

**GLOBAL ANTISEMITISM:  
A CRISIS OF MODERNITY**

**Volume V  
Reflections**

Charles Asher Small  
Editor

**INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF GLOBAL ANTISEMITISM AND POLICY**

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*For Professor William Prusoff*

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Charles was the founding Director of the Yale Initiative for the Interdisciplinary Study of Antisemitism (YIISA), the first interdisciplinary research center on antisemitism at a North American university. At Yale he taught in the Political Science Department and the Program on Ethics, Politics and Economics, and ran a post-doctorate and graduate studies fellowship program at YIISA. He was also an Associate Professor and the Director of Urban Studies at Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU). He has lectured internationally and worked as a consultant and policy advisor in North America, Europe, Southern Africa, and the Middle East. Charles specializes in social and cultural theory, globalization and national identity, socio-cultural policy, and racism(s)–including antisemitism.

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I am especially grateful to all the scholars who attended the conference. Most of them did so at their own expense and traveled considerable distances to be there. The conference, on which this series is based, was the largest academic gathering ever on the study of antisemitism. More than one hundred speakers from approximately twenty academic fields and more than twenty countries attended the event. It was truly a remarkable gathering at an important historical moment. Due to the high level of scholarship, the conference produced many key insights and has given rise to many important research projects.

Finally, I would like to thank Daniel Stephens for copy-editing and reviewing the contributions for this project. I am most grateful for his professionalism, patience, and assistance, often beyond the call of duty. Without his efforts these volumes would not have been possible. I am thankful to Alan Stephens for his much-valued advice and for making this publication possible in the first place. I am also most grateful to Lauren Clark and would like to thank Ulrike Becker, Idit Shalev, Tatenda Mujeni, Della Fok, Aleksandra Gliszczyńska-Grabias, Carlton Long, Zachary Izenberg, Dovid Katz, and Evan Weiser for their assistance during the conference.

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This series is dedicated to the memory of Professor William (Bill) Prusoff. Bill was the founding member of ISGAP and funded much of our activities from 2004 until his passing in 2011. Without his support, ISGAP would not have been able to establish YIISA at Yale University. In many ways, Bill's reputation as a scholar and an exceptional *mensh* paved the way for our work. Rarely in one's life does one have the privilege to meet someone of Bill's stature. He was a medical genius who created the first generation of anti-viral and anti-HIV medications that helped to save or prolong the lives of millions. Yet despite his incredible accomplishments, Bill was the most humble, kind, and amiable person I have ever met. Bill never forgot where he came from. He often recounted how his family had to flee Brooklyn for Miami in the 1930s after "Brown Shirts" thugs attacked the family store or how he was refused entry to Yale's Medical School because of the Jewish quota that was in place at the time. Nevertheless, he eventually managed to become a tenured professor at Yale as well a true giant in his field. In the Jewish tradition there is a belief that, at any given time, there are 36 hidden righteous people (*Tzadikim Nistarim*) in the world whose role in life is to justify the purpose of humankind in the eyes of G-d. For those of us who knew Bill, this idea did not seem beyond the realm of possibilities. He is missed.

Charles Asher Small  
December 2013

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# Introduction

Charles Asher Small

In August 2010, the largest-ever academic conference on the study of antisemitism took place at Yale University. The conference, entitled “Global Antisemitism: A Crisis of Modernity,” was hosted and organized by the Yale Initiative for the Interdisciplinary Study of Antisemitism (YIISA) and the International Association for the Study of Antisemitism (IASA). The conference featured over 100 speakers from more than 20 countries from around the world. They included recent graduates at the beginning of their academic careers, experienced academics, and leading senior scholars who have dedicated their intellectual pursuits to the study of antisemitism, as well as legal experts, practitioners and others. More than 600 people attended the conference, including undergraduate and graduate students, scholars from many universities, including Yale University, practitioners and members of non-governmental organizations, civil servants and diplomats interested in the policy implications of the subject matter, and members of the general public. This volume presents a selection of the many important and challenging papers presented at the conference. It is one of five volumes reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the conference as well as the diverse nature of the subject of antisemitism in general.

The Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP) was established in 2004, with a network of scholars from around the world and the support of a group of dedicated philanthropists led by the humanitarian and professor of pharmacology William (Bill) Prusoff, in response to a clear and ominous increase in global antisemitism.<sup>1</sup> In 2006, ISGAP approached Yale University with a view to establishing an academic research center within the university. After determining that the center would meet all the necessary administrative, financial, and academic requirements, Yale University inaugurated the Yale Initiative for the Interdisciplinary Study of Antisemitism (YIISA) in 2006. It was the first academic research center focusing on the interdisciplinary study of antisemitism to be based at a North American university.<sup>2</sup> ISGAP’s Board of Trustees supported and funded all of YIISA’s activities, co-sponsoring

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<sup>1</sup> In his opening remarks at the United Nations conference “Confronting anti-Semitism: Education and Tolerance and Understanding,” June 21, 2004, New York, Professor Elie Wiesel examined the rising levels and threat of antisemitism. The rise in contemporary global antisemitism is examined and substantiated in several chapters in this volume.

<sup>2</sup> The fact that the first interdisciplinary and fully fledged research center on antisemitism at a North American university was only established in 2006 ought itself to be a the focus of a research project, especially given the role antisemitism has played in Western civilization.

its seminar series and various other events and paying the salaries of its 14 employees. It also underwrote the August 2010 conference on which the above-mentioned five volumes are based.<sup>3</sup>

From 2006 to 2011, YIISA offered a successful graduate and post-doctorate fellowship program. Each year, it welcomed a group of scholars from leading universities in the United States and around the world, including several senior visiting professors. YIISA had a robust programming agenda. It organized over 120 seminars, special events, a series of films, four international conferences, symposiums and other gatherings at Yale University in New Haven, as well in New York, Washington, and Berlin. Its scholars carried out research projects and published important material on the interdisciplinary study of antisemitism. ISGAP and YIISA met the need to examine the changing contemporary state of and processes pertaining to global antisemitism. The fact that over 100 speakers participated in the aforementioned 2010 conference, and that all but ten of them attended at their own expense, is testimony to the extensive interest in the study of contemporary antisemitism.

The conference, "Global Antisemitism: A Crisis of Modernity," offered an environment in which scholars from a wide array of disciplines, intellectual backgrounds, and perspectives would be able to present their research and engage in interdisciplinary debate. The call for papers was inclusive and encouraged scholars from around the world to present their work. Without such a free exchange of ideas, any notion of academic freedom is tantamount to rhetoric. The subject of antisemitism is complex and controversial, as many students and scholars of this subject know. It was therefore important to YIISA to provide a forum in which this important issue could be freely discussed and explored.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> ISGAP continues as a research center with its head office in New York. It develops academic programming at top universities, including McGill, Fordham (Lincoln Center Campus), Harvard Law School, and the Stanford's Hoover Institution.

<sup>4</sup> It is not uncommon for scholars of antisemitism, especially those engaged in the study of its contemporary manifestations, to be labeled as right-wing, neo-conservative, or Islamophobic. Likewise, despite their obvious and sometimes extraordinary credentials, their scholarship is often unfairly categorized as "advocacy." Such accusations, which are often made by those who engage in advocacy themselves, actually constitute a form of antisemitism. Others simply embrace the "gatekeeper" role within the academy, which Cohen describes as an attempt to maintain the status quo on behalf of institutional interests. See Robin Cohen, *The New Helots: Migrants in the International Division of Labour* (Gower Publishing, Aldershot 1987) and E. Bonacich, "A Theory of Middleman Minorities," *American Sociological Review* Vol. 38 (1973) pp. 583-594. This is reminiscent of the McCarthy era interference with academic freedom. At that time, a notable scholar, Nathan Glazer, took it upon himself to report on members the Jewish community to the "Committee" in order to silence political views that were deemed unacceptable at the time (Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Zed Books, London 1983)). The academic activities of YIISA, in particular its work on state-sponsored antisemitism, Iran, and the Muslim Brotherhood, was denounced as "advocacy" by those with an interest in promoting the US administration's general policy of "engagement" with Islamic states. Analogous views also found support within the Yale Corporation and administration, as well as among several tenured faculty, resulting in a *de facto* limitation of academic freedom. These perspectives were conveyed directly to my colleagues and me by leading members of the Yale administration and faculty members. It thus appears that the scholarly analysis of antisemitism in contemporary Middle Eastern societies infringed upon various political and economic priorities. Moreover, the possible investment of Gulf funds in Yale University, and other universities around the world, or fear of the discontinuation of such funding, is a

In June 2004, the United Nations, an institution that emerged from the ashes of World War II and the Holocaust, held its first official conference on antisemitism. This gathering served as a formal acknowledgement of the re-emergence of antisemitism as a contemporary matter of concern in a changing and globalizing world. It was hosted by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and Nobel peace laureate Professor Elie Wiesel at the UN headquarters in New York.<sup>5</sup> Wiesel, the keynote speaker in a packed General Assembly Hall, noted that antisemitism is the oldest collective form of hatred in recorded history and that it had even managed to penetrate the United Nations itself. He questioned whether the world body, despite its role as a moral and political global leader, had forgotten the destructive and deadly impact of antisemitism. Some in attendance, Wiesel pointed out, actually endured its consequences: "We were there. We saw our parents, we saw our friends die because of antisemitism." In my view, the 2004 UN conference on antisemitism marked a turning point in the response of academia to the subject of antisemitism. This renewed interest was a contributing factor in the establishment of ISGAP several months later.

The YIISA conference addressed two inter-related and important areas of research that both encompass various disciplines, namely (1) global antisemitism and (2) the crisis of modernity currently affecting the core elements of Western society and civilization. Is it possible that the emergence of the current wave of global antisemitism both reflects and forms part of a wider attack on the core elements of modernity, notions of Enlightenment, and Western civilization more generally by reactionary social forces empowered by the crisis of capitalism? Against this background, the participants in the conference addressed conceptual and empirical questions from a wide array of perspectives and disciplines. The diversity in approach and opinion was itself a sign of academic health.

\* \* \*

Antisemitism is a complex and, at times, perplexing form of hatred. Some observers refer to it as the "longest hatred." It spans centuries of history, infecting different societies, religious, philosophical and political movements, and even civilizations. In the aftermath of the Holocaust, some have even argued that antisemitism illustrates the limitations of the Enlightenment and modernity itself. Manifestations of antisemitism occur in numerous ideologically-based narratives and in constructed identities of belonging and Otherness such as race and ethnicity, as well as nationalist and anti-nationalist movements. In the contemporary context of globalized relations, it appears that antisemitism has taken on new complex and changing forms that need to be decoded, mapped, and exposed. The academic study of antisemitism, like prejudice more generally, has a long and impressive intellectual and research history. It remains a topic

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question meriting unfettered research rather than a statement of fact. The question whether this so-called "advocacy," which allegedly affected research on antisemitism, ought to be replaced by kosher "non-advocacy" research that does not disturb governmental or foreign donor sensibilities must now be on the table as an open question for research. Additionally, against this background, the possibility that the term "advocacy" itself has become a euphemism for "research relevant to current affairs and therefore likely to offend some powerful parties" must be subjected to critical scholarly scrutiny.

<sup>5</sup> Professor Elie Wiesel is the Honorary President of ISGAP.

of ongoing political importance and scholarly engagement. However, especially at this important historical juncture, unlike prejudice and discrimination directed at other social groups, antisemitism—in particular its contemporary forms and processes—is almost always studied outside an organized academic framework.

The purpose of YIISA's 2010 conference was therefore to explore this subject matter in a comprehensive manner and from an array of approaches and perspectives, as well as in its global, national, and regional contexts. The development of an interdisciplinary approach and consciousness, while encouraging analytical studies examining a prejudice that remains widespread and but also appears to be experiencing a resurgence, was a key objective of the conference and YIISA's general mission. The conference aimed to create a vibrant space in which high-caliber scholarship and open and free debate would develop, be nurtured, and have an impact.<sup>6</sup>

The process of globalization has led to an increase in adversarial identity politics. In this environment, Israel, as a central manifestation of contemporary Jewish identity, and Jews more generally have become the focus of scapegoating and hateful rhetoric. At a more structural and socio-historical level, the old ideologies and tendencies of antisemitism have re-emerged and are being fused with anti-Zionism or what in many cases might be more appropriately described as Israel-bashing.<sup>7</sup> The old theological and racist forms of European antisemitism are being amalgamated with anti-Jewish and anti-Israel pronouncements emanating in particular from the Muslim world, which is located mainly, but not exclusively, in and around the Middle East. Contemporary globalization and the related socio-economic, cultural, and political processes are being fused with these histori-

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<sup>6</sup> The establishment of a research center similar to YIISA is urgently required within the academy. The approach of such an entity should be analogous to the one adopted by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham (UK) and the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations (CRER) at the University of Warwick (UK), yet with a specific critical approach to antisemitism. Both centers adopted an interdisciplinary approach with an emphasis on critical conceptual analysis based on solid empirical research. Currently, there are several small entities that study antisemitism, but they are all led by European historians with little or no background in the contemporary, regional, or interdisciplinary context. In fact, several of these scholars actually blame Israel for contemporary manifestations of antisemitism and underestimate the relevance of Islamism. This perspective is often based on "politically correct" views rather than rational scholarship. There is a need for vibrant analysis, study, discussion, and debate. A new entity for the study of antisemitism ought to combine an understanding of Western antisemitism and notions of "Otherness" with a willingness to tackle the contemporary changes sweeping the Middle East and knowledge of the region and its culture, including Islam and Islamism. The study of terrorism as it relates to contemporary antisemitism is also very much required. All these issues should obviously be examined in the context of processes associated with globalization, as opposed to the more frequently-used and descriptive concept of global antisemitism. Descriptive work without a critical, comprehensive, and conceptual interdisciplinary analytical framework will not be effective in assessing the contemporary condition, nor in creating appropriate policy responses. Policy development is a recognized and respected field of study within academia. This must be stated, since many who analyze antisemitism are "gatekeepers" who dismiss this vital scholarship as advocacy. This is not only problematic but also hinders the finding of solutions to key issues, indirectly undermining the safety of many.

<sup>7</sup> For an analysis linking classical forms of antisemitism with contemporary Israel-bashing, see Edward H. Kaplan and Charles A. Small, "Anti-Israel Sentiment Predicts Anti-Semitism in Europe," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 50, No. 4, August 2006.

cal tendencies, creating the conditions that pose a threat to Jewish people and Jewish communities in the Diaspora. In addition, new structural realities within the realm of the international relations and the emergence of anti-Israel propensities appear to pose a threat to Israel and the Jewish people in a manner not seen since the end of World War II. Once again, in this age of globalization, the Jewish people seem to be caught between the “aristocracy” or “wealthy establishment” (core) and the marginalized or disenfranchised masses (periphery), as they have been throughout most of history.<sup>8</sup>

With the advent of the “socialism of fools,” a term describing the replacement of the search for real social and political equity with antisemitism that is frequently attributed to August Bebel, Jews continued to be targeted.<sup>9</sup> In much the same way, the current marginalization of the Jewish people in the Arab world—or, more accurately, the marginalization of the image of the Jew, since most of them were pressured to leave or expelled from Arab countries between 1948 and the early 1970s after a strong continual presence of thousands of years—is staggering. As the social movements in the Middle East have turned to their own version of the “socialism of fools” (i.e., the antisemitism of radical political Islamism), they have incorporated lethal forms of European genocidal antisemitism as their fuel.<sup>10</sup> However, many scholars, policy-makers, and journalists of record still refuse to acknowledge this fact and to critically examine the ideology and mission of this social movement.

Anti-Judaism is one of the most complex and at times perplexing forms of hatred. As evident from the range of papers presented at the conference and in these volumes, antisemitism has many facets that touch upon many subjects and scholarly disciplines. The term “anti-Semitism,” which was coined in the 1870s by Wilhelm Marr,<sup>11</sup> is also controversial and at times confusing. Yet despite its etymological limitations and contradictions, it remains valid and useful. The term refers specifically to prejudice and discrimination against the Jewish people. Some incorrectly or for reasons of political expediency use the term to refer to prejudice against all so-called “Semitic” peoples, claiming that Arab peoples cannot be antisemites, as they are Semites themselves. This is

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<sup>8</sup> See the *Arab Human Development Report* (United Nations Development Programme 2005). This report and other subsequent reports examine the impact of globalization on aspects of socioeconomic marginalization stability in the Arab world.

<sup>9</sup> Steve Cohen, *That’s Funny You Don’t Look Anti-Semitic. An Anti-Racist Analysis of Left Anti-Semitism* (Leeds 1984). The well-known saying “Anti-Semitism is the socialism of fools” (“Der Antisemitismus ist der Sozialismus der dummen Kerle”) is frequently attributed to Bebel, but probably originated with the Austrian democrat Ferdinand Kronawetter; it was in general use among German Social Democrats by the 1890s (Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich* (Penguin Group 2005)). For a discussion of antisemitism, including the notion of the socialism of fools, see David Hirsh, *Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism: Cosmopolitan Reflections*, The Yale Initiative for the Interdisciplinary Study of Antisemitism Working Paper Series, Editor Charles Asher Small, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2007).

<sup>10</sup> In *Islamism and Islam* (Yale University Press 2011), Bassam Tibi makes the important distinction between antisemitism that was European in origin and genocidal, on the one hand, and the kind of anti-Judaism that was discriminatory in nature, which was historically prevalent in the Middle East and Islamic context, on the other. For various reasons why the antisemitism taking hold in Muslim societies in the contemporary condition has much in common with European genocidal antisemitism, see the contributions on this subject in the present volume.

<sup>11</sup> Shlomo Avineri, *Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernization* (New York 1968).

fine in terms of etymological musing but not in terms of the history of language and thought, where terms acquire specific meanings over time that diverge from their etymological origins. In fact, antisemitism refers to a specific form a hatred that is mainly European in origin and focuses upon the Jewish people. Some scholars prefer to use the term antisemitism, without a hyphen and uncapitalized, since it refers to a form of hatred or a phenomenon rather than to a specific race or biologically determined group. Emil Fackenheim, for example, used the unhyphenated form for this reason.<sup>12</sup> These volumes and all of ISGAP's other work also follows this approach.

Some scholars who have examined the complexities of antisemitism claim that it takes several forms, including social, economic, political, cultural, and religious antisemitism. René König, for example, contends that these different forms of antisemitism demonstrate that the origins of antisemitism are rooted in different historical periods and places.<sup>13</sup>

When religion, in particular Christianity, represented the dominant way to perceive reality, the Jews were regarded as followers of the wrong religion. It was also believed that their refusal to accept the Christian messiah disqualified them from any form of redemption and even that Jewish stubbornness hindered world redemption. Finally, it is hardly necessary to recall that the Jews were accused of deicide. When the dominant manner in which Europeans perceived reality was based on the nation state and biological notions of race and ethnicity, the Jews were constructed as belonging to another, inferior race. According to the Nazis and others who subscribed to racist beliefs, for example, they were perceived as polluting the Aryan race and needed to be removed completely in order to save the purity of the "race" and "nation."

At present, some argue for religious reasons that the self-determination of the Jews—the non-Muslim "Other"—on so-called Islamic land is a sin and should not be tolerated. Others, in the West, see Jewish stubbornness as the cause of radical Islam, Jihadism, and the instability in the region. When it comes Israel's policies and existence, they believe that if only the Jews would change the problems in the region and in international relations as a whole could be resolved.<sup>14</sup> If taken to its logical conclusion, this perspective could lead to great destruction, like other historical manifestations of antisemitism, since its aims is the eradication of Israel or any semblance of Jewish self-determination in the region.<sup>15</sup> Despite the complete rejection of the Jewish narrative by the Iranian regime, Hamas, Hezbollah, and other Salafists and Islamists, many observers focus on the "Other" and are content to blame the "victim" of this ideology without properly examining it. In fact, attempts to critically examine these reactionary views are often deemed politically unacceptable. This contemporary form of antisemitism has many layers. New forms are mixed with older ones, such as conspiracy theories about Jewish power and culture, apocalyptic theories concerning the Jews. For example, the *Protocols*

<sup>12</sup> Emil Fackenheim, "Post-Holocaust Anti-Jewishness, Jewish Identity and the Centrality of Israel," in Moshe Davis, ed., *World Jewry and the State of Israel* (Arno Press 1977).

<sup>13</sup> René König, *Materialien zur Kriminalsoziologie* (VS Verlag 2004).

<sup>14</sup> It is important to note that, in the contemporary US context, some political realists certainly fall into the category of those who blame Israel for all the problems in the region and beyond.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (2000) (originally published as *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation* in two separate volumes in 1939 by Haus zum Falken, Basel). Refusing to recognize the Other and insisting on changing them fundamentally will inevitably lead to violence and even destruction.

of the *Elders of Zion*, which played a key role in creating the conditions for the Holocaust, as well European antisemitism more generally, has now become part of the political and cultural mainstream in several Arab and Muslim societies.<sup>16</sup>

The above-mentioned complexities make it difficult to define the different forms that antisemitism takes. This in turn makes it problematic to address and analyze the subject matter. It is no wonder, then, that contemporary forms of antisemitism have always been difficult if not impossible to acknowledge, study, measure, and oppose. One hopes that it will not only be future historians who come to understand and address today's lethal forms of antisemitism, too late to affect policy, perceptions, and predispositions.

The context of contemporary global antisemitism, on which the conference focused, covers international relations, which are increasingly in a state of flux and turmoil, as well as notions of tolerance, democratic principles and ideals, human rights, and robust citizenship. These values appear to be receding within many institutions and societies, while the international community seems to be less strident in trying to defend them. It would appear that the Jew, or perhaps more importantly the image of the Jew or the "imaginary Jew" as described by Alain Finkielkraut,<sup>17</sup> is at the middle of this global moment. Both historically and today, antisemitism is a social disease that begins with the Jews but does not end with them, making the Jewish people the proverbial canary in the coalmine. This deadly strain of hatred often turns against other groups, such as women, homosexuals, moderate Muslims, and other sectors of the population who are perceived as not being ideologically pure, as well as against key democratic notions such as robust citizenship, equality before the law, and religious pluralism. Antisemitism is consequently a universal human rights issue that should be of importance to all.

In view of its character as the "longest hatred," with a destructive power that is both well known and well documented, the historical lessons of antisemitism ought to reach beyond the Jewish people and concern scholars from a wide range of disciplines, both academic and policy-oriented. In fact, antisemitism should be perceived as a key aspect in the development of Western civilization, yet it is often perceived as a Jewish or parochial issue.<sup>18</sup> This perception forms an impediment to the study of antisemitism in current academic culture, which favors the universal over the particular. In fact, the study of antisemitism is often regarded as unworthy of consideration or even as an enemy of the progressive universalistic worldview that is currently in vogue.

Certain members of the academic community, especially those who claim to espouse progressive and/or postmodernist views, often perceive the study of antisemitism as an

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<sup>16</sup> See Bassam Tibi, *Islamism and Islam* (Yale University Press 2011); Neil Kressel, *The Sons of Pigs and Apes: Muslim Antisemitism and the Conspiracy of Silence* (Westview Press 2012). Bassam Tibi was a Visiting Professor and Neil Kressel a Visiting Fellow at YIISA. As Israel becomes the focus of contemporary discourse and manifestations of antisemitism, even in the United States, the notions of "dual loyalty" and the "Jewish lobby," which were previously articulated mostly by extremists, have gained credibility with the publication of a controversial book on the subject by Walt and Mearsheimer in 2007 (*The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy*) and the approach of some "realists" who have gained influence in the past several years in the media and policy circles.

<sup>17</sup> Alain Finkielkraut, *The Imaginary Jew* (University of Nebraska Press 1994).

<sup>18</sup> The members of ISGAP specifically established YIISA, the first-ever research center focusing on the interdisciplinary study of antisemitism at a North American university, to create a space to engage in this subject matter freely.

attempt to undermine criticism of the State of Israel and accuse those engaged in this study of being political advocates rather than pursuers of real scholarship.<sup>19</sup> In fact, in this postmodern age, this is a fairly common view in academic and intellectual circles.<sup>20</sup> It is therefore important to embark on a systemic critique of the intellectual and political impact of this philosophical movement not only with regard to the safety and security of the Jewish people and their right to self-determination but also with regard to the integrity of the Enlightenment project and perceptions of modernity.

The contemporary canon includes a critique of the traditional “Western” canon, for example by Michel Foucault and Edward Said, that has also helped to demonize Jewish cultural and historical narratives in relation to Israel and beyond. This perspective is now an integral component of many “good” university curriculums throughout the West.<sup>21</sup> Foucault welcomed the Iranian Revolution of 1979 as a triumph of spiritual values over the profanity of Western capitalist materialism. He perceived this Islamist revolution as a critique of Western culture and a protest against the political rationality of modernity.<sup>22</sup> This sympathetic view of the Islamist revolution has been largely ignored, but it undoubtedly influenced the subsequent philosophical discourse and scholarship. Said, who was in Paris in 1979, fondly recalls spending time with Foucault and notes that they both hoped that the Iranian Revolution would develop into what the French Revolution was to Kant two hundred years earlier. Despite its violence, they hoped that the revolution would be a crucial step toward progress and emancipation for the people of Iran and the oppressed peoples of other nations.<sup>23</sup> Their critique of modernity and Western colonial power, combined with the lack of an ethical alternative, prevented these early postmodernists from criticizing the excesses of the Iranian revolution and its failure to recognize the ‘Other’ as an equal and respected member of society. The works of Foucault and Said have thus helped to lay the foundations for the failure of many contemporary intellectuals to condemn the rise of Islamism as a social movement,<sup>24</sup> especially in relation to its lack of acceptance of basic notions of “Otherness” within Islamic society, a cornerstone of democratic principles, and its vitriolic prejudice against the Jewish people and Israel. This intellectual development should also be considered in the context of global politics and the prevailing environment in many academic institutions, where the need for funding unfortunately appears to be having a growing impact on the curriculum.

<sup>19</sup> See Judith Butler, “No, it’s not anti-semitic,” *London Review of Books*, August 21, 2003.

<sup>20</sup> See Robert Wistrich, *From Ambivalence to Betrayal: The Left, the Jews, and Israel* (University of Nebraska Press 2012).

<sup>21</sup> Charles Asher Small, “The Gaze of the Colonial and Post-Colonial: Judeophobia, Empire and Islamism,” Conference: Orientalism Revisited: Art and the Politics of Representation, Paul Goodwin, Curator, Tate Britain, London, June 2008.

<sup>22</sup> See Janet Afary and Kevin Anderson, *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seduction of Islamism* (University of Chicago Press 2005). Afary and Anderson examine Foucault’s 1978 visit to Iran where he met with leaders of the Iranian-Islamist revolution, including Ayatollah Khomeini. The authors document how this period influenced the philosopher’s understanding of issues such as the Enlightenment, homosexuality, and his quest for the notion of political spirituality. As the book demonstrates, this topic, which has been largely overlooked, is worthy of consideration.

<sup>23</sup> Ramin Jahanbegloo, *Iran: Between Tradition and Modernity* (Lexington Books 2004).

<sup>24</sup> For an analysis of the notion of social movements, which are transformational, and protest movements, which are reformist, see Manuel Castells, *City, Class, and Power* (MacMillan, London 1978).



Furthermore, Said's attempt to undermine the legitimacy of Jewish self-determination in Israel and the Jewish historical narrative in the Diaspora needs to be critically examined with regard to its role in the re-emergence of antisemitism among intellectuals and within the academy. Such a critique of the critique is especially urgent at this time, as there seems to be little possibility to address antisemitism forcefully within the academy or to express outrage and concern regarding the recent successes of Islamism despite its reactionary agenda and worldview.<sup>25</sup> Instead, these ideological and philosophical foundations enable leading and respected scholars such as Judith Butler to argue that Hamas and Hezbollah ought to be viewed as part of the progressive global left. It also encourages some observers, including scholars of antisemitism, to blame Israel for antisemitism throughout the world.<sup>26</sup>

Even in the aftermath of the Holocaust, and despite the academy's preoccupation with colonialism, racism, sexism, socio-economic, political, and cultural inequality, domination, and critical understandings of "Otherness," antisemitism, especially its contemporary manifestations, does not exist as an area of study in the mainstream academic curriculum.<sup>27</sup> Unlike other forms of discrimination, antisemitism is not an issue of significant concern. These developments have had the effect of placing attempts to defend the Jews—and their legitimate connection to Israel and Jerusalem—outside the realms of what is acceptable and proper. This is most troubling, given that the legacy of antisemitism in the academy and in Western civilization more generally has yet to be understood and addressed in the same way as other forms of discrimination and hatred. The contemporary perception in some quarters of the Zionist movement as an unfash-

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<sup>25</sup> Daniel Sibony, *Freud, Edward Said and Israel* (forthcoming).

<sup>26</sup> Id. It is fascinating to note that Jewish scholars who blame Israel for various crimes and even antisemitism itself often enjoy much attention and popularity, more so than scholars doing the serious analysis and research. In fact, this is a common phenomenon with regard to the politics of hatred more generally and historically.

<sup>27</sup> It is worth recalling that during the rise of Nazism the German academy as an institution voluntarily cleansed itself of Jews. See Saul Friedlander, *The Years of Persecution: Nazi Germany and the Jews 1933-1939* (Phoenix, London 2007). While I do not wish to compare the German academy of the Nazi era to the present academy, the role of the academy in studying, combating, or promoting contemporary antisemitism ought to be critically examined, regardless of the period. At present, the university campus atmosphere is once again becoming increasingly hostile in terms of the pressures facing Jewish students. In fact, US universities have a history of questionable relations with dubious interests, including the Nazi regime and Islamist interests. See Stephen Norwood, *The Third Reich in the Ivory Tower: Complicity and Conflict on American Campuses* (Cambridge University Press 2009) and Mitchell Bard, *The Arab Lobby: The Invisible Alliance That Undermines America's Interests in the Middle East* (Harper Collins 2010). In fact, in late 2009 and early 2010, YIISA was criticized by the Yale Corporation, the Provost, and faculty members for being critical of the Iranian revolutionary regime. The regime had just placed Yale University on a list of institutions considered hostile to the regime and called for Iranians not to have contact with them. See, for example, "Iran Intelligence Ministry Blacklists Yale and Dozens of Other Western Institutions," *Los Angeles Times*, January 4, 2010. The Provost and several faculty members told me directly that members of the Yale Corporation were angered, as they saw YIISA's work as interfering with the free flow of academic exchanges with Iran and Iranian scholars. During this time, Yale Corporation member Fareed Zakarria (before he resigned over a plagiarism scandal) often supported the policy of "engagement" in his writings, while several YIISA scholars were critical. See <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gByfHdLCdhA>>.

ionable, intellectually defunct, and morally bankrupt remnant of Western colonial racist culture—a perception that pays no attention to the competing narrative of Jewish national aspirations or the Jewish people’s millennia-spanning history in the region—is therefore a recipe for disaster. At the very least, it creates an uncritical blind spot for the role that antisemitism plays in the contemporary Middle East. To engage in the study of antisemitism is somehow perceived as supportive of the Zionist narrative, while the real threat that antisemitism poses is not understood and no policies are developed to address it, let alone to help thwart it.<sup>28</sup>

In this environment, it is more acceptable to study the role of the Church or the role of fascism in antisemitism rather than its contemporary manifestations.<sup>29</sup> In fact, if one looks at the history of antisemitism, it was never acceptable to study or examine contemporary forms of antisemitism at the time in which they occurred. The true challenge of effective and insightful scholarship is to understand the real threat that antisemitism poses to people and society today and to develop policies to protect ourselves against this threat. However, it is not uncommon to find scholars and institutions that are opposed to the study of contemporary antisemitism yet still blame Israel for its renewed prevalence without research to back up these claims. This response is not based on sound academic analysis but nonetheless finds appreciative academic audiences and in some cases enjoys the blessing of university administrations eager to receive funding from Gulf states and/or to avoid confronting inconvenient truths of the contemporary condition.<sup>30</sup> For instance, at a recent gathering at Yale University, a group of historians of French society concluded that Jihadist antisemitism should really be understood as a metaphor used for rhetorical and political impact. None of the scholars in question were students of Arabic, the Middle East, Islam, contemporary political or social movements, or contemporary or post-Holocaust antisemitism. However, this did not stop them from adopting a position that would no doubt be welcomed by their institutions and gatekeepers. One director of a research center on antisemitism admitted to friends that his hands were tied and that he had to keep to this line.<sup>31</sup>

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It is in this institutional and political context that Yale University’s Associate Provost addressed the opening session of the YIISA conference and managed to stun many of those in attendance, including those who were well aware of the various hurdles to the study of contemporary antisemitism within the academy. In her opening remarks, the Associate Provost, explicitly warned the participants not to allow the conference to descend into a promotion of Islamophobia, thereby reinforcing a common stereotype

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<sup>28</sup> For a clear example of this sort of conflation, see Joseph Massad, “Palestinians, Egyptian Jews and propaganda,” *Aljazeera*, January 7, 2013.

<sup>29</sup> A good example of this phenomenon is Paul Gilroy’s book, *Between Camps: Nations, Cultures and the Allure of Race* (2001), which begins with a heavily nostalgic and sympathetic look at the Jewish refugees that fled Nazi Europe and arrived in the London cityscape of Gilroy’s childhood. It seems uncourageous, and is reflective of a general tendency within the academy, to condemn the horrible racist antisemitism of an era past while turning a blind eye to contemporary manifestations.

<sup>30</sup> See Alex Joffe, “Follow the Money,” *Jewish Ideas*, March 2, 2011; Ben Cohen, “Scholarship and Antisemitism at Yale,” *Jewish Ledger*, Hartford, Connecticut, March 28, 2012.

<sup>31</sup> Paula Marantz Cohen, “The New Antisemitism,” *The Smart Set*, Drexel University, October 2012, available at: <<http://thesmartset.com/article/article10181202.aspx>>.

associated with those studying contemporary antisemitism. It seems incongruous that the Associate Provost—and by extension the university administration—deemed it necessary to issue such a warning to a gathering of some of the world's most important and respected scholars on antisemitism and other forms of discrimination. Many of those in attendance viewed this as an example of the power of contemporary antisemitism, on the grounds that no other academic gathering on comparable forms of discrimination would be welcomed in this manner.<sup>32</sup> In fact, it appears that Yale University's Jackson Institute was happy to invite Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to speak to a group of Yale students just a month after the conference, in September 2010, without issuing a similar caveat.<sup>33</sup> Finally, as the conference was entering its last day, without citing any specific evidence, the PLO Ambassador to Washington DC, Maen Rashid Areikat, and a network of Muslim Brotherhood affiliated student activists accused the conference of being Islamophobic.<sup>34</sup> Soon afterwards, they began to attack YIISA itself as a platform for Islamophobia, which ultimately led to its demise.<sup>35</sup> These events represent a key failure of academia in the face of political pressures, both domestic and foreign.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> As Ryan notes, there is a tendency to blame the victim in the politics of discourse. See William Ryan, *Blaming the Victim* (Vintage, New York 1971). Despite the complexities of Middle East politics, there is one particular social movement that clearly does not accept the other, yet some observers still find it difficult to critically assess and condemn its ideology.

<sup>33</sup> See Sam Greenberg, "Relating to Iran, in seminar and in person," *Yale Daily News*, September 27, 2010, available at: <<http://yaledailynews.com/blog/2010/09/27/relating-to-iran-in-seminar-and-in-person>>. In addition, the Jackson Institute hosted scholars with connections to the Iranian Revolutionary Regime, as well as Judge Richard Goldstone, at the invitation of Yale professor Ian Shapiro, an advocate of the Obama Administration's failing policy of "containment" of radical Islamism. See Michael Widlanski, *Battle for Our Minds: Western Elites and the Terror Threat* (Simon and Schuster, New York 2012).

<sup>34</sup> See Josh Rogin, "PLO representative accuses Yale of supporting 'hate mongering,'" *Foreign Policy*, August 31, 2010; Abby Wisse Schachter, "Yale's latest gift to antisemitism," *New York Post*, June 7, 2011; "PLO Envoy Slams Yale for Antisemitism Conference," JTA, September 3, 2010, available at: <<http://www.jta.org/news/article/2010/09/03/2740789/plo-envoy-slames-yale-for-anti-semitism-conference>>. See also Philip Weiss, "Yale conference on antisemitism targets Palestinian identity, self-hating Jews and anyone who criticizes Israel," *Mondoweiss.net*, August 25, 2010. This is an example of a blog that demonizes the conference without reference to the facts and also quotes people who openly incite to destroying Jews and Israel as expert sources. (See YouTube videos and writings by Charlotte Kates and Yaman Salahi).

<sup>35</sup> Significantly, the head of Yale University's Public Relations Department, Charles Robin Hogen, was active in making statements to the media supporting YIISA's closure. Some of these statements were later found to be incorrect. See Abby Wisse Schachter, "Yale's latest gift to antisemitism," *New York Post*, June 7, 2011. Interestingly, Hogen introduced the fact and bragged about his close association with former PLO member Professor Rashid Khalidi at YIISA meetings. Hogen also stated in these meetings that he was at a point in his career where he did not need to promote projects he found distasteful, such as the antisemitism conference. In a fascinating twist, I recently came across materials that show that in the 1990s Hogan was the Vice President of Hybridon Inc. Days after the 9/11 attacks, investigators discovered that the Bin Laden family owned part of Hybridon. Hogan now works for Robert Wood Johnson. See Hogen's professional associations at: <<http://www.prweekus.com/johnson-foundation-names-hogen-vp/article/233952>>; and a Harvard Crimson article pertaining to Hybridon's political and terror connections at: <<http://www.thecrimson.com/article/2001/9/27/local-company-distances-itself-from-bin>>.

<sup>36</sup> See Adam Brosky, "Yale's antisemitism whitewash," *New York Post*, July 7, 2011; and Walter Reich, "Saving the Yale Antisemitism Institute," *Washington Post*, June 13, 2011.

The fact that YIISA's detractors could level such accusations in a prestigious Ivy League environment without providing any proof, or even attempting to document any discriminatory speech or providing any critique of the papers or academic presentations by leading scholars,<sup>37</sup> is testament to the contemporary state of antisemitism in the academy and beyond.<sup>38</sup> It also points to the urgent need for a "critique of the critique" and the need to create an interdisciplinary critical framework for the study of contemporary antisemitism in relation to ideology and power relations. This would be a difficult task for scholars who are concerned about maintaining the institutional and cultural status quo and obtaining professional appointments and acknowledgement. The current intellectual and institutional void, which also encompasses a general disinclination to contemplate Islamist antisemitism and the Islamism in general, enables many to continue speaking of an Arab Spring when there are many indications that it is turning into an Islamic Winter.<sup>39</sup> Any assessment of the region that does not address the global implications of radical political Islamism and antisemitism is fatally flawed and serves the reactionary forces by squashing analysis and debate at a key moment in Middle Eastern and global history. The reality is that these reactionary forces are gaining power, and they are doing so with the tacit or, in some cases, vocal support of "useful idiots" in the academy and the media. Paradoxically, the current refusal to explicitly oppose the rise of such forces, which are diametrically opposed to the basic human rights and democratic principles, due to a postmodern and/or post-colonial reluctance to hold them to Western standards is no less paternalistic than previous Western interventions in the region.

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Daniel Sibony, the French philosopher, provides insights into the above-mentioned attitudes, which appear to have taken hold in many elite academic institutions in the West.<sup>40</sup> In fact, Sibony contends that deep down those who insist on ignoring Islamism and its reactionary agenda are actually anti-Muslim themselves. The silencing of scholars and

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<sup>37</sup> In fact, this prompted leading scholars from around the world to write to the President of Yale University defending the conference against these unfounded allegations. In particular, many scholars signed a letter comparing the contemporary study of antisemitism by YIISA to the groundbreaking work of Yale's historians on the issue of slavery written in the 1950s. Thousands of letters from concerned parties were sent to Yale protesting the closure of YIISA one year later.

<sup>38</sup> See Alan Dershowitz, "Yale's Distressing Decision to Shut Down Its Initiative for the Interdisciplinary Study of Antisemitism," *Huffington Post*, June 11, 2011. Dershowitz contends that a research center at Yale University has never been closed down on the basis of a confidential report, as in the case of YIISA. In "Yale's Jewish Quota: The University's Shameful Decision to Kill Its Anti-Semitism Institute," *Slate Magazine*, July 1, 2011, Ron Rosenbaum examines how the conference formed the beginning of the end for YIISA, due to its insistence that aspects of antisemitism throughout the world, including the Middle East, would be examined at the conference despite warnings from the administration not to do so. According to Rosenbaum, this is essentially a new form of a Jewish quota, namely one that distinguishes between acceptable and unacceptable Jews. Writing in the *New York Post*, Neil Kressel claims that the accusations leveled at YIISA were baseless and never substantiated. See Neil Kressel, "Yale's Cowardice," *New York Post*, June 11, 2011.

<sup>39</sup> In *The Unloved Dollar Standard: From Bretton Woods to the Rise of China* (Oxford University Press 2012), economist Ronald McKinnon documents how money-flows from the US cause cyclical bubbles in global commodity prices, including food, "so much so that the so-called Arab Spring of 2011 could be interpreted as just a food riot."

<sup>40</sup> Daniel Sibony, *Freud, Edward Said and Israel* (forthcoming).

human rights activists who are concerned about antisemitism and human rights in Middle Eastern societies is a manifestation of a deep fear, or phobia, of the Islamic world. This fear, which is combined with guilt over the West's colonial legacy in the Middle East, is powerful.<sup>41</sup> As a result, there is a tendency in certain circles to tolerate and justify reactionary Islamic attitudes, including sexism, homophobia, and antisemitism, despite their own liberal views.<sup>42</sup> It is thus more convenient to blame the Jews for the stalemate in the Middle East and other related problems. Sibony traces this to the colonial mentality of not expecting the peoples of the Middle East and other parts of the world to adhere to the same criteria of human rights and civility as the "civilized" West. He also points out that those who continue to highlight these contradictions and dangers eventually come to be perceived as the problem and are targeted instead.<sup>43</sup>

Sibony goes further, stating that there is an emerging fascination in the West with the genocidal antisemitic narrative of radical Islamism as expressed by the Iranian regime, the Muslim Brotherhood, and other Salafists.<sup>44</sup> In a similar vein, Colin Shindler argues that the growing red-green alliance has come to see the displaced and marginalized members of the Islamic world as the new proletariat, who deserve Western liberal support and admiration. Anyone perceived as being critical of the new Islamic proletariat is immediately branded a reactionary.<sup>45</sup> In this intellectual climate, voices condemning brutality, anti-democratic practices, sexism, homophobia, opposition to minority rights, and other violations of universal human rights are silenced, while expressions of genocidal antisemitism are dismissed as poor translations and/or hysterical rhetoric fashioned by the Zionist defenders of Israel.<sup>46</sup> This is what makes the task at hand,

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<sup>41</sup> An example of the manifestation of this fear occurred when Yale sociologist Jeffrey Alexander, speaking on National Public Radio (NPR), compared the work of YIISA to that of the Black Panthers. Such an irrational, ahistorical, and reductionist comment pertaining to the African American condition and to the complex issues of both racism and antisemitism provides an insight into the sort of hurdles that are prevalent in the academy with regard to this subject. "Yale Shuts Down Antisemitism Program," National Public Radio, June 17, 2011.

<sup>42</sup> This may help to explain why, at a meeting called for by the Associate Provost days before the conference, I was told not to invite any scholars or organize events that were critical of Middle Eastern society or Islam. Echoing the policy mantra, she told me that we must "engage" Islam. I informed her that YIISA events were not critical of Islam but that YIISA was examining antisemitism throughout the world and that it was analyzing Islamism as it would any other social movement. It is also worth noting that there seemed to be a certain amount of fear within Yale's administrative ranks in this regard. A year earlier, in 2009, in the face of threats, Yale University Press refused to publish cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad in a book by Jytte Klausen discussing the publication of those very cartoons in 2006, which led to global riots in which at least 200 people were killed. See Patricia Cohen, "Yale Press Bans Images of Muhammad in New Book," *New York Times*, August 12, 2009; Jeffrey Herf, "Why Did Yale Close, Then Open, A Center on Antisemitism?" *The New Republic*, July 5, 2011.

<sup>43</sup> Daniel Sibony, *L'Enigme antisémite* (Seuil 2004). See also Daniel Sibony, "The Essence of Antisemitism: Is It Too Simple to Be Understood?" ISGAP Seminar Series, McGill University, October 16, 2012.

<sup>44</sup> Daniel Sibony, "The Essence of Antisemitism: Is It Too Simple to Be Understood?" ISGAP Seminar Series, McGill University, October 16, 2012 and Harvard University, October 17, 2012.

<sup>45</sup> Colin Shindler, "The Left Sees Islam as the New Proletariat," *New York Times*, October 28, 2012.

<sup>46</sup> This helps to explain why, at a recent seminar at Clark University's Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, David Feldman of Birbeck College, London, felt able to claim that YIISA was in fact the long arm of Israeli intelligence within the academy. Several of those in

namely to produce high-caliber scholarship and effective policy development and analysis for dealing with contemporary antisemitism—in particular its potentially genocidal variety—all the more challenging but also all the more urgent.

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The crisis of modernity refers to the crisis of capitalism itself. Regardless of one's definition, the crisis is causing problems at local and global level and has become a key aspect of the contemporary condition. Institutions that play a key role in society, especially the state, are under increasing pressure. The crisis is affecting everything from the core to the periphery. Those in the periphery are experiencing high levels of socio-economic, political, and even cultural marginalization. In some areas of the world, the economic and political crisis is so severe that it is causing failing and even failed states. Several states in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as several other Islamic states, are currently in this predicament.<sup>47</sup> When such states fail, marginalization increases. The resulting power vacuum is increasingly being filled by radical Islamism, whose adherents, like those who follow neo-liberalism, actually detest the state, perceiving it as a vestige of the colonial era and Western imperialism. In many cases, the political actors and interests that are rising to power subscribe to ideological worldviews that are also extremely hostile toward Jews.

In the context of the conference title, the term "modernity" refers to the processes that led to the emergence of the specific and distinctive characteristics of modern society. In this context, the concept of "modernity" does not simply refer to a phenomenon of contemporary origin. It possesses an analytical and conceptual value that embodies the defining characteristics of modern societies. According to Stuart Hall, these characteristics include:

- (1) The dominance of secular forms of political power and authority and conceptions of sovereignty and legitimacy, operating within defined territorial boundaries, which are characteristic of the large, complex structures of the modern nation-state.
- (2) A monetarized exchange economy, based on the large-scale production and consumption of commodities for the market, extensive ownership of private property and the accumulation of capital on a systemic, long-term basis. [...]
- (3) The decline of the traditional social order, with its fixed social hierarchies and overlapping allegiances, and the appearance of a dynamic social and sexual division of labor. In modern capitalist societies, this was characterized by new class formations and distinctive patriarchal relations between men and women.
- (4) The decline of the religious world-view typical of traditional societies and the rise of a secular and materialist culture, exhibiting those individualistic, rationalist, and instrumental impulses now so familiar to us.<sup>48</sup>

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attendance demanded that he substantiate his accusation. He could not. The idea that one cannot engage in the scholarly examination of contemporary antisemitism without having a conspiratorial agenda, which is associated with notions of dual loyalty, is a powerful antisemitic canard with a long pedigree, especially in European discourses.

<sup>47</sup> See "The 2012 Failed States Index," An Eighth Annual Collaboration between Foreign Policy and the Fund for Peace, available at: <[http://foreignpolicy.com/failed\\_states\\_index\\_2012\\_interactive](http://foreignpolicy.com/failed_states_index_2012_interactive)>.

<sup>48</sup> Stuart Hall, "Introduction," in Stuart Hall et al., eds., *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies* (Blackwell Publishers 1996) p. 8.

The emergence of modern societies was spurred by new intellectual movements that developed during the Reformation, the Renaissance, the Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth century and the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. The transformation of Europe's intellectual, philosophical, and moral framework was significant and played an important part in the formation of modern societies as encapsulated by capitalism and the rise of the nation state. In addition, Hall contends that the construction of cultural and social identities is an important aspect of the formation process. This then plays a key role in creating "imagined communities" and symbolic boundaries that define who belongs and who is excluded as the "Other."<sup>49</sup>

In the context of the YIISA conference, the "crisis of modernity" refers to the current breakdown of the political and economic system. However, this crisis also operates at a philosophical level, raising issues that are just as important as economic and political uncertainty. In fact, the uncertainty created by the crisis is eroding the moral and ethical rudder of Western institutions by creating a philosophical vacuum that is being filled by the moral relativism of postmodernism.

On one level, modernity offered a different vision of humanity, society, and the universe, but it also required a narrative to establish the legitimacy of its vision. This narrative constructed an image of the "Other," living in darkness and irrational ignorance due to his so-called primitive religious beliefs. In contrast, the so-called Enlightened thinkers and scientists succeeded in liberating man from his material and philosophical poverty and placed him on the path to progress and perfection.<sup>50</sup> This narrative, which was dominant in seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe, also provided the foundations for modernity's racism, slavery, and — as some argue — even the Holocaust.

The "crisis of modernity," then, is the recognition of the weakness of this narrative and the uncertainty of everything that has emerged from it, including the existing social order, ethical standards, and even our perceptions of ourselves. In this postmodern moment of uncertainty and competing relativist narratives, thinkers are prevented from thoroughly examining and speaking out against the forms of discrimination openly advocated by radical reactionary social movements, including but not limited to anti-semitism, that challenge notions of equality and robust citizenship.<sup>51</sup> Another result of the "crisis of modernity" is the emergence of the aforementioned red-green alliance, which is gaining ground among scholars, practitioners, and activists, as well as within the political establishment.

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Much of the scholarship on antisemitism is descriptive in nature, especially concerning its contemporary manifestations. However, there is also a need to analyze antisemitism

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<sup>49</sup> Id.

<sup>50</sup> Id.

<sup>51</sup> Leo Strauss, a strong critic of modernity, attributed modernity's intellectual degradation to the influence of several Enlightenment philosophers in the history of political thought who radically broke with classical political thinking. Strauss believed that, in doing so, these thinkers either directly or indirectly contributed to the emergence of historicism and positivism, and he held these movements accountable for modernity's relativism, nihilism, and moral and intellectual demise. See Jens Olesen, "The Crisis of Modernity and Its Interpretive Significance: Leo Strauss on Reading Political Philosophy," paper presented at the 14th International Graduate Conference in Philosophy, University of Essex, May 28, 2011.

in the context of other processes—socio-economic, political, cultural, and ideological—and the impact of globalization. Few scholars contextualize their studies in this manner. There is therefore a need to combine empirical and conceptual analysis of antisemitism within an interdisciplinary framework. The contemporary condition, which is characterized by the crisis of modernity, the processes of globalization, which are governed by a neo-liberal approach, the weakening of the state, the emergence of radical political Islamism as an effective social movement, the reluctance of Western intellectuals to critically engage these processes, and the re-emergence for the first time since the Holocaust of a deadly form of antisemitism, requires the development of a creative, interdisciplinary, critical approach within a cooperative research entity to begin to assess this phenomenon in all its manifestations and implications. This is especially true at a time when—for all sorts of reasons—such an entity has many opponents.

Globalization has a direct bearing on contemporary antisemitism. During the last several decades, nationalism and new forms of identity politics have exacerbated existing social, economic, and political cleavages. The causes of this emerging crisis include the extension of global competitive markets and the effects of structural adjustment, the intensification of socio-economic inequalities, the blurring of international and domestic political conflicts, and the world-wide escalation of adversarial “identity politics.”<sup>52</sup> The extension of information technologies and travel possibilities has created a new network of “global spaces” within the interstices of metropolitan life across continents, inhabited by a growing coterie of transnational professionals and specialists. From the perspective of this high-rise corporate economy and corporate culture, the city down below appears to be inhabited by immigrant populations competing for low-wage jobs in an increasingly informalized urban economy, as the state retreats from its welfare functions. The combined economic and political imperatives of globalization seem to sweep away particularities of time and place to generate common outcomes everywhere: growing ethnic racial and cultural heterogeneity, coupled with social and spatial polarization.

At the most general level, it is possible to think of globalization in terms of movement and circulation, a complexity of criss-crossing flows: some of it capital and trade, some of it people, and some of it signs, symbols, meanings, and myths. A common thread which runs through the existing body of literature is the idea that such flows and mobility across space have accelerated, speeded up, or gained a new momentum in the contemporary era, captured in such key phrases as “time-space compression,”<sup>53</sup> “time-space distantiation,”<sup>54</sup> and “intersecting scapes.”<sup>55</sup> Thus the concept of globalization does not imply a shift from one period to another in the form of an historical rupture, as do other encompassing terms most frequently used to describe contemporary metropolitan experience, namely post-Fordism<sup>56</sup> and postmodernity.<sup>57</sup> Rather it denotes an

<sup>52</sup> Charles Small, “Creating National Identity and Otherness: Canada and the First Nations,” in Olufemi Vaughan and Charles Small, eds., *Globalisation and Marginality: Essays on the Paradoxes of Local and Global Forces* (Sefer Academic Press, Ibadan, Nigeria 2007).

