

m of



Haaretz | News Jewish Man
Attacked in France, Called 'Dirty
Jew'; anti-Semitism Suspected



Haaretz | Opinion The Damage
Caused by Israel Fires Goes
Beyond the Material



Haaretz | News With Fo
Policemen for Every S
Is How Israel Plans to

From the Web Recommended by

Home > Opinion

Opinion // The Fear Driving British Jews to Jewish Schools

My daughter's experience of every anti-Semitic variation at her mainstream school explains why more UK Jews than ever before send their children to Jewish schools. But I still believe turning inwards is no answer.

Karen Glaser | Dec 05, 2016 12:59 PM

Share

Tweet



7

Zen

Subscribe



A protester in England hold up a sign reading "Hitler You Were Right!" Credit: CST

- Britain pledges \$17 million to protect synagogues, Jewish schools
- **Opinion //** Diaspora Jews must not be intimidated into laying low
- **Opinion //** Why British Jews fear Britain's new left

When my daughter was four, the age that compulsory education begins in the U.K., I didn't enroll her at a primary (elementary) school in my leafy, London neighborhood. I opted for a state-funded Orthodox Jewish one, several postcodes away, instead.

I reasoned the long car journeys across town were an acceptable trade-off for the grounding Rebekah would receive in Jewish custom and practice, and in the Hebrew language: the Yiddishkeit that I, with my complicated Jewish upbringing, had missed out on.

On paper, an Orthodox establishment was an unlikely choice. In reality, it was full of liberals who'd never had a God-bothering moment in their lives. I felt I'd come home. But after six years of

Most Viewed Now



Netanyahu Toppled //
Golden Statue of PM
Taken Down by
Israelis




American Jewish
Establishment Stifles
Free Speech to
Silence Zionism's
Critics




Kushner Family's
Settlement Donations
Alarm U.S. Jewish
Groups



Specter of Soldiers
Evacuating Amona
Settlers Worries
Israel's Military Brass




Savicell
Diagnostics



Click for details >>

finansim
פנסים (חשבון) לבעלי חשבונות בנקים



driving for two or more hours five days a week I admitted defeat, and enrolled Rebekah in a local, mainstream primary school.

— Advertisement —



Read More: *Are British Jews Afraid? And if they aren't, should they be?* | *British Parliament took a brave stance against 'goysplaining' anti-Semitism* | *Citing anti-Semitism, French Jews eschew public education*



Police officers separate pro and anti-Israel demonstrators outside Downing Street in London, September 9, 2015. Credit: Getty Images

Anxious for her to settle in quickly, I was delighted when, during her first week, she was invited to a classmate's home. When I picked her up I discovered the child's very English, middle-class parents were also journalists, and as we exchanged chit-chat about our industry, my eyes roamed around their book-lined living room. And then I froze. Stuck to the edge of one of the groaning shelves was a sticker that read: Boycott Apartheid Israel.

A couple of months later I was having coffee with the mother of Rebekah's new school friend, Ella. Conversation turned to a parent at the school who was active in hard left politics, and whose daughter, Sasha, was in our girls' class. "I feel dreadful telling you this, Karen," said the mother," but some leaflets fell out of Sasha's bag in the playground yesterday, and they said: Kill Jews. Ella picked them up really quickly so Rebekah wouldn't see, but still." It was November 2012, and several days into Operation Pillar of Defense. Sasha, I later learned, had been on a protest against the assault with her mum and must have picked up the radical Islamist leaflets there.

— Advertisement —

Related tags: Jewish education , anti-Semitism , UK



In First, Israel Denies Entry to pro-BDS Church Activist

By Ilan Lior | 1 Hour Ago 4



Google Search

I'm Feeling Lucky

Google Removes 'Are Jews Evil' Search Suggestion, but Keeps 'Are Muslims Bad'

By JTA | 5 Hours Ago



After David Duke Claims Jews Dominate Porn, Jenna Jameson Fires Back

By JTA | 9 Hours Ago



Anti-Semitic? Disqualifying? Keith Ellison's Views on Israel Are the Same as Most U.S. Jews

By Rebecca Zimmerman Hornstein | 6 Hours Ago

5



Giant Golden Statue of Netanyahu Mysteriously Appears in Tel Aviv

By Lior Soroka | 1 Hour Ago 3



Last month, a report published by Anglo-Jewry's representative body, the Board of Deputies, and the British independent think-tank, Institute for Jewish Policy Research, found that **two thirds of British Jewish schoolchildren now attend Jewish schools**. That is six times more than in the 1920s, despite the nine percent decline in Britain's Jewish population over the same period.

