



DAVID MILIBAND

Does the British foreign secretary, the child of Holocaust survivors and New Labour wonk, have the “icicle in the heart” it takes to become prime minister?

Michael Goldfarb

DAVID MILIBAND IS KNOWN FOR HIS LOW-KEY, WONKISH PUBLIC-SPEAKING STYLE.

But at this fall’s Labour Party Conference, the British foreign secretary was angry—and didn’t hide it. “It makes me sick,” he told those gathered, referring to the Conservative Party’s membership in a European Parliament coalition that boasts known anti-Semites.

In June, ahead of Britain’s general election next year, the Conservatives joined the European Conservatives and Reformists Group, chaired by Michal Kaminski of Poland’s Law and Justice Party, who has insisted that Poles should not apologize to Jews for atrocities committed during the Holocaust until Jews apologize to Poles for atrocities committed by Jewish soldiers in the Soviet Army. Another member, Roberts Zile of Latvia’s Fatherland and Freedom Party, partakes in an annual ceremony commemorating a Latvian SS unit.

Miliband made the Conservatives’ unsavory partners a main talking point of his address. He decried Kaminski’s “anti-Semitic, neo-Nazi past” and accused Conservatives of giving up their values for short-term political advantage. “No one in the Tory party batted an eyelid. What do they say? All you need for evil to triumph is for good men to remain silent.”

The outburst was uncharacteristic. Miliband is the child of Holocaust survivors—and at least 80 members of his family perished—but he is also a man who until recently has said almost nothing publicly about his Jewish heritage.

As the point man for British diplomacy, the youthful-looking 44-year-old has managed to find a balance between a British vision of foreign policy and that of the United States and steer a straight course through furors set off by the United Nations’ Goldstone Report, Britain’s University and College Union’s efforts to boycott Israeli academics and the Scottish government’s release of the only man convicted in the Lockerbie bombing. And as his speech at the Labour Party conference showed, he can, when he wants to, throw a punch. Acknowledged as a bright light of the next generation of Labour leaders, Miliband is frequently spoken of as a future prime minister.

THE STORY OF HOW David Miliband ascended to these heights is a tale of historical forces that shaped Jewish life in Europe. Like many Jews, his paternal grandfather, Samuel, a leather worker, left Poland after World War I, eventually settling in Brussels. But on May 10, 1940, the Nazis overran Belgium. Samuel and his 16-year-old son Adolphe walked for two days to the port of Ostend, where they boarded the last boat for Britain. Left behind were Samuel's wife and daughter, who fled to a village in the countryside, successfully hiding from the Gestapo.

The son was David Miliband's father, who soon changed his name to Ralph. He briefly attended the London School of Economics (LSE), then served for the rest of World War II in the Royal Navy, patrolling the Mediterranean and translating intercepted German communications.

Meanwhile, Miliband's mother, Marion Kozak, and her family were trapped in Nazi-occupied Czestochowa in southern Poland. Marion and her mother found shelter in the home of a local Polish family who took great risks

to ensure their survival. At war's end, Marion also made her way to Britain, where she met Ralph Miliband, who by then had resumed his studies in politics at the LSE and had become a committed Marxist. It was the 1960s and Marion shared his passion for left-wing politics. They married and, rather late in life, started a family. David was their first-born, followed by his brother Ed.

Ralph became one of the most prominent left-wing intellectuals in Britain and a leading figure of the "New Left," a movement sparked by the 1956 Soviet invasion of Hungary and given impetus by the Vietnam War. Britain was the epicenter of global cultural changes that marked the '60s and Labour was in power. Although it was in theory a socialist party, Ralph viewed Labour as completely cut off from the working masses who founded it and argued that it had become a servant of the existing power structure.

Ralph Miliband's world view was shaped by big ideas but also by his painful family history. Israel's swift victory in the Six-Day War of 1967 created fissures within the New Left that still have not healed. Harsh critics, including many of the movement's Jewish intellectuals, accused Israel of waging a war of colonial aggression against the Palestinians. In contrast, Ralph Miliband supported Israel's actions.

