Vote Conservative

by: Rabbi Jeremy Rosen

I always voted for the Labour Party in the UK. I admired its idealists, like Aneurin Bevan, Hugh Gaitskell, and Michael Foot. I supported Harold Wilson's desire to turn the UK into a scientific meritocracy. I felt bad for cuddly Michael Foot, propelled into a position unsuited to him, but still better him than angry, bitter Tony Benn. I applauded Tony Blair's strength in standing up to the unions, and his balanced approach socially and economically. Even with their loony left, I identified with Labour more than with the Conservatives, who were snobbish, xenophobic, and elitist.

As for the Liberals, there's no point in voting for a party that can turn up to parliament in a single taxicab, as my father used to say. I thought they were right about many issues, including the electoral system. Still, a vote for them was a wasted vote.

I turned against Labour for various reasons. Like any party that is in power for too long, it lost its edge. It became complacent, and it failed to tackle fundamental social issues and abuses of welfare. It promised to democratize the risible House of Lords, but did not.

From a Jewish perspective, and of course I have one, the leadership was predominantly pro-Israel, but too many of its prominent MP's, like Clare Short, were blinkered in their hostility (criticism is one thing, hostility is another). They refused to change the law so as to stop ugly monkeys trying to haul Tzipi Livni, of all people, before the English courts on criminal charges and they have ignored militant Islam in order to retain the Muslim vote.

As for the Liberal Democrats I'd never dream of voting for a party that puts boycotting Israel on its agenda, still has the unspeakable Baroness Tonge as a member, and goes out of its way to insult the Board of Deputies by sending in its deputy leader, William Wallace, to rebuke Anglo-Jews for supporting Israel.

The sad fact is that no party seriously addressed the issue of cultural conflict, of homegrown antagonism to democratic secular values. But some were worse than others. The Lib Dems were so eager to gain power that many of their candidates allied themselves with rabid fundamentalists who disapprove of every plank of their political and moral agendas except for antagonism towards Israel (and towards Jews, since the Koran, not unlike the New Testament, says some nasty things about them).

So that only left the Conservatives. Britain needed change. I thought they would be the least damaging to the values and interests I hold dear and you never know, despite my scorn for all politicians, they might even do a good job.

From a Jewish perspective again, their leadership is pro Jewish although their Foreign Minister Hague is not. Under him the rabidly Arabist Foreign Office will continue to ensure that the only place the Queen cannot go to in the Middle East, is Israel. Not that I care too much about that.

Anyway the Conservatives won even if they needed the Lib Dems to join their coalition. Thank goodness the Lib Dems have been kept out of the ministries of Home Affairs, which controls immigration, Work and Pensions which controls Welfare.

In Britain there are three main voting blocks. Upper-class, right-wing, big money tend (always exceptions, of course, to any rule) to vote Conservative. Left-wing workers, trade unionists, loonies, vote Labour. Liberal intellectuals vote Lib Dem. The middleclass professionals, businessmen, entertainers, sportsmen, and overnight personalities are the swing voters who switch between the major parties. They brought Thatcher to power, but later switched to Blair. Now they have swung back to Conservative. Why? It is not the economy. Brown did a great job until international factors derailed every major economy in the world, and no one believes the Conservatives are going to change the world.

More people voted Conservative precisely because they were the only ones who did not kowtow to the Muslim extremist vote. Neither were they xenophobic. Most Britons are not. They know working immigration benefits a country and the average Brit by now is used to foreigners and not much bothered (except for rival gangs). That is why the Conservatives destroyed the fascist BNP vote. What the average Brit cannot abide is the appeasement of those who want to undermine or negate British values. Whereas Labour and the Liberals have gone out of their way to indulge, and court and subsidize radical Muslims, the Conservatives alone have not.

There is a reaction to alien fanaticism. One sees it in Belgium, which hitherto had Socialist government that courted the Muslim vote and overindulged it with welfare. Yet now Belgium has preempted France in voting to ban the burka in public. France has no anti-immigrant legislation, but sends Jihadist preachers home. All one needs is a simple message, "We have our values. We are going to keep them, and we are not going to support or encourage anyone who wants to undermine them." But sadly in Britain none of the major parties so far had the guts to say this.

That's how we Jews integrated. Some of us wanted to keep our funny dress, strange customs, and cultural identity, but we did not try to undermine the values of the society we came to. My parents even advised me, as a teenager, to wear a hat instead of a kipah, so as not to stand out. (As if I didn't anyway.) And if we wanted change we used the democratic channels to fight, not gunpowder.

Change in politics is necessary. And if the Cons actually deal with the crucial social issues instead of ignoring them, next time they will win a proper majority. That is democracy. That is why I love it.