[i]n the case of the far right, it would be utterly unremarkable and normal to see the far right being infiltrated by journalists, investigative reporters et cetera, [but] we do not seem to be having that same kind of level of activity against Islamists’ — this is perhaps unsurprising.

A particularly interesting argument made by one expert to whom the author of this study spoke was that the antisemitism of Islamists is only one form of inter-ethnic or inter-religious bigotry whose existence has been neglected. Observing that there are multiple minority groups in the UK whose historic conflicts *outside* the country have an impact on their relations here, that interviewee noted that British institutions and their representatives, including police, teachers, and healthcare professionals, often appeared oblivious, because of the limitations of their training (which has generally proceeded under the anti-racist paradigm critiqued in Section 1). That is, the individuals tasked with dealing with bigotry and hate have been trained to view these problems exclusively in terms of relations between the majority community and various minority communities, when inter-minority relations may be at least as fraught. The same interviewee suggested that, while communities and individuals that come to adopt a British identity are likely to leave those conflicts in the past, there are some whose commitment to the perpetuation of inter-communal enmity has grown more deeply entrenched as they have become more securely established in the UK (especially on a political level). The recent unrest between Hindus and Muslims in Leicester was provided as an example of how easily such ethno-religious tensions can get out of hand. The mention by another interviewee of sectarian persecution of Ahmadi Muslims (see Section 4.4.4) provides another example of how dangerous these enmities can become.

These were not the only problems which interviewees raised with regard to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) as implemented in the UK. One interviewee argued that EDI initiatives had sometimes acted to lend plausibility to antisemitic stereotypes and conspiracy theories:

What we’re starting to see is that actually some of the kind of EDI ideas and principles and teaching actually end up creating more problems when it comes to antisemitism ... especially [with] the more kind of radical approaches of ‘all racism is about structures of power and white supremacy and the world is divided into the oppressors and the oppressed and every conflict is a function of this systemising of the world’. ... [W]hen people bring that understanding ... as a way of interpreting Israel and Palestine or as a way of interpreting antisemitism and Jews in Western societies, it encourages people to see it as ‘Israel is the white, powerful Western oppressor; therefore, Israel’s networks of support in the West are white and powerful and oppressors and racists’ — and that’s Jews — and that then opens up spaces for antisemitic conspirac[y theories] or stereotypes about Jews being powerful and rich and so on, so ... that understanding of racism and how racism works — it’s not just that it excludes antisemitism because it doesn’t fit, but [that] it actually encourages an antisemitic way of thinking at times.

A different interviewee drew attention to the practical problem of naivety in the application of EDI policies, within both the corporate and the educational sectors, which have at times led to the misguided invitation of extremists to speak, due to their mis-identification as reputable community representatives:

We’ve even seen cases where, as part of diversity and inclusion activity within organisations, Islamists have been given a platform. And, of course, that’s the opposite of what diversity and inclusion training is supposed to be achieving, so what we’ve ended up with now is a situation where the immune system that is supposed to protect organisations from extremists and from hateful ideologies is in fact platforming those very same hateful ideologies

...

I think that our schools are completely or almost completely unprotected from Islamist ideology, and the checks and balances that we have are far too weak, and also the investigative powers that we have are inadequate to root out this kind of thing, and I think there's a parallel again with the sort of diversity and inclusion [issues] that we hear in the corporate context, where sometimes a desire by schools to be inclusive ... actually has the effect of platforming Islamists ... and ... that's the most dangerous thing of all, because the earlier somebody is targeted with extreme ideology, the more likely it is that that ideology will stay with them for life.

In this context, it is perhaps worth noting the finding of a recent legal review that 'there is no specific criminal law ... that criminalises efforts to radicalise children into extremism, if those efforts to radicalise children do not include the encouragement, preparation, or instigation of acts of terrorism'.³⁶⁵ Universities present a different set of difficulties. The same interviewee continued:

Higher education has always been very very problematic, and there are different strata at which that occurs. You obviously have ... academics themselves who pursue Islamist ideology ... and ... you also then have Students Unions, which themselves are very problematic, particularly in terms of the types of events that they will often host in university premises, so they become a sort of route into respectability for Islamists. So if, for example, a university has no affiliation to — and would never have any affiliation to — an organisation like CAGE, but the Students Union books a room and brings someone from CAGE to speak, then — without the university wishing for that to have happened — the university has essentially hosted CAGE.

It should perhaps be clarified that the hypothetical Students Union in the interviewee's example might *also* not have wished for this to have happened, as the speaker would typically have been brought in by a student society which had booked the venue *through* the Students Union, rather than by the Students Union itself. Nonetheless, the point remains that Students Unions have often provided the vector through which extremist speakers have ascended to a respectable platform: a point to which this study shall return in Section 4.5. The above interviewee was not the only one to highlight the problem of academics who promote a view of the conflict which adds credibility to extremist narratives, especially by promoting the idea that Israel is a 'settler-colonial' society: an idea which (as we have seen) combines leftist, Nazi, and Muslim supremacist ideas (see Study I and Section 4.4.2). For example, another interviewee argued that

much of the problematic understanding [which many people have of the conflict] comes down to the ... settler-colonial theory of Israel's creation, which underpins the basic belief that Israel should never have been created ... and what flows from that is the idea [that] ... if Israelis get killed, well tough luck, they shouldn't be there. ... There's a crossover, a point of connection between that and the idea that there should not be Jewish sovereignty on Muslim land. They're sort of two versions of the same way of viewing the conflict. And university academia in general has done more than any other part of society to encourage this way of viewing the conflict and all the things that flow from it, and when I look at universities today, part of the problem is ... students saying antisemitic things to Jewish students or students chanting certain inflammatory chants that tend towards conflict ... , but the bigger problem is, ... what's being taught about this conflict ... just creates this very skewed very particular view of it.

As with so many of the other themes identified by experts interviewed for this study, the above admits of no simple solution.

365. Khan and Rowley, p. 33.

4.5 Discussion

The purpose of this study has been to contextualise and enrich the findings of Study I by drawing on the knowledge of members of the researcher-practitioner community who have directly engaged with Islamist antisemitism in their work. It has found that the history of antisemitism within Islamist movements has left a distinct legacy in the UK, both in the exaggerated importance placed on the Israel-Palestine conflict (suggesting additional reasons for that emphasis not uncovered through the methodology applied in Study I), and in the specific forms of antisemitic ideology expressed (although these should not be assumed to have reached contemporary believers through direct transmission via the works of the historical figures associated with the ideological innovations in question). Grievances — including not only physical harms inflicted on individual Muslim people in the course of military conflict, but also the symbolic harm regarded as having been inflicted on the worldwide Muslim community by the mere existence of a Jewish state on land where Muslim supremacy had for centuries been regarded as the natural order of things — have been emphasised as having particular importance, not only for radicalisation and recruitment but as an adjunct to the Salafi-Jihadist interpretation of ‘defensive jihad’ as providing virtual *carte blanche* for violence, including against civilians (see Study I). However, this study has also emphasised the importance of recognising the importance of Islamic extremist currents other than Salafi-Jihadism and Islamism more generally — or at least of Islamic extremist *ideas* as they circulate beyond the immediate reach of Islamist organisations.

This study has further found indications that police forces, educational institutions, local authority safeguarding teams, and equality and diversity professionals may lack awareness of the problem of Islamist antisemitism — as opposed to the extreme right wing forms of antisemitism familiar from the British education system and from Western popular culture — perhaps in part because of a failure on the part of the media to report on Islamism and other forms of extremism which draw upon the religion of Islam.

The problem of extremist speakers associated with Islamist organisations such as CAGE being hosted at British universities is undoubtedly real.³⁶⁶ As noted, this often happens not via the agency of the university itself but via the agency of a student society which has booked the venue through the university’s associated Students Union. It should therefore be observed that Students Unions throughout the UK have taken action to prevent right wing extremist speakers from appearing on campus since the National Union of Students passed its No Platform policy in 1974³⁶⁷ — a policy which has at times been used to deny quite innocuous speakers a platform, and was for a while abused in such a way as to threaten the existence of Jewish Societies on campus³⁶⁸ — so it is reasonable to assume that they could also act to prevent Islamists from speaking, if the will to do so can be found. The problem of a one-sided view of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict allegedly being taught in universities is harder to resolve, as there can be no suggestion of compromising academic freedom over this issue, and no interviewee even implied that such an approach would be conceivable. As the sheer range of prior studies cited in Study I demonstrates, there has been considerable academic research into the problem of Islamist antisemitism, so it may simply be that teaching on the subject has often been done by individuals without genuine scholarly expertise in the area, or by those for whom ideological commitments take priority over such expertise.