<sup>53</sup> D. Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1989).

<sup>54</sup> A. Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Polity/Blackwell, Cambridge 1990).

<sup>55</sup> A. Appadurai, *Globalization* (Duke University Press, Durham, N.C. 2001).

<sup>56</sup> A. Amin, *Post-Fordism: A Reader* (Blackwells, Oxford 1994).

<sup>57</sup> E. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (Verso, London 1989); S. Watson and K. Gibson, eds., *Postmodern Cities and Spaces* (Blackwells, Oxford 1995).



intensification and stretching out of movements and flows, as captured for instance in Giddens's definition of globalization as "the intensification of world-wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa."<sup>58</sup>

Some social groups initiate flows and movement, while other do not; some are more on the receiving end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it. There is thus a dimension of movement and circulation; there is also a dimension of control and initiation. The ways in which different social groups are re-inserted into, placed within, and seize upon these flows, which are themselves differentiated, can both reflect and reinforce existing power relations; it can also undermine them. What does not follow from the considerations above, and yet continues to inform much of the literature on global flows, is the social imaginary of a borderless world. Inherent to the concept of global flows, differentiated and differentiating, is the capacity to transgress taken for granted boundaries between nation states, between racial, ethnic, and gender groups, and between the public and private spheres. This does mean, however, an increasingly order-less world, one in which boundaries have lost their meaning. On the contrary, borders have become the locus of struggles among a variety of social actors, mobilized to reassert or redefine their boundaries *vis-à-vis* other relevant actors, and translate onto the space of the metropolis.

Globalization divides as much as it unites. Alongside the emerging planetary dimensions of business, finance, trade, and information flows, a localizing, space-fixing process is set in motion. Between them the closely interconnected processes sharply differentiate the existential condition of entire populations and of various segments of each one of the populations. What appears as globalization for some means localization for others; signaling a new freedom for some, upon many others it descends as an uninvited and cruel fate. Some of us become fully and truly global; some are fixed in their locality. Being local in a globalized world is a sign of deprivation and degradation. An integral part of the globalizing process is progressive spatial segregation, separation, and exclusion. Neo-tribal and fundamentalist tendencies, which reflect and articulate the experience of people on the receiving end of globalization, are as much legitimate reactions to globalization as the widely acclaimed hybridization of top-culture—the culture at the globalized top. There is a break down in communication between the globalized elites and the ever-more localized rest.<sup>59</sup>

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It is in this context that contemporary antisemitism emerges. In a real sense, Israel is in the middle of a region in which societies are experiencing critical levels of marginalization, and in some cases collapse, threatening social cohesion and further complicating international relations. As mentioned above, globalization—through migration, trade and business, and advances in technology and telecommunications—is connecting people as never before, but it is also dividing them as much as it unites them. In the

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<sup>58</sup> A. Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Polity/Blackwell, Cambridge 1990).

<sup>59</sup> Charles Small, "Creating National Identity and Otherness: Canada and the First Nations," in Olufemi Vaughan and Charles Small, eds., *Globalisation and Marginality: Essays on the Paradoxes of Local and Global Forces* (Sefer Academic Press, Ibadan, Nigeria 2007).

midst of these processes, contradictions, and emerging cleavages, antisemitism is once again flourishing in the form of the demonization of Israel and, by extension, Diaspora Jewry, with its real and supposed associations with the State of Israel.<sup>60</sup> During five years of interdisciplinary programming and research projects conducted at the highest levels of scholarship, several YIISA scholars examined the emerging socio-economic, political, and cultural vacuum that is being filled by the burgeoning social movement of radical political Islamism. This movement embodies the most pernicious forms of antisemitism, including a consistent call for, and incitement to, genocide against the Jewish state, consistent with its ideological and religious worldview. Many scholars and policy makers do not recognize or acknowledge these developments. It is within this context that Israel is emerging as the “Jew among nations,” finding itself geographically, politically, and metaphorically in the center of this process, as well as on the frontline of a conflict over basic relations of the state and notions of democracy. Like the Jews of Europe during the interwar period, the Israel and—perhaps more so—Jewish people in Diaspora communities around the world will find themselves separated from the elites on one side and the working classes on the other. They will be more separated politically, culturally, and economically in the middle of competing forces as the crisis of modernity continues to evolve and its manifestations deepen. As Bernard-Henri Lévy contends, it is the role of the intellectual to shed light where there is darkness. It is the study of contemporary antisemitism and the struggle to develop social policies that will promote human dignity and respect for all that is once again an urgent calling for scholars.<sup>61</sup> With this in mind, it is important to consider the following three points:

- (1) The failure to recognize antisemitism studies as a valid academic discipline contributes to the ongoing mood of apologetic lethargy concerning this long-lasting prejudice. Now more than ever, there is a need for a vibrant, critical, open interdisciplinary research center to develop research projects and interdisciplinary curriculums. Policy and policy development are respected areas of study that need to be included in the area of contemporary antisemitism studies. Those who dismiss this as advocacy are pushing an regressive political advocacy agenda of their own.
- (2) The failure of academia to assert its independence from funding sources and government influence in the study of human rights and efforts to combat hatred is a failure worthy of research in itself, as it goes to the heart of free debate and democratic principles and practice.
- (3) Antisemitism is a major issue in the study of globalization, modernism, and post-modernism and also needs to be acknowledged as a legitimate issue in Middle Eastern studies. The study of contemporary antisemitism from an interdisciplinary perspective is crucial to scholarship, policy, and the protection of human rights, human dignity, and democratic principles, especially in these times of silence.

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<sup>60</sup> It is important to consider the impact of social media and information technology on the dissemination of its ideas, discourse, and political culture, especially in the Middle East. This impact is like a double-edged sword, since it encompasses an utopian liberating effects but also empowers reactionary forces. In this context, it is interesting to note that certain hateful images of Jews with origins in European antisemitism are being “beamed” into Europe for the first time in many decades from the Middle East.

<sup>61</sup> See Bernard-Henri Lévy, *Left in Dark Times: A Stand Against the New Barbarism* (Random House 2009).

As Ruth Wisse has summarized the issue with insight and power: “Jews in democratic societies are not merely the proverbial canaries sent into the mine shaft to test the quality of the air: they function rather as the kindling used to set the system aflame. Why stop at the Jews?” In other words, the study of antisemitism is not a parochial matter, but a complex and explosive phenomenon that is bound up with matters of human rights, the protection of democratic principles, and citizenship, as well as notions of dignity. In the contemporary context of globalization, combined with the rise of reactionary social movements, we must not only examine and come to understand these complex processes as they relate to antisemitism: it is also incumbent upon us to develop approaches to safeguard and solve these attacks against all humanity.

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This volume presents a selection of the papers presented at the “Global Antisemitism: A Crisis of Modernity” conference organized by YIISA in August 2010. It is one of five volumes reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the conference as well as the diverse nature of the subject of antisemitism in general.

Volume I includes papers that approach antisemitism from a wide range of conceptual perspectives and scholarly disciplines. Volume II deals with matters of antisemitism and the intellectual environment. The papers in this volume focus on the treatment of Israel in the media and the study of antisemitism in the academy. Volume III examines the manifestations and impacts of antisemitism in various regional contexts. Some of the papers focus on historical cases, while others focus on recent or contemporary matters. Volume IV on Islamism and the Arab world examines a form of antisemitism that has become especially virulent in recent times. It is also a form of antisemitism whose origins and manifestations are perhaps less well-known to academics and policy-makers due to the supposedly controversial nature of this topic. This volume includes papers from some of the leading experts in this area. Volume V, finally, comprises various “reflections” that were presented at the conference by a number of well-respected observers, academics, and practitioners. They provide insightful observations and important analysis but are not presented in the form of classic academic papers.

These volumes will be of interest to students and scholars of antisemitism and discrimination, as well as to scholars and readers from other fields. Rather than treating antisemitism merely as an historical phenomenon, they place it squarely in the contemporary context. As a result, the papers presented in these volumes also provide important insights into the ideologies, processes, and developments that give rise to prejudice in the contemporary global context.



# How Do We Put an End to Antisemitism? No, Really, How Do We?

Ruth R. Wisse\*

There has probably never been a time when so many good minds have devoted themselves to exposing antisemitism and defending Jewish rights. These days, America's leading newspaper, the *Wall Street Journal*, is only one of many publications making the case for Israel as intelligently as it can be done. Multiple institutes and organizations have been formed to explain and counteract anti-Jewish and anti-Israel aggression. One only has to compare the response of "Jewish leaders" to the Damascus blood libel of 1840 or to Hitler's Final Solution a century later with the address of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to the joint session of the United States Congress in May 2011 to see how very far the Jewish people have come in engaging effective allies in its self-defense.

Yet there is something here that ought to give us pause. Why has there been no concerted effort to *eradicate* antisemitism? People track it, expose it, oppose it, and deplore it, without trying to bring about its end. Is this because of some lack of capacity or courage in ourselves, or have we come to accept antisemitism as an intrinsic expression of human nature? In the words of the Yiddish writer Lamed Shapiro, do we believe we face in antisemitism something "as eternal as the eternal God?"

Two other modern political scourges that arose in tandem with antisemitism have seen their power greatly diminished. Fascism was crushed in the Second World War, and communism lost its international base in 1991. These movements were powerful in their time and still have adherents, but their sustaining ideologies have been seriously weakened. Yet antisemitism, which figured prominently in both, has metastasized and, according to one of its foremost historians, Robert Wistrich, "will probably get worse."<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, then, the first step in containing antisemitism is to approach it not as an essential force of human nature but as a political problem, comparable to those others and equally vincible. Once we identify its political functions and strategies, we may better appreciate its disproportionate appeal.

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<sup>1</sup> Gil Shefler, "Antisemitism is worse in 2010 than 1910," Interview with Robert Wistrich, *Jerusalem Post*, August 11, 2010.

## 1. WHAT ZIONISM COULD AND COULD NOT DO

Because antisemitism works through indirection, a good place to begin an inquiry into its nature is with some of the ways it has been misunderstood by the very movements that have set out to repel it, for example Zionism.

Political Zionism was first and foremost a movement of national self-determination that had much in common with other parallel national movements like those of Italy, Ireland, and Poland. However, Moses Hess, Theodor Herzl, and other Zionist thinkers also believed that normalizing the political condition of the Jews would staunch the aggression against them. Zionism seemed a plausible answer to the accusation that Jews had for too long been a dependent minority in other people's lands. The early Zionist leader Leon Pinsker said that the political lifelessness and shadowy existence of the Jewish people made their neighbors afraid of the "Jewish ghost." By contrast, Wilhelm Marr, a German who founded the League of Antisemites, feared them as threatening aliens—all-too-potent usurpers of the majority's wealth and culture. One way or another, Zionism expected that Jews would cease to provoke or frighten surrounding peoples once they packed up and headed home: Zionism would restore Jewish national sovereignty and simultaneously arrest the unwarranted aggression against them.

Zionism achieved its primary goal. I will not dwell here on the marvels of Israel, except to emphasize that Zionism succeeded in whatever depended on Jewish effort, energy, and will. It proved mistaken, however, in its belief that antisemitism attacked some *remediable* quality in the Jews, ignoring that antisemitism arose not to address the realities of the Jewish situation but to serve and satisfy the political needs of others. "Normalization" depended as much on the *reception* as on the creation of a Jewish homeland and could not be achieved without it. Jews could not satisfy the accusations against them by responding to ostensible charges that were independent of their actual behavior. The fate of antisemitism is controlled by antisemites.

Experiments yield their results only after they have been conducted. The builders of Israel were entitled to expect political normalization. Those who fought for and achieved political sovereignty had good reason to expect that they, like so many others, would join their country to the family of nations. The United Nations, which was founded just prior to the creation of Israel, affirmed its commitment to the "equal rights of nations large and small." The error lay not in the hope and confidence placed in the Jewish capacity to establish a homeland, but in expecting to find *in the Jews* a viable solution to the hostility directed against them. In this Zionism failed, because Jean Paul Sartre was correct in his dictum: "If the Jew did not exist, the antisemite would invent him." The nature of the Jews had become irrelevant to their political instrumentality.<sup>2</sup> Not their disposition, but their utility as a target determined the course of the wars against them.

Antisemitism was indeed launched against a people without a homeland, but it could work just as well against Jews in their own land. In 1945, in parallel with the establishment of the United Nations, the Arab League was founded with the unifying goal of preventing the creation of Israel. So far, nothing out of the ordinary: many emerging countries initially meet with resistance and must fight for their right to exist. But what followed was altogether exceptional. Israel won its War of Independence, but

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<sup>2</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Antisemite and Jew* (1946).

unlike Britain's response to the thirteen colonies Arab leaders did not acknowledge Israel's independence. Though the world was now dealing with a Jewish country rather than a dispersed people, the political functions of Israel in Arab politics became almost identical to the functions of the Jew in the politics of Europe. To say this is not to compare German fascism with Arab nationalism or Islamism but to compare their anti-Jewish strategies of grievance and blame. Arab leaders forged a target and scapegoat by adapting some of the texts, images, and tactics of European antisemitism and adding their own. With the ideological inversion that is at the heart of antisemitism, they denied the Jews their country and accused them of denying the Arabs theirs.

Moreover, the United Nations failed to live up to its obligations. Although it had voted for the partition of Palestine, it did not fulfill its commitment in the U.N. Charter to protect nations large and small. It allowed the Arab states to deny Israel recognition—the only state to be thus offended against. When the countries of the Arab League refused to recognize Israel as a member state, they should have been censured and, if not expelled from the United Nations, at least put on probation for failing to abide by this founding principle. This Arab response rendered Israel exceptional despite its successful establishment as a normative state. More than the response itself, the fact that it was condoned by this international body allowed antisemitism to become a viable international tool. At almost every step, the United Nations functioned in ways that facilitated rather than thwarted the Arab war against a member state. The United Nations did not generate the politics of antisemitism but granted it legitimacy by failing to oppose it. Zionism was politically unexceptional—dozens of new countries have joined the United Nations since 1948. The exception was anti-Zionism: the organization of politics against the Jewish state.

There was nothing inevitable about this process. The Arab world might have developed differently, as Efraim Karsh documents in his study *Palestine Betrayed*. The Middle East could have seen peoples living side-by-side had Arab leaders accepted the presence of a Jewish state alongside so many of theirs. The United Nations might also have acted differently, just as it could have gone either way in voting on partition in 1947. The United States might have persuaded King Saud of Saudi Arabia to recognize Israel.

Belligerents propelled antisemitism, and “by-standers” who ignored it allowed it to spread.

To say that the Jews serve the political purposes of others does not mean that antisemitism is politically inevitable. It means that control over antisemitism does not lie with the Jews. Jews may resist their enemies, but they cannot unilaterally halt the war against them because they are not its purveyors. Jews who are targeted as a pacific minority cannot unilaterally overcome the political asymmetry between themselves and gratuitous enemies many times their number. The aggression against them must be arrested at its source with the encouragement or persuasion of larger and politically more powerful nations or of the international community acting as one.

## 2. HOW ANTISEMITISM SUCCEEDS

The Zionist misdiagnosis, however innocent, raised expectations that could not be satisfied, and Zionism was then held responsible for those dashed hopes. Having expended so much creative energy in the recovery of the Jewish homeland—on the assumption that it would reduce anti-Jewish assaults—many Jews were disturbed to find

themselves facing greater enmity than before. It was hard to be grateful for the acquired capacity for self-defense when the goal had been to *need* no self-defense. Instead of absorbing the disproof of the Zionist hypothesis, however, some Jews, having learned nothing from their original mistake of seeking the cause of antisemitism in their fellow Jews, compounded the error by attributing the persistence of antisemitism to the Jews of Israel, or to the Jewish state. Not the actions of Israel, but its utility as a target determined the course of the war against Zionism. Yet the misapprehension persisted that anti-Zionism could be reduced by Israeli concessions.

Antisemitism works through the strategy of the pointing finger. Through political prestidigitation the accuser draws attention away from his repressive intentions by pointing to the Jews, whose inflated image and extravagant achievements make them a plausible explanation for whatever ails his regime. The pointing finger keeps negative attention focused on the Jews—or Israelis—who fall into the trap whenever they accept responsibility for a situation they cannot control. They are trapped even earlier, at the point of answering to the charge of which they stand accused. In politics as before the law, whoever stands in the dock is the defendant and whoever points the finger is the plaintiff. The only effective response to false accusation is effective counter-prosecution. Unless and until the defendant turns plaintiff, antisemitism enjoys the *fun* of negative campaigning. Negative campaigning succeeds when it meets no superior resistance. The Jews' disincentive to attack those whose acceptance they crave remains their fatal disadvantage in stopping the campaigns against them.

The Zionist misconception that actions on the part of the Jews will end antisemitism found its apotheosis in the Oslo Accords of 1993. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's decision to invite Yasser Arafat to head the Palestinian Authority was politically absurd—no threatened country has ever before armed its enemy with the expectation of *gaining* security. But Israel did as it did, demonstrating its political inexperience as a sovereign country. However, this political blunder was exacerbated when Israel allowed its surrender of power to the terrorist leader to be linked to expectations of peace. Once again, Jews pretended that antisemitism could be stopped by some remediable action of their own, ignoring that the options for peace lay with their accusers.

Rabin might have accompanied Israel's actions with something like the following declaration:

The State of Israel has decided to make such and such concessions to Yasser Arafat's terrorist organization because we feel it is in our national interest (a) to retreat to more defensible borders; (b) to appease international expectations; (c) to gain time and hope for changes in Arab society; (d) to regroup and redeploy. But we are obliged to point out that the preposterous imbalance between the Arab belligerents and ourselves makes it impossible for *us* to end the conflict. Only Arab leaders can stop what they started. However much we may wish it, Israeli concessions can do nothing—*nothing!*—to bring about peace. We have no incentive for aggression, and the lopsidedness of the war against us means that only its initiators can halt incitement against us. We call on them to help their Palestinian brethren govern and improve their society. We call on the international community to help us in penalizing any acts of aggression should there be any violation of the agreement we now sign....

And so on in this vein, directing onto the Palestinian and Arab societies all political responsibility for the actions of their leaders.



Capitulation to Arafat was no less damaging than Israel's participation in the accompanying charade of "peace." Zionism in its innocence may once have failed to grasp the function of the Jews in the political strategy of their antagonists, but by this time the excuse of naiveté was not sustainable. Since Israel had walked into the peace trap, it was increasingly blamed for the aggression against it. Israeli actions were supposed to bring peace, so why did they not? Why not try again with more concessions? Each time the Jews pretended to be able to arrest the hostility against them, they reinforced expectations that they ought to do so. The same trap ensnares not only Jews and Israelis but all people of good will. Raising false expectations of peace becomes culpable even if one is not responsible for the original violence. The more false expectations Israel raises, domestically and abroad, the more blame it earns.

### 3. THE PEACE TRAP

In the short run, one can, of course, understand the well-intentioned advice of observers like pollster Frank Luntz: "The only way for Israel to create sympathy is to be the side working hardest for peace. The best case for Israel is to demonstrate that she is willing to go twice as far as her neighbors to establish peace." In proposing to end the wars against them, Jews appeal to a world view that believes in conflict resolution, human progress, and mankind's desire to work in its own rational self-interest. Jews who seek international harmony and peace are naturally eager to work toward that laudable end. The catchword for this view is liberalism, which connotes optimism, hope, and a generous view of human nature. Indeed, Jews were a popular liberal cause in the quarter-century between the end of the Second World War and the Yom Kippur War, when it seemed, momentarily, as if Israel was about to win the peace.

By any reasonable standard, Israel is indeed a beacon of liberalism in an illiberal region. Political columnist Bret Stephens explains how he explains Israel on college campuses. He asks a series of questions: Are you for gay rights? Women's rights? Artistic self-expression? An impartial justice system? No capital punishment? Israel is the only country in the Middle East that applies these values. If you defend these values, integrity requires that you defend the only country in the region that incorporates these values.

Jews and Israel *are* the "true north" of liberalism on any genuine political compass because of the way they are politically constituted and because of the anti-liberal forces ranged against them. Antisemitism in all its varieties—Christian, Muslim, or pagan; communist or fascist; secular or religious; totalitarian or authoritarian—is an anti-liberal movement, casting liberalism as a Jewish conspiracy. Arab opponents of Israel likewise resist liberal democracy. One would therefore expect an automatic political alignment of Israel with liberalism and of anti-Zionism with anti-liberalism. In fact, standard-bearers of muscular liberalism from novelist George Eliot in England to Senators Henry "Scoop" Jackson and Daniel Patrick Moynihan in the United States have been among the strongest defenders of Jewish sovereignty and the Jewish state.

Yet here lies the paradox. The fiercer antisemitism grows, the more it forces a choice between protecting the Jews, on the one hand, and faith in conflict resolution, on the other. Protecting the Jews requires confronting hostility that is not subject to rational persuasion, that does not obey our version of the rule of law, that does not abide by Western ideas of fairness, and that does not radiate peace and good will. The targets of

this aggression must then keep reminding the rest of the world about the presence, intentions, and deeds of the aggressors—unwelcome reminders for which no one is grateful. Furthermore, to then side with Israel leaves one exposed to the same hostility that assails the Jews. Self-interest therefore persuades some governments to ignore aggression that presumably does not concern *them*. Leaders have not only a right but also a duty to place the interests of their own people above all other claims. The superior power of antisemitic regimes and the short-term advantages they offer in diplomacy, commerce, and trade, usually outweigh those of siding with the Jews.

Some will even try to justify their pragmatism by holding Jews responsible for the aggression leveled against them. Likewise, some Jews try to separate themselves from the culpable Jewish “extremists” or Zionists who are under attack. The anti-liberal politics of Jew-blame works by persuading us that it is aimed at the offending Jews. Those who accept anti-Jewish politics at face value become accomplices of those launching the attacks.

A Harvard transfer student from Russia tells me of an incident that represents in miniature the political conundrum I have been describing. At a freshman reception for international students a Palestinian student learns that he is Jewish and begins to assail him for Israel’s abuses against her people. He is tempted to explain that Israel wants peace, that its doctors cure Palestinian children, or that Palestinian gays seek refuge in the bars of Tel Aviv. But since she has been raised on a politics of Jew-blame that makes attacking Jews part of her Palestinian identity, were he to enter the defendant’s box into which she has cast him, he would be reinforcing the aggrieved condition of which she complains. He can only repel her antisemitism by turning the accusation back on itself, challenging not the content of her charges, but their premise: Why did twenty-one Arab countries deny Jews their single homeland and then accuse Jews of denying Arabs *their* land? Why did the Arabs not follow Israel’s example in resettling Jewish refugees from Arab lands, instead perpetuating the misery for which she is trying to blame *him*? This young man may certainly express sympathy for the Palestinians who have been badly exploited by their fellow Arabs, but any acknowledgement of Jewish responsibility for her politics of hatred will only further corrupt her society and corrode her soul. Antisemitism batters on those who falsely assume or ascribe Jewish guilt for anti-Jewish aggression.

#### 4. CAN ANTISEMITISM BE ERADICATED?

If politics is the art of the possible, it ought to be possible to set a goal of curbing antisemitism. But in order to do so, one must first learn to think of antisemitism in political terms, as a political instrument with an ideological rationale that serves political ends, functions through political channels, and can be opposed by political actions. Considerations of its history and psychology are subordinate to its political utility.

Anthony Julius has written a authoritative study of antisemitism in England in which he offers this capacious description:

[perhaps] a repertoire of attitudes, myths and defamations in circulation at any given time. It is a kind of discursive swamp, a resource on which religious and political movements, writers and artists, demagogues, and the variously disaffected, all draw, without ever draining. It is not a political philosophy, or anything close to one. It is

not a conception of the world; it is merely an *idée fixe*—a hatred, dressed up as a conviction ... a protean, unstable combination of received ideas, compounded by malice.<sup>3</sup>

This conveys the complexity of the phenomenon, leaving the impression that it can never be contained. The first task of the researcher (who approaches antisemitism the way one would go about curing AIDS) is to drain that discursive swamp and identify how antisemitism works in the world today.

In this we do well to follow the lead of Wilhelm Marr, who distinguished modern antisemitism from earlier forms of religious prejudice. Antisemitism in its modern iteration is the organization of politics against the Jews. Some consider it formless in the way it absorbs contradictory accusations, but its protean nature makes it that much more useful to initiators, accommodators, and fellow travelers. How, then, does it function in the domestic, regional, and international affairs of these groups? Whom does it serve? How does it forge alliances? How does it appeal to the elites and the masses, and is its appeal the same to both? How does it direct and deflect protest against one group by providing an outlet for violence and rage against another? Does a negative politics like antisemitism prove more resilient than other contemporaneous movements based on “positive” ideals? When scientists set out to stop an epidemic, they do not erect a museum to its memory, or provide curricula for facing its history: they separate the variables that may cause the epidemic and test the properties of each. Curbing antisemitism will require a similar approach.

Finally, we must ask why no such serious investigation has yet begun. Let me offer two hypotheses. In the case of AIDS, its carriers are its obvious victims, giving them a stake in finding a cure. When AIDS struck the homosexual community, the carriers of the malady put their community at risk, and this galvanized support from relatives and friends. Soon it was reported that “HIV research is undergoing a renaissance that could lead to new ways to vaccinate against the AIDS virus....”<sup>4</sup> When carriers of an illness are also its casualties, or endanger others like themselves, everyone is eager to tackle the problem. Antisemitism is different. Its carriers—those who organize politics against the Jews and Israel—do not experience themselves as its apparent victims. Jews cannot halt the scourge because they are not its carriers, and its carriers, the antisemites, will not arrest the scourge because they do not recognize its harm to themselves.

Another reason for the failure to arrest antisemitism is that it can only be stopped by a “conservative turn.” A focus on the containment of evil as the surest means of enlarging the good. Whether or not we call them “evil,” some societies adopt political strategies antithetical and hostile to ours. Antisemitism assaults the political freedoms and liberalization that Jews are thought to represent. Some of us turned “conservative” because of this ideological and applied aggression aimed at our coreligionists and against our way of life. But resisting antisemitism requires ceaseless effort and the attendant inconveniences of vigilant self-defense.

Perhaps it would help if a Muslim Theodor Herzl were to craft a Utopian vision of what a cooperative Middle East might look like, with Arabs and Jews thriving side by side. Tourists would flock to see these religious civilizations in tandem; Israelis, already the world’s most eager travelers, would boost the economies of their neighbors, and

<sup>3</sup> Anthony Julius, *Trials of the Diaspora: A History of Anti-Semitism in England* (Oxford, 2010) p. xlvii.

<sup>4</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, July 9, 2010.

their neighbors would enjoy some of the sights and sounds they do not have in their own lands. Trade and commerce would fill the national coffers. Education would lead to a mutual appreciation of each other's music and art, history and customs, and problems and achievements. The excitement of Anwar Sadat's visit to Jerusalem would be matched by parallel state visits of Israeli leaders to Arab countries and the emergence of new pan-Semitic alliances. Environmental problems would be addressed through cooperative ventures. Bi-national courts would settle individual and institutional claims. Such sweet dreaming might quicken political rethinking.

One hopes that the reformation and renaissance of Arabs societies in the Middle East will prove happier than Europe's protracted road to Hitler and Stalin. All antisemitism's attempts at inversion and prestidigitation cannot alter the fact that this political instrument destroys those who resort to it. Antisemitism has arguably been the greatest obstacle to peace in the Western world. There will be no political progress unless and until it is eradicated.

# Arab and Islamic Antisemitism

Menahem Milson\*

Arab and Islamic antisemitism is currently the form of antisemitism that poses the most danger to Israel and to Jews everywhere in the world. It is uniquely insidious because it is often disguised as criticism of Israel, which is in itself a legitimate activity.

At the outset, I should like to make some preliminary remarks:

- a. When speaking of antisemitism—whether Islamic or otherwise—I do not mean criticism of this or that Israeli policy. Mere criticism of Israel—whether justified or not—is not antisemitism. I am speaking about the dehumanization and demonization of the Jews and about the expectation of Muslims that they will slaughter all the Jews at the End of Time.
- b. Arab and Islamic antisemitism is not a new phenomenon. However, when it comes to Arab antisemitism, there are many who *prefer to look the other way*. Until just a few years ago, Israeli and Jewish academics and public figures all but ignored it. There have been a few exceptions of course (some in Israel, some elsewhere), but these have been few. The fear of being labeled “anti-Arab” and accused of being “Islamophobic” has been enough to keep the overwhelming majority of Middle East academic experts away from this subject.

The reluctance has not only been academic; it has also been quite typical of people in the media and in politics to ignore Arab antisemitism. I have already mentioned one reason for this. There is another, political motivation behind the unwillingness to deal with Arab anti-Jewish attitudes: the fear that the exposure of antisemitic sentiment on the Arab side would reinforce political intransigence in Israel and play into the hands of political groups that oppose any territorial compromise.

However, it must be recognized that shutting our eyes to Arab and Islamic antisemitism is not only intellectually dishonest but also politically misguided. Countering Arab and Islamic antisemitism is an indispensable part of our struggle to achieve peace. A dehumanized image of the Jew forms an impediment to peace and normal relations.

- c. The issue of contemporary Arab antisemitism is quite distinct from that of Muslim attitudes to Jews and Judaism prior to the modern era. While these two issues are interrelated in various ways, their historical contexts are so completely different that

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to treat them together is either a methodological mistake or — worse — a deliberate attempt to obscure the issue. They should be treated separately.

- d. There are those who claim that, if you engage in exposing Arab and Islamic anti-semitism, you are guilty of Islamophobia. This is of course a false charge. To expose Arab antisemitism is not in any way to say that all Arabs or all Muslims are anti-semitic. In fact, this false charge has a purpose. It is intended to stop, indeed to preempt, the struggle against Arab antisemitism and to provide immunity to antisemites. Such manipulations should be rejected.
- e. It should be emphasized that Arab antisemitic propaganda does not distinguish clearly between Jew, Zionist, and Israeli; these three concepts are often used in Arab and Iranian anti-Jewish publications as though they were synonymous.

## 1. WHAT ARE THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF ARAB ANTISEMITISM?

The following conclusions have been formed on the basis of extensive monitoring by the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) of a wide variety of Arabic and Iranian publications and forums (newspapers, magazines, television programs, Friday sermons in mosques, books, and websites) over the last decade.

Arab and Iranian anti-Jewish propaganda appears to include three major components:

- a. anti-Jewish views derived from traditional Islamic sources;
- b. antisemitic stereotypes, images, and accusations of European and Christian origin;
- c. Holocaust denial and equating Zionism with Nazism. This too is of course Western in origin, but its pivotal role in Arab antisemitism warrants special attention.

## 2. THE ISLAMIC COMPONENT

The rise of Islamic fundamentalism since 1979 has intensified the Islamic dimension of antisemitism in the Arab and Muslim world and has contributed to its dissemination and inculcation.

### A. *Apes and pigs*

It is common for Jews to be called “apes and pigs” or “descendants of apes and pigs.” This insult appears not only in Friday sermons but also in political articles. It is based on a number of Koranic verses which state that some Jews were turned into apes and pigs by God as punishment for violating the Sabbath.<sup>1</sup>

This insult should not be dismissed as mere vulgar invective, nor should the belief that God once turned some Jews into apes, pigs, or other creatures be considered merely as an indication of primitive magical thinking. Repeated reference to Jews as despised

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<sup>1</sup> Koran 2:65, 5:60, 7:166. Two of these texts (2:65 and 7:166) specify that violation of the Sabbath was the cause of the transmogrification. In one instance (5:60), it is mentioned as a punishment brought upon *ahl al-kitab* (“the people of the book,” a term signifying both Jews and Christians), who refused to accept the true faith.

beasts dehumanizes them and provides justification for their destruction. The following are just a few examples of the use of this insult in a variety of forums.

This image has pervaded the public consciousness, even that of children. In May 2002, the Saudi satellite television station, Iqraa, which, according to its website, seeks “to highlight the true, tolerant image of Islam and refute the accusations directed against it,” interviewed a three-and-a-half-year-old “real Muslim girl” about Jews, on a program called “The Muslim Women’s Magazine.” Asked whether she liked Jews, the little girl answered, “no.” Asked why not, she said that Jews were “apes and pigs.” “Who said this?” the moderator asked. The girl answered, “Our God.” “Where did He say this?” “In the Koran.” At the end of the interview, the moderator said with satisfaction: “No [parents] could wish for Allah to give them a more believing girl than she... May Allah bless her and both her father and mother.”<sup>2</sup>

### B. *The attempt to poison the Prophet Muhammad*

Another common anti-Jewish charge is that the Jews conspired to assassinate the Prophet Muhammad. One such attempt is particularly notorious: the alleged attempt by a Jewish woman to poison the Prophet Muhammad.

### C. *The Promise of the Stone and the Tree*

Another common anti-Jewish traditional motif is “The Promise of the Stone and the Tree.” According to a widely quoted prophetic tradition (*hadith*), before Judgment Day, the Muslims will fight the Jews and kill them. The Jews will hide behind stones and trees, and the stones and trees will call out, “Oh Muslim, oh Servant of Allah, a Jew is hiding behind me. Come and kill him.” According to this tradition, the world must be cleansed from Jews before the coming of the Hour.

## 3. WESTERN ELEMENTS

Arab antisemitism has also adopted all the European antisemitic myths, even those that have been discarded by Western antisemites as too primitive. The most obvious examples are the notorious blood libel, the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, and the charge that the Jews killed Jesus—which is rather strange for Muslims considering that, according to the Koran, Jesus was never crucified.

### A. *The blood libel*

The blood libel is still current in the Arab and Muslim world and crops up even in the most important government newspapers. The most notorious case of spreading the blood-libel myth is that of Mustafa Tlas. Tlas—who until 2004 was Syria’s vice-president and defense minister—published a book in 1983 called *The Matzah of Zion*, in which he tells the story of the Damascus 1840 blood libel, except that he tells it as though the Jews were actually guilty of committing the crime.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Iqraa Television, May 7, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> An infamous affair in which the death of a Capuchin friar Thomas and his Muslim servant were blamed on the Jews, who were accused of engaging in ritual murder.

Some writers rehash and recycle the ritual murder accusations, putting a new twist on them by claiming, for example, that, in honor of the Jewish holiday of Purim, Jews use human blood to make their traditional pastries. Blood libel accusations in the Arab media are most commonly encountered in the context of criticism of Israel's actions against the Palestinians.

### B. *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*

Since 1925, when it was first translated into Arabic, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* has been frequently used in anti-Jewish discourse in the Arab world to back up claims that there is a "Jewish plot to take over the world." Many Arab shapers of public opinion cite this fabricated document, claiming that the Jews' malicious plan, as set out in the *Protocols*, is now coming to fruition. The Jews are accused of using devious methods to accomplish their goal: controlling the economy and the media, corrupting morals, and encouraging international and internal conflict.

The use of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion in the Arab media became a topic of discussion worldwide in late 2002, when an Egyptian satellite station began to air the Egyptian television series *Knight Without a Horse* throughout the Arab world over Ramadan (November-December).<sup>4</sup> In Ramadan 2003, also during prime-time hours, Hizbullah's TV station Al-Manar aired another antisemitic series: a Syrian-produced series called *Al-Shatat* (The Diaspora). This series purported to show Jewish life in the Diaspora and the emergence of Zionism. It included gruesome scenes such as the ritual murder of a Christian boy and the ritual murder of a Jew who married a gentile. The series also shows how Amschel Rothschild, the founder of the purported secret world Jewish government, instructed his sons from his deathbed to start wars and corrupt society all over the world in order to serve the financial interests and the political goals of the Jews.<sup>5</sup>

An official tenth-grade history textbook published in 2004 by the Palestinian Authority includes a chapter on the history of Zionism. The chapter summarizes the resolutions of the first Zionist Congress in Basel. After a section in which the book gives a factual

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<sup>4</sup> On November 6, 2002 (the first night of Ramadan), some Arab television channels (including Egyptian State Television) aired the first segment of a 41-part serial called "A Knight Without a Horse," which was based on *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. It should be noted that the nights of Ramadan are considered a peak time of television viewing in Arab and Muslim countries. The series sparked protests in the West, with the US State Department calling on the Egyptian government to prevent the broadcast—a demand that was rejected out of hand by Egyptian information minister Safwat Al-Sharif. The series aroused much debate in the Egyptian and Arab press. Most writers supported the airing of the series, but a few criticized Egypt's obsession with antisemitic writings. The series was viewed and approved for broadcast by a committee appointed by the Egyptian censor. A committee from the Egyptian Radio and Television Association declared the series "a landmark in the history of Arab drama." The Egyptian information minister stated that "the dramatic views expressed by the series contain nothing that can be considered antisemitic." See MEMRI's Inquiry and Analysis Series, nos. 109, 113, and 114 (Nov. 8, Dec. 10, and Dec. 20, 2002, respectively). A video cassette of the relevant sections with English subtitles is available from MEMRI.

<sup>5</sup> It is interesting to note that the producers of *Al-Shatat*, conscious of the previous year's outcry against "Knight Without A Horse," preceded each episode with a disclaimer stating that the series was not based on the notorious *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* but on historical facts and research, including writings by Jews and Israelis.



presentation of the main official decisions of the Congress, it goes on to say: "There are a number of secret decisions issued by the Congress known as 'The Protocols of the Elders of Zion', which aim at taking control of the whole world."<sup>6</sup>

When the *Protocols* are mentioned in the Arab media, they are referred to as unquestionably authentic. To be sure, there are many Arab writers who are well aware that the *Protocols* are a forgery. Nevertheless, many continue to make use of the *Protocols*, arguing that, "it does not matter whether they are fact or fiction: their 'predictions' have largely come true."

The following incident is very revealing. In November 2003, the Arabic translation of the *Protocols* was put on display next to the Torah and the Talmud as part of an exhibit on the sacred books of the three monotheistic religions in the Alexandria library. Dr. Yousef Zeidan, director of the Centre for Arabic Manuscripts at the Alexandria library, proudly reported to the Egyptian weekly *Al-Ussbu'*:

When my eyes fell upon the rare copy of this dangerous book, I immediately decided to place it next to the Torah. Although it is not a monotheistic holy book, it has become one of the Jews' sacred [texts] and part of their basic constitution, their religious law, and their way of life. In other words, it is not merely an ideological or theoretical book. Perhaps this book of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion is more important to the Zionist Jews of the world than the Torah.

There are, as mentioned above, a few notable exceptions, among them some prominent figures, who publicly denounced the *Protocols* as forgeries. These include Syrian philosopher Dr. Sadeq Jalal al-'Azam, President Mubarak's advisor Usama al-Baz, and Dr. Abd al-Wahhab al-Masiri, an Egyptian authority on Jewish history and author of an Arabic-language encyclopedia of Judaism.

### C. *The Jews murdered Jesus*

The ancient Christian accusation that the Jews murdered Jesus has become standard in Arab antisemitic discourse. For example, Arafat's advisor Bassam Abu Sharif referred in the Saudi London-based daily *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* to the statue of the Virgin Mary that was damaged by Israeli gun fire during the siege on the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. He wrote,

The sad smile of the Virgin Mary as she shields her son the Messiah did not prevent the soldiers of the Israeli occupation from shooting at the face of this Palestinian angel [i.e. Jesus] and murder the smile... so as to murder what they hadn't managed to murder throughout 2,000 years.<sup>7</sup>

For Muslims to call the Jews Christ-killers as part of anti-Jewish Arab propaganda is particularly ironic, because, according to the Koran, Jesus was never crucified and thus did not die on the cross. The Christian belief that Jesus died on the cross is considered by Muslims to be a blasphemous lie.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Tarikh al-'alam al-hdith wa'l-mu'asir* (Modern and Contemporary World History), The State of Palestine Ministry of Education, Ramalla-Al-Bireh, 2004, p. 63. Incidentally, the preparation of this textbook received financial support from Belgium.

<sup>7</sup> *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*, March 20, 2002.

<sup>8</sup> Koran 4:156-157.

#### D. Holocaust denial and the slogan “Zionism is Nazism”

The Holocaust denial appears in all of its notorious variations.

Related to Holocaust denial is the claim that the Zionists actually collaborated with the Nazis, in order to motivate the Jews of Europe to emigrate to Palestine.<sup>9</sup>

Another common trend today in the anti-Jewish propaganda is to equate Zionism with Nazism. Articles and public discussions in the Arab world draw a similarity between the two movements. They claim that just as the Nazis believed in the superiority of the Aryan race, the Zionists believe that the Jews are the “Chosen People.” They also claim that the Zionists like the Nazis maintain an expansionist policy. Further, Israel’s treatment of the Palestinian people is equated with the Nazis’ treatment of the Jews—or said to be even worse.

The political significance of these claims is clear. If the Holocaust never happened, the Germans need feel no guilt toward the Jews; moreover, the Germans—and the rest of the Western world—owe the Palestinians. Also, if Jews are now doing to the Palestinians what the Nazis purportedly did to the Jews, then the whole international community should fight Israel.

This is where Arab antisemitism and Western antisemitism interconnect, creating a strategic antisemitic axis.

Finally, there is the justification of the Holocaust: the Jews deserve the punishment. The Holocaust is Allah’s retribution for their iniquities. In the future, their destruction will be complete—by the hands of the Muslims.

#### 4. DEMONIZING THE JEW

As a so-to-speak logical conclusion of all the above comes the demonization of Jews, individually and collectively. Despite the information accumulated about the identities of the perpetrators of the September 11 terrorist attacks, some officials, journalists, and religious leaders throughout the Arab and Muslim world continue to claim that the perpetrators of the attacks were not Arabs or Muslims. The claim that American and/or Jewish/Israeli elements carried out the attacks has become an accepted, common myth in the Arab and Islamic world.<sup>10</sup>

#### 5. WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Finally, the question is: What should be done to counter Arab antisemitism?

The first step is to understand the dangers posed by Arab and Islamic antisemitism. It shapes public opinion throughout the Arab and Islamic world and creates an atmos-

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<sup>9</sup> Such claims are the focus of a 1982 doctoral dissertation by top Palestinian Authority official and PLO Executive Committee Secretary-General Mahmoud Abbas, also known as Abu Mazen, at Moscow’s Institute of Oriental Studies. The Arabic version of the dissertation was published in 1984. See Yael Yehoshua, “Abu Mazen: A Political Profile,” MEMRI Special Report No. 15, April 29, 2003, ch. V: Zionism and Holocaust Denial, available at: <<http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sr&ID=SR01503>>.

<sup>10</sup> *A New Antisemitic Myth in the Middle East Media: The September 11 Attacks Were Perpetrated by the Jews* (Washington, DC: MEMRI, 2002), available at: <<http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sr&ID=SR00802>>.

phere in which Jews, individually and collectively, are not considered to be fully human. This is—to use the phrase coined by Norman Cohn—a *warrant for genocide*. I do not need to spell out the sinister implication of this.

- It has become the linchpin of the Antisemitic International.
- It has been embraced by the post-modern global theology that falsely calls itself the “human rights movement.” This concocted, highly irrational global movement depicts the Jew qua Israeli as the demon, and the Palestinian as the innocent victim.

Countering Arab antisemitism is, therefore, not merely a matter of combating falsehood and prejudice: it is a vital component in the struggle of Jews in Israel and elsewhere for safety, peace, and human dignity.

On a practical level, what needs to be done is the following. Arab antisemitism must be monitored and its manifestations must be made available to Western media and opinion-makers. Its publications must be translated into Western languages in the hope that exposure of these virulent materials will lead to international protests and diplomatic pressure on the relevant Arab governments and institutions.

There are those who argue that this kind of response draws attention to the views of a minority of cranks who would otherwise go unnoticed. This position overlooks the fact that much of this anti-Jewish hate literature appears in mainstream newspapers and magazines—many of which are government sponsored—and on highly popular and influential TV channels. Turning a blind eye to this will only encourage the most extreme elements in the Arab and Islamic world to flourish unchecked and increase their malignant political influence.

Experience has shown that Arab governments and intellectuals are not indifferent to protests and outside pressures. Usama al-Baz’s articles in December 2002, in which he denounced antisemitism, were a welcome step forward. Equally significant is the fact that the Institute of Islamic Studies at the religious Al-Azhar University in Cairo recommended that Muslim preachers refrain from comparing Jews to pigs and apes.<sup>11</sup> It is unlikely that either of these steps would have been taken were it not for the protests and criticism in the US Congress and the Western media.<sup>12</sup>

For all these reasons, I believe that there is no alternative but to continue unremittingly in the task of monitoring and exposing the appalling products of Arab and Islamic antisemitism. At the same time, we must encourage those voices within the Arab world that denounce antisemitism and promote a culture of tolerance.

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<sup>11</sup> Published in the Saudi daily *al-Watan* on March 14, 2003.

<sup>12</sup> Yigal Carmon, “Harbingers of Change in the Antisemitic Discourse in the Arab World,” MEMRI Inquiry and Analysis Series No. 135, April 23, 2003, available at: <<http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=ia&ID=IA13503>>.



## The History and Psychological Roots of Antisemitism Among Feminists and Their Gradual Stalinization and Palestinianization

Phyllis Chesler\*

Four score and ten years ago, women won the right to vote in the United States. Thirty years ago, in 1980, I stood with the Israeli delegation in Copenhagen at the United Nations Conference on Women—the true precursor of the anti-Zionist conference in Durban in 2001. Twenty-nine years ago, in Connecticut, at the University at Storrs, I convened a panel at the annual convention of the National Women’s Studies Association to challenge American feminists about both their antisemitism and their anti-Zionism.

I had been doing this since the early 1970s, but even I could not have predicted the rapid and extreme Stalinization and Palestinianization that would take place among academics and activists in general. I could never have imagined that the Western intelligentsia, the “good” people, including feminists, would make so tragic an alliance with Islamist barbarism and misogyny.

I became a feminist leader in 1968-1969. I remain one. Most of the other feminists of my generation are no longer engaged with the historical movement.

Are women racists? We might as well ask: Are women human beings?

But are women also antisemites?

To do justice to this subject might require another conference. Women have internalized the same prejudices as men have. Like men, women are both sexists and racists. Women are also bystanders at the crossroads where evil meets its prey. The majority feminist view has viewed women as “weak” or “innocent” non-actors, powerless to affect the destiny of nations. This is a fantasy and bears no relationship to reality.

Women can also be consummate collaborators. Some of them choose powerful men as protectors, and they do not always ask them what they do at the office.

Are educated women, human right activists, feminists, lesbian feminists, *Jewish* lesbian feminists antisemites too? Hell yes! Neither education, talent, ambition, or privilege—nor vulnerability, pariah status, or a sense of grievance—seems to inoculate people against the virus of antisemitism.

Thus, I have lived to see the day when feminists—most, but not all of whom, are women—seem to care more about the alleged “occupation” of a country that does not exist (Palestine) than they care about the real, but primarily Islamist, occupation of women in “Palestine.” American and European feminists are postcolonial, postmodern,

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anti-interventionists; in the name of “political correctness,” “cultural relativism,” and “cultural sensitivity,” they no longer believe in men and women’s universal human rights and no longer take a stand against apartheid — at least not when it is practiced by radical Muslims.

Instead, many feminists, like their non-feminist counterparts, scapegoat Israel as an apartheid state and refuse to understand that Islam is the largest practitioner of gender and religious apartheid in the world.

Anti-racism, but not anti-sexism; anti-racism, but not opposition to antisemitism, which is not viewed as racism. Still, anti-racism, coupled with support for all wars of national liberation, is *the* new feminist priority — except where Israel, the Jewish nation state, is concerned. To such feminists, Zionism equals racism. They do not understand that precisely the opposite is true: anti-Zionism equals racism. And that anti-Zionism is the new antisemitism — that, and its Islamist version.

For the last decade, Jewish and non-Jewish feminists have marched in pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel rallies and signed newspaper ads and petitions to divest from and boycott Israel. Yes, even gay and lesbian feminists who would be tortured to death in Muslim countries have done so. These professed “humanitarians” do not take as strong a stand against stoning, forced face-veiling, or polygamy. Some feminists think face-veiling and polygamy might even be “liberating,” the ultimate feminist choice. Many feminists do not take a stand against forced marriage, child marriage, first cousin marriage, and honor-related violence, included honor killing. They fear that doing so might be seen as “racist” or as culturally insensitive.

Like Stalinists, they save their fire to protest Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib, former President George Bush, and the American and Israeli military “occupation” of Muslim lands. If challenged, they turn stone-faced and accuse their challenger of racism and McCarthyism. Thereafter, they slander their challenger as a “racist Islamophobe” and shun her.

I have been battling feminist antisemitism and anti-Zionism since 1970.

In the early 1970s, together with Aviva Cantor and Cheryl Moch, I tried to persuade other Jewish feminists that antisemitism was a form of “racism.” We suggested Jewish feminist consciousness-raising groups in New York City. No one was really interested. (Some of these same Jewish feminists went on to develop healthy careers *as* Jewish feminists, but that was later, when it became trendier and temporarily permissible.) Aviva, Cheryl, and I organized two major Jewish feminist speakouts which were packed out—but confronting this kind of racism never caught on as much as confronting other kinds of racism. I spent countless hours soliciting signatures against the infamous “Zionism equals Racism” resolution and organized the first feminist and left journalist trip to Israel. I am proud to have brought both the late Jack Newfield and the late Ellen Willis there, both of whom wrote important articles about Israel for their liberal and feminist constituencies.

In 1980, in Copenhagen, at the United Nations Conference on Women, I was present at an important NGO panel on women refugees. A North European woman was the moderator. A woman “boat person” from Vietnam spoke, as did women from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the West Bank. Each woman was dignified, careful, and heartbreaking. The moment they finished their presentations, Soviet-trained and Arab-League-backed female hooligans immediately took over the floor.

The plight of female refugees all over the world did not interest them at all. One after the other, they delivered belligerent anti-Israel and anti-American speeches—but only on behalf of Palestinian women refugees. The pro-PLO moderator refused to call upon anyone in the audience who was not on her pre-arranged list. I finally managed to persuade her to call on an Iraqi Jewish refugee, Simcha Choresch, whose husband had been tortured and executed and who had herself fled for her life. This was not easy to do. The hooligans soon silenced Simcha—but then they really went crazy when another woman began to blame the Soviets for having invaded Afghanistan, which, she said, had caused unending misery for Afghan women refugees.

In 1981, at Storrs, Connecticut, I convened a panel at the National Women's Studies Association meeting. The subject was "Women, Feminism, and Antisemitism." I tried to convey to American feminists what the Copenhagen conference was really like and what I believed it meant for feminism. Some women were sympathetic to our message. Some said that we were only trying to steal the thunder from black women, from women of color, by pretending to belong to a victim group when we were, after all, *white* Jews. I turned the tapes of this panel over to a feminist who wrote a piece in *Ms.* magazine about antisemitism in the woman's movement and who would go on to write a chapter in a book about it.

In May of 2000, Women's Studies at University of California at Santa Cruz sponsored a week of events "in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for justice." They did not sponsor an event about wife beating on the West Bank or about the resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan, and so forth.

On July 27, 2000, two months before Ariel Sharon ascended the Temple Mount, which subsequently unleashed and became the excuse for the long-planned Intifada of 2000, Dr. Marilyn Safir, an American-born academic who had lived in Haifa for more than thirty years, was disinvented to a grassroots feminist academic conference on female sexuality that had been scheduled to take place in Istanbul, Turkey, during the Jewish high holidays.

The fact that Safir was a pro-peace, pro-Palestinian Jewish left feminist who had been conducting academic research together with her Palestinian counterparts at Al-Quds (Jerusalem) and An-Najah (Hebron) Universities did not matter. The fact that she was an Israeli *Jew* is all that mattered. The conference's co-sponsors, Women for Women's Human Rights and the International Women's Health Coalition, abruptly rescinded Safir's invitation.

The Turkish conveners, Pinar Ilkcaracen and Leyla Gulcur, disinvented Safir because, they wrote, "the lack of agreements reached between Israel and Palestine at Camp David ... [has created] an atmosphere of tension and we were told that the Arab participants would boycott the meeting in finding out that participants of Jewish-Israeli background were also coming."

