

# ANTISEMITISM INTERNATIONAL

2006  
No.3-4

An Annual Research Journal of the Vidal Sassoon  
International Center for the Study of Antisemitism

Edited by Robert S. Wistrich

2006



האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים  
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

# ANTISEMITISM INTERNATIONAL

An Annual Research Journal of the Vidal Sassoon  
International Center for the Study of Antisemitism

No.3-4

2006

## Contents:

<b>Editorial</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>Robert S. Wistrich</i>	
<b>Converging Pathologies: From Anti-Zionism to Neo-Antisemitism</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>Robert S. Wistrich</i>	
<b>Muslim Antisemitism and Anti-Zionism in South Africa since 1945</b>	<b>18</b>
<i>Milton Shain and Margo Bastos</i>	
<b>Continuity and Change in Argentinean Antisemitism</b>	<b>31</b>
<i>Martina Libertad Weisz</i>	
<b>Multiculturalism, "Race," and Antisemitism in Brazil</b>	<b>44</b>
<i>Bernardo Sorj</i>	

*We would like to thank the following persons and  
institutions for their support:*

*Mr. Felix Posen*

*Mr. Daniel Posen*

*Mr. Vidal Sassoon*

*Mr. Alan Bloch*

*Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah*



This publication is made possible in  
part through the generous support of  
the Anti-Defamation League

2006

<b>Symposium:</b>		<b><i>"Good Morning, Mr. Hitler"</i></b>	<b>112</b>
<b>The <i>Protocols of the Elders of Zion</i>, Aum, and Antisemitism in Japan</b>	<b>55</b>	<i>Dana Arieli-Horowitz</i>	
<i>David Goodman</i>		<b>Submission to the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry on Antisemitism in the UK</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>The <i>Protocols</i> in a Land without Jews: A Reconsideration</b>	<b>68</b>	<i>Robert S. Wistrich</i>	
<i>Rotem Kowner</i>		<b>Conference on Antisemitism, Multiculturalism, and Ethnic Identity</b>	<b>122</b>
<b>Comments</b>	<b>78</b>		
<i>Ben-Ami Shillony</i>		<b>From Multiculturalism to Antisemitism</b>	<b>140</b>
<b>Einstein on Antisemitism: Highlights from 1920, 1933, and 1938</b>	<b>80</b>	<i>An Interview with Prof. Robert S. Wistrich</i>	
<i>Simcha Epstein</i>		<b>Activities of the Vidal Sassoon Center, 2005-2006</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>Sartre at 100: Revisiting his Interventions in the Arab-Israeli Conflict</b>	<b>94</b>	<i>SICSA Personnel Research Publications ACTA and Posen Papers</i>	
<i>Jonathan Judaken</i>			
<b>The Report on the Romanian Chapter of the Holocaust and Its Consequences</b>	<b>103</b>		
<i>Leon Volovici</i>			

**Editor-in-Chief:** Robert S. Wistrich  
**Managing Editor:** Alifa Saadya

Articles of up to 6000 words to be considered for  
future issues may be submitted to the Editor

**Design:** Janis Design

*Antisemitism International*  
Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of  
Antisemitism  
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
Mount Scopus  
91905 Jerusalem, Israel  
e-mail: [sicsa@mssc.huji.ac.il](mailto:sicsa@mssc.huji.ac.il)  
<http://sicsa.huji.ac.il>

# Editorial



As this special issue of *Antisemitism International* goes to press, Israel is once again at war—this time on two fronts. The enemy in the south is Hamas (the Islamic Resistance Movement) which is the present government of the crumbling Palestinian authority: in the north it is Hizbollah (the “Party of God”). Behind these two Islamist terrorist organizations stand Syria and Iran, long-standing allies who in mid-June 2006, signed a military cooperation agreement directed against Israel. Significantly, in the more moderate part of the Arab world, led by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan, there is considerable consternation that radical extremist organizations like Hamas and Hizbollah are so recklessly destabilizing the Middle East. Despite Iran’s claim to global Muslim leadership, Arab rulers need no reminder that Persians are not Arabs, nor are they even Sunnis. Moreover, the prospect of Iranian nuclear empowerment is hardly a matter of rejoicing for any rational Arab leader, despite all-too-familiar rhetoric about crushing the “Zionist enemy.”

It is important to note that the axis of terror and jihad that extends from Teheran (via Damascus) to the Lebanese Hizbollah and the Hamas in Gaza is also cemented—at least in part—by the age-old scourge of antisemitism, a fact that receives very little attention in the international media. Yet the current escalation of antisemitism worldwide is no accident nor should it be seen as a mere side-show or marginal detail in the ongoing terrorist war against Israel’s very existence. The new Iranian President Ahmadinejad began his own offensive in late October 2005, by reminding the Muslim faithful that the “regime that is occupying Quds [Jerusalem] must be eliminated from the pages of history.” In December 2005 he brazenly mocked those who think that there had ever been a Holocaust, adding that if this had indeed happened, Israelis should be immediately transferred from the Middle East to Bavaria. At a rally in early February 2006 Ahmadinejad even claimed that only “medieval” thinking could explain the acceptance by the West of the “Holocaust myth.”

The exposure of this “myth” has indeed become a high priority for the Iranian media, the propaganda

apparatus and the government in its global campaign against Zionism and the West. Moreover, in this endeavor Iran has been vigorously supported by the Hamas, Hizbollah, the Muslim Brotherhood, and a significant body of opinion in the Arab world, which has never related to the Holocaust as anything but a cynically manipulated “pretext” for the creation of Israel. This Iranian-sponsored campaign is fundamentally antisemitic. It reminds us the demonization of Jews are an integral part of the radical Islamist desire to eliminate Israel, to bring down the West and save the world for Islam. In the case of President Ahmadinejad this state-supported antisemitism is reinforced by a missionary ideology constructed around the imminent return of the hidden 12th Imam, the Islamic Messiah who was the last direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammed’s cousin and son-in-law Ali.

