

Is a rational co-operation between Muslim and Jewish students in opposing the BNP more productive than separate confrontation?

Some Preliminaries regarding the BNP...

I am not an expert on the BNP, and I am not going to give you a précis of the history of the modern BNP, or its roots in the National Front, or its alleged Nazi sympathies. I am not going to inform you about any particular tactics to challenge the likes of Nick Griffin, and his followers. There is a plethora of information on the internet about the BNP, and, as students, you are all, hopefully, being educated in critical analysis of source material, and you are more than capable of discovering for yourself the true agenda of the BNP.

However, I will start by reminding you that Nick Griffin was convicted and given a suspended sentence in 1998 for inciting racial hatred in 1998, in relation to his publication, *The Rune*, an anti-Semitic holocaust denying magazine. Despite NG's attempts to back pedal on his Holocaust Denial, on Question Time, and elsewhere, by stating, that EU law prevents him from stating his views— his view remains as transparent as ever.

A similar prosecution was brought against him in 2004. The prosecution related to comments made in three speeches in the West Yorkshire. Two comments were made by BNP member Mark Collett and one was made by Nick Griffin. These were covertly recorded by a BBC journalist and certain excerpts were broadcast in a documentary called "The Secret Agent" on July 15th, 2004. The Jury were not convinced beyond reasonable doubt that an offence had been committed in respect of these speeches, but the CPS maintains that it was right to bring the prosecution, that it will take a hard line on all potential breaches of race hate laws.

The Law geek in me wishes to quickly clarify NG's position on 'EU law and holocaust denial'

So, before I move onto the real substance of this debate, I will share with you, in case you do not already know, that, Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin aims to prevent discrimination on ethnic or racial grounds, but it does not explicitly ban or criminalise holocaust denial. There is nothing stopping Nick Griffin from stating what he thinks when he is in the UK. He does not do so as he knows that Holocaust denial will not be tolerated by a critical British media.

So – Muslim and Jewish Student Co-operation against the BNP – Is it more effective than separate confrontation? The real question here is not would it be more effective, but is it possible at all???

My first question is-

Is there presently any cooperation between Jewish and Muslim students, in the political sense, on campus? I'm sure, and I certainly hope that there are plenty of incidences of Jewish and Muslim students in lectures and halls of residence who are friends, but how much do the J-Soc and I-Soc, actually work together, for the **practical benefit** of all their members?

My Background in Uni Politics (non-background!)

My experience of University politics was very poor indeed. I am not an instinctively political creature. I certainly have no allegiance to any particular party. I prefer to avoid confrontation outside of my professional obligations and I was never a 'committee' person.

I was a student on campus in 2001 when a motion was proposed by the I-Soc, which was vehemently opposed by the J-Soc and it was a horrible, unproductive, emotionally fraught day which, in my view, actually served no productive purpose for any student at Manchester University. It seemed to me then, and now that there was zero **practical benefit** to any Jewish or Muslim student that day, save for some frustrated individuals blowing off some hot air.

As a result of that day, I became interested in the relationship between J and M students on campus and I established a dialogue group which operated successfully for two years, which I then handed onto subsequent students.

Question 2. What are the issues preventing the possibility of M and J students working together against the BNP?

With the greatest of respect to you all, and without wishing to annoy those of you who do genuinely have a 'best friend' who is Muslim or Jewish, when you are the other....I would suggest that the following issues are probably standing in the way of productive co-operation between you....

- General Ignorance
- Existing campaigns (Palestine/Israel) that take precedence
- Distrust

Certainly all those issues existed when I was here 9 years ago.

I do not, hold myself out as an expert in the field of religious history, either of Jews or Muslims- however in order to overcome those issues, effective dialogue between students is not just necessary it is essential.

It is essential to listen to lay down personal prejudice, to temporarily for the purpose of listening and understanding only, set aside debate about Palestine and Israel, and simply hear one another's personal histories.

The experiences of our communities as immigrants to the UK are very similar, our experiences of being British, our experience of being on the outside of society looking in, some of our religious requirements, and our common interest to see peace in the middle east, make it an absolute necessity that we take the time to investigate our ignorance, and prejudices and listen to one another.

We have history to guide us.

There are celebrated periods in history where Muslims, Jews and Christians have co-existed besides one another, most notably in Spain, during the period known as The Golden Age or Convivencia, under the Ottoman Empire, and in other predominantly Muslim countries such as Egypt under the Caliphs of the Fatimid Dynasty.

Those who wish to undermine the possibility and potential of M and J cooperation against the BNP or otherwise, would seek to remind you that historical peace and understanding between our communities has only occurred under periods of Muslim rule. Of course this is factually true, however this should not undermine the essential point, which is that both our communities have tolerated one another, we have lived peacefully alongside each other, we

can and we should use our own collective history to provide light in times when there appear to be very dark forces at work both inside and outside our communities.