An ideological tendency to view ethnic bigotry exclusively as a matter of skin colour related to the history of European colonisation (see Section 1) was highlighted in relation to academia and to educational and corporate attempts to work towards greater equality, diversity, and inclusion. It may also be related to the argument by one interviewee that failure to understand Islamist antisemitism is only one specific instance of a wider pattern in which ethnic, religious, or ethno-religious prejudice is systematically unrecognised when it is expressed by members of minority groups. The importance of coming to terms with inter-minority conflict and prejudice is clear from the Hindu-Muslim clashes in Leicester to which one interviewee

366. See Hasan, Toube, and Khan, *Mainstreaming Islamism*, pp. 4, 18–21, and throughout.

367. Rich, *The Left’s Jewish Problem*, pp. 115–18.

368. Rich, pp. 118–57.

referred.³⁶⁹ Another interviewee drew attention to the persecution of Ahmadi Muslims both in Pakistan and in the UK, as well as to the use of threatened or actual violence in order to enforce particular standards of respect towards religious figures or texts.³⁷⁰ Thus, Islamist antisemitism can be seen in context of a range of other inter-communal and intra-communal problems with which British state and civil society organisations are only belatedly coming to terms.

4.6 Scope for future research

Given the scale of this project, it would only ever have been possible to gather insights from a relatively small number of individuals, and, for this reason, a decision was taken from the outset to focus on individuals who would be able to provide a high conceptual vantage point. However, there are hundreds of individuals in the UK whose professional duties bring them face-to-face with the issues discussed here, and their contextually specific experience will be important to draw upon. These would include Prevent practitioners, counter-terrorism professionals, and officers of the prison and probation service. Although individuals such as the aforementioned constitute a vital untapped resource for investigation, considerable institutional obstacles are likely to be encountered in drawing upon their knowledge, because individuals serving in such roles are typically restricted from participating in external research without explicit permission from further up in their organisational hierarchy. This might suggest that any research which is done will be most likely to be undertaken internally, by the organisations within which such individuals are employed. However, while internal research is certainly preferable to no research, it may prove difficult to publish, with the result that insights arising may remain tightly limited in circulation and unavailable for other researchers to build upon – or indeed to critique. It is therefore to be hoped that partnerships may be developed between researchers and other professionals inside and outside the organisations in question, so that the potential promise of such research may be fulfilled.

5. Study III: Statistical association between antisemitism and sympathy for Islamist extremism

5.1 Abstract

The final study presented in this report comprises a novel quantitative analysis of data collected in what appears to be the only survey of British Muslims to have measured both antisemitic attitudes and extremist views: the 2015 survey commissioned from ICM by Channel 4. It finds a highly statistically significant positive association between antisemitism and several measures of extremism, with the strongest association being found between antisemitism and support for Islamic State (IS, ISIL, or ISIS). Problems with the dataset are acknowledged, and suggestions are made for future research to mitigate or circumvent such problems. How-

369. See John Connolly, 'Why Is Violence Breaking Out in Leicester?', 18 September 2022, <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/why-is-violence-breaking-out-in-leicester->; DLUHC, 'Independent Review Launched into Civil Unrest in Leicester: Michael Gove Orders Independent Review into the Unrest That Occurred in Leicester Last Year', 2023, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/independent-review-launched-into-civil-unrest-in-leicester>.

370. For more on these topics, see Fiyaz Mughal, 'We Have Turned a Blind Eye to Extremism Against the British Ahmadi Muslim Community: A Web of Extremism Percolates Outwards from Pakistan into Communities in the UK', *New Statesman*, 19 July 2018, <https://www.newstatesman.com/policies/2018/07/we-have-turned-blind-eye-extremism-against-british-ahmadi-muslim-community>; APPG AMC, *Suffocation of the Faithful: Persecution of Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan and the Rise of International Extremism*, (London: All Party Parliamentary Group for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, 2020), <https://appg-ahmadiyyamuslim.org.uk/report/>; Duffy, 'Why Britain's Blasphemy Controversies Are Here to Stay'; Liam Duffy, 'A New Blasphemy Battle Is Coming: Highly Discriminate Violence Is on the Rise', 7 July 2023, <https://unherd.com/2023/07/a-new-blasphemy-battle-is-coming/>. Recent research has also highlighted tensions in Hindu-Sikh and Sikh-Muslim relations both in the UK and in India, as well as concerns over sectarian violence within the Sikh community itself, see Jagbir Jhutti-Johal and Sunny Hundal, *The Changing Nature of Activism Amongst Sikhs in the UK Today*, (Commission for Countering Extremism, 2019), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-changing-nature-of-activism-amongst-sikhs-in-the-uk-today>. An important study of blasphemy extremism in the UK was released after the completion of this report: Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens, *Understanding and Responding to Blasphemy Extremism in the UK* (Commission for Countering Extremism, 2024), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/understanding-and-responding-to-blasphemy-extremism>.

ever, the analysis provides strong evidence that antisemitism should at least be considered a risk factor with regard to radicalisation.

5.2 Introduction

In 2015, Channel 4 News commissioned a face-to-face survey of 1081 British Muslims and a telephone survey of a comparison sample of 1008 British adults from ICM Research, a member of the British Polling Council. Fieldwork for both was carried out from 5–7 June. For the face-to-face poll, a quota sample was used in randomly-chosen areas where at least 20% of residents were Muslim. The findings of the surveys were used as the basis for the 2016 Channel 4 documentary, ‘What British Muslims Really Think’, presented by Trevor Philips, the former chair of the UK’s Equality and Human Rights Commission. The documentary was controversial, and received criticism for making statements some of which were alleged to be inadequately supported by the survey findings.³⁷¹ Perhaps more damagingly, some opinion columnists reporting on the programme used those survey findings as a rhetorical springboard from which to launch into alarmist claims bearing only the most tenuous relationship to the programme content or to the data on which it drew.³⁷² Whether or not the programme makers were responsible for those claims, this experience should lend support to the view that particular care is necessary when researching — and reporting research on — ethnic and religious minorities.

The survey questions covered a number of issues, not all of which received attention in the Channel 4 documentary. Among the issues which were not discussed in the programme were the respondents’ attitudes to Jews. As Section 1 has observed, the question of antisemitism within the Muslim community is widely regarded as sensitive or even dangerous to acknowledge, but urgently needs to be addressed through rigorous scholarly research. The data collected for the programme provide a unique opportunity to carry out such research on a statistical level. They were provided to the activist organisation, Campaign Against Antisemitism, which in turn provided them to the author of this study.

Instead of using an analysis of these data to estimate the level of antisemitism or sympathy for extremism within Muslim communities — what a statistician would refer to as the ‘central tendency’ of these variables — the current study instead estimates the association between those traits among members of those communities: that is, the extent to which an individual British Muslim’s level of sympathy for extremism can be predicted from his or her level of antisemitism, or vice versa. Here it is argued that, while there are problems with the sample (which will be discussed in greater detail in Section 5.3), the data collected in the ICM / Channel 4 survey of British Muslims provide researchers with an unprecedented opportunity to answer this research question. Data collected from the comparison sample drawn from the general British population would be useful to answer the equivalent question for British people in general, but this would be of lesser relevance to the current report, which is specifically focused on the under-researched phenomenon of antisemitism and extremism in the Muslim world, as the existence of a relationship between antisemitism and certain forms of right-wing extremism is not in question (see Section 1).

To conduct such a study of the British Muslim population is not to stigmatise that population. Rather, it is simply to ask whether members of that population who adhere to the extremist ideologies whose proponents target that population for recruitment might hold more antisemitic views than other members of the same population. In this study, absolutely no comparison is made between the population of British Muslims and the wider population of British people more generally, whether with regard to antisemitic or to extremist views. Section 1 has discussed some recent polling which *did* aim to make such comparisons, but that is not a focus here.

371. See Bridget Byrne and James Nazroo, ‘Misleading, Irresponsible and Dangerous: Why Phillips and Co Should Apologise for “What British Muslims Really Think”’, *Manchester Policy Blogs*, 2016, <http://blog.policy.manchester.ac.uk/ethnicity/2016/04/misleading-irresponsible-and-dangerous-why-phillips-and-co-should-apologise-for-what-british-muslims-really-think/>; Miqdaad Versi, ‘What Do Muslims Really Think? This Skewed Poll Certainly Won’t Tell Us’, *Guardian*, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/apr/12/what-do-muslims-think-skewed-poll-wont-tell-us>.

372. E.g. James Delingpole, ‘Trevor Phillips’s Documentary on Muslims Was Shocking — but Not Surprising’, *Spectator*, 2016, <https://www.spectator.com.au/2016/04/why-do-we-pretend-that-all-muslims-are-sweet-smiley-and-integrated/>; Katie Hopkins, ‘What Do British Muslims Really Think? Now We Know. And It’s Terrifying’, *MailOnline*, 2016, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-3539431/KATIE-HOPKINS-British-Muslims-Really-Think-know-s-terrifying.html>.