As the son of a professor, David's growing years were peripatetic. At first, the family lived in Primrose Hill, a leafy area just north of London's Regent's Park, famous today as home to movie stars and models, but then a colony of left-leaning professors and writers. They moved when Ralph left LSE to teach in the northern English city of Leeds and later at Boston's Brandeis University, returning to Britain for David's high school years. As a result, the future foreign secretary became a fan of both the British soccer team Arsenal and of a certain American baseball team. As Miliband once put it, "If you lived

SO THERE IT IS

So there it is: the siren. It's 10 am. The three of us stand up around the table in the small dinette—for some reason we all face the window and the birds are chirping their heads off. In my mind are my father's losses: sister, big brother, his wife, his two sons—and the story my mother told me just last year very carefully, shaking off for a moment the slowly rising flood of confusion and timelessness that more and more is her life these days: that when they visited Yad Vashem in '77, one month before his final stroke, my father had fainted, having discerned his brother among the open sea of faces there. And in my mind it's yitgadal v'yitkadash for Motek and Rina and the wife and sons whose names I don't know (and for my father, too) and the next thing I know it's my first Yom Ha-Shoah in Israel nine years back on a highway in the middle of the Negev at 10 am, the few cars to be seen in the wide and flat terrain pulled over to the side under a big sky, and by each of them one or two figures standing silent and now, now, breaking into and penetrating the drone of the siren is a silly musical phrase calliope-like they use instead of a bell to mark the end of each class in the school across the way and one minute has elapsed and before I know it the siren is rising in pitch and the two minutes are gone and there is silence for a beat,

and for that second minute, I realize, there were neither birds nor inner words nor memory nor breath, for one entire minute, all there was was the sound of the siren and that was all there was.

—Bernard Horn



If anyone objects to the union of these two people, here, or on Facebook or on Twitter, speak, post, or tweet now, or forever hold your peace.”

in Boston, you, of course, support the Boston Red Sox.”

DAVID’S CHILDHOOD was steeped in values of equality and justice and his father’s frustration with Britain’s political system. As a young man, his commitment to those values led to a break with his father’s world view and toward an embrace of Labour Party politics. After a first class degree from Oxford in politics, philosophy and economics followed by a master’s at MIT in Boston, Miliband gained notice as a policy analyst at the Institute for Public Policy Research, a think-tank with close ties to Labour. It was the early 1990s and the party had just lost its fourth election in a row to the Conservatives. Every speck of policy and ideology was up for re-examination.

In 1994, Miliband co-edited a volume of essays called *Paying for Inequality: The Economic Cost of Social Injustice*. With enough charts and statistics to beat the most ardent free-marketer into submission, the book took on the economic orthodoxy of the

Thatcher-Reagan era. “Our purpose,” wrote Miliband, “is to show that the economic justification for current levels of inequality is spurious.” The book was notable for what it was not: It was not a shrieking, rhetorical screed against the widening gap between rich and poor in Conservative Britain but rather a measured and sober analysis of the economic cost of that gap to British society. Miliband called for the redistribution of wealth not because he wanted a revolution, but because it would tap the economic potential of those who had been excluded and reduce costs in the long run.

The book, published before Miliband turned 30, had a major impact on the new team that headed the Labour Party. He became particularly close to Tony Blair, the newly elected party leader. Blair was not a Marxist; he was barely a Socialist; Ralph Miliband reportedly despised the young Labour Party leader, considering him a closet Tory. But his son and the soon-to-be prime minister saw the world differently. They believed that Labour had to embrace a new kind of progressive

THE OTHER MILIBAND



David Miliband may be cruising toward Labour leadership, but one person who might get in his way is his brother Ed. Four years younger, Ed, 40, has risen faster than his wunderkind older brother. Having served as an advisor (and confidant) to Prime Minister Gordon Brown and as a cabinet minister, he was appointed secretary of state at the newly created Department of Energy and Climate Change in 2008. Ed has received high marks for his leadership working on climate change abroad and at home. There is some amusement among Labourites about the party’s “band of brothers”: At its 2005 conference delegates wore “My favourite Miliband” badges, with pictures of either David or Ed. His affable and easy-going manner is causing politicians, cabinet members and journalists alike to suggest that he, too, has the making of a future prime minister.

