I am not Jewish but I do have some sympathy with accusations that Lord Levy is coming under fire partly for his Jewishness during the current ‘cash for peerages’ investigation. David Rowan, editor of the Jewish Chronicle, (who I should declare is an acquaintance of mine), believes that anti-semitic language is creeping in to the coverage of the affair, which, of course, now has little or nothing to do with cash for peerages and everything to do with a power struggle between the police and Number 10.

But is the Establishment and the news media being anti-semitic? In today’s JC, Rabbi Yitzchak Schochet, of Mill Hill Synagogue in North-West London, where the embattled peer is a congregant, denounces “the blatant nastiness in some of the tabloids and the recent seeming trial by media”. Rabbi Schochet has blamed “sinister corners” for the leaks, and condemned “the mean-spiritedness so prevalent in this country”. He also used a television interview to claim: “The Jewish community is becoming increasingly more sensitive that there is one Jew, who has been called the most dynamic Jew in Anglo-Jewry, seemingly being hung out to dry here.” I have to say that I agree with some of this, but that if someone themselves is so high-profile about being Jewish then it is difficult not to refer to them without mentioning that aspect of their lives. I do believe that there is a growing amount of low-level, unthinking references to people’s Jewish faith or background and some of it is pejorative. But I am not convinced we are yet facing a significant increase in anti-semitism which is the systematic denigration of Jews and their faith. Last night I was reading the Concentration Camp novel Fateless by Imre Kertesz. It is a devastating account of the banal evil of the Nazis. But in its early pages it is also a chillingly realistic portrayal of the way that very low level casual prejudice on the part of a society can lead to appalling collective acts of inhumanity.

We should all mind our language.