In a television program aired on July 11, 2006, the Iranian President solemnly warned Western countries: “[T]he Zionists are not opposed only to Islam and the Muslims. They are opposed to humanity as a whole. They want to dominate the entire world. They would even sacrifice Western regimes for their own sake. Stop supporting these corrupt people.... the rage of the Muslim peoples may soon reach the point of explosion.... the waves of this explosion will not be restricted to the boundaries of our region.”

This is a mode of antisemitic prophecy and apocalyptic threat uncannily reminiscent of the Hitler era. Iranian television discussions since the beginning of 2006 have assumed an equally aggressive and threatening posture, in which Holocaust denial often merges with genocidal calls to remove Israel—described as a “cancerous tumor”—from the Middle East.

Not to be outdone, Ahmadinejad’s political adviser, Mohammed Ali Ramin, told students at Gilan University on June 9, 2006, that Jews had always plotted against other nations and ethnic groups, and that it was part of their character to oppose justice and righteousness. In the past, there was good reason to believe that they were the source for deadly diseases like the plague and typhus; more recently, they were no doubt responsible for the Aids epidemic; and “rumors” about bird flu had, in all

---

probability, been deliberately spread by Israel, America, and Britain to distract attention from their malevolent intentions against Iran. The Holocaust as “myth” fits only too well this pattern of “Zionist conspiracy.” According to Ramin, it was the principal reason why Palestine could be so easily occupied. In conclusion, the presidential advisor observed: “So long as Israel exists in the region there will never be peace and security in the Middle East. So the resolution of the Holocaust issue will end in the destruction of Israel.”

The legacy of annihilationist jihad and Jew-hatred bequeathed to Iran by the Ayatollah Khomeini’s Islamic Revolution of 1979 is also what inspires Hizbollah and Hamas. The “Party of Allah” has for at least 20 years pursued the objectives of turning Lebanon into a Shari’a state and destroying Israel as part of its long-term aim of helping to promote international Islamic hegemony. Hizbollah’s spiritual leader, Husayn Fadlallah has consistently argued: “Either we destroy Israel or Israel destroys us.” For the present Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah, behind the war to liberate Jerusalem and Palestine there stands an eternal conflict between Islam and the Jews. Indeed, in Hizbollah propaganda, Jews are invariably depicted as corrupt, treacherous, aggressive, and fundamentally “racist.”

Violently antisemitic motifs are no less apparent in the ideology of the Palestinian Hamas. Its leaders and representatives have repeatedly stated since their accession to power in the Palestinian Authority, that the *non-recognition* of Israel is one of their founding principles. Indeed, the Hamas charter could not be more explicit on the subject of the Jews. It states that the conflict with Israel is one between Muslims and Jewish “infidels” that *all* of Palestine is Muslim; that an uncompromising holy war (jihad) must be waged until Israel is destroyed. This is made clear at the beginning of the Charter, with a quotation from the founder of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, Hassan Al-Banna: “Israel will arise and continue to exist until Islam wipes it out, as it wiped out what went before.”

Vicious overt antisemitism characterizes Hamas as it does the Hizbollah, with both groups drawing on Muslim as well as European sources. Thus, it is an Islamic axiom

that Jews deserve only “humiliation and misery” because they angered Allah, rejected the Quran and killed the prophets. The Hamas Covenant demonizes Israeli Jews as “Mongols” and “Nazis” in their allegedly brutal behavior toward women and children. But it is above all the spirit of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* which infuses the Hamas charter with its peculiarly sinister antisemitic content. Article 22 bluntly states: “No war takes place anywhere without the Jews’ being behind it.”

Following the pattern of the *Protocols*, Jews are held responsible in the Hamas Sacred Covenant for all local conflicts, for the French and Russian Revolutions as well as for the First and Second World Wars. They control the media, the banks, the film industry, freemasonry, and education. Jews have been behind both capitalism and international Communism. Above all, they are permanent enemies of Allah and Islam.

It is evident that both Hamas and Hizbollah, which have now openly declared war on Israel, are driven by an apocalyptic and exterminationist Jew-hatred that underlies their geo-political strategy. This is, moreover, a central element in the broader anti-Western assault of modern jihadi terrorism. The “Semitic” antisemites have learned how to exploit themes that were previously latent rather than explicit in Muslim eschatology. Article 7 of the Hamas Charter concludes with a spine-chilling *hadith*, widely cited today by radical Islamists around the world:

The last Hour would not come unless the Muslims will fight against the Jews and the Muslims would kill them until the Jews would hide themselves behind a stone or a tree and a stone or a tree would say: “Muslim, or the servant of Allah, there is a Jew behind me: come and kill him” but the tree Gharkad would not say, for it is the tree of the Jews.

With enemies like these, this is a battle that Israel must decisively win, both for itself and the sake of mankind.



Robert S. Wistrich  
July 16, 2006

# Converging Pathologies: From Anti-Zionism To Neo-antisemitism

*Robert S. Wistrich*

At the end of December 1984 I had the honor to present a lecture in Hebrew to the Study Circle on World Jewry held in the residence of Israel's President, Chaim Herzog, who chaired the proceedings and actively participated in the ensuing discussion. The lecture, entitled "Anti-Zionism as an Expression of Antisemitism today," subsequently appeared in 1985 (in both Hebrew and English) in a series jointly published by the Study Circle and the Zalman Shazar Centre for the study of Jewish History.<sup>1</sup> Looking back more than twenty years, this text seems to me a remarkably prescient diagnosis and forecast of where the new wave of "global anti-Zionism" (moderate in comparison with today) was likely to lead. In my address, I pointed to the naivety of the post-Holocaust assumption that antisemitism would gradually disappear in the Gentile world, and sharply criticized the wild denunciations of Israel's so-called "genocide" in Lebanon (1982) already proliferating in the Western media, as well as in the Arab world and the Soviet bloc. At the same time I warned against the toxic "Third Worldism" exhibited by many European politicians and intellectuals as well as the knee-jerk anti-Americanism (linked to hatred of Israel as an "American stooge") which flourished in these same circles. It was obvious to me that since Israel's lightning victory in the 1967 war (imposed on it by the Arabs), a radical counterculture was consolidating itself in the West which energetically spread "anti-Zionism" into the peace movement, the ecological ("Green") parties, feminist circles, and among new immigrants (especially Arabs and Muslims), also finding a powerful echo in the universities.<sup>2</sup>

