

Jeremy Corbyn's Jihad Against Israel (Part II)

by Hugh Fitzgerald



Jeremy Corbyn, the self-described “friend” of Hamas and Hezbollah whose representatives he invited to speak in Parliament, who at a graveyard in Tunisia stood right beside one convicted terrorist and a few feet away from a second terrorist (a leader of Black September), while intoning an Islamic prayer over the gravesite of still a third (one of the masterminds of the Munich killings), is an appalling creature. His refusal to visit Israel, even if only to visit Yad Vashem (or would that be, in Corbyn's view, unwise because it might create too much sympathy for the Jews?) also rankles.

Most recently, he has expressed his doubts about the Labour Party's decision to adopt, after having first rejected, the definition of antisemitism formulated by the International Holocaust Remembrance Committee. That decision was praised by many, including Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Corbin, however, remains deeply worried, afraid that this might limit criticism of Israel, the country he loves to hate. He thinks it should not be considered antisemitic to “describe Israel, its policies or the circumstances around its foundation as racist because of their discriminatory impact.” What “discriminatory impact” is that? That the Jews dared to defend themselves when attacked by five Arab armies? That many Arabs chose to leave Mandatory Palestine in order to get out of the way of the combatants, sure that they would soon be returning when the Arab side triumphed, and then did not return? That the Jews actually won, their tiny state survived, and despite many attempts to destroy Israel, it is still standing? For Corbyn, Israel's existence is irremediably

“racist,” and has always been so, while his friends in Hamas and Hezbollah, whose leaders have promised to kill all the Jews, are fine fellows.

The attempts to drive out of the Labour Party such supporters of Israel as Joan Ryan, Frank Field, and Margaret Hodge, or failing that, to marginalize them, will only push the party further, and irremediably, to the far left. The prominent Labour backbencher, Chuka Umunna, has claimed that the “row over antisemitism” has pushed his party’s MPs “to the breaking point.” Tony Blair has said he doesn’t think the party can be taken back from Corbyn and his clique. Jewish voters, long loyal to Labour, are finally leaving the party in droves.

On the other hand, why should Corbyn care? Muslims now outnumber Jews in Great Britain 4-to-1, and Corbyn’s hostility to Israel, and to Jews, is a sure vote-getter among this immigrant group, which already helped elect from Labour’s ranks the current Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan.

And for those in Great Britain who see a moral difference between Israel and its enemies Hamas and Hezbollah – but precisely in the opposite way from Jeremy Corbyn – the most disturbing news of all is that despite his honoring of dead terrorists and embrace of live ones, despite his war on long-term Labour friends of Israel who have described his views as “antisemitic” and “grotesque,” despite his insistence that Israel has been “racist” from its beginning, Jeremy Corbyn is still leading in the polls. Were he to be elected Prime Minister, that would be a nightmare not only for Israel but also for the United States. Jeremy Corbyn, the farthest-left of any British candidate for Prime Minister in at least a century, does not like the United States, and should he be elected, the Americans can forget about that “special relationship.”

That’s the bad news. The good news is that the next general election in the U.K. will not be held until May 2022. That’s a

long way away, and in Corbyn's "antisemitism row," the forces arrayed against him now include the last two Labour Prime Ministers, Gordon Brown and Tony Blair, the current Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, the leaders of three important unions, Usdaw (the shop workers' union), Unison (the public service workers' union), and the GMB (a general trade union), and the Labour Friends of Israel. All of these have called on Corbyn to accept without reservations the definition of antisemitism that would cover Corbyn's own attacks on Israel as "racist" since its "foundation."

Corbyn can continue on his course, pushing his party ever more leftward, ever more anti-Israel in its policies and antisemitic in its attitudes. But he is making a lot of enemies along the way, and not just among Labour Friends of Israel. Many find his attacks on Israel so unhinged as to amount to antisemitism. The former chairman of the Equality and Human Rights Commission Trevor Phillips – a black man – has claimed the Labour Party is now "led by anti-Semites and racists." Mr. Phillips, who served as a Labour member of the London Assembly for three years, said that rows about anti-Semitism are "killing our party." Phillips said: "It doesn't help that one of our great parties, the one I belong to, is led by anti-Semites and racists who basically want to eliminate anyone" who disagrees with them.

A prominent backbencher, who pulled out of the race for Labour Party leader in 2015, though he was then deemed the front-runner (he thought he was "not ready") but remains a serious potential challenger to Corbyn, is Chuka Umunna. The son of a Nigerian Christian immigrant who then returned to Nigeria to campaign against corruption, Umunna is an M.P. for Streatham, and at 39, already a leader in the party. He now accuses his own Labour Party of "institutional racism." By that, Mr. Umunna makes clear he means antisemitism: "It's very painful for me to say that. Part of the reason that I joined the Labour party, that my family supported the party, was because

it was an anti-racist party. I think the failure to deal with the racism that is antisemitism is particular, and clearly is a problem.”

“The racism that is antisemitism” is a formulation that must startle Jeremy Corbyn. Furthermore, he is no doubt discombobulated by these attacks coming from two black men, Phillips and Umunna. This isn’t supposed to happen. For Corbyn, “Zionism is racism,” Jews are Zionists, ergo Jews are racists. What are black people doing attacking others for antisemitism? Why do they even care? This makes no sense to the limited likes of Jeremy Corbyn.

It’s 3 1/2 years to the next election. Enough time for Corbyn to alienate still others – there’s many a slip ‘twixt cup and lip – and for Umunna, should he wish, to enter the lists against him. Keep your eye on Umunna. For not only is he on the right side in the antisemitism row, but one has reason to suspect that he is also opposed to Corbyn on the subject of Islam. The Nigerian Christians, after all, have been for a long time on the receiving end of Jihads against them unleashed by northern Muslims. The deadliest of these Jihads has been what has entered history as the Biafra War. It lasted from 1967 to 1970, and was intended to crush the Christians’ independent state, that had been declared in response to Muslim pogroms against Christians in Nigeria’s north. The Muslims had military assistance from fellow Muslims – Egyptian Migs strafed the helpless Christian villagers – while the Biafrans did receive far less aid, mostly small arms, from a handful of countries, but were otherwise on their own. After two million Christians starved to death, the Biafrans finally surrendered. Today again, Boko Haram and Fulani cattle-herders have revived the Jihad against the Christians in northern and central Nigeria. Chuka Umunna knows this history, and as a consequence, unlike Jeremy Corbyn, he cannot possibly be a fan or friend of Jihadis or of Islam. He knows too much. And there is another possible influence on his views: his maternal

grandfather was High Court judge and Nuremberg Trial prosecutor Sir Helenus Milmo. It is safe to assume that Chuka Umunna's mother would have told him about her father prosecuting the Nazis in that most famous of trials, and, in detail, about those Nazi crimes. Surely that would have made Chuka Umunna keenly sensitive to any display of antisemitism.

It would indeed be something if a British Prime Minister named Chuka Umunna were to undo the damage that his white predecessors Blair and May, eager to show their deep commitment to diversity, did to the country by allowing in so many Muslim migrants. Black himself, Chuka Umunna doesn't have to prove anything about racism or the supposed need to make Britain "more diverse." He can, instead, do what Theresa May thinks she can't do: he can take a sensible hard line on Muslim migrants. He has, after all, his own family's experiences – handed down to him in stories – of living with Muslims in Nigeria, experiences which surely have left a deep impression. And it will be fascinating to see, if Umunna does challenge Corbyn, how Muslims rally round their devoted champion and accuse Umunna of "racism" because he does not, the way Jeremy Corbyn does, consign Israel to the outer darkness.

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