Because it is anticipated that many readers of this report will be unaccustomed to statistical analysis of the type conducted in this study, care has been taken to explain the methodology and findings in particular detail. Those who find such explanation tedious are invited to skip ahead to the findings reported in Sections 5.6.1 and 5.6.2, or even to the discussion of those findings in Section 5.7.

5.3 Sample

5.3.1 Data collection methodology

It is noted that the data collection strategy employed with regard to ICM's sample of British Muslims has been criticised both on the grounds that Muslims living in areas where their co-religionists constitute 20% or more of the local population may not be representative of British Muslims generally and on the grounds that the quota-based approach which was taken may not have yielded a perfectly representative sample even of the Muslim residents of those areas, such as could have more reliably been achieved through probability sampling.³⁷³ The validity of these criticisms is acknowledged, although it is emphasised that minority groups are, by their nature, difficult to sample, with the result that some departure from the ideal of probability sampling was almost inevitable. Indeed, major opinion research companies in the UK do not typically use true probability sampling even for their bread-and-butter 'omnibus' surveys of the general population, because it is too expensive. Moreover, a probability sample of a minority religious group would require a list of members of that group to use as a sampling frame — a list whose compilation would raise severe ethical, privacy, and civil liberties concerns.

In fact, a very similar sampling strategy to that used by ICM had been used in a study of sympathy for various forms of radicalism among British Muslims, published the previous year in the leading scientific journal, *PLOS One*.³⁷⁴ If that study served as a model for the ICM data collection (which seems likely, given similarities between questionnaire items; see Sections 5.5 and 5.4.1), then a strong case can be made to the effect that ICM researchers were following what would have been considered to be established good practice at the time. A very similar data collection strategy was employed by the same opinion research company for a subsequent study of British Muslims, which justified the approach as follows:

According to the 2011 Census, the Muslim population accounts for 4.8% of the adult population in Britain. However, individuals' religious affiliation cannot be separately identified on any existing comprehensive sampling frame. As such, when conducting research among this audience screening is required to identify eligible respondents (in this case, whether or not they self-identify as Muslim). However, it is extremely time-consuming and very expensive to screen for such a low-incidence group using a standard nationally-representative random location approach.

Therefore, we decided to take a random location, quota-based sampling approach. We selected locations from all of those where the Muslim population accounts for at least 20% of the total population. The 20% minimum threshold was chosen as it provides the best balance between extensive coverage and feasibility. A full-scale random location methodology which includes areas with very few Muslims living in them would have been practically impossible given reasonable cost restraints. Slightly more than 50% of British Muslims (51.38%) live in the areas we surveyed, and we believe that the 20% threshold was the most suitable compromise.³⁷⁵

These are reasonable arguments. While not ideal, the sampling strategy cannot therefore be dismissed out of hand, and neither can the data collected. Indeed, it should be admitted that almost any feasible alternative

373. Byrne and Nazroo, 'Misleading, Irresponsible and Dangerous'.

374. Kamaldeep Bhui, Nasir Warfa, and Edgar Jones, 'Is Violent Radicalisation Associated with Poverty, Migration, Poor Self-Reported Health and Common Mental Disorders?', *PLoS ONE* 9, no. 3, (2014), <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0090718>, p. e90718.

375. Martyn Frampton, David Goodhart, and Khalid Mahmood, *Unsettled Belonging: A Survey of Britain's Muslim Communities*, (London: Policy Exchange, 2016), <https://policyexchange.org.uk/publication/unsettled-belonging-a-survey-of-britains-muslim-communities/>, pp. 11–12.

approach to sampling would also have been open to criticism: at least one major opinion research company in the UK refuses to survey *any* religious minority other than Christians on the grounds that a truly representative sample would be impossible to achieve, and – while that position is certainly to be respected – any attempt to answer statistical questions about British Muslims would require *some* sort of sample, such that the likely effect of insistence on an ideal sample would simply be for such questions not to be asked at all. If such outcomes are to be avoided, it will have to be accepted that research always involves compromise between what would be ideal and what can realistically be achieved.

While the author of this study would feel less confident in using a sample with the aforementioned problems to estimate central tendencies within variables – for example, overall mean levels of antisemitism or sympathy for extremism in the British Muslim population (see Section 5.2) – the estimation of associations between those variables is a different matter. While it is likely that antisemitism and extremist sympathies might be higher in some demographic sub-groups than in others, and therefore might be over- or underestimated in a study relying on a sample in which those sub-groups were over- or underrepresented, this is not necessarily a problem for a study aiming only to estimate the relationship between those variables. As the classic statistical study of the relationship between newer and older forms of antisemitism argues, ‘[t]he situation is somewhat akin to [that of] epidemiological studies relating, say, the incidence of cancer to smoking behavior: there is no need for the proportion of smokers in such studies to mimic the true percentage in the population’.³⁷⁶ That is, it is not important whether the sample contained a higher or lower proportion of people with extremist sympathies or antisemitic views than the population for which the sample is taken to stand in, because the purpose of this study is not to estimate either of those proportions, but only to provide an abstract measure of the extent to which an individual’s propensity towards or away from extremism predicts his or her propensity towards or away from antisemitism.

5.3.2 Demographic descriptive statistics

Altogether, 1081 responses were collected from British Muslims. Basic demographic characteristics of the sample are recorded in Table 1, broken down by age. It may be observed that there is an increasing gender imbalance towards males in all age bands from 35–44 onwards. Although this imbalance could in principle be corrected for through weighting, the extent of the imbalance would require certain individuals to be assigned very high weights, effectively forcing them to stand in for much larger numbers of people with the same broad demographic characteristics and reducing confidence in the findings.

Table 1: Sample demographic descriptive statistics

| | | Gender | | Housing | | |
|-----------|------|--------|------|---------|-----------|-------|
| Age | n | Female | Male | Rented | Mortgaged | Owned |
| (Overall) | 1081 | 47 | 53 | 48 | 28 | 25 |
| 18–24 | 208 | 50 | 50 | 51 | 22 | 27 |
| 25–34 | 330 | 50 | 50 | 52 | 26 | 22 |
| 35–44 | 271 | 48 | 52 | 49 | 33 | 17 |
| 45–54 | 149 | 45 | 55 | 47 | 33 | 20 |
| 55–64 | 74 | 34 | 66 | 32 | 25 | 43 |
| 65+ | 49 | 29 | 71 | 22 | 18 | 60 |

The above observation highlights the importance of not using data drawn from the sample to support estimates of the proportion of British Muslims who hold particular views. It is therefore re-emphasised that the aim of this study is *not* to investigate the prevalence of extremist or antisemitic views within that popula-

376. Kaplan and Small, ‘Anti-Israel Sentiment Predicts Anti-Semitism in Europe’, p. 551.

tion, but only to investigate the potential relationship between the two variables: an endeavour for which full demographic representativeness is not necessarily essential, especially if demographic controls are applied.

5.4 Materials

5.4.1 Measures of antisemitic and extremist attitudes

One of the most powerful tools for the measurement of opinions, attitudes, beliefs, personality traits, and even medical and psychological symptoms is the Likert scale: that is, a group of statements, each of which a research subject or patient is invited to respond to on a sliding scale, for example ranging from ‘Strongly disagree’ to ‘Strongly agree’ via two or more intermediate stages. Responses are converted to numbers and then totalled or averaged in order to produce a single score. This score can be treated as a measure of the extent of a particular phenomenon in relation to a particular individual, provided that the questionnaire items making up the scale have face validity as plausible measures of aspects of that phenomenon being measured, and that the mathematical relationships between responses to those items are judged to be satisfactory on certain commonly used metrics. A Likert scale is generally considered to produce more accurate measurements than a single-item question, because it enables multiple aspects of a phenomenon to be taken account of.

To their credit, researchers involved in the original ICM / Channel 4 research project which generated the dataset analysed here appear to have chosen to adapt two fairly standard sets of questionnaire items in designing their own questionnaire (see Table 2). 11 items in the questionnaire were drawn from the Sympathies for Radicalisation or SyfoR scale developed by Kamaldeep Bhui and colleagues,³⁷⁷ while a further 12 were adapted from the questionnaire instrument which the Anti-Defamation League or ADL used to measure anti-semitism until 2022. The latter has not typically been treated as a Likert scale, with ADL publications typically reporting percentage rates of agreement for individual items or for overall numbers of items. However, the use of a sliding scale of response options facilitates such treatment, which has been argued to be preferable for research purposes,³⁷⁸ and is the approach typically taken in academic studies of many forms of prejudice,³⁷⁹ including antisemitism.³⁸⁰

377. Bhui, Warfa, and Jones, ‘Is Violent Radicalisation Associated with Poverty, Migration, Poor Self-Reported Health and Common Mental Disorders?’