Much of this venomous anti-Israel rhetoric was new Leftist in inspiration and self-righteously "anti-fascist"—creating a cultural code in which Zionism was linked with the worst conceivable evils of imperialism, racism, and militarism. Radical Jews were especially prominent (then as now) in promoting simplistic and totally partisan neo-Marxist equations which sought to damn Zionism as a neo-colonial movement, intransigently opposed to Arab liberation.<sup>3</sup> Already then, there was no shortage of Jewish intellectuals eager to accuse Zionists of always having allied

themselves with the most reactionary political forces and collaborating with pogromists and antisemites. It was also alleged that Zionism and its product—the Israeli State—were fundamentally detrimental to the Jewish Diaspora; that both had pursued a cruel, racist, and biblical doctrine of "chosenness" which threatened the moral basis of humanity and peace.<sup>4</sup> The "anti-Zionists" of the 1970s and 1980s, like their Jewish liberal or Marxist predecessors, during the pre-Holocaust era, insisted that Zionism was a peculiarly obnoxious tribal, particularist, and "chauvinist regression," antithetical to universalist or humanist values.<sup>5</sup> This trend escalated with the publication of *The Age of the Dictators* (1983), a tendentious rewriting of the fascist era by a maverick Jewish Trotskyist from America, Lenni Brenner, as if it were the story of "Nazi-Zionist collaboration."

Zionists were branded by Brenner and other Trotskyists as Hitler's most enthusiastic allies and helpers.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, Israel was equated with the Third Reich, the IDF with the Wehrmacht, and the political leaders of the Jewish State were systematically vilified as "war criminals" or "fascist executioners." In the Soviet Union and Communist-controlled Eastern Europe, such libels had been part of an orchestrated campaign ever since 1967 and greatly helped to achieve the "victory" of the notorious 1975 UN resolution equating Zionism with racism.<sup>7</sup> I warned that if this political current (which had already penetrated the media in the Western democracies) was not stopped in its tracks, it would inevitably lead to a *delegitimization* of the Jewish State and to its international isolation. But virtually nothing was done in Israel or the Diaspora to initiate a counter-offensive at the level of ideas.

I also emphasized the cumulative impact of sophisticated pro-Palestinian propaganda in forging a myth of revolutionary liberation, poisoning mainstream Western opinion and creating a demonological perception of Zionism. Since the late 1960s, Al-Fatah (the spearhead of the Palestine Liberation Organization-PLO) had begun to adopt Communist and Third Worldist models of "national liberation," denouncing Zionism as a "fascist" occupation regime. Abetted by the Western Marxist Left, the USSR, and its allies, it

---

constantly compared Palestinian suffering under Israeli “oppression” with the fate of Jews under Hitler’s rule. Burying all traces of the unconditional pro-Nazi orientation of Haj Amin el-Husseini’s Palestinian Arab national movement between 1933 and 1945, Arafat and his friends blamed Israel for their own intransigent refusal to halt terrorism, accept partition, or enter any serious peace process. The Palestinians shamelessly usurped the mantle of the “Jews” in the Middle East—depicting themselves as a homeless, persecuted people, ruthlessly evicted from their lands by alien “racists” and brutal Zionist colonialists. This Palestinian victimology, which has today become a ritualized mantra parroted in many parts of the liberal Western media, was already rather widespread during the 1982 Lebanon war. In European and American caricatures about Lebanon, the star of David was mischievously twinned with the swastika; Israelis were being transfigured into Nazis, and Arafat’s encircled PLO in Beirut assumed the mantle of the embattled Jews of the Warsaw ghetto.<sup>8</sup> The new trend prompted the-then editor of the London Observer, Conor Cruise O’Brien, to write in June 1982: “if your interlocutor can’t keep Hitler out of the conversation, if he is...feverishly turning Jews into Nazis and Arabs into Jews—why then I think you may well be talking to an anti-Jewist.”<sup>9</sup>

In my 1984 lecture I pointed out that there were some varieties of anti-Zionism and anti-Israelism not necessarily driven by antisemitic intent. This was obviously true of Jewish Orthodox anti-Zionism, of the Bundist rivalry with Zionism, or Reform Judaism before the foundation of Israel.<sup>10</sup> They did not engage in deliberate defamatory, dehumanizing, or deformed stereotypes that cast doubt on the moral legitimacy of Israel.

I also remarked in 1984 that the “new” antisemitism was self-consciously “anti-racist,” inverting older labels and execrating Jews as prime perpetrators and prototypes of racism, especially against Palestinian Arabs.<sup>11</sup> This form of anti-racist, universalistic, and “humanistic” antisemitism, by denying the foundations of Jewish national legitimacy, was profoundly discriminatory, though wrapping itself in a deceptive language of “anti-

imperialism.” Here is my formulation over twenty years ago of the significant parallels between contemporary anti-Zionism and classical antisemitism:

Both ideologies seek in practice to deprive the Jew of his right to an equal place in the world; to limit his activity and freedom of movement, his human, civic, and political rights, and even his very right to exist—at least in the more radical formulations. Both antisemitism and anti-Zionism imply that the Jews have no claim to be a free, independent people like other peoples, to define themselves according to universally acceptable criteria of self-determination.... Thus both ideologies are built on the negation of Jewish rights and seek to drive the Jew back to a ghetto—whether it be physical or symbolic. The Jews must be confined to the status of a pariah nation. In a word, they do not belong.<sup>12</sup>

The chilling recent declarations of Iranian President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, simultaneously denying the Holocaust, and threatening “to wipe out” Israel, describing it a rotten tree or “artificial implant” waiting to be “uprooted” by one nuclear firestorm, graphically underline my point. However, even twenty years ago, the writing was on the wall. Already then, I had designated the fundamentalist Iran of the Ayatollah Khomeini as the most dangerous future threat to the West and the true heir of Nazi-style messianic antisemitism.<sup>13</sup>