Safir asked them to resist such pressure and to reconsider their decision. The Turkish conveners not only refused to do so, they claimed not to understand what Safir meant by "giving in to outside pressure." Ilkcaracen and Gulcur wrote that Safir's insistence that "we should take 'another' stand on this issue could also be described as 'pressure.'" Adrienne Germaine, the President of the Health Coalition, agreed with their decision. What was to have been a non-political, free-standing feminist conference had been taken hostage by Islamic Jihad and the PLO.

On August 11, 2000, more than two weeks later, Safir shared news of this “troubling incident” with other feminist academics and activists. I wrote a letter on her behalf to the immediate feminist world. In a response, British-born Israeli law professor Frances Raday strongly condemned the disinvitation. She wrote that

the preparedness of women who are members of human rights groups to associate themselves with a boycott on Jewish (but not Muslim or Christian) women from Israel makes a mockery of the very concept of human rights ... since the conference is concerned with the rights of women against governments, it is self-defeating to exclude women on the grounds that their governments are allegedly not behaving in accordance with your standards regarding human rights.

On the other hand, a number of Jewish Israeli feminists excused Marilyn’s disinvitation. One woman wrote: “Since Israel is the dominant power in the Middle East, [this disinvitation] cannot be viewed as a human rights violation ... [Arab women] may not feel comfortable ‘sharing’ with a white European woman.”

When I mentioned this disinvitation in American feminist circles, a sympathetic groan was heard in the land—not for Safir, but for the “poor” Turkish women and for “poor” Adrienne Germaine, who had, clearly, been pressured into an unfortunate decision and who would, no doubt, be raked over the coals by the evil, powerful, Zionists. When I suggested that the decision was an antisemitic one, most feminists disagreed. “No, they probably weren’t thinking clearly, who knows what pressure they were under.” Most feminists did not see this disinvitation as an “antisemitic” and therefore a “racist” act. Women, you see, cannot be accused of racism—unless, of course, they are Jewish women. Whatever other women do is entirely due to undue male pressure for which women can never be held accountable.

Most feminist magazines, newspapers, and spokeswomen continually and routinely condemned Israel as a colonial, apartheid, and misogynist state. Feminist marchers have waved the Palestinian flag and worn Arab headdress in various demonstrations. (They don’t have it right, though, because they wear Arab male keffiyehs; were they marching anywhere between Cairo and Kabul they’d be wearing headscarves or burqas). Feminists signed petitions in favor of boycotting Israel, including the boycott of Israeli academics, many of whom were, themselves, also left feminists and anti-Israel left lesbian feminists.

Many American feminists strongly condemned one nationalist struggle (the one being waged by Jews) but backed another nationalist struggle (the one being waged by the Palestinian people) and they did so as feminists.

As I have mentioned, feminists were no longer as concerned with the “occupation” of women’s bodies world-wide as they were with the alleged Zionist occupation of Palestinian lands. From 2000 on, every feminist listserv group that I have been on has been inundated with petitions against Israel and with anti-Zionist propaganda. The internet atmosphere has been highly charged, tense, hostile, heartbreaking, and the discussions decidedly unfriendly toward anyone who dares question this exact party line. It is almost as if the feminist world has become a wholly owned subsidiary of the United Nations and the PLO.

These very same feminists, so keenly aware of Palestinian suffering, failed to condemn the terrorist attacks against Jewish civilians in Europe and Israel—not even when more than half the dead and wounded were women and children and most were help-



less civilians; nor did they condemn the physical violence and intimidation against Jews on various American campuses. International feminists did not organize contingents of “human shields” to ride the buses in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem or to live in endangered “politically correct” kibbutzim whose historic and current priority was peaceful co-existence with their Palestinian neighbors. Instead, they signed ads published in the mainstream media condemning Israel for defending herself or which singled out Israel and the United States as Evil Empires.

On January 27, 2003, for example, an advertisement appeared in the *New York Times* against American military intervention anywhere in the world from “the Philippines to Palestine ... where Israeli tanks and bulldozers have left a terrible trail of death and destruction.” It was signed by many prominent leftists and feminists, including Noam Chomsky, Edward Said, Jesse Jackson, Cornel West—and the feminist and black liberationist Angela Davis, former SDS member Bernardine Dohrn, Jane Fonda, and Eve Ensler.

They did not mention the suicide bombings against Israeli civilians, nor did they mention the long history of Palestinian airplane hijackings. They did not single out North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Iran, Iraq, Cambodia, Guatemala, Argentina, Bosnia, China, or Rwanda for grievous military abuses and human rights violations; they singled out only the United States and Israel. They claimed that, in the United States, “dissident artists, intellectuals, and professors find their views distorted, attacked, and suppressed.” Excuse me? We have seen, rather, how pro-Israel and pro-American ideas have been attacked and suppressed on campuses. And, they did not mention the much graver and more pervasive imprisonment, torture, and execution of Muslim artists, intellectuals, and professors in Islamic countries, or the persecution of Christians in Muslim countries.

In 1989, feminist activist and former *Ms.* magazine editor, Robin Morgan, published a book titled *The Demon Lover: The Roots of Terrorism*. It was reprinted again in 2001, post-9/11. In my opinion, the book glorifies the Palestinian Authority, and romanticizes the most corrupt, scandalous, and terrorist-connected of United Nations agencies, namely the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA).

While this agency has provided social services to the Palestinians, it has also employed and funded terrorists and has been funded by terrorists. UNRWA has also appropriated most of the money meant for the impoverished Palestinians—whose unending misery is meant to arouse the world against the Jewish presence in the Middle East. Finally, the world has tens of millions of refugees. UNRWA has managed to focus the world’s attention on the plight of only *one* small refugee group: the Palestinians.

Now, let me take you on a feminist trip through the looking glass.

First, Morgan on UNRWA: “The entire organization won my respect for extraordinary work performed against all odds.” She profusely thanks seven different UNRWA functionaries for having arranged her trip and guided her through the Palestinian “camps.”

“Camps”? Morgan does not write “refugee neighborhoods” or “Palestinian enforced ghettos.” “Camps.” Is this phrase chosen to remind one of “concentration camps” or of “death camps”? In reality, most Palestinians live in cities; some live in luxurious villas, others in dreadful poverty. They do not live in tents or cages.

In the decade in which Robin Morgan visited the West Bank and wrote and published *Demon Lover: The Roots of Terrorism* (the 1980s), Palestinian terrorists repeatedly

attacked Israeli civilians and kibbutzim; bombed synagogues in Paris, Vienna, Brussels, and Rome; and hijacked and killed passengers on Egyptian and American airplanes. In 1985, members of the Palestine Liberation Front hijacked the Achille Lauro and threw an American Jewish tourist, the wheelchair-bound Leon Klinghoffer, over the side of the ship.

During this same decade, Islamic jihadists, all of whom had a strong pro-Palestinian agenda, also attacked the United States. For example, at the end of 1979, Islamist Iranians stormed the American embassy in Teheran and held 53 Americans hostage for 444 days; Islamist terrorists blew up the American embassy in Beirut, killing 63 people, including 17 Americans; terrorists, backed by Iran, blew up the American marine barracks in Beirut, killing 241 Marines and 58 French paratroopers; Iran's Hezbollah hijacked a TWA plane, flew it to Beirut, demanded the release of 700 Arabs held in Israeli jails, killed one American, and held 39 American passengers hostage for two weeks; and Libyan terrorists blew up Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland.

In the 1990s, before Morgan wrote the new Introduction and the new afterword to the post-9/11 edition of *Demon Lover*, the Islamist El Sayyid Nosair assassinated the Jewish-American Rabbi Meir Kahane in New York City—we now know that Ariel Sharon had been their true target; an Islamist shot a young Jewish-American yeshiva student, Ari Halberstam, on the Brooklyn Bridge; Arab Islamist terrorists, connected to the blind sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, tried to blow up the World Trade Center in New York City; an Islamist, yelling “Allahu Akbar,” murdered five foreign guests dining at the Semiramis Hotel in Cairo; Arab Islamist terrorists blew up the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, killing 19 American servicemen and wounding hundreds; Egyptian-based Jemaah Islamiyah terrorists shot and killed more than 60 tourists visiting the temple of Queen Hatshepsut at Luxor, Egypt; al-Qaeda detonated two car bombs that destroyed the American embassies in both Dar-es-Salaam and Nairobi, killing 224 and wounding thousands; and al-Qaeda bombed the U.S.S. Cole in Aden, Yemen, killing 17 sailors. And then, on September 11, 2001, al-Qaeda attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

However, in her post-9/11 afterword to *The Demon Lover*, Morgan notes none of this. Instead, she continues the work of politically correct feminism. Immediately after 9/11, Morgan's main fear is that the United States might turn “bigoted,” and become “extreme right.” What concerns her and so many other feminists is not America's vulnerability, but the presumed vulnerability of Muslims in the United States. And not just any Muslims; Palestinian Muslims in particular.

In the days right after 9/11, Morgan's emails were widely circulated on the internet. These emails now comprise the afterword to *The Demon Lover*. Now, not only is Morgan worried about right-wing Christian fundamentalism; she is even more worried about the possible lynching of Muslims in the United States. She proposes the creation of networks to save them.

But, in all this, where is Morgan's concern for women? Or for dead American civilians? Why are feminist networks the world over presumably this concerned with protecting Muslim men who may be accused of terrorism—or who may even be terrorists? Have they all agreed to focus on racism and the civil rights of male immigrants and non-Americans in the United States and to forget entirely about women? What about gender and religious apartheid in the Islamic world? Has that become too politically incorrect for feminists to challenge? Indeed, it has.

In the last two decades, certain feminists misapplied feminist concepts in the service of demonizing Judaism and Israel. For example, in 1988, I persuaded famed anti-pornography and anti-prostitution activist, Andrea Dworkin, to join me on her first-ever trip to Israel. In 1990, in her novel *Mercy*, she compared the Jewish God to a Nazi without mercy. And, in a 2002 work of non-fiction, *Scapegoat: The Jews, Israel, and Women's Liberation*, she compared the Jewish state to a "pimp" and a "John" and viewed the Palestinians as their "prostitutes."

In 2002, at a feminist conference at the state university at New Paltz, Dr. Ruchama Marton, an Israeli Jewish psychiatrist, likened Israelis to "batterers" in a marriage. Guess who is the "battered wife?" None other than the Palestinians. Are the Israelis and Palestinians married? Is the feminist view of marriage that it is like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? Why was only Israel and Palestine discussed at a conference that was advertised to be about "Women, War, and Peace"?

The academic postcolonial literature is infected by an across-the-board view of Palestinians as the symbol of all things noble and the Jews and Israelis as symbols of evil.

Women's Studies programs offer a steady stream of anti-Israel speakers. At the University of California, for example, moderate Muslims, ex-Muslims, anti-Islamist Muslims, and pro-Israel Muslims are never invited or funded, and Women's Studies professors do not attend their very rare lectures.

The British-born and American-based feminist journalist and adventurer, Jan Goodwin, has written an important feminist book about women in the Muslim world: *Price of Honor: Muslim Women Lift the Veil of Silence on the Islamic World*. The book was originally published in 1994 and updated and reissued in 2003. Goodwin interviewed women in eight Muslim countries and in the "Israeli Occupied Territories."

Goodwin does not interview Palestinian women who live in Israel proper and who are Israeli citizens (and who do not want to give up their Israeli citizenship), nor does she present a particularly sophisticated history of the persecution of Palestinian civilians by the Arab Muslim governments of the Middle East. Thus, like Morgan, and the writers of the Amnesty International reports, Goodwin views most of the grievous problems of Palestinian women as mainly due to the Israeli "occupation." For example, Goodwin links the oppression and suffering of Arab and Muslim women in nine Muslim countries mainly to Arab and Islamic misogyny — and she does so even as she depicts complicated political realities. By contrast, while she does discuss the rise of fundamentalism on the West Bank and in Gaza in a chapter devoted to Palestinian women, Goodwin nevertheless attributes Palestinian women's suffering mainly to the Israeli occupation.

Goodwin claims that the Israeli military policies of self-defense have emasculated Palestinian men. Curfews keep grandiose, woman-hating, and honor- and shame-reared men at home for long hours. Based on anecdotal evidence, Goodwin believes that such men take their considerable frustrations out on women and children. Here, Goodwin quotes Suha Sabbagh, who says that the "Palestinian male, a father, the authority figure in the house, has lost all his authority." Goodwin dwells upon the systematic "humiliation" of the Palestinian man by the Israelis. She writes: "Much of this belittling has taken place in front of their children and womenfolk," which, in turn, has "cut down" the image of the Palestinian man as the family's "hero" figure. "For Arab men, this is the same as losing their masculinity."

And here Goodwin, like so many other feminists, contradicts herself. Arab and Muslim overly vigilant paternal authority is precisely what has brutalized many Arab and

Muslim women. In 1992, Jean Sasson published *Princess: A true Story of Life Behind the Veil in Saudi Arabia*. The unnamed al-Saud princess (whose story Sasson tells) describes the typically cruel way in which fathers, brothers, and husbands treat their “women-folk.” Let me quote her:

The authority of a Saudi male is unlimited; his wife and children survive only if he desires. In our homes, he is the state.... From an early age, the male child is taught that women are of little value ... the child witnesses the disdain shown his mother and sisters by his father; this leads to his scorn of all females ... [the] women in my land are ignored by their fathers, scorned by their brothers, and abused by their husbands.

Iranian-Swiss Carmen Bin Ladin, in her book, *Inside the Kingdom*, portrays life for women under Saudi male rule similarly. Women cannot go out without a male escort and cannot leave the house or the country without male permission and accompaniment. A daughter can be married against her will, and a father can seize custody of his children and not allow their mother to ever see them again. Bin Ladin writes:

I rarely met a Saudi woman who was not afraid of her husband.... A wife cannot do anything without her husband’s permission. She cannot go out, cannot study, often cannot even eat at his table. Women in Saudi Arabia must live in obedience, in isolation, and in the fear that they may be cast out and summarily divorced.

Saudi Arabia has not been “settled,” “colonized,” or “humiliated” by Israelis.

Goodwin also utterly fails to note or discuss the persecution and oppression of non-Muslims under Islam. She does not interview Arab and non-Arab Christian women (Maronites, Copts, Phoenicians, Assyro-Chaldeans, Arameans, etc.). Nor does she interview Jews or other religious minorities who have suffered under Islamic rule both in terms of gender and religion. This is scandalous but typical.

Goodwin actually reverses the truth in this particular area. Like many feminists, she attempts to present the Prophet Mohammed as kinder and fairer to women (or to his own wives) than many of his followers have been — which may actually be true.

For example, Goodwin writes that the Prophet married many women in order to forge alliances “with tribes who had been bitter enemies of Islam.” Her only example given is that Mohammed married a Jew, one Safiya bint Huyay. According to Goodwin, this marriage to the “daughter of an important Jewish chief, for example, diminished Jewish opposition to the Prophet’s mission.”

One scarcely knows where to begin. According to Bat Ye’or in *The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians under Islam, Islam and Dhimmitude* and *The Decline of Eastern Christianity Under Islam: From Jihad to Dhimmitude*, Mohammed systematically attacked, exiled, ransomed, or slaughtered those Jews who refused to convert to Islam; he also confiscated their property. In 624 Mohammed did this to the Jews of Medina (the Qaynuqa) and the following year to the Jewish Nadir tribe. In 627, Mohammed attacked the Jewish tribe of the Qurayza in Medina who refused to convert. In *The Dhimmi*, Bat Ye’or writes:

Mohammed attacked and overwhelmed (the Qurayza). Trenches were then dug in the marketplace of Medina and the Jews — six to nine hundred of them, according to traditional Muslim sources — were led forth in batches and decapitated. All the menfolk perished in this way, with the exception of one convert to Islam. The Prophet then divided the women, children, houses, and chattels among the Muslims.

Safiya, according to Bat Ye'or, was taken captive by Mohammed after he slaughtered her father and husband. Is marrying the man who has slaughtered your husband and father Goodwin's feminist view of what constitutes marriage? Does her feminist critique of forced marriage apply only to Muslim women and not to Jewish or Christian women?

In June of 2004, I was the first pro-Israel and pro-democracy feminist guest on Pacifica's KPFK radio station in Los Angeles. After years of on-air Jew-hatred and Israel bashing on KPFK, the program, "Feminist Magazine," run by a feminist collective, had taken a principled position against this unacknowledged form of racism and had invited me to discuss my views on antisemitism, Israel, democracy, and Islamic gender apartheid. Tricia Roth and Melissa Chiprin bravely interviewed me. I said the kinds of things that I have written above—and all hell broke loose. Even while we were still on air, the switchboard lit up with angry listeners, most of whom were Jewish left feminists. That was only the beginning. Feminist calls mounted for the censure and removal of "Feminist Magazine" from the air and for control of the feminist collective. An online protest petition was launched that characterized what I said as "racist," and my views as "anti-feminist." The Los Angeles chapter of Women in Black made a bid to take over the collective.

Such accusations, coupled with potential and real physical violence, would happen to me many times on campuses. I would be accused of being a "racist" whenever I described Islamic gender apartheid and how it had penetrated the West. Eventually, I could only appear on campus with a bodyguard, sometimes with more than one.

I was also invited—and disinvited—to deliver a keynote address at the international tenth anniversary conference of the Women's Studies program at Cambridge. I was not allowed to speak at veteran feminist events. Left feminist attempts were made to have conferences that *had* invited me disinvite me. Feminists like Katha Pollitt, of *Nation* magazine, and others tried hard to persuade the National Organization of Women of New York State that it would be shameful, ill-advised, and unfortunate to have me as a speaker at their conference that took place at the City University of New York's Graduate Center.

In October of 2004, a small group of San Francisco-based feminist activists, members of Women in Black and Brit Zedek, traveled to Duke University in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, to support the Palestine Solidarity Movement Conference that was taking place there. It would be one thing if such feminists had come to protest both the systemic Palestinian abuses against women as well as the war-related burdens that Israel, acting primarily in self-defense, has visited upon both Palestinian and Israeli civilians, especially women, children, and the elderly.

But they did not have a balanced or particularly feminist agenda. Although many activists were lesbians or pro-gay, they had not come to protest the Palestinian persecution and torture of suspected homosexuals in Gaza or on the West Bank nor did they seem to know that Israel has granted political asylum to Palestinian homosexuals, including those who have literally been tortured and nearly killed by other Palestinians. Instead, these American feminists wore keffiyas, political buttons, and tee-shirts that read "We are all Palestinians."

## THE BETRAYAL OF THE IDEOLOGUES

The American and European left and feminist and gay movements have made a devil's pact with Islamist terrorists. The same left that has still not expressed any remorse over its devotion to Communist dictators who murdered one hundred million of its own

people in the service of a Great Idea has now fatefully joined the world jihadic chorus in calling for an end to “racist” Zionism and the Jewish apartheid and “Nazi” state.

These Westerners share an extraordinary psychological rage that requires a scapegoat and cleansing messianic promises, a refusal to look within, an overwhelming need for group approval, an inability or refusal to think as independent individuals, an adolescent in-your-face rebelliousness toward certain authorities—coupled with an adolescent, slavish adoration of other authorities, a desire for cathartic violence, for the ecstasy of mob action, and the most uncanny and frightening ability to scapegoat Jews precisely because leftists have not been able to achieve their desired New World Order. If some ideal cannot be achieved, then the Jews must pay.

In 2007, a Jewish Israeli feminist researcher at Hebrew University, doctoral candidate Tal Nitzan, accused Israeli soldiers of *refusing* to rape Arab and Palestinian women, claiming that this constituted “racism” against Palestinians.

In 2010, a team of researchers led by a female Harvard social scientist blamed Israel in the pages of *The Lancet*, a British medical journal, for an increase in Palestinian wife-battering in Gaza and on the West Bank. The researchers did not even consider the role that radical Islamification might play in the oppression of women or the fact that Gaza is ruled by terrorist militias and this might cause an escalation of violence towards women. Honor killings (and a relevant, recent study actually existed) were not included in their measures of violence against Palestinian women. Why? Because that cannot be blamed on Israel or on the West. I published a letter challenging this study in the pages of *The Lancet*.

In the summer of 2010, Rashid Khalidi, the Edward Said Professor of Modern Arab Studies at Columbia University and former spokesman for the PLO, a man who also happens to be a friend and former dinner companion of President Obama, signed an appeal for money to send yet another aid ship to Gaza named “The Audacity of Hope,” the title of Obama’s second autobiographical book. He publicly challenged the President, saying that “if the name [of the boat] is a problem for the administration, it can simply insist that Israel lift the siege: end of problem, end of embarrassment.” A number of so-called high-profile feminists have signed on to this new boat venture, including Medea Benjamin, the co-founder of CODEPINK, Angela Y. Davis, for whom I once marched when she was jailed in New York City, Starhawk, a Jewish feminist Wiccan, and my old friend, the writer Alice Walker.

## CLOSING POINTS

Some academics and activists are merely opportunists. Anti-Zionism (which is one of the things that is “new” about antisemitism, something I identified in 2002-2003—that plus the Islamification of antisemitism) is seen as a necessary ideology in order to succeed as professors, authors, journalists—and in a wide variety of other professions.

Some academics and activists are not capable of original thinking and simply follow the herd. They are dreadful conformists. They have literally been indoctrinated to believe that the United States and Israel are evil and are the cause of world suffering. They want to abolish world suffering by abolishing Israel.

Some academics and activists are nostalgic for the 1960s and are still so furious at the United States that they want the barbarians to bring down Wall Street in a way that they themselves never could. They believe that they alone will be spared as the United States

and Europe go down because they are “politically correct.” They believe that the barbarians will not come for them.

They are also slumming, erotically thrilled by contact with real outlaws, real killers, Really Bad Men. Male serial killers also have no end of fans, including marriage proposals after they have been jailed.

Some academics and activists — and here I am thinking of many Jews — are exercising their secular version of religious Judaism. They are “repairing the world,” but not for Jews, mainly for non-Jews, the strangers at the gate, and for the enemies of the United States and Israel. Although such Jews may be secularists or atheists, they behave with a fundamentalist-style religious zeal. They truly believe that their work is what alone will save the world, fulfill the Jewish ethical mission, and redeem, even justify, Israel’s existence. Their work consists of criticizing Israel, partly because they feel that Israel’s existence must be justified. They believe that Israel must be better than other nations to justify its right to exist.

Some academics and activists — and here I am thinking especially about Jewish feminists and lesbians — believe that they will lose their pariah status if they scapegoat Jews, indeed, if they are the first to do so. This alone will allow them to live. This is what makes them tough and trendy “radicals.”

Such feminists, leftists, and gay liberationists have not thought through what their lives might be like under Islamic rule. In fact, they still deny that there’s a “problem” with Islam and insist that the main problem is with American and Israeli colonialism, imperialism, and militarism. All these Israel-bashers may be far more terrified of Islamic jihad than I am — and are assuming the position of dhimmi-appeasers long before it is necessary to do so.

In closing, my aim is not to bash feminists. I am one. As I have stated, I do not like what has happened to the best minds of my Second Wave generation. However, our feminist work is certainly not worthless and was not done in vain. Today, I do my feminist work with Muslim and non-Muslim feminists and dissidents. We work on Islamic gender apartheid. My vision of universal human rights has not changed. Feminism now provides a bridge in our collective fight to defend both Israel and the West. Such anti-Islamist Muslims are marginalized and need our support. We need to convince Western governments to listen to them and work with them. We need to unify and fight the war to delegitimize Israel. It is the key to preserving the West.





## The Rabbi and the President: “Don’t Give Us the Holocaust at the Expense of Israel”

Walter Reich\*

On May 1, 1978, some 600 Jewish leaders gathered on the South Lawn of the White House. They were there to mark the 30th anniversary of Israel’s birth. Most of them were rabbis, and almost all of them were men.

The day was clear and cool. The guests sang the Israeli national anthem, *Hatikva*, and *The Star-Spangled Banner*. Menachem Begin, Israel’s prime minister at the time, had come to the United States for a speaking tour to commemorate the founding of his country, and the White House decided to invite him for a talk with President Jimmy Carter. In all, 1,200 Jewish leaders had been invited. That only 600 came was a poor showing for this grand occasion. Which Jewish leader would not want to be there or have his photo taken while shaking the president’s hand?

But two reasons could have explained the low turnout. First of all, the Carter-Begin meeting itself had been arranged just a few days earlier, as had been the South Lawn ceremony, giving the invitees little time to make travel arrangements. Perhaps more importantly, the feelings of America’s Jewish community toward Carter had turned sour. Carter had just decided to sell 60 advanced F-15 warplanes to one of Israel’s enemies, Saudi Arabia, and 30 other warplanes to Egypt,<sup>1</sup> leaving some Jewish leaders, presumably, reluctant to pay Carter obeisance by appearing instantly at his bidding.

Yet the crowd that did come seemed jubilant, expectant, and, by some reports, pleased with themselves for having been chosen for the invitation. A number of them had declined to attend a demonstration at the White House to protest the arms sales to the Arabs.<sup>2</sup>

At 1:30, Begin drove up to the entrance of the White House’s West Wing in a limousine and was greeted by a grinning Zbigniew Brzezinski, Carter’s National Security Adviser, who had been blamed by some Jews for what they saw as the Carter administration’s tilt toward the Arab states.<sup>3</sup> During the 30 minutes of the Begin-Carter meeting, the waiting guests on the lawn drank coffee and punch.

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<sup>1</sup> “Will America’s Jews thank Carter in the end?,” *The Economist*, April 29, 1978, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> Avi Weiss, *Principles of Spiritual Activism* (Hoboken, NJ, Ktav Publishing House 2002) p. 166.

<sup>3</sup> Edward Walsh, “A Day of Emotion for Carter, Begin; Unity Gesture on Israeli Anniversary,” *Washington Post*, May 2, 1978, p. 2.

One of the guests, Rabbi Avi Weiss, described in the *Washington Post*'s report of the event as "an intense, young rabbi from Riverdale" — a neighborhood in the Bronx, in New York City — handed out "copies of a letter he had written to Carter. It opposed, in polite language, the proposed sales of warplanes to Saudi Arabia and Egypt."<sup>4</sup>

Finally, Carter and Begin showed up on the South Lawn. Carter announced that he was appointing a commission to recommend to him ways of memorializing the Holocaust—a commission that, eventually, recommended the creation of, among other things, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum.

It is very unlikely that Carter had such a large and permanent institution in mind when he announced the creation of the commission. He might have thought that they would recommend a statue or a ceremony, but in any case, coming soon after the airing of the 1978 NBC miniseries "Holocaust," seen by about 120 million<sup>5</sup> Americans and ultimately by about 220 million viewers in the US and Europe,<sup>6</sup> and welcomed by the country's Jews, this seemed like an effective way to mollify an important Democratic Party constituency. After all, 70 percent of voting American Jews had cast their ballots for him; because of that lopsided percentage, he had won New York State, Ohio, and the national election.

In announcing the commission on the Holocaust, Carter described the Holocaust as "the ultimate in man's inhumanity to man." After Begin spoke about the Jews' struggle for survival and freedom, the crowd sang *Am Yisrael Chai* (The People of Israel Live).

The receiving-line that formed to shake hands with Carter included the rabbi from the Bronx who would be described by the *Washington Post* as intense and young, Avi Weiss. "As I waited my turn," Weiss later recalled, "I wondered whether I could speak truth to power. Memorizing the words I wanted to say to the president, in fear that I would freeze when meeting him, I finally clasped his hand and said, 'I was one of your strongest supporters, but I'm outraged by your disastrous tilt toward the Arabs. And Mr. President, don't give us the Holocaust at the expense of Israel.' The president looked incensed, but I felt good that access had not prompted me to compromise my principles."<sup>7</sup>

In that dramatic moment, that young and intense rabbi understood something that few other Jews—rabbis or not, communal leaders or not—have understood. He understood that the Holocaust could serve, for national and international statesmen, as a political sop. He understood that a bow to Holocaust memory would be greeted automatically with gratitude by Jews who wanted non-Jews to understand, or at least recognize, the reality of the immense atrocity that had befallen the Jewish people. And he understood that even a government or international organization that had done something to threaten the existence of the Jewish state could, by recognizing the Holocaust, and talking about its memory in lofty terms, immunize itself from the accusation that it was endangering—and, in extreme circumstances, ignoring, condoning, or even endorsing lethally-intentioned hostility—toward the Jewish state.

<sup>4</sup> Edward Walsh, "A Day of Emotion for Carter, Begin; Unity Gesture on Israeli Anniversary," *Washington Post*, May 2, 1978, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Alan L. Mintz, *Popular culture and the Shaping of Holocaust Memory in America* (New York, 2001) p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> <<http://www.museum.tv/archives/etv/H/htmlH/holocaust/holocaust.htm>>.

<sup>7</sup> Avi Weiss, *Principles of Spiritual Activism* (Hoboken, NJ, Ktav Publishing House 2002) p. 167.

Those who know anything about that young and intense rabbi — and I do, not least because I happen to be his brother-in-law — know that no one has been more committed than he to the honest preservation of Holocaust memory. I mention this, and cite a few examples of that commitment, to emphasize that his commitment to already-murdered Jews, great as it was, took second place to his commitment to the still-living Jews in Israel — the Holocaust's survivors, their descendants, and the rest of their community — who were in danger of being killed in the future. And that was back in 1978, when Israel did not yet contain half of the world's remaining Jewish population, six million souls, and when the existential threat to them was not a fraction of what it is today from an Iran hell-bent on vaporizing it and its people.

But just in case anyone suspects Weiss of having grandstanded when he confronted Carter by saying that preserving the memory of the Holocaust took second place to preserving Israel, it is worth citing a few examples showing how important the preservation of Holocaust memory has been to him, even to the point of a willingness to risk his life to preserve it:

- In 1989, he demonstrated against the use, as a convent, of a building at the Auschwitz death camp that had been used to store canisters containing crystals of Zyklon B, the very crystals that the Germans had tossed into the gas chambers of the crematoria in which well over 90 percent of the victims had been Jews. He saw the creation of that convent as part of the attempt to transform the memory of Auschwitz into a place of Polish Catholic martyrdom. Many Poles were indeed murdered at Auschwitz, but the primary purpose to which the Germans put it was the extermination of those European Jews who had not already been gassed in the other death camps or starved in ghettos or shot in extermination pits. Weiss saw the convent as part of an attempt to change historical memory, and he went there to protest that attempt. In the course of his protest he climbed over the convent's fence, was beaten by Polish workers, and was dragged out by the police.
- In the late 1990s, Weiss also protested the use of the building that had housed the commandant of Birkenau, the largest part of the Auschwitz complex and the one that contained its gas chambers, as a parish church, with its crosses towering over the barracks and the remains of the barracks and the gassing centers.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, he protested the erection, amid the ashes of hundreds of thousands of Jews, of numerous crosses.<sup>9</sup>
- In 2003, he protested the building of a memorial in another German death camp in southeast Poland, Belzec, where some 600,000 Jews were murdered upon arrival, with only two survivors, because the building of the memorial involved the desecration and destruction of the remains of those murdered Jews.<sup>10,11</sup>

Clearly, Weiss has committed much of his life to preserving Holocaust memory, so that it would be true to Holocaust history, and to protecting the physical remains of its

<sup>8</sup> Avi Weiss, "What price memory," *Jerusalem Post*, January 6, 1999, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> See "President promises Jews Auschwitz site will be protected by law," BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, January 12, 1999, from Polish Radio 1, Warsaw, in Polish, January 10, 1999, 18:00 GMT.

<sup>10</sup> Tom Martin, "Pensioner to Sue for Nazi Site Memorial," *Sunday Express*, August 10, 2003, p. 44.

<sup>11</sup> Avi Weiss, "A Monumental Failure at Belzec," *The Forward*, April 11, 2003. See also: <<http://www.hir.org/amcha/belzec.html>>.

victims. Yet, back in 1978, he was not willing to accept the sop that Carter had used as a political strategy to enable him to do what, Weiss believed, would endanger Israel. For him, the memory of dead Jews was sacred, but the survival of living Jews—the Jews of Israel, including many of the Holocaust’s survivors—was much more important.

And, for Weiss and others, those living Jews are still more important than the lofty words, often uttered as rote platitudes, by world leaders in memory of the Holocaust dead—especially if those words ignore, or serve to mask, the efforts of other leaders to eliminate the Jewish state.

Which is why they are wary of the crop of commemorations, resolutions and exhibitions that have emerged in recent years from the United Nations.

For example, in 2005, the UN commemorated the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz,<sup>12</sup> and the General Assembly rejected the denial of the Holocaust as a historical event.<sup>13</sup> In 2007, the UN Secretary-General established an “International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust,”<sup>14</sup> and the UN Department of Public Information’s Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Program collaborated with the International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation on a “Partners of Hope” concert at Carnegie Hall.<sup>15</sup> The speeches made at those commemorations were quite moving, so it is not surprising that some Jewish organizations, as well as many Jews, including Holocaust survivors, were touched by them and grateful for other UN-sponsored Holocaust-remembrance events.

But the fact that these gestures have been carried out by an institution many of whose members have for decades unrelentingly hijacked its bureaucratic machinery to demonize the Jewish state, and in recent years have increased the virulence of the UN’s focused attacks on Israel, renders those commemorations, resolutions, and exhibitions almost insignificant—and, at worst, has served to mask the UN’s constant attacks and make the organization seem balanced and reasonable. That the leader of one of those members has even threatened to “wipe Israel off the map,” heads a country that is frantically building nuclear weapons that could do just that, and is warmly applauded by a large segment of the UN when he addresses it even as he excoriates the Jewish state and rejects its right to exist, highlights the hypocrisy, even the bitter mockery, that Holocaust commemorations have sometimes become.

This is no small matter. Those unfair and one-sided attacks—organized by the UN’s bloc of 56 Islamic states and supported by an automatic bloc of additional, “non-aligned” states whose votes are captive to the power of the Islamic states—are constantly cited by Arab and other Muslim countries, as well as by terrorist groups, as proof that Israel is a demonic country—that it is the only violator of human rights in the world and that it does not have the right to exist. In some cases, they are cited as proof that not only Israel, and not only Israeli Jews, but *all* Jews do not have the right to exist.

Here are just some examples—many of them compiled by UN Watch—of the ways in which the UN has, with extreme unfairness, attacked Israel in recent years, an unfairness that has been made to seem less unfair by the recent spate of Holocaust commemorations,

<sup>12</sup> Warren Hoge, “UN Listens to Pledges of ‘Never Again,’” *International Herald Tribune*, January 26, 2005, available at: <<http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/01/25/news/un.php>>.

<sup>13</sup> <<http://www.un.org/holocaustremembrance/docs/res607.shtml>>.

<sup>14</sup> <<http://www.un.org/holocaustremembrance/2007/index.shtml>>.

<sup>15</sup> <<http://www.un.org/holocaustremembrance/2007/concert.shtml>>.

as if they demonstrate that the UN is not antisemitic or has not had its organizational structure hijacked to achieve the demonization and even elimination of the Jewish state:<sup>16</sup>

- In 2007, UN Watch reported that only a few countries were criticized by the General Assembly, and in no case by more than a single resolution. Israel, on the other hand, was the target of 22 one-sided resolutions.
- In 2006-2007, *all* of the 11 condemnatory resolutions passed by the UN Human Rights Council — which was supposed to have been an improvement over the obsessively anti-Israel UN Human Rights Commission, which had embarrassed even UN staff members — were against Israel. *None* of them were against any of the remaining 191 member states of the UN, including Sudan, which was responsible for the genocide in Darfur (and which co-sponsored condemnations of Israel); Burma, with its severe political repression; China, with its repression of Tibetans; Saudi Arabia, with its severe religious intolerance, beheadings, and discrimination against women; Iran, with its executions of homosexuals and calls for the elimination of a member state of the UN, Israel; and a host of other countries that have murdered or suppressed their own populations.
- Also in 2006-2007, the Human Rights Council created one agenda item that is permanent — the “human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories”<sup>17</sup> — again, despite the fact that the human rights situations in numerous countries are far more serious.
- In 2005, two UN bodies, the World Health Organization and the International Labour Organization, passed only one resolution against a specific country — Israel.
- A number of permanent organizations have been set up within the UN, several with large staffs, that constantly spew out anti-Israel messages: the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (which was established in 1968); the General Assembly’s Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; and the UN Secretariat’s Division for Palestinian Rights, which has a staff of 16.
- Louise Arbour, the last UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, never criticized antisemitism while in that post, nor did she take exception to the call by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the president of Iran, to “wipe Israel off the map.” Indeed, she never responded to a plea by over 40 human rights organizations that she use the UN’s second annual Holocaust commemoration to condemn the Iranian government’s Holocaust denial.<sup>18</sup> And the General Assembly has repeatedly condemned Islamophobia while ignoring the hatred of Jews and Christians.
- The UN’s “International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People” in 2005 was marked by a map in which Palestine replaced Israel.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> <[http://www.unwatch.org/atf/ct/%7B6DEB65DA-BE5B-4CAE-8056-8BF0BEDF4D17%7D/UNW\\_THE\\_UN\\_AND\\_ANTI\\_SEMITISM\\_04\\_07\\_REPORT\\_CARD.pdf](http://www.unwatch.org/atf/ct/%7B6DEB65DA-BE5B-4CAE-8056-8BF0BEDF4D17%7D/UNW_THE_UN_AND_ANTI_SEMITISM_04_07_REPORT_CARD.pdf)>.

<sup>17</sup> Jackson Diehl, “A Shadow on the Human Rights Movement,” *Washington Post*, June 25, 2007, p. A19.

<sup>18</sup> <<http://www.unwatch.org/site/apps/nl/content2.asp?c=bdKKISNqEmG&b=1330819&ct=4566483>>.

<sup>19</sup> <<http://www.eyeontheun.org/view.asp?l=21&p=142>>.

- In the most striking recent moment of anti-Israel frenzy by a UN organ, the UN Human Right Council's Durban Review Conference in April 2009 in Geneva, the very same Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad who said that Israel should be "wiped off the map" addressed that week-long meeting.
- In May 2010, Libya, a chronic violator of human rights, was elected to the UN Human Rights Council—by a vote of 155 of the UN's 192 members.<sup>20</sup>

The attacks against Israel are increasing at the UN. The few apostrophes to Holocaust memory are welcome. But it is to them that the UN and some of its most rabidly anti-Israel members point when confronted with the relentless anti-Israel bias in the world body—a bias that results in anti-Israel condemnations that are cited to justify the argument that Israel is the world's worst violator of human rights and does not even deserve to exist.

Unfortunately, I have grown accustomed to the practice, in the UN, of holding ceremonies to remember the Holocaust, but often as a cover to engage in activities that attempt to delegitimize the Jewish state, and remain silent, or even support, the threats to annihilate it.

But I am troubled when even friends of Israel, who are deeply troubled by the attempts to delegitimize it, and fear the possibility of a future Holocaust against Israel's six million Jews carried out by Iran, fail to seize opportunities, especially at Holocaust commemorations. I am troubled that such an opportunity was missed in Washington, during the Days of Remembrance Ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda on April 23, 2009. The ceremony was dedicated to the theme of individual responsibility, to the idea that all human beings must be individually responsible to make sure that an event like the Holocaust never happens again. President Barack Obama, the main speaker, said all the right words, but never mentioned the threats of annihilation against Israel by a nuclearizing Iran. Sadly, none of Jews who spoke there mentioned the Iranian threat either. No one noted that Hitler's 1939 "prophecy" that the Jews would be exterminated is being repeated, 70 years later, by a national leader who is building nuclear weapons, denies that the Holocaust ever happened and threatens the elimination of Israel—and who, in his speech a few days earlier, at the UN's "anti-racism" Durban Review Conference in Geneva, called the Holocaust an "ambiguous and dubious question" and a "pretext of Jewish sufferings." These Jews, who are at the forefront of Holocaust commemoration in America, had, as their captive audience, the president of the United States, and still they said nothing directly about the danger of a second Holocaust.

When Jimmy Carter played the Holocaust card in 1978 in order to mollify his Jewish critics and mask his acts that endangered the Jewish state, at least he set in motion the creation of what was ultimately a useful product—the US Holocaust Memorial Museum. At the UN, though, the Holocaust card—the occasional commemorations and exhibits evoking the memory of the Holocaust dead—is unlikely to have any redeeming outcomes.

One wishes that a young, intense rabbi would, at some Holocaust remembrance ceremony, tell the UN Secretary-General, "don't give us the Holocaust at the expense of Israel." But even if he did, and even if the Secretary-General were to respond sympa-

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<sup>20</sup> Neil MacFarquehar, "New Members Elected for Human Rights Council," *New York Times*, May 13, 2010.

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thetically, it is unlikely that the UN member states that are busy undermining Israel's existence would, even during some obligatory moment of silence, stop their efforts to delegitimize or eliminate the Jewish state.

And one wishes that *any* Jewish figure—whether old or young, intense or laid-back, a member of the establishment of Jewish organizations or outside of it, famous or unknown—would tell a US president who has come to commemorate the Holocaust to say the right thing about the Holocaust that was but also to *do* the right thing about the even *more* important task of preventing the Holocaust-to-come.





## Without *Ahavath Yisrael*: Thoughts on Radical Anti-Zionism at Brandeis

Doron Ben-Atar\*

Brandeis is probably the last university in the United States where you would expect to find a storm developing over an invitation to the Israeli ambassador. But the university's selection of Michael Oren as its 2010 commencement speaker triggered a protest and unleashed an ugly controversy that reverberated through the Jewish community in the United States and abroad. The opposition to Oren can be dismissed as one more meaningless academic theater, similar to the ones faced by Barack Obama at Notre Dame, John McCain at the New School, Phyllis Schlafly at Washington University in St Louis, and a host of others. Indeed, when all was said and done, Brandeis's outgoing President, Jehuda Reinharz, never wavered. Oren came, got his honorary degree, and made an address that was soon forgotten. Fears of protest and disruptions, like the one orchestrated by the Muslim student organization at UC Irvine, did not materialize. The episode is thus secure in the dustbins of mountains that turned into molehills.

But there was something about this controversy that was nevertheless alarming, for it exposed a reality at the Jewish community's academic safe-haven. Oren was opposed because, in January 2009 during Operation Cast Lead, he did reserve service at the office of the IDF spokesman, where he defended the Israeli operation. But this was merely a ruse. The opposition originated in the simple fact that he was the official representative of the State of Israel. Opponents charged that Oren was "too controversial" to be a graduation speaker, as if the ideal choice of a speaker would have been a hallmark card. But that is what the president of the local chapter of J-Street declared, and the editorial board of the students' newspaper, *The Justice*, agreed. Other opponents were less circumspect. Computer science professor Harry Mairson charged that in honoring "an apologist" for dropping "white phosphorus on Gazan civilians" the university was compromising its traditional commitment to social justice.<sup>1</sup> Flyers left on seats on the day of the commencement accused Oren of defending war crimes in Gaza and mocked his "astounding talent to twist oppression into victimhood."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jeremy Sherer, "Choice of speaker is too divisive,"; Editorial, "Oren is poor choice for address: Polarity may mar ceremony,"; Harvey Mairson, "Honoring Oren and Ross contradicts University mission," *The Justice*, April 24, 2010. It should be noted that Washington's official J-Street did not endorse the position advocated by the Brandeis chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Gordon Fellman, "A dissenting view of commencement," Letters to the Editor, *The Boston Globe*, June 1, 2010. The flyers were removed from the chairs many hours before the ceremony. Professor Fellman, who actively opposed the Oren invitation, probably had prior knowledge of the flyer and its contents.

If this affair had not taken place at Brandeis, then these positions, however absurd or abhorrent, would have hardly merited a mention. We have gotten used to much worse: fire bombings at Hillels, violent assaults on Zionist activists and yarmulke-wearing students, and so forth. But it did happen at America's Jewish-sponsored university. That the student newspaper at Brandeis would consider the Israeli ambassador too controversial shows how far down the slippery slope we have fallen. And nothing is more telling of the atmosphere at Brandeis than the arguments put forward by those defending the invitation. Heddy Ben-Atar, the student representative to the board of trustees, tried to defuse the controversy by writing an op-ed in the student newspaper highlighting Oren's intellectual accomplishments as a "first-class historian who produces brilliant work" that qualified him for the honor. My daughter,<sup>3</sup> president of the Brandeis Zionist Alliance, argued that Oren was invited for his "academic achievements, not his political ones." While she effectively—and brilliantly I would "objectively" add—cornered the opponents into an anti-free-speech position, she said nothing of the symbolic importance of Brandeis standing by Israel in these tough times.<sup>4</sup>

Assuming an even lower profile, the university Hillel avoided taking a stand, even though its director, Larry Sternberg, believes that "denying Oren, or any representative of the State of Israel, the right to speak at Commencement is beyond the line." Still, Sternberg chose the informal route by reaching out to the individual students who wrote *The Justice* editorial, which did not of course yield any change in the paper's official position vis-à-vis Oren's invitation. Sternberg believes that calling out the students who wrote the piece would have triggered a "substantial backlash" against Israel supporters on campus, who would be seen as dogmatic, intolerant, and all too quick to label all critics antisemites.<sup>5</sup>

Sternberg has come under criticism by parents and alumni who wished that Hillel, for one, had taken a more principled stand. But as he sees it, radical anti-Zionism is a minor phenomenon at Brandeis, advocated by a small group of marginal radical students and faculty. Taking a principled stand would have backfired. As Sternberg wrote:

In this sense, there are no "right" actions in such matters, only more or less "effective" ones—and effectiveness itself is subjective. For one parent who called me, the most effective thing Hillel (or I) could have done would have been to lambast those who led the charge to rescind the invitation to Oren by stating, among other things, that they were self-hating Jews. This parent literally told me that this would be the best thing to promote Jewish identity on campus and to act in support of Israel. He was disappointed that I did not agree with his assessment and at first accused me of being "weak." By the end of a 20 minute conversation he noted that he understood why his

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<sup>3</sup> In the interest of full disclosure, I am an alumnus of both the college and the graduate school, having graduated with a BA and an MA in comparative history in 1982. I was recruited from Maccabi Tel Aviv to play basketball for the Judges by the late Bob Brannum. My family's connection to the university runs from its founding to the present. My mother-in-law was a member of the first graduating class. I met my wife (Jo Mainzer Ben-Atar, '80) at Brandeis. My son Assaf graduated in 2007, and my daughter Heddy will be graduating in 2011. Our family has thus voted for Brandeis with our feet, our hearts, and, most painfully, our wallets for the past six decades.

<sup>4</sup> Heddy Ben-Atar, "Ambassador has much to offer at graduation," *The Justice*, April 24, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Larry Sternberg to Doron Ben-Atar, private email communication, July 23, 2010 and July 26, 2010.

approach might not be the best thing for Jewish identity or for Israel, but that he still thought it was the “right” thing to do, because it was honest. The penchant in the Israel advocacy world to believe that such “truth telling” is both necessary and effective is, for me personally, the single greatest obstacle to overcome in our gaining support for Israel among Jews and others. It’s ironic that so much is expended (in dollars and effort) by so many in what I’ll call the “feel-good” activity of speaking their “truth” which undermines support instead of building it.<sup>6</sup>

Sternberg and my daughter doubtlessly read the mood on campus correctly. But why is it so controversial to make a principled stand and declare that opposition to having Israel’s ambassador speak at commencement is unacceptable bigotry at Brandeis, a university that like the State of Israel was founded in 1948 by assertive Jews? What is the source of this fear? I would like to give examples of two university forums, one of the faculty and the other of students, that have contributed much to creating the atmosphere of intimidation and fear on campus. Of course, it would be foolish to attribute radical anti-Zionism at Brandeis to this or that group on campus. Universities operate in a fluid and interdependent academic world. What students do at San Francisco State or UC Irvine echoes around other campuses. And the same goes for the faculty. Most academics get their news and analysis from the same sources: NPR, BBC, the *New York Times*, the *Guardian*, the *New York Review of Books* and a few others.

Brandeis has long professed a unique commitment to social justice, and while the university’s claim to this tradition does not set it apart from others, inside Brandeis the assertion continues to resonate. (Every university in the US makes this claim. Catholic universities have a much more distinguished tradition of service to the poor than does Brandeis. And this fashion is hardly confined to institutions with religious affiliations. On a campus tour of Tufts, the guide, a very cute WASP from Buffalo declared that what is unique to his university is its commitment to *Tikkun Olam* (fixing the world). He even pronounced the Hebrew correctly.) Brandeis does have a radical chapter in its past. According to university lore, during the 1960s, half-naked students served LSD-laced punch in the middle of campus. It counts radicals Abbie Hoffman and Angela Davis among its graduates. In 1970, two of its students made the FBI ten-most-wanted list for taking part in a politically motivated, deadly armed robbery. The same year, it housed the information center of the national students’ strike against the invasion of Cambodia, made famous by the killing at Kent State. In some circles, the university still rests on these laurels, and some high-school activists are attracted to the university for this reason.<sup>7</sup>

Student opposition to Israeli policies has been a common feature of the university’s life for decades. But even during the height of the protests during the Lebanon War and the first Intifada, no one really challenged the Jewish right to self-determination. This has changed. In 2008, the student senate refused to pass a resolution commemorating Israel’s 60th anniversary. Brandeis Students for Justice in Palestine and its many Moslem students openly and legitimately advocate for the Palestinian cause. But their activities are part of a particularist history and movement. More relevant to Brandeis’s tradition of radicalism is a group of progressive students who want to rekindle the activism of the

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<sup>6</sup> Larry Sternberg to Doron Ben-Atar, private email communication, July 26, 2010.

<sup>7</sup> Ethan Bonner, “Brandeis at 50 Is Still Searching, Still Jewish, and Still Not Harvard,” *The New York Times*, October 17, 1998.

past. Some of them share their ideas on the student web forum called Innermost Parts—a play on the saying on Brandeis’s seal “truth, even unto its innermost parts.” Initiated by Israeli student activist Sahar Massachi, the blog gives students the opportunity to write about international, local, and personal affairs with a leftist bent. During the Oren controversy, the blog featured a lively conversation about how to rescind the invitation to, “a propagandist for a regime that does not respect human rights.” Forum bloggers organized demonstrations and initiated a petition to boycott commencement should Oren be the speaker.<sup>8</sup>

It is important not to exaggerate the dimensions of student anti-Zionism at Brandeis. For all the hoopla, the demonstrations drew, by the organizers’ own admission, only 10 to 20 students. And some of the opponents were deeply ambivalent. Massachi, for example, in a moving personal blog decried: “Oren divides me! Please understand, I’m a patriotic Israeli citizen. I love my country. I’m also a proud ‘left-ish,’ and people on the left tend to be pretty harsh on Israel. This contradiction has torn my heart for years already.”<sup>9</sup> I certainly sympathize with his sentiments. I often feel the same. No one really supports every policy of the Israeli—or for that matter any—government, and even outright hawks cringe when they learn of brutality. What Massachi and his fellow progressive students fail to grasp is that in opposing the invitation to the official representative of the democratically elected government of Israel to speak at the university’s commencement, they were striking an alliance with those who seek to delegitimize Israel and demonize its people.

On the faculty front, the opposition centered with professors subscribing to the “Concerned People at Brandeis” listserv. In November 2002, a couple of old radicals—Robert Lange of Physics and Gordon Fellman of Sociology—formed a web-based forum in opposition to the Iraq war. The listserv quickly broadened its focus and featured numerous exchanges about a variety of topics. Usually, list members share links to leftist pieces in newspapers and magazines. It remains active. At the moment, the list numbers 92 subscribers, though three to four members of the faculty circulate most of the postings about Israel.

The most prominent feature of Israel-related material is the absence of discrimination between substantial pieces and wild ramblings. Everything and anything that is anti-Israel is kosher. Some of the articles circulated by the list include cutting, substantial, and pointed exposes of Israeli misconduct, brutality, and callousness. Others are critical reports from radical Israeli and international organizations. Finally, there are pieces that

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<sup>8</sup> Peter Beinart, “The Failure of the American Jewish Establishment,” *The New York Review of Books* June 10, 2010; Jon Susman, “Ambassador Michael Oren Selected as Commencement Speaker,” *Innermost Parts*, April 21, 2010, <<http://innermostparts.org/2010/04/21/ambassador-michael-oren-selected-as-commencement-speaker>>; Sahar Massachi, “Oren Strategy,” *Innermost Parts*, May 9, 2010 <<http://innermostparts.org/2010/05/09/oren-strategy>>.

