

“A Lethal Obsession: Antisemitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad”
Professor Robert Wistrich

Anti-Jewish violence is on the rise. In June 2009, a white supremacist opened fire inside the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. In the Arab world, *Mein Kampf* has been a major bestseller and in Iran, President Ahmadinejad refers to the Holocaust as a “myth.” Scholar Robert S. Wistrich’s powerful study of the bimillennial scourge of antisemitism could not be timelier. In **A Lethal Obsession: Antisemitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad (Random House; On Sale January 5, 2010)**, Wistrich, widely known as the “dean of historians of antisemitism,” provides a disturbing examination of this fatal and seemingly inexplicable phenomena, from the first recorded pogrom in ancient Alexandria to its resurgence today.

Antisemitism has accompanied Jewish history for more than two thousand years, though only in the past century did its potentially lethal aspects lead to a scientifically planned effort by a powerful modern state to annihilate the entire Jewish people. Yet it turns out, even the Holocaust that decimated two-thirds of European Jewry did not discredit antisemitism. Wistrich powerfully portrays key moments in antisemitism, such as the creation of the fateful tract *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, commissioned by Russia’s tsarist secret police at the end of the nineteenth century and the Soviet Communist Party’s campaign between 1948 and 1953 to weed out and purge unwanted Jewish personnel.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the scourge of exterminatory hatred of Jews has once again returned to plague humanity – now often masked, even in America, as Anti-Zionism or one-sided attacks against the State of Israel. Wistrich explains how antisemitism has been revived with new force in an age of globalization and instant communications. Stereotypical and hateful images focusing on bloodsucking, greedy, and all-powerful Jews are rampant on the internet, as well as being common currency in the visual and verbal incitement that has become normal in the Arab Middle East. In the concluding chapters of **A Lethal Obsession**, Wistrich warns of a possible nuclear “Final Solution” at the hands of Iran, a land in which a formerly prosperous Jewish community has declined in freedoms and Holocaust denial has even become a quasi-official state doctrine.

Since World War II and the Holocaust, it has become impossible to ignore the role and importance of antisemitism in the past and present. In **A Lethal Obsession**, Wistrich provides readers with a definitive look at the mutations of the astonishingly resilient and persistent phenomenon throughout through the ages and the alarming form it could take in the future.