378. Mikołaj Winiewski and Michał Bilewicz, ‘Are Surveys and Opinion Polls Always a Valid Tool to Assess Antisemitism? Methodological Considerations’, in *Jewish Studies at the Central European University Yearbook, 2009–2011*, ed. András Kovács and Michael L. Miller, (Vienna: Central European University, 2013), pp. 83–97.

379. E.g. Susan A. Basow and Kelly Johnson, ‘Predictors of Homophobia in Female College Students’, *Sex Roles* 42, no. 5/6, (2000), <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1007098221316>, pp. 391–404; Becky L. Choma, Gordon Hodson, and Kimberly Costello, ‘Intergroup Disgust Sensitivity as a Predictor of Islamophobia: The Modulating Effect of Fear’, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 48, no. 2, (2012), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2011.10.014>, pp. 499–506.

380. E.g. Allington, Hirsh, and Katz, ‘Antisemitism Is Predicted by Anti-Hierarchical Aggression, Totalitarianism, and Belief in Malevolent Global Conspiracies’.

Table 2: Questionnaire items used for analysis

| Item | Response options |
|--|--|
| Scale: Antisemitism | |
| Jewish people have too much power in Britain | Strongly agree, Tend to agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Tend to disagree, Strongly disagree, Don't know |
| Jewish people have too much power over the government | |
| Jewish people have too much power over the media | |
| Jews are more loyal to Israel than to this country | |
| Jews have too much power in the business world | |
| Jews have too much power in international financial markets | |
| Jews still talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust | |
| Jews don't care what happens to anyone but their own kind | |
| Jews have too much power over global affairs | |
| Jews think they are better than other people | |
| Jews are responsible for most of the world's wars | |
| People hate Jews because of the way they behave | |
| Scale: Radicalism | |
| Use violence in political protest | Completely sympathise, Sympathise to some extent, Neither sympathise nor condemn, Condemn to some extent, Completely condemn, Don't know |
| Make threats of terrorist actions as part of political protest | |
| Organise radical groups, but do not take part in terrorist actions | |
| Commit terrorist actions as part of political protest | |
| Suicide bombing to fight injustice | |
| Scale: Defensive violence | |
| Violence organised by groups to protect their own religion | Completely sympathise, Sympathise to some extent, Neither sympathise nor condemn, Condemn to some extent, Completely condemn, Don't know |
| Violence to fight injustice by the police | |
| Violence to fight injustice by governments | |
| Items for individual analysis | |
| Violence against those who mock the Prophet | Completely sympathise, Sympathise to some extent, Neither sympathise nor condemn, Condemn to some extent, Completely condemn, Don't know |
| Stoning those who commit adultery | |
| There being areas of Britain in which Sharia law is introduced instead of British law | Strongly support, Tend to support, Neither support nor oppose, Tend to oppose, Strongly oppose, Don't know |
| The objective to create an Islamic state | |
| The way in which Islamic State / ISIS / ISIL is trying to establish a Caliphate | |
| Should any publication have the right to publish pictures of the Prophet? | Yes, It depends on the nature of the pictures, No, Don't know |
| Should any publication have the right to publish pictures which make fun of the Prophet? | |

Three disadvantages of this scale from the point of view of a present-day researcher are that it does not attempt to capture Israel-related forms of antisemitism, that it does not contain a balance of ‘reversed’ or ‘con-trait’ items, and that measures of its factor structure and internal reliability have not been published. This was inevitable, given that the research was conducted before the publication of the first antisemitism scale to overcome these problems.³⁸¹ However, it will be possible to carry out some simple forms of validation within the context of this paper, using the collected data itself. The most commonly used measure of internal reliability is Guttman’s lambda 3, also known as Cronbach’s alpha, although Guttman’s lambda 6 is preferred by many psychometricians, for which reason, both of these measures are employed here. These measures assume the unidimensionality of a scale — that is, they assume that all items of a scale measure a single trait — which seems reasonable in the case of the antisemitism items. The items of the SyfoR scale measure two different but related traits, referred to by the scale authors as Radicalism and Defensive Violence,³⁸² so these are treated as belonging to two separate scales for all analytic purposes, with the authors’ chosen names for these traits being retained.

Three items from the Sympathy for Radicalisation inventory, i.e. ‘Take part in non-violent political protest’, ‘Commit minor crime in political protests’, and ‘Violence to protect their family’, were excluded from this study because these behaviours would not be regarded as extremist in the UK.

5.4.2 Internal reliability of scale measures

Responses to the questionnaire items collectively treated as measuring antisemitism exhibited very high levels of internal reliability, with an alpha of .96 and a lambda 6 of .97. Although these scores are likely to have been to some extent inflated by the lack of con-trait items (i.e. items expressed agreement or sympathy with which would indicate reduced, rather than increased levels of the trait in question) due to the recognised problem of acquiescence bias,³⁸³ they are still very high — indeed, high enough that some of the items could probably be considered redundant. Responses to the questionnaire items collectively treated as measuring Radicalism exhibited an alpha of .90 and a lambda 6 of .89. Responses to the questionnaire items collectively treated as measuring Defensive Violence exhibited an alpha of .92 and a lambda 6 of .90. Again, there is likely to have been some inflation of these figures due to the absence of con-trait items to balance out the effects of acquiescence bias, but these are nonetheless very impressive scores which indicate a high level of internal consistency.

5.5 Analytic methodology

The initial analytic approach taken in this report was to calculate correlations between pairs of Likert scores, and also between Likert scores and responses to certain individual items included in the questionnaire. In the formal statistical sense, correlation is a measure of association between two numeric or ordered variables, ranging from -1, which indicates that one variable *always* falls when the other rises, to 1, which indicates that both variables *always* rise together, via zero, which indicates that rises and falls in the two variables are not related in a linear or monotonic way (depending on the specific calculations used).

Statistical inference involves treating measurements taken from a sample from a population as estimates of the ‘true’ values which would be measured if it were possible to collect data from the population as a whole. Thus, the ‘estimated’ coefficients of correlation and mean differences referred to in the analysis below are

381. Daniel Allington, David Hirsh, and Louise Katz, ‘The Generalised Antisemitism (GeAs) Scale: A Questionnaire Instrument for Measuring Antisemitism as Expressed in Relation Both to Jews and to Israel’, *Journal of Contemporary Antisemitism* 5, no. 1, (2022), <https://doi.org/10.26613/jca/5.1.99>, pp. 37–48; Allington, Hirsh, and Katz, ‘The Generalised Antisemitism (GeAs) Scale: Validity and Factor Structure’, 2022.

382. Bhui, Warfa, and Jones, ‘Is Violent Radicalisation Associated with Poverty, Migration, Poor Self-Reported Health and Common Mental Disorders?’, p. 6.

383. That is, the tendency on the part of some respondents to agree — or, conversely, disagree — with all statements with which they are presented, regardless of propositional content, see John J. Ray, ‘Reviving the Problem of Acquiescent Response Bias’, *Journal of Social Psychology* 121, no. 1, (1983), <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.1983.9924470>, pp. 81–96; McKee J. McClendon, ‘Acquiescence and Recency Response-Order Effects in Interview Surveys’, *Sociological Methods and Research* 20, no. 1, (1991), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124191020001>, pp. 60–103; Jacques B. Billiet, ‘Do Unbalanced Scales Influence the Respondent’s Opinion?’, *Contributions to Methodology and Statistics* 10, (1995), pp. 67–83; Bert Weijters and Hans Baumgartner, ‘Misresponse to Reversed and Negated Items in Surveys: A Review’, *Journal of Marketing Research* 49, no. 5, (2012), <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmr.11.0368>, pp. 737–47.

the *actual* coefficients of correlation with regard to the data collected by ICM. How close these are to the ‘true’ values for the population of British Muslims cannot, of course, be known, but these figures are the best estimates available. In order to facilitate informed judgement, *p*-values and 95% confidence intervals are provided for all of these estimates. A *p*-value indicates the probability of randomly selecting a sample of the given size within which a correlation at least as strong can be observed from a population where the true correlation is zero. A 95% confidence interval indicates the range within which we can be 95% confident that the true correlation for the population from which the sample was drawn might fall, on the assumption that the sample can be considered equivalent to a true random sample. The safety of this assumption cannot be assessed, but this dataset remains the best that is available.