<sup>9</sup> Sahar Massachi, “It’s not Michael Oren’s fault,” *Innermost Parts*, May 6, 2010, <<http://innermostparts.org/2010/05/06/its-not-michael-orens-fault>>. In the midst of the Oren controversy, Sahar Massachi ran for the presidency of the student union and won slightly over 20 percent of the vote. “Acheampong wins presidency of the Student Union,” *The Justice*, April 13, 2010. It is impossible to determine the relationship between his electoral accomplishment and his position in the Oren controversy since student union elections are often about personalities and friendship rather than issues. However, there can be little doubt that those who voted for Massachi were comfortable with his positions on the Oren controversy in particular and on the Middle East in general.

clearly cross the line between criticism and hate. I have read comparisons of Israel and Nazi Germany and notes about Jewish control of banks, the media, and Congress. The blood libel that American boys are being sacrificed for the interests of Israel seems to be an article of faith. Articles detect conspiracies against Arabs, Moslems, and the poor directed from the West Bank and Wall Street. An AIPAC cabal controls American foreign policy. President Jehuda Reinharz is attacked regularly for his supposed effort to “Zionise” the university, even though only four years ago he awarded an honorary degree to playwright Tony Kushner—a critic who decries the very existence of the State of Israel.<sup>10</sup> And the list does not tolerate dissent. A brave undergraduate student who dared to post alternative points of view exchanged some nasty comments with some list members and was kicked off. Attacks on Jews and Israel are never mentioned. Tolerance is reserved only for the intolerant. Purveyors of different points of view on the political map are classified as right-wing nuts, pawns of AIPAC, or worse. The following posting by Donald Hindley from January 15, 2009 is quite typical:

American Diaspora Pitbulls and the American goyische kopfs. Were there an ethnically-based, well-financed, robotically primed Lobby that put another country’s interests ahead of our United States or human rights (G-d forbid), it might categorize “the Others” as the deluded, the cowering intimidated, and the sycophantic begging bowl opportunists. To seek primacy for America’s interests or universal human rights would be clearly anti-Semitic. Emphasis annoyingly added.—Donald<sup>11</sup>

There are many other similar and even worse postings. Such intimidating rhetoric coming from senior (and, in the case of Fellman, beloved) members of the faculty has had a chilling effect on the atmosphere on campus.

Wild and vicious assaults on Zionism on college campuses in Europe and the United States are hardly news. Nearly every school features anti-Israel events and fairs and invites speakers that rail against Israel and its supporters in the United States. When Norman Finkelstein was invited to Fordham by a coalition of Moslem and radical students, upset Jewish students who wanted to protest approached me. My response was similar to Sternberg’s. I counseled doing nothing, because a move to cancel the engagement would depict us as opponents of free speech, and a protest would draw attention to a talk that was going to be otherwise attended only by the usual suspects. A student responded rather despondently: “Why is it that it’s not OK to bring racist or homophobic speakers to campus, but it’s OK to have an antisemite?” That is the Jewish condition, was my reply.

It was supposed to be different at Brandeis. The Jewish-sponsored university was a form of American Zionism—a place where, as Brandeis’s founding president Abram Sachar put it, we will be hosts at last.<sup>12</sup> It was to be a secular institution of teaching and

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<sup>10</sup> Kushner, together with Alisa Solomon, edited a strong anti-Israel collection of essays entitled *Wrestling with Zion: Progressive Jewish-Americans Responses to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (New York, 2003). For an analysis of the phenomenon, see Alvin H. Rosenfeld, “Progressive Jewish Thought and the New Anti-Semitism,” published by the America Jewish Committee (2006) pp. 16-24.

<sup>11</sup> Donald Hindley, “Olmert: Israel Orders the White House,” *Concerned People at Brandeis*, January 15, 2009, <<https://lists.brandeis.edu/www/arc/concerned/2009-01/msg00143.html>>. Hindley italicized some words to heighten the offensive nature of his remarks. I did not include the italicization because I do not wish to inflame the nature of the posting.

<sup>12</sup> Abram L. Sachar, *Brandeis University: A Host at Last*, revised edition (Brandeis University Press, 1995).

research, sponsored by American Jews. But the Jewish character of the institution was *sui generis*. It operates according to the Jewish calendar and it accommodates Jewish special needs like kashrut. Most importantly, it was to be a place where Jews are treated equally, where they would be able to walk proudly as equals and would not fear standing up to antisemites.

While Brandeis became one of the most distinguished universities in the United States, it failed to deliver on its promise to Jews. To be sure, the atmosphere in the undergraduate college is unmistakably Jewish. But as the university's academic reputation rose, it began to move away from its Jewish roots. Racial, geographical, and religious diversity policies, combined with athletic recruitments, discriminate against Jewish applicants. It is probably harder for Jews to get into Brandeis than it is for non-Jews. Tours for perspective students that I took did not mention the words Jew or Jewish. Instead, guides and deans talked of the Red Sox and quoted Emily Dickinson as if Brandeis was just another suburban Massachusetts university.

The struggle for a higher score on the student life section of the US News and World Report college ranking led to marketing policies that hid the ethnicity of the student body because Jews are not associated in popular culture with being cool, partying, and drinking. In the 1980s, the Board of Trustees commissioned Gustav Ranis, professor of international economics at Yale and a member of Brandeis's first graduating class, to prepare a report on how the university could attract non-Jewish, particularly Asian, students. The committee recommended "dejudification." President Evelyn Handler, following the committee's advice, initiated serving pork and shellfish at the student cafeteria and threatened the financial stability of the university by building a state-of-the-art gym that befits universities with more ambitious athletic programs.<sup>13</sup>

In many ways, Reinharz's presidency saved the university.<sup>14</sup> The highly regarded scholar of Zionism put the university on a solid financial footing, revived the connection to the Jewish community, and expanded Brandeis' position in its unique natural niches. But Reinharz ran afoul of many on the university faculty who feel a certain disconnect with the Jewish culture of the institution. The Oren controversy needs to be understood within this broader debate over Brandeis's place in American and Jewish life. This was Reinharz's last graduation. He is stepping down at the end of the year following the Rose Art Museum debacle. Inviting Oren was his way of cementing his legacy not only in the history of Brandeis University but also in American intellectual life. Reinharz, however, is leaving a university where chilling anti-Zionist discourse is an accepted feature of the intellectual landscape.

The great scholar Gershon Scholem famously wrote Hannah Arendt that, its numerous egregious historical and factual errors aside, *Eichman in Jerusalem* betrayed a profound absence of *Ahavath Yisrael* (love of the Jewish people), to which Arendt responded that indeed she felt none. She did, however, have plenty of love for the Nazi Heidegger. Modern day demonizers follow in her path.<sup>15</sup> They do not have an emotional connection

<sup>13</sup> Bonner, *supra* note 7.

<sup>14</sup> Scientist Samuel O. Thier succeeded Handler but served only three years at the post and was succeeded by Reinharz.

<sup>15</sup> For the connection between Holocaust denial, Arendt worship, and contemporary radical anti-Zionism, see Elhanan Yakira, *Post-Zionism, Post-Holocaust: Three Essays on Denial, Forgetting, and the Delegation of Israel* (Cambridge University Press, 2009).

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to Israel or to Jewish history. Arendt blamed the *Judenrat* for the Holocaust, and they blame Zionists for all that has gone wrong in the Middle East since 1880. Arendt was uncomfortable with Jewish assertiveness, and modern day Jewish demonizers at Brandeis and elsewhere share her shame. And, until we shed this shame, we will never be "Hosts at Last."





## Between Opposition and Denial: Radical Responses to Antisemitism in Contemporary Europe

Robert Fine\*

There is an enigma concerning the Left in Europe today: how can it be that a political current committed to antiracism in general and to combating antisemitism often finds itself hostile to the actually existing critique of antisemitism that goes under the name of “new antisemitism theory”? Why this division into political camps? Why has the question of antisemitism become the shibboleth whereby past political allies have become firm enemies?

The common belief that many of us have expressed — sometimes under the unsatisfactory title of “new antisemitism theory” — is that a discriminatory logic has taken hold of significant sections of public opinion in Europe and America. Israel is depicted as a uniquely illegitimate state, Zionism is depicted as a uniquely noxious ideology, supporters of Israel are depicted as a uniquely powerful lobby and memory of the Holocaust is depicted as a uniquely self-serving reference to the past. The fear we have expressed is that, behind the (so-to-speak) “critique of Israel”, what is actually happening is a reconstruction of old antisemitic motifs in a new guise: blood libel, global conspiracy, secret power, indifference to the suffering of others, exclusive concern over Jewish interests, radical evil and so forth. Our alarm over the rise of this discriminatory logic is intensified by the range of political forces that seem to subscribe to it, which include not only fundamentalist parties in the Middle East and ultra-nationalist parties in Europe, but also sections of liberal and radical European political opinion. Our growing concern is that these otherwise conflicting political forces might unite around hatred of Israel just as opposing political forces united around hatred of Jews in the past.

So what is it that makes our approach to confronting contemporary antisemitism into an object of such deep suspicion for a Left that avowedly opposes antisemitism as part of a more general antiracism and is avowedly self-reflective about its own capacity for racism? Let us begin by listening to what our Left critics say about us. They say we exaggerate the extent of antisemitism in Europe and obscure the existence of much worse forms of racism, including racism against Muslims, Roma, black immigrants and others. They say we attack the very conceptual framework that will allow us to see other forms of racism, including the whole vocabulary of “Islamophobia”. They say we accentuate the problem by stigmatising whole categories of people as antisemitic—

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Muslims, Arabs, the Left, liberals, Europeans, all who dare from their point of view to question the actions or existence of Israel. They say we are close to manifesting our own racism when we “otherise” antisemites in this way. They say we misappropriate the history and memory of the Holocaust by privileging the suffering of Jews, as if only Jews have really suffered, and they say we become indifferent to suffering other than “our own”. They say we invoke the charge of antisemitism for dishonest reasons, to defeat criticism of Israel, and that we thereby debase the language of antisemitism itself. The very raising of the antisemitism question can begin to appear illegitimate—a covert way of expressing a politics that cannot be overtly justified.

The first thing I would reply to this often impassioned critique of our critique of antisemitism is that the universal principles on which it is based are not trivial and are important to keep in mind. What we might call their cosmopolitan universalism is the starting point of all critical thinking. To be sure, we should not exaggerate the extent of antisemitism in Europe to make it appear worse than other racisms. We should not isolate the question of antisemitism from more general questions of racism in Europe or privilege struggles against antisemitism over those against other racisms. We should not stigmatise whole collectivities as antisemitic—be they Muslims or Arabs or the Left itself. We should not deploy memory of the Holocaust for narrow or self-interested political ends or abuse the language of antisemitism to provide a dishonest defence of the Israeli government’s occupation of Palestine or human rights abuses. There is every reason to remind ourselves of these universal principles.

But who then is the target of the Left’s critique? Who are the “they” who are said to be sensitive only to the mass murder of *Jews* and not to anyone else and who shout antisemitism every time someone attacks Israel or defends Palestinians? It seems to me that the amorphousness of the “they”, its very indeterminacy, is worrying. My experience is that most of us who are actively opposed to antisemitism bend over backwards to display our own universalism; for example, to treat the Holocaust not only as an event in Jewish history but also as an alarm bell warning us of the potential for genocide in the modern world.

However, we should also acknowledge that there are individuals and groups opposed to antisemitism who more or less fit the picture painted of them by our critics. Within the anti-antisemitic camp let us accept that there are those who think exclusively about Jewish interests, just as within the larger world of antiracism there are those who respond to racism against “their own” people in equally exclusive terms. Indeed, it would be surprising if this were not the case. Nothing can be more natural, to cite a much misunderstood passage by Hannah Arendt, than that if you are attacked as a Jew you fight back as a Jew. In this respect there is little that marks out opposition to antisemitism from the general phenomenon that opposition to racism often takes a more or less exclusive form. If you are insulted as a Muslim, an African or a black person, your instinct is to fight back as Muslim, an African or a black person. Exclusivity in the battle against racism takes many forms. One may be sensitised to racism against black people but have no feeling for racism against the Irish; so too one may be sensitised to antisemitism but have little concern over what is sometimes called “Islamophobia”. Some people may use “the race card” or the “antisemitism card” opportunistically, to promote their own narrow advantage, but this does not mean that the racism or antisemitism in question is not real.

It seems to me entirely justified to criticise exclusivity in the ways some people confront antisemitism, just as it is justified to criticise exclusivity in the ways some people have responded, for example, to the racism of the colonial powers in Africa, to the racism of the apartheid regime in South Africa or to anti-Muslim racism in Europe. It is necessary to be ever alert to the problem of exclusivity in the struggle against racism and antisemitism precisely because particularistic responses are in some sense more natural, more spontaneous, easier, than more mediated and reflective forms of universalism. Most people involved in the struggle against contemporary antisemitism are well aware that it is wrong to treat all Muslims as antisemitic because of the antisemitism of certain radical Islamist movements and that it is wrong to treat all Arabs as antisemitic because of the antisemitism shown by some Arab states or nationalist parties. However, slippage into a form of “categorical thinking”, which mirrors the racisms to which we are opposed, is a constant temptation in this business.

We always have to be careful not to invert the problem we are addressing. The temptation we face in confronting antisemitism is to represent antisemites as inhuman monsters. If antisemites dehumanise and demonise Jews, if they racialise “the Jews” into a unitary otherised category, the temptation is to respond with an act of sheer reversal<sup>1</sup> and treat antisemites as an equally unitary and otherised category. This reversal does not get us very far down the road of reflectivity or critical understanding. It simply reproduces the notion that one category of human beings is entirely culpable and excludes regard for what we share or could potentially share as complex human beings. The sociologist Raymond Aron once raised an analogous issue in his discussion of Jean-Paul Sartre’s *Antisemite and Jew*. Aron argued that Sartre’s treatment of the antisemite mirrored the antisemite’s depiction of the Jew:

Anti-antisemites tend to present all the colonisers, all the antisemites, all the whites as essentially defined by their contempt for natives, hatred of Jews, desire for segregation. They paint a portrait of the coloniser, the antisemite or the whites that is as totalising as their stereotypes of the Jew, the native or the blacks. The antisemite must be *wholly* antisemitic.<sup>2</sup>

Whether or not Aron was justified in this characterisation of Sartre, the issue he raises remains of central importance in our own struggles against antisemitism. The temptation towards reversal, that is, towards dehumanising those who are seen as dehumanising us, must be one of the most intractable problems of political thought.

My argument is that it is not wrong to criticise the shortcomings of exclusivist or categorical approaches to confronting antisemitism, just as it is not wrong to criticise exclusivist or categorical responses to racism more generally. This to my mind is the rational kernel of the radical critique of the critique of antisemitism. However, it would be wrong to treat exclusivity as the defining feature of the battle against contemporary antisemitism. Such a step would slip from a political argument about the limitations of certain forms of opposition to racism and antisemitism, which in the language of Paul Gilroy cannot emancipate themselves from “raciological thinking”, to discrediting anti-

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<sup>1</sup> G. Cousin, “Positioning Positionality: The Reflexive Turn”, in M. Savin-Baden and C. Howell Major (eds.), *New Approaches to Qualitative Research: Wisdom and Uncertainty* (London, Routledge Education 2010).

<sup>2</sup> R. Aron, *Paix et guerre entre les nations* (Paris, Calmann-Levy 1969) pp. 87-88 (my translation).

antisemitism as such as if it alone bore the burden of these shortcomings. Such a slip-page would on the one hand dovetail with old antisemitic motifs about the exclusiveness of “the Jews” and, on the other, express a blatant double standard on the part of a Left otherwise committed to the notion that the natural and rational form of opposition to racism is through what it calls the “nationalism of the oppressed”, that is, the nationalism of those who suffer the racism in question. In the case of opposition to antisemitism, the radical intelligentsia is prone to denounce what in other instances of antiracism it idealises.

Clearly, Left critics of contemporary anti-antisemitism need to be more careful than they are in identifying their target. New antisemitism theory is not a unitary camp. Those of us concerned about the rise of a new antisemitism in Europe, America and the Middle East come from a wide spectrum of political opinion from the more exclusive to the more universal. However, what is also at issue in the Left’s critique of new antisemitism theory is a darkness that lies in the heart of the critics themselves: one that will not admit, come what may, the phenomenon of contemporary antisemitism. The European Left is an antiracist and anti-antisemitic movement that nonetheless has great difficulty in coming to terms with contemporary antisemitism. I think we can begin to understand this phenomenon by distinguishing between the more liberal and radical wings. The influence of the radical wing depends very much on the common sense of the world in which it swims.

Emerging within European liberalism is the view that antisemitism was indeed a terrible stain on Europe’s past but that it is no longer a major problem in Europe’s present. The great liberal temptation is to give the story of European antisemitism a happy ending and to pay tribute to the success of the new Europe in transcending its longest hatred. Antisemitism is safely tucked away in history, overtaken by the defeat of Nazism, the fall of the Soviet Union and the rise of the European Union. In broad terms, the liberal Left tends to associate political antisemitism with the period of European nationalisms and especially the ethnic nationalism that took hold of Germany and much of Eastern Europe. It tends to see the New Europe as marking a radically new period in Europe’s history—one that aspires to the formation of a postnational Europe and spells the end of antisemitism as we know it. In this reassuring narrative, the liberal Left looks back to an era in which antisemites saw themselves as guardians of the ethnically pure nation-state and forwards to a “postnational” Europe in which antisemitism along with other forms of racism are remembered only as a residual trauma or museum piece.

This way of thinking represents a major shift in European liberal thought. In the past the progressive liberal consciousness tended to see the new Europe as “bound together by the signs and symbols of its terrible past”, as “forever mortgaged to that past”. The commitment it expressed was to teach afresh Europe’s past, not least its violence against black people without and Jews within, to each passing generation and thus to “furnish Europe’s present with admonitory meaning and moral purpose”.<sup>3</sup> Today, by contrast, European liberalism is more inclined to recreate a moral division of the world between us and them: “we” are civilised and postnationalist; “they” believe in the purity of the nation and act with corresponding barbarity. The irony of this fake reconstruction of European self-belief is that it presents the European perpetrator as having learned the

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<sup>3</sup> T. Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (Penguin Books 2006) p. 831.

universal lessons of the Holocaust, whilst it presents the Jewish victim as having learnt only to reinstate the very malpractices the new Europe has now overcome.

Israel plays a particular role in this declining liberal consciousness. This new dichotomy threatens to demonise "Israel" as the other of an idealised new Europe. It represents Israel as the incarnation of all the negative properties postnational that Europe has allegedly thrown off: a racially defined state that denies human rights to those who do not belong to the nation and inclines itself towards ethnic cleansing or even genocide. "Israel" serves here not as a real country embroiled in real conflicts but as a vessel into which postnational Europe can project all that is bad in Europe's imperial history and preserve the good for itself. In this sense, Israel now performs a mythic function for a demoralised European liberalism anxious to divest itself of its own past. It becomes a figment of an increasingly impoverished imagination.

Within the more radical European Left we see an analogous decline. European racism is treated as a recurring phenomenon, deeply rooted in Europe's colonial experience and now reinstated in Europe's continuing imperial attachments. In this less than reassuring narrative, there prevails a sceptical view of the whole postnationalist ideology of the new Europe, which is presented as but another form of imperial relation to the non-Western world. Within this way of thinking, the critique of racism and antisemitism gives way to a radical negativity that refuses to recognise any progress in the achievement of antiracism in postwar Europe. It is as if the practical endeavour to overcome racism has been pre-empted by a theory that can admit a circulation of different racisms but not an overcoming of racism itself. However, what the radical Left shares with European liberalism is the conviction that antisemitism has run its historical course in Europe, that antisemitism is always in the past. The radical Left declares that it has in the present period given way to new racisms, especially against Muslims, Roma and black immigrants, and that the race question is no longer whether Jews can be good Germans, good Frenchmen or good Brits, but whether Muslims, Roma and black immigrants can be good Europeans. What lies behind this notion, I think, is that Jews are seen as having crossed sides and joined the European, white elite.

In recent years, the European radical intelligentsia has become increasingly inclined to treat Israel as its primary enemy. Israel is represented as a racist state, a pariah people, an imperial power, the tail that wags the American dog, the extension of colonial Europe into the Middle East and so forth. The struggle against "Israel" is made to appear as if it were a struggle against all the old European proclivities to territorial expansion, ethnic cleansing, indifference to the suffering of others, or the careless exercise of gratuitous violence. In this "anti-Zionist" cause even the most basic political distinctions can be sacrificed: distinctions between state and civil society, between reactionary and democratic anti-imperialism, between democracy and fundamentalism. To be sure, the European Left continues to avow universal antiracist principles, but it does not expect the same of the victims of racism it supports. *For the victims* it accepts or even advocates nationalist or fundamentalist forms of resistance that are anything but universal. To the expression of apparently genocidal antisemitic sentiments within these forms of resistance its only response is to ignore, translate or even justify them. The great temptation of the radical Left is to commit its own act of reversal. If certain ultra-nationalists in Israel racialise Arabs and turn them into a unitary "otherised" category, its response is to treat "Zionists" as an equally "otherised" category and place Palestinians in a single identity script as victims of Israel. The deeper the compassion for the victims, the more

passionate becomes the hatred of the victimisers. Let me add my own rider. I am not suggesting that Palestinians are not victims but they are not *only* victims and they are not only victims of *Israel*.

Let me conclude on this note. It is a worrying view of history that dictates what is and is not possible in a given period. In practical terms, the factual claim that anti-semitism is no longer a major political problem in Europe excludes it from the list of racisms Europe now has to confront. It illustrates the triumph of what I would call in the tradition of critical theory “categorical thinking”—that is, thinking that places the category above experience. Today the decline of the European Left in both its liberal and radical forms is such that it does not appear ashamed to make common cause even with Israel’s most fundamentalist enemies. The false projection onto “Israel” of all the defects of ultra-nationalism does nothing to address the real growth of ultra-nationalism in many European and Middle Eastern countries, including Israel. Perhaps one ray of light in this worrying time for the European Left is that the urgency of this situation might just provide an opening for a less categorical tradition of European critical theory to regain a foothold.

# The Iranian President, the Canadian Professor, the Literary Journal, and the Holocaust Denial Conference That Never Was: The Strange Reality of Shiraz Dossa

Deborah E. Lipstadt\*

The list of attendees at the Iranian Holocaust Denial Conference in December 2006 constituted a virtual *Who's Who* of Holocaust deniers and antisemites, including Robert Faurisson, one of the leading "theorists" of the movement, who lives in Vichy, France, Australian Fred Tobin, whose Adelaide Institute is a bastion of denial activities, former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke, and Bradley Smith, founder of CODOH (Committee on Open Debate on the Holocaust), which was responsible for placing a series of ads in college and university newspapers denying the Holocaust. There was, however, one name that caught many people by surprise: Professor Shiraz Dossa. It was not his lofty standing in academia that surprised people. In fact, few people, certainly those in the field of Holocaust studies, seemed to have any notion of who he was. What gave people pause was that Dossa was a tenured faculty member at a legitimate academic institution, St. Francis Xavier University (SFX) in Nova Scotia. Was this, some people wondered, an Arthur Butz redux? Butz, who teaches at Northwestern University, is the professor of electrical engineering whose multi-sourced and multi-footnoted book, *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, tried to cloak denial in an academic garb. Butz does not teach about the Holocaust and has no ostensible expertise in the field. (This led one Northwestern faculty member to quip that Butz has as much expertise in the Holocaust as he has in building bridges.) However, his affiliation with a prestigious university upset and baffled many people.

Dossa has two graduate degrees from the University of Toronto. Born, according to his decidedly self-deprecating SFX webpage, in an unnamed "multiracial British colony in Africa," he has apparently published one book on Hannah Arendt's political philosophy that contains eight pages that deal explicitly with the Holocaust.<sup>1</sup> Though his list of publications contains few items that seemed to be overtly connected to the topic, Dossa

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<sup>1</sup> See: <<http://books.google.com/books?id=hRiOf1ETLCgC&dq=shiraz+dossa&printsec=frontcover&source=web&ots=sVvOH5AICg&sig=upegOIDAKafwYofjC1vNszMOHsc#PPA19,M1>>. According to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), he was born in Uganda and has Iranian heritage on one side. See: <<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2006/12/13/professor-holocaust061213.html#skip300x250>>.

describes himself as a Holocaust “expert” or “scholar.”<sup>2</sup> When it became known that Dossa had gone to Teheran for the conference, he was subjected to a barrage of criticism from many quarters. His university colleagues circulated a petition protesting his participation, and the president of his university described it as “abhorrent.”<sup>3</sup> Dossa attempted to fend off the criticism by claiming that he did not know this would be a denial conference. He said he was surprised to discover, upon his arrival, that deniers, whom he described as “hacks and lunatics,” were present.<sup>4</sup> His explanations only roiled his critics more. His claim to have been unaware that this was a Holocaust denial conference lead John Ibbitson, a columnist in *The Globe and Mail*, to declare that Dossa was either “an idiot or was lying.” Ibbitson called for Dossa to be fired by the university.<sup>5</sup>

A few months later, Dossa struck back with an extensive essay in a small journal, the *Literary Review of Canada*. Using language that was pregnant with religious overtones, he lamented the “Spanish Inquisition” and “crusade” sanctioned by the school and designed to “denounce [him], a ... Muslim professor,” and “Muslim Holocaust scholar.” He then added, in an unconnected parenthetical observation, “who also happens to be an outspoken critic of Israel’s brutality in occupied Palestine.” The “crusade” was, he charged, “launched by two Jewish professors and the Christian chair of the political science department.”<sup>6</sup> Dossa’s use of the term crusade, stress on the religious identity of his “inquisitors,” and emphasis that it was a *Muslim* professor who was under attack were not inconsequential.

He was not alone in trying to shift the emphasis of the debate from his attendance at a Holocaust denial conference to his religious identity. The literary journal itself picked up on the religious identity theme in its front page promotion of Dossa’s article: “A Muslim Scholar Speaks His Mind.” In an interview after the article’s publication, the editor stressed that she believed that the criticism of Dossa was rooted in his religious identity.

I think we’re at a very sensitive stage in Canada right now regarding diversity, and the elephant in the room is Islam. We can talk about diversity in a very general sense of how we’re all in this multicultural stew together, and isn’t that great, and Canada’s doing its best and all of that. But there is something about Islam and Muslims within our Canadian community that seems to be less susceptible to tolerance. Professor Dossa has put that right on everybody’s plate and asked them to take a very careful look at it.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> His self-identification notwithstanding, the only thing I could find that he has written on the Holocaust is a small section in one of his books where he addresses Hannah Arendt’s treatment of the Holocaust. See: <<http://www.jstor.org/view/00084239/sp050050/05x3075g/2?frame=noframe&userID=aa8cdbc>>.

<sup>3</sup> See: <<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2006/12/13/professor-holocaust061213.html>>.

<sup>4</sup> See: <[http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20061213/holocaust\\_conf\\_061213/20061213?hub=CTVNewsAt11](http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20061213/holocaust_conf_061213/20061213?hub=CTVNewsAt11)>.

<sup>5</sup> See: <<http://www.campus-watch.org/article/id/3519>>; <[http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/Page/document/v5/content/subscribe?user\\_URL=http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/LAC.20061214.COIBBI4/TPStory/National&ord=7942042&brand=theglobeandmail&for ce\\_login=true](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/Page/document/v5/content/subscribe?user_URL=http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/LAC.20061214.COIBBI4/TPStory/National&ord=7942042&brand=theglobeandmail&for ce_login=true)>.

<sup>6</sup> Shiraz Dossa, “The Explanation We Never Heard,” *Literary Review of Canada* (June 2007), available at: <<http://lrc.reviewcanada.ca/index.php?page=the-explanation-we-never-heard>>.

<sup>7</sup> Jordan Timm, “The explanation we never heard,” June 11, 2007, available at: <[http://communications.uwo.ca/making\\_headlines/coverage/070611-1.htm](http://communications.uwo.ca/making_headlines/coverage/070611-1.htm)>.



She clearly believed that it was the issue of religious intolerance—not his participation in a denial conference—on “everybody’s plate.”

### 1. PRESIDENT AHMADINEJAD: NOT A HOLOCAUST DENIER

Though designed to be a brief on his own behalf, the essay also provides insight into what might have motivated this political theory professor to participate in such a gathering. Dossa began by challenging, what he described as two “fallacies” about Ahmadinejad. One was that he had threatened to wipe Israel off the map and the second that the he is a Holocaust denier.

The anti-intellectual storm at St. FX [Dossa’s university] was driven by two fallacies pushed by the media and the literati. The first is that Iran’s president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has dismissed the Holocaust as a “myth” and threatened to “wipe Israel off the map.” In fact, Ahmadinejad has not denied the Holocaust or proposed Israel’s liquidation; he has never done so in any of his speeches on the subject (all delivered in Farsi/Persian). As an Iran specialist, I can attest that both accusations are false. U.S. Iran experts such as Juan Cole and UK journalists such as Jonathan Steele have come to the same conclusion.<sup>8</sup>

Juan Cole and Jonathan Steele have challenged the interpretation of Ahmadinejad’s statements regarding Israel as meaning that he was calling for the destruction of the state. However, neither of them have had anything to say about his Holocaust denial, certainly not in the sources referenced by Dossa. It is unclear whether Dossa was suggesting that Cole and Steele have contested the idea that Ahmadinejad is a denier or whether the professor simply expressed himself in a sloppy fashion.

More central to this analysis is Dossa’s assertion that Ahmadinejad has “not denied the Holocaust ... he has never done so.” While he acknowledges that Ahmadinejad’s language has been “excessive and provocative,” he suggests that this is a laudatory characteristic. “He does not really care what we in the West think about Iran or Muslims; he does not kowtow to western or Israeli *diktat*.” Dossa asserts that Ahmadinejad has not denied the Holocaust but only questioned its “mythologizing and the sacralization,” and “raise[d] doubts about [its] scale.”

The most accurate means of testing the validity of Dossa’s claim about Ahmadinejad is to juxtapose it with the Iranian president’s own words. When an interviewer from *Der Spiegel* referred to the absolute historical fact of the Holocaust, Ahmadinejad adopted what might best be described as a “neutral” stance and responded with a question: “Did the Holocaust actually take place?” He answered his own question: “You answer this question in the affirmative.... On the other hand, if the Holocaust didn’t take place....” Ahmadinejad justifies his “neutrality” by insisting that there has not yet been enough unbiased research to establish whether there was a Holocaust. “We are of the opinion that, if an historical occurrence conforms to the truth, this truth will be revealed all the more clearly if there is more research into it and more discussion about it.” When the *Der Spiegel* interviewer pointed out that there has been a tremendous amount of research in Germany, Ahmadinejad maintained his neutral stance: “We don’t want to confirm or deny the Holocaust. ... We want to know whether this crime actually took place or not.”

<sup>8</sup> See: <<http://lrc.reviewcanada.ca/index.php?page=the-explanation-we-never-heard>>.

When the interviewer pushed him further, Ahmadinejad suggested that, while much research may have been done, it has not yet been done by the proper or impartial scholars. "And if the Holocaust actually occurred, then you should permit impartial groups from the whole world to research this. Why do you restrict the research to a certain group?" Sounding a bit exasperated by Ahmadinejad's responses, the *Der Spiegel* representative pushed for a direct answer: "Are you still saying that the Holocaust is just 'a myth'?" Ahmadinejad again skirted the question. "I will only accept something as truth if I am actually convinced of it," he replied [emphasis added]. When the interviewer pointed out that there are no Western scholars who harbor any doubts about the Holocaust, Ahmadinejad insisted that those scholars who "say the Holocaust occurred," were "politically motivated" and contended that there are "scholars" who represent the "opposite position." Their work, he insisted, has not been given serious consideration.

In yet another interview, Brian Williams of MSNBC asked Ahmadinejad why he referred to the Holocaust as a "myth." Not surprisingly, rather than answer the questions, the Iranian president repeated his familiar mantra: "if the event happened," "if it is an historical event," and "assuming that the Holocaust happened" [emphasis added]. Describing himself as a "scholar" who is interested in researching events, he contrasted himself with Holocaust scholars. Unlike them, he wanted to "allow everyone to research it and study it." Echoing his statement to *Der Spiegel*, he asserted that those who question the Holocaust are punished for it: "Why is it that those who ask questions are persecuted?"<sup>9</sup>

Can one be, as Dossa asserts, "neutral" or "skeptical" on something that is not only of such enormous scale as the Holocaust but that has also been so thoroughly documented? Dossa is not, of course, the first one to try to depict denial as skepticism. He is, in fact, using a tactic upon which deniers have relied for several decades. Calling themselves "revisionists," they insist that they are simply intent on correcting mistakes in history. They vigorously eschew the label antisemite. In the 1970s, deniers created the Institute for Historical Review and its journal, *Journal of Historical Review*, whose precise objective was to give denial an aura of a legitimate intellectual enterprise. They wish to be thought of as "an other side" in the scholarly conversation about the Holocaust. Dossa's use of the term "denial/skepticism" fits this model. It is interesting to note that deniers may be gravitating away from use of the term "revisionists," possibly because it has become synonymous with denial. From the deniers' perspective it has become toxic. In his report on the conference, Australian Holocaust denier Fred Tobin includes the following caption: "Note conference theme: a review, NOT a revision of the 'Holocaust.'"

Ahmadinejad has more than just expressed "skepticism" about the Holocaust. In December 2005, a year before the conference, the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting quoted Ahmadinejad's speech to thousands of people in the Iranian city of Zahedan. In this speech, he was more explicit than in his interviews with *Der Spiegel* and MSNBC. "They [the Jews] have fabricated a legend under the name Massacre of the Jews...."<sup>10</sup> He was equally explicit, according to IRNA, the official Iranian news agency, at a press

<sup>9</sup> See: <<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/14912050>> for the text. To watch the interview itself, see: <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ykd-syzZ4ZY>>.

<sup>10</sup> See: <<http://english.aljazeera.net/English/archive/archive?ArchiveId=17019>>.

conference in Mecca, held in conjunction with a meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. "Some European countries insist on saying that Hitler killed millions of innocent Jews in furnaces.... Although we don't accept this claim...."<sup>11</sup>

Ahmadinejad's contention that in the scholarly world all topics are open to investigation with the exception of the Holocaust is a long-standing denial tactic that relies on antisemitic tropes. According to deniers, Jews use their manipulative powers to keep the Holocaust from being properly investigated. In a letter to Chancellor Merkel in August 2006, Ahmadinejad added the financial stereotype to his claims about the Jews and the Holocaust. "The Jews created this myth of destruction as a means of achieving *financial gain*." They planned to use the myth of the Holocaust "in order to continue their *extortions*." Jews together with the "victorious countries of World war II ... create[d] an alibi [the Holocaust] on the basis of which they could continue keeping the defeated nations of World War II *indebted* to them."<sup>12</sup> Ahmadinejad's explanation relies on the traditional antisemitic imagery of the "money hungry" Jew who will use all means, irrespective of how nefarious they may be, to achieve financial and political gain. It explains why Jews have gone to such efforts to create this myth in a way that "makes sense" to the antisemite. It validates the antisemite's notion of the archetypical Jew who will, in the interests of financial gain, create a myth about the murder of his own people.

What about Professor Dossa's claim that all Ahmadinejad is doing is raising questions about the number of victims? Can this not be said to be a practice in which historians frequently engage, i.e. determining the number of people involved in a particular action? Have not the leading Holocaust scholars engaged in and still do engage in this very exercise? Holocaust scholars differ on the death toll. Raul Hilberg estimated it at 5.1 million. Yisrael Gutman and Robert Rozett, writing in the *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, reached the estimate of 5.9 million. More recently, Wolfgang Benz argued that, in light of the evidence that became accessible after the fall of the Soviet Union and other Communist countries, the death toll is closer to 6.3 million. These scholars all acknowledge that their estimates are exactly that—*estimates*. As Hilberg observed, "exactness is impossible" when it comes to numbers.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, there is enough information to make a reasonable estimate. In contrast to these scholars, deniers generally place the number of victims, at the highest, in the realm of a couple of hundred thousand. Sometimes they go as high as a million. This falls so far beneath the range of reasonable numbers when cross-referenced with the Jewish populations of these regions prior to the war and the number remaining after the war that it cannot be taken seriously. Where do deniers contend these people are? Prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, Robert Faurisson used to argue that they were all being held there unable to make contact with their relatives. Since the fall of Communism and the failure of millions of Jews to reappear he seems to have abandoned that "explanation." When challenged to reveal where these people are, Lady Renouf, one of the conference participants and a close associate of David Irving, stated unequivocally that these "missing Jews" are in fact living under assumed names in Israel.<sup>14</sup> Why they would not have reemerged to reunite with their families was something she did not reveal.

<sup>11</sup> See: <<http://www.radioislam.org/nejad/holo.htm>>.

<sup>12</sup> See: <<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=8506060558>>.

<sup>13</sup> Hilberg, *The Destruction of European Jewry* (1961), p. 121.

<sup>14</sup> See: <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2NwsAtaivHw&mode=related&search>> at 4:40.

Deniers do not only diminish the death toll to an absurdly small amount that bears no relation to the evidence: they generally posit that these Jews “died” from disease and other “natural” by-products of war. In other words, they were not killed. This tactic serves a number of purposes. First of all, while any death is tragic, particularly if it occurs to a civilian during a war, there is a wide gulf between dying of war-related privations and being murdered as part of a organized program of annihilation. Secondly, contending that a small number of Jews died allows deniers to protest that they do not deny that Jews suffered. They just deny that the Jewish people were slated for murder.

Dossa claims that Ahmadinejad is doing exactly what “Jewish scholars,” such as Tom Segev and Uri Davis have been doing for years. As critical as both of these gentlemen have been about Israel and Israeli policies, neither has ever echoed Ahmadinejad’s statements in relation to the Holocaust.

## 2. THE CONFERENCE IN TEHRAN: NOT A HOLOCAUST DENIAL GATHERING

After contending that Ahmadinejad is not a denier, Dossa proceeded to argue that the conference was not a denial conference but “a Global South conference convened to devise an intellectual/political response to western-Israeli intervention in Muslim affairs.” He asserts that the presence of a “few notorious western Christian deniers/skeptics, a couple of neo-Nazi stripe” was used to brand the conference as a denial gathering, when in fact “Holocaust deniers/skeptics were a fringe element,” with only six of the papers devoted to denial topics. Was this, indeed, a Global South conference on “western-Israeli intervention in Muslim affairs”? Judging from a copy of the program posted on the website of the Adelaide Institute, a Holocaust denial organization, Dossa’s claim bears little relationship to reality.<sup>15</sup> Among the presentations were:

- Alexander Baron, “The Nazi gas chambers: Rumors, Lies and Reality”
- Jan Bernhoff, “The Holocaust Demography” (His speech was intended to “prove the lack of scientific basis for The Six Million Figure.”)
- Robert Faurisson, “The Victories of Revisionism”
- Alfonso Pengas, “The Geopolitical Environment of the Holocaust Myth”

Additional speakers included Wolfgang Frohlich, the author of the “Gas Chamber Fraud,” Richard Kreige, whose paper denied that Treblinka was a death camp, Patrick McNally, who has declared that the “the Zionist Holocaust story is a hoax,” and Mohammed Hagazi, who speaks of the “Holohaux.” Hagazi is a Muslim, giving the lie to Dossa’s claim that only “Christian deniers/skeptics” were present. Leading Holocaust denier Michael Collins Piper declared this conference “momentous” because it “directly challenged perhaps the most hallowed icon of modern history, the Holocaust.”<sup>16</sup> Frederick Töben, head of the Adelaide Institute, gave a paper entitled “The Alleged Murder

<sup>15</sup> See: <[http://www.adelaideinstitute.org/2006December/contents\\_program1.htm](http://www.adelaideinstitute.org/2006December/contents_program1.htm)>. Canadian Jewish Congress, “The Truth You Failed to See: A Rebuttal of Dossa’s ‘The Explanation We Never Heard,’” June 14, 2007, available at: <[http://www.cjc.ca/docs/RD/210\\_Rebutal%20of%20Dossa.pdf](http://www.cjc.ca/docs/RD/210_Rebutal%20of%20Dossa.pdf)>. See also: <[http://www.adl.org/main\\_International\\_Affairs/iran\\_holocaust\\_conference.htm?Multi\\_page\\_sections=sHeading\\_5](http://www.adl.org/main_International_Affairs/iran_holocaust_conference.htm?Multi_page_sections=sHeading_5)>.

<sup>16</sup> See: <<http://www.adelaideinstitute.org/2006December/Piper.htm>>.

Weapon: Homicidal Gas Chambers and the Logistics Problem." It demonstrated, according to the Institute "that technically the claims made by 'Holocaust' believers about the mass gassings and burnings are a physical impossibility."<sup>17</sup> Also present were Serge Thion, who co-authored a book with Robert Faurisson and wrote for the Holocaust-denying Institute for Historical Review, and Lady Renouf.<sup>18</sup> In contrast to Dossa, these participants acknowledged the denial character of the gathering. Herbert Shaller, for example, observed that the conference had "publicly established that there are no proofs for the existence of homicidal gas chambers ... [and that] sufficient evidence had been available [to this effect] for a long time."<sup>19</sup>

But it was not just the papers and the participants that give to the lie to Dossa's claims. The exhibits did so as well. As one reporter described them, they "largely supported the view the Holocaust did not take place or was much exaggerated." The photographs of Holocaust-related events had the label "myth" next to them, while deniers' so-called explanations were labeled "truth." David Irving's books were prominently displayed. Those responsible for the exhibits echoed this theme. Mostafa Mohammadi, a Tehran University student who helped set up the exhibition, said, "Between 150,000 and 300,000 Jews died because of the natural causes of war such as famine and air raids. Unfortunately, Iranian schools still teach the official history dictated by the West, but we are campaigning to change that."<sup>20</sup>

Still struggling to give the gathering academic respectability, Professor Dossa argued that the convener of the conference was *not* the Iranian government but the Iranian Institute of Political and International Studies, an "elite school of advanced politics and policy studies that offers MA and PhD programs." Dossa claims that the fallacy of this being a government sponsored denial conference was "concocted" by the Simon Wiesenthal Center and the Jewish Defense League and "peddled" by the media. This claim by Dossa is given the lie by the website of the sponsoring Institute. It carries, on the upper corner of both the English and the Farsi page, the following logo:<sup>21</sup>



Even the *Iran Daily* described the gathering as "the Foreign Ministry-sponsored conference."<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs delivered the opening address in which he thanked the delegates for participating.<sup>23</sup> Dossa protested that there

<sup>17</sup> See: <[http://www.adelaideinstitute.org/2006December/FT\\_talk.htm](http://www.adelaideinstitute.org/2006December/FT_talk.htm)>.

<sup>18</sup> See: <<http://www.adelaideinstitute.org/2006December/Piper.htm>>. On her background, her participation in the Irving v. Penguin/Lipstadt trial, and how this former beauty queen came to be Lady Renouf, see Deborah Lipstadt, *History on Trial: My Day in Court with a Holocaust Denier* (New York: Ecco, 2006), pp. 128, 178, 296-297, 327 n. 7.

<sup>19</sup> Herbert Schaller, "Report on the Criminal Law Aspects of the Holocaust Problem," as quoted in Canadian Jewish Congress, *supra* note 15, at p. 11.

<sup>20</sup> See: <[http://news.independent.co.uk/world/middle\\_east/article2067598.ece](http://news.independent.co.uk/world/middle_east/article2067598.ece)>.

<sup>21</sup> See: <<http://www.ipis.ir/English/index.htm>>.

<sup>22</sup> See: <<http://www.iran-daily.com/1385/2732/html/index.htm>>.

<sup>23</sup> See: <[http://www.ipis.ir/English/meetings\\_roundtables\\_conferences.htm](http://www.ipis.ir/English/meetings_roundtables_conferences.htm)>.

was no way he could have known that “a few deniers would be in attendance.” In fact, the news that Iran was planning a Holocaust denial conference had been announced by the spokesman for the Foreign Ministry in January 2006, Hamid Resa Asefi. It would be, he told the press, “a conference to examine the scientific evidence supporting the Holocaust.”<sup>24</sup> In September 2006, he repeated the news about the conference and noted that “the Holocaust is not a sacred issue that one can’t touch. I have visited the Nazi camps in Eastern Europe. I think it is exaggerated.”<sup>25</sup> Even Aljazeera television reported in September 2006 that Iran was going to hold such a conference to examine the “evidence supporting the Holocaust, dismissing it as exaggerated.”<sup>26</sup> The idea for a conference to assess the evidence of the Holocaust was first proposed, according to the news agency Fars, in late 2005 by one of Ahmadinejad’s close advisors, Mohammed Ali Ramin. Ali Ramin called on Ahmadinejad to establish “an international committee for clarifying the real extent of the Holocaust.” Ramin also praised Ahmadinejad for having voiced his doubts over the Holocaust.<sup>27</sup> It seems strange that Dossa’s suspicions were not aroused despite these repeated statements about a conference designed to “assess” and to “clarify” the “real extent of the Holocaust.”

### 3. ANTISEMITISM: A PLOT AGAINST MUSLIMS

In what may well be considered the heart of his essay, Dossa argues that the virulent attack on him was motivated by “Islamophobia.” It began with two *The Globe and Mail* journalists, whom he describes in decidedly non-academic language, as “dilettantes extraordinaire on the Holocaust and the Middle East;: who ... got most things wrong, ... displayed ... cerebral deficits, [and were] intellectually just a cut above the Trailer Park Boys.” *The Globe and Mail* had given them “unlimited latitude ... to trash Muslims even as they defend ‘civilization,’ Israel and Jews.” But this was far more than just an attack on him. It was also an attempt by his Catholic university “to assure the white, mainstream Canadian community, including Canadian Jews, that ‘Catholic’ St. FX was on their side....” In other words, this was a machination by the university to please the white mainstream community and the Jews.

Dossa asserts that “Catholic anti-Semitism has always had two strands, anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish. The anti-Jewish strand has been dominant in western culture for several centuries.” Dossa’s claim is a variation on the theme that Arabs, because they are so-called Semites, a non-existent racial category, cannot be antisemites. Dossa is, of course, certainly not the first one to assert that Muslims or Arabs cannot be the purveyors of antisemitism or that “anti-Semitism” [sic] has never been present in the Islamic world. As Khaled Al Maeena, editor in chief of the *Arab News* writes, “How, I wonder, can Arabs be anti-Semitic? They are in fact themselves Semites; the word derives from one of the sons of Noah—in English Shem—who was the ancestor of both Jews and Arabs.”<sup>28</sup> In fact, the term Semite was conceived in the eighteenth century to describe a family of cognate *languages*, not peoples. To argue that Arabs cannot be antisemites is to inaccurately

<sup>24</sup> “Iran Plans Holocaust Conference,” AP, Tehran, January 15, 2006.

<sup>25</sup> “Iran to Host Autumn Conference on Holocaust,” AP, September 3, 2006.

<sup>26</sup> See: <<http://english.aljazeera.net/English/archive/archive?ArchiveId=35678>>.

<sup>27</sup> See: <<http://www.radioislam.net/nejad/holo.htm>>.

<sup>28</sup> See: <<http://www.arabview.com/articles.asp?article=685>>.

rately conflate language with race. (Furthermore, even if the term Semite did connote a particular group or race of people, there is no reason why a member of the group could not be an antisemite, i.e. someone who shows contempt and hostility toward his or her own group.) The fact that Hebrew and Arabic shared certain linguistic patterns no more eliminates the possibility of hostility between the speakers of the two languages than does, as Walter Laqueur recently noted, the possibility of war between Russians and Germans or French and British because they all speak languages that belong to the Indo-European family.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, to argue that Arabs cannot be antisemites because they speak a Semitic language would be to argue that an Arabic language edition of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is not antisemitic, while an English language one is. It is not, as Bernard Lewis observes, a very “compelling argument.”<sup>30</sup> Even the Third Reich, which raised the concept of antisemitism to an unprecedented level, did not perceive of Arabs as members of a race that was destined for destruction. This same claim was echoed at the conference by the Iranian Foreign Minister who delivered the opening address.<sup>31</sup>

#### 4. AHMADINEJAD DID NOT ATTEND THE CONFERENCE

Dossa argues that Ahmadinejad did not “attend or participate.” Claims to the contrary, he insists, are “all false.” This assertion is contradicted by Dossa’s co-participants at the conference, the official program, and, not least, by the website of the President of Iran. Photographs, such as the one which appeared on the front page of the *Iran Daily* showing Ahmadinejad greeting the participants further give the lie to Dossa’s invention.

According to the official program, a welcome message from Ahmadinejad was delivered at the first session. It may have been read on his behalf, as official greetings often are. However, an official greeting from the head of the nation in which a conference is being held constitutes precisely that, an *official* greeting. The participants themselves acknowledged that the president was the instigating force behind the meeting. Frederick Toben opened his talk with words of thanks:

With deep gratitude I thank the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, *Dr Mahmoud Ahmadinejad*, for making all this here possible. It is the first time in Revisionist history that a truly international “Holocaust” conference has been held where general and specific focus is on the claim that during World War Two the Germans systematically exterminated European Jewry in homicidal gas chambers, in particular at Auschwitz. [emphasis added]

He closed his remarks by returning to Ahmadinejad’s role:

In my talk I show[ed] that technically the claims made by “Holocaust” believers about the mass gassings and burnings are a physical impossibility. *This fact alone justifies the Iranian President Dr Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s aim in holding the conference*, to urge historians and scientists to investigate the whole “Holocaust-Shoah” matter in a rational way without fear or favor.<sup>32</sup> [emphasis added]

<sup>29</sup> Walter Laqueur, *The New Antisemitism* (Oxford, 2006), p. 191.

<sup>30</sup> Bernard Lewis, *Semites and Antisemites* (New York, 1986), p. 16.

<sup>31</sup> See: <[http://www.ipis.ir/English/meetings\\_roundtables\\_conferences.htm](http://www.ipis.ir/English/meetings_roundtables_conferences.htm)>.

<sup>32</sup> See: <[http://www.adelaideinstitute.org/2006December/FT\\_talk.htm](http://www.adelaideinstitute.org/2006December/FT_talk.htm)>.

Ahmadinejad, however, did more than just offer his greetings through a third party; he met with the participants (though apparently not at the same venue in which the papers were presented). The official website of the President of Iran quotes what Ahmadinejad “told participants of the international conference World Vision on Holocaust who met him in Tehran.”<sup>33</sup> The conference program, as posted on the webpage of the Adelaide Institute, contains the following notation below the program for the final session: “the above closing session was cancelled and the conference adjourned to meet the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Departure time 14:45 hours.” This is accompanied with a series of photographs of the presenters’ meeting with Ahmadinejad.<sup>34</sup> His meeting with the delegates was also reported on by MSNBC,<sup>35</sup> Mehr, Reuters, the National Journal, and the Adelaide Institute,<sup>36</sup> among others.<sup>37</sup> A reporter who was present described how Ahmadinejad “appeared to revel in his meeting Tuesday with conference delegates.”<sup>38</sup>

##### 5. THE *LITERARY REVIEW OF CANADA* AND CAUT: HANDMAIDENS IN SHIRAZ DOSSA’S REVISIONISM

Ultimately, Dossa is a relatively unimportant figure who seems to have earned more column inches and attention by his few days in Tehran than by anything else he has done thus far. Rather than to simply say, “I went and I made a mistake,” he has engaged in a convoluted effort to rewrite history and to cast himself as the victim of so-called Islamophobia. Far more disturbing than Dossa’s response was the behavior of the *Literary Review of Canada* (LRC), which published his essay, the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), which issued a strong statement in support of him, and Michael Valpy, the reporter for *The Globe and Mail*, who covered Dossa’s essay. Valpy found Dossa’s defense “compelling.”<sup>39</sup> The LRC accompanied Dossa’s essay with an introductory note by the editor. She noted that Dossa addressed “the all-out attack on him back home in Canada, particularly from *The Globe and Mail* and from his own university, St. FX.” She then proceeded to give the LRC’s perspective. “We read his manuscript, which seemed to us a serious exploration of the right of academic freedom in Canada and who gets to exercise that right. *After rigorous fact-checking that went on for a number of weeks*, we agreed that the essay was ready for publication.” [emphasis added] LRC’s claim that Dossa’s article had been subjected to rigorous fact checking and con-

<sup>33</sup> See: <<http://www.president.ir/eng/ahmadinejad/cronicnews/1385/09/21/index-e.htm>>.

<sup>34</sup> See: <[http://www.adelaideinstitute.org/2006December/contents\\_program2.htm](http://www.adelaideinstitute.org/2006December/contents_program2.htm)>.

<sup>35</sup> See: <<http://www.president.ir/eng/ahmadinejad/cronicnews/1385/09/21/index-e.html>>.

