

Cambridge University Union: “Peal of Laughter” Greets Malaysian Prime Minister’s Antisemitism

by Hugh Fitzgerald



The antisemitic Prime Minister of Malaysia has just been [invited to speak at Columbia University](#). Will his hatred be greeted there as enthusiastically as it was last June at the Cambridge University Union? From the [Algemeiner](#):

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad – infamous for his antisemitic views across several decades – delivered an anti-Jewish barb that was greeted with laughter during an appearance at the Cambridge University Union in the UK on Sunday night.

The 93-year-old was responding to a respectfully-posed question from the event moderator who asked him, "Why do you say that the Jewish people in general are inclined towards money? There are lots of Jews who care about human rights, care about social justice, care about democracy."

Mahathir answered: "I have some Jewish friends, very good friends. They are not like the other Jews, that's why they are my friends."

"Some of my best friends..." Of course, and that shows just how judicious Mahathir Mohamad is. He is capable of distinguishing the handful of good Jews – "good" because they are "not like other Jews" – who are his friends, from all the other Jews who, alas, act like Jews, and therefore are unworthy to be befriended, but should be mocked, despised, disliked, hated.

This comment was met with an appreciative peal of laughter that rippled across the audience. This was immediately followed by an awkward silence, during which Mahathir grinned at the moderator and then the audience.

That "appreciative peal of laughter" that "rippled across the audience" is nauseating. One wonders what would have been the reaction, had a speaker spoken of Muslims as disparagingly as Mohamad did about Jews. Of course not. There would have been dozens of outraged cries of "Islamophobia" and "racism." That speaker would have been booed off the podium.

At no point was Mahathir challenged or reprimanded by the moderator. There were no audible protests from the audience.

Why would anyone challenge Mahathir Mohamad at the Cambridge Union? Antisemitism is back in fashion, especially at universities. Those BDS groups are now on hundreds of college campuses, in Europe and North America. Anti-Israel rallies and petitions, the disinviting or shutting down of pro-Israel

speakers, the resolutions passed by student unions that call Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East, an “apartheid state” – even though Arabs serve in the Knesset, on the Supreme Court, in the diplomatic corps, live and work and play alongside Israeli Jews – are repellent enough. But still worse is the naked antisemitism of so many of these anti-Israel agitators, who – just like Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib – suffer no consequences for their views. And those antisemites were well represented in the audience, for who would be likeliest to come out to listen to Mahathir Mohamed spout his views? But there were surely many others, not antisemites, but too indifferent or cowed to offer a single syllable of protest to Mohamad’s zany laff-riot.

Mahathir’s long-held beliefs about Jewish domination of global politics and finance have become one of his defining characteristics as a world leader. Career highlights have included invoking the Nazi stereotype of Jews as “hooknosed” financiers, questioning the extent of the Holocaust during an interview with the BBC, and telling a Muslim solidarity conference with the Palestinians that the September 11, 2001 Al Qaeda terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, DC, “were staged...as an excuse to mount attacks against the Muslim world.”

Of course, It all makes sense to the likes of Mahathir Mohamad. But if Jews dominate global politics and finance, then how is it that they couldn’t manage to prevent the Holocaust? Why couldn’t they prevent Mahathir himself from being invited to address the Cambridge University Union or Columbia University? How is it that they haven’t been able to prevent Israel from being the object of more negative resolutions by the U.N. General Assembly than any other country? If Jews dominate global politics, why couldn’t they have annexed the entire West Bank long ago? Or gotten rid of the PLO, Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad? Why couldn’t the Jews who “dominate global politics” stop Ayatollah Khomeini

from taking power in Iran? Why couldn't they long ago have pressured a hundred countries to move their embassies to Jerusalem? Some domination!

Among the student organizations condemning Mahathir's appearance was the Labour Party's student branch at Cambridge University. In a tweet, the Cambridge University Labour Club denounced the Malaysian leader as a "vicious antisemite" and declared its "solidarity with British Jews."

That tweet denouncing Mohamad as a "vicious antisemite" was especially welcome, not just because of the no-nonsense description, but because it came from the Cambridge University Labour Club, which apparently has little use for Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn. whose own antisemitism is well known.

And the Union of Jewish Students did not spare the Cambridge Union or Mahathir's audience:

"As we warned would happen, the Malaysian prime minister used the prestigious platform of the Cambridge Union to spread his anti-Jewish racism."

"It is chilling, particularly for any Jewish students in the room, to see a crowd of students laugh off flagrantly anti-Semitic comments used by Mahathir Mohamad."

Those are two good things to have come out of the appearance by Mahathir Mohamad at Cambridge – almost certainly, the only good things. Will the situation be any different at Columbia?

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