In some cases, a spurious correlation between two variables may arise, or a genuine one may be masked, as a result of mutual correlation with one or more additional variables. For example, if scores for Antisemitism and for Defensive Violence were both higher, on average, among members of one particular gender, then this on its own could be sufficient to produce a spurious correlation between Antisemitism and Defensive Violence: that is, the two variables might appear to be associated with one another when really it is only that they are both associated with gender. Conversely, if scores for Antisemitism were higher, on average, among members of one gender, while scores for Defensive Violence were higher, on average, among members of the other gender, then this could mask a real correlation between the two variables: that is, they might be correlated among men and also among women, but the correlation might disappear when we consider men and women as a single group. It is possible to remove the interference introduced by such mutual correlations through a procedure known as ‘partialling out’. This provides an estimate of what a correlation will be when the additional variables are held constant (i.e. ‘controlled for’). Throughout the analysis of correlations presented below, this procedure is followed for the demographic variables of age, gender, and residence in rented accommodation (which, in the absence of data on personal or household income, is treated as a proxy for economic status). However, a matrix of raw (i.e. uncontrolled) rank-order correlations between all variables included in the analysis is provided for the sake of transparency.³⁸⁴

The above-outlined analysis, which serves to establish the general principle of a statistical link between endorsement of antisemitic ideas and sympathy or support for extremism, is followed by an exploratory analysis employing logistic regression to determine the extent to which the former can be considered a risk factor with regard to the latter.

384. The rank-order coefficient of correlation (popularly known as the ‘Spearman correlation’), which assumes a monotonic relationship, was used because it was applicable across all pairs of variables used in the study. The product-moment coefficient of correlation (popularly known as the ‘Pearson correlation’), which assumes a linear relationship, could not have been used with the ordinal variables.

5.6 Findings

5.6.1 Confirmatory analysis

Raw correlations between all variables are presented in matrix form in Table 3, while partial (i.e. demographically controlled) correlations between antisemitism and each of the nine predictor variables, together with confidence intervals and significance tests, are presented in Table 4. Comparison between the estimated coefficients in Table 4 and the coefficients in Table 3 indicates that the application of demographic controls made little difference, in some cases slightly decreasing, and in others slightly increasing, the strength of the association of primary interest.

Table 3: Raw rank-order correlations between all variables

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. Age | | -0.08 | -0.10 | 0.11 | -0.06 | -0.10 | -0.09 | -0.05 | -0.04 | -0.05 | 0.00 | 0.02 | -0.01 |
| 2. Female | -0.08 | | -0.05 | -0.10 | -0.03 | -0.05 | -0.07 | -0.06 | -0.04 | -0.05 | -0.02 | 0.02 | 0.00 |
| 3. Rented accom. | -0.10 | -0.05 | | 0.10 | -0.04 | -0.04 | -0.07 | -0.07 | 0.03 | -0.05 | -0.03 | 0.03 | 0.02 |
| 4. Antisemitism | 0.11 | -0.10 | 0.10 | | 0.07 | 0.19 | 0.18 | 0.08 | 0.23 | 0.04 | 0.04 | 0.12 | 0.05 |
| 5. Radicalism | -0.06 | -0.03 | -0.04 | 0.07 | | 0.62 | 0.44 | 0.54 | 0.29 | 0.34 | 0.38 | -0.04 | -0.07 |
| 6. Defensive Violence | -0.10 | -0.05 | -0.04 | 0.19 | 0.62 | | 0.56 | 0.47 | 0.34 | 0.30 | 0.31 | -0.04 | -0.06 |
| 7. Viol. mock Proph. | -0.09 | -0.07 | -0.07 | 0.18 | 0.44 | 0.56 | | 0.56 | 0.34 | 0.31 | 0.30 | 0.06 | 0.04 |
| 8. Stone adulterers | -0.05 | -0.06 | -0.07 | 0.08 | 0.54 | 0.47 | 0.56 | | 0.30 | 0.32 | 0.31 | 0.04 | 0.04 |
| 9. Intro. Sharia UK | -0.04 | -0.04 | 0.03 | 0.23 | 0.29 | 0.34 | 0.34 | 0.30 | | 0.34 | 0.31 | 0.05 | 0.05 |
| 10. Create Isl. state | -0.05 | -0.05 | -0.05 | 0.04 | 0.34 | 0.30 | 0.31 | 0.32 | 0.34 | | 0.81 | 0.01 | 0.04 |
| 11. IS Caliphate | 0.00 | -0.02 | -0.03 | 0.04 | 0.38 | 0.31 | 0.30 | 0.31 | 0.31 | 0.81 | | -0.02 | 0.00 |
| 12. Pict. of Proph. | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.03 | 0.12 | -0.04 | -0.04 | 0.06 | 0.04 | 0.05 | 0.01 | -0.02 | | 0.66 |
| 13. Pict. fun of Proph. | -0.01 | 0.00 | 0.02 | 0.05 | -0.07 | -0.06 | 0.04 | 0.04 | 0.05 | 0.04 | 0.00 | 0.66 | |

Table 4: Estimated rank-order correlations with antisemitism, following demographic controls (95% confidence intervals)

| | | <i>r</i> | | | | |
|---------------------|-----|----------|-------|------|----------|----------|
| | DF | Est. | Low | High | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> |
| Radicalism | 802 | 0.06 | -0.01 | 0.13 | 1.80 | 0.072 |
| Defensive Violence | 800 | 0.20 | 0.13 | 0.26 | 5.63 | <0.001 |
| Viol. mock Proph. | 786 | 0.21 | 0.14 | 0.27 | 5.91 | <0.001 |
| Stone adulterers | 776 | 0.09 | 0.02 | 0.16 | 2.49 | 0.013 |
| Intro. of Sharia | 745 | 0.23 | 0.16 | 0.30 | 6.45 | <0.001 |
| Create Isl. state | 720 | 0.05 | -0.03 | 0.12 | 1.22 | 0.223 |
| IS Caliphate | 726 | 0.04 | -0.03 | 0.11 | 1.12 | 0.264 |
| Pict. of Proph. | 771 | 0.11 | 0.04 | 0.18 | 3.21 | 0.001 |
| Pict. fun of Proph. | 779 | 0.04 | -0.03 | 0.11 | 1.20 | 0.230 |

Three of the predictor variables have correlations with antisemitism in the range of .20 to .23, i.e. Defensive Violence, sympathy for violence against those who mock the Prophet, and support for the introduction of Sharia law in parts of the UK. These correlations are by no means negligible by the standards of the be-

havioural sciences: on one highly influential schema, ‘small’ but still notable positive correlations begin at around .10, while ‘medium’ positive correlations are said to begin at around .30.³⁸⁵

Correlations between antisemitism and two further variables, i.e. support for the stoning of adulterers and denial of the right to publish pictures of the Prophet, were around the lower end of the scale for a ‘small’ effect. Although these are relatively weak correlations, they are of the sort of magnitude typically encountered in personality research, and are statistically significant. This means that we may have a high level of confidence that the variables are positively correlated in the population from which the sample was drawn: if there were no such correlation in that population, then one would expect to have to draw over a thousand random samples of this size before finding one in which an apparent correlation at least this strong appeared by chance.³⁸⁶ However, correlations with radicalism, support for the objective of creating an Islamic state, support for Islamic State itself, and support for the right to publish pictures making fun of Muhammad were very weak.

In order to understand why the weakness of some correlations might give a misleading impression of the relationship between antisemitism and the attitudes reflected in the nine predictor variables, it is necessary to discuss some of the assumptions behind the mathematical concept of correlation. For two variables to be strongly correlated, the relationship between them must be observable across all levels of both. However, this does not appear to be the case with the variables analysed here. For visualisation of the relationships involved, see Fig. 1, which presents a violin plot with horizontal markers for the 25th, 50th, and 75th centiles for antisemitism at each level of each predictor variable (the 50th centile being the median). In only one case, i.e. support for the introduction of Sharia law in parts of the UK, does the median level of antisemitism rise regularly and distinctly as we move from the least extreme position to the most extreme position. In all other cases, we see the median level of antisemitism rise by very small increments, or even waver up and down, as we move from the least extreme to the second-most extreme position with regard to the predictor variable in question. However, in *every* case, respondents holding the most extreme position with regard to the predictor variable had the highest median level of antisemitism.