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politics to meet Britain's current needs. In the post-industrial society, the working "masses" were property owners. To be elected, Labour had to speak a new language. Borrowing from Ralph Miliband's idea of a "New Left," the party rebranded itself "New Labour."

David Miliband is credited with writing much of the 1997 Labour Party election manifesto—its party platform. There wasn't much naked socialism in it. But there was a lot of emphasis on something his father, who passed away in 1994, would have approved of: education. Labour won the election in an historic landslide. Miliband followed Blair into 10 Downing Street as head of policy. Blair's chief of communications, Alastair Campbell, gave him the nickname "Brains."

Miliband was thought of as a brilliant policy wonk but not a politician. "David is very austere," says one political figure who has known him for a long time. "He is shy and values his privacy." Despite an affinity for blogging, his personal life is virtually unknown beyond a few basic facts. His wife, Louise Shackleton, a violinist with the London Symphony Orchestra, is a dual American-British citizen whom he met on a flight to Rome. The couple adopted two young sons, Isaac and Jacob, from the United States. His ability to keep his private life private is an amazing feat in a country with a rapacious tabloid press.

But in 2001, much to the surprise of many who knew him, Miliband threw himself into electoral politics. He stood for Parliament for the safe Labour seat of South Shields, a gritty northern constituency. It was the kind of place where voters favored the socialism his father endorsed. Once elected to Parliament, his rise to the cabinet seemed pre-ordained. In 2006, Blair appointed him secretary for environment, food and rural affairs. The following year, the new prime minister, Gordon Brown, named him foreign secretary.

BECOMING FOREIGN SECRETARY wasn't what Miliband had in mind. Chris Brown, professor of international relations at LSE, says David Miliband hoped that Prime Minister Brown would put him in charge of a big-budget domestic department, like the Home Office, which oversees immigration policy, counter-terrorism and science.

But after a smooth rise to the upper echelons of the Labour Party, Miliband had slammed into the wall that has prevented Labour from fulfilling the promise of its 1997 manifesto: the rivalry between Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. The men were elected to Parliament the same year and plotted against each other to become prime minister. Blair won out because it was clear to everyone that he was a great campaigner. Brown's intellectual skills are formidable but he is not at all personable. He broods, he holds grudges, and he does it all in public. In Brown's mind, Miliband was a Blair loyalist and a potential rival. But he was too important to ignore, and so he was "relegated" to the Foreign Office to enjoy the prestige and not get in the way.

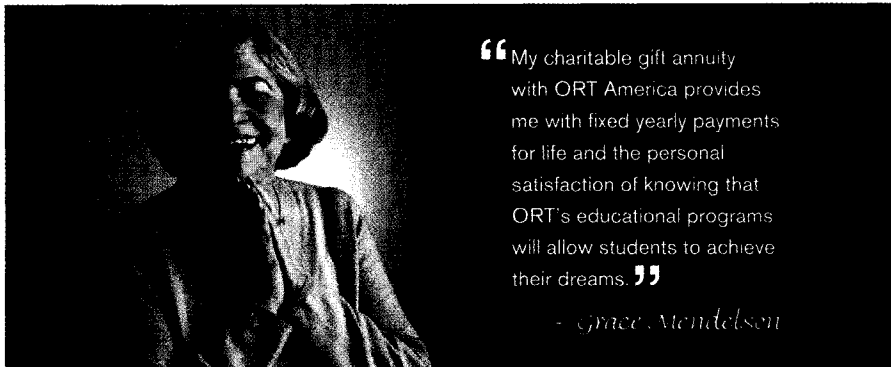
Whatever his initial feelings about the appointment, Miliband has thrown himself into a job that is no longer as glamorous as it once was. In the heyday of the British Empire, the foreign secretary's position ranked only slightly behind the prime minister's in importance. But because the center of world power shifted to Washington after World War II, Britain's foreign policy ambitions today are more modest.

