

Tory Candidates All Agree That “Islamophobia” In Their Party Must Be Investigated

by Hugh Fitzgerald



On June 17, the five Tory candidates then in the running for prime minister – Boris Johnson, Jeremy Hunt, Sajid Javid, Rory Stewart, and Michael Gove – appeared for a debate on the BBC. (The field has now been narrowed to two: Johnson and Hunt.) The format included questions from pre-vetted callers. Abdullah Patel, an imam in Bristol, called to say that he had seen firsthand the malign effects of “Islamophobia,” and asked if the candidates agreed that “words have consequences.” The host, Emily Maitlis, referred the question first to Boris Johnson, reminding him of comments he had made comparing Muslim women wearing the veil with “letterboxes” and “bank robbers.”

Johnson replied:

“In so far as my words have given offense over the last 20 or 30 years, when I have been a journalist and people have taken those words out of my articles and escalated them, of course I am sorry for the offense they have caused.”

An apology of sorts, in which Johnson did not directly discuss his “letterbox” remark, but referred to all his words in his articles over the past 20-30 years, and did not say he was sorry for the words themselves, which he implied were taken out of context and exaggerated (“escalated”) for effect, but was “sorry for the offense” they may have caused others. That is a different thing.

“When my Muslim great-grandfather came to this country in fear of his life in 1912, he did so because he knew it was a place that was a beacon of hope and of generosity and openness, and a willingness to welcome people from around the world.”

Some of Johnson’s critics felt that his reference to his “Muslim great-grandfather” was akin to the antisemite who defends himself with the claim that “some of my best friends are Jewish.” But Johnson was making a valid point, not about his own scarcely-discernible link to Islam, but about his great-grandfather, who in 1912 fled a barbaric Islamic land – Ottoman Turkey – and found sanctuary in the “hope and generosity and openness” of Great Britain. His Muslim great-grandfather was a real person, not some fictional “best friend” made up to prove a point, and Johnson was right to cite that Turkish ancestor’s welcome in 1912 as a telling example, from his own family’s history, of British generosity and openness.

Johnson’s limited contrition over his “letterboxes” remark was disappointing; he might have stuck to his guns, explaining

that he deplored the niqab (which he confessed with the similar "burka") – though he would not ban it – both as a security threat, for it put him in mind not only of "letterboxes," but of "bank robbers," and as an article of clothing too often forced on Muslim women. He then might have asked his rivals to join him in condemning all such extreme cover – burka, niqab, chador – where it was not a matter of the woman's free choice: "I am sure you agree that there is nothing anti-Islam about defending the rights of Muslim women to choose their clothing." How many of them would have dared to disagree?

Sajid Javid, the home secretary, who had previously called for an independent investigation into "Islamophobia" in the Conservative Party, did so again in his reply to Mr. Patel, and asked his rivals to back his demand; they all nodded in seeming agreement. "It's great that we all agree on that," Javid said, noting that there was a "concern [about] growing anti-Muslim hatred in our country, certainly over the last few years, in all parts of society. And, wherever that is, including in political parties, it must be absolutely rooted out."

He added: "We are, today, one of the most successful multiracial democracies in the world – whatever your race, whatever your religious background. And that is what we have got to remain."

Just how "successful" has the U.K. been in creating a multi-religious democracy? The thousands of English girls who have been the victims of Muslim grooming gangs in a dozen cities would not agree. Nor would the police, if they were allowed to speak their mind about "No-Go" areas created by Muslims in major cities – London, Manchester, Bradford, Leeds, Birmingham – where non-Muslims are made to feel unwelcome by the inhabitants, and even the police must watch their backs. Antisemitic hate crimes, almost all by Muslims, hit a record high in 2018. Sikh and Hindu girls have been the targets of

attention from Muslim men, hoping to marry and convert these girls, thereby increasing Muslim numbers in what has been called a "Love Jihad." All this suggests that things are not quite as rosy in the U.K.'s 'multi-religious democracy" as Sajid Javid claims.

It is too bad that not one of the other candidates took issue with Javid, but of course to mention the grooming gangs, the No-Go areas, the "Love Jihad" would not have been politic. Instead, his claim about "anti-Muslim hatred" – part of the victimhood narrative that Muslims all over the West have constructed – went unchallenged. Why didn't anyone ask him to compare the numbers of hate crimes against Muslims in the U.K. with the far greater number of hate crimes by Muslims? No Muslims are fleeing the country, but some Jews, reeling from Muslim attacks, have left for Israel. There are No-Go areas where non-Muslims fear to tread, but despite this supposed increase of "anti-Muslim hatred," there appear to be no No-Go areas for Muslims. They are free to roam unconcernedly, while non-Muslims, especially Jews and women, must watch their backs in many Muslim areas.