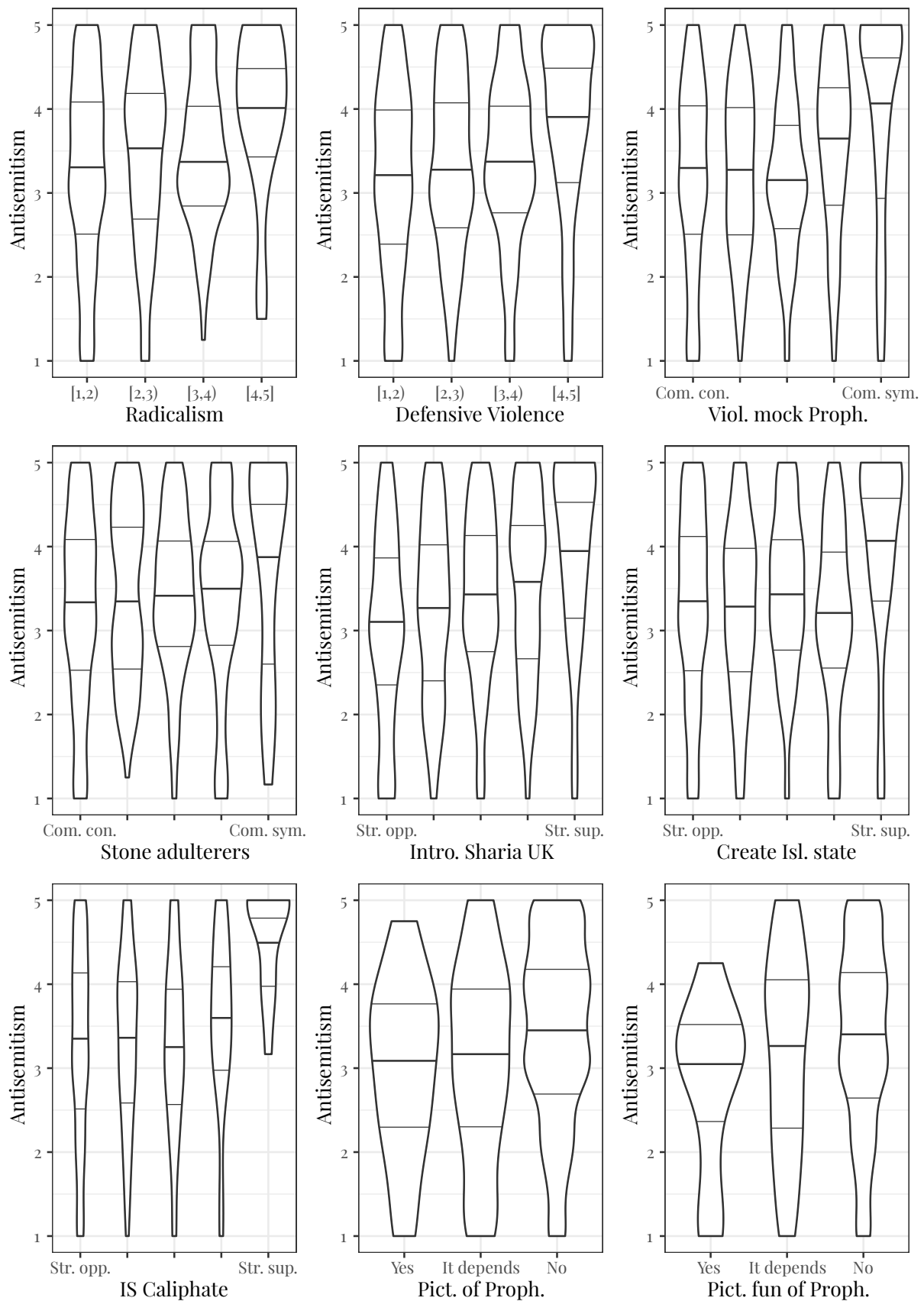
With regard to Radicalism, Defensive Violence, sympathy for violence against those who mock the Prophet, and support for the objective to create an Islamic state, the median level of antisemitism for those adopting the most extreme position was around the level of the 75th centile of antisemitism for those adopting all other positions. With regard to support for the way in which Islamic State had sought to establish a caliphate, the situation was even more dramatic: the 25th centile for antisemitism among those in a position of strong support was around the level of the 75th centile for antisemitism among those in a position of opposition, neutrality, or weak support. Indeed, *everyone* who expressed strong support for Islamic State scored more than 3.0 for antisemitism: that is, there was no one in the dataset who both supported Islamic State to this extent and was in an overall position of disagreement or even neutrality with regard to the 12 antisemitic tropes on which respondents were questioned.

This strongly suggests that, while levels of antisemitism were roughly constant across the great majority of survey respondents who rejected, were neutral towards, or were only weakly supportive of extremism, they were *much higher* among the small minority of survey respondents whose views can perhaps truly be regarded as extreme. For this reason, the same data were re-analysed employing a different approach.

385. Which is in reality close to the maximum typically found in many areas of psychological research, see Jacob Cohen, *Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioural Sciences*, Psychology Press, (Mahwah (NJ): Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1988), pp. 79–80.

386. As we have seen in Section 5.3, the sample from which the data were collected was not, in fact, a true random sample. As is typically the case in social science research (which is only exceptionally able to employ such sampling when surveying human populations), inferential statistics (here, *t*-values and confidence intervals) are calculated on the assumption that the sample is *equivalent to* a random sample for the purposes of the research question being addressed. Whether it is truly equivalent cannot be known, but these are the best data currently available. As argued in Section 5.3, problems of representativeness may be less severe when estimating associations between variables than when attempting to estimate the central tendencies of the variables themselves (which the author has avoided doing in this study).

Figure 1: Violin plots of antisemitism at each level of the nine predictor variables (25th, 50th, and 75th centiles indicated with horizontal lines)



5.6.2 Exploratory analysis

In a follow-up analysis prompted by examination of the visualisations in Fig. 1, each of the measures of extremist sympathies was dichotomised: that is, re-coded so that there were only two possible values: one representing the most extreme value, and one representing all the other possible values. With regard to Radicalism and Defensive Violence, the highest level was equated with a score of between 4 and 5, inclusive. With regard to violence against those who mock the Prophet, it was the ‘Completely sympathise’ response option; with regard to the questions about the right to publish, it was the answer ‘No’; with regard to the remaining single-item variables, it was the ‘Strongly support’ response option.

Once this was done, antisemitism and the same demographic variables from the confirmatory analysis were used to model the likelihood that a randomly chosen member of the sample had provided the most extreme answers with regard to each of the measures of extremist sympathies, through a procedure known as logistic regression. Age was transformed into a pseudo-continuous variable by assuming that each respondent was at the bottom of the age bracket in which he or she placed him- or herself, and then both age and level of antisemitism were standardised through subtraction of the mean and division by the standard deviation.

The results are presented in Table 4, in the form of adjusted odds ratios with 95% confidence intervals. An odds ratio of 1.00 indicates that a predictor variable tells us nothing about the likelihood of a given respondent’s having extreme views. An odds ratio of over 1.00 indicates that the predictor variable is associated with increased odds of extreme views, while an odds ratio of under 1.00 indicates that the predictor variable is associated with decreased odds of extreme views. Antisemitism is associated with increased odds of extreme views on *every single measure*, and there is only a single measure – acceptance of the right to publish pictures that make fun of the Prophet – on which the 95% confidence interval crosses 1.00, indicating statistical insignificance. By contrast, there is only a single measure – sympathy for violence against those who mock the Prophet – on which a demographic variable attained even marginal significance, with older members of the sample being very slightly less likely to sympathise strongly (all other things being equal).

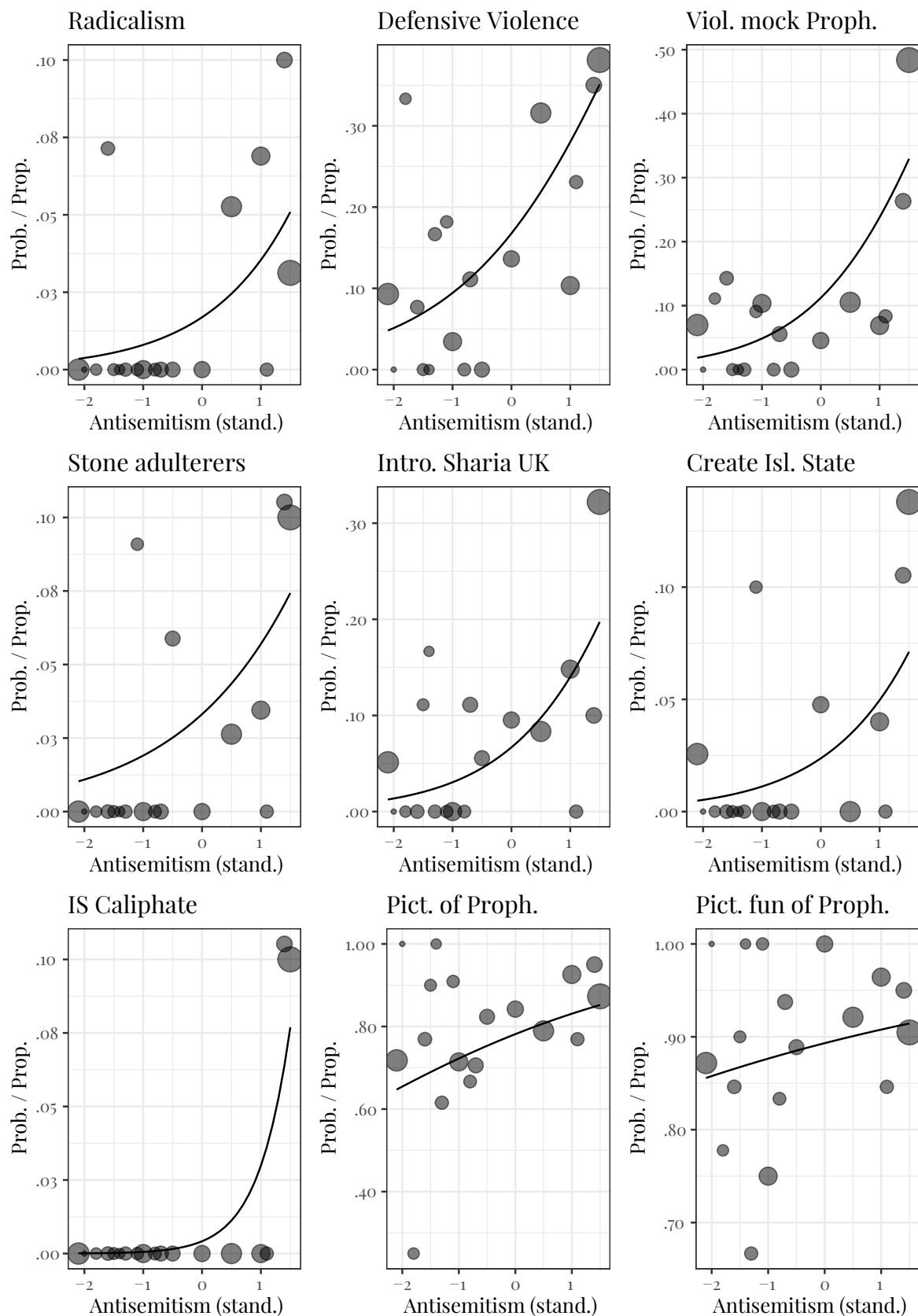
Table 5: Predicted likelihood of holding most extreme attitudes: adjusted odds ratios (95% confidence intervals)