Since Labour came to power in 1997, British and American foreign policy has run along the same track on the big issues: Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq and aid for Africa. On issues such as the unpopular war in Iraq, being seen as the United States' lapdog is not a good place when it comes to public opinion. "That is what brought Tony Blair down. He was seen as too slavish to American policy," says Todd Endelman, a University of

Michigan professor who specializes in Anglo-Jewish history. Miliband has faced criticism for his closeness to Blair, and as foreign secretary has spent considerable energy extricating British foreign policy from the compromises and possible illegalities associated with the war on terror. He has managed to get British citizens out of Guantanamo, yet at the same time has fought what looks like a losing battle against keeping secret the interrogation methods (torture) used on some of those citizens. His public avowals that this would compromise American intelligence and might lead to the U.S. withholding top intelligence from Britain seem mealy-mouthed to the more vocal critics of the "special relationship" between the two nations.

Climate change is one area where the British have been able to clearly differentiate themselves from the United States. Throughout the Bush Administration, the U.S. was not a player, and the Obama Administration, while more interested, is just getting its toes wet. The United Kingdom has made climate change a major foreign policy priority in recent years, led, among others, by Miliband's brother Ed, who is secretary of state for energy and climate change. Last November, Ed Miliband helped usher in the Climate Change Act, which commits the United Kingdom to reducing carbon emission by 80 percent from a 1990 baseline by the year 2050. David Miliband has called for all governments, including Barack Obama's, to make similar commitments, arguing, "This is too important an issue for conventional negotiation where everybody plays their cards close to their chest until the last minute."

Oliver Kamm, an editorial writer for *The Times* of London and an Oxford contemporary of the foreign secretary, notes that Miliband has approached dealing with Russia and Iran differently than did Blair: "He's been less prone to give [Russian Prime Minister Vladimir] Putin



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- Grace Mendelson

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the benefit of any doubt. And he’s been strong on holding the Iranian leadership to account for their nuclear duplicity.”

Miliband has made it a priority to reach out to Arab and Muslim communities both outside and inside the U.K. In May, he declared that the West needs to “understand the Muslim world better. We need to hold fast to our values and support those who seek to apply them, or we will be guilty of hypocrisy.” “Miliband and his team within the foreign ministry were the first to realize that the term ‘the global war on terror’ ought to be shelved,” says Steve Clemons, senior fellow at the New America Foundation.

Miliband’s message of tolerance is important not only to an international audience but a domestic one. Britain is home to 2.4 million Muslims, a population that is growing 10 times faster than its others. Regarded as one of the most tolerant countries in Europe, Britain struggles with questions of integration, particularly the social exclusion of its Muslims, as well as the psychological aftermath of the July 2005 suicide bombings on London’s public transport system carried out by young Britons of Pakistani descent, which left 52 people dead and over 700 injured.

Britain has been a leading partner in attempts to lure Syria away from Iraq and into serious peace discussions with Israel, and Miliband has become a point person for these discussions. Shortly after Barack Obama’s election, Miliband visited Damascus, the first official visit by a member of the British government in nearly a decade. His meetings with his Syrian counterpart helped smooth the way for recent discussions between President Obama’s special Middle East envoy, George Mitchell, and Syrian president Bashar Assad.

On the subject of Israel itself, Britain has shown a greater willingness than the United States to criticize the Israelis over settlements and what some call

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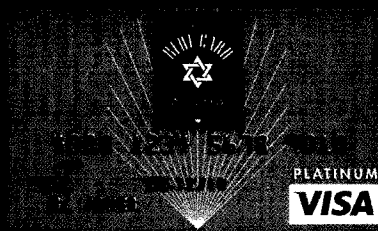
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the disproportionate responses to provocations from Gaza and southern Lebanon. (Jewish Labour MP Gerald Kaufman is among the most vocal.) Like his predecessors, both Labour and Conservative, Miliband has been unequivocal: "Settlements are illegal under international law," he told Parliament last summer. "They are a major blockage to peace in the Middle East on the basis of a two-state solution."

THAT MILIBAND IS JEWISH is almost never mentioned in professional assessments. Unlike the large and organized Jewish community in the U.S., the U.K.'s Jewish community is smaller—around 267,000—and quieter, too. According to one of its leaders, who prefers to speak anonymously, the community has "genuine ambivalence about one of their own being close to power," despite the fact that Jews have a long history in British politics. While in the U.S., Democrats can count on wide support from the Jewish population, British Jews are more divided between the Conservative and Labour parties, according to Todd Endelman.