So – Where are we now?

We are presented with a threat to the peace and security of both our communities, here in the UK, where we all seek to live alongside one another. This threat comes from the BNP. It is not sensible to simply regard the BNP as a bunch of bigoted crack pots who if ignored will realise they are not welcome. Under rug swept is not appropriate, they are popular enough to have gained 2 seats in the European Parliament, NG for the Northwest and Andrew Brons for Yorkshire and Humber. In 2008, the [BBC](#) estimated the BNP had about 56 councillors. The party holds a London-wide seat on the [London Assembly](#).

If Muslim and Jewish students were ever seeking to find something that they had in common now as opposed to in the past I would suggest that they look to their relationship with the BNP.

Hands up!

Who has looked at the BNP website?

Who has joined the 1,000,000 unite against the BNP on Facebook?

Mission Statement of the BNP

The British National Party exists to secure a future for the indigenous peoples of these islands in the North Atlantic which have been our homeland for millennia.

We use the term indigenous to describe the people whose ancestors were the earliest settlers here after the last great Ice Age and which have been complemented by the historic migrations from mainland Europe.

The migrations of the Celts, Anglo-Saxons, Danes, Norse and closely related kindred peoples have been, over the past few thousands years, instrumental in defining the character of our family of nations.

They currently permit as members....

Membership of the BNP

1) The British National Party represents the collective national, environmental, political, racial, folkish, social, cultural, religious and economic interests of the indigenous Anglo-Saxon, Celtic and Norse folk communities of Britain and those we regard as closely related and ethnically assimilated or assimilable aboriginal members of the European race also resident in Britain. Membership of the BNP is strictly defined within the terms of, and our members also self-define themselves within, the legal ambit of a defined 'racial group' this being 'Indigenous Caucasian' and defined 'ethnic groups' emanating from that Race as specified in law in the House of Lords case of Mandla v. Dowell Lee (1983) 1 ALL ER 1062, HL.

2) The indigenous British ethnic groups deriving from the class of 'Indigenous Caucasian' consists of members of: i) the Anglo-Saxon folk community; ii) the Celtic Scottish folk community; iii) the Scots-Northern Irish folk community; iv) the Celtic Welsh folk community; v) the Celtic Irish folk community; vi) the Celtic Cornish folk community; vii) the Anglo-Saxon-Celtic folk community; viii) the Celtic-Norse folk community; ix) the Anglo-Saxon-Norse folk community; x) the Anglo-Saxon Indigenous European folk community; xi) members of these ethnic groups which reside either within or outside Europe but ethnically derive from them.

You may well be aware that this has been challenged by the Equality and Human Rights Commission and in the last few days the BNP have voted at their conference that they will run a full ballot of all their members as to whether they will concede to change their membership requirements. It remains to be seen what the outcome of this vote will be.

I gain from, the current position on membership, the clear impression that the BNP does not care very much about my future, or the future of any of my family or friends with a 'non-indigenous' background, which I do not consider myself to have, despite my appearance.

Palestine/Israel and the BNP

Muslim and Jewish students need to be alive to the fact that despite the fact that the BNP attempts to distance itself from the Israel/Palestine debate. It states that it's another country and that what goes on there is its own business. (To some extent I understand this!!!!) Wouldn't it be good if we could just brush our hands of all the difficult positions in which we find ourselves.... However,

- I read Nick Griffin's view on this issue on the BNP website. As I understand it, NG believes that should Israel be successfully destroyed by 'Islamic extremists', it would merely add wind to their sails- ie. -if so called Islamic Extremists succeeded in destroying Israel, it would only serve to prove that their world view was correct....which is unthinkable if you Islamophobic....therefore the default position is the Israel should exist and its existence should be protected by the UK in order to ensure that remains as a barrier between rest of the Muslim world and the West.
- It could also be said, when reading between the lines, that Nick Griffin supports Israel, because in his view it provides a place for us to go, when his Britain for 'Indigenous Whites' only transpires.

The BNP would I believe, if it was given the opportunity, have Jewish people believe that Islam preaches an entirely anti-Semitic message, it would certainly aim to state that Muslims are anti-Israel, and that the Qur-an is anti-Semitic. This is of course entirely contrary to that which I have already outlined about our productive and rich history.

For Muslim and Jewish students to act on separate fronts against the BNP, in my view serves to further the cause of the BNP. The BNP are more than happy for our communities to be divided, and they would seek to exploit the distrust and ignorance which sadly exists between us.

I would urge you to consider that effective dialogue between individuals in our communities would both serve to improve and strengthen our understanding of one another, and further enhance our ability to fight the BNP, and all fascists, united together, for the good of both our communities.

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