There are many ironies in this shift of the antisemitic center of gravity from Europe to the Middle East. After all, modern European antisemites, from Drumont





to Hitler, vilified Jews as being racially “Semites” or “Asiatics,” totally alien to “Aryan” and Christian Europe. However, for most Arabs (and many Muslims) today, Israel is an *alien* interloper from the West.<sup>14</sup> The Iranian leaders, in their more benign moments, assure us that if only Israel were transplanted back to Bavaria or Austria, they would have no objection to its existence. I doubt that. What is certain is that Jewish sovereignty in any part of the so-called Arab/Muslim domain (*Dar al-Islam*) is clearly beyond the pale. Here, again, is what I wrote in 1984:

The goal of Arab anti-Zionism is ultimately to reduce Israel (or the Jews as a collectivity) to their age-old humiliated status under Islam, as dhimmis—protected” by Muslim “tolerance” and living on grace rather than by right in their midst. This type of anti-Zionism seeks to de-emancipate the Jews as an independent nation, much as modern secular European antisemitism insistently sought to de-emancipate the Jews as free and equal individuals in civil society.... Anti-Zionism continues the discriminatory theory and practice of classical antisemitism, transforming it to an international pariah. It wishes to re-ghettoise the Jewish nation, just as post-emancipation antisemites sought to return the Jewish community to the pre-modern ghetto.<sup>15</sup>

There are, of course, those who argue that Arab anti-Zionism and antisemitism are merely a function of the Israel-Palestine conflict and therefore fundamentally different from the European original. Thus, the

Israeli scholar Yehoshafat Harkabi (a former head of military intelligence), thought that Arab antisemitism was primarily the product of the century-long Arab struggle against the Zionist movement, the Yishuv, and the State of Israel. Though he closely documented the proliferation of Judeophobic fantasies in the Arab world, Harkabi insisted that they had a *rational* political kernel—unlike the irrational and ineradicable nature of European Christian antisemitism.<sup>16</sup> But Harkabi’s distinction looks increasingly hollow today with the renewed upsurge of Islamic religious fanaticism (whose potential he underestimated) and the unprecedented scale of antisemitic hatred pouring out of the Muslim world during the past two decades.<sup>17</sup> This tidal wave of “eliminationist” Muslim propaganda against the Jews has not only obliterated any meaningful distinction between anti-Zionism and antisemitism, it bears a macabre resemblance to Nazi prototypes.<sup>18</sup> In both cases, there is an overriding belief in the international Jewish conspiracy to dominate the world; there is the same conviction that a vast global Jewish network controls America and the West, seeking to subvert and overthrow Islam and any other obstacle to its hegemony. Although “Zionism” and Israel obviously loom much larger in contemporary Arab-Muslim consciousness than they did for the Nazis, the underlying mind-set is virtually identical.

The Russian secret police fabrication, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (partly plagiarized from a French source and concocted shortly after the First Zionist Congress of 1897), has played a crucial role in contemporary Arab propaganda, as it did for the Nazis. This notorious antisemitic text has been a best seller for many years in the Arab world.<sup>19</sup> For Hitler and Alfred Rosenberg before 1945, as now for many Muslims, Zionism was ultimately seen, through the prism of the *Protocols*, as a branch of the world-wide Jewish plan of conquest—closely linked to Anglo-American imperialism and international Communism. In this paranoid conspiracy vision, whose impact on the Arab world began in the 1930s and 1940s, antisemitism becomes the driving force of “anti-Zionism,” rather than the other way around.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, since 1919, Arab and



Muslim antisemites were increasingly drawn towards the European view of the Jew as the universal agent of chaos, the destroyer of all social order, the source of atheistic secularism, of moral decadence, pornography, drugs, and subversive social doctrines.<sup>21</sup> The consolidation of Israel and its striking military prowess after 1948 greatly reinforced this demonology, with the traditional Arab stereotype of the Jew as a weak and ineffective plotter, undergoing a mutation into a truly satanic image of frightening omnipotence. The archetypal Jew was now elevated in Arab propaganda to the level of a global, cosmic threat to be annihilated. He had once more become a symbol of ultimate wickedness, responsible for all of the world's evils.<sup>22</sup> This is especially clear in the writings of the Egyptian fundamentalist Sayyid Qutb, the leading theorist of the Muslim Brotherhood, imprisoned and then executed by Gamal Abdul Nasser in 1966. Qutb considered the Jews to be responsible for the harmful effects of capitalism, communism, atheism, psychoanalysis, sexual permissiveness, and the spread of materialism—a cluster of accusations familiar enough from antisemitic European and Nazi sources.<sup>23</sup> However, in Qutb's case, as in the sacred covenant of the Palestinian Hamas (an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood) dating from 1988, antisemitic conspiracy theories are not only culturally Islamicised, but they are given the binding quality of religious dogma. In the founding document of the Hamas, the Jews are presented as having fomented all modern revolutions since 1789. They are explicitly blamed for the outbreak of the First and Second World Wars, accused of being in league with freemasonry and other “subversive” organizations (including the league of Nations, the UN, Rotary Clubs, etc.)—all in the pursuit of their relentless strategic goal to rule the world.<sup>24</sup>

Such *Protocols*-inspired conspiracy theories are today rampant across the Arab world. But they also extend to Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia, and some other large Asian Muslim population centers. Many non-Arab Muslims have been influenced by Saudi clerics who incite on a daily basis against the Jews as the sons of “monkeys and pigs” while preaching the duty of jihad. Similar sermons can be heard in Egypt, the Palestinian Authority,

Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and the Gulf States. They regularly invoke the blood libel, deny the Holocaust, and vilify the “treacherous Jews” as “enemies of Allah” and bloodthirsty oppressors.<sup>25</sup>