<sup>36</sup> See: <[http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.adelaideinstitute.org/2006December/pics/President.JPG&imgrefurl=http://www.adelaideinstitute.org/2006December/contents\\_program\\_con.htm&h=450&w=600&sz=77&hl=en&start=2&um=1&tbnid=KzLrXcW5vMK6FM:&tbnh=101&tbnw=135&prev=/images%3Fq%3DPresident%2BAhmadinejad%2Bat%2BTehran%2Bholocaust%2Bconference%26svnum%3D10%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26client%3Dfirefox-a%26channel%3Ds%26rls%3Dorg.mozilla:en-US:official](http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.adelaideinstitute.org/2006December/pics/President.JPG&imgrefurl=http://www.adelaideinstitute.org/2006December/contents_program_con.htm&h=450&w=600&sz=77&hl=en&start=2&um=1&tbnid=KzLrXcW5vMK6FM:&tbnh=101&tbnw=135&prev=/images%3Fq%3DPresident%2BAhmadinejad%2Bat%2BTehran%2Bholocaust%2Bconference%26svnum%3D10%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26client%3Dfirefox-a%26channel%3Ds%26rls%3Dorg.mozilla:en-US:official)>.

<sup>37</sup> See: <[http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam\\_multimedia/Hebrew/heb\\_n/html/img/holo\\_caut\\_denial.jpg](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/Hebrew/heb_n/html/img/holo_caut_denial.jpg)>.

<sup>38</sup> See: <<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/16149717>>.

<sup>39</sup> Michael Valpy, *The Globe and Mail*, May 28, 2007, available at: <<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20070528.wdossa28/BNStory/National/home>>.



tained information that had not previously been known does not compute. Certainly, the extensive fact checking the LRC claimed to have conducted should have revealed the misstatements in Dossa's claims. One would have expected the LRC to have recognized at least some of the fabrications.

Equally, if not more, disturbing was the statement by CAUT, which it issued right after the conference. Reacting, at least in part, to a call by a *Globe and Mail* columnist that Dossa be fired, it contended that the reaction to his attendance at the gathering "raises fundamental questions about academic freedom." CAUT insisted that "universities can only serve the public interest through the advancement of knowledge if they are places open to the widest diversity of viewpoints and perspectives—places where criticism and debate, not silencing and suppression, are the response to perspectives with which one disagrees."<sup>40</sup> Since the topic of the conference was so clearly Holocaust denial, it is strange that CAUT should see this solely as a matter of academic freedom and not academic integrity. Why was CAUT not disturbed by the participation of one of its members in a gathering whose premise is based on falsehood and lies? Why did it not, even as it acknowledged Dossa's right to be there, raise questions about why a university teacher would participate in something that is so clearly intended to distort the truth? Why did CAUT ignore the fact that the university, while castigating Dossa's attendance, acknowledged his academic freedom and right to attend?

When Dossa returned to Canada, James Turk, the executive director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, rose to his defense, casting his words in the context of academic freedom, which he defined as "the right of academic staff to speak the truth as they see it without repression from their institution, the state, religious authorities, special interest groups or anyone else." He compared the way in which Prof. Dossa was treated to the McCarthy period in the United States when many people feared attending "events that were unpopular." Turk chastised those who engaged in an "aggressive attempt based on very little information to denigrate Prof. Dossa and to vilify him." It seems strange for the head of an organization dedicated to university teaching to come so aggressively to the defense of a professor who chose to attend a conference at which people who deny not only the Holocaust but the horrors of the American slave trade were participants.<sup>41</sup>

The LRC's concluded its comments about Dossa's essay with a rather self-congratulatory paragraph.

Academic freedom, like all freedom of speech issues, calls on thoughtful citizens to broaden their horizons.... It is always individuals who are raising uncomfortable ideas that the majority would rather not hear who end up excoriated or denigrated in the media and who are left twisting in the wind by the institutions within which they work. Reading Shiraz Dossa's essay gives us all the opportunity to confront some important and controversial ideas that go to the heart of our identity as a multicultural nation. We hope you agree.

The LRC and, to a somewhat lesser degree, CAUT seem to believe that Professor Dossa deserves to almost be lauded for participating in such a gathering. While Dossa was

<sup>40</sup> See: <<http://www.caut.ca/en/news/comms/20061214dossa.asp>>.

<sup>41</sup> Valpy, *supra* note 39. For Turk's comments, see Dossa, "The Explanation We Never Heard," *supra* note 6.

subjected to a barrage of criticism, he was not fired or demoted. In fact, the statement by the SFX president specifically took note of Dossa's *right* to attend. Had this been a conference devoted to rewriting the history of American slavery, claiming that it was a great boon and gift for the Africans who were part of it, as conference participant David Duke argues was the case, would the LRC and CAUT have rallied to his defense?

While deniers may have been pleased by the conference, their real victory is to be found in the comments of CAUT and the LRC. To call Holocaust denial (or even "review" or "revision") an "uncomfortable idea" is to ignore the fact that deniers distort, obfuscate, and invent in order to make their arguments. To have their ideas called "important" and "controversial" is more than they could have hoped for. The response of the LRC and CAUT to this conference can be contrasted with that of an Iranian journalist who, while standing outside the conference, lamented: "It makes me ashamed, so ashamed."<sup>42</sup> That journalist may be one of the few people to have emerged from this affair with his honor intact.

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<sup>42</sup> See: <[http://news.independent.co.uk/world/middle\\_east/article2067598.ece](http://news.independent.co.uk/world/middle_east/article2067598.ece)>.

## Making History: Engaging, Educating, and Empowering Faculty to Address Issues of Antisemitism in the Academy

Edward S. Beck\*

In 1972, as a young untenured lecturer on an administrative line teaching in the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Education at Penn State's branch campus in Harrisburg and after having just returned from my first trip to Europe and Israel to meet family trying to reunite after the Holocaust, I was introduced to an organization called American Professors for Peace in the Middle East (APPME).

It was a vital interdisciplinary academic association with a solid history of clarifying many of the academic issues and misperceptions surrounding the Middle East conflict. Several of my senior colleagues at Penn State were engaged members of the group. The group produced a journal that was peer-reviewed and considered quite helpful and respected at the time. The group had a strong history through the 1960s until the mid-1980s when they became defunct. In informal conversations with a number of past members and leaders of that group, I was told that with the impending optimism generated by the Oslo accords and other events, it was felt that there was no further need for this group to continue and so it became defunct and disbanded.

Nothing could have been further from the truth in terms of the ongoing need in academia to have a well-respected group of academics analyzing current events in the Middle East. This was because departments of Middle Eastern studies were becoming established and started developing a clear anti-Israel bias and Israel studies departments started following some unwritten and misguided notion that, in order to be academically respected, scholars would have to concentrate on a hypercritical analysis of Israeli politics, society, and challenges rather than reporting on the wider range of Israel's unique and challenging position of being trying to be a good neighbor in a hostile neighborhood.

In the period between Oslo process and accords in the early 1990s and the start of the Second Intifada nearly ten years later, a highly negative anti-Israel narrative started to emerge from academia, fueling what Phyllis Chesler (2003) refers to as the "new antisemitism" and including what Natan Sharansky refers to as the "3 Ds" — the Demonization of Israel, the Delegitimization of Israel, and the holding of Israel to a Double standard (Sharansky, 2004). These underpinnings gave rise to such academic develop-

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ments as the vilification and physical intimidation of Jewish students on college campuses; the call for a “single-state solution” called Palestine by New York University political scientist, Jewish second generation Holocaust survivor the late Tony Judt (Judt, 2003); the minimization and vilification of the Holocaust (Finkelstein, 2005); the characterization of Israelis as “colonialists” (Said, 1978); the call for the boycott of Israeli academics and academic institutions, starting in the United Kingdom in 2005 and spreading to Norway and Canada and, most recently, Johannesburg; calls for academic institutional divestiture from Israeli financial holdings at places as diverse as Hampshire College and UC Berkeley; a growing number of events on campus under the banner of “Israel Apartheid Week” at colleges and universities seen as hospitable to anti-Israel sentiments in North America; orchestrated student disruptions of Israeli speakers (UC Irvine 2010); university invitations to anti-Israel political leaders to major universities promoting hate and propaganda against Israel (Ahmadinejad at Columbia 2009); academic allegations by senior scholars of a powerful Israel lobby fueling the United States government against its own interests in order to support Israel (Walt and Mearsheimer, 2007); increasing challenges that any faculty members who defended Israel’s right to exist as a democratic Jewish state were “right-wing nuts”; and an increasing number of Jewish and Israeli professors becoming so anti-Israel that even their own institutions and funding sponsors have started discussing sanctions, which is fueling more calls for boycotts, divestiture and sanctions against Israeli academics.

These developments shouted out for the reincarnation of the APPME, as faculty supporters of Israel were feeling more and more isolated and reluctant to openly speak their minds. This led to the relegation of the all-important accurate narrative to the professional polemicists, propagandists, and academic extremists from both sides of the conflict, who were not involved in dialogue but in launching attacks and counter-attacks. The time had come for an academic association that would try to become a “big tent” for discussion and concentrate on “academic integrity and honest debate” in a civil academic discourse on the basis that that Israel had a right to exist within safe and secure borders, “able to recognize the peaceful legitimate aspirations of her neighbors.” Thus began the commitment in 2002 of Judith Jacobson, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, Laurie Zoloth, then at San Francisco State University and now at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, and myself to found Scholars for Peace in the Middle East. With the help, encouragement, and guidance of Rabbi Dr. Eric Lankin, then of the United Jewish Communities and now of the Jewish National Fund, the group evolved from a Yahoogroups listserv of about 300 faculty members to what is now an international academic community of over 60,000 faculty network participants with a board of directors, executive director, two conferences with published proceedings and another conference scheduled for January 2011, and 40 chapters (including chapters in Australia, Austria, Canada, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, and with chapters being formed in Latin America, Europe, and Asia). Network participants range from Nobel laureates to college and university presidents and part-time and adjunct instructors, not to mention many independent and think-tank scholars.

Contrary to many advocacy organizations, the organizers are trying very hard to be construed not as a Jewish pro-Israel advocacy organization but as a legitimate community of scholars coming from a wide range of disciplines, ethnicities, political perspectives, and experiences where “academic integrity and honest debate” through civil discourse

was the norm. Reaching this unique level of recognition and operations has been an ongoing challenge for SPME but has resulted in producing well-received scholarship, including the proceedings from its 2005 Conference on Postcolonial Theory and the Israel-Arab Conflict, which resulted in a well-received series of papers edited by Philip Carl Salzman and Donna Robinson Divine (Routledge 2008) and the 2010 Conference on The Islamic Republic of Iran: Multidisciplinary Analyses of Its Theocracy, Nationalism and Assertion of Power, which resulted in proceedings published through Case Western Reserve University through its library's Digital Case Services.<sup>1</sup> At the time of writing, an academic conference slated for the annual meeting of SPME in Miami, entitled "Fifty Years of the Special US-Israel Relations (1962-2012): Walt-Mearsheimer in Perspective" is being planned, with the papers and proceedings to be published by academic presses.

The organizers were also faced with the dilemma of addressing the issue of faculty wanting to "do something" more in terms of advocacy, given the very real threats to "academic integrity and honest debate" that were quickly emerging from well-financed anti-Israel groups that were causing problems for established Jewish constituencies on campus. This began with calls to boycott Israeli professors and academic institutions from the UK Association of University Teachers (AUT) and continued through the sustained efforts of the AUT in its present form as the University and College Union (UCU). Inspired by the internationally based Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel and other well-financed international campaigns, SPME quickly and rapidly acquired collegial support from a wide range of scholars totaling well over 60,000. Through petitions and statements they informed their peers that boycotting fellow academics is anathema to academic integrity, honest debate, civil discourse, and academic freedom, serving no useful purpose in advancing the course of peace and perhaps even confounding and further complicating the process. In several statements, academics, Nobel laureates, and college presidents stated quite simply that anyone boycotting Israelis would be boycotting them as well. This sent out a strong and compelling message about the seriousness of such actions. In 2008, over 12,000 faculty members including scores of Nobel laureates and college and university presidents signed a statement saying

We are academics, scholars, researchers and professionals of differing religious and political perspectives. We all agree that singling out Israelis for an academic boycott is wrong. To show our solidarity with our Israeli academics in this matter, we, the undersigned, hereby declare ourselves to be Israeli academics for purposes of any academic boycott. We will regard ourselves as Israeli academics and decline to participate in any activity from which Israeli academics are excluded. (SPME Petition, 2008)

This statement was seen as a significant persuasive statement in defeating the UCU boycott effort in 2008, as it demonstrated quite clear from faculty to faculty that boycott actions would not only frowned upon but would also have some unintended and serious consequences that were clearly understood in the professional academic arena, even if not by the popular media. This demonstration of academic solidarity was indeed historic by any account (of which there were few).

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<sup>1</sup> See: <<http://library.case.edu/digitalcase/BrowseObjects.aspx?PID=ksl:IslamicRepublicIran>>.

To date, nearly 100,000 faculty from around the world have been involved in one or more SPME initiatives, either through advocacy or scholarship or both. As of this writing, SPME has a mailing list of nearly 60,000, much to the surprise, if not envy, of others, several of whom have been skeptical about the ability of SPME to survive and thrive.

So what accounts for this kind of success? In 2003, as SPME was forming, the leadership attended a major gathering of students, Jewish community activists, and Hillel functionaries at a major northeastern university where the head of a major American Jewish communal group was addressing about 600 students, faculty, and community donors. When asked what role and resources were being developed for faculty as stakeholders in the academic community to help improve the integrity of the narrative, the questioner was told that “faculty are hopeless.” Faculty members attending at the time were appalled and felt quite perplexed by this statement, which suggested that faculty were not seen either as stakeholders in the academic community nor as a potential source of influence for changing the toxic anti-Israel narrative on campus. This incident, as much as any single incident, helped the leaders crystallize the notion that it takes a faculty-to-faculty initiative to persuade, motivate, and inspire colleagues to come out of their foxholes to address these issues of anti-Israelism that is frequently nothing more than veiled antisemitism in ways that are sensitive to the norms and culture of the faculty in their home institutions.

SPME continually strives to distinguish scholarship from advocacy, polemics, and propaganda for the sake of faculty whose objectivism and neutrality is oftentimes a critical component of their very existence. More than one scholar has come before a peer review committee, department chair, or dean to be confronted with displeasure over their personal or political views rather than their scholarship.

SPME is trying to perfect the concept of “academic advocacy,” which is based on the premise that, when the objective facts are closely examined, there can be clarity and resolution and full understanding of the complexities of the situation. As Justice Louis Brandeis noted, “Sunlight is the best form of disinfectant.” SPME’s academic constituency continually challenges SPME to be open to a variety of views and interpretations.

To this end, SPME also seeks—sometimes successfully but often with great difficulty and in the face of resistance—to engage and connect with others in cases of disagreement and entrenchment on what are sometimes major issues. Colleagues with extreme, intransigent feelings are frequently reluctant to engage with others. Dialogue can therefore be difficult, but it is never discouraged and always encouraged, as SPME values academic freedom, freedom of thought and ideas, and honest and civil debate. SPME views with regret and frustration those who demand that SPME reflect their world view as a condition for becoming involved. SPME tries to refrain from name calling, ad hominem attacks, and incendiary rhetoric. Most of the time it does so successfully, but sometimes one colleague’s analysis may cause another colleague to become a victim of incitement.

Academic sensitivities are fragile and sometimes difficult to deal with. Does participating in SPME’s stated mission automatically place a professor in the right-wing camp? Is it possible for liberals and progressives to endorse the mission statement? Can those who have issues with the “occupied territories” and those who see the territories as “disputed” find common ground with one another in an academic setting? Like others, academics can also draw lines in the sand. This is problematic, because such intransigence turns every issue into a zero-sum game. It is clear to many that any solution to the

Middle East conflict will require great compromise and sacrifice in order to avoid what can only be described as an alarming alternative.

So how can faculty on college campuses still make history with respect to this particular conflict narrative?

1. Faculty members will need to become more proactive stakeholders on their campuses in the areas of:
  - a. academic freedom, responsibility, and accountability, in order to address what constitutes acceptable professional academic discourse versus hate speech, incitement, and intimidation;
  - b. knowing institutional, local, and state codes of conduct, in order to hold academic community members—whether students, faculty colleagues, or administrators—to account by bringing institutional charges against offenders; and
  - c. monitoring academic curriculums for bias, imbalance, inaccuracies, and abuse of faculty privilege.
2. Faculty scholars will need to develop scholarship to:
  - a. not only educate students but also educate colleagues and future generations of scholars by addressing the demonization, delegitimization, and double standards being leveled against Israel in a variety of disciplines and not just in the field of Middle Eastern studies;
  - b. recapture the original meaning of Zionism as a progressive, humanitarian, egalitarian ideal that sees people living side-by-side in peace working toward the common good;
  - c. emphasize and highlight research and academic developments that enhance cooperation and collaboration among the differing ethnicities in the region;
  - d. open constructive dialogue with colleagues with different orientations and persuasions using constructive models of engagement as opposed to absolutist models; and
  - e. seek real solutions to the real problems of the region to facilitate co-habitation and, hopefully, mutual respect and shared aspirations.
3. Faculty scholars can no longer sit back and let others manage these issues within their institutions and communities. As we have learned from the past, when the intelligentsia remain uninvolved, their inaction is viewed as compliance, which sometimes places them in extremely compromised and difficult positions. We are learning that there is strength and meaning in numbers when it comes to keeping this narrative honest and that every voice counts.
4. Finally, and this is perhaps the most difficult aspect of all, faculty must agree to contribute to an organization such as SPME precisely to maintain its academic integrity and independence and its responsiveness to its constituency. If faculty wish to develop and elevate the narrative, they must invest in the process and own it by sustaining the organization. If they do not, others will control the narrative that is partially responsible for the dilemmas we are facing now. The fact of the matter is that funding scholarship is not yet seen as funding students and community agencies. Faculty will need to take the initiative to self-govern and spend a few dollars to collectively empower themselves to fund the kinds of scholarship that can help elevate the narrative on campus. The arithmetic is very simple. If 60,000 faculty members

contributed \$75.00 a year, that would produce an annual budget of \$4,500,000. Imagine the level of scholarship and educational opportunities to address the increasing anti-Israelism and antisemitism on campus that could be funded by such a budget. In other words, faculty must put their money where their mouths, heads and hearts are.

In conclusion, faculty do not only have the right to analyze and interpret history and results but also have a responsibility to use that knowledge to make history by standing solidly for the principles of academic freedom, civility, privilege, and integrity upon which the modern academy is built. Without doing these things, the academy and the complex narrative and hopes for a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Arab conflict on campus will be reduced to a house-to-house, sniper-shooting guerilla war resulting in never-ending hostilities, continued casualties, and loss of hope.

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## Struggles over the Boundaries of Legitimate Discourse: Antizionism,<sup>1</sup> Bad-Faith Allegations and *The Livingstone Formulation*

David Hirsh\*

A colleague told me she had been invited onto a panel in the Netherlands to discuss Caryl Churchill's *Seven Jewish Children: a play for Gaza* (2009). I asked if she had judged that the play was antisemitic. She looked concerned and surprised and told me that in the Netherlands one would not characterise such a play as antisemitic. After the Holocaust the word "antisemitic" was too strong, she explained.

The play is an account of the psychological dynamics within an archetypal (or stereotyped) Jewish family that have led to the situation where today's Jews are able to contemplate the suffering of Palestinians without pity or remorse. The writer Howard Jacobson (2009) did say in Britain that the play was antisemitic. He argued that the play was dishonest, one-sided, made use of the themes of the blood libel and it accused Jews of being pathologically pre-disposed to genocide.

I am interested here in the thought process of my Dutch colleague. For her, characterising something a person has written as antisemitic felt similar to saying that she was like a Nazi advocating the gassing of the Jews. For her, the concept *antisemitic* could not be used in a civilised rational or analytic discussion about Churchill's play because it was too big and too powerful. It could not be used as a scalpel, to dissect a text; it was a nuclear bomb, which would not only destroy the object of inquiry but also the whole discursive space. There was a sense in which the concept of antisemitism itself was felt to be outside of the boundaries of legitimate discourse for ordinary everyday slanders against Jews.

If to raise the issue of antisemitism is to unleash a nuclear bomb, then the issue is unraisable, as nuclear weapons are unusable. The discussion of antisemitism is thought of as a weapon instead of an analytic or political endeavour. Who is sufficiently cynical and vulgar to wield this weapon when it ought to be reserved only for the characterisation of pure evil? Caryl Churchill says:

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<sup>1</sup> The word "antizionism" is not hyphenated, because the "Zionism" against which antizionism defines itself is a self-constructed phenomenon, not something that exists in the material world.

Howard Jacobson ... writes as if there's something new about describing critics of Israel as anti-Semitic. But it's the usual tactic. (Churchill, 2009a)

Who's usual tactic? What is the collective of which Jacobson is alleged to be part that usually uses a tactic of raising the issue of antisemitism to delegitimise criticism of Israel? Churchill does not defend herself against Jacobson's accusation but instead bounces back a counter-accusation that critics of Israel are routinely accused of antisemitism in order to silence them.

Judith Butler (2003) was concerned about an argument made by Lawrence Summers, then the President of Harvard University, that the campaign to divest from or to boycott Israel was antisemitic in its effect if not in its intent. Butler was critical of Summers' claim that something could still be antisemitic in its effect even if it was not motivated by any antisemitic intent.

Butler has made a career out of tracing the complex ways in which social and linguistic structures set up gendered and homophobic exclusions and how conceptual and discursive factors coalesce into systems of discrimination. According to her own theory, we are all caught up in the complexity of power relations in which our own self-consciousness is only a part of the story. But when the issue is one of antisemitism, she puts down her sophisticated social and discursive tools and insists instead that a person can only be implicated in antisemitism if they are self-conscious Jew-haters. In response to Summers, who is trying to use the concept of antisemitism in an analytic and a measured way to discuss a phenomenon about which he is concerned, Butler insists that the concept should remain a nuclear bomb. It should only be used, for her, to describe actions that are motivated by the hatred of Jews. She insists on defining antisemitism in such a way as to make it unusable in a discussion of contemporary discursive phenomena that are related to hostility to Israel.

The EUMC Working Definition of Antisemitism, produced by an institution of the European Union, is a set of guidelines that was intended to help with the process of making judgments about whether or not an incident is antisemitic. This definition was tentatively adopted following successful lobbying by Jewish NGOs that were concerned that some kinds of manifestations of hostility to Israel ought to be recognised as antisemitic (Whine, 2006). The Working Definition focuses not on the intention of the person responsible for an incident but on the incident itself. It was originally produced to help officials across Europe to count and report antisemitic incidents. It was an attempt to recalibrate the concept of antisemitism to what was actually going on in Europe and so to undermine the association of the concept only with pure evil.

Antizionist discourse has been influential within the University and College Union (UCU) in the United Kingdom, the trade union that represents university and college workers. It has manifested itself in repeated attempts to win the union to a policy of supporting a boycott of Israeli universities. In May 2011, senior figures in the UK Jewish community wrote a letter to the General Secretary. They wrote that the prevalence of antizionist discourse had created a situation where they judged that the union had become institutionally antisemitic. At UCU Congress, shortly afterwards, some antizionists proposed a motion that disavowed the EUMC Working Definition. They could not accept it as a valid definition because it seemed to characterise much of what they themselves were doing within the union as antisemitic. In the debate, the Working Definition was denounced as a bad faith attempt to say that criticism of Israel was antisemitic and thereby to situate such criticism outside of the boundaries of antiracist,

or even of legal, discourse. During the debate, Brian Klug's definition of antisemitism was proposed instead, which was summed up by a speaker in the debate as "hostility towards Jews as Jews" (Hirsh, 2011). This proposal would limit the concept of antisemitism to hostility that was consciously and openly felt and expressed against Jews for no other reason than their Jewishness.

My Dutch colleague did not want to use the concept *antisemitism* because it seemed to impede the possibility of rational debate and critical thinking. Caryl Churchill did not want to engage with the concept of antisemitism because she thought of it as a dirty weapon, wielded in bad faith by people who want to protect Israel from criticism. Judith Butler did not want to accept the possibility of actions having antisemitic effect even in the absence of antisemitic malice. The UCU, when accused of antisemitism, responded by insisting on a definition by which nobody except a crazed Nazi could be said to be antisemitic.

Antiracists who are accused of antisemitism in connection with their statements about Israel find themselves in an unusual position. Often they forget the importance of understanding racism objectively as something that exists outside of the individual racist. They find it easier to look within themselves and to find they are not intentionally antisemitic, indeed they are opponents of antisemitism. Intimate access to the object of inquiry yields an apparently clear result and seems to make it unnecessary for the antiracist to look any further at how contemporary antisemitism actually functions independently of the will of the particular social agent.

In February 2005, Ken Livingstone, then the mayor of London, became involved in an apparently trivial late night argument with a reporter after a party at City Hall. Oliver Finegold asked him how the party had been. Livingstone was angry because he felt Finegold was intruding. After a little banter to and fro, in which the reporter said that he was only trying to do his job, Livingstone retorted by asking him whether he had previously been a "German war criminal". Finegold replied that he had not, and that he was Jewish, and that he was offended by the suggestion. Livingstone went on to insist that Finegold was behaving just like a "German war criminal", that his newspaper, *The Standard*, "was a load of scumbags and reactionary bigots" and that it had a record of supporting fascism.

Instead of apologising for his comment in the sober light of day, Livingstone responded to charges of antisemitism that had been made in relation to the Finegold affair with the following words:

For far too long the accusation of antisemitism has been used against anyone who is critical of the policies of the Israeli government, as I have been. (Livingstone, 2006)

This is a formulation which often appears in response to an accusation of antisemitism, which I have called *The Livingstone Formulation* (Hirsh, 2007; 2010). It is a rhetorical device that enables the user to refuse to engage with the charge made, a mirror that bounces back a counter-charge of dishonest Jewish (or "Zionist") conspiracy to a charge of antisemitism.

*The Livingstone Formulation* does two things. First, it denies the distinction between criticism of Israel, which is legitimate, on the one hand, and discourse or action about which there is concern relating to its alleged connection to antisemitism, on the other. *The Livingstone Formulation* takes everything together, criticism of Israel but also other things that are allegedly not so legitimate, such as repeatedly insulting a Jewish reporter by comparing him to a Nazi.

Second, *The Livingstone Formulation* does not simply accuse anyone who raises the issue of contemporary antisemitism of being wrong, it also accuses them of bad faith: “the accusation of antisemitism *has been used* against anyone who is critical...” [my italics]. Not an honest mistake, but a secret, common plan to try to delegitimise criticism by means of the instrumental use of a charge of antisemitism. This is an allegation of malicious intent made against the (unspecified) people who raise concerns about antisemitism. It is not possible to “use” “the accusation of antisemitism” in order to delegitimise criticism of Israel without dishonest intent.

The raising of the issue of antisemitism is often claimed to be an *ad hominem* attack on the “critic of Israel”. Yet while there is fierce resistance to the possibility of unintended antisemitism, those who employ *The Livingstone Formulation* accuse the raisers of the issue of antisemitism of doing so with malicious intent. Jon Pike (2008) argues that the “Livingstone manoeuvre represents a significant injustice. The function of the formulation is to establish and cement a credibility deficit on the part of those who have and express concern about anti-Semitism.”

Slavoj Žižek (2011) begins an article with what is universally accepted as being outside of the boundaries of legitimate discourse, that is the writings of Anders Breivik, the murderer of 77 people in Norway in July 2011. Žižek’s method is to associate other phenomena with Breivik in order to demonstrate how they too fall outside of the boundaries of legitimate discourse. Žižek says that Breivik is antisemitic but also “pro-Israel”. Žižek’s evidence is that “he even wants to see the Jerusalem temple rebuilt”, as though he shared this with most people who are “pro-Israel” and he makes sense of Breivik’s “pro-Israel” stance by reference to his Islamophobia and his view that Israel is “the first line of defence against the Muslim expansion”. Žižek asks how a “Zionist Nazi” is possible. He says that “Zionist-rightists” want to make a dirty deal with Europe whereby they are allowed to build “apartheid” in Israel in exchange for Europeans being allowed to be intolerant of Muslim minorities at home. Since when did Europeans require Jewish agreement to be intolerant? But in Žižek’s argument Israelis, or “Rightist-Zionist” Jews, are a key element in the fatal undermining of European civilisation. He is careful not to blame all Jews, he only blames those Jews who adhere to “Zionist politics”. Without comment, he moves from Zionist Nazis, and “Rightist-Zionists” to the left liberal philosopher Bernard Henry-Lévy. Žižek is concerned with Lévy’s claim that antisemitism in the 21st century would come significantly from the left rather than the right. Žižek does not take the idea of antisemitism on the left seriously, and he swipes the idea away by ridiculing it as a claim that “today’s anti-capitalism is a disguised form of antisemitism”. Strange that he has never sniffed anti-capitalist antisemitism and does not find the idea worthy of consideration. Strange also that it seems not to occur to him that Nazism itself could be understood as an anti-capitalist antisemitism. Instead, he reads the significance of Lévy’s concern as being neglectful of “old” antisemitism in Europe. He says that Lévy’s position is that concern for the “old” antisemitism is incompatible with concern for the “new”, yet this actually turns out to be his own position. He thinks that concern about “new” (fake) antisemitism undermines the fight against “old” (authentic) antisemitism.

Žižek offers a classic instance of *The Livingstone Formulation*:

... Zionism itself has paradoxically come to adopt some antisemitic logic in its hatred of Jews who do not fully identify with the politics of the state of Israel. Their target, the figure of the Jew who doubts the Zionist project, is constructed in the same way as the European antisemites constructed the figures of the Jew...

Antisemitism has often made use of the trope of the exceptional Jew who is offered a way of distancing himself from the crimes of the Jews in general. Žižek splits Jewry into two. On the one hand we have Zionist Jews who embody everything that is bad about the contemporary world, evidenced by the fact that Breivik embraces their worldview. On the other hand, we have Jews who Žižek characterises as those who “do not fully identify with the politics of the state of Israel”. The first group of Jews, in Žižek’s understanding, is analogous to the antisemites of old while the second group of Jews is analogous to the Jews of old. The first group has become Nazi while the second group is the remnant of authentically Jewish multiculturalist alterity. *The Livingstone Formulation* slippage is important here, it conflates the tiny minority of Jews who are militantly hostile to Israel with the evidently common and legitimate Jewish position of “not fully [but in one sense or another] identifying with the politics of the state of Israel”.

Instead of examining the politics of Israel-hatred or of particular manifestations of anti-capitalism to see if they connect in any way to antisemitism, Žižek haughtily discounts the possibility in advance. Eschewing rational discourse, he denounces the majority of Jews, from the most racist settlers on the far right to Bernard Henry-Lévy on the left, of being themselves like antisemites. Instead of engaging with what actually existing Jews say,<sup>2</sup> he seeks rhetorically to push them over the boundary of legitimate discourse onto a terrain where their voices need not be heard. It is not a surprise that the campaign to boycott Israeli academia is based on the same foundations as Žižek’s politics. The damage done by refusing to think analytically and coolly about contemporary antisemitism, and delegitimising those who do so, is that it inoculates antiracist activists against being able to recognise and to oppose antisemitism when they see it or, more worryingly, when they themselves stumble into it.

The inoculation is widespread. Carlos Latuff is an antizionist cartoonist who is celebrated on parts of the antiracist left but who was also awarded the second prize in President Ahmadinejad’s Iranian Holocaust denial cartoon exhibition in 2006. Latuff’s work is full of antisemitic tropes: Israel as a child-killing state, Israel as a blood-sucking state, Israel as a globally powerful lobby, Israel as playing the antisemitism card in bad faith. *The Guardian* newspaper carried an uncritical piece about Latuff by Jack Shenker (2011), who asked Latuff about claims that his work is antisemitic. Latuff offered an answer, “wearily”, writes Shenker. And that was enough for somebody writing in an antiracist newspaper. Latuff is weary because we are all inoculated to understand that accusations of antisemitism are made in bad faith. This has become a shared common-sense of our age. With the world “wearily” Shenker sides with the antisemite in refusing to engage rationally with his accusers. He only needs to sigh in mock tiredness at their bad faith and push them over the boundary of civilised discourse into a place where they do not need to be listened to and where their criticism does not need to be engaged with.

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<sup>2</sup> For some research on what actually existing Jews in Britain say, as well as a response to this Žižek piece, see Gardner (2011).

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## The Language of the New Antisemitism

Michael C. Kotzin\*

For several years now, scholars and commentators have been talking about the new antisemitism—a contemporary manifestation of the age-old hatred whose themes, as well as the vocabulary and imagery through which they are expressed, are mostly traditional. Though this manifestation sometimes takes new shape or is expressed in new venues, what is particularly distinctive about this trend is the fact that the targets of today’s attacks are not so much individual Jews or Jewish communities per se, as was the case formerly, but the Jewish collective—that is, the State of Israel, along with individual Jews based on their association with that entity.

When Naim Ateek and his Jerusalem-based Sabeel Center for Liberation Theology sent out an Easter message in 2001 saying that “In this season of Lent, it seems to many of us that Jesus is on the cross again with thousands of crucified Palestinians around Him,” and when they went on to say that “the Israeli crucifixion system is operating daily,” they were providing an example of the rebirth of Christian antisemitism in this new form. Though the Catholic Church and a number of Protestant denominations have explicitly repudiated the deicide charge that was at the core of antisemitic activity for centuries, that charge is an antisemitic trope that is now being conveyed through allusion and analogy in the works of Ateek and his followers and by representatives of mainline Protestant denominations in the United States and elsewhere.

Similar discourse appeared in the draft of a report issued by the Middle East Study Committee of the Presbyterian Church USA in the spring of 2010, preceding that church’s General Assembly in Minneapolis. In a critique that appeared in the *Christian Century* magazine issue of June 29, 2010, entitled “Habits of Anti-Judaism,” Ted A. Smith and Amy-Jill Levine, both of them from the Vanderbilt Divinity School, cited a number of examples of this sort of rhetoric in the document. They concluded that the Presbyterian report “evokes old echoes of theological supersessionism” and that it “describes Jacob in ways that resonate with anti-Jewish stereotypes.” They also noted multiple other ways in which the report used tropes with origins in Christian anti-Judaism.

Reacting to the Smith-Levine critique and to the comments of other critics of the Presbyterian report, James Wall, himself a former editor of *Christian Century* and an ordained United Methodist minister, similarly resurrected traditional antisemitism in new garb in a piece headed “Israeli ‘Agents’ Infiltrate Presbyterian General Assembly.” Alluding to a familiar New Testament phrase that referred to the episode in which Herod murdered all boys under the age of two in the Bethlehem area in an attempt to

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kill Jesus, Wall spoke of the way that “the slaughter of the innocents began with the Nakba in 1947.”

Applying the themes of a stolen birthright and of supersessionism in the framework of his own hybrid application of religious traditions, the Nation of Islam’s inflammatory Minister Louis Farrakhan resurfaced in the summer of 2010, baiting American Jewish communal leaders and proclaiming as he has in the past that “The Honorable Elijah Mohammad said that almighty God Allah revealed to him that the Black people of America are the real children of Israel and we are the choice of God.” Insisting that “To all of those who feel that the children of Israel are all over in that place they call Israel, you are mistaken,” he added: “The wickedly wise ... are working night and day to trick you out of the promise of God and take you down to hell with them because the time of their end has come.”

Echoes of traditional Christian antisemitism can be heard not only in the words of theologians and spokesmen of religious bodies, mainstream or fringe, but also in more popular discourse. For example, working in a medium that favors short-hand allusions that accompany or are conveyed by starkly rendered graphic images, cartoonists have recirculated the blood libel charge that had so much currency and did so much harm in the Christian Middle Ages.

This theme was gruesomely evoked in a cartoon that appeared in the January 27, 2003 issue of *The Independent* in England. It showed a grotesque, naked Ariel Sharon eating the bloody body of a Palestinian youth. Another visualization of the theme appeared in March 2010 in the form of a wall poster cartoon that was exhibited in the town square of Cologne, Germany. This drawing portrayed a person seen from chest level down who was wearing a bib with a Jewish Star on it, with a plate in front of him on which he was using a knife marked “Gaza” and a red, white, and blue fork to carve up a miniature, bleeding human figure dressed like a Palestinian (with a keffiyeh around his neck). Beside the plate was a glass filled with a red liquid. Explaining why the public prosecutor’s office declined to charge the poster maker with inciting racial hatred, a spokesman explained: “It is not a tendency of hostility toward Jews, but an actual criticism of the situation in Gaza. The cartoon is a sarcastic expression of the Israeli army in Gaza.” I will talk about denial of antisemitism later in this paper, but it is worth keeping this comment on a contemporary rendering of the blood libel theme in mind.

It has been widely noted by scholars that themes familiar from historic Christian antisemitism have found fertile soil in which to grow within the Islamic world. And thus the blood libel, for one thing, has often been repeated in Arab countries. But no theme from Western-generated antisemitism has become as widespread — both in the Islamic world and beyond — as the concept of a global Jewish conspiracy dedicated to controlling the world. It is a theme that Anthony Julius, in his recent book on the history of antisemitism in England, says was “new ... in the late nineteenth century.” As Julius puts it, “Anti-Semitism ... ceased to address a problem *within* medieval life; it instead addressed the pattern of modern life.”

Introduced at the time of the rise of modern Zionism, the theme was rendered in archetypal form in the notorious forgery called the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” — an inspirational text for the Nazis that is now an accepted, widely circulated source of ideas about Jews in the Islamic world. Nowhere can that be seen more clearly than in the Hamas Charter, a strikingly direct and extensive rendering of the language of the new antisemitism, that was issued in 1988 and continues to define the group’s nature and goals.



Hamas' use of the Protocols and belief in their validity is explicit. "Today it is Palestine, tomorrow it will be one country or another," reads Article 22 of the Charter. "The Zionist plan is limitless. After Palestine, the Zionists aspire to expand from the Nile to the Euphrates. When they will have digested the region they overtook<sup>1</sup> they will aspire to further expansion, and so on. Their plan is embodied in the 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion,' and their present conduct is the best proof of what we are saying." Similarly, in Article 28, the Charter speaks of the "Zionist invasion" as "a vicious invasion" that "does not refrain from resorting to all methods, using all evil in contemptible ways to achieve its end. It relies greatly in its infiltration and espionage operations on the secret organizations it gave rise to ... and other sabotage groups. All these organizations, whether secret or open, work in the interest of Zionism and according to its instructions. They aim at undermining societies, destroying values, corrupting consciences, deteriorating character and annihilating Islam."

In this rendering of classic antisemitism in new garb, the word "Zionist" often replaces the word "Jew," as it already did in the title of the Protocols, though that book was written when the Zionist movement was in its infancy and well before the establishment of the State of Israel. When Article 30 of the Charter talks about "the ferocity of the Zionist offensive and the Zionist influence in many countries exercised through financial and media control," we are hearing the language of the new antisemitism full-blown.

It is not only Hamas writing for its own followers and would-be followers that speaks this way today. Addressing the United Nations General Assembly on September 23, 2009, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, referred to "barbaric attacks by the Zionist regime" on the Palestinians and, saying in that august setting the sort of thing he has said elsewhere as well, went on to proclaim: "It is no longer acceptable that a small minority would dominate the politics, economy, and culture of major parts of the world by its complicated networks, and establish a new form of slavery, and harm the reputation of other nations, even European nations and the United States, to attain its racist ambitions."

Ahmadinejad is often regarded as a crackpot, as a figure from another century if not from another world. But the kinds of ideas that he and his Hamas counterparts convey is becoming more and more common in the mainstream. This is so not only in England and Europe, where we have come to expect it, but in the United States as well. For one thing, this is especially true for Internet postings, where writers can give rein to unfiltered vituperation. And so, for example, John Petras, a former professor of sociology at Binghamton University, can write in an Internet newsletter called "Dissident Voice" that "[Elana] Kagan's ties to the staunchly Zionist faculty at both Chicago and Harvard Law Schools ... account for her meteoric promotions to tenure, deanship and now the US Supreme Court." And he can go on to link those advances to her "ethnic connections" and can conclude that "another active pro-Zionist advocate on the Court will provide a legal cover for the advance of Zionist-dictated authoritarianism over the American people."

Even respected academics working through mainstream publications are joining the chorus in their way these days. In what began as a long article published in the *London Review of Books* in 2006, then turned into a book titled *The Israel Lobby and US Foreign*

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<sup>1</sup> An animal metaphor consistent with the derogatory and dehumanizing way in which Jews are spoken about throughout this document and in other Hamas-endorsed frameworks.

*Policy* that was published in 2007 in the United States, University of Chicago professor John Mearsheimer and Harvard professor Stephen Walt talked about their subject in more veiled language that, though they repeatedly deny meaning it to be heard that way, still sounds an awful lot like the way Jews and Zionists are portrayed by Hamas, Ahmadinejad, and the legion of other echoers of the concepts crystallized by the Protocols. Reduced to its essence, in the Mearsheimer/Walt construction, the supporters of Israel come together to exert an influence powerful enough to lead the United States to ignore its own interests in the Middle East and the world, and instead to be driven by what the lobby sees as in Israel's interest.

Mearsheimer and Walt may assert that they do not believe there is a Jewish cabal or conspiracy, and that in their minds the Israel lobby is like any other interest group or ethnic lobby. Still, for them the members of the so-called Israel lobby "are in an unusually favorable position to influence foreign policy" while "what sets [that lobby] apart is its extraordinary effectiveness." And in fact, throughout their book, Israel's supporters are portrayed as constituting a powerful force undermining America's well being, with the members of that lobby skillful enough to cover up their behind-the-scenes subterfuge from others. The Hamas Charter calls it "sabotage." Mearsheimer and Walt may not overtly use the term in their text, but through their subtext they certainly convey a similar idea.

Since gaining widespread notice thanks to the book, Mearsheimer has continued to advance its themes, sometimes more bluntly. "In short," he said in a speech at the Palestine Center in Washington in April 2010, "President Obama is no match for the lobby." In an even more recent post on his blog, he proclaimed that "the lobby believes it can finesse any issue.... America's interests and Israel's interests are going to continue to diverge. An end result of that ... is that the lobby is going to have to work overtime to cover that up."

In that same post, Mearsheimer proclaimed that "The Israelis can do almost anything and get away with it.... If I went to the Middle East, visited Israel, and I was killed, somebody shot me, do you think there would be any accountability? Seriously." Surely the venom verging on paranoia with which this notable professor now talks about Israel and its supporters has entered some very off-the-wall but familiar terrain.

In his April speech at the Palestine Center, Mearsheimer talked about what he described as the inevitability of Israel's becoming an apartheid state, entering into territory widely occupied today by those who have discovered that the term is an especially useful slur. In so doing, he himself engaged in a couple of revealing maneuvers. First, he switched from talking about Israel and apartheid in the future subjunctive, as though that linkage is only a hypothetical possibility, to doing so in the present tense, using a grammatical double move to make it sound like Israel has *already* become an apartheid state while leaving himself room to deny having said that. Secondly, he demonstrated how scornfully he regards Israel's mainstream supporters by using name-calling derived from South African history. Thus, after listing what he calls "righteous Jews" (including people who are prepared to sharply attack Israel and, in some cases, question its right to exist), he said: "On the other side we have the new Afrikaners who will support Israel even if it is an apartheid state." The people on the latter list, it should be noted, are not only personalities who might fairly be placed toward the right-wing of the political spectrum, but also others who objectively would not be regarded as having that political profile—including what he calls "individuals who head the Israel lobby's major organi-

zations." Here it is worth citing Anthony Julius' observation that "the master trope, that there are 'good Jews' and 'bad Jews,' has been continuous in the political culture for at least the last hundred years. It ... is itself an anti-Semitic construction."

The evocation of apartheid of course conjures up the racist regime of South Africa, which ultimately was overthrown. Numerous scholars have pointed to the differences between contemporary Israel and that regime, but despite that, references to the practice of apartheid and use of the word itself have become increasingly common as a way to malign Israel and, ultimately, deny its legitimacy. Such usage is one of the central ways that Israel and its supporters are linguistically tarred and feathered today, in an age in which racism is the prototypical sin and apartheid-era South Africa the model of a regime that did not deserve to exist.

Expressions of Israel-connected antisemitism keep turning up these days, even—or perhaps one might say particularly—in the words of celebrities who get widespread attention in our culture. Thus when a rabbi cum camera toting YouTube reporter asked the aging but still active Helen Thomas, a respected journalist despite her cantankerous style, for a comment on Israel, she replied by saying: "Tell them to get the hell out of Palestine" and "go home" to "Poland, Germany, America and everywhere else." As commentators such as Jeffrey Goldberg and Shelby Steele have observed, this comment reveals both a denial of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state and insensitivity to, if not blatant ignorance of, the realities of the Holocaust and its effects. Coincidentally enough, within a week or so of the Thomas incident, a Jewish dance group—ironically named "Chaverim"—was stoned while attempting to perform in the German city of Hanover. The attacking youths, reportedly young Muslims, who were obviously well in touch with the language of the historic antisemitism of that landscape, shouted "Juden raus."

Even more recently, in another verbal outpouring that the perpetrator later said he regretted, the American film writer and director Oliver Stone told *The Sunday Times* in the United Kingdom that though "Hitler did far more damage to the Russians than the Jewish people," there is a greater focus on the Holocaust than on Russian suffering because of "the Jewish domination of the media." "There's a major lobby in the United States," Stone added in the Mearsheimer and Walt vein: "They are hard workers. They stay on top of every comment, the most powerful lobby in Washington. Israel has f\*\*\*\* up US foreign policy for years." Whatever pro forma retraction Stone may have offered—and in what he said afterwards he really did not totally exonerate himself from the implications of all that he had been quoted as saying in the interview—his readiness to come out with such comments suggests the extent to which these attitudes and the kind of language used to convey them seem to be "out there" these days, beneath the surface if not always explicitly rendered.

The fact that both the Thomas and the Stone comments were connected with the Holocaust is not an incidental matter. Increasingly, the Holocaust context has become a dominating component of the new antisemitism. That can be seen in a number of frameworks, but the linguistic trope I wish to focus on here has to do with the way in which the Nazi war against the Jews, surely one of the most devastating expressions of antisemitism in all of Jewish history as well as one of the most cataclysmic events of the twentieth century, is today itself being used to harm the Jewish people and the nation state that they established in their ancient homeland following World War II.

As Robert Wistrich and others have shown, comparisons of the Israelis and the Nazis could be seen as a theme in the Soviet Union, particularly following the Six Day War in

1967, and then in the Arab world as well. In the Soviet Union, there was a certain appropriateness to the propaganda technique, since the Russians had been besieged and in their own way indeed victimized by the Nazis, and if you wanted to demonize the Israelis, it made a certain sense to say that the Nazis had been reborn in the Israelis' skins. For the Arabs, however, the approach was ironic, since key members of their own leadership had sympathized with the Nazis during the war and some of their countries had provided refuge for Nazi war criminals. All the same, the equation caught on, and cartoons and other forms of propaganda promoting it were then reiterated and expanded at the time of Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and subsequently.

Still, it is pretty much since the 1990s, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, and especially during the past decade, that the Israel/Nazi analogy has become a major motif in the West as well as in the Islamic world. It is now a leading weapon in the propaganda assault against Israel directed by activist Palestinians and other Muslims who have made their way to the West and by radical left-wing individuals and groups. With Nazism widely recognized as the most profound manifestation of evil in modern times, the painting of Zionism as Nazism reborn and Israel as the new Nazi Germany is an attempt to transfer the substance of that evil.

And so it is that, were you to have witnessed anti-Israel rallies in the streets not just of European metropolises but also North American cities subsequent to Israel's military advance into Gaza in late December and early January 2009-2010, or following the recent episode involving the Turkish flotilla, you would have seen demonstrators waving the flags of Hamas and Hezbollah while holding signs bearing images equating the swastika and the Star of David and calling Gaza the new Warsaw Ghetto, labeling Israel soldiers the new storm troopers, and accusing Israel of Nazi-like genocide. Dominating the rhetoric of these rallies, such signage—along with other signs and the chanting and speeches of the rallies—conveyed not sympathy for the Palestinians as much as hatred for Israel and its supporters. And meanwhile, this trope too has made its way into the mainstream—again often in the hands of a cartoonist like Pat Oliphant, who at the time of Operation Cast Lead drew an image of a headless, brutal storm trooper to characterize Israel's behavior in Gaza.

In using swastikas and images of storm troopers to portray Israel and its supporters, Israel's enemies have appropriated motifs with a power that Hitler exploited in his time. It is the power of a stark twisted cross; the power of cruel Hitler-saluting soldiers in black boots, with which the power of the magnetizing madman Hitler himself is associated. Through the years neo-Nazis and other adversaries of the Jewish people have used the swastika to hurt individual Jews, painting swastikas on Jewish institutions, for example, as a form of antisemitic expression. Now, however, the swastika is used not just *against* Jews but, when attached to the State of Israel, to *portray* Jews. It is not just a vehicle for inflicting pain on Jews by trying to create the impression that their worst tormentors have returned, but a way to insultingly accuse them of having become those tormentors themselves.

In the new equation, not only have the Jews become the Nazis, but they have been replaced by new Jews, by new victims, namely the Palestinians, who are regarded as the true heirs to the Promised Land. Seen this way, the Nazi-Israel analogy is a contemporary equivalent of the replacement theology that drove Christian antisemitism for centuries, and thus can be likened to other current expressions of supersessionism.

The equation also creates a particular form of literal Holocaust revisionism, it can be suggested—that is, a way to lead the world to revise its thoughts and feelings about the

Holocaust. For as this realignment of roles goes on, the Holocaust ceases to be regarded as the historic event it was, with facts and details to be learned about. It rather becomes a repository of images, of symbols of innocence and evil to be evoked and applied in whatever way one chooses to suit one's ideological purposes, however twisted that may be. It becomes, in sum, a toolbox full of icons to be taken out and assigned while the reality of the Holocaust, if not actively denied, melts away into a post-modern penumbra.

Traditional antisemitism demonized and scapegoated individual Jews and the Jewish people, regarding them as the evil "other" responsible for the ills of society and the world. The new antisemitism uses language that treats Israel and its supporters in similar ways. Whereas, in earlier eras, antisemitism, with its personal approach, caused Jews to be discriminated against, expelled from one country after another, and ultimately annihilated throughout most of Europe, it is the Jewish national state that today's antisemitism, serving a geopolitical agenda, would have treated as a pariah and ultimately eliminated. This goal is bluntly declared not only by the likes of Ahmadinejad and Hamas but in our own cities, for example by graffiti artists who, in this case abjuring the ubiquitous swastika, paint "Death to Israel" on synagogues they have vandalized. And a similar message is less directly stated but still implied by individuals and groups closer to the mainstream.

"In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defense of the indefensible," wrote George Orwell in his classic essay on "Politics and the English Language" in 1946. The eras and contexts may have their differences, but Orwell's insights apply as well to the use of language I have been talking about, especially his observation that "if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought." Like that before it, the language of today's antisemitism depends upon distortions of the truth to fulfill its purpose, a "hijacking of meaning" as Bernard-Henry Lévy called it when commenting on the post-flotilla demonizations of Israel. Some of those who call Israel an apartheid state or who equate Israel with Nazi Germany must realize that there are differences, and they can be said to be cynically corrupting language to promote such likenesses and to get others to believe them. But there are also people who truly believe even the extremist, delusional concepts about Israel and its supporters that they proclaim, who, haunted by their obsessions—often, it seems, projections of their own hatreds and intentions—have allowed themselves to be separated from reality.

While the discourse of antisemitism is always drenched in corruptions of the truth and those who use and believe those corruptions are always separated from reality to some extent, there is something particularly troubling about the way in which the kinds of views circulating today are not only held by people who are clearly beyond the fringe but are also finding some degree of acceptance in the academy and elsewhere in the mainstream. That process is facilitated when mainstream figures who explicitly or implicitly use the language of the new antisemitism deny such intent and even dismiss the very existence of this new antisemitism, insisting that they and others like them are only criticizing Israel the way one can legitimately criticize any country.

The pattern is common. We have already seen it in the words of the spokesman of the public prosecutor's office in Cologne. Another example is provided by Mearsheimer and Walt, who devote a whole section of their book to advancing the misleading charge that "pro-Israel groups now claim there is a 'new anti-Semitism,' which they equate with criticism of Israel." Mearsheimer and Walt's insistent, repetitive use of the word "criti-

cism" in this section as a description of what is being objected to becomes a stylistic tic, but that still does not make it accurate.