The study does not detail why parents are opting for Jewish schools, but it's reasonable to assume many are attracted by the good academic standards, the crippling cost of non-state funded private education in these straightened times and, for the observant, a continuity between home and school religious practice. But I know from countless conversations with Jewish friends that these weren't the decisive factor: their fear of anti-Semitism was paramount.

There's no doubt that Jew-hatred is growing in the U.K., particularly in London, where around 60% of Britain's estimated 284,000 Jews live, and where **anti-Semitic incidents increased by 62% in the first six months of this year**. And while there is no official data for anti-Semitism in British schools, on the basis of my experiences, I'd say that my friends' apprehension, their defensive position, is entirely understandable.

[Share](#)
[Tweet](#)
[Email](#)
[All sections](#)

school down the road even though she'd been entered places by two Jewish secondaries. She wanted to stay local, and I understand the importance of a social, as well as an academic, education: her school cuts across class lines and has a large Muslim population.



Protests against anti-Semitism outside the Royal Courts of Justice in London on August 31, 2014. Credit: AFP

I knew she'd be one of a small number of Jews among the student body. But I didn't quite reckon on her being the only Jewish child in



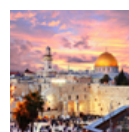
Kushner Foundation Donated to West Bank Settlement Projects

By Judy Maltz | 11 Hours Ago [Key](#) [13](#)

Promoted content



What Liberal Jews Can Learn From Henry Ford



25 most beautiful places to visit in Israel

Security & Aviation



Second Russian Jet Crashes While Landing on Aircraft Carrier Off Syria



The Airstrike in Syria: Does Putin Understand Israel's Urgent Security Needs?



Iran Made Millions From German Submarine Maker Netanyahu Insisted on Buying From



Russia Just Restricted the Strongest Air Force in Mideast

This Day in Jewish History

her class, in an area of north London that is home to many Jews, and has been for generations.

Anti-Semitism is a mutating virus, and during her time at secondary school my daughter has experienced pretty much all its variations. Religious: you killed Christ. Racial: how come you haven't got a big nose? Economic: Jews are rich and owns loads of businesses. Political: Zionists are racists.

Generally, the black and white working-class kids spout the religious and racial anti-Semitism; Muslim and middle-class students peddle the political prejudice; and everyone appears to think Jews are loaded.

When I relay all this to my largely secular Jewish friends they palpably shudder and ask me why on Earth I keep Rebekah at the school. My reasons are nuanced. First, she doesn't internalize any of the rubbish she hears. On the contrary, she knowledgeably and confidently rebuffs it. Second, she's often the first Jew her fellow pupils have knowingly met, and I think she does a wonderful job of breaking down stereotypes about the tribe. Third, her schoolmates often don't realize their prejudices are just that.

And that's the point, isn't it? If we don't get to know each other, it's easy to misunderstand the people who live among us and, when necessary, to tackle their bigotry.

So, while I completely understand why, when it comes to education, British Jews are falling in with a safer, separatist sense of identity, I don't think we are ultimately doing our kids any favors. Nor British society as a whole.

How will non-Jewish children ever positively encounter the Jewish children who live among them - and have their preconceptions challenged? And when those Jewish kids leave the cocoon of their Jewish schools, how will they know how to stand up to, recognize even, the world's longest hatred?

Sending our children to Jewish schools is a delaying tactic. They are not going to live the rest of their lives in an all-Jewish world. And they will certainly encounter anti-Semitism on British campuses. I believe my daughter will be far better equipped to deal with prejudice at university, and move on, than a kid who's been schooled in a Jewish bubble. That, to me, seems the crueler option.

Karen Glaser is a British freelance journalist for national newspapers and magazines.

All names have been changed to protect the subjects' privacy.



Karen Glaser
Haaretz Contributor

[Send me email alerts](#)



This Day in Jewish History // 1967: First Heart Transplant in the U.S. Is Carried Out, Baby Briefly Survives

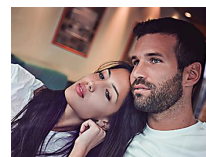
By David B. Green | 12 Hours Ago

Subscribe to Haaretz today
Only \$1 for the first month

Today's Most Read

- 1 Kushner Family's Settlement Donations Alarm U.S. Jewish Groups**
- 2 Giant Golden Statue of Netanyahu Appears in Tel Aviv**
- 3 Netanyahu Toppled: Golden Statue of PM Taken Down by Israelis**
- 4 Kushner Foundation Donated to West Bank Settlement Projects**
- 5 The Can of Worms Opened After Iconic Photographer Accused of Rape Commits Suicide**
- 6 Hanukkah Party at Trump Hotel Blasted as 'Tone Deaf, Naked Sycophancy'**

More From the Web



Match.com
20 Unwritten Rules of Online Dating



TickleFeeds
Nearly 20 Years After Saving Her Life, This Cop Is



defeaty.com
You Had No Idea This Happened During The



Viral Thread
The Most Evil People To Ever Step Foot On Earth

Recommended by

You Might also Like



Haaretz | Opinion
Who Cares That Ivanka Trump Is Jewish?



