

# Graffiti for intellectuals



SIMON SAYS



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Si Frumkin

## A SELDOM MENTIONED CAUSE OF MUSLIM BACKWARDNESS

**Professor** Bernard Lewis is admittedly the greatest living scholar of Arabic history. He was born in London 92 (yes, 92!) years ago, lives in Princeton, New Jersey, spends at least 3 months every year in Tel Aviv and is surprised that people do not know that he is a Jew.

He also spends several months each year doing research in places that he declines to name: he is very much aware that he has engendered hostility by being an open critic of backwardness of Arab and other Moslem nations. He respects Islam as being one of the great religions and is somewhat optimistic about its future development but considers himself a realist; it was he who coined the phrase "clash of civilizations" in 1957. The title of his most recent book is self-explanatory: "What Went Wrong?: The Clash Between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East" (2002).



In a lengthy Jerusalem Post interview professor Lewis covered subjects

that ranged from his background (no personal experience of anti-Semitism in Britain, neither in civilian life nor the army) to the imposition of freedom and democracy on other cultures (impossible) and much more in between.

What intrigued me was his take on the role and subjugated position of women in Islamic countries and the negative effect of this on Islam's cultural development.

While he admits that women have not achieved total equality in all Western societies and that the situation was much worse in the past, he believes that even at its worst Western women were incomparably better off than the women of Islam.

Christianity is the only religion that specifically forbids polygamy and concubinage – even Judaism, depending on the geography and the time period does not reject them unequivocally – but Islam specifically acknowledges and permits both. In the writings of the very early caliphs, women – wives and

mothers - are mentioned because at that time they were free Arab ladies only to become slaves in harems in the centuries to come and play no visible or acknowledged role in public life.

On the other hand, in Christendom, women play major roles: there is Queen Elizabeth of England, the Russian Catherine the Great, Isabella of Spain, Mary of Scotland, Maria Theresa of Austria, Marie Antoinette and many others. There are very few meaningful Islamic biographies because the wives and lovers are not mentioned – would the biography of Henry VIII be possible without mentioning the wives and the subsequent break with the Catholic Church? The histories of France would be grotesquely incomplete without the wives and lovers of the Kings, Marie-Antoinette, Madame de Pompadour and the salons where she and other Parisian ladies hosted the brightest European minds of that time. Even *la Liberte*, the symbol of the French revolution is a street woman, rifle in hand, leading rebels across a barricade and corpses of royalists.



Lewis feels that the exclusion of women from meaningful roles has been a very significant reason for the deterioration of Islam. By mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the better educated Muslims realized that they were falling behind the West and unable to resist increasing Western domination. Many reasons were advanced for this – economic, military, lack of political reforms – but it was a Turkish writer, Namik Kemal, who declared that "we are falling behind because of the way we treat our women". He made the case that Islamic societies treat their women as jewels or musical instruments – pretty and entertaining but with no independent existence. The result, he said, is that "compared to the West, our society is like a

human body that is paralyzed on one side".

He said that by excluding one half of the population from participation in society there is more than a loss of the women's talents and abilities; it also results in men being brought up in their first years by ignorant and downtrodden mothers.



Kemal's was a voice in the wilderness. Later, an Egyptian – Qasim Amin – who had studied in Paris also wrote and argued on behalf of a better position for Muslim women and started a small

movement for women's rights which didn't achieve much.

Since most of the Muslim world is ruled by authoritarian regimes it is almost impossible to speak there openly for unapproved causes. In some countries, however, changes have taken place. In Iraq, the status of women is one of the best in the area. Even under the dictatorship, women had access to law, medicine and other professions which meant their children had a better start in life.

The status of women in Iran had been improving steadily under the Shah and got set back by Ayatollah Khomeini who announced early on that emancipation of women was one of the greatest crimes the Shah and his regime had committed.