The reason they say this happens is because, they charge, Israel's supporters want to "silence" the country's critics. And they further advance their argument by turning other people's charges about the use of *concepts* into name calling about *personalities* who use those concepts, deliberately conflating the two by saying, for example: "Anyone who criticizes Israeli actions or says that pro-Israel groups have significant influence over US Middle East policy stands a good chance of being labeled an anti-Semite." While this labeling admittedly happens sometimes, it is not nearly as common as is implied by these authors and by others who would prevent readers from taking unfair attacks on Israel or expressions of the new antisemitism seriously. (After the recent flotilla incident, to give but one more example of this pattern, the cartoonist Oliphant drew a pirate with a Star of David on his head-covering climbing on board ship with sword in hand saying: "If you don't like piracy on the high seas, you're anti-Semitic.")

On the one hand, rejection of the existence of antisemitic meaning in statements partaking of the new antisemitism can be seen as a pre-emptive tactic that reveals an acknowledgment that, however much the taboo against antisemitism may have eroded in recent years, the charge still carries weight. On the other hand, though, attempts to obfuscate the difference between fair criticism of Israel and hate-filled rhetoric (a distinction Israel's supporters need to keep in mind too) leads to further corruption of language. Moreover, this new approach can be seen as problematic and even hostile in its own fashion.

In a way, active denial of the existence of the new antisemitism can be related to Holocaust denial. In the minds of those who embrace these positions, the twentieth century's Nazi-driven scapegoating and victimization of Jews and the early twenty-first century's demonization of Israel and its supporters are both considered myths made up by the Jews. For the Holocaust deniers, the first myth was created to evoke sympathy for the Jews and to elicit support for the establishment of Israel. (This is a leitmotif for Ahmadinejad, and the notion was rendered in shorthand by graffiti spray painted in Rome in January 2010 that said "The Holocaust equals Zionist propaganda.") In the eyes of those who object to the claims that there is a new antisemitism, it too is a fiction, in this case created to block criticism of Israel and thus maintain support for that country. Furthermore, in both cases, there is an underlying belief that the ability of the Jews to get the world—at least the West—to buy into these fictions is proof of their skill in controlling others and thus of their nefarious, conspiratorial powers.

In fact, the world today truly is witness to the emergence of a new form of antisemitism, one that is no less potent than that of earlier eras. It is conveyed through language and images that are at once traditional in their substance and contemporary in their modes of expression. But experience reveals that for the man on the street, for the media, for officials in national governments and local jurisdictions, and for university administrators, there has been a serious deficiency in identifying and addressing this new form of hate.

The shift in the specific nature of the target apparently makes it difficult for people of goodwill who hold preconceptions based on what the situation was in earlier times and who are thus programmed to recognize only the classic forms of antisemitism that come from traditional sources to immediately understand what is happening today, especially with those who circulate the new antisemitism not wanting it to be acknowledged. But it

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is incumbent upon those who do realize what is going on, what it means, and what is at stake to speak out and to properly identify the danger that is out there. It is not just Israel's security and the safety of the Jewish people but reality, justice, and just plain common decency that demand no less.





# The EU, the Middle East, and Antisemitism

Leslie S. Lebl\*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The European Union (EU) has become an important—albeit virtually invisible—player in the Middle East, and its role is only likely to grow in future. Scholars and media alike tend to focus on the policies and actions of key EU member states such as France, the United Kingdom, or Germany, while the EU itself has come under relatively little scrutiny. This is hardly surprising: its common foreign policies represent consensus positions among the member states and all too often lack any punch. That is not the case, however, with regard to EU Mideast policy, which began under the EU's predecessor institution, the European Economic Community (EEC), a generation ago.

In the mid-1970s, the EEC decided to support the Palestinian position in the Mideast conflict as part of its Euro-Arab Dialogue with the Arab League (Ye'Or, 2005; Al Mani, 1983; Taylor, 1978). It confirmed this posture in its Venice Declaration (European Council, 1980). The EEC also instituted expansive policies regarding family reunification, cultural autonomy, and social benefits for immigrants that helped to maintain high levels of Muslim immigration and non-assimilation in Europe—policies the EU has continued to promote since it was given authority for immigration policy *per se* (Apap, 2002; Luedtke, 2006).

Manfred Gerstenfeld (2005) has argued that the EU's discriminatory declarations and votes in international bodies have fanned the flames of antisemitism. More broadly, support for the Palestinian cause has provided a favorable environment for the spread of anti-Zionism and its twin, antisemitism. So has the existence of large, unassimilated Muslim immigrant communities increasingly dominated by Islamists,<sup>1</sup> whose antisemitism can be traced back to their seminal thinker Sayyid Qutb (1952; also see Tibi, 2010). The close connection between anti-Zionism and antisemitism is clear from the working definition of antisemitism adopted by the EU (European Union Fundamental Rights Agency, 2005), which states that "calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion" is an example of antisemitism. Today's anti-Zionism, which includes these elements, is essentially a cover for antisemitism. And, indeed, there is a high correlation between individuals with extreme anti-Israel sentiments and antisemitic views (Kaplan and

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<sup>1</sup> "Islamists" refers to groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, whose ideology is variously described as Islamic fundamentalism, political Islam, or radical Islam.

Small, 2006). The specific EU Mideast policies discussed below contribute to the growth and mainstreaming of this ideology, whether presented as anti-Zionism or antisemitism.

As for the motivations behind EU Mideast policy, many factors have played a role. The EEC wanted to enhance its role in the region while minimizing that of the United States; France saw the EEC as a vehicle for achieving French ambitions in the Middle East (Imperiali and Agate, 1984); in general, European countries wanted to maintain good relations with energy-producing Arab countries as well as with the poor, restive, over-populated countries on the southern rim of the Mediterranean. In addition, the EEC demonstrated a predilection in the 1970s for appeasing Palestinian terrorists (Ye'Or 2005; Gantz, 2008). But, beyond these reasons, is there something unique about the EU, as opposed to its member states, that shapes its approach to the Middle East?

French linguist and philosopher Jean-Claude Milner (2003) argues that a united Europe will inevitably pursue a universalist foreign policy that, while minimizing the differences between Europe and the Islamic world, seeks to exclude Jews from the Mediterranean littoral. If Milner's criticism is accurate, it suggests that EU will be unlikely to alter its Mideast policy even if that policy contributes to the spread of anti-semitism in Europe. This paper concludes that Milner's perspective, while controversial, is a useful addition as it emphasizes intrinsic EU characteristics that merit further scholarly scrutiny.

## 2. EEC/EU MIDEAST POLICY

After the 1980 Venice Declaration, which called on Israel to negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization and to cede control of Jerusalem, EEC Mideast policy went into eclipse. The EEC had hoped to marginalize the United States in the Middle East while carving out a role for itself, but in fact the opposite occurred. Starting in the mid-1970s, the United States became the chief peace-broker in the region and the EEC was sidelined (Allen and Pijpers, 1984).

More than a decade later, the EU reclaimed a secondary role for itself as the "pay-master" of the Palestinian Authority set up under the Oslo Accords. Today it is the largest donor to the Palestinians, with combined contributions from the EU and its member states reaching 1 billion euros per year. The EU expanded its activities into the political sphere after 2000, when President George W. Bush distanced himself from Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. The EU has maintained close ties with the Palestinian Authority, proposed a Road Map for a Mideast peace settlement in 2002, and participated in the Quartet group set up to coordinate Mideast policy (the other members are the United States, the Russian Federation and the United Nations) (European Commission, 2009).

Today, Mideast policy is typically on the agenda of meetings of EU foreign ministers or EU summits. While the policy of supporting the Palestinians has continued since the Venice Declaration, the policy as a whole is more nuanced than newspaper headlines suggest. Even in the 1970s, the EU concluded a trade agreement with Israel despite Arab pressure. In recent years, the EU, wishing to become a peace broker in the Mideast conflict, has upgraded its diplomatic relations with Israel. Israel's growing economic and technological prowess also makes it a desirable partner. In addition, there is no doubt that certain EU member states, such as Italy and the Czech Republic, are sympathetic to Israel and act to moderate overall EU policy.

However, several components of EU Mideast policy, which have also shown considerable durability and longevity, are of concern with regard to European antisemitism. They include insistence on the primacy of the Mideast peace process; mixed messages with regard to Hamas and Hezbollah; and direct or indirect funding of actors that seek to delegitimize the State of Israel.

#### *A. The gift that keeps on giving*

Ever since the Euro-Arab Dialogue, the EU has consistently defined the Mideast conflict as the most important one in the region, or even in the world, today. As the EU put it in its European Security Strategy (Council of the European Union, 2003: 8): “Resolution of the Arab/Israeli conflict is a strategic priority for Europe. Without this, there will be little chance of dealing with other problems in the Middle East.” While one can occasionally encounter an EU official who does not think so, for the most part this is still the common refrain.

Successive European leaders, most recently Spain’s José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, have hoped to achieve a breakthrough during their time in the rotating EU presidency, thus winning glory for themselves and for the EU (United Nations, 2009). However, with both Fatah and Hamas dedicated to the destruction of Israel, the peace process is unlikely to end in peace—unless it is the peace of the graveyard (MEMRI, 2010; Rubin, 2010).

Accordingly, this EU policy means in practice that Israel will continue to be blamed for blocking the achievement of one of the EU’s strategic priorities. Josef Joffe describes as “elimination-lite” European hopes that “if one could only weaken and push back Israel, only somehow force Israel to retract its occupation-cum-settlements, then presto!, ‘the’ Middle East conflict would be solved.” (Joffe, 2004: 30). There is no comparable hope of remedying the problem by changing Palestinian behavior.

The longevity and lack of success of the peace process guarantee that Israel will continue to be blamed for the lack of Mideast peace, and that this accusation will continue to fuel anti-Zionism and antisemitism in Europe. Every new Israeli security measure will be compared to the actions of the Nazis, simultaneously demonizing the Israelis while relieving European guilt for the Holocaust. And blaming Israel for endangering European peace and security will allow Europeans to curry favor with Arab states while cloaking their fear of Islamist aggression.

This dynamic will also fuel European antisemitism in general. In addition to all the traditional purposes that antisemitism has served in Europe, it will allow Europeans to deflect onto Jews the fear and dislike that they are not allowed, or are afraid, to voice with regard to the ever-growing Muslim minorities in their midst. The end result is a green light for ever more virulent anti-Zionism and correspondingly higher levels of antisemitism in word and action in Europe. EU commitment to the Mideast peace process is indeed a gift—unfortunately, a very negative one—that keeps on giving.

#### *B. Israel’s “disproportionate” response*

As an integral part of its Mideast policy, the EU must also take positions toward Hezbollah and Hamas. The record here has been mixed. The EU has refused to classify Hezbollah as a terrorist organization, but has condemned the terrorist nature and activities of Hamas (BBC News, 2003). Thus far, it has maintained the Quartet position against

formally recognizing the Gaza regime, despite growing internal pressures, including from members of the European Parliament (EurActiv, 2010). The EU Council did not endorse the Goldstone Report, although the EU Parliament passed a non-binding resolution in its favor (European Parliament, 2010). After the Turkish flotilla incident, the Council resisted pressure from some member states for the EU to monitor the cargo of ships headed toward Gaza (Council of the European Union, 2010; Phillips, 2010).

These positions reflect the EU's need to find common ground that can be agreed to by all member states. They are also in the EU's foreign policy interest: the EU has avoided taking untenable positions in the middle of the Mideast controversy, and it has been responsive to lobbying from Israel, the United States, and certain member states, as well as from Muslim countries.

Certainly, the EU has sidestepped the issue of Hezbollah's terrorist activities, despite—or perhaps because of—the presence of Hezbollah terrorist organizations in Europe itself (Phillips, 2007). Nor has it addressed the core goal of genocidal anti-semitism that both Hamas and Hezbollah share—a goal that belies their image as underdogs and innocent victims. Doing so forcefully might constrain the ability of European Islamists to rally people to support these organizations. Instead, the EU has essentially whitewashed them, repeatedly accusing Israel of responding to Palestinian attacks with “disproportionate” force.

While this may appear to be a more neutral, “balanced” response than the more strident anti-Israel positions of some EU member states, it is in fact the opposite. Charges of using “disproportionate” force contribute to delegitimizing Israel by denying it the right to defend itself. The Israeli objective of responding to Palestinian military aggression is not to be proportionate, but to discourage the Palestinians from doing it again. Trying to keep the force level proportionate (e.g. an equal number of casualties on both sides) only means that the Palestinians will continue to attack. The net result is to enhance the image of a cruel and unjust Israel that can easily be likened to Nazi Germany. Here, EU policy cannot be disentangled from hateful speech and actions against European Jews as well as Israelis.

### *C. The role of money*

Since the mid-1990s, the EU has been a primary funder of the Palestinian Authority, despite recurring accusations that money was being used, among other things, for terrorism and hate education. An investigation by the European Anti-Fraud Office found no conclusive evidence that European Commission funds were misused, but admitted that it had no way to exclude such a finding (European Anti-Fraud Office, 2005).

Several years later, a UK study charged that EU as well as British funds were still being used on educational materials glorifying suicide attacks against Israel (Funding Hate Education, 2008). As Israel political scientist Yohanan Manor has put it: “the European Union has a heavy responsibility in the transformation of the Palestinian education system into a war machine against the Oslo process” (Gerstenfeld, 2005: 23).

In addition, Israeli researcher Gerald Steinberg has argued that some EU-funded NGOs have denigrated and delegitimized the State of Israel in the name of promoting peace (Steinberg, 2008: 1). A recent report by Steinberg's NGO Monitor (2010) reported that the European Commission allocated more than 2 million euros for Israeli and

Palestinian NGOs, a sizable amount. "The evidence shows that many of the ... grantees promote a narrow political perspective and embrace biased campaigns to isolate Israel internationally. [Certain NGOs] advance allegations of Israeli 'war crimes' and 'apartheid' that distort international law and demonize Israel."

Nor has this calumny happened by accident. "Ideologically, NGO officials are at the forefront of the European intellectual emphasis on the transcendence of the nation state, which reinforces the dominant post-colonialist ideology in de-legitimizing [*sic*] Israel, Zionism and the Jewish right to self-determination." (Steinberg, 2008: 5). Steinberg also cites the lack of transparency in EU funding as well as opaque decision-making regarding which projects to fund, and in 2010 NGO Monitor filed suit against the European Commission with the EU Court of Justice (Izenberg, 2010).

In the aggregate, NGOs provide a substantial portion of much of what the European mainstream knows about Israel. If EU-funded NGOs (1) apply double standards by requiring of Israel a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation; (2) compare contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis; or (3) engage in other activities that the EU itself classifies as antisemitic in its working definition, then the EU is helping to promote antisemitism within broader European society. At the same time, it is funding Palestinian programs that ensure continuing mayhem and war in the Middle East.

### 3. THE DEMONIZATION OF ISRAEL

Thus, several aspects of EU Mideast policy have contributed to the delegitimization and demonization of Israel, while fanning the flames of anti-Zionism and antisemitism in Europe. In and of themselves, however, these aspects do not explain why this is the case. The United States, for example, also remains committed to the Mideast peace process; it too provides funding to the Palestinian Authority (and perhaps indirectly to Hamas) (Silverberg, 2010); and it has NGOs as well as academics and media personalities who compare Israel to Nazi Germany or apartheid South Africa, albeit without official US funding.

One obvious explanation lies in Europe's long history of antisemitism, which provides a clear contrast to the situation in the United States. There, opinion polls continue to register high levels of support for Israel (Saad, 2010), and antisemitism, while present, is nowhere near the levels in Europe. As a result, Americans are much less likely than Europeans to subscribe failures in the Mideast peace talks uniquely to Israel or to condemn Israeli military actions regardless of their context.

A second explanation arises from the growing domestic pressure the EU faces not only from ethnic "Europeans" but also from European Muslims — whose numbers have greatly increased, at least in part due to EU policies — to support Hamas and Hezbollah and to de-legitimize Israel. There is no doubt that EU policies are partly driven by the desire to appease restive Muslims at home, just as they aimed to appease Palestinian terrorists in the 1970s. EU leaders cannot ignore the fact that more and more places in Europe are now becoming "no-go areas" for non-Muslims or that large, truculent crowds have recently marched through downtown Berlin and London shouting "Hamas: Jews to the gas!" To make matters worse, EU officials frequently consult with leaders associated with the Muslim Brotherhood, an organization infused with Jew-hatred, regarding issues that affect Muslims in Europe (Merley, 2008). Similar trends

also exist in the United States, but to a far lesser degree, and the environment is much less favorable for their development.

Indeed, fear appears to be a large if unacknowledged motivation for current EU policy. An EU survey conducted in 2003 showed more Europeans consider Israel a threat to world peace than any other country. Its military actions, even if conducted in self-defense, are typically considered highly destabilizing and provocative. Thus, Israel is viewed as the problem country that must make concessions or disappear to keep the peace in the Middle East and Europe.

A third explanation arises from the EU's desire to establish a common Euro-Mediterranean space, a goal first elaborated in the mid-1990s and reaffirmed most recently in the newly-minted Union of the Mediterranean. This new organization, jointly headed by EU and non-EU officials, and which includes the State of Israel, aims to improve ties between the EU and its southern neighbors. According to French President Nicholas Sarkozy,<sup>2</sup> the Union's overarching goal is to progressively lead to peace in the Middle East (Vucheva, 2008).

Yet the proposed Union may founder on Arab opposition to Israel, as did its predecessor, the so-called Barcelona Process. The Union of the Mediterranean is unlikely to enjoy much popular support, but it does indicate clearly the drift of EU policy-making—and there is nothing in it to counter the tendency to demonize Israel. Rather, Israel appears yet again to EU officials and the EU political elite as the obstacle blocking progress.

#### 4. A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON EUROPEAN UNITY AND THE "JEWISH PROBLEM"

But is there something in the nature of the EU itself that reinforces these policy directions and enhances their emotional content, especially the need to demonize Israel? Joffe has described the collision between the boundary-less, non-military, post-nation-state EU and the State of Israel, as well as between the EU and the United States (Joffe, 2004: 33-34). French linguist and philosopher Jean-Claude Milner, in *Les penchants criminels de l'Europe démocratique*, offers another, stinging critique of EU motivations with regard to the Middle East.

Milner posits a dark side to European unity. He argues that, historically, for many adherents the concept of a Europe unified by a common culture contained within it a key stumbling block: the "Jewish problem." Hitler's "Final Solution" solved this problem, bequeathing to Europe's postwar leaders a Europe essentially free of Jews. On the ashes of the Third Reich, European leaders began to build a new unified Europe.

An entity with no clear definition of its final borders, the EEC/EU has dedicated itself to various open-ended processes. One was promoting peace and reconciliation in Western Europe, then Central and Eastern Europe, and perhaps beyond. Another was expanding EEC/EU influence throughout the world, particularly in Muslim North Africa and the Middle East. In its attachment to an open-ended Mideast peace process, Milner argues that the primary EU goal is not to protect Israelis from physical harm but to reach out to the Third-World, non-European foreigner: to "understand the [Palestinian] Other." (Milner, 2003: 90)

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<sup>2</sup> France held the EU Presidency for six months in 2008.

The EU's approach to the Islamic world is similarly abstract, according to Milner. He compares the ideology of European "peace" with that of Muslim "jihad," showing an eerie similarity between the two. He argues that events such as Durban I and the anti-Iraq demonstrations in 2003 marked the encounter and alliance between two limitless concepts: modern European society on the one hand and the Caliphate on the other. The EU envisions the worldwide extension of a modern, homogeneous European society, while the Islamists envision a global society living in conformity with the Koran (Ibid., 94-101).

Many in the European elite, including senior EU leaders, appear to believe that, with sufficient "comprehension" and "moderation," these two ideologies can be reconciled with each other. Milner comments sarcastically that the Europeans appear to believe that they can provide enough comprehension and moderation for both sides (Ibid., 95).

This new, unified Europe that sought to shed its bloody past, including not only two world wars but also Third World colonization, developed an aversion to the use of military force and a marked sympathy for the underdog. In fact, winning military victories is considered to be bad (Ibid., 78).

Once again, though, there is a Jewish problem, this time in the shape of the State of Israel. Israel remains a nation state, rather than an amorphous, boundary-less entity like the EU. It relies on military force rather than "soft power," and it defines itself by religion, not according to a universalist European culture. According to Milner, the logic of the situation dictates that Israel must disappear if the EU is to realize its ambitions in the region (Ibid., 97-98).

## 5. CONCLUSION

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that EU Mideast policy, while described by the EU as "balanced," in fact is not. Frequently, the EU has blunted or contained the anti-Israel policies of some of its member states, a nuance not included in Milner's vision of the EU. Nevertheless, recent polling (Shepherd, 2009: 90) shows that the closer people are to opinion-makers, the more hostility they manifest toward Israel, suggesting that EU compromises do little to mitigate the basic impact of its policies.

Milner argues that the EU has a positive affinity for a *Judenrein* Middle East. However, other factors that color the national policies of member states like France also appear to play a significant role in EU policy-making. Fear of and the concomitant desire to appease radical Islam and Muslims in general are perhaps the most important of these. It is easier to blame the Jews than to acknowledge the difficulties in absorbing Muslim immigrants into European societies, let alone to broach the politically incorrect topic of the potential Islamization of Europe. It is also more attractive to negotiate with neighbors who promote *jihad* rather than accept the hard reality that such negotiations are doomed to failure — along with the vision of a united Europe spreading its beneficent influence in ever-widening circles beyond its borders.

Milner is right that proponents of expanded influence for a united Europe underestimate the difficulty — or ignore the impossibility — of finding common ground with the Islamist world view. It is true that an entity like the EU with little military power will naturally favor "soft power" and international law to accomplish its objectives. Milner's argument, though, helps to explain why this dynamic is so widespread and so popular in EU circles.

Milner's thesis is most powerful, though, in explaining why the EU and its political and media elites are tempted to delegitimize and demonize Israel. The State of Israel by its very existence challenges EU ideology and ambition in a way that Arab nation states do not. And it is the EU's nature as a border-less, post-nation-state entity founded on multiculturalism and the pursuit of "peace" that makes it favor such an interpretation.

In summary, although the standard political motives explain much of the EU's Mideast policy, they fail to explain adequately the EU's insistence on demonizing Israel and thus boosting antisemitism in Europe. In contrast, the internal EU factors identified by Milner do more to explain this demonization. Those factors and their impact merit further scholarly investigation.

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# The Unique Nature of Palestinian Antisemitism: A Foundation of Palestinian National Identity

Itamar Marcus\*

Palestinian antisemitism has long been recognized as a vehicle used by the Palestinian Authority (PA) to promote hatred. From Palestinian academics teaching that Judaism permits murder and rape of non-Jews to religious leaders preaching that Jews are the enemies of Allah, Palestinian antisemitism is a compelling force driving hatred as well as terror.

PA officials and the controlled media have at times depicted Jews as the archetypal force of evil throughout history. Jews have been said to be responsible for all the world's problems: wars, financial crises, even spreading AIDS. Jews are presented as a danger to Palestinians, Arabs, and all humanity. Ibrahim Mudayris, an official in the PA Ministry of Religion, has explained it as follows:

When Muhammad entered Medina, he found serious [internal] conflicts among the Arab tribes. After investigating these conflicts, he found the Jews behind all of these conflicts. He found treachery and betrayal in the Jews' nature, and causing conflicts among the Arabs and among all people on earth.... The Jews—a mere 7 million—trouble the entire earth. The cause of our nation's problems and the world's problems are the Jews.<sup>1</sup>

Another time he formulated it like this:

The Jews are Jews, oh Muslims, their character and their custom are the corruption and destruction of this land. We keep warning you: the Jews are a cancer that spreads inside the body of the Arab and Islamic nation.<sup>2</sup>

This hatred of Jews is promoted by many parts of society, not only by the religious establishment. In an interview on PA TV, Jordanian academic Muhammad Dohal explained that in every society the Jews damaged the population financially, leading to the image of the Jew as Shylock. According to this view, the Shylock image in Shakespeare was an accurate depiction of the true nature of the Jew:

The Jews are hated in every society in which they have lived, because of their behavior relating to their great love of money. ... This was the source of their harm to the societies around them, including Arab-Palestinian society.... Their behavior led to

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<sup>1</sup> PA TV, June 4, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> PA TV, January 7, 2005.

[Shakespeare's] famous story, the story of Shylock about money lending, which clings to the Jews. This is how they harmed the societies that embraced them.<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Tayseer Al-Tamimi, former PA Chief Justice of the Religious Court and Chairman of the Supreme Council of Islamic Law, has also explained the danger that the Jews present to humanity. However, he added a critical component by teaching that the Jews' evil nature is noted in the Quran. This religious dimension is significant, since it tells believing Muslims that the Jews' so-called evil nature is not a learned or acquired trait, but an inherent and permanent characteristic. This is an attempt to stain Jews with an eternal negative status that cannot be challenged, because Allah has determined it:

Concerning the Jews, the Holy Quran says that they lack understanding, are void of wisdom, know nothing, violate agreements, etc. However, the Jews were known—it was known about them throughout history—that they make false claims, lies, forgery, slander, and fabrications, in order to justify their aggression, land theft, defilement of holy sites, appropriation of land, destruction of homes, murder of children, women, and the elderly.<sup>4</sup>

The ultimate stain that can be imposed on an ethnic group is to define them as an enemy of God himself. Attributing this status to a group justifies all types of hatred and violence, since a believer assumes that, if the group is God's enemy, then fighting them is in the service of God. On numerous occasions, PA religious leaders have used this terminology pertaining to Jews, including the current senior Palestinian religious leader, PA Mufti Muhammad Hussein. In a sermon delivered at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, he claimed:

The Al-Aqsa Mosque is threatened by the plans of the enemies of Allah [the Jews], who have violated all faith and religious laws, and even deviated from their humanity.<sup>5</sup>

Defining the Jews as Allah's enemy in a religious society ensures that Jews will be perceived as enemies. For this reason, the Palestinian religiously-based hatred is extremely potent. According to a poll by the Ramallah Center for Human Rights Studies, 99 percent of Palestinians think religion is either important or somewhat important in their lives (85 percent said religion plays an important role in their lives; 13.7 percent considered religion as somewhat important) and less than 1 percent considered religion not important.<sup>6</sup>

Defining the Jews as enemies, however, is not limited to religious expression or religious leaders. On a Palestinian TV show that interviews families of prisoners, the TV host defined Jews as enemies in a conversation with a six-year-old. The following is an excerpt from the interview with the child of a Palestinian prisoner in an Israeli jail:

PA TV host to young child: "Ibrahim, you know—you're cute and sweet. Where's Daddy?"

Boy: "In prison."

Host: "Who is it that put him in prison?"

Boy: "The Jews."

<sup>3</sup> PA TV, October 10 and 17, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> PA TV, June 9, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Aqsa Mosque Forum, <<http://www.al-msjd-alaqsa.com>>, June 25, 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Ramallah Center for Human Rights Studies, <<http://www.rchrs.org>>, August 2010.

Host: "The Jews are our enemies, right?"  
 [Boy nods in agreement.]<sup>7</sup>

Cartoons in the PA's official daily newspaper, *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, likewise depict Jews as a danger to the entire world. The following cartoon shows a Jew placing a skullcap on the globe, representing the Jewish threat to "Judaize" the world. The cartoon has appeared in the paper twice within the space of a few years:



Source: *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, July 4, 2005 and May 8, 2009.

During the PA terror campaign ("Intifada") in 2000-2005, many PA religious leaders quoted from the *Hadith* that Jews had to be exterminated in order to bring about the "Hour" of Resurrection. In 2010, a PA religious leader reiterated this call to kill Jews in the name of Allah. Furthermore, the opening remarks define the Jews as treacherous, evil, and threatening, such that Allah's call to kill Jews is presented not as a racist attack against innocents but as a defensive measure against the Jews' inherent evil:

Oh Muslims! The Jews are the Jews. The Jews are the Jews. Even if donkeys would cease to bray, dogs cease to bark, wolves cease to howl and snakes to bite, the Jews would not cease to harbor hatred towards Muslims. The Prophet said that if two Jews would be alone with a Muslim, they would think only of killing him. Oh Muslims! This land will be liberated, these holy places and these mosques will be liberated, only by means of a return to the Quran and when all Muslims will be willing to be Jihad Fighters for the sake of Allah and for the sake of supporting Palestine.... The Prophet says: "You shall fight the Jews and kill them ... until the tree and the stone will speak and say: 'Oh Muslim, Oh servant of Allah ... there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him.'"<sup>8</sup>

In response to international criticism of the sermon, the PA claimed that it was not a planned and scheduled sermon. Nonetheless, the Palestinian religious figure who was asked to preach was merely repeating a message that has been preached many times on PA TV and has never been retracted.

According to the PA's narrative, the nations of the world have been involved in continuous defensive actions to protect themselves from the Jews. The antisemitic oppression, persecution, and expulsions suffered by the Jews throughout history are presented

<sup>7</sup> PA TV, June 17, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> PA TV, January 29, 2010.

as the legitimate self-defense responses of nations, creating a new and sinister twist to the thousands of years of persecutions, pogroms, and genocide that Jews have suffered. According to this PA ideology, the persecutors and murderers of Jews throughout history were not exercising a blind hatred but were themselves victims who were just trying to protect themselves against the Jews.

This ideology has been expressed for many years in the PA. Palestinian psychologist Khader Abbas explained on PA TV:

The Israelis brought on themselves, I emphasize, brought on themselves in every society they lived disasters and massacres. They concentrated money in their hands denying it to others. They spied against the nations where they lived. Important and basic aspect: their feeling of superiority. These three factors created hatred [of Jews.] Thus the societies they were in avenged them or tried to punish them.<sup>9</sup>

The aforementioned PA religious official, Ibrahim Mudayris, expressed it like this:

The Jews are a virus similar to AIDS, from which the entire world is suffering. You'll find Jews behind every conflict on Earth. The suffering of nations—the Jews are behind it! Ask Britain what it did to the Jews! They persecuted them, tortured them! Ask France! They tortured them, persecuted them and burned their Talmud, for the conflicts that they tried to ignite in France. Ask Portugal.... Ask Czarist Russia—who invited the Jews who then plotted to murder the Czar! And he massacred them repeatedly. Don't ask Germany what it did to the Jews, since the Jews are the ones who provoked Nazism to fight the entire world.<sup>10</sup>

Accordingly, the Palestinians do not deny the suffering of the Jews in history. Rather, they see it as proof that all nations ultimately agree that the Jews are a problem.

This type of antisemitism, presenting Jews as an enemy of God and a danger to humanity, has been used in other cultures to generate hatred. Yet Palestinians take their hatred a step further: demonization of Jews is used as a basis for denial of Israel's right to exist and has become a central component of Palestinian national identity. Indeed, the apex of this Palestinian demonic depiction of Jews and is to use this image of the evil Jew as the foundation upon which they build the Palestinian national identity.

The Palestinians see themselves as fighting a defensive battle with Israel for historical rights to the same small piece of land. Israel has a well-documented Jewish history in the land for thousands of years, with biblical and other historical records as well as archeological finds, including ancient Hebrew coins and stamps, all bearing witness to thousands of years of Jewish history. In contrast, there never was a Palestinian state, a Palestinian king, or any Palestinian national sovereignty, although there were Arabs who experienced history in the land and ruled the land at times.

Accordingly, in order to create a historical Palestinian *right* to a land that has borne Israel's footprint for thousands of years, rewriting the history of the Land of Israel in order to deny Israel's right to exist became a central component of PA policy. As early as 1998, at a conference of Palestinian historians, rewriting "Palestinian" history was linked to the political goal of denying Israel's right to exist:

<sup>9</sup> PA TV (Fatah), April 14, 2002.

<sup>10</sup> PA TV (Fatah), May 13, 2005.

Dr. Yussuf Alzamili [Chairman of the History Department, Khan Yunis Educational College] called on all universities and colleges to write the history of Palestine and to guard it, and not to enable the [foreign] implants and enemies to distort it or to legitimize the existence of Jews on this land.... [History lecturer Abu Amar] clarified that there is no connection between the ancient generation of Jews and the new generation.<sup>11</sup>

The PA routinely denies the Jewish presence in the land and denies the legitimacy of all historical records and all archeological finds. PA TV broadcast an interview in 2009 with a Palestinian lecturer on urban planning from Bir-Zeit University, Dr. Jamal Amar, who rewrote history by denying everything that archeology has proven about the Jewish past:

There is a view that where it [the Dome of the Rock] stands was the Holy of Holies of the fictitious Temple—and by the way, that is merely an illusion. There is no remnant of it. It's a myth. A story of no value, like the Arabian Nights, and other legends.... [After] 60 years of digging, and they've found nothing at all. Not a water jug, not a coin, not any earthen vessel, no bronze weapons, no piece of metal, absolutely nothing of this myth, because it's a myth and a lie. This digging has not left a single meter [unturned], but it has achieved absolutely nothing.<sup>12</sup>

Of course, none of this is true. Digging in Israel has unearthed far more evidence of Jewish history in Israel than was anticipated by many archeologists. For example, stamps have been found in Jerusalem bearing the names of political officials cited in the Bible, yet all this is denied by the PA for political purposes.

Having erased Jewish history, the PA fills the historical void by fabricating ancient histories of Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims in the land. PA academics claim that Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims all populated the Land of Israel in biblical times and even earlier. These fictions are historically inaccurate, and the facts and figures cited by PA leaders are often contradictory. Yet the PA repeats them regularly in an attempt to create a competing history in the consciousness of its own people. For example, speaking in the name of PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas, advisor and representative Abdallah Al-Ifranji said that the Palestinians have a 9,000-year-old history in the land:

We say to him [Netanyahu], when he claims—that they [Jews] have a historical right dating back to 3,000 years BCE—we say that the nation of Palestine upon the land of Canaan had a 7,000 year history BCE. This is the truth, which must be understood and we have to note it, in order to say: “Netanyahu, you are incidental in history. We are the people of history. We are the owners of history.”<sup>13</sup>

The narrator on a PA TV political program opened with the following statement:

Six thousand years ago, Palestine created human civilization and was like the sun, producing light and giving it to human beings. The Palestinians, both regular citizens and leaders, were the vessel for this gift.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Al-Ayyam*, December 4, 1998.

<sup>12</sup> PA TV, June 23, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> PA TV, May 14, 2011.

<sup>14</sup> PA TV, February 20, 2011.

Religious leaders have likewise perpetuated this myth:

Sheikh Ikrima Sabri, Chairman of the Supreme Islamic Council in Jerusalem and preacher at the Al-Aqsa Mosque ... emphasized that the inhabitants of Palestine have roots in this land originating earlier than 7,500 BCE.... He said, "We have never been foreigners in our city. The foreigners are those [Israelis] who accuse us of being foreigners."<sup>15</sup>

However, this denial of Jewish history left the PA with a challenge: namely to explain to their people the reason for the Jewish presence in the land. The PA had to create a logical reason that Jews from countries all over the world would gravitate to the land if they really had no history there. Why would British, Dutch, Russian, and Egyptian Jews all leave their homes and come to Israel if there was no real connection? Since Jews, they say, never had a history in the Land of Israel, why did they start the Zionist movement?

To solve this gap in their historical revision, the PA reverts to its aforementioned antisemitic principles portraying Jews as an evil force threatening all of humanity. According to the PA model, the Jews, who have no history in the land, would never have considered coming to "Palestine." Rather, Europeans created Zionism as the final act in a long series of self-defense measures, to rid themselves permanently of the "burden" of the Jews.

This demonization of Jews, which serves to deny Israel's history and delegitimize Israel's national existence, has been an integral part of Palestinian ideology, voiced by political, academic, and religious leaders since the early years of the PA. In 1998, the PA's official daily newspaper described Britain's support for the establishment of a Jewish state as being motivated by the same need as Hitler's attempt to exterminate the Jews. British support for Zionism, like Hitler's genocide, were said to be defensive measures against the Jews:

Hitler did not have colonies to send the Jews so he destroyed them, whereas Balfour ... [turned] Palestine into his colony and sent the Jews. Balfour is Hitler with colonies, while Hitler is Balfour without colonies. They both wanted to get rid of the Jews.... Zionism was crucial to the defense of the West's interests in the region, [by] ridding Europe of the burden of its Jews.<sup>16</sup>

Dr. Riad al-Astal, a history lecturer at Al Azhar University in Gaza, described it as follows:

In aiding Zionism, Britain's first aim was to be rid of the Jews, who were known to provoke disputes and disturbances and financial crises in Germany, France and other European states.<sup>17</sup>

Political commentator Fathi Buzia explained it like this on official PA TV:

Europe, led by Britain, founded Israel.... The Jews in the time of Herzl caused European societies to lose sleep. They wanted to be rid of them, and implanted them in Palestine.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, July 3, 2010.

<sup>16</sup> *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, December 6, 1998.

<sup>17</sup> PA TV (Fatah), December 28, 2003.

<sup>18</sup> PA TV, June 17, 2009.



The PA Ministry of Culture in Tulkarem held a political conference “to mark the 93rd anniversary of the cursed Balfour Declaration.... Lecturer Na’aman Shahrour spoke about this anniversary, which still sticks in the throats of the Palestinians....” He said:

The Palestinian people is still bleeding since the British Foreign Minister gave this promise, resulting in all that has happened throughout the years and what is happening now—killing, destruction, and theft.... All this in order to be rid of this burden, called the Jews, which troubled Britain and Europe, who wished to be rid of this burden.<sup>19</sup>

Accordingly, PA antisemitism is not mere incitement to hatred, similar to antisemitism in other countries throughout history. The PA’s antisemitic claims are part of the foundation of Palestinian ideology and are used to explain Israel’s existence without having to acknowledge Israel’s history. The PA denies Israel’s legitimacy and presents itself as the victim of a colonialist plot. This national identity—based on victimhood—has become the foundation upon which a Palestinian national identity is created.

The tragic reality is that this Palestinian antisemitism and its implications may already have had an impact on Palestinian youth. During a talk show for teens on official PA TV, a young girl explained the reason Jews live in Israel:

About the problem of the Jewish presence: You’d agree that the Jewish presence in the land of Palestine was nothing but the liberation of all the countries of the world from the source of evil. The evil that is found in the Jews has become a germ among us, which is a cancer that buried us and is still burying. And we are the ones who suffer from this cancer.<sup>20</sup>

The adult moderator did not correct her comment, as she was merely reiterating a common and accepted component of Palestinian national dialogue that forms the basis of Palestinian national identity.

It is for this reason that the Palestinian antisemitism construct is especially problematic and difficult to dislodge. Since the aim of Palestinian antisemitism is not merely to promote hatred but also part of the systematic demonization of Jews that serves to deny Israel’s right to exist, the need to prove that the Jews are evil has become an element of the ongoing Palestinian narrative.

For this reason, Palestinian antisemitism has remained prevalent regardless of the leader or the period. Under Mahmoud Abbas’ leadership, for example, the religion column in the PA’s official daily newspaper continues to be a source for spreading hatred of Jews. The following are examples from two of these religion columns:

In this lesson I wanted to talk about Cain and Abel—that’s the first story on earth, whose victim was Abel, at the hands of his brother Cain—because this story shows a similarity to the Jews and their crimes.... The Jews, by throwing off their yoke, followed in the footsteps of the first person on earth who threw off the yoke of Allah. Their [the Jews’] evil nature is drawn from Adam’s first son [who killed his brother Abel].<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, November 5, 2010.

<sup>20</sup> PA TV, June 23, 2002.

<sup>21</sup> *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, May 13, 2011.

The struggle between truth and falsehood is as ancient as life upon this earth.... Sixty-three years ago, the Israeli Prime Minister, Ben Gurion, stood at the UN after the entire world granted recognition to the malignant cancerous growth known as the State of Israel.... I hope that the [Islamic] nation will study this faith [Judaism] in order to know with certainty that the Jews talk, in conferences and in negotiations, only through their distorted, corrupted, false religion.... The conflict between us and the Jews is not a conflict about land and borders, but rather a conflict about faith and existence.<sup>22</sup>

Even under Chairman Abbas, the claim that Jews want to rule all humanity is part of the discourse:

Zionism is an extreme religious ideology whose aim is political hegemony and the transformation of a Jewish monarchy in Palestine into a basis for their eternal rule over the world, [and] that others, "Goyim" [non-Jews], must submit to their will, [their rule] which is drawn from the will of God.<sup>23</sup>

According to the PA's official daily newspaper, the Jews have always been and remain a danger to the entire world.

In other societies, antisemitism has been a tool to promote hatred for a variety of internal reasons. As such, when hatred was no longer "necessary," as in post-Nazi Germany, antisemitism could be withdrawn as a government policy. However, the goal of the PA's demonization of the Jews transcends mere hatred. Antisemitism is a political tool designed to defame Zionism, deny Israel's right to exist, and create victimhood as the glue cementing Palestinian national identity. Because this political goal will exist as long as Israel exists, Palestinian antisemitism will be much harder to uproot. If there is ever to be peace in the region, Palestinians must define a new Palestinian national identity—one that does not rely on the eradication of Israel's legitimacy, demonization of Jews, and antisemitism to support its foundation.

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<sup>22</sup> *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, June 3, 2011.

<sup>23</sup> *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, May 15, 2011.

# Some Philosophical Reflections on Antisemitism Today

Alan S. Rosenbaum\*

## 1. INTRODUCTION: MODERNISM AND ANTISEMITISM

It is undoubtedly as true as it is distressing that the centuries-old phenomenon of demonizing, threatening, and persecuting Jewish people for who they are (and not for what they may have done) is still in existence today. One would have thought that after the Holocaust decimated European Jewry and the Allied victory over a singularly genocidal, racist, and anti-Western (and anti-modernist) regime,<sup>1</sup> the persistent flames of Jew-hatred would have been doused, becoming no more than a cottage industry of a few isolated, lunatic clusters of reactionaries.

Sadly, recent observations show that this sanguine expectation requires dramatic re-consideration. For a resurgent, viral antisemitism is growing into a far more global danger for Jews. Perhaps its re-emergence is part and parcel of a recent worldwide wave of a highly polarized intolerance toward what some philosophers call “the other.” Further, as the sentiment of shame about the Holocaust recedes into historical and mnemonic oblivion, public expressions of contempt and intolerance for Jews seem to be gaining ground.

My paper offers some thoughts on this resurgent antisemitism. I will briefly focus on only two important areas of concern: Pope Benedict XVI’s apparent turn toward a more traditionalist understanding of Catholicism as it reawakens the Church’s historical dogma, which has always proven so threatening to the existence of the Jewish people, and the Iran-Israel dispute in which the Iranian leadership continues its genocidal incitement against the world’s only Jewish state.

For this paper’s limited scope I have chosen to sidestep other crucial antisemitic events such as: current campus calls for boycotts against Israelis and products made in Israel; disruptive Israel-bashers on European and American campuses (like at UC at Irvine where an Israeli ambassador was shouted down disgracefully in February 2010); neo-Nazi marches in Europe (e.g., in Hungary); random physical attacks on individual Jews and Jewish institutions around the world; Holocaust denial conferences;<sup>2</sup> effusions

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<sup>1</sup> Hitler made clear in *Mein Kampf* that the Nazis regarded “the Jew” as the embodiment of everything they despised: democracy, capitalism, universal equality and freedom, and “bourgeois rationality.” See Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, translated by Ralph Manheim (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co. 1943).

<sup>2</sup> About Iran’s infamy on this matter, see, for example, Matthias Kuentzel, “Global Vision: Iran’s Holocaust Denial,” in Alan S. Rosenbaum (ed.), *Is the Holocaust Unique?*, 3rd edition (Westview Press/Perseus Books 2009) ch. 13.

of cyber-hate, cyber-bullying, and cyber-based recruitment against Jews and Israel; and so forth.

However, I will concentrate my remarks specifically on two faith-based, global communities: Catholics and Muslims. Statistically, they constitute together almost one-third of the world's seven billion people. (If we include all Christians, then the tally would be closer to one half.) The fact that the Jews are a miniscule minority (perhaps 13 million) is irrelevant because antisemitism may flourish with or without a Jewish presence.

Despite the significant conflicts and differences between and within these two "communities," the Jewish people have had reserved for them a special, nefarious standing in the New Testament<sup>3</sup> and in the Koran.<sup>4</sup> Each faith has a lengthy history of persecutory antisemitism and a scriptural basis from which to justify its actions against Jews. Since papal authority has such tremendous (though not always decisive critical influence) over the beliefs and behaviors of Catholics, and also because the Church's antisemitic history requires constant vigilance, a possible turn toward such past practices and beliefs should command our attention.

Similarly, Muslim extremists often cite passages from the Koran that are unflattering and incendiary toward the Jews to press their calls for a holy war against the Jews, Jewish institutions, and most prominently against Israel (and also against infidels and apostates).<sup>5</sup> Admittedly, only a small fraction of the world's Muslims are antisemitic *jihadis*. But, thanks to their increasingly successful efforts at recruitment to their various causes, especially when Islamic heads of state (from Malaysia to Iran) call for genocidal antisemitism against Israel, and when the president of Iran removes government officials who become too friendly with individual Israelis (like the Iranian tourism minister who allegedly shook hands with his Israeli counterpart in Spain), any distinction between Israel and its Jewish citizens or Jews in general as the genuine target of their animus tends to collapse.<sup>6</sup> As one astute non-Jewish writer observes, there is antisemitism (Jew-hatred) and anti-Zionism (with its antisemitic and purely political forms). For example, in Europe, a "cause might advance in the name of anti-Zionism, but Europe's Jews were being attacked because they were Jews.... In practice, antisemitism and anti-Zionism were approving and disapproving ways of describing the same thing."<sup>7</sup>

In regard to both faith-based communities noted above, it is impossible to know for certain how many of their adherents harbor anti-Jewish beliefs and sentiments which lie dormant and are aroused under a conducive mix of favorable circumstances. Thus, their leaders' words assume a much greater importance and influence than those of ordinary people.

<sup>3</sup> For instance, the New Testament states in 1 Thessalonians 2, verses 15, 16: "The Jews who killed the Lord Jesus ... the Jews who are heedless of God's will and enemies of their fellow-man...."

<sup>4</sup> For example: "The Jews ultimate sin and punishment: they are the devil's minions" (4:60); "cursed by Allah, their faces will be obliterated" (4:47); "if they do not accept the true faith of Islam, they will become made into ... apes or swine" (5:60); and "burn in the hellfires" (4:55). See Andrew Bostom, *The Legacy of Islamic Antisemitism* (NY, Prometheus Books 2008) p. 218.

<sup>5</sup> See Gilles Kepel, *Beyond Terror and Martyrdom* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University 2008) p. 239.

<sup>6</sup> See Christopher Caldwell, *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe* (NY, Doubleday 2009).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 264-265.

Generally, as we have learned from the incessant barrage of abiding anti-Jewish propaganda in the case of pre-Hitlerite Germany, this was the foundation upon which the Nazi regime implemented its “final solution.” Government encouragement of antisemitism, as in Iran (like in Germany), with its proxies Hezbollah and Hamas, must be taken very seriously.

In that so many fine scholars have contributed to the voluminous body of literature tracing the historical roots, causes, and diverse forms of antisemitism, I will assume the readers’ knowledge of these matters.<sup>8</sup> So, I will not approach this well-researched topic systematically in this paper.

In a qualified sense, the current waves of antisemitism may be called “anti-modernist.” Usually, modernism refers to the following: the presupposition that the seat of moral and sociopolitical value resides ultimately in individual autonomy, with each person being entitled to equal moral consideration (i.e., the principle of equality);<sup>9</sup> the doctrine of universal natural/human rights and the concomitant principles of freedom of expression, tolerance, and multicultural diversity; the free market economies of capitalism; the democratization of societies; the standard of scientific rationality; the idea of inevitable progress in history; and also respect for the institution of a just rule of law (i.e., constitutionalism).<sup>10</sup>

Anti-modernism, for the present purpose, is a manifest repudiation and exploitation of the aforementioned themes of modernism to serve certain parochial, reactionary interests in the contexts selected. The net effect of the anti-modernist impulse is, in my opinion, to enlarge the public space for tolerating virulent and deadly expressions of customary antisemitic beliefs. It is a basic thesis of my paper that antisemitism assumes a more dangerous status as institutions of high authority, whether governments or powerful religious organizations, not only tolerate hate-driven expressions of Jew-hatred but move toward actually encouraging them.

## 2. WHAT IS ANTISEMITISM?

In my view, antisemitism is a vicious form of hate that attempts in word or deed to deliberately harm, persecute, or destroy the physical, cultural, or spiritual being of Jewish people, the symbols and institutions of Judaism, and/or the Jewish state of Israel. At the very least, what Jews want in society is normalcy. Instead, what they often receive in some parts of today’s world is more akin to updated versions of such traditional, toxic antisemitic indictments as perpetrating usury, causing plagues, poisoning wells, and using the blood of Christian and Muslim children to make Passover matzoh or pastry (the infamous “blood libel”). Now Jews or Israelis are accused of perpetrating usury through the banking system, causing illnesses like AIDS and H1N1, and harvesting the organs of Palestinian children after Operation Cast Lead in Gaza last year. We even find

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<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., Robert Wistrich, *A Lethal Obsession: Antisemitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad* (2010); Walter Laqueur, *The Changing Face of Anti-Semitism* (2006); David Kertzer, *The Popes Against the Jews* (2001); George L. Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (1997); and Andrew Bostom, *The Legacy of Islamic Antisemitism* (2008).

<sup>9</sup> For an interesting discussion of our Enlightenment heritage, see Michael Sandel, *Justice* (NY, Farrar, Straus and Giroux 2009) pp. 140-166.

<sup>10</sup> For an excellent compendium of Enlightenment/modernist thought, see Isaac Kramniek (ed.), *The Portable Enlightenment Reader* (NY, Penguin Books 1995).

the Nazi genocide or Holocaust is blamed on its Jewish victims or that some contemporary Jewish scholars are charged with exploiting the Holocaust and turning it into an “industry” for sympathy and financial gain. Finally, building on the usual historical antisemitism, Jews stand accused by Islamist terrorists of fomenting 9/11 and the anthrax attacks in a hidden conspiracy that recruited others to do their dirty work. In this vein, the former prime minister of Malaysia said in a 2003 speech to the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and again in early 2010 in support of Al Quds: “today, Jews rule the world by proxy. They get others to fight and die for them.” And, even the Cardinal of Honduras recently blamed the sex scandals in the Church on the Jews!

Borrowing from centuries-old, scripture-based Christian antisemitism, many Arab and Muslim governments and their controlled media use such hate-bound, defamatory items such as the notoriously antisemitic “Protocols of the Elders of Zion,” a late nineteenth century tract thought to originate with the czarist police in Paris.<sup>11</sup> I understand that many hotels from Jordan to Egypt and Iran carry copies of the “Protocols.”

In 2002, Egypt broadcast a series based on the “Protocols” called “A Knight Without a Horse,” and Saudi, Egyptian, and Palestinian newspapers (like *Al Ryjad*, *Al Akhbar* and *Al Quds*) often publish excerpts, along with nazified cartoons caricaturing Jews and Israelis, and many textbooks and madrassas teach and preach the “Protocols.” What is this anti-Jewish screed of which the Nazi Third Reich’s propagandists made such vitriolic, rife use? It accuses the Jews—all Jews, everywhere and everywhen—of attempting to seize the reins of global power through the manipulation of banks and other financial institutions, the media, and the cultural and political institutions of all countries.

For example, the first protocol asserts that the real power of the Jewish world conspiracy is invincible because it is invisible. The pervasive fear of the “hidden hand” of the Jews, which works behind the scenes, has become a centerpiece of antisemitism today. As with other paranoid conspiracy theories of this sort, it is clear that if evidence of a conspiracy is lacking, the conspiracy theorists claim that the “lack of evidence” is proof positive of a secretive conspiracy (i.e., if one cannot prove that ghosts do not exist, this is taken as evidence that they do exist!). Perhaps it was that during the European Enlightenment and owing to the rise of the liberal society with its individual rights-based freedoms that the Jews were accused or suspected of using their new-found freedoms for devious, hidden, self-interested purposes, meaning that from society’s perspective, Jews are basically cosmopolitan and rootless.

### 3. IS THERE AN EMERGING DOWNTURN IN CATHOLIC-JEWISH RELATIONS?

Pope Benedict XVI’s policy toward the Jews is becoming problematic because it gives the appearance of inconsistency, backsliding, or, cynically, worse. His two predecessors gave the Jewish people—and progressive Catholics—substantial reasons to believe that the Catholic Church was finally done with tormenting Jews and, accordingly, was actively purging its liturgy of the teachings and interpretations that powered so much of its persecutory antisemitism by its adherents for so many centuries.

