

## Anti-Semitism on the Iranian Internet By Hamid Tehrani

Iranian anti-Semitic blogs reveal important information that can help us gain a better understanding about the roots and dynamism of anti-Jewish sentiment in Iran. Yet, anti-Semitism has rarely attracted researchers' interest. In recent years, Iranian president and Holocaust denier Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has organized cartoons on the Holocaust in Iran and invited notorious international revisionists to a conference to Tehran, surprising the world. Reading these blogs will help us to explore anti-Semitism in Iran as an old and dynamic "ideology." Ahmadinejad's comments and actions are just one visible and official part of it.

In last three years anti- Semitic blogs and sites have had a real active presence on the Iranian internet and in their words try to “conquer their part of market in virtual world”.

We should keep it in mind that most anti-Semitic blogs are islamists but most islamists are not anti -Semitic. There are also ultra nationalist blogs and sites that in the same time reject Islam and promote hate speech against Jewish and Arab people. But these ones contrary to islamist ones are not really significant and have no relation with the Iranian State.

Good news is the number of anti -Semitic blogs is realtively small.

Bad news is they organize themselves into groups, have directly or indirectly connections with Iranian State and some news sites.

Iranian anti-Semitic blogs combine different schools of rhetoric. Some are religious in nature, some nationalistic.

## Islamist anti-Semitic blogs

These bloggers choose to present a few selected verses of the Qu'ran, and some Hadiths, to portray Jewish people as an eternal enemy of Muslims.

Some of these bloggers cite a single verse of the Qu'ran (Surat Maedeh verse 83) that says: "Jews and infidels are the worst enemies of Muslims." Then they conclude that learning about this "absolute enemy" is a duty for each Muslim.

The blog [Yahood Shenasi](#) (means "knowing the Jews") refers to the writings of a 17th century influential cleric, Majlesi, to expose so-called Jewish hostility to the will of God and Mohammad, the Prophet. According to Majlesi, Jews wanted to kill Abdullah, the Prophet's father, to prevent his birth — but they failed. But the blogger adds that Jews are "responsible" for the suspicious death of Abdullah.

Islamist anti-Semitic rhetoric about Jewish hostility is not bound by any given time frame. It started before Islam and it will continue until the advent of the Hidden Imam Mahdi at the end of the world.

[Alhadid blog](#) writes that according to one Hadith, there will be a fight between Muslims and Jews. Jews hide behind a rock and tree but the same rock and tree shout here is a Jew hide in me, come and kill him.

[Analyzehahghhat](#) (means analyzing truth) warns Muslims that according to one Hadith no Jew does not want to be alone with a Muslim except to kill him.

This kind of anti-Semitism gives a spiritual and metaphysical dimension to hatred against Jews. They are not only a nation or country but against God, from the beginning to the end!

## Iranian anti-Semitism

Nationalism shows up on some Iranian anti-Semitic blogs. These bloggers cite events in Iranian history to prove that Jews have played the role of "traitors" for centuries at any opportunity.

[Alhadid](#) writes about Sa'ad al- Dwla , a Jewish physician and statesman in

13-century Persia. He was grand vizier (minister) from 1289 to 1291 under the Mongolian Ilkhan in Persia Arghun Khan. The blogger says that this Jewish statesman encouraged Arghun Khan to invade Mecca and turn Kaaba into an idolatry center!

Another favorite story of these bloggers concerns the Biblical figure, Esther. The book of Esther was written near the end of the second century BC. According to the book of Esther, Haman—the Visir of Ahsuerus, the Persian King and Esther's husband—decide to kill all Jews in the Empire. Esther informed the King about this event and Ahsuerus ordered the execution of Haman and his sons.

Anti-Semitic bloggers emphasize certain Biblical verses that speak of the Jews killing their enemies in all countries— "up to 75000 were killed."

The irony is that Islamist bloggers try to prove their point by referring to the Book of Esther in the Bible —yet they believe the Holy Book of Christians or Jews is not a reliable source.

These bloggers are still suspicious of the Iranian Jewish population and believe their "negative and destructive" role continues in today's society. One [anti-Semitic blog](#) that calls itself a "Jewish" blog specializes in revealing "conspiracies" of Jews and their "dark propaganda." He adds that an Iranian Jewish magazine promotes Hollywood and Jewish Iranians whose goals are criticizing the Iranian regime and Muslims.

### Catch-all Anti-Semitism

Still other blogs recycle the bigoted claims associated with European anti-Semitism: the Holocaust is a lie, Jews rule the world according to the tenets of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, Jews are animals.

For these bloggers, Jews are not victims because the Holocaust did not happen — and even if it happened, it was not that important. One blogger, denying all reliable statistics, says there were only 500,000 Jews in Poland and Germany before World War II. They publish revisionist photos and call them the real victims. Many have published the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, a forged document, to prove the Jews' "conspiracy" to rule the world. Ever since the early 20th century the veracity of this document has been rejected — but of course these bloggers ignore that fact. King Faisal of

Saudi Arabia used to give the Book of Protocols to his guests. This is the same King who believed Jews drank the blood of their enemies. (1)

Finally, as usual, [Jews are presented](#) as greedy people acting in secrecy against any society in which they live.

### Hidden Jews

One of the obsessions of these blogs is that there are "hidden Jews" who hide their Jewishness to push their goals not only in Iran but in the whole world. Even Muammar Gaddafi may be considered a hidden Jew. Some Iranian Jews are accused of using non-Jewish names to hide their identity.