Professor Lewis does not claim that emancipating women would produce a magical leap forward in the Muslim world. He is, however, convinced that this is one of the important factors in Islam's failure to advance. Unfortunately, I doubt that his voice will be heard and his advice followed. Ω

# Antisemitism among Muslim youth in Australia

By Dr. Philip Mendes from reports by a Sydney high school teacher

**Dr. Philip** Mendes, Senior Lecturer in Social Policy & Community Development in the Department of Social Work at Monash University and the author or co-author of six books. The teacher, who prefers to remain anonymous, has taught in several Sydney schools and interacts on a daily basis with hundreds of young Muslims in Sydney. He is a committed leftist, who believes that current progressive research and thinking fails to address Muslim anti-Jewish prejudice. (Slight additional editing and condensation by Si Frumkin)

The schools under discussion in this paper are all classified as disadvantaged. They are state high schools in western and south-western Sydney with a typical ethnic composition, in descending order, as follows: Lebanese, Turkish, Pacific Islander, Afghan, Chinese, Indian and Anglo Australian. Other nationalities represented include Sudanese, Egyptian, Iranian, Syrian, Palestinian, Libe-  
rian, Former Yugoslavia and Pakistani. The majority religious faith of students is Islam with about 80% adherence with Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, and Bahai making up the minority. Some schools have 95% of students practicing Islam and culturally they are in effect de facto Madrassas.

There are always exceptions but generally the level of conscious and malicious antisemitism is moderately high and the level of ignorance about Jews and Israel is very high. Muslim youth commonly express antisemitism. One cannot say that this phenomenon only applies amongst Arab background youth. Some of the most virulent antisemitism is expressed by non-Arab Afghans, Turks and Pakistanis. On the other hand, Coptic Christians from Egypt and Lebanese Maronites and Orthodox, who are of course Arabs, rarely express antisemitic sentiment.

Antisemitic sentiment and expressions comes almost exclusively from boys. It appears to be a form of male violence which is not mirrored by girls in the same cohort.



There are no Jewish students in western Sydney. Bankstown Synagogue was fire-bombed and never rebuilt in the early 1990s and Parramatta Synagogue has suffered arson attacks and its congregation is small and ageing. This is of course reflected in the composition of the high schools. There is no mixing of Jewish and Muslim students either in school or in the local area. If an identified Jewish student attended one of these schools, it is reasonable to expect he or she would be

bullied, verbally and physically. Bahai students, who are viewed as apostates by Muslims, are treated very harshly.

## Antisemitic expressions

A Jewish teacher was harassed by Muslim students with racial taunts in class. Two Jewish relieving teachers were instructed by other staff not to let the students know they were Jewish because it was implied they would be harassed. Teachers of unknown religious background have been harassed in attempts to convert them to Islam.

In subject areas where Jews, Judaism or Israel are mentioned students deny facts that reflect well on Jews or Israel. In Ancient History classes some Muslim students deny Abraham or Moses was Jewish, claiming they were Muslim. In social life, antisemitism is a source of amusement. It is popular for



boys to download beheadings and attacks against "infidels" onto their mobile phones and then swap and show them

with their friends. This atrocity exhibitionism is widespread across schools in the region. Students also have access to DVDs of murder and torture committed by Islamists against Jews and Christians.

## Antisemitic beliefs

Jews are viewed as profane, treacherous, cunning and not to be trusted: in short the epitome of evil. Israel is an abomination; an affront to Islam and its very existence is intolerable.

In these boys' minds Jews are responsible for anti-Islamic prejudice and every failure by Middle Eastern countries is the result of the perfidious Jew and Israel. There is a massive amount of denial and resentment amongst students. Nothing is ever their fault or responsibility. It's always the fault of Jews, Australia, America or the police. Any manifestation of negative interest in their misdemeanours is automatically construed as racist or anti-Muslim.

Antisemitic ca-quoted as fact by in these schools

\*Mossad or- the September 11 ings to incite hatred Muslims and no went to work in the towers that day as they all received a special phone call telling them to call in sick.

\*Coca Cola is a Jewish conspiracy. It is owned by Jews and the writing on the side of the can reads in Arabic "No Allah, No Muhammad".

\*Israel indiscriminately murders Muslims in Israel while they are praying.