A debate, in May 2001, initiated by Al-Jazeera TV, entitled “Is Zionism Worse than Nazism?” epitomizes the prevailing climate of opinion. The program was hosted by Dr. Al-Qassem and Dr. Hayat' Atiya, a Christian Arab woman “researcher” who had translated the work of French Holocaust denier, Roger Garaudy, into Arabic. Atiya loudly defended the denial of the Holocaust and then unveiling a large picture of an Arab child who had been accidentally killed in the Intifadah, she screamed before the cameras: “This is the Holocaust...there is no Jewish Holocaust!!! There is only a Palestinian Holocaust!!!” If that were not enough, the internet poll on the program showed that no less than 84.6% of its Arab viewers agreed that Zionism was worse than Nazism.<sup>26</sup>

The slander that equates Zionism with Nazism is by no means confined to the Arab world. The constant borrowing of vocabulary, images, and analogies from the Shoah in order to pillory Israel has also become a European speciality in recent years. Much more than in the 1980s, the swastika has steadily been transformed into a new yellow star to pin on the Jews. Prominent European officials, like the former Swedish Foreign Minister, have at times implicitly or explicitly encouraged this falsehood by comparing Israel's behavior towards the Palestinians with that of the Nazis towards the Jews.<sup>27</sup> The Portuguese Nobel Prize laureate, José Saramago, writing in the Spanish daily *El País* brazenly asserted that Israelis were committing crimes “comparable to Auschwitz” in the “occupied territories” even as they endlessly scratched their own wounds, to show them off “as if it were a banner.”<sup>28</sup> For

*The archetypal Jew was now elevated in Arab propaganda to the level of a global, cosmic threat to be annihilated. He had once more become a symbol of ultimate wickedness, responsible for all of the world's evils.*

---

Saramago and the many “intellectuals” who think like him, Ramallah is Auschwitz, full stop.

The Ulster-born British poet Tom Paulin (who lectures at Oxford University) is another of the many European “artists” who regularly equate Zionism with Nazism. A poem by Paulin, published in the *Observer* some four years ago, referred to the “Zionist SS” gunning down “little Palestinian boys.”<sup>29</sup> The Greek composer, Mikis Theodorakis, like much of his native country’s media, also likes to portray Israel as a “Nazi” State, suggesting that under Ariel Sharon, the Jews were being led “to the root of evil,” just as “Hitler led the Germans.”<sup>30</sup> Theodorakis declared himself to be flabbergasted that “the Jewish people, who have been victims of Nazism, can support such a fascist policy.” Yet this same self-proclaimed cosmopolitan humanist, “anti-fascist,” and “anti-racist,” so militantly opposed to antisemitism, has revealed through his own statements and interviews that his outlook is thoroughly contaminated with some of the worst clichés of the old and new Judeophobia. Thus, Theodorakis in an interview with *Haaretz* in August 2004, ranted on about fanatical, domineering traits of the Jews, their imagined control of Wall Street, of the banks, the mass media, and the world of music.<sup>31</sup> According to Theodorakis, Jews dominated the United States and globalized capitalism, the arts, the sciences, and modern culture in general. Their arrogance and feelings of “superiority” ultimately stemmed from their “unnatural” monotheistic religion, which he held to be highly judgmental, repressive, and responsible for imbuing Jews with a strong sense of their own “chosenness.” Evidently, the pro-Palestinian Theodorakis found it impossible to distinguish between Israel and “the Jews,” a tendency observable among growing numbers of European intellectuals, artists, cartoonists, and academics. The deepest layer in the composer’s prejudice appears to have come from the warnings of his Greek Orthodox grandmother not to associate with Jews at Easter, since they required the blood of Christian children for ritual purposes.

As in Greece, so too in Spain. Israel has been stigmatized in the media by drawing on traditional Christian stereotypes of Jews derived from earlier

periods.<sup>32</sup> There are not a few Spanish journalists who see Israel as the source of all unrest in the Middle East and in the rest of the world. Sometimes they treat the so-called “criminality of Israel” as if it were a topic that requires no proof whatsoever, while playing down or completely ignoring Palestinian atrocities. As the left-wing Spanish journalist Pilar Rahola has tellingly remarked, Israel is reduced to one sole image:

[It is] a country that occupies territories and whose vocation is to make life miserable for the poor Palestinians. The history of the Holy Land is being reinvented. Everything takes place as if there were instructions: Never recall the faults and errors of the Palestinians, never recall their alliances with dangerous countries such as Iraq.<sup>33</sup>

As a result, there are never any Jewish victims and no Palestinian executioners in this ideologically blinkered vision. Arab terrorism naturally becomes “comprehensible and even acceptable.”<sup>34</sup> In this respect, Spain is only a microcosm of the rest of the European Union (EU) where such techniques of disinformation and the deformation of Israeli and Palestinian reality have been an integral part of political opinion-making. Beyond this bias, there lies the more far-reaching negation of Israel—burdened by its enemies with the *odium theologicum* of having been “born in sin.” For those who embrace this world-view, Israel is once more (as in Christian theology) the symbolic expression of the evil that afflicts this world. This implicates *all* Jews, who are often presumed to be automatic carriers of the toxic Zionist virus.

There are other no less striking parallels. Anti-Zionism, like antisemitism, all too frequently relies on *hate speech, incitement to violence, intellectual intimidation, and terror*. This is stunningly obvious in cases like the current Iranian leadership, Hizbollah, or Hamas, which share a genocidal discourse on Jewish history, the Jewish nation and the future of the Jewish State. But there are also many anti-Zionists who are not extremists, yet assume that the idea of a Jewish State is morally *illegitimate* and *criminal* in its essence.<sup>35</sup> Their language is calculated to inspire disgust, revulsion or (at the very least) cold indifference towards Israel while

---

encouraging protest actions against it. Anti-Zionism, no less than antisemitism, is *obsessional* in its accusations which can border on the delirious and show total disregard for empirical facts. While endlessly rehearsing Israel's alleged crimes, anti-Zionists often present the Palestinians as if they were totally innocent lambs.