An [anti-Semitic blog](#) called "Jew" writes that "Gaddafi is responsible for the kidnapping of Mousa Sadr, a Shiite leader in Lebanon. After years of chanting slogans against Israel, he asked several Arab countries to normalize their relations with this country. What a Muslim he is!" The blogger mentions that Gaddafi's mother was a converted Jew. He considers that Gaddafi can be a hidden Jew too.

### Cultural warfare

Anti-Semitic bloggers on one side promote their own products, while rejecting pro-Israel and pro-Jewish products. They promote Holocaust-denying cartoons while warning against pro-Jewish films, books and other goods.

There are a lot of [warnings about Hollywood movies](#) such as Roman Polanski's *The Piano*, in which an oppressed Jewish character is featured. Steven Spielberg [comes in for especial abuse](#).

One of the most interesting topics is the Harry Potter series. One [anti-Semitic blog](#) asserts that books and movies try to give a positive image of witchcraft. Thus, the blogger claims, may be contrary to Islam and Christianity, but is attractive to Jews. According to the [filmpedia blog](#), Mickey Mouse was created by Disney to give Jews a positive image. Why Mickey Mouse? Because Jews were considered like rats in Europe and Mickey Mouse presents a positive image of rats in the eyes of Europeans!

### Palestine

Most of these bloggers publish photos of civilians who were wounded and killed by Israeli military attacks — but there is no consensus in support of the Palestinian cause.

For all of these bloggers, there is no doubt that Israel — or as they call it "occupied Palestine" or the "occupied regime of Qods" (Jerusalem) — is illegitimate and should be eradicated.

But some of the [bloggers back Hamas](#) and publish declarations of Hamas, such as Anti Sahyoon blog, while others condemn both Hamas, a Salfite group, and Mahmoud Abbas as part of a corrupted Fatah movement.

Perhaps, as many Jewish people say, we do not so much defend Palestine as we fight Israel. We think the problem is Israel and Israelis because of all their "plans" for us.

Talking the walk

In the course of this investigation of Iranian anti-Semitic blogs, I have examined some 30 blogs. Most have very limited audiences; fewer than 50 readers. All of the bloggers are anonymous and pro-government, and all came into existence after Ahmadinejad's victory. These bloggers walk their talk by supporting demonstrations against Israel or against a company such as Nestle that is "considered an ally of Zionism."

There are many other blogs that cover a broader range of issues, though from time to time they express anti-Semitic views. These reach a bigger

audience, some getting a few hundred visitors per day.

Associations:

Muslim Bloggers Association

The Muslim Bloggers Association (MBA) is a conservative association that launched less than a year ago, but its first post went back to January 2005. The founders of this association are very young, and one of their leading figures, Mohmmad Masih Mahdavi, is only 19 years old. The roots of this association goes back to two years ago when at least some in the MBA tried to organize a committee for Moslem bloggers.

MBA is a conservative Islamist association whose many characteristics originated in the first decade of the Islamic Republic's existence, when Ayatollah Khomeynie, Founder of the Revolution, was alive. MBA positions itself on two fronts: Iran and the rest of the world.

MBA opposes secularism and liberalism in Iran. It wants to export revolution and it is extremely anti-American and anti-Zionist.

MBA follows two main objectives:

*1-Promoting activities of Muslim bloggers and Islamic values*  
*2-Fighting enemies and causes such as secularism, feminism and atheism. In other words, it believes that "anyone who is not with us is the enemy."*

The only additional notable characteristic in regard to Khomeyni's era is MBA's anti-Semitism.

The first post is relevant to their ideology and their emotional ties with Ahmadinejad. MBA says : *"We offer you a cultural product and it is the negation of the Holocaust"*.

MBA is very internationalist and it wants to launch a Global Islamic Front, a Hezbollah virtual base in the near future . MBA is very interested in learning about the outside world. Their interest can be understood in the realistic context of marketing. The members of this association want to export their revolution — and when you plan to export something, you should learn about your markets.

One of its founding members says there are different tendencies within the association. Although some are focused on foreign issues such as Palestine, Lebanon and fighting against Zionism, other members want more focus on Iran and social justice .

He states: "We support Hezbollah and we are very interested [in the] Moslem Brothers in Egypt but we do not support and like Hamas because it is a Salafid group and it kills innocent civilians. It is something that distinguishes us from some other Islamist bloggers who support Hamas ."

MBA has developed relationships with Conservative politicians and other fundamentalist associations.

One of the main political figures who is in very close contact with MBA members is Mohamad Ali Ramin, adviser to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. He is the man who was behind the infamous Conference on the Holocaust in Iran. Mohamad Masih says that Ramin, because he does not have any official position, has much more time to spend with members of MBA.

He adds that Ramin is not anti-Semitic and even wants to encourage research on the Holocaust. But reality is far different than this claim. Rami has already said: *Historically, there are many accusations against the Jews. For example, it was said that they were the source for such deadly diseases as the plague and typhus. This is because the Jews are very filthy people. For a time people also said that they poisoned water wells belonging to Christians and thus killed them. ..*

## Conclusion

Anti-Semitic blogs are a small part of the Iranian blogosphere and can be considered a sub-group of Islamist blogs. These blogs show that anti-Semitism is a dynamic movement in Iran, able to combine traditional/religious, national and Western elements.

The conspiracy theories these blogs peddle reflect the trademark rhetoric associated with Ahmadinejad: denial of the Holocaust, suspicions about 9/11, claims that inflation is a Jewish plot. All of these claims have a common element: the denial of facts.

All Iranian statesmen do not support Ahmadinejad's attitude. Former President Khatami calls the Holocaust a reality. Many Iranian religious leaders, despite their strong anti-Israel rhetoric, seldom sound anti-Semitic.