| | Radicalism | | | | Defensive Violence | | | | Viol. mock Proph. | | | |
|----------------------|------------------|------|-------|----------|--------------------|------|------|----------|---------------------|------|------|----------|
| | Est. | Low | High | <i>p</i> | Est. | Low | High | <i>p</i> | Est. | Low | High | <i>p</i> |
| Antisemitism | 2.14 | 1.15 | 4.43 | 0.026 | 1.93 | 1.55 | 2.44 | <0.001 | 2.47 | 1.86 | 3.36 | <0.001 |
| Age | 1.07 | 0.61 | 1.76 | 0.806 | 0.94 | 0.77 | 1.15 | 0.545 | 0.77 | 0.59 | 0.98 | 0.038 |
| Female | 1.09 | 0.35 | 3.23 | 0.879 | 0.84 | 0.56 | 1.25 | 0.388 | 0.62 | 0.37 | 1.00 | 0.053 |
| Rented accom. | 0.53 | 0.16 | 1.58 | 0.266 | 0.73 | 0.49 | 1.09 | 0.124 | 0.76 | 0.47 | 1.21 | 0.253 |
| | Stone adulterers | | | | Intro. Sharia UK | | | | Create Isl. State | | | |
| | Est. | Low | High | <i>p</i> | Est. | Low | High | <i>p</i> | Est. | Low | High | <i>p</i> |
| Antisemitism | 1.76 | 1.09 | 3.02 | 0.028 | 2.28 | 1.62 | 3.30 | <0.001 | 2.15 | 1.31 | 3.79 | 0.005 |
| Age | 0.82 | 0.51 | 1.27 | 0.400 | 1.17 | 0.89 | 1.52 | 0.248 | 0.62 | 0.35 | 1.00 | 0.069 |
| Female | 0.47 | 0.16 | 1.16 | 0.120 | 0.60 | 0.32 | 1.09 | 0.101 | 0.55 | 0.21 | 1.32 | 0.198 |
| Rented accom. | 0.91 | 0.38 | 2.17 | 0.822 | 1.05 | 0.59 | 1.84 | 0.875 | 1.45 | 0.61 | 3.57 | 0.406 |
| | IS Caliphate | | | | Pict. of Proph. | | | | Pict. fun of Proph. | | | |
| | Est. | Low | High | <i>p</i> | Est. | Low | High | <i>p</i> | Est. | Low | High | <i>p</i> |
| Antisemitism | 7.34 | 2.61 | 30.24 | 0.001 | 1.37 | 1.14 | 1.65 | 0.001 | 1.18 | 0.93 | 1.49 | 0.179 |
| Age | 0.73 | 0.35 | 1.35 | 0.345 | 0.94 | 0.78 | 1.13 | 0.501 | 0.93 | 0.73 | 1.18 | 0.521 |
| Female | 0.79 | 0.20 | 2.62 | 0.712 | 1.16 | 0.80 | 1.68 | 0.446 | 1.03 | 0.64 | 1.68 | 0.899 |
| Rented accom. | 1.15 | 0.35 | 4.06 | 0.822 | 1.31 | 0.90 | 1.91 | 0.154 | 1.17 | 0.72 | 1.90 | 0.526 |

With regard to Radicalism, violence against those who mock the Prophet, support for the introduction of Sharia law in the UK, and support for the creation of an Islamic state, having a level of antisemitism one standard deviation above the mean more than doubled the odds of holding the most extreme views; with regard to Defensive Violence, the odds were nearly doubled, with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 1.55 to 2.44. When it came to support for Islamic State itself in its efforts to establish a caliphate, a level of antisemitism one standard deviation above the mean was associated with a sevenfold increase in the odds of the same, with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 2.61 all the way up to 30.24.

The models are visualised in Fig. 2. In each plot, the curve represents the estimated probability of taking the most extreme view for a male respondent of the mean age for the sample, living in rented accommodation, for a given level of antisemitism (standardised as above), while the dots indicate the proportion of all respondents taking the most extreme view at each level of antisemitism (standardised and rounded to one decimal place, with the size of the dots reflecting the number of observations). The relationship is most striking with regard to support for Islamic State, which runs at 10% among respondents at least 1.4 standard deviations above the mean level of antisemitism, but is close to 0% for all other respondents. However, the relationship also appears very clear with regard to support for violence against those who mock the Prophet, which runs at 26% among respondents 1.4 standard deviations above the mean level of antisemitism, and at 48% among respondents 1.5 standard deviations above the mean, but at 7% throughout the rest of the sample.

Figure 2: Estimated probability and observed proportion of most extreme views, by standardised level of antisemitism



5.7 Discussion

The analysis presented above finds strong evidence of an association between antisemitism and support both for policies promoted by Islamists and related extremists and for the activity of the Salafi-Jihadist group, Islamic State. This association appears particularly strong when we compare those individuals with the most extreme views to the remainder, including not only those who reject Islamism, but also those who equivocate, or who sympathise only half-heartedly. With regard to every measure of extremist attitudes examined in this study, those respondents at the extreme end of the spectrum held more antisemitic attitudes than the others, on average. The stronger association of antisemitism with so-called Defensive Violence than with Radicalism is of interest because of the belief that genocidal antisemitism is a defensive measure against the (projected) genocidal intentions of Jews or Zionists (see Sections 3.4.1, 3.4.2, 3.4.6, and 4.4.3). However, the finding of an even stronger association between antisemitism and high levels of support for Islamic State is of interest for the contrary reason that Islamic State was less active than many other Islamist groups in pursuing an anti-Jewish agenda (see Section 3.4.4). It may be that support for an openly terrorist organisation such as Islamic State simply represented the strongest form of extremist sympathy measured in the data collection – and it should be remembered that respondents were not asked about their degree of support for any other Islamist group. Thus, it seems plausible that a still stronger relationship might have been found between antisemitism and support for Hamas, which is not only an Islamist terrorist organisation but an Islamist terrorist organisation famous for the murder of Jews: a point which would apply almost regardless of the direction of any causal relationship which might be assumed to underlie the association (for example, Hamas supporters might be exposed to more anti-Jewish propaganda than Islamic State supporters as a result of their support for Hamas, while people who were already very highly antisemitic might preferentially support Hamas over Islamic State because of its direct attacks on Jewish targets). This possibility is all the more concerning given the finding by other researchers that Hamas is far more popular than Islamic State among British Muslims (see Section 1).