A visitor from Mars, exposed to the growing mountain of "anti-Zionist" literature (Arab, Muslim, West European, Russian, American, etc.), could never imagine the tiny geographic dimensions of Israel in comparison with the surrounding Arab world. Even if all of world Jewry lived in Israel, its population would be smaller than that of the Egyptian capital, Cairo. Our visitor would never guess from the high priests of anti-Zionism that there are nearly 60 Arabs to every Israeli, and about 100 Muslims for every Jew on this planet. This anti-Israel fixation reminds me of German antisemitic paranoia towards the Jews in the Weimar period when the latter represented less than one percent of the non-Jewish population. In both cases, the miniscule Jewish minority "provokes" the same delusional state of mind. Israel is perceived by millions of Gentiles as the greatest single danger to world peace, the source of all discord, dissension, and trouble, just as it was in the heyday of European antisemitism.<sup>36</sup> In this context, one might be tempted to update the old Russian antisemitic formula of Tsarist times: "Beat the Zionists and save humanity!" Today, of course, it is more politically correct to propose the dissolution of the "apartheid" Jewish State in the name of "human rights."

The writing has been on the wall for about 30 years. Little has changed except the greater mainstreaming and globalization of anti-Zionist antisemitism during the past decade. Certainly, the domestic "Jewish question" of specific countries with large Jewish populations, which characterized the pre-Holocaust era, is no longer decisive.<sup>37</sup> The problem is *universal*, but ultimately still linked to the traditional mythical image of "the Jew" as a destructive agent in the world. However, globalized anti-Zionism is linked with at least one phenomenon that has considerably expanded in significance since the early 1980s—the rampant anti-Americanism in Europe, the Middle East, and parts of Asia. Anti-Americanism

has indeed become part of the new "Jewish Question," especially in France and Germany.<sup>38</sup> Rather like antisemitism, hatred of America functions as a flashpoint for many discontents, as "a ready-made explanation of internal weaknesses, disappointments, and failures."<sup>39</sup>

Already in the late 19th century, Americans and Jews were perceived in Europe as symbols of a money-driven, urban, individualistic and rootless, capitalist modernity. In the inter-war period, this type of cultural antipathy was reinforced by Nazi and fascist stereotypes of "Judaized"

*The are also many anti-Zionists who are not extremists, yet assume that the idea of a Jewish State is morally illegitimate and criminal in its essence. Their language is calculated to inspire disgust, revulsion or (at the very least) cold indifference towards Israel while encouraging protest actions against it.*

America. The United States was depicted as a Babel of races, represented by Wall Street Jewish bankers, "Jewish" Hollywood, and "negro-Jewish" jazz. America was the incarnation of *Bodenlosigkeit* (rootlessness) and soullessness, a mediocre, mongrel nation ruled by an East Coast "plutocracy." Needless to say, it was dominated by Jews and feverishly seeking world domination. Of course, since 1945, the *reality* of American global power has grown considerably. So, too, has Israel's regional strength since the Six Day War, which turned it into an "occupying" power and added new layers to the antagonism which it had aroused ever since its creation. The German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk typically branded America and Israel in 2002 as being the only two countries today, who are "rogue states."<sup>40</sup> This is, in effect, a widely held prejudice among those left-wing academic and political elites in Europe, who regard Israel as America's imperialist instrument in the Middle East. Similar myths continue to predominate in Arab anti-Zionist and anti-American propaganda.<sup>41</sup> However, during the past few years (and especially after the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq) the antisemitic view of the United States as Israel's servant has become much more

prevalent. This is true on the Left as on the Right in both America and Europe. The Nazi antisemitic stereotype of America controlled by East Coast Jews has now merged into the “anti-Zionist” fantasy of American foreign policy being manipulated by a war-mongering neo-conservative “cabal” of pro-Israel Jewish hawks.<sup>42</sup> This helps to account for the astonishing fact that 59% of all Europeans in 2003, regarded Israel as the number one danger to world peace, before Iran, North Korea, the U.S., Iraq, Afghanistan, or Pakistan—and far ahead of China or Russia. In the Netherlands, no less than 74% held this amazing view, and 65% in Germany agreed with it. In Great Britain, despite the pro-American policy of Prime Minister Tony Blair, similar sentiments are encouraged on a daily basis by the *Guardian*, the *Independent*, the BBC and other so-called respectable media, which (irrespective of their intent) have contributed to the weakening of residual taboos regarding antisemitism.<sup>43</sup> The left-wing Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, who has repeatedly denounced George Bush and Ariel Sharon as “war criminals,” provides a classic example of how ideological anti-Zionism seamlessly slides into and actively nourishes antisemitism. At the beginning of 2006, Mr. Livingstone gratuitously insulted a Jewish reporter, Oliver Feingold, comparing him to a Nazi concentration guard; then, in March 2006, he told the Reuben brothers, two major property developers in London who had irritated him, that they “could go back where they came from”—and try their luck with the Ayatollahs of Iran! In point of fact, Simon and David Reuben were both born in Bombay to Iraqi Jewish parents and had been British residents for forty years.



London demonstration, February 2006

To compound his racist and crassly insensitive slur, Mr. Livingstone then issued a cocky “apology” to the people of Iran for suggesting they might be linked to the Iraqi Jewish businessmen.<sup>44</sup> Mr. Livingstone, a former Trotskyist who for almost 30 years has relentlessly demonized Israel as a “racist” state, would no doubt have grovelled to a black or Muslim journalist had he been accused by them of insulting their communities. But Israel and British Jews are evidently in a very different category.

The obsessive quality of contemporary anti-Zionism is especially visible in British academia. On 29 May 2006, the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE), the largest academic trade union in Britain, decided to boycott Israeli academics in general. The resolution was depicted as an act of solidarity with the Palestinians, and as a rejection of Israel’s “apartheid” policies and “discrimination” against Israeli Arabs—both entirely false accusations. The latest boycott followed the reversal of an initially successful attempt by the British Association of University Teachers in 2005 to boycott Haifa and Bar-Ilan universities. Never mind that Israel withdrew from the Gaza strip, that it plans potentially divisive and highly risky withdrawals from the West Bank; or that the Palestinian Authority is now governed by a terrorist antisemitic regime which does not even recognize Israel and continues (on a daily basis) to shell the Negev with Qassam rockets; or that Iran persistently threatens to wipe the “Zionist entity” off the map. What concerns British “anti-Zionists” is the principle that (whatever it does) Israel must be boycotted, delegitimized, and *punished*—a blatantly antisemitic witch-hunt smacking of academic McCarthyism. This politics of discrimination and exclusion is practiced with a good conscience by so-called “liberals” and “leftists” (some of them of Jewish origin) who claim to be defending humanist principles of tolerance!<sup>45</sup>