David Miliband grew up in a home without a close connection to London's Jewish community, which is traditionally more religiously observant than its American counterpart. According to one close observer, "The Milibands were not active members of the community and this was resented. They were not acknowledged as really being Jewish."

Miliband, who is an atheist, has become more open about discussing his ethnic roots than in the past. This June, he undertook a private visit to Warsaw's Jewish cemetery, where he spent time on his own looking for the graves of his family. In a candid article for London's *Jewish Chronicle*, Miliband conceded that this visit had been too long in coming. "There must have been a deep ambivalence at the heart of this delay.

Poland is my roots," he wrote. "But Poland is the scene of terrible tragedy—mass murder on an unimaginable scale." And he learned more about his family's past when his brother traveled to Moscow for talks on climate change. While there, during a radio interview, an elderly caller announced on the air, "I am Sofia Davidovna Miliband. I am your relative; I am the only one left." It was no hoax. The woman was indeed his 87-year-old cousin. The pair had a private meeting during which Ed learned that he and David had previously unknown distant cousins living in Britain.

Many members of the Jewish community have come to appreciate David Miliband's growing public acceptance of his heritage. Some especially like that he hosts a Hanukkah celebration at his official residence, something that no foreign secretary had ever done. "He has learned the power of small symbols to the Jewish community," added the community leader approvingly.

WITH A GENERAL ELECTION

expected next May, Labourites and the Conservatives have already commenced campaign hostilities. The Labour Party is considered to be in the position where the Conservatives were in 1994: ripe for defeat. They are currently 16 to 18 points behind the Conservatives in every opinion poll.

The Conservatives are led by David Cameron, a contemporary of Miliband's at Oxford, and just as fresh-faced as the foreign secretary. He has studied the New Labour playbook and repositioned his party squarely in the middle ground of British politics—except on one issue: Europe. Britain's Conservatives have long been skeptical about the country's membership in the European Union, which some view as nothing more than a stealth program for creating a United States of Europe, headquartered in Brussels and run by France and Germany.

During tough economic times, like now, there is popular resentment, for example, of the 600,000 Poles who have migrated to Britain for work since 2004. Nevertheless, the Conservatives' invitation of Kaminski and Zile to their 2009 conference has allowed Labour to stir controversy and puncture the carefully crafted new image of the Conservatives as the "nice" party.

Even the spotlight on the Conservatives' strange bedfellows may not be enough to pull Labour out of its doldrums, which means that Miliband could be out of government after the elections. What he will do then is a matter of wide speculation among London's chattering classes. If he makes a bid to lead the party he could end up being prime minister by the middle of the next decade.

Observers are divided about whether David Miliband really wants the top job—and if he's got what it takes to land it. In July, he wrote an op-ed piece that was widely seen as critical of Brown's leadership and many assumed that he would challenge Gordon Brown for the Labour leadership.

But it didn't happen. Oliver Kamm regrets his college friend's lack of audacity. "His opportunity to be Labour leader has, for all effective purposes, passed, because he didn't go for the kill when he might have done and ought to have done, against a leader who will produce electoral catastrophe for the party."

Michael White, veteran political columnist of *The Guardian*, also doesn't think it will happen. "David Miliband is a smart guy and a decent guy, very thoughtful, too, for a politician," he says. "Can he become Labour leader and even prime minister? Not on the evidence I've seen so far. He's neither ambitious nor ruthless enough, no icicle in the heart." But other political commentators are not so sure. Ned Temko of *The Observer* newspaper says, "My impression is he wants the leadership."

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around in circles in their new soles going “Who knew?”