Indeed, 45 years ago, the Second Vatican Council (1965) issued its landmark “*Nostra Aetate*” (In Our Time) declaration. It explicitly rejected the charge of deicide and held

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<sup>11</sup> See Stephen Eric Bronner, *A Rumor About the Jews* (NY, St. Martin’s Press 2000).

that the Jewish people were not culpable for Jesus' crucifixion. Further, it asserted that they ("the Jews") remained "most dear to God." This stunning reversal of the Church's previous triumphalism and supersessionism would mark a dramatic, official, and (it was hoped) irreversible change in Catholic-Jewish relations in the future.<sup>12</sup> Another illustration was that a prayer calling for the conversion of Jews was to be expunged from the Catholic liturgy. Of course, this prayer implied the superiority of Catholicism. It would then seem to follow that the case for sainthood of a Jewish-born Carmelite nun, Edith Stein, would be put on hold indefinitely. She converted to Catholicism because she hoped it would help her to escape a one-way trip to the Nazi's "Final Solution." It did not, for she too perished in the Nazi's exterminative machinery.

Also on the positive side of the ledger are a number of interfaith services, papal visits to synagogues and to Israel, as well as other genuine efforts by some Catholic and Protestant clergy and theologians to underscore the ecumenical idea that the Jews are to be regarded as "elder brothers," rather than as dangerous, expendable, god-forsaken leftovers from pre-Christian times.

However, the current pope is raising the specter of the reversibility of the "irreversible," sanguine prospect for further improvement in Catholic-Jewish relations. A senior correspondent for the *National Catholic Reporter*, John L. Allen Jr., has tried to give an account of Benedict's Jewish policy,<sup>13</sup> because its patent inconsistencies are raising some serious warning signs in parts of the Jewish community. Allen Jr. explains that such "inconsistencies" are at best merely apparent but ultimately resolve into coherency once outside observers (presumably Jews) understand that Benedict is really addressing Catholics. His goal, says Allen Jr., is to purge the Church of elements of secularism.

Moreover, Allen states that the pope's policy may "not be everything some Jews desire, but at this moment in Catholic history, it may well be as good as it gets." In brief, some of these "inconsistencies" involve the rehabilitation of a Holocaust-denying bishop,<sup>14</sup> moving Pope Pius XII, the wartime pope whose public record in the face of the Nazi genocide was mostly silence, a step closer to sainthood, and reintroducing a Good Friday prayer that calls for the conversion of Jews.

Granted, this German pope visits synagogues and Nazi death camps and couples these important gestures with professions of abiding and meaningful "esteem and affection" for Judaism. But it is important to remember the Catholic Church's centuries-old, religion-based persecutory antisemitism. Given this dreadful history, and in light of Benedict's predecessors' ecumenical efforts to confront and reverse some of the Church's doctrinal basis for religious antisemitism, the inconsistencies in Benedict's policy reignite the embers of mistrust and fear in the hearts of many Jews.<sup>15</sup> On a more sobering note, we should underscore that any improved relations between Catholics and Jews must be qualified, since antisemitic beliefs, attitudes, feelings, or sympathies have been

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<sup>12</sup> For a compelling enumeration of Bible-based antisemitic commentary, see John Shelby Spong, *The Sins of Scripture* (NY, HarperCollins 2005) s. 6, pp. 181-210.

<sup>13</sup> See John L. Allen, Jr., "Making Sense of Benedict's Jewish Policy," *The National Forward*, January 29, 2010.

<sup>14</sup> This refers to Bishop Richard Williamson, whose excommunication from the Church was rescinded by Pope Benedict XVI, along with three other members of the ultra-conservative Society of St. Pius X.

<sup>15</sup> See Alan S. Rosenbaum, "Alarmed by Benedict," *The National Forward*, February 5, 2010.

well nurtured and sustained for years by many at the parish level. And these are not always amenable to papal directives or theological pronouncements.

#### 4. A REFLECTION ON ISRAEL AND GENOCIDAL ANTISEMITISM

In a discernible historical movement from religious to bioracial forms of antisemitism, in addition to Holocaust revisionism or denial, a very hurtful facet of current Jew-hatred is the jarring attempt by many parties in the Arab and Muslim world to delegitimize the Jewish state of Israel, i.e., to deny it has a right to exist as the world's only Jewish country, as a nation equal to all others in its inviolable sovereignty as recognized by the United Nations. In addition, Holocaust denial itself may be seen as a strategy for re-legitimizing public expressions of antisemitism.

This newer current of antisemitism seeks to eclipse a people's presumed natural entitlement to have its history publicly validated. As Israel's enemies continue to propagate negative stereotypes and myths about Jews as a people, it degrades them as individuals, groups, and as a nation by denying (or seeking to deny) to them the publicly enforced validation they need to flourish as a people. As a significant sidebar, both religious traditions of Christianity and Islam have been obsessed with the Jews and the Jews' failure to accept the teachings or prophecies of Jesus and Mohammed from time immemorial.

The Islamic Republic of Iran (its formal constitutional title) has been striving to claim the mantle of regional leadership in the Middle-Eastern Muslim world, so its proclamations matter. Its leading cleric Al Khamenei and its president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad have persistently threatened that Iran will "wipe Israel off the map" once it has the (nuclear) capacity to accomplish its genocidal ambition (i.e., to cause a second Holocaust while denying that the first one occurred). They also refer to Israel as the "Zionist entity or regime" and never by its proper name.

If history teaches us anything, we who support Israel (but not uncritically) ought to avoid the foolishness of dismissing such remarks by Iran's leadership as the rantings of mere lunatics or as simple political hyperbole for domestic consumption and for its proxies (like Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon). In a recent web posting as reported in the *New York Times*, Ayatollah Khamenei reportedly said: "Definitely, the day will come when nations of the region will witness the destruction of the Zionist regime." Further, he has stated: "How soon or late (Israel's demise) will happen depends on how Islamic countries and Muslim nations approach the issue."<sup>16</sup> This remark is a thinly disguised call for genocide. Moreover, he has referred to Iran's "permanent struggle against this international pariah [as] its divine duty."<sup>17</sup> The continuing hostility against Israel and its people by the Iranian regime officially began in 1979 when the revolutionary Islamic theocracy severed diplomatic relations with Israel. To successfully do so seems to suggest that there was fertile soil among many segments of the Iranian people for a ferocious hatred that clearly predates the regime's ascension to power. As the Persian (non-Arab) Islamic Republic of Iran moves closer to producing nuclear weapons, despite its perfidious public denials, Israel has the option to strike Iran militarily. However, doing so will involve a much greater risk of catastrophic failure, because

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<sup>16</sup> *New York Times*, January 28, 2010.

<sup>17</sup> *New York Times*, January 22, 2010.



Iran has learned from the mistake that Saddam Hussein made in placing his reactor in one location. Israel destroyed the Osirak reactor in 1981 in a single sortie.

It is too soon to tell now whether Iran's ambitions and options may yet be blunted by UN- or US-led sanctions. Further, Sunni Muslim governments like Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Egypt would also be gratified if Iran's nuclear quest were to be stopped, because they regard Iran's Shia government as a threat to their own internal stability. This is especially true of Jordan, because of Iran's support for Palestinian statehood and the subversion of Israel (since over one half of Jordan is Palestinian). It would also forestall a nuclear arms race in the Middle East.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Despite the fanatical intolerance we see arrayed against Israel and the Jewish people in many quarters in Arab and Muslim lands, as well as in select places in Europe (like Sweden), it is difficult to discern if this antisemitic eruption is the outcome of a clash of cultures or civilizations, the forces of modernism, or a religious, cultural, and political antisemitism. To think it is merely a defensive religious response, as some do,<sup>18</sup> is too simplistic. There are too many scriptural and historical reasons why it is taking root so vigorously, especially within the extreme right and extreme left in Europe, often in concert with unassimilated Muslims in European countries like France.

Although Iran has accused Israel of possessing nuclear weapons (which Israel has never confirmed or denied), its demand for Israel's denuclearization rings hollow among other Middle East states because Israel has never threatened any of its neighbors with nuclear devastation.

In summary, the Jewish people fortunately have some safeguards against another attempted genocide. Israel did not exist as a sanctuary for Jews at the time of the Nazi atrocity. In addition, organizations and institutions exist that teach about the Holocaust. We have learned from history about the warning signs that may lead to a future Holocaust. For example, the ADL is dedicated to reporting outbreaks of antisemitism anywhere in the world. Finally, we understand that passivity, indifference, ignorance, and a lack of strategies for confronting the forces of antisemitism make a potential turn toward exterminative antisemitism more likely. We must make certain that such deficiencies never again contribute to such an outcome. This is our major challenge today.

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<sup>18</sup> See Lee Harris, *The Suicide of Reason: Radical Islam's Threat to the West* (NY, Basic Books 2007) p. 211.



# Modern Antisemitism and National Identity

Ilka Schroeder\*

Modern antisemitism and national identity have both been thriving on a global scale. Being well aware of this situation, social scientists are paying more and more attention to both these issues and, more recently, to their connection.

However, a major difference exists in the perception of these two phenomena: national identity is often perceived as something positive, whereas antisemitism is viewed negatively. This paper will explore the connection between national identification and antisemitism. National identification will be identified as a systematic prerequisite and basis for modern antisemitism. This is to suggest that, in the antisemitic picture of the Jews, the position of the individual in modern society and his relationship with that society represents the core theme of antisemitism. Hence, the need to examine the citizen and society when analyzing modern antisemitism becomes obvious.

It is relatively easy to pinpoint when the relationship between antisemitism and national identity started. Jew-hatred was linked to national ideas beginning around the mid-18th century with the emergence of nation states, but it did not become the basis for party political organization and mass mobilization until the 1870s.

These ideas began to take root with slogans like "The Jews are our misfortune!" It might seem strange to single out this specific statement as an instance of modern antisemitism, as this kind of expression is hardly ever used, at least not in the West. When looking closely at the content of many current antisemitic and anti-Zionist statements, it becomes clear that the core content of modern antisemitism, then and now, shows strong continuities. This is especially true when one analyses the link between modern antisemitism and national identity.

There are also strong continuities in Jew-hatred more generally speaking. That is why some scholars claim antisemitism has been in existence at least since the High Middle Ages. Jew-hatred undoubtedly goes back that far in history, but the major change in content of this set of ideas (see below) justifies regarding Christian Jew-hatred as a different phenomenon to modern antisemitism, despite the continuities.

The well-known slogan used by Heinrich Treitschke, the antisemite who kicked off the "Berliner Antisemitismus-Streit," will in this paper serve as an example of the connection between national identification and modern antisemitism. The emphasis will be on the fourth word of his outcry: "The Jews are *our* misfortune!"

Looking at antisemitic statements, one quickly senses that they reflect not so much an individual feeling or an immediate personal threat or injury by a particular Jew. This is obviously not the experience of most antisemites. Rather, they refer to the threat to

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“us,” thus referring to a collective entity. It is this “we” that the antisemites claim the Jews threaten. The “we” is not a random group. It is the antisemite’s own nation made up of all of its citizens.

Given this rather extensive “we” as a somewhat natural starting point for any standard antisemitic statement, what seems to be at stake for the antisemite? What does he claim is being ruined, when this group, the “we,” is being harmed? We have all heard and known the accusations and slurs related to the financial, political, and cultural spheres. Thomas Haury (2002: ch. 1) sums it up well: whatever the Jews do endangers the national well-being. According to some antisemites, the Jews pushed the United States into a war with Iraq. They are also accused of influencing the government through their financial and political power, causing it to decide in favor of this tax law or that advantage for the wealthy. Antisemites also claim that the media only reports what is approved by the so-called Jewish lobby. The implicit idea is that if it were not for the Jews, the country would be much better off, the economy would work as it should, and politicians would do their job, which is to serve the country instead of serving a certain lobby.

This main substance of the accusations of the modern antisemite is quite severe. Granted, other nations and their citizens are often characterized as having similar evil interests—and many also believe that they would harm the interests of other nations in order to serve their own interests. Still, outside wartime, following these interests is usually seen as an individual affair.

This is something that Klaus Holz (2001) stresses in his theory. Before examining how all this relates to Jews in the antisemite’s view, there is an important remark to be made concerning his analysis. Holz takes for granted that all citizens identify with their nation and respect the right of other nations’ subjects. The whole question of why people identify with their nation in the first place is not considered. This may seem like a digression, but this paper will demonstrate how national identification is a prerequisite for and part of modern antisemitism and how the way people understand themselves as subjects—citizens of a state and of a nation—is central to a theory of antisemitism. All of this is important in order to analyze the correlations as well as the contradictions of the antisemitic worldview and reality.

Let us return to the antisemitic point of view with regard to other nations. It is indeed different when it comes not to just any nation but to the Jews. The antisemite’s perspective is that the Jews control his homeland—be it the United States, Argentina, Germany, or any other country. The reason for that is not because the Jews follow their national agenda as everyone else, but because they follow their own special Jewish agenda. The content of that special agenda—antisemites claim—consists exclusively of materialism: Jews are all about money, about getting the best deal, and about getting even richer. That is all they strive for. To clarify, with other nations, the nation is about the nation—anything else is subordinate. Such subordination does not apply in the case of the Jews—their highest goal, in the antisemitic view, is money, money, and money.

However, antisemites often see the relationship of the Jews to the nation exactly the other way around. According to this view, money is simply the means to the real aim: world domination. This just shows how contradictory antisemitic ideology can be.

Either way, there are two characteristics ascribed to the Jews by the antisemite. The first of these is that the Jews are responsible for an abstract and general national misfortune. In addition, the Jews also serve as a reverse image of the antisemite’s own idealized nation.

The image various antisemites have of their own countries differs from country to country; many varied national myths abound around the globe. But the image of the Jew is astonishingly persistent and global. It functions as a universal counter-image representing greed, power mongering, and willful ignorance about any other need.

To explain a third function of antisemitism, one more aspect of national identity should be considered. It is the "we" that includes the claim to an identity or, in fact, the claim to two identities. The first is a common identity among the members of each nation—the claim that they share certain qualities or convictions that make them one nation. The second identity is the one that exists between the citizen and the state. It is assumed to be the general identity of each member, who expresses his nationality by way of being and behaving. This also works the other way around: the state acts as the representative of the nation and therefore manifests and fosters the national spirit.

Both identities are merely claimed, an ideal that can never be achieved, because these identities are partial at best. There is not a single thing that all members of a nation agree on—whether it is the preferred political path or whether fried chicken is more American than pancakes. Nor is there an identity between the citizen and the state (see below). For the moment, suffice it to say that the state cannot satisfy the varied needs of every citizen. This means that reality does not provide the material to confirm this basic modern identity.

This aspect of nationhood is mentioned because it illustrates the gap between a citizen's expectation of identity and the non-existence of this identity in reality. This gap needs to be bridged in any national identity. This is important for the study of modern antisemitism, as antisemitism is one way of filling this gap (Haury, 2002: ch. 1). It is an attempt to fix the inconsistency, but this attempt is still tainted by contradictions. Antisemitism is a way to bridge the gap, because it involves declaring that something is not part of the national identity, namely the Jews. This offers everybody who is part of the identity a way of distinguishing themselves. It also presents a distinction to the outside world that strengthens the inner bond among its members.

Of course, this is the case with any kind of racism toward foreigners. No matter where they live, they are all members of other nations and are perceived as such. However, when considering the difference between racism and antisemitism, one discovers another interesting and very specific aspect of Jew-hatred. Sure enough, Jews within a nation are regarded as not really belonging to that nation, but nor are they necessarily representatives of another nation. They can be seen, even after the foundation of Israel, as the "third other." According to Klaus Holz, the Jews are not only regarded as not really belonging to a certain nation. In fact, some antisemites regard them as not belonging to any nation. This becomes apparent when looking at Jews who carry a specific passport, for instance a German passport. The antisemitic mind has no secure way of knowing whether these Jews are really part of the German nation. Thanks to the materialistic characteristics attributed to them, the Jews are always perceived as disloyal and thereby not really part of the nation in their hearts.

All other nations on the same level of identity: the antisemite has his national identity and other nations' members have theirs. But the Jew fulfills yet another function. He is not only a counter-image to each nation but also stands for a negation of the national principle as such. In the antisemitic view, the Jews can have the role of an anti-nation. In a world structured by nation-states, this verdict actually implies danger: negating this principle is a very principal exclusion. It means that Jews do not belong—anywhere.

This negation is an explanation of the immanent “sense” of antisemitism, but it is still only part of the explanation. The exact content remains to be analyzed in the context of other aspects of modern society. Is there any judgment on society hidden in the antisemitic perspective that sees the Jewish communal spirit in materialism?

On the one hand, there is this idea or promise of unity in the concept of national identity. The German poet Friedrich Schiller put it in a nutshell: “We shall be a single People of brethren.” At the same time, modern society is built on the principle of competition; in politics, in economics, in every social arena, people compete with each other. In such a society, there needs to be an entity that sets the rules about how to compete—and prosecutes those who do not comply. For everyone who takes part in the competition, this entity now becomes something that everyone depends on. Therefore, everyone has to want those rules and has to develop an interest in the entity doing its job as a judge or referee. Wanting the regulation of the whole game also means that every person has to want the restrictions implied in the rules—even when they apply to himself. That implies an interesting contradiction. Wanting somebody to take care of the ground rules of the competition means talking a step back and not only having an interest in one’s own position but also in the competition as a whole.

Immanuel Kant and Georg W.F. Hegel both talk about this fundamental conflict for any citizen in the modern world. It later became known as the conflict between the *bourgeois*—i.e., self-interest—on the one hand, and the *citoyen*—i.e., the interest in the common good—on the other.

This is worth mentioning because, interestingly enough, only the *bourgeois* side of the argument is attributed to the Jews. The antisemitic claim that the Jews only follow their own interests and that their desire to get more money and power drives them translates exactly as a representation of the *bourgeois* quality.

Given that a normal citizen has awareness of both *citoyen* and *bourgeois*, this is an interesting phenomenon. Even if one group were to be extremely successful in following one of these two paths, why would they be hated for it rather than congratulated for achieving success in that area? Obviously, something about the *bourgeois* attitude is not appreciated. That something was the idea that acting rampantly as a *bourgeois* would harm national well-being. This idea emerged in the conservative debate in Europe in the 19th century, which is where racial antisemitism developed.

The *citoyen* angle represents an effort citizens must make for their nation in the name of modern society. It demands of them to give something up instead of following the comfortable path and just worrying about themselves, regardless of the social consequences.

That might sound fairly straightforward, but it does not explain why the entire *bourgeois* attitude is projected onto a group that is imagined to be evil and to bring evil. In the antisemitic view, the *bourgeois* is either seen as acceptable, as long as people stick to the rules when pursuing their own self-interest, or, in its radicalized form, the *citoyen* is seen as representing the good and the *bourgeois* as representing the bad. This obviously clashes with reality, where everybody has to be a *bourgeois* at least in some aspects and most people also accept the point of view of the *citoyen*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This author does not share the interpretation that the modern antisemitic idea is necessarily based on citizens being bound by blood rather than by law. Both types—the liberal understanding of national belonging and the biological one—are a fertile breeding ground for antisemitism. Both essentialize the projected qualities of Jews, but that is not exactly the same as arguing on a biological basis (Holz, 2001: esp. ch. 3).

Indeed, the accusation that the Jew acts as a pure *bourgeois*, thereby endangering and corrupting the nation, derives from the *citoyen* angle. That is why the antisemite believes that it is not only himself or any other individual who is harmed but society as a whole.

This again suggests that the antisemite speaks from the viewpoint of the nation, and he thereby abstracts from himself. In his claims, he negates his own interests and the fact that he is also a *bourgeois*. In this context, the question remains why this *bourgeois* side is negated and projected onto an outside group.

Detlev Claussen (2005) and, more recently, Klaus Holz have uncovered the ideal of the nation that is behind this antisemitic accusation. In the imagined *Gemeinschaft* (which roughly translates as “community”), which becomes the benchmark of the antisemites’ critique, the individual exists as part of the community, and he exists to serve the community. Unity is the first principle, and the individual must subordinate.

Also, antisemites assume this imagined community as having existed previously. They back-project their ideal of a society as historical fact and thereby stress their moral right to “reintroduce” this structure.

Once again, there is a contradiction within the antisemitic ideology. The Jewish sense of belonging is portrayed in two ways. On the one hand, antisemites believe that the Jews invented liberal society — with its necessary clashes of interest — because it is their ideal of society and because it is their way of behaving. This society all about arguing, and no sense of togetherness exists whatsoever. On the other hand, many antisemites believe that liberal society is only a tool through which the Jews seek to destroy other nations and other communities in order to better gain power over the world — and thereby establish their national identity on a global scale.

Similarly contradictory is the imagined bond among Jews. Some claim the bond among Jews is biological, analogous to nationhood for others, but even stronger. Hitler, for example, claimed that the Jews watch over the purity of their Jewish blood much more than any other “people.” The other position is that the bond among Jews is mediated and motivated by pure material interests. According to this view, Jews only help each other in order to get the most out of a sense of belonging and do not share the same bond as all other nations.

This explains the content of this aspect of the antisemitic image of the Jew as “the other.” It also explains the answers that antisemites tend to give. What it does not explain, however, is what questions he raises and how he links them to reality. To understand where antisemites start, other issues have to be taken into account. What needs to be processed individually and as a society when people project one part of being a citizen, the *bourgeois* side, onto a perceived outer group? To put the question differently, if antisemitism is understood as a constant symptom of modern society, what does this say about society and the position of the subject and his ways of processing his status as a *bourgeois* and as a *citoyen* — especially concerning national identity? What promise lies within this identity that antisemites implicitly judge not to be fulfilled, blaming the Jews for this failure?

In conclusion, the antisemitic image of the Jew produces a counter-image of what the antisemite wishes his own national identity to be. It also produces an ultimate enemy responsible for all national failure. The Jews are seen as an anti-national entity questioning the national principle, but they are also accused of having the strongest bond of all nations. In addition, the Jews are perceived by some claiming to represent a certain class or a notion of class struggle as the embodiment and representatives of the *bourgeois* side.

This is the common ground of the different versions of modern antisemitism. Yet some questions remain to be answered. What constitutes the material basis for the principal gap between *citoyen* and *bourgeois*? Moreover, what fundamental threat is posed to antisemitic citizens with a firm national identity when they see others whom they perceive as only following their *bourgeois* side? Both these questions are deserving of further research, to which I intend to contribute.

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## Sisterhood Was Powerful and Global: Where Did It Go?

Thyme S. Siegel\*

I tossed like a dreamer through my life in America, daughter of Yiddish speakers, daughter of the backwoods of New Jersey. I was sleepwalking. Incubating. Even though 20 years ago, I researched and taught Jewish Women's History and published an article called "Anti-Jewish Oppression in Progressive Movements," I did not feel a sense of personal threat. Except when I thought about Israel. I was afraid to go. Israel was too precious and too vulnerable. Finally, during Passover 2009, I went to Israel. Enchanted, I wrote a story of my adventure called "Three Weeks in the Holy Land". It is the best story I have ever written. I loved the little Jewish nation, a whole country of my extended family.

But when I arrived back in northern California, old friends of the decades, people, women mostly, who were always warm and supportive of me and my writing, did not approve of my joy and did not want to read my adventure.

I went to dinner at the home of an old high-school friend, a well-published Talmudic scholar also considered a feminist for his writings. Even though he owes his career to Israel, he felt Israel had no right to defend itself against rockets from Hamas. His response to my questioning this:

"For a few rockets? Its lies, all lies."

I said that there were many, many reports of thousands of rockets. "Its lies, all lies."

Me: But I know someone whose relatives have half a second to get into a bomb shelter in Ashkelon." He shrugged contemptuously. He scoffed at the notion of contemporary antisemitism. He pooh-poohed the problem of Jews having to flee Europe again. "Highly overblown." He compared the Israelis to Nazis in public at an University of California Berkeley Associated Students meeting debating the divestment from Israel issue. He called Israel's effective airline security procedures "racism."

When I pointed out these might save his life someday, he retorted "I don't care!"

This is what someone called "Jewicide." The embedded agenda that trumps the facts. Yet he has been able to indoctrinate several generations of students now. In academia there are a lot more Jews like him. And non-Jews.

I feel threatened by this kind of thinking, personally threatened. It has stirred up my survival instincts. The Hamas Charter calls for the annihilation of the Jewish people and has done so all along, but it did not impact my fear level. I am now more motivated than I have ever been in my life.

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\* Researcher/Activist.

I am motivated to speak out, impelled by a sense of insecurity, not only for Israel, but for America. After returning from Israel I researched global jihad and the predicament Israel is really in. I read *Eurabia* about Europe and *Infiltration* about the United States.<sup>1</sup>

I have undergone a transformation, woken up my survival instincts and my appreciation. I appreciate the life I have lived in America, a life of fantastic freedom of choice and opportunity for creativity. I never thought I would do this, but I stand on the street with a pro-Israel group, holding an Israeli or American flag—to counter those across the street, demonstrating that anti-Zionism really is antisemitism, in case there was any doubt.

The flotillistas shout ugly slogans. “Go back to Auschwitz” and “Intifada! Intifada!” chanted by hundreds of demonstrators held back only by the goodwill of the police can stimulate your survival instincts—if you want to wake up your whole being—and not just comprehend all this intellectually. Hear the shouts of “From the River to the Sea,” meaning they do not want a two-state solution, they want it all. Hear: Khaybar! Khaybar! A reference to Mohammad’s 7th century massacre of a tribe of Jews. The Hamasniks shout “Smash the Jewish state,” “Target all Jewish businesses,” “Every Zionist is a target”, “Bloodthirsty monster ... shame shame shame.” I am not ashamed.

The local flotilla leader in the Bay Area openly solicits funding for new flotillas (and airplanes now)—without worry about getting indicted by the federal attorney for aiding a terrorist organization. This does not seem to alarm my longtime women and men friends, Jewish and non-Jewish. Hardcore pacifists are ready to overlook all facts on the ground. They do not want to believe that, no matter what they say or do, they have deadly and determined enemies. Patiently I explain why the Israelis got themselves into a position of needing to have a blockade. There is no memory, even of the most recent history.

I live in Berkeley, California, where I pioneered women’s studies in 1970, enabled by a faculty advisor who, 40 years later, now signs petitions to boycott Israel. The topic of Jew-hatred, of Israel and Jewish history, did not arise for me until I researched and taught Jewish Women’s History in the early 1990s. I was part of a generational bubble. We could have lives of great intercultural cross-over, lives which explored our freedom.

In the 1970s I lived in a matriarchal village in Eugene, Oregon. (I call it “matriarchal” because I wrote a story with that name; no one else called it that.) We were against patriarchy, all patriarchies. By the 1980s it seemed we had ceded our global vision to the larger left. No longer concerned with the fate of women in Islam, I started hearing condemnations of Israel with no mention of the surrounding toxic patriarchies. The original ideals of global sisterhood disintegrated into a shocking rhetoric of obsessive Israel-blaming. We were of course against war, all war. Later our slogans merged with the larger anti-war left: “Another world is possible,” and the larger New Age spirituality movement: “Be the change you want to see” and “We refuse to be enemies” or “There are no enemies anywhere.”

There is no free speech in Berkeley if you speak outside the dominant paradigm. Nonie Darwish, an ex-Muslim Egyptian American, who wrote “Now They Call Me

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<sup>1</sup> Bat Ye’or, *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis* (2005); Paul Sperry, *Infiltration: How Muslim Spies and Subversives Have Penetrated Washington* (2008).

Infidel" and an exposé of Sharia law called "Cruel and Usual Punishment," came to speak at the UC campus. She was interrupted so intensely during her campus speech that she had to leave the stage, speech unfinished, with inadequate security. Public education is not easy. Darwish has to live with a bodyguard and death threats.

The women's movement in the United States has drifted off the rails. Not finding Israel perfect, and not finding our own American relatives perfect, some women in the movement started down a long slippery slope, thinking they were claiming the moral high ground, shouting "hypocrites, murderers" at their own relatives and ancestors, while claiming a universal identity. The blame-Israel-always-for-everything obsession picked up speed with the most tired repetitions. The Israeli government always held in contempt as dominated by right-wing militarists instead of being perceived as led by the duly elected leaders who were chosen as the best to maintain security.

An old friend from our women's writing group claimed recently that "Israel has the most right-wing militarist government in its history." She always made huge, confident claims in a quiet, calm manner. I believed in her confidence, my friend of 35 years. I always craved her approval. I suddenly heard ignorant arrogance instead.

I asked her, "How would you feel if you and your extended family were targeted for mass extermination by the ideology of millions of people?"

She replied: "First, I would ask myself if it was true. We could try to figure out how to know better what the truth is. What form does that target for death take? Tell me why you feel your life is in danger of death from those you know and are in physical proximity to.... Maybe this seems like a stupid question. I am asking it because we have to find solid ground to stand on before we get to the more difficult questions. So tell me if you feel this." She is a person I have shared my feelings with for 35 years but I shut down, unable to share more with her. She refuses to read the sources that have convinced me of the nature of the antisemitism we are facing. Her continued obtuseness indicates to me she is an adherent who refuses to give credence to any development that does not fit the narrative to which she is committed.

A well-known visionary author, earth activist, anti-globalization campaigner, and Wicca leader in the Bay Area goes on English-language tours of Gaza. After I returned from Israel, I had questions for her, a Jewish witch tourist in Gaza. By email, I asked her if she could monitor Al Jazeera in Arabic? I asked if she would ask her Palestinian friends some questions suggested by Tawfiq Hamid, an ex-Muslim, to define political Islam. He asks Muslims and Muslim institutions to clearly, unambiguously, and publicly denounce fighting and killing Jews, calling Jews "pigs and monkeys", killing apostates, beating and stoning women for any reason, and killing homosexuals.

Her response was to say that radical Judaism needed to denounce those concepts also. Then she rattled off a list of horrendous things that Israeli soldiers and settlers have allegedly done to the Palestinians.

She signed it, "Thyme, your radical consciousness and lifelong commitment to justice is better than this, love." Yes she signed it love, as she shifted the blame back to Jews and changed the subject.

A couple weeks later she sent me a forwarded message, introducing it by saying, "This is a far more eloquent response to your questions than anything I could write." Then below in capitals: WORTH YOUR TIME TO READ!!!! It was not a response to my questions, but a total blaming of Muslim women's predicament on Israel and Western imperialism. Nothing about the inculcated Jew-hatred.

I responded by asking her again if she could monitor Al Jazeera in Arabic. But it was useless as she had blocked my email. I was shocked, no dialogue was possible.

There are familiar patterns. Blaming everything on US imperialism, colonialism, blaming Israel and Jews right back into that familiar groove.

Ah, and then there is blaming everything on patriarchy, all patriarchies, without differentiating.

A goddess priestess, who produces a well-distributed and very successful women's astrological calendar, mentored me in the 1970s. The voice of the old anti-patriarchal spirit. When I tried to update her on the world today, she responded: "In the alternative non-patriarchal world we are creating ... without men who are so much more stuck in the old adversarial ways of patriarchy." I notice the we-we of it, the world we are creating, because we do create our own reality, right?

But then she updates herself and writes that "getting beyond duality is the only game she wants to play." We all need to grow up and take responsibility for our lives. Fight the enemy within, as a necessary precondition to fighting what appears to be the enemies "out there." This is a time of human evolution that will either do us in or force us to change in fundamental ways. She is envisioning "the shift" that the bumper stickers proclaim, the shift that happens.

I imagine a shift also, that our survival instinct wakes up, that we come to appreciate our deepest most important values and are inspired to defend them. The motivation for this shift will entail feeling personally threatened.

Now I am a Zionist street warrior, holding an Israeli or American flag, standing across the street to counter the hate and lies of the Women in Black.

Standing next to me on the street is a lesbian who had also been in the Jewish feminist movement. We knew the same names, the local and national celebrities of our literary sub-culture of the 1970s. We had read the same authors, gone to the same concerts. We came from old-lefty families. We both know the self-righteous proclaimers who sign the local anti-Israel petitions. "We are Jews and we support divesting" kind of thing. What did they know of Jewish history? When finally a petition appeared with a long list of those who opposed the hate and lies about the Jewish state, I did not know any of them, but I had to find them, I had to meet them, I needed them.

I will meet with anyone who supports Jewish Israel. I am not afraid of this surreal situation of being called —horror of horrors— right-wing, even though it is a total obfuscation of the term. "Right-wing," "racist," "Islamophobic" are words being used to frighten and suppress people with legitimate concerns.

I am not drinking the Kool-Aid. I say, "Hello, Berkeley, your acid sparkled streets, heartland of the production of rhetoric, heartland of resistance: I am here, I love Israel, I love America, get used to it.

# Progress in Combating Antisemitism at the International Level

Michael Whine\*

Following the 2001 Durban Conference, Jewish organisations sought redress at the international level, and the resultant diplomatic offensive against antisemitism has therefore been carried on through this medium.

Some international organisations play a more effective role than others, but the initiatives have been more than declaratory. They involve ground level programmes within territories that have historically provided fertile territory for antisemitism.

## 1. OSCE

The OSCE was the first international organisation to recognise and react to the changing circumstances. In June 1990, the foreign ministers of the then participating states of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe met in Copenhagen to adopt the Copenhagen Declaration, which gave force to their concern that the so-called “human dimension” could play a role in undermining security within and between states. They recognised that “the protection and promotion of human rights is one of the basic purposes of government”. The Declaration accordingly called on participating states to

clearly and unequivocally condemn totalitarianism, racial and ethnic hatred, anti-semitism, xenophobia and discrimination ... [to] take effective measures, including the adoption, in conformity with their constitutional systems and their international obligations, of such laws as may be necessary, to provide protection against any acts that constitute incitement to violence against persons or groups based on national, ethnic or religious discrimination, hostility or hatred including anti-semitism.

As antisemitic incidents and violence rose worldwide, but especially in Europe, during the latter part of the 1990s, the OSCE Foreign Ministerial Conference in Porto in December 2002 noted governments’ concern over the “manifestation of aggressive nationalism, racism, chauvinism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and violent extremism, wherever they may occur.”

The statement did more than express concern however. It went on to authorise the OSCE to take action and ensure effective follow-up via the annual Human Dimension meetings and seminars organised by the agency’s human rights affiliate, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

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A consequence therefore was the 2003 Vienna meeting on antisemitism, the first high-level conference devoted specifically to antisemitism.

The meeting was preceded by a two-day seminar on human rights and antisemitism organised by the Jacob Blaustein Institute, at which Jewish representatives sought to engage with and enlist the support of the major international human rights groups Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. That meeting was less than successful, and in the end the Jewish groups were unable to garner any real support from the international human rights groups, a situation that still prevails.

However, the Vienna meeting required a proper follow-up, an event that would engage governments at the highest level and ensure continuing support for programmes. This led to the 2004 Berlin Conference, which in its final Declaration noted “unambiguously that international developments or political issues, including those in Israel or elsewhere in the Middle East, never justify anti-Semitism”, breaking a logjam in pointing to the source of much “new” antisemitism. It also committed participating states to collect and maintain reliable data on antisemitic and other hate crimes and to work with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to determine appropriate periodic reviews of antisemitism. It tasked ODIHR to work systematically on collecting and disseminating information, identifying best practice for preventing and responding to antisemitism and, if requested, to offer advice to participating states.

The first step in pursuing these aims was the Paris meeting on cyberhate two months later, which examined the increasing use of the internet to promote antisemitism and other forms of hatred. On this occasion, the OSCE failed to follow up the recommendations, and it took until March 2010 for the organisation to hold its second expert meeting on the same subject.

The planned outcome of that meeting will be a binding Ministerial Declaration on combating cyberhate.

The Berlin Conference was followed by three more high-level conferences, in Cordoba, Bucharest and Astana, that have forced states to demonstrate their progress, or otherwise, in combating antisemitism. Intermittent experts’ meetings are also held to draw attention to emerging concerns and to assist the Personal Representative on Antisemitism to the OSCE Chairman in Office.

ODIHR now publishes a series of important reports, including the annual *Hate Crimes in the OSCE Region* report, which collects and analyses data from member states and NGOs and includes a substantial section on antisemitism. The report also measures progress against agreed targets, such as adherence to national and international instruments. In addition, ODIHR publishes other reports, including *Education on the Holocaust and Antisemitism*, *Hate Crime Laws—A Practical Guide* and a series of school books for high-school students, so far in nine languages. The ODIHR Tolerance and Non Discrimination Information System database contains national legislation against hate crime, model legislation for states that have yet to draft such legislation and over two million other pieces of relevant information for governments to use.

## 2. EUROPEAN UNION

The European Union’s early efforts in confronting antisemitism were fraught with problems, but positive efforts have since been made to redress the balance.

The 2003 report on *Manifestations of Antisemitism in the European Union*, published by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, renamed the Fundamental Rights Agency in 2007, was in fact two reports: a country analysis prepared by the Berlin University Centre for Research on Antisemitism and a report on *Perceptions of Antisemitism in the European Union*. These reports were reasonable given the short time allowed for their preparation but controversy erupted when the EUMC sought to bury the first report, delay publication of the second and then publish both with a press release at variance with the assessments made by the reports' authors. What the EUMC failed to understand is that antisemitism is now frequently a consequence of the overflow of Middle East tension and is increasingly promoted by Islamists. Muslims also suffer from prejudice, and the EUMC, a body established to monitor this phenomenon as well, found difficulty in reconciling the fact that victims of one sort of prejudice could be responsible for promoting another form of prejudice.

Since 2004, the FRA has published a useful annual review of antisemitism within the EU based on reports submitted by its RAXEN network of national focal points. But, as with the annual OSCE report, it fails to provide a complete picture as too many states are still unable or unwilling to submit data.

Of real lasting benefit, however, could be the Working Definition of Antisemitism. When the EUMC considered its first report in 2003, it found that many respondents could not define antisemitism in today's political climate. It also lamented the fact that no two experts could define antisemitism in the same way. It therefore asked selected Jewish NGOs and academics to provide a simple working definition that would encompass antisemitic demonisation of Israel, which could also be used by their own RAXEN network of national focal points and by law enforcement agencies.

Although it was never intended that the definition would be legislated, it has nevertheless also been adopted as a working guide by the OSCE and the US State Department and is under consideration by the German Expert Commission on Antisemitism.

Another major step forward within the EU is expected when the Common Framework Decision comes into effect this November. Although much watered down from the original stronger draft, it nevertheless places on all EU member states a requirement to legislate against the promotion of hatred, including antisemitism, Holocaust denial and denial of genocide.

### 3. COUNCIL OF EUROPE

The Council of Europe, with a larger membership than the EU, also acted by passing policy resolutions condemning antisemitism. But its racism monitoring body, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance has taken on the issue in an effective and business-like manner. Its mission is to monitor member states' adherence to European legislation and the European Convention on Human Rights, in particular. It does so by means of four-yearly reviews of states' compliance with European and their own national legal instruments, as well as occasional thematic recommendations. Member states are expected to act on ECRI recommendations, and the current third cycle of country reports is paying particular attention to the improvements made by members over the entire twelve-year cycle. In 2004, ECRI also published a General Policy Recommendation on Combating Antisemitism, which gave advice to member states on legislation and the action required by national criminal justice agencies.

The 2010 ECRI review of progress notes that its three-pronged programme of activities—country reports, thematic reports and engagement with civil society—has allowed it to promote real legislative progress and effective use of that legislation.

#### 4. UNITED NATIONS

Let me now turn to the UN. Latterly, it has, by any standards, been ineffective in defending human rights. But it has nevertheless made a contribution to combating antisemitism. Several denunciations of antisemitism, within the context of denouncing racism, in 2002 and 2005, were followed by the more practical decision to establish the International Day of Commemoration for Holocaust Victims on 27 January and an unequivocal condemnation of Holocaust denial, signed by all member states except Iran, in 2005.

Even the ridiculous 2009 Durban Follow-On Conference attempted to move on from the ill-fated Durban Conference by calling on member states to counter antisemitism, take measures to prevent the emergence of movements promoting hatred and implement General Assembly resolutions on Holocaust commemoration and Holocaust denial.

The Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust in 2000 was among the most practical and long-lasting outcomes of international diplomacy and one that stemmed from the concerns of statesmen rather than at Jewish urging.

Initiated by the then Swedish Prime Minister, the forum agreed to establish an international taskforce to ensure that states recognise the magnitude of the Holocaust and its everlasting scarring effect on the Jews and humanity as a whole. So far, 27 states have signed the Stockholm Declaration and put in place annual Holocaust commemorations and educational programmes.

To ensure enlargement and consistency, a permanent office was established in Berlin, funded by the German government and with a revolving chairmanship shared by signatory states.

Finally, it should be noted that the pressure parliamentarians exert on governments and international agencies has been significant. The London Declaration, signed by 125 parliamentarians from 40 countries, following the first London Conference on Antisemitism in London organised by the Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism in February 2009, has now led to the establishment of a European Parliamentary Intergroup to fight Antisemitism. The recognition that racism starts with the Jews but could ultimately destroy civilisation was spelled out by two of its co-founders, German MEP Martin Schulz and former Bundestag member Gert Weisskirchen. Both stressed the need for urgent action, which depends, in part, on the pressure parliamentarians exert on their governments.

#### 5. PROGRESS AND SETBACKS

Looking back, it might be argued that ten years' diplomatic effort to counter antisemitism has been of little avail, given the dramatic increase in incidents and deterioration in discourse particularly following Operation Cast Lead in 2009.

This would, however, miss the point. At the turn of the millennium, governments were reluctant to even recognise that antisemitism was growing again. They could see



antisemitism only through the prism of the far right, which was in retreat politically, and not through that of Islamism and the left, which were in the ascendant. They also underestimated the phenomenal power of information and communication technologies and the viral nature of social networking internet sites. Since then, states have recognised the dangers to societies' health by not combating the phenomenon, have agreed a common yardstick by which antisemitism can be defined and measured and have recognised that it now also comes from new and different directions. Many have also legislated against incitement of antisemitism in its various forms, including Holocaust denial. Those that have not yet done so, in Europe at least, will have to do so by the end of 2010.

It must also be recognised that none of these individual initiatives can, on their own, defeat antisemitism. Taken together over a period, and with others still to come, they are establishing a diplomatic and political climate that will more effectively counter antisemitism and make states and their criminal justice agencies respond more effectively.

There have also been setbacks. Many states are still unable to measure antisemitism, despite having agreed to do so. Some states still grapple with the concept of "hate crime" itself. To collect data, states are required to note hate crime specifically in their penal code or provide their courts with the power to enhance penalties if there is evidence of bias on the part of an offender. It needs sensitisation and training for police, prosecutors and judiciary to recognise the aggravated element, and criminal justice agencies need coordinated and linked systems to record the crimes, incidents and outcomes. Moreover, they are required, by international agreement, to disaggregate the data so that it may be analysed by victim group. Some states do not allow such disaggregation because of data privacy protection requirements or because the secular nature of the state, for reasons of cohesion or on philosophical grounds, denies recognition of faith and the particularity of faith groups in society.

Despite their declared wish to contribute, some states are therefore precluded from providing the data required for analysis at this time. The overall picture is therefore lacking in clarity, although the broad outlines are obviously clearly apparent. In recognition of this, the OSCE, ECRI and the FRA therefore encourage the work of NGOs and rely on their vital work in augmenting the data provided by state agencies. Additionally, the FRA is now considering widespread polling on perceptions of antisemitism within Jewish communities, following polling projects within other minority communities. These projects recognise that official bodies may not be able to provide reliable and timely data and that NGOs have limited capacity. Instead they are designed to provide an overview of minority communities' experiences and perceptions.

These shortcomings are now recognised by the FRA and the OSCE, and for that reason the session on combating antisemitism at the 2010 OSCE High Level Conference in Astana called on participating states, inter alia, to implement the 2004 Berlin Declaration and record and prosecute antisemitic (and other) hate crimes, to sign and implement the Stockholm Declaration on Holocaust Remembrance and the ICCA London Declaration on Combating Antisemitism and to promote the Working Definition of Antisemitism.

Additionally, it noted that "participating States seem to lack the political will to implement their commitments on the topic of anti-semitism". This second setback is the apparent fatigue that exists among some states. Concern over growing antisemitism in Europe has been overtaken by concern for the mounting violence against Roma and Sinti, the massively under-researched violence against the disabled and violence against Muslim communities. Progress in monitoring and combating antisemitism may there-

fore slow down as governments and their criminal justice agencies and educational systems are put under pressure to adapt, innovate and enlarge their work in a recessionary climate.

In conclusion, I would contend that the progress made in confronting and combating antisemitism since the 1990s has been neither continuous nor consistent, but without the determination of some governments the international agencies and a handful of Jewish NGOs the progress made thus far would not have been possible.

# The Effect of the Resurgence of Antisemitism on Holocaust Survivors

Barbara Wind\*

## INTRODUCTION

After the Holocaust, the radical nature of that genocide made it unseemly to voice antisemitism publicly, at least for those in or strongly affiliated with Western civilization. The Protestant and Catholic Churches apologized for the contempt teachings that laid the foundation for the destruction of one-third of the entire population of world Jewry, as well as all those groups and individuals whom the Nazis deemed Jewish or otherwise undesirable or as they termed it, "life unworthy of life."<sup>1</sup>

Under communism, the expression of antisemitism was officially *verboten*, as was all religious practice. The demise of the Soviet Union brought both religion and nationalism to the fore. One consequence has been the open expression and acceptance of antisemitism in the former Soviet Union. The creation of palatable official postwar national narratives have served to downplay or utterly disregard the patriotism and nationalistic aspirations many Jews had for the lands they loved, lived in, and served for centuries. Instead, some of these revisionists have cast their nations purely as victims or double victims of the fascist and communist regimes. They tend to link or conflate Jews with the communist oppressors while ignoring the fact that many of their own collaborated with the Nazis or the communists.

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<sup>1</sup> Decades after the Holocaust, formal apologies, written and verbal, were made at different times and in a number of venues by official representatives of Catholic and Protestant Churches. These include statements by Lutheran bishops in 1994, French bishops in 1994, and the Vatican on March 17, 1998, followed by the publication of a 14-page report on April 8, 1998, Pope John Paul II's statement at Yad Vashem on March 12, 2000; Pope Benedict XVI's statements in a New York synagogue on April 18, 2008, at Yad Vashem on May 11, 2009, and in a Roman synagogue in January, 2010. It is worth noting that scholars and theologians have criticized these statements as being so carefully worded that they fall short of an honest and direct apology, leaving the door open for revisions that would glorify the Church and some of its members, particularly Pope Pius XII. Many Jews and Christians consider his silence during World War II as an act of complicity to genocide, which should have been subject to criminal charges. Nor do they appreciate Pope Benedict XVI's determination to canonize him. The current Pope, who as Josef Ratzinger was a member of the Hitler Youth, has made no apology for his wartime activity. To have resisted joining the obligatory *Hitlerjugend* movement would have demanded conviction and courage, which some Germans, including Jehovah's Witnesses, indeed demonstrated.

The publication of Jan Gross' *Neighbors* and Father Patrick Desbois' discoveries of the complicity of locals in the mass executions of Jews (published as *The Holocaust by Bullets* and made into a documentary film) have provoked reactions that border on Holocaust denial or diminution.<sup>2</sup> Father Desbois' (literally) groundbreaking work, with the support of historians, leads him to believe that the popularly accepted figure of six million is an underestimate of the Jews who were murdered. He also thinks that the number of local perpetrators and complicit witnesses to the mass executions is also greater than what was previously known. He bases this premise on the confessions of local eyewitnesses he has heard as a Roman Catholic priest. (The publication of his findings has resulted in threats against his life, and he now travels with a bodyguard as part of the team that uncovers forensic evidence of the atrocities.)

World War II was a not merely a victory for democracy and freedom: it resulted in an evolution that eventually produced independence for previous colonies of the British and the French, as well as the civil rights movement in the United States. These changes, in turn, spurred other political, social, and religious movements, some of them global in scope and often suspicious of the Western establishment and its ideologies.

Among the unfortunate and least desirable legacies of the Holocaust is the resurgence of antisemitism. The reasons for this are varied, numerous, and well beyond the scope of this paper. For the purposes of this paper, I will concentrate on the post-WWII legacy of antisemitism.<sup>3</sup>

The last decade has seen a resurgence of antisemitism on a heretofore unprecedented global scale. Even in populations where the Jewish presence is minimal or altogether non-existent, local inhabitants express antisemitism. The results are alarming to Jews and those who understand that Jews have historically been the first victims of ideologically-based conflicts. For example, the overarching goal of the Nazis was world domination and not merely the elimination of specific Jews or even the entire global Jewish

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<sup>2</sup> Deborah Lipstadt refers to malicious revisionism by means of minimizing the Holocaust as "soft-core denial."

<sup>3</sup> A substantial part of this is the result of the Holocaust Nazi propaganda machine in Arab lands during World War II, subsequently spurred by the 1948 establishment of the State of Israel and its miraculous success despite continued assault. This achievement, as well as the inflated notion of global Jewish wealth and power, is often and increasingly attributed to the ancient scurrilous notion that Jews are demonic in nature. The slanderous association of Jews with Satan goes back to the Gospels. It has found new resonance among Muslim extremists who regard Israel—the "little Satan"—as being powerful enough to control the United States—the "big Satan." They also believe that their combined agenda is nothing less than the destruction of Islam, precisely as the Nazis had warned in their publications and radio broadcasts. "How lovely are thy tents, O Jacob" (Numbers 24) was Balaam's blessing in Biblical times. This prophet/sorcerer had been brought by King Balaak to curse Israel. An honest seer, whose "eyes were opened," he was determined to heed the Lord. Thus, he ended up blessing rather than cursing Israel. For those who take the Bible literally, this prophecy/blessing affirms God's covenant with the Jewish people, which may thus be perceived as an ongoing threat of Israel's dominion over its neighbors. Against this background, Israel's continued triumph over chronic adversity, as well as the resilience of the global Jewish community and the amazing achievements of individual Jews worldwide, appears to provoke constant written, verbal, and physical attacks. Whether based on psychological, political, economic, religious, or social prejudices, these expressions of hatred and hostility, currently fostered by technology and the global media, have become permissible and even acceptable in many circles, including academic ones.

population. Relying on millennia of Christian contempt teaching, they used Jews as a means to an end.

The Zionist concept of the creation of a sovereign Israel was seen as a necessary solution and possible antidote to the problems of antisemitism. Many believe the Holocaust could have been averted had Israel existed in the Hitler era. Of course, it would have had to absorb all the Jews the Nazis sought to expel. Given its critical lack of natural resources, infrastructure, food, and material goods, this scenario would have been highly improbable, if not altogether impossible.

Since the United Nations recognized Israel as a sovereign state, it has been forced to fight existential wars. Military actions and attacks on the State of Israel have mutated to increased verbal, written, and physical attacks on Jews throughout the world. Malmö, which gave sanctuary to Danish Jews, is experiencing an exodus as Jews there flee attacks. The absurd apogee of Europe's current danger for Jews is the situation in Holland, where police officers masquerade as orthodox Jews in order to apprehend street criminals engaged in hate crimes against Dutch Jews.

Moreover, continued efforts to delegitimize Israel have become increasingly nuanced and sophisticated. Accusations of genocide, apartheid, even a new version of the ancient blood libel with Palestinian children replacing Christians, as well as the paradox of state-sponsored denial of the Holocaust, along with the conflation of Zionism with Nazism, have produced responses from both the ignorant and well-educated, from devout believers and atheists. Existential threats, boycotts, sanctions, and divestiture have increased greatly. On August 16, 2010 Harvard University announced its divestiture of Israeli holdings.

The plaintive Yiddish Holocaust song, *Vu Ahin Zol Ikh Geyn?* (Where Shall I Go?),<sup>4</sup> has acquired new resonance in Europe, the former Soviet Union, and the Arab lands where Jews had a considerable presence until the last century. These places are now nearly *Judenrein*. Islamist threats to destroy Israel would deny refuge to those displaced from their former homelands.<sup>5</sup> Holocaust survivors recall the "Jews to Palestine!" slogan that was popular in 1930s Europe and are stunned to hear "Jews out of Palestine!" This admonition is most egregious when it comes from the mouth of a White House correspondent. As William Faulkner said, "The past is not dead. In fact, it's not even past."

Given the continuous existential threats against Israel, its history of numerous wars, suicide bombings, and rocket attacks, this plaintive song and these taunts have special significance for Jews who survived the Holocaust. Echoes of the past surely evoke intense concern for the future. This was the premise on which I based my study.

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<sup>4</sup> *Vu Ahin Zol Ikh Geyn?* (Where Shall I Go?), with lyrics by the Warsaw writer Y. Korntayer, who was murdered in Auschwitz, and melody by Oscar Strook (also attributed to composer Sigmund Berland).

<sup>5</sup> The forced exile and impoverishment, through confiscation of property (which in many cases was substantial), of Mizrachi (eastern) Jews from Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and other Arab lands is not acknowledged in the Muslim world. Israel's successful absorption and integration of these refugees could have served as a model for the displaced Palestinians. Instead, they were moved into and continue to be kept in squalid refugee camps by Jordan and fellow-Arabs as political pawns.