In Britain, as in other European countries, a substantial section of the Left combines its unsavory worship of Palestinian victimhood with a marked loathing for Israel. Especially telling is the comeback of the catchword “cabal” (now a synonym for being manipulative and Jewish) favored by right-wing

reactionary American isolationists like Pat Buchanan, pacifist British MPs such as Tom Dalyell, or the sycophantically pro-Arab George Galloway. Though America is hated by much of the European Left for its military aggressiveness and as Israel's political patron, it is not subjected to similar boycotts as the Jewish State out of hypocritical self-interest. But the United States, like Israel, is heartily detested for its sense of biblical mission. An increasingly secular Europe is incapable of empathizing with the Bible-oriented consciousness of Israeli Jews or American Christians. Moreover, Europe has its own ghosts yet to be fully exorcised:

Anti-Zionism and anti-Americanism help Europeans cope with their two historical burdens, the Holocaust and colonialism. By transforming Israelis into the new Nazis, Europeans relativize the Holocaust. And by attacking Americans as the new colonialists, Europeans prove they have repudiated colonialism.<sup>46</sup>

Both America and Israel are seen by many Europeans (in a secularized version of Christian anti-Judaism) as “Pharisees”—hypocrites who carry the banners of freedom and democracy, but in reality serve the “Golden Calf.” Moreover, both nations radiate military power, are prepared to act unilaterally, do not balk at robust self-defense to ensure their survival, and are not embarrassed by displays of patriotic idealism. For Europeans who pretend to have renounced any hint of realpolitik and like to present themselves as pioneers of a “post-national,” “multicultural,” and multilateralist approach to international relations, American and Israeli attitudes often seem infuriating. Such differences help to credit the idea of a “Zionist-American conspiracy.”

Thirty years ago, the concept of a “Tel-Aviv–Pretoria–Washington axis” was primarily the stuff of Soviet antisemitic propaganda. Today it is above all neo-Marxists and Islamists like Osama Bin Laden, Iranian clerics, or Palestinian and Arab nationalists who believe in the machinations of the “Great” and the “Little” Satan. But even in America, there are those who think that the United States is in the hands of an all-powerful Jewish-Zionist lobby. Such views have infiltrated academia in recent years. Thus, two well-known American professors



Bush as Sharon's puppet

of Political Science recently argued that the Israel Lobby manipulates and distorts U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East in ways that fundamentally jeopardise American national security.<sup>47</sup> Their analysis, crude in its assumptions, partisan in its reasoning, and heavily tainted with stereotypical images, is unfortunately quite widespread on U.S. campuses, though unrepresentative of American public opinion. In Europe, however, such a view has almost become a mainstream article of faith.

### **Conclusions**

The radical forms of anti-Zionism which have revived with renewed force in recent years display definite analogies to classic European antisemitism. One of the more obvious similarities has been the call for a scientific, cultural, and economic boycott of Israel that arouses grim associations and memories among Jews of the Nazi boycott that began in 1933. There are other highly visible manifestations. An example is the systematic manner in which Israel has been harassed at international forums such as the UN, where the Arab states have for decades pursued a policy of isolating the Jewish state and turning it into a pariah. An offshoot of this campaign was the hate-fest at the UN-sponsored Durban Conference against racism of September 2001, which denounced Zionism as a “genocidal” movement, practicing “ethnic cleansing” against Palestinians. In such public forums, as well as in much of the Western media, Zionism and the Jewish people have been pilloried in ways that are virtually identical to the methods, arguments, and techniques of racist antisemitism.

Indeed, Israel is today the only state on the face of this planet that such a large number of disparate people wish to see disappear—itsself a chilling reminder of Nazi Jew-baiting in the 1930s. The most virulent expressions of this “extremist” or genocidal anti-Zionism have come from the Arab-Muslim world, which in that respect is the historical heir of Hitler’s Germany. It is worth recalling that “moderate” Muslim statesmen such as Mahathir Mohammad could publicly proclaim the classic antisemitic belief that “Jews rule the world” while eliciting no objections in the Islamic world. The more radical Islamists from Al-Qaida to the Palestinian Hamas go much further since they fuse indiscriminate terror, suicide bombings, and a *Protocols of Zion* style of antisemitism with the ideology of jihad.

The so-called “war against Zionism” unmistakably embraces the total demonization of the “Jewish other.” Jews are the “enemy of mankind,” deadly poisonous snakes; barbarian “Nazis” and “Holocaust manipulators”; they control international finance, America, the Western mass media, while inciting wars and revolutions to achieve world domination. Such conspiracy theories

*Indeed, Israel is today the only state on the face of this planet that such a large number of disparate people wish to see disappear—itsself a chilling reminder of Nazi Jew-baiting in the 1930s.*

sailing under “anti-Zionist” colours constitute a highly toxic, even murderous outlook that today is linked both to religious fanaticism and a worldwide revolutionary agenda.<sup>48</sup> The same demonizing stereotypes can, however, be found

in more moderate pro-Western Egypt (home to the *Protocols*-based antisemitic soap opera *Rider without a Horse*), in secular Baathist Syria, conservative Wahhabite Saudi Arabia, and the Shiite fundamentalist Iran of the ayatollahs.<sup>49</sup> This is an ideological “anti-Zionism” that seeks both the annihilation of Israel and a world “liberated from the Jews”—in other words, it is a *totalist* form of antisemitism.

The danger of such irrational hatred has become especially grave because “annihilationist” anti-Zionism

is gradually spreading under the guise of anti-Israelism to Western Europe, America, Russia, Asia, and other parts of the Third World. It has found grassroots support in the Muslim Diaspora among radicalized youth and more than an echo among antiglobalists, Trotskyites, and far-Right groups, as well as in parts of the mainstream media. There is a loose and shifting coalition of red, brown, and green bigotry focused on both America and Israel. Osama bin Laden is a hero not only to those who wish to restore Islam’s global hegemony but also for neo-Nazis and left extremists who still believe in “world revolution” of the proletarian masses or the demise of a mythical “Judeo-American” domination.