I think that when you die, it is the same as before you were born. I think that heaven is the feeling you have when the room is sunny and you are awake but your eyes are not open. I think that my brother is in heaven. Even though he is older than I am, he is a baby. I think that if G-d called him back just at the last second, he must have had a very gentle heart. That if he were here, and knew what I knew, the things I have told you, that his heart would be broken, and that he would have walked around from person to person with his hand out, like waiting for a coin, asking people to help him repair the world. Or that he would have prayed with so much sadness that the sanctuary would have filled with his tears and the chairs and even the Torahs would have been lost in the torrent. He was all love and no bone and his lungs were never even filled with air. It was like two strong angels took him by each arm and rushed him back to heaven. And he only had a minute to look behind him and see my mother holding the baby he was. And he played at the feet of G-d's throne, and that is where he met me and said, “I'll stay here—you go,” and the feeling I have in my chest when my heart pounds and my arms feel empty is from the falling, falling down to earth. ♣

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If Labour loses, there's talk of him becoming Europe's first foreign minister, and indeed, Miliband would like to see Britain take a greater role in European Union leadership. “He has been successful in demarcating his own political agenda, and even should the Brown government crash and burn, David Miliband will emerge unscathed,” says Jonathan Laurence, a professor of political science at Boston College and a senior fellow at Brookings Institution's Center on the U.S. and Europe. “He has a bright future.” ♣

Ukraine was anxious to be removed from the list, which it regarded as a Cold War relic. On March 23, 2006, Ukraine was exempted from Jackson-Vanik with support from the American Jewish community. In return, the Ukrainian government promised to keep up the pressure on MAUP.

Still, many in the international community were uncomfortable with how long it took Yushchenko, and especially Foreign Minister Tarasyuk, to disassociate themselves from the school. “It took considerable international attention to make Yushchenko and Tarasyuk distance themselves from MAUP,” says Rudling, adding that it is not known what sort of money Yushchenko, Kravchuk, Tarasyuk and others received “for their associations with Shchokin's network.” Jed Sunden agrees that the response was slow. “I don't think a lot of the officials even knew about the campaign,” he explains. “In the States it would have been very rapid, but public pressure and freedom of the press are new in this country.”

By the end of 2006, MAUP no longer appeared infallible. When Shchokin and other MAUP professors ran on the Conservative Party platform in parliamentary elections, they garnered less than one percent of the vote, failing to win any seats. MAUP also began to lose its luster in court. Mikhail Frenkel, the editor of the newspaper *The Jewish Observer* and chair of the Association of Jewish Mass Media in Ukraine, was sued for defamation for a September 2005 editorial he wrote after a yeshiva student was attacked outside Kiev's central synagogue, receiving brain injuries that left him in a coma. Frenkel blamed MAUP for spreading “the poison of anti-Semitism and Judephobia” and the government for doing nothing about it. In that same suit, MAUP also named Ukraine's chief rabbi Yankel Bleich, a Karlin-Stolin Hasid from Brooklyn, and Sergey Maxim, then head of the Jewish

Federation of Ukraine. “The case went all the way to the Supreme Court,” says Frenkel proudly. “Ours was the first case MAUP lost.”

UKRAINE AND RUSSIA are the only two former Soviet republics that still have substantial Jewish populations. I hear estimates ranging from 100,000 to 400,000, a small fraction of the country's 46 million people.

Josef Zissels, chairman of the Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities in Ukraine, explains why it is difficult to count Jews in Ukraine. The last census, he says, recorded 105,000 self-identified Jews but that number doesn't include all of those with Jewish mothers, which would bring the count to 200,000. “If only one parent is Jewish, a person usually says he is not Jewish—this is inertia from Soviet times,” he says. “The number of Jews increases to 400,000 if you apply the criteria of Israel's Law of Return.”

These numbers are minuscule compared with the nearly two million Jews who lived in Ukraine during the 19th century. “A great chapter of Jewish life occurred here,” Jed Sunden reminds me. “The Hasidic movement was born and thrived in Galicia, now western Ukraine and southeast Poland. There were great yeshivas, and great secular literature came out of the community.”

The tumultuous history of Jews in Galicia began in the 10th century when Polish nobles invited Jews to manage their business interests, placing the newcomers in direct conflict with the peasants who worked the land. As Polish control weakened in the 17th century and Russia expanded, Cossack troops marauded throughout central and western Ukraine, slaughtering Jews and destroying their communities.

Under Russian control, Jews were confined to the Pale of Settlement, which included much of Ukraine, and from 1922 on were citizens of the Soviet