## I. THE STUDY

**Hypothesis:** Living with the memory of the Holocaust and its prelude has made survivors keenly alert to current antisemitic rhetoric and threats.

**Method:** To demonstrate this, I interviewed five survivors, affiliates of the Holocaust Council of MetroWest, New Jersey (hereinafter referred to as HCM). All interviews were conducted as single sessions during the first two weeks of July 2010. With one exception, the interviews took place in the HCM offices. The other interview took place in the survivor's home for mutually convenient reasons.

**Objectives:** I sought to prove my theory that survivors perceive an alarming increase in antisemitism. Also, I wanted to record their views on the resurgence of this prejudice, a fast-growing virulent global phenomenon (hereinafter referred to as the "new antisemitism").

**Purpose(s):** A study of survivors' responses to the new antisemitism is important to the comprehensive historical record of the Holocaust, which may prove valuable to future researchers. On a practical level, it can help inform psychiatrists, psychologist social workers, physicians, and other therapists who treat patients who survived the Holocaust. It may also prove useful in the treatment of survivors of other genocides, wars, terrorism, and traumatic experiences.<sup>6</sup>

## II. THE STUDY SAMPLE

Because my profession provides me with the opportunity to know and work with a large and diverse group of Holocaust survivors, I was deliberate in my choices. I asked active, articulate, dependable individuals and avoided *kvetches* (complainers). All who were asked eagerly agreed to the proposed interview.

Interviewees were not given the questions ahead of time. All interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis. I asked the questions and videotaped the interviews. I also took extensive notes. In an attempt to keep what could have been a very tense atmosphere unthreatening and to encourage casual conversational responses, I allowed the subjects to keep their answers as long or as short as they chose. Nor did I insist that they answer the few questions they skipped over. Only occasionally did I ask for clarifications. Syntax, incomplete sentences, grammatical errors, and omitted responses appear in the transcript as they do on the videotapes.

Because the tape of one interview was corrupted, I typed the responses from my notes and sent the transcript to the survivor in question, who made a few minor corrections, mostly to clarify the responses in a more elegant way. None of the other survivors received copies of their videotapes or transcripts of their testimonies. (None requested them.)

All five subjects are members of HCM's Speakers' Bureau and are therefore accustomed to articulating thoughts and narratives. They are active and in good health, save one who battles her physical ailments daily yet remains highly involved in HCM and other communal affairs. All were children or teenagers during the war.

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<sup>6</sup> I also saw this study as benefiting the participants. Survivors appreciate opportunities to speak and have their testimonies documented. As the last witnesses of their generation, they are grateful for every chance to speak for those who were brutally silenced. It is a way for them to fulfill the last requests of victims to "remember and tell."

Only one subject lost her entire immediate family in the war. However, she was fortunate to have had the help of several righteous gentiles. This appears to have made her more trusting and less cynical than stereotypical Holocaust survivors, who did not encounter such incarnations of goodwill, courage, and sacrifice during those horrific times.

All the interviewees suffered during the Holocaust. All but one faced actual deportation and death. However, none experienced the very extreme conditions of the worst concentration camps. All but one completed formal education at college level. Three have graduate degrees; two earned doctorates and did post-doctoral work. All five achieved success in their professional and personal lives. Most are even-tempered, laugh easily, and consider themselves optimistic. Thus, although this select sample includes survivors with a variety of backgrounds and experiences, this study does not purport to constitute a broad assessment of Holocaust survivor reactions.

### III. DESCRIPTION OF INTERVIEWEES

#### 1. LG

Born in 1930, she jumped from a window of a train headed for Majdanek in 1943. Her formal education ended several years before that event, when she and her parents were interned in the ghetto of her town in eastern Poland. Nevertheless, she is extremely well-read and also reads and translates German and Polish. She kept a diary in hiding and wrote poetry, a couple of samples of which she was able to save. She continues to write and her memory is prodigious.

LG was an adored child, raised in middle-class comfort. Following her escape, she was helped by several righteous gentiles, including a priest. Soon after the war, she married and had children. She emigrated to the United States in 1949, raised her family, and eventually worked in a large manufacturing company as a customer representative. After her retirement and up to the present, she has engaged in volunteer activities. Her two children are married; she is a grandmother and is expecting a great-grandchild. Her parents and an only sibling were murdered, along with most members of her extended family. However, she has been able to retain an optimistic attitude; perhaps as a result of her secure and happy early childhood, subsequent rescue, and the ability to create a satisfying and meaningful life.

#### 2. EH

Born in the lap of Germany luxury, he felt the effects of the boycotts that led to a radical change in the family's social and economic situation. His rabbi encouraged the family to move up EH's *bar mitzvah* before his actual birthday and flee the Nazis while they still could. He immigrated to the United States a month before *Kristallnacht* with his two brothers and parents. His maternal grandparents joined them within a year. The rest of the family remained behind, was deported to France, and eventually to their deaths.

EH suffered the effects of antisemitism after Hitler came to power. His family, native Germans for hundreds of years, lost their lucrative business, grand home, and their German friends and acquaintances. He and his siblings were eventually expelled from school. After completing high school in New Jersey, EH was drafted and shipped off to Europe to participate in the Battle of the Bulge. However, he was transferred to army intelligence and eventually put in a detail that identified and catalogued Nazi looted art and cultural artifacts.

After the war, he entered college, graduated as engineer, and was successful in business. He married, had three children, and is a grandfather. Currently, he is highly involved in a variety of volunteer activities.

Until he learned of and accepted the Yad Vashem definition of a survivor, adopted by HCM, he referred to himself as a "refugee" or "escapee."<sup>7</sup>

### 3. DC

DC was born in Czechoslovakia in the 1930s. Carpentry skills saved the family when his father was put to work building furniture for the commandant of a concentration camp. After that camp was liquidated, DC's father and teenage brother were sent to a labor camp, and eventually on a death march.

DB, his mother, and younger sister were sent to Auschwitz, where they expected to be gassed. Most unusually, their particular transport was never unloaded. Because the Soviets were approaching and the camp was beginning to close down, the commandant did not want to contend with extra corpses. Thus, the train was sent to Theresienstadt, where the passengers remained until they either succumbed to starvation and/or illness or were liberated.

Through a series of fortunate circumstances, DB survived with his immediate family intact. In 1948, they came to the United States where he went to high school, college, and then to medical school. A retired physician, his life now revolves around his wife, their children, and grandchildren. He cares for his extended family, especially his brother, now infirm. He also travels and spends a good deal of his free time reading, including on-line news, commentaries, and blogs. He gets great satisfaction though his volunteer work with HCM.

### 4. AB

AB was one of two children born into a wealthy Warsaw family. She escaped from its ghetto after her mother and younger sister were deported to Treblinka. AB helped her father and 16 other people escape and survive in a false wardrobe in the apartment she and her family's former maid rented on the Aryan side. She also secreted numerous babies out of the ghetto into the arms of nuns and other Poles.

After the war, she headed to Palestine, but while in Romania, joined an acting troupe, fell in love, and married an extraordinary man who, masquerading as an SS officer, had saved numerous Jews. The young couple returned to Poland for a heady life in the theatre and the arts.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> It is quite common for those whose experiences under the Nazis did not include internment in a concentration camp to abjure the "survivor" title. This title, which some consider an honorific, is often reserved for those who suffered the worst horrors.

<sup>8</sup> Upon settling in Warsaw, her husband immediately realized that he had made a grave mistake based on his utopian view of communism and the offer of a highly prestigious position. He would continue to berate himself throughout his life, "What have I done to you! What have I done!" Afraid to flee, they fashioned lives of material comfort and professional satisfaction but lived under constant surveillance and fear of denouncement. It was a Marrano type of existence. Although religion was sanctioned under the Soviets, most Jews who remained in Poland felt compelled to hide their Jewish identity. Their son was unaware that he was Jewish until, as a young teenager, he came home and reported that he had seen a group "of dirty Jews."



She later had a child and was widowed early. After her devastating loss, which coincided with the rise of antisemitism in Poland, she and her son emigrated to the United States. She eventually married a widower and has led a relatively satisfying life since.

#### 5. BN

Born in Berlin to an impoverished family, he was sent on a Kindertransport to France. His Polish-born parents were deported and eventually killed in Belzec. His only sibling escaped from the transport and led a fugitive existence until liberation. He married, had children and came to the United States with his family.

BN was rescued by the OSE and found refuge in a remote village in France and then in Switzerland. He came to the United States in 1946, where he worked and went to university and graduate school. He eventually earned a doctorate in the sciences. He married a survivor and has children and grandchildren. After an illustrious career, he devotes his time to family and is very active in volunteer activities.

### IV. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The questions for the interview were structured in five sections:

#### A. *Personal response to the new antisemitism*

- Are you surprised by the current state of global antisemitism?
- Do you feel threatened by it?
- When did you first feel this threat?
- Can you ascribe it to a particular event?
- Where do you think the threat emanates from?
- Why in that area?
- Who do you think is most responsible?

#### B. *Survivors in the world*

- Have you done a lot of traveling since the war?
- Please describe.
- Would you be more apprehensive if you lived in Europe? South America? Australia? Israel?

#### C. *Israel*

- Would you feel comfortable if your children chose to live in Israel?
- What mistakes, if any, do you think the State of Israel has made?
- Do you believe Israel has a future?

#### D. *After the Holocaust*

- Do you believe the world should have been more active in teaching the lessons of the Holocaust soon after the Holocaust?
- Do you believe the Holocaust has contributed to antisemitism?
- If so, in which way(s)?
- Do you have any suggestions for combating antisemitism?

### E. *Looking back—going forward*

- How are you coping with the new antisemitism?
- Is it affecting your health?
- Do you suffer nightmares?
- If so, have they changed as a result of the new antisemitism?
- What do you do to relieve your stress?
- Do you foresee another world war or smaller conflicts?
- What has the war taught you about surviving antisemitism?
- Do you regret having brought children into the world?
- Does religion or faith influence your thinking?
- What message do you have for younger generations?

## V. SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

### A. *Personal response to the new antisemitism*

None of the interviewees seemed utterly surprised by the resurgence of antisemitism. “Not really” was the immediate response of LG and DC, who also spoke of being shocked and hurt by the antisemitism that they encountered immediately after the war when they returned to their hometowns.

Three feel threatened, two of them very threatened. BN did not consider the threat imminent. However, he is still unnerved by the sight of men in police uniforms and his response to that is visceral. All but one confessed to nightmares and/or bad dreams. EH responded that he does not suffer such effects.

Most ascribed the advance of the new antisemitism to the rise of Muslim extremists. LG blamed it partially on “the home”: contempt teachings of the older generation to the younger. She also mentioned the copycat effect and peer pressure as factors. The two survivors from Poland blamed the Church. Only AB mentioned the economy.

The notion of history repeating itself was used by several interviewees.

### B. *Survivors and the world*

LG has traveled least of the interviewees. She has never chosen to return to Europe but has visited Israel a number of times. The other survivors have done a considerable amount of national and international traveling and have visited their hometowns. None reported encountering antisemitism in their travels. EH spoke of encountering it locally, in his apartment building, and during his army service.

### C. *Israel*

All expressed admiration for Israel and also a bit of reserved criticism. Four did not express upset at the thought that their children might move there. LG was ambivalent because, in opposition to DC, she deems Israel less safe than America. Only AB considers Israel unsafe. However, she stated that she does not feel completely secure anywhere. BN voiced upset that anti-Zionism and anti-Israel sentiment has morphed into antisemitism, complete with ugly rhetoric, threats, and actual attacks on innocent civilians. EH believes that after 2,000 years it is long past time for the world to acknowledge the right of Israel, and by extension all Jews, to exist and thrive.

#### D. *After the Holocaust*

None saw a direct trajectory between the Holocaust and the new antisemitism. However, they are saddened and disappointed that the Holocaust has not eradicated this hatred, as they had hoped it would. DC suggested that it was so contained in the 1950s and 1960s that its eventual demise seemed possible. LG considers it possible that the Holocaust encouraged antisemitism because in Poland it achieved the nationalistic aspiration voiced before the war, "Poland is for Poles." She also stated, "What happened can happen again." All voiced belief in the necessity of education, though not necessarily through museums and memorials. Some of these, they indicated, may actually have a deleterious effect.

#### E. *Looking back—going forward*

Most survivors cope with the new antisemitism by adopting a positive attitude, staying physically active, intellectually engaged, and socially involved. LG is convinced that many of her ailments result from Holocaust related injuries and the stress of coping with memories, as well as the new antisemitism. Only EH does not suffer nightmares. EH wondered what the Holocaust can teach but answered his own question. With the exception of BN, all believe that the long delay in delivering Holocaust education has had a deleterious effect and has even contributed to more recent genocides.

### VI. TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEWS

#### 1. LG

##### **A. Personal response to the new antisemitism**

Are you surprised by the current state of global antisemitism?

*Not really. I was hoping it wouldn't happen; but it doesn't surprise me.*

Do you feel threatened by it?

*Yes, in a lot of ways, since I witnessed and went through it. I'm scared for my children and grandchildren. History repeats itself and it's repeating itself now.*

When did you first feel this threat?

*Quite a few years ago. First when hatred started to erupt in the Muslim communities, not only in Israel where it has been going on for many years, but in other countries from the Taliban, Hamas, etc. 9/11 had a big impact on survivors. We felt very threatened and memories came back.*

Can you ascribe it to a particular event?

*When Mel Gibson produced the picture "The Passion of the Christ," hatred against the Jews erupted in the US, which is really scary. I am also scared by the actions of a lot of young white extremists [supremacists] who follow the Nazi ideology, swastikas that appear on Jewish houses of worship, overturned monuments at Jewish cemeteries, rallies....*

Where do you think the threat emanates from?

*From the home. Children learn from their parents. I think that children hear their parents express hatred. As they get older, they put into action what they learned at home. They also join groups that hate, like the skinheads, and follow their path.*

Why in that area?

*It starts in the cradle. In my opinion, young people try to emulate their elders or their peers.*

Who do you think is most responsible?

*I hope not the Church, but I'm not sure. I know that in Poland the Church is definitely responsible, and also the home environment in which the haters grew up. I hope that in America the Church has nothing to do with growing antisemitism.*

## **B. Survivors in the world**

Did you do a lot of traveling before, during, and after the war?

*I traveled from very antisemitic Poland to Germany, where everyone "was not guilty after the war and did not know what was going on during the war." From Germany I went to the United States. I've also traveled to Israel many times.*

Please describe.

*My first encounter with antisemitism was when the Russians liberated us [from hiding in Ukraine]. They said, "You mean to tell us they didn't make soap out of you?" It made me feel terrible. Also in Poland, our former neighbors were in shock [when Jews returned]. They were living in Jewish homes with Jewish possessions and they weren't happy to see us.*

As a survivor in America, would you be more apprehensive if you lived in Europe?

*I think so.*

South America?

*Also.*

Australia

*Maybe.*

Israel?

*I don't think so. Israel is our country. I would be among my people. Israel will persevere, somehow.*

## **C. Israel**

Would you feel comfortable if your children chose to live in Israel?

*I would miss them terribly. I would follow. But in answer to the question, yes and no. I'd fear for their safety.*

What mistakes, if any, do you believe the State of Israel has made?

*I am not a politician but I think that those who do not live in Israel have no right to criticize what the State of Israel did in the past, whatever mistakes they have made in the past or are making now.*

Do you believe Israel has a future as a nation?

*I certainly hope and pray they do, but optimism alone will not help. Had there been a Jewish state in 1933, six million Jews would not have died.*

## **D. After the Holocaust**

Do you believe the world should have been more active in teaching the lessons of the Holocaust soon after the Holocaust?

*Yes. Maybe we wouldn't have all the other genocides if we did.*

Do you believe the Holocaust has contributed to antisemitism?

*Depends in which countries, In some, yes. Most Poles felt good that Jews were taken care of—they wanted a Judenfrei Poland. They used to say, “Poland is for Poles, Jews go to Palestine!”*

If so, in which way(s)?

*It taught them that you could kill Jews. What happened once can happen again.*

Do you have any suggestions for combating antisemitism?

*The only way is to teach young people about it. For adults it would be good to have meetings for educational purposes and interfaith dialogue.*

## **E. Looking back—going forward**

How are you coping with the new antisemitism?

*I haven’t encountered anything personally, but I see what’s happening and I worry.*

Is it affecting your health?

*Yes. I worry, I get nervous. It brings back memories, not such pleasant memories.*

Do you suffer nightmares?

*Yes, but these nightmares are different from the ones I used to have. I worry about my children and grandchildren. The nightmares bring back memories and that doesn’t help.*

If so, have they changed as a result of the new antisemitism?

*Before the war in Poland nearly every city had a university. Polish students would come and beat up the Jews and one of my brother’s friends was beaten so severely he had to spend a couple of weeks in the hospital. Now it’s happening again in other places.*

What do you do to relieve your stress?

*I’m a very positive person. I always think that tomorrow will be better.*

Do you foresee another world war or smaller conflicts?

*We’re at war all the time. Of course, I think we can [have another world war].*

What has the war taught you about surviving antisemitism?

*To be very vigilant and proud to be Jewish, never to deny that I am Jewish. To try to show ignorant people that we are human beings and want to be treated as such.*

Do you regret having brought children into the world?

*No. I would have liked another child [a third] but my husband didn’t want anymore. I was never envious of those who didn’t have children. Most of them are unhappy and regret it. I would like to emphasize that the children brought us back to life and gave us the opportunity to perpetuate our parents’ names.*

Does religion or faith influence your thinking?

*I believe in a higher force but I don’t know what it is. I believe in fate.*

Do you believe that Holocaust museums, commemorations, Holocaust education, and programs are having a positive effect on reducing antisemitism?

*Not really. There are too many museums and memorials.*

Of these, which do you consider most effective?

*When survivors go to schools and speak to students. That has a bigger impact. It’s more memorable.*

What message do you have for younger generations?

*For Jews: always remember. If they can intern at a museum or a center, twin, or adopt,<sup>9</sup> it's a great experience for both. Survivors feel that someone knows, feels with you, and will remember and tell their children. I feel the same way for non-Jewish children. What they learn becomes integrated when they give back to their community. We have to be vigilant—optimism wouldn't help.*

2. EH

### A. Personal response to the new antisemitism

Are you surprised by the current state of global antisemitism?

*Not at all. To me, [it is] a vivid history of what I went through during the 1930s. It's utterly remarkable how close we are to repeating history. The similarities are that extreme groups preach that they are superior to everybody else in the world. They preach hate to everybody else. They blame those who cannot protect themselves. They are on the road to brainwashing a vast group of human beings that they are right and everyone else is wrong. I saw a photo of young Palestinian women marching in Syria who were dressed identically, which reminded me of the hate based upon lies that was formed when the Nazis came into power. It doesn't surprise me that the Muslim world led by Islamic preachers are involved in that. It surprises me that Semites are preaching antisemitism against another group of Semites, we the Jewish people. The similarities are absolutely vivid. The Mufti [believed] that Jews were taught under the Protocols of the Elders of Zion and that Jews were evil, and [he] was a personal friend of Hitler.*

Do you feel threatened by it?

*Yes, I am threatened by those who preach hate and the rest of the world is silent, especially the Muslim world. They are silent and the silence is deafening. There is no voice in the world that is strong enough. Our leaders are not forceful enough in making this topic a top priority because it's not only about the Jewish people. We haven't learned the lessons of the Holocaust. We cannot live in this world in which evil is superior to the good that has to come out of each individual.*

When did you first feel this threat?

*I started to feel it in the 1980s when I heard of killing aboard ships, such as the Klinghoffer [murder]<sup>10</sup> and other murders that took place by Arabs. That's what led me to become more aware with what was going on. It helped me to become more involved in Holocaust education and to promote the work that was done by Raul Wallenberg.*

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<sup>9</sup> "Twin with a Survivor" is a program created and facilitated by the Holocaust Council of MetroWest. It pairs *bar and bat mitzvah* students with Holocaust survivors. Students meet a survivor, learn his or her story, and incorporate some of what they have learned into their *d'var torah* (*bar/bat mitzvah* speech). "Adopt a Survivor" is open to students of all faiths. A comprehensive form of "Twin with a Survivor," it is designed for more mature students, who contract to be their adopted survivor's witness in 2045.

<sup>10</sup> On October 17, 1985, Leon Klinghoffer was a passenger aboard a cruise ship that was hijacked by terrorists. They were members of the Palestine Liberation front. They took hostages, demanded the release of 50 prisoners in Israeli jails, and ordered the captain to sail to Tartus, Syria instead of Port Said. The next day, after being refused permission by the Syrian government to dock at Tartus, the hijackers singled out Klinghoffer, a Jew, for execution, shooting him in the forehead and chest as he sat in his wheelchair. They then forced the ship's barber and a waiter to throw his body and wheelchair overboard.

Can you ascribe it to a particular event?

*The Klinghoffer murder helped make me more aware.<sup>11</sup> I was not surprised by the first Iraq War, where the rulers of the Middle East were against Israel. As a German Jew with friends being Zionists, I became more aware of the issues with Israel and antisemitism.*

Where do you think the threat emanates from?

*The threat emanates from the Muslim World. They bring it to Europe, where Muslims moved to make a living. The Muslim percentage is increasing in Europe. I'm not surprised, but perturbed by the silence of Muslim preachers.*

Why in that area?

*Muslims have greed, jealousy, and great incentive for that kind of philosophy. Africans still have hatred for the European government. They blame the white Europeans, and do not need to blame Jews.*

Who do you think is most responsible?

*Islamic extremists who govern the Muslim world are the most responsible.*

## **B. Survivors in the world**

Have you done a lot of traveling since the war? Please describe.

*I encountered antisemitism right in this country — right in my apartment house, although it had drastically decreased than what I had felt in Germany. The majority of people here are neutral, with neither great love or great hate. Diversity demands tolerance. I traveled to Budapest, Vienna, and Prague in 2005. In Prague, I went to Theresienstadt. I visited Latvia and Lithuania in 2008. Right outside of Latvia, 20 of us went to a site where 25,000 Latvian Jews were murdered. I did not experience antisemitism in Tibet, but I did experience a certain attitude. The Buddhists were battling the Chinese. Me and two other men met a Tibetan woman who told us about her life in a Chinese jail, which reminded me of the Holocaust.*

Would you be more apprehensive if you lived in Europe? South America? Australia? Israel?

*Yes, but I have made it a point to live up to my grandfather's expectation to be American. I've never thought of living in South America. Australians are more aware of leading a kind of life that we should be living as humans. I would definitely be more apprehensive about living in Asia. I have the feeling that Israeli Jews have a different feeling of antisemitism. I have a feeling they are threatened as a nation rather than religion.*

## **C. Israel**

Would you feel comfortable if your children chose to live in Israel?

*I would feel comfortable.*

What mistakes, if any, do you believe the State of Israel has made?

*In the past Israel has put too much emphasis on trying to feel that the world that surrounds them would be peaceful. "If you give them an inch, they take a yard." I don't think they made a mistake*

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<sup>11</sup> Not only could he empathize with the 69-year-old victim, a man who was his approximate age and shared his faith and basic way of life, but EH was now also at a point in his life when, with children as independent adults, he could devote his time and energy to reflection and subsequent action.

*with giving up Gaza. I don't think they had the capability of keeping Sinai. I think they have given up enough land for peace because the Palestinians and their friends will not be satisfied.*

Do you believe Israel has a future?

*Yes, after 2,000 years, it is time for the world to say "We have mistreated you for millenniums" and at least give us a little piece of land. My parents realized that life for Jews had come to an end after 500 years and would have settled to live in Israel.*

#### **D. After the Holocaust**

Do you believe the world should have been more active in teaching the lessons of the Holocaust soon after the Holocaust?

*Yes, but I'm not sure we understand what we are supposed to teach. Life experiences taught us essence of the policy to avoid genocides. We're never going to have Utopia, but I often find myself looking up at the sky or the forest behind me. If we could all turn toward the sky, we could have a more peaceful world. I have learned in my work with naval missile defense systems of the destruction humans cause.*

Do you believe the Holocaust has contributed to antisemitism?

*No.*

Do you have any suggestions for combating antisemitism?

*We have to learn to overlook our own weaknesses. Because I can't do something doesn't mean I don't have to dislike someone who can do something. Don't use strength to dislike others. We can share and learn from each other on a grass-roots level.*

#### **E. Looking back—going forward**

How are you coping with the new antisemitism?

*I really haven't felt any increase in antisemitism in my surroundings.*

Is it affecting your health?

*No.*

Do you suffer nightmares?

*No.*

If so, have they changed as a result of the new antisemitism?

*No.*

What do you do to relieve your stress?

*I got a habit of talking to people and bringing out something humorous in people I speak to. I'm not a joke teller, but I have a tendency to express humorous feelings. I do enjoy laughter, which makes others laugh, as well. This laughter and humor didn't come out until the later part of my life.*

Do you foresee another world war or smaller conflicts?

*I foresee smaller conflicts.*

What has the war taught you about surviving antisemitism?

*I encountered some antisemitism in the army. In the army, it was more that you had to come along with your fellow soldiers. I did not feel resentment from the local people in Germany after the war. The war did not teach me about surviving antisemitism.*



Do you regret having brought children into the world?

*I have never regretted having brought children into the world. In general, my own kids are good human beings. That's the greatest gift. I am disappointed that they are not following Judaism.*

Does religion or faith influence your thinking?

*I believe that there is a power in the Universe, a God who totally governs everything. I'm saying who comes along and brings these trees to life in the spring? Can human beings do it? I like looking at birds who can go places far beyond the capability of human beings.*

Do you believe that Holocaust museums and programs are having a positive effect on reducing antisemitism?

*Yes. I think if they weren't being taught, antisemitism would be even greater or more pronounced.*

Which of these institutions or programs do you consider most effective?

*I think meeting a Holocaust survivor, eyeball to eyeball, is the most effective method. People can relate better to another individual than to a photograph.*

What message do you have for younger generations?

*Try to live the life of a good human being. If you have the opportunity to do something good, you will feel better. Learn how to give instead of taking. As the saying goes, "you will feel it in your belly button." I've learned it that way.*

### 3. DC

#### A. Personal response to the new antisemitism

Are you surprised by the current state of global antisemitism?

*Not really. I feel that antisemitism has always existed and the recent events have brought it out. Such events are the increase of the Muslim population and because of lack of US support for Israel.*

Do you feel threatened by it?

*Yes, I do. Unless something is done about this I am worried we will have another Holocaust in the future. In some countries it has come to the point where there has been a sharp increase in antisemitism.*

When did you first feel this threat?

*In the 50s and 60s there was practically no threat in NYC. In the last 5 to 10 years or so I have felt the threat revived, especially in Europe. Something must be done to stop this before it gets out of hand.*

Can you ascribe it to a particular event?

*When I came back to my hometown after the Holocaust and the mayor said that they had already gotten rid of all Jews and they didn't need us here. That is when my father and I realized we had to get out of Europe.*

Where do you think the threat emanates from?

*The propaganda is causing a lot of the problem, particularly in the Middle East, and it spreads to the Islamic population throughout Europe. Children are educated to hate Jews and this stays with them for a long time*

Why in that area?

*From what I know, I don't think they will stop until they conquer the world. For instance, at ground zero the whole mosque business shows their intention. I didn't think Islam would be a threat except in the last couple of years*

Who do you think is most responsible?

*Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Syria, Iran, Jordan is a little bit better. If all countries were like Jordan we would be further ahead in the peace process.*

## **B. Survivors in the world**

Have you done a lot of traveling since the war?

*I came to this country in 1948 and I went to medical school in Britain and Northern Ireland. But in my travels I have been to Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, Israel, Italy, Croatia, Poland, Germany, France, Luxembourg, Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, Russia, Japan, China, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, Argentina, Brazil, and Peru. I did not experience antisemitism in any of the countries I went to and there were no incidents. I went back to my hometown and I felt no antisemitism. All the people were happy to see we came back. People helped me even to get into the Jewish cemetery and had conversations with me about how great my parents were before the war. I would go to the Netherlands and Germany but I would be afraid to show that I was a Jew for fear of being attacked.*

Would you be more apprehensive if you lived in Europe? South America? Australia? Israel?

*I would be far more apprehensive living in Europe and South America. Unfortunately antisemitism exists all the time. I don't know much about Australia but I do know that antisemitism is under the hood there so I would be. Same with Asia and South Africa. At this point I would be very happy to live in Israel. People ask me if it is safe to go and I say absolutely it's safe and there are many people making sure you will be safe. The security is excellent*

## **C. Israel**

Would you feel comfortable if your children chose to live in Israel?

*In security terms I would be fine with it. But I would hope to be closer to them. I suppose I would move with them if they moved.*

What mistakes, if any, do you believe the State of Israel has made?

*I don't know if the settlements were such a smart idea as they are so spread out. But all in all they are so fair to the other people, particularly the Israeli Arabs who live much better than those in Gaza and the West Bank.*

Do you believe Israel has a future?

*Yes.*

## **D. After the Holocaust**

Do you believe the world should have been more active in teaching the lessons of the Holocaust soon after the Holocaust?

*Absolutely, I have no idea why it took so long. With people being knowledgeable about what horrors can occur if it goes unchecked, hopefully this will prevent it from ever happening. Not just to Jews but for everyone.*

Do you believe the Holocaust has contributed to antisemitism?

*I don't think so. I think, if anything, it shows what can happen to people Jewish or non-Jewish when nobody speaks up. If it did, [it did so] in a very minor fashion.*

Do you have any suggestions for combating antisemitism?

*Spreading history so it doesn't happen. Show that the Jews are peaceful and do not want to harm others and would rather live in harmony. Make sure that people don't get the wrong story.*

### **E. Looking back—going forward**

How are you coping with the new antisemitism?

*It certainly upsets me to think about. I am never afraid, though, to speak up when I hear about it. My wife does not feel as free though to do so as I do.*

Is it affecting your health?

*No, because I am living in a safe country.*

Do you suffer nightmares?

*No. But I do occasionally have bad dreams about the Holocaust, but no horrible nightmares that force me to wake up in the middle of the night.*

If so, have they changed as a result of the new antisemitism?

*There have been some that changed, but not really.*

What do you do to relieve your stress?

*I think I look at things optimistically and I look at things and say, "It could be better but it could also be far worse." I am a glass-half-full-type of person.*

Do you foresee another world war or smaller conflicts?

*I hear about the secret talks to strike against Iran. I feel we might possibly help them because it is a question of survival and they need some equipment from us as a lot of the nuclear material is underground.*

What has the war taught you about surviving antisemitism?

*Don't give up hope and try your best and try to survive under any circumstances. Silence is the worst enemy and it's terrible we do not speak up.*

Do you regret having brought children into the world?

*Absolutely not. I feel we should have family under any circumstances.*

Does religion or faith influence your thinking?

*I'm a great believer in being good to your own neighbor rather than attending temple every week. Religion helps in the moral point of view and I do fast on Yom Kippur.*

What message do you have for younger generations?

*They should certainly know the whole story of the Holocaust. They should certainly believe that it happened. They should know that 9/11 was caused by people who not only hate Jews but hate America and we should be able to prevent it for a brighter future. We must spread the truth and we must start by spreading it to young people.*

## 4. AB

**A. Personal response to the new antisemitism**

Are you surprised by the current state of global antisemitism?

*It has always happened that the Jews are used as a scapegoat. I expected this. When people have problems in their lives, who is guilty? The Jews. So no I am not surprised. The rest of the world is just like the USA. I have a survivor friend in England and she is terrified by it. She says she never has seen such rampant antisemitism in England since she moved there since 1945.*

Do you feel threatened by it?

*Very much so. From the moment I came to this country I didn't stop feeling scared. I have been scared since the war.*

When did you first feel this threat?

*When times began to go bad in the United States I became afraid that they would blame the Jews because they are always blamed.*

Can you ascribe it to a particular event?

*The economic crisis was really the event that brought back my fears of antisemitism*

Where do you think the threat emanates from?

*Much of it has to do with the Church. Not everybody of course. But when they say the Jews killed Jesus a lot of resentment was directed toward the Jews. The economy also usually is responsible for sparking some antisemitism*

Who do you think is most responsible?

*The Church.*

**B. Survivors in the world**

Have you done a lot of traveling since the war?

*I never experienced antisemitism while traveling, as a lot of the places I went to had people with similar characteristics to Jews, such as Italy. If I went to Norway, let's say, I would probably not have felt the same. I always have a great fear though of antisemitism, even in areas where there is no threat.*

Would you be more apprehensive if you lived in Europe? South America? Australia? Israel?

*Yes, without question I would be more fearful in Europe. Because America is America and you see here all over people of different race and color. Whereas in Europe you only see people of that country's ethnicity. I don't know anything about South America. I lived in Australia and I think that there is no place on the planet I would rather live than America. When I think of Israel I feel ashamed. After the war I felt that I had to go to Israel. I didn't because I was still afraid. I still regret this.*

**C. Israel**

Would you feel comfortable if your children chose to live in Israel?

*I would not be happy; I would be scared.*

What mistakes, if any, do you believe the State of Israel has made?

*The last discussion on who is Jewish vs. who is not Jewish is ridiculous. I love Israel so much that I do not see mistakes.*

Do you believe Israel has a future?

*I am scared. Anything is possible but many antisemites want to see Israel destroyed.*

#### **D. After the Holocaust**

Do you believe the world should have been more active in teaching the lessons of the Holocaust soon after the Holocaust?

*Yes. You know, it is very interesting. You can tell in Poland that they saw everything. In other countries, they are shocked how little they knew.*

Do you believe the Holocaust has contributed to antisemitism?

*I don't think so.*

If so, in which way(s)?

*I think most people want to put an end to it [the Holocaust] and just get it out of the way because we are the Jews and people don't really care.*

Do you have any suggestions for combating antisemitism?

*Only education. And besides, the government in every country must help to push their education about the Holocaust.*

#### **E. Looking back—going forward**

How are you coping with the new antisemitism? Is it affecting your health?

*It is, absolutely. Sometimes I don't sleep at night. During the war I had nightmares about the Germans. I don't really anymore but I sometimes feel fear in my dreams.*

Do you suffer nightmares?

*Sometimes. They are usually me in danger running from the Germans*

If so, have they changed as a result of the new antisemitism?

*I think so. My nightmares have become more frequent. I am scared. But even in the best of times I have felt threatened. Before my nightmares were about the Germans, now they are not but it is me being lost in nowhere. It is terrible.*

What do you do to relieve your stress?

*I play bridge. I ride my exercise bike and [run on a] treadmill for three miles a day.*

Do you foresee another world war or smaller conflicts?

*It depends on whether the war has nuclear weapons. Who knows who will be the first to try it? I hope that Israel will not be the first to push the button.*

What has the war taught you about surviving antisemitism?

*You always live with antisemitism. I simply learned to deal with it as it became inherently obvious in the Ghetto.*

Do you regret having brought children into the world?

*I am happy now that I had a child, but initially I was very upset. He was an accident and I would not normally have had him.*

Does religion or faith influence your thinking?

*I miss the traditions of my childhood. But God? No.*

What message do you have for younger generations?

*Learn about the world that was. Learn that anything is possible in any country at any time.*

5. BN

### A. Personal response to the new antisemitism

Are you surprised by the current state of global antisemitism?

*I'm disappointed—deeply. Surprise is a different matter. I'm not happy about it.*

Do you feel threatened by it?

*Not personally. I don't think there's an immediate threat. But I believe it's a long-range threat to civilization. Its core is being challenged.*

When did you first feel this threat?

*There's no simple answer. There's an element in control of the agenda: to impose Sharia law on the world. And a political agenda. I don't see it being opposed in any forceful manner.*

*Israel is a convenient whipping boy—this is also enormously disappointing to me. It's anti-semitism in a different name. Antisemitism is a difficult name.*

*Anti-Israel attitude is irrational. Israel is a thorn; totally different politically [from its neighbors]. Arabs have found they can manipulate the West against the State of Israel and all its powerful supporters.*

*Opposing Zionism—a Jewish desire—is not the same as opposing Israel as it exists since 1948. Several things:*

1. *Recognize what's going on.*
2. *Response to cartoons—totally inadequate.*
3. *Murder of Dutch film maker—I don't see that the Dutch government has taken any measures.*
4. *People have drawn the wrong conclusions from the Holocaust.*

*It's obvious from Islamist statements that antisemitism is out of control. It's "Kill the Jews!" vs. "Kill the Israelis." I was frankly hoping I would never hear that. I did not expect it.*

Can you ascribe it to a particular event?

*It was gradual things. We lived in France in 1984. [Right-wing politician Jean-Marie] Le Pen said many things that made sense but he was really over the top about the Holocaust.*

Where do you think the threat emanates from?

*The Muslim world.*

### B. Survivors in the world

Have you done a lot of traveling since the war?

*I've lived in four countries: Germany, France, Switzerland, and the United States, where I arrived at 17. I am now 81. From 1995-1998, all of Europe was my territory, except Yugoslavia [because of Balkan War]. I was in Mexico, Cuba. I never visited Africa, Asia, or South America*

Please describe.

*I was enormously upset by the Balkan War. European countries were doing nothing to stop it. When I expressed outrage over the genocide to my colleagues, their response was, "But [BN], what can we do?" I was happy with Clinton's response. The Dutch troops stood by during the massacre in Srebrenica. Guilt [over their role in WWII] makes the Dutch liberal.*

*I took a trip to Belzec six years ago with my family. Six hundred thousand Jews, including my parents were murdered there. The German ambassador made a speech and not once during that entire speech was there mention of the Jews who'd been killed there!*

*What we have to learn is to reject all forms of racism, xenophobia. Europeans go overboard with xenophobia when outrages are committed. The lesson is that you have to resist it, not just ignore it.*

*I just returned from Germany and Poland. There was no evidence of antisemitism when I was there. My former school, the Karl Weiser Schule, invited me to speak to the students, who are a very diverse population. A Muslim girl from Turkey listened attentively and asked very good questions. Very sympathetic.*

*The Stolpersteiner are meaningful.<sup>12</sup>*

Would you be more apprehensive if you lived in Europe? South America? Australia? Israel?

*There was one and only one antisemitic incident I encountered in the United States. During an interview I was asked, "Are you Jewish?" When I replied that I was, [the interviewer] immediately said, "I don't think we need anyone with your qualifications." It was for a low-level position at a Wall Street bank, when I was just starting out.*

*I took a practical approach and try to keep things in perspective. I have learned to put anti-semitism in perspective.*

*It's the government sponsorship for antisemitism that you have to control. The French have a problem with recent immigrants who are not fully integrated or employed. So kids do outrageous things. There was a riot that lasted three nights in Grenoble [in southeastern France].*

*I'm worried about the state of Europe. I view it as [being in a] pre-Fascism condition. [There is an] out of control, anti-societal population with which the government deals ineffectively. On my recent trip, there were two major strikes during ten days.*

*The United States is by far the best country in the world.*

### C. Israel

Would you feel comfortable if your children chose to live in Israel?

*I would, but I wouldn't follow them. This is my country. It's been very good to me.*

What mistakes, if any, do you believe the State of Israel has made?

*Don't criticize if you don't have to face the dangers. I'm not happy about the disproportionate power of the orthodox Jews because they do not universally serve in the military.*

Do you believe Israel has a future?

*If the Western world doesn't wise up, Israel alone can't defeat its neighbors. They have to take action to prevent conflict. Iran is helped by Germans, Russians. Right now there are just threats without follow-through.*

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<sup>12</sup> *Stolpersteiner* are memorial stones set into sidewalks on streets where Jews lived in Germany and Austria before they were deported. The individual stones are covered with a brass plaque engraved with the names of those Jews.

## D. After the Holocaust

Do you believe the world should have been more active in teaching the lessons of the Holocaust soon after the Holocaust?

*No. People were horrified. People were in a state of shock. There would have been no rational response. It wasn't until the first reunions in '83-'84 [at a meeting in Washington DC] that they could really speak of it.*<sup>13</sup>

Do you believe the Holocaust has contributed to antisemitism?

*It did in some sense. On the contrary, it has no effect on the Muslim world.*

If so, in which way(s)?

*This is a very difficult question. There are a whole range of things. The Holocaust Council has a limited effect. My major fear in the West: Muslim extremists will carry out an apocalypse as soon as they have the means. In the Western world an anti-Israel attitude has become very fashionable. But it's very difficult to distinguish anti-Israel from anti-Judaism. In universities and presses—less so here than in Europe.*

*Jews failed to see that the threat is not from the right but from the extreme left. It's a deadly danger but not imminent.*

*Jews have drawn lessons: In France in the 1990s Jews kept a low profile—didn't want to make waves. Now they're extremely active and forcefully react to outrages. CRIF, a union of all Jewish organizations, is extremely active. Unfortunately, it's not well regarded by Jewish lefties.*

Do you have any suggestions for combating antisemitism?

*Vigilance and reactions. I'm encouraged by the pro-Israel attitude of the evangelical churches. I think they're more influential than established Christianity.*

## E. Looking back—going forward

How are you coping with the new antisemitism?

*I don't [feel the need to] cope very much. I don't think there's an immediate danger without Iran and extremism in the Muslim world.*

Is it affecting your health?

*This is a non-issue. I'm in good health.*

Do you suffer nightmares?

*Yes, over 1,000 times based on my own history. The scenario is I'm back in Berlin, the family is together and all of a sudden there's a knock on the door and I jump from the balcony to escape. I always wake up before I land. I suffered nightmares for 30-40 years. They were intermittent and I would wake sweating and agitated. Another scenario was during the Cuban missile crisis. Russians were pursuing me 45 years after Berlin.*

*In 1984 I decided to go back [to Germany]. I went by myself. It was incredibly emotional and I never had that nightmare after that.*

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<sup>13</sup> In fact, survivors spoke of this immediately after the war. The widespread popularity of *The Diary of Anne Frank*, Leon Uri's *Exodus*, Herman Wouk's *Winds of War*, and the 1970s televised mini-series "Holocaust," in particular, fueled interest in commemorations, conferences, books, videotaped testimonies, films, and so forth.



*I was terrified by the Cuban missile crisis. I would always kiss my children as though it was for the last time. It all came back to me.*

*If so, have they changed as a result of the new antisemitism? I used to be frightened of policeman. I would have a physical reaction.*

*What do you do to relieve your stress? The computer—though I'm not sure it doesn't create more stress. Classical music and skiing.*

*Do you foresee another world war or smaller conflicts? The world has changed a lot. We have a clash of civilizations. What form it will take is unclear. A world war is not in the same sense. I see war as a possibility, not the same.*

*I was not in the military. I received a draft notice but didn't serve because the work I was doing was considered valuable to the government.*

*What has the war taught you about surviving antisemitism? Do what you must do to protect the family. Family is very precious. I have a very close family. The fate of Jewish people as a whole is always a concern, always a struggle for survival.*

*My father said, "God will help the Jewish people." I don't believe that. I believe you have to help yourself. And work with others. I'm very encouraged by the ecumenical event for the recent rededication of the synagogue in Wroclaw. It's called The White Stork because the White Stork Inn originally stood on that site.*

*Do you regret having brought children into the world? I did during the Cuban missile crisis, when I found myself in the reverse role of my parents. When my first child, my daughter, was born I was 23 years old. I remember looking at her and saying, "Now, I'm responsible."*

*Does religion or faith influence your thinking? Students always ask this. I am essentially an agnostic. I attended Temple Emanu-El on Fifth Avenue in New York—for the showing of the "Children of Chabannes." I feel a deep identity with Jewish people, traditions, and customs. I participate, too.*

*My brother, who escaped from a Belzec bound train, converted to Unitarianism. He and his wife, also a survivor. He married during the Holocaust. [The conversion] was a mechanism to help their children survive. He didn't want to inflict the kind of pain he'd endured on them and raised his children as Unitarians.*

*I do believe in ethics.*

*What message do you have for younger generations? Again, a complicated question. [My wife] and I publicly testified against the building of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum. We lived in Rockville at the time. We predicted it would be one of many outrages against the memory of the Holocaust once the government got involved. We are now favorably surprised by the effect it's having and have publicly "eaten crow."*

*Education—but many different aspects including museums as educators. It's astonishing to see the numbers it attracts.*

*Berlin Holocaust Memorial—we asked an employee to describe the visitors it attracts. The response was two-thirds tourists, one-third Germans. It's not an adequate memorial. I didn't know about the underground exhibit, which focuses on individuals. The people I saw inside were deeply affected.*

*Various exhibits in various centers including Belzec have contemporary paintings. I didn't like that. However, the Penderecki Kaddish that was performed in Wroclaw was very moving. Be wary of generalities. Be good to people. Become a mentor. I like real acts. Ecumenical remembrances are extremely important. Jews have to make an effort to remember the Holocaust. I can see complaints of young Jews about making the Holocaust central, but they must remember. It should be taught to children. Beware fanaticism of all kinds. It is utterly destructive to humanity, including orthodox Jews. Don't be caught up by hysteria that devours you.*

## CONCLUSION

The initial request for interviews was emailed as a distancing mechanism, because I wanted the survivors to feel comfortable about refusing to join the study. But ultimately none of them did. Nor did I elaborate on the scope of the study when setting up the appointments. The interviews were conversational in tone but followed the more formal format of answering a specific set of questions within a timeframe of one to two hours. Survivors did not receive the questions prior to the interview. As a result, there was limited opportunity for survivors to reflect and respond. However, I deliberately designed the study to capture immediate and visceral reactions to the questions. I believe I succeeded in this quest and that these responses have inherent validity as affective rather than cognitive reactions.

United Jewish Communities MetroWest, NJ is one of the largest federation catchments in the United States and contains an extensive Holocaust survivor population. Based on my knowledge of its survivor community, I believe that my survey is distinct. In fact, the group of individuals who took part in the study could fit into the child survivor category, as all were in their teens during the war, with one of them just entering his teens at liberation.

Were I to have interviewed a larger sampling, with a concentration of older, frailer, poorer, emotionally needier, more pessimistic survivors, and particularly those who experienced the misery and terror of the numerous concentration camps and death marches, the study's outcome would undoubtedly reflect more concern, cynicism, and outright fear.

For this study, time constraints did not permit me to arrange interviews with a sampling from that group. I would welcome the opportunity to expand the study to this population. I believe it would provide a broader understanding of how survivors perceive and relate to the alarming phenomenon of global antisemitism.

What I did conclude from my research confirmed my suspicions that survivors are keenly alert to the new antisemitism and deeply troubled by it. Even the most functional, healthy, educated, active, optimistic, and generally happy Holocaust survivors voice concern and fear for the future based on the resurgence of antisemitism. In particular, its new form, which draws on ancient canards, with references to Nazism and cartoons inspired by, if not directly copied from, *Der Stürmer*, is disappointing at the very least and affirms the thought that nothing (beneficial to humanity) was learned from the Holocaust. In a worst-case scenario, one survivor saw the Holocaust as a model for the future, almost a prelude to an even larger catastrophe.

In conversations previous to and following the formal interviews, survivors mentioned several factors that contribute to their fears and concerns. These include:

- the substantial increase in hate crimes directed against Jews and their institutions in the United States and abroad;
- the growth of neo-Nazism and white supremacist/military movements;
- Mel Gibson's notorious film "The Passion of the Christ," which fanned the embers of Christian-based antisemitism;
- certain Vatican policies including attempts to canonize Pope Pius XII;
- Protestant church support of Palestinians through protests and threats of divesting from Israel;
- actual or threatened boycotts, divestiture, and sanctions against Israel and Israelis;
- boycotts of Israeli academics;
- the depressed global economy;
- the global growth of Islam;
- extreme Islamism, which pillories Israel and all Jews, and its spread in early education;
- glorification of suicide bombers, particularly as models for young children;
- Arab school textbooks that contain antisemitism;
- the growth of European nationalism;
- recent antisemitic rhetoric and revisionism in Lithuania and Ukraine;
- the increasing Muslim population in a practically *Judenfrei* Europe;
- Holocaust denial (and/or diminution) particularly on the part of states (i.e. Iran) but also from Islamic theologians;
- the wide dispersal of translated copies of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, particularly in the Muslim world as well as the immense popularity of the Arabic television series based on this disgustingly slanderous work of fiction that purports to be an actual document proving that Jews are bloodthirsty demons intent on ruling the world;
- the anti-Israel stance of the left, especially in academic circles;
- the double standard by which Israel is judged;
- the Orwellian stance that the UN consistently takes toward Israel but does not apply to other member states that flagrantly abuse human rights;
- global terrorism and suicide bombers;
- apocalyptic ideologies;
- increased global nuclear capability; and
- increased instances of global terrorism.<sup>14</sup>

Despite this long list of concerns, the five survivors in this study, who are non-observant Jews with a strong belief in ethics, try to maintain a rational and optimistic perspective. They are nearly all confident that Israel will persevere. Except for one, they voiced ease—if not joy—at the unlikely scenario that their children would move to Israel. Two said they would also move if their children did. One spoke with admiration and a hint of envy of the superior security systems that Israel has and implements.

Although they do not always agree with Israeli policies and politics, they are generally reluctant to voice much criticism of Israel because they enjoy the luxury of living without ongoing existential threats and rocket attacks. The United States remains their

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<sup>14</sup> Not all of these concerns were addressed during these interviews, but I have heard all of them (and other related concerns) being addressed by these survivors on various occasions.

safety net and most continue to assert huge appreciation and love for this country. However, one survivor makes it abundantly clear that she is afraid that what happened elsewhere can also happen here. 9/11 and its aftermath of failed terrorist activities seem to have an unsettling effect on all the interviewees.

I was shocked but not completely surprised by some of their expressions of prejudice and bigotry.

A surprising revelation was just how displeased these interviewees are with the current political administration. Historically, American Jews have voted for the Democratic ticket. In every presidential election except for Jimmy Carter's second run, they have overwhelmingly voted for the Democratic candidate. Thus, it seems almost implausible, albeit circumstantially understandable, that a group of people, specifically the three male survivors, who suffered so much under totalitarian regimes, should espouse such right-wing politics. Their thinking is based on the perception that the Democrats have become liberal to the point of national suicide. These interviewees believe that the left wing seems prepared to do anything to avoid offending Muslims; that they meet threats with either silence, euphemisms, or voiced support of Muslims (as in the case of the Ft. Hood killings) and are using the freedom of religion amendment in a way that amounts to support for terrorism and an assault on Western values and civilization. Nor are they convinced that the current administration is willing to protect Israel. These factors, and possibly the fact that the Nazis came to power in a democratic election, as did Hamas, may influence their opinions. The fact that both antisemitism and Nazism are strongly affiliated with right-wing movements seems to have little bearing on these survivors' political stance.

Only one interviewee stated that the Holocaust fostered new antisemitism. The survivors did not attribute it to the propaganda that the Nazis directed toward Muslims during World War II.<sup>15</sup>

They consider Holocaust education crucial but are not convinced that all the museums and memorials are necessary and effective. One survivor, who lived in Washington, DC at the time of the hearings on the planned building of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, actually testified against it. However, given the numbers and diverse populations the museum attracts, he has gladly retracted his earlier opinion.

In terms of Holocaust education, all participants in the study believe that nothing can substitute for the public testimony of a living eyewitness. Most effective are the one-on-one meetings between survivors and students. They consider this "creation of witnesses to the witness" to be the most beneficial means of educating young people.<sup>16</sup> They have seen and heard the responses of students and adults and have been pleased with the interest and respect, even awe, that is shown to them when they speak in schools

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<sup>15</sup> Whether they are aware of the recent research scholars have done in this area is unknown. I did not refer to it during the interview process, as I wanted to maintain the integrity of their personal responses. An HCM conference on this topic was scheduled for 2011 and it would be interesting to examine the influence of that information on these and similar questions in a follow-up study.

<sup>16</sup> Inherent in this is the depressing realization that the demise of the witnesses will greatly diminish Holocaust education. The bleakest view is that it will destroy it altogether. The interviewees are all aware of and engaged in HCM's programs and its plans to counteract this eventuality. I did not explore this topic with the survivors.

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and other venues. As public speakers they have received accolades and fan mail describing the transformations that have taken place in young people who listened and heard them. They have witnessed group responses such as students raising funds for solar cookers for refugees in Darfur, and it is heartening for them to know that learning about the Holocaust can evoke acts of caring and compassion.

These survivors believe the world, through its silence, was complicit in the Holocaust. In their responses to the interview questions, all of them emphasized the need for present and future generations to learn from historical mistakes and failures. Survivors are convinced that it is imperative for everyone to speak out against injustice and evil. Protest through words and action is the only way of countering old prejudices and the new antisemitism.



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