\*Jews control the world. Zionism is an international conspiracy linked to freemasonry.

\*Jews are really Muslims who refuse to accept Islam into their lives.

\*Israel is a colonialist entity occupying Muslim land. Most students forget their national background when confronted with Israel and revert to a Pan-Islamic identity in solidarity with the Palestinians.

\*Israel built the Attaturk dam in Turkey to starve Syria and Iraq of water.

## Sources of youth antisemitism

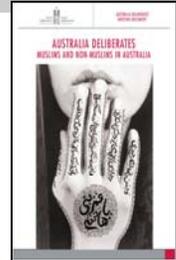
The internet is the most easily accessible



source of antisemitic propaganda. Students generally believe everything on the Internet is true and, in particular,

believe websites purporting to be Muslim are infallible. Other media also contribute, particularly satellite television. Al Jazeera is very popular, as was the now-banned Al Manar channel.

Many Turkish students are particularly antisemitic. This could be based on the availability of right wing nationalist newspapers such as *Anadoluda Vakit*. Lebanese Muslim students' expression of antisemitism usually (See "AUSTRALIA" page 3)



nards students include:

ganised hijack-against Jews twin

relates to Israel’s invasion in 1982 and occupation of southern Lebanon.

Palestinian students vary: some students express a visceral hatred of all Jews; some hate “Zionists” but don’t mind other Jews and some are more liberal. Bosnian Muslim students are by far the most liberal in their political views and I have never witnessed an antisemitic comment or incident from this group. This may be linked to the philosophy of the former Yugoslavia, which officially preached racial tolerance, secularism and harmony. Bosnian Muslims have a tradition of moderation in their religious practice and fundamentalist views are virtually unheard of.

Some students repeat antisemitic assertions they hear at their mosques during Friday prayers.

**Muslim antisemitism is ignored**

There are many research projects and programs in Western Sydney studying Muslim and Arab students.

Most are aimed at discovering prejudice *against* Muslims while there is a lack of academic work gauging Moslem anti-Semitism. This may be because of the political orientation of researchers and the prevalence of antisemitism, masked as anti-Zionism in the academic world.

Leftists groups have made significant compromises to woo Muslim youth. Before the March 2003 invasion of Iraq, the Socialist Alliance



recruited Arab and Muslim students to anti-war student rallies preying on their antisemitic and anti-American fantasies and avoiding any

mention of feminism or homosexual rights, issues on which the Left is generally strong.

**Solutions**

It is vitally important not to typecast Muslim or Arab youth. Male students congregate in friendship-based groups outside of school meeting in public places. This often leads to issues which brings the students into conflict with the police. Students believe they are picked on because of their background, that Australia is a racist country and that



Australians are prejudiced against Islam. Police and media stereotypes reinforce these beliefs.

The political framework needs to be recast. The Left perceives that to attack Muslim antisemitism would be to line up with the Right attacking a vulnerable immigrant community. within the Islamic community who are proven antisemites. Progressive leaders must not use criticisms of Israel to justify tolerating antisemitism.

Massive increases in funding and resources are needed by schools in Sydney’s west and south west.



Open-minded and moderate Muslims must be identified, supported and encouraged. There must be The Jewish community should consider sponsoring moderate Muslim young people in high standing in the community to visit Israel.

**Conclusion**

Disturbing levels of antisemitism exist among Muslim youths in western and south-western Sydney. These attitudes are expressed in antisemitic beliefs and harassment and have the potential to lead to violence. They are strongly influenced by internet sites as well as other media and reinforced by the peer group and the difficult socio-economic situation of this group. Muslim antisemitism has been ignored by researchers and politicians because of the current attitudes on the Left. ★

That is essentially what has been happening to the Republicans, as far as the black vote is concerned, for decades on end. Someone once said a method that fails repeatedly may possibly be wrong.

The truth is something that can attract people’s attention, if only for its novelty in politics. There is no need for Republicans to try to pose as saviors of blacks. Democrats do that and they have more experience doing it.