Much of the mobilizing power of “anti-Zionism” derives from its traditional link to the Palestinian cause. Since the 1960s, Al-Fatah worked very hard to delegitimize Zionism and the policy has partly succeeded: this Palestinian anti-Zionism always involved a *negation of Jewish nationhood*, of any legitimate Jewish sovereignty in the land of Israel. It involves a denial of the link between Judaism and Zion, or even the existence of the two Jewish temples in ancient Jerusalem. Israel, in fact, has never existed on any Palestinian maps, not even during the Oslo “peace process.” Nor should it be forgotten that the Palestinian Authority has frequently combined highly antisemitic motifs (including Holocaust denial, medieval blood libels, and Jewish conspiracy themes) with its general incitement to violence against Israel. Furthermore, the Islamic groups among the Palestinians, openly see themselves as engaged in “a war against the Jews.” Hamas, as we have pointed out ever since its birth, embraced an Islamicized version of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

The Palestinian cult of martyred victimhood and so-called Arab “anti-Zionism” have helped to infect the world with an old-new version of antisemitism in which Jews are perceived as rapacious, imperialist “infidels” who came to Palestine to conquer the land by brute force, to expel or “cleanse” it of its natives. Jews are modern “Crusaders” with no rights to the soil of Israel—an alien transplant, absolutely foreign to the region. They succeeded only because of a gigantic occult conspiracy in which the Zionists (i.e., the Jews)

manipulated Great Britain and subsequently America. This typically antisemitic narrative, of which Hitler surely would have approved—is widely believed in the Muslim world.

The popularity of the *Protocols* today is a telling symptom of the continuing merger between antisemitism and anti-Zionism. Another sign is the success of the leftist mantra reviling Zionism as a racist, apartheid, colonialist, and imperialist movement. The severity of Israel's military reprisals against terrorism inevitably compounds the problem. As a result, many Europeans cannot resist the lie that “the victims of yesterday have become the [Nazi] perpetrators of today.” With barely concealed *Schadenfreude*, they depict Zionism as heir to the darkest pages of Western colonial history such as Algeria, Vietnam, or South Africa. This is the essence of “progressive” anti-Zionism, which (unlike classic forms of racist antisemitism) is not ethnically nationalist or *völkisch*. But nevertheless, its attitude to Israel is highly discriminatory, not to say bigoted, precisely because it negates the elementary rights of a Jewish State. At the same time, this “anti-racist” Left ignores the litany of terrorist crimes, suicidal bombings, and relentless anti-Jewish hatred to be found in Palestinian nationalism. For much of the Western Left, Palestinians can only be *victims* and never perpetrators.

Anti-Zionism is not only the historic successor of earlier forms of antisemitism. Today, it is the lowest common denominator and bridge between the Left, the Right, and the militant Muslims; between the elites (including the media) and the masses; between the churches and the mosques; between an increasingly anti-American Europe and an endemically anti-Western Arab-Muslim Middle East; a point of convergence between conservatives and radicals in search of a scapegoat for all of the world's ills. “Anti-Zionism” is no longer an exotic collection of radical-chic slogans that survived the debacle of the late-1960s counterculture. It has once again become a pseudo-redemptive ideology actively mobilized by the Iranian ayatollahs, by a motley band of global jihadists, by the Palestinian Hamas, the Hizbollah, and legions of “useful idiots” in the West who can always be relied upon to get it wrong.<sup>50</sup>

## Notes

1. This text is integrally reproduced in Robert S. Wistrich, *Between Redemption and Perdition. Modern Antisemitism and Jewish Identity* (London and New York, Routledge, 1990), 214-24.

2. See my formulation of the problem of left-wing anti-Zionism in Western societies, in Robert S. Wistrich, ed., *Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism in the Contemporary World* (London: MacMillan,

1990), 50-51; “anti-Zionism has since become an integral part of the political culture of the Left as a whole—contaminating the mainstream social democratic parties, the trade unions, the left-liberal intelligensia as well as the traditionally receptive student milieu, the Trotskyist sects and the anarchist subculture. Even beyond the organized political Left, the influence of this diffuse, almost instinctive anti-Zionism into related sectors like the peace movements, women's liberation movements, black power, Green movements is [striking]....”

3. Among the pioneers and models of new Left dogma in this regard was Isaac Deutscher's vitriolic interview “On the Israeli-Arab War,” which originally appeared in *New Left Review*, 20 June 1967, reproduced with glowing praise by the Pakistan-born British Trotskyist Tariq Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms—Crusades, Jihads and Modernity* (London and New York: Verso, 2002), 314-32; see also Nathan Weinstock, *Le Sionisme contre Israël* (Maspero: Paris, 1969); and Maxime Rodinson, *Israël et le refus arabe* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1968). More recently there appeared another example of this Jewish leftist tradition that uncritically identifies with the Palestinian cause, written by Jacqueline Rose, *The Question of Zion* (Princeton and Oxford, 2005), a work full of the most elementary factual errors.

4. A veritable obsession with the “bloodthirsty ideology” of the “chosen people” allegedly driving Zionism, was characteristic of Soviet and Russian nationalist circles. See William Korey, *Russian Antisemitism, Pamyat, and the Demonology of Zionism* (Chur: Harwood, 1995).

5. On the historical phenomenon of liberal Jewish anti-Zionism in the West,



see Robert S. Wistrich, "Zionism and its Jewish 'Assimilationist' Critics (1897-1948)" in *Jewish Social Studies*, 4, no. 2 (Winter 1998): 59-111. An influential example of this syndrome can be found in the relentlessly anti-Zionist liberal posture of the *New York Times*; see Laurel Leff, *Buried by the Times. The Holocaust and America's Most Important Newspaper* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005). The Jewish publishers of this famous newspaper, the Sulzberger-Ochs family, were primarily responsible for obscuring anything that