An opportunity was missed by the five Tory candidates during their June 17 debate to respond intelligently to the charge of "Islamophobia." They might have taken issue with, instead of blandly accepting, the use of this word. They might have informed viewers that, after all, it is not unreasonable, certainly not "Islamophobic" (that is, exhibiting an "irrational fear and hatred of Islam and of Muslims"), for people to be alarmed about Muslim attitudes and observable behavior. That debate audience might have been informed that there are 109 Qur'anic verses commanding Muslims to "to fight" and "to kill" and to "smite at the necks of" and to "strike terror in the hearts" of the Unbelievers. But no one was prepared to mention those verses about violent Jihad. And what a salutary effect it might have had on millions of BBC viewers had any of the Tory candidates quoted Muhammad, for

Muslims the Perfect Man and Model of Conduct, who had boasted in a hadith that "I have been made victorious through terror." No Muslim could deny the existence of this remark, and their silence, or their transparent attempts to somehow twist its meaning, would be telling. And how would the television audience have reacted had they been told that one Qur'anic verse (3:11) describes Muslims as "the best of peoples" and another describes Unbelievers as "the most vile of created beings"?

After the debate, to the BBC's great embarrassment, and consternation among Muslim apologists, it was discovered that Abdullah Patel, the imam in Bristol who had originally started the whole discussion about "Islamophobia" by claiming he had "seen firsthand the main effects" of this hatred, had tweeted antisemitic comments and mocking remarks about rape. This were not discovered until after the debate, because he had deliberately suspended his twitter account before he was vetted by the BBC so that those tweets could not have been seen, and then, after the show, Patel promptly reactivated his twitter account.

Here is what he twitted about Jews – as all-powerful paymasters of those who dutifully do their bidding on behalf of Zionism:

*"Every Political figure on the Zionist's payroll is scaring the world about Corbyn. They don't like him. He seems best suited to tackle them!" In another tweet he suggested that the solution to the Arab-Israeli problem would be to remove Israel entirely from the Middle East and set it down in the middle in of the U.S. Patel asked in another tweet "how long are they going to hide behind the Holocaust cry"? And he had this to say about Gaza: "Auschwitz was a monstrosity. **But the concentration camp in Gaza is the modern day Auschwitz.** The Jews got justice, th (sic) Muslims deserve theirs.' That was enough to convince people of his antisemitism.*

Another tweet by Patel on the subject of rape blamed the victims: "Let's make something clear: 'Generally, men are the predators, but women need to realize this and be smarter. It takes 2 to tango, and if you put yourself in that position, don't expect every man to pass up the opportunity to take advantage of you. Don't be alone with a man!'"

In Patel's view, men are not to blame for rape. They are naturally predators; they can't help it; it's the fault of women if they are raped. He chastises them: "Don't expect every man to pass up the opportunity to take advantage of you. Don't be alone with a man!" British women were horrified; few realized that this view of rape is hardly unique to Abdullah Patel, but is shared by a great many Muslim men.

Both the antisemitic tweets and the rape comment set off a firestorm of criticism of Abdullah Patel. The Islamic girls' school where he taught, and the mosque, Masjid e Umar, where he served as imam, have "suspended" Patel pending further investigation. And what at first looked like it would be a solid win for the forces of Islam, with the five candidates agreeing that "Islamophobia" in the Tory Party should be investigated, instead ended in an embarrassed shambles at Abdullah Patel and his views, now unearthed, on "Zionists" and on rape.

This debate could have been used, in part, as a teaching moment, a way to introduce a wide audience to the most disturbing Qur'anic passages. But none of the candidates saw fit to do so. Instead they all nodded in agreement at Savid Javid's proposal that "Islamophobia" in the Conservative Party should be investigated. Baroness Warsi, the Muslim Conservative who sits in the House of Lords, who has made "Islamophobia" her signature issue, must have been well pleased. Fortunately, Abdullah Patel's tweets then became the story, deflecting attention from the promise to look into "Islamophobia" in the Tory Party.

But whoever turns out to be the candidate – as of this writing, on June 23, Johnson and Hunt are still in the running – and once the Tory prime minister is chosen by the 160,000 Tory faithful, there will be interviews, articles, speeches by him to shore up support in the broader public. In any general election, the Muslim vote can be written off by the Tories; that vote will go to the Labour Party's Jeremy Corbyn. The Tory candidate has to rally to his side those voters whose main worry is the Muslim presence in the U.K. and who until now have found themselves without adequate representation in the major parties. Then he will be able, if he is unafraid to adduce textual support from the Qur'an, to skeptically dissect the supposed scourge of "Islamophobia" and to bring forcefully to the British public's attention the many Jihad verses in that text. It's long past time for some palpable hits to be scored against the "religion of peace." In the debate the Tories held on June 18, all we witnessed was a very big miss.

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