Haaretz | News
Israeli-born BDS Supporter Vies to Head Britain's Jewish Student Union



Haaretz | Opinion
The ADL's Bad Call on Keith Ellison



From The Web
defeaty.com
Ancient Gods That Were Actually Terrifying



From The Web
Reader's Digest
How equity release changed our lives



From The Web
IrishCentral
These Irish baby names are about to become super trendy
Recommended by

2,671 Amazon.co.uk customer reviews

Highly Recommend these tablets
“An excellent product. These tablets have given my elderly dog a new lease of life.”

Comments

Add a comment

- Sort comments by Newest first Expand all
- 5

Marlene Newesri | 5 Hours Ago

This is not to say that hatred does not exist...however....

▲ 0 ▼ 0
- 4

Lois Manning | 6 Hours Ago

Let's turn a slur into a compliment

▲ 0 ▼ 0
- 3

Lois Manning | 6 Hours Ago

Anti-seminism is a misnomer

▲ 0 ▼ 0
- 2

Ann Jackson | 7 Hours Ago

When the jaunts change to assaults, maybe you will change your mind.

▲ 0 ▼ 0
- 1

Jan | Yesterday

This is all quite serious.

▲ 9 ▼ 3

Ann | 1 Hour Ago

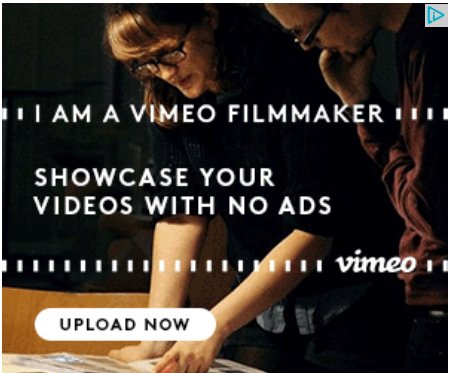
@Jan

▲ 0 ▼ 0

Ann | 2 Hours Ago

@Jan

▲ 0 ▼ 0





Haaretz.com

10 hours ago

This is pure gold



Giant golden statue of Netanyahu mysteriously appear...

HAARETZ.COM

435

109

293

ICYMI



Israeli-born BDS
Supporter Vies to Head
U.K. Jewish Student ...



Rising Israeli Arab Star
No Longer Has to Worry
About Humiliating ...



Dutch Secret Service
Investigated Far-right
Leader's Ties to Israel



Italy Has a Trump of Its
Own



Chomsky: Wrong to
Compare the 'Trump
Era' to 1930's Germany



FAQ
Contact us
Newsletters
Terms and conditions
Privacy policy
Management
Editorial
Accessibility
Advertise on Haaretz.com

Israel News

Middle East
Jewish World
U.S./World
Business

Partnerships

Israel Real Estate
Dan Hotels in Tel Aviv
Haaretz Labels
Michael Laitman

Life

Archaeology
Science
Sports

Culture

Purim
Books
Travel
Theater
Movies and TV
Food
Poem of the Week

Columnists

Bradley Burston
Chemi Shalev
Allison Kaplan Sommer
Anshel Pfeffer
Sayed Kashua
Ilene Prusher
David Rosenberg
Carlo Strenger
Vered Guttman

Opinion

Daily Cartoon
Letters to the Editor

הארץ

חדשות
גלריה
מתכונים לחנוכה
ספורט
ספרים
סרטים מומלצים
קפטן אינטרנט

TheMarker

Finance
חדשות
שוק ההון
צרכנות
נדל"ן

Haaretz.com, the online edition of Haaretz Newspaper in Israel, and analysis from Israel and the Middle East. Haaretz.com provides extensive and in-depth coverage of Israel, the Jewish World and the Middle East, including defense, diplomacy, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the peace process, Israeli politics, Jerusalem affairs, international relations, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, the Palestinian Authority, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the Israeli business world and Jewish life in Israel and the Diaspora.