Respondents with strong sympathies for extremism cannot, of course, be assumed to be extremists in their own right, the proportion of which is likely far too small for a significant number to have been captured in a sample of 1081: to have a good chance of finding even a dozen members of extremist groups in a sample of this size would require the UK membership of those groups to be in the tens of thousands, which is obviously not the case. Rather than being extremists, then, these respondents can be assumed simply to be people who strongly sympathised with at least some of the ideas promoted, goals sought, and/or methods used by extremist organisations. The authors of the questionnaire instrument from which the Likert scales here used to measure extremist attitudes were drawn proposed that such individuals are *vulnerable* to radicalisation,³⁸⁷ rather than truly radicalised (see Section 4.4.3 for a related understanding proposed by one of the expert interviewees). This suggests at least two non-exclusive ways in which to interpret the finding of an association between antisemitism and extremist sympathies. Firstly, if those members of the British Muslim population who are most vulnerable to radicalisation are also more prone to antisemitism, then it is reasonable to assume that those who actually become radicalised will likewise have a greater likelihood of holding antisemitic attitudes, and thus to threaten, or to encourage others to threaten, Jewish targets (see Section 2 for cases where this has happened). Secondly, it may be that a preexisting tendency towards antisemitism predisposes individuals towards extremist views (for example, by inclining them to see Islamist propaganda regarding Israel or a purported ‘Zionist-Crusader’ conspiracy as reasonable), or (alternatively) that antisemitism increases as an individual gravitates towards extremism, for the simple reason that antisemitism is a component of multiple forms of Islamist and Islamic extremist ideologies (see Study I). However, whichever causal interpretation is considered preferable, a statistical association between antisemitic and extremist views implies that the former may be considered a risk factor for the latter. That is, while the findings of this study cannot resolve the important question of why such an association might exist (a question addressed elsewhere in this report), they provide statistical support for the view that, the more antisemitic the attitudes

387. Bhui, Warfa, and Jones, ‘Is Violent Radicalisation Associated with Poverty, Migration, Poor Self-Reported Health and Common Mental Disorders?’, p. 4.

of a given British Muslim, the more likely it can be assumed to be that the individual in question will be sympathetic to extremism.

The findings of this study thus have important implications for counter-extremism and counter-terrorism policy. Although there were problems with the demographic representativeness of the sample, controlling for demographic variables did not substantially affect the analysis of correlations, which suggests that the finding of an association is unlikely to have been an artefact of the demographic make-up of the sample. Replication studies are always to be desired, especially on matters of policy importance, but the statistical significance of many specific findings was sufficiently great that the general hypothesis of an association between antisemitism and sympathy for extremism may already be treated as possessing a certain degree of support. That is, it is not the case that findings were so marginally significant that they could easily be attributed to sampling error, and, while the probability that an apparent finding could have arisen from that source alone can only be known in relation to a true probability sample, it remains to be demonstrated that the sample from which the data were collected could have deviated from that ideal in such a way as to produce these findings in the absence of an association between antisemitism and sympathy for extremism in the population from which the sample was taken.

5.8 Scope for future research

It must be emphasised that the above finding was made in the absence of a measurement instrument sensitive to Israel-related forms of antisemitism. This is important, because agitation around the Palestinian issue is far more central to Islamist propaganda than are the traditional European and Christian anti-Jewish stereotypes reflected in the questionnaire items used to produce the index of antisemitism employed in this study. That is, we would have reason to expect an even stronger statistical relationship between Islamist and Islamic extremism on the one hand, and a comparable measure of antizionist antisemitism on the other, although the hypothesis of such a relationship was not possible to test using the data analysed here. In this connection, it is probably worth noting that – while there exists a validated questionnaire instrument for the measurement of antizionist antisemitism alongside traditional antisemitism (see Section 6) – there is no known questionnaire instrument which takes account of specifically Islamist and Islamic expressions of antisemitism, such as the idea of an ancient religious war between Muslims and Jews (see Section 3.4.2) – a point which may or may not be important in designing a follow-up study (such instruments are designed for use across multiple communities and therefore do not typically take account of specifically Christian expressions of antisemitism either).

Whether or not it is considered necessary or desirable to modify the data collection instrument in these ways, more recent data would also be of interest in view of the suggestion by more than one of the expert interviewees spoken to for Study II that agitation around a number of Islamist causes, including but not limited to the Israel-Palestine issue, has considerably increased in the last few years (see Sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.4). The use of a more representative sample of the British Muslim population would also be preferable, although (in the event that such a data collection is considered permissible on a political level, which is by no means certain) it will be important not to allow perfectionism on this particular matter to become an obstacle (see Section 5.3.1).

6. Conclusion

Each of the three studies collected together within this report has found persuasive evidence of a connection between extremism in the Muslim world and antisemitism. Although the historical evidence is seldom discussed in public fora, it is especially strong: the *status quo ante* which Islamists seek to restore was one in which Jews were systematically humiliated and oppressed, and contact with and admiration for European antisemites, especially the genocidal Nazis, was a major element in the development of Islamist ideology. The admittedly small number of counter-extremism researchers and practitioners spoken to for this report had all observed powerful evidence of the link's existence, and testified to its importance as an explanatory factor

in recent events in the UK. And statistical evidence for the attitudinal existence of such a link on a population level has also been provided, suggesting that antisemitic views are a much better predictor of support for extremism among British Muslims than any standard demographic variable.

A full discussion of the potential policy implications of such a connection is beyond the scope of this report, but it would clearly suggest the need for greater awareness, among counter-extremism practitioners, among law enforcement professionals, and among those involved with the Channel programme. Such awareness might also be beneficial at a wider societal level: too often, antisemitism is identified exclusively as a characteristic of right-wing extremism in the white British population, which (as the research presented here suggests) may create a false impression of the threat landscape faced by the Jewish community in the UK. Earlier research has consistently found that the latter perceives Islamist antisemitism to be a greater threat than the antisemitism of the extreme right (see Section 1); the research presented here indicates that there may be very good reasons for that perception.

It is widely recognised that a finding of correlation, such as that made in Study III, does not imply any particular causal relationship. However, the assumption of causation is not required for recognition of antisemitism as a risk factor for radicalisation in the population from which the sample was drawn, nor for acknowledgement of the implication that Jews and Jewish institutions may be a particular target for extremists if those at greatest risk of radicalisation tend to be characterised by hostility to Jews. With regard to causal relationships, it should be emphasised that statements of the form ‘antisemitism gives rise to extremism’ or ‘extremism gives rise to antisemitism’ are unlikely to constitute a meaningful description of social reality, as crude ‘laws’ of this type are largely unknown to sociology, social psychology, and political science. Indeed, Studies I and II suggest the possibility of much more complicated relationships, with the Israel–Palestine issue being one among several prominent themes in extremist agitation, and with antisemitic ideas being deeply embedded in multiple competing strands of Islamist and other Muslim extremist thinking.

There is, then, a clear need for further research. A replication of the statistical study presented here, ideally with pre-registration and in a peer-reviewed venue, would be particularly welcome. Such a study could act to investigate the relationship between Islamist extremism and ‘new’, i.e. antizionist, forms of antisemitism, if it were to use a more up to date scale which takes account of Israel-related expressions of antisemitism.³⁸⁸ On the other hand, it is acknowledged that such a data collection would be politically difficult to conduct, and so it may be that the ICM / Channel 4 data analysed here will remain the last statistical word on the matter. More extensive qualitative research with counter-extremism practitioners, such as Prevent officers and intervention providers, might help to clarify the range of ways in which antisemitic ideas may relate to extremist positions, although it will be difficult to have confidence in the findings if they are not published and opened up to scrutiny, which may present problems if the research is conducted internally. Content analysis of sermons, social media posts, lectures, speeches, and *nasheeds* would present fewer practical problems, especially if the objects of analysis have been publicly released, although content analysis can tell us only about messages being delivered, and not about their reception by various audiences, which may ignore them, take them to heart, interpret them literally or subjectively, etc. Thus, in order to investigate any relationship between antisemitic ideation and terror offending, it is hard to imagine any adequate substitute for interview research conducted within the offender population: a form of research little practised in the UK with regard to the topic of extremism, but which has usefully addressed that topic in France, albeit without a focus on antisemitism.³⁸⁹

All of these forms of research might additionally have wider benefit in that they could potentially open up a range of inter- and intra-communal tensions as areas both of study and of public interest, helping both practitioners and members of the policy community to transcend the limits of an outdated paradigm for the understanding of hatred and extremism. However, the core message of this document is much simpler than

388. For example, the validated scale developed by Allington, Hirsh, and Katz, ‘The Generalised Antisemitism (GeAs) Scale: A Questionnaire Instrument for Measuring Antisemitism as Expressed in Relation Both to Jews and to Israel’, 2022 and validated in Allington, Hirsh, and Katz, ‘The Generalised Antisemitism (GeAs) Scale: Validity and Factor Structure’, 2022.

389. See in particular Hugo Micheron, *Le Jihadisme Français: Quartiers, Syrie, Prisons* (Paris: Gallimard, 2020). On the lack of such research in the UK, see Daniel Allington, *The national research environment for the study of extremism in the UK* (London: Commission for Countering Extremism, 2023), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-research-environment-for-the-study-of-extremism-in-the-uk>, pp. 38–40 & 48–49.

that. It is that the democratic world must come to terms with the existence of powerful military, political, and religious factions for which the Holocaust is unfinished business.

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