A sober presentation of the facts — “straight talk,” if you will — gives Mr. McCain and Republicans their best shot at a larger share of the votes of blacks. There is plenty to talk straight about, including all the things the Democrats are committed to that work to the disadvantage of blacks, beginning with Democrats’ adamant support of teachers’ unions in their opposition to parental choice through vouchers.

The teachers’ unions are just one of the Democratic Party’s

sacred cow constituencies, whose agendas are very harmful to blacks.

Black voters also need to be told about tens of thousands of blacks forced out of a number of liberal Democratic California counties by skyrocketing housing prices, caused by Democratic environmentalists’ severe restrictions on building homes or apartments.



The black population of San Francisco, for example, has been cut in half since 1970 — and San Francisco is the very model of a community of

***The black population of San Francisco has been cut in half since 1970 — and San Francisco is the very model of a community of liberal green zealot Democrats.***

liberal Democrats, including green zealots who are heedless of the consequences of their actions on others.

Then there are the effects of tort lawyers in raising prices, liberal judges turning criminals loose and other influential Democratic constituencies whose effects on blacks are strictly negative.

Where should these and other messages be delivered to blacks, if not through the existing black organizations?

That message can be delivered as part of televised speeches addressing other major issues facing the country. It can be delivered as part of advertisements in the general media and separately in advertisements in newspapers, magazines and television programs with a black audience.

Logistics are not the problem. Insistence on following a repeatedly failed game plan is. ★

*Thomas Sowell is a nationally syndicated columnist.*



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## THE G.O.P. AND RACE

By Thomas Sowell  
April 13, 2008

### If Sen. John

McCain needed to prove he is a real Republican, he did it when he continued an old Republican tradition of utterly inept attempts to appeal to black voters.

Mr. McCain was booed at a recent memorial on the anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. In typical Republican fashion, he tried to apologize but the audience was not buying it and let him know it.



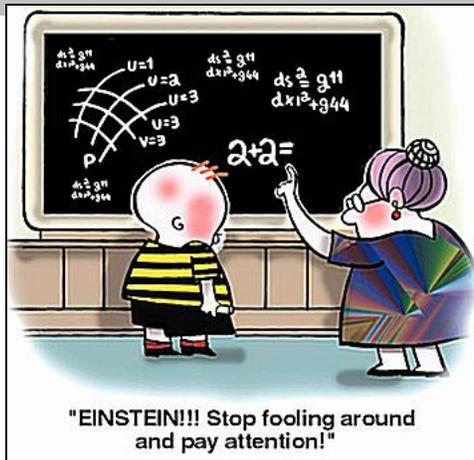
Thomas Sowell

The Republican strategy for making inroads into the black vote has failed consistently for more than a quarter-century. Yet it never seems to occur to them to change their approach.

The first thing they do that is foredoomed to failure is try to reach blacks through the civil rights organizations and other institutions of the black establishment. The second proven loser is trying to appeal to blacks by offering the same kinds of things Democrats offer — token honors, politically correct rhetoric and welfare state benefits.

Blacks who want those things

**Vote for the Worst Teachers in America (who can't be fired)**



know they can already get them from the Democrats. Why should they listen to Republicans who act like imitation Democrats?'

**The teachers' unions are just one of the Democratic Party's sacred cow constituencies, whose agendas are very harmful to blacks.**

These are not the blacks whose votes Republicans could realistically hope to get. Nor do Republicans need the votes of all blacks. If just 20 percent of blacks begin voting Republican, the Democrats are lost.

The question then is how to have a shot at getting the votes of those blacks who are not in thrall to the current black "leaders" and who on many issues may be conservative.

First, you don't get their votes by approaching them from the left, when that is neither their orientation nor yours. Issuing stamps honoring Paul Robeson and Kwanzaa are not the way to reach those blacks whom Republicans have any realistic chance of reaching.

Trying to reach blacks through civil rights organizations that are totally hostile to your message is like a quarterback trying to throw a pass to a receiver surrounded by opposing defenders. That just leads to a lot of interceptions and touchdowns for the other team.



**(PLEASE SEE G.O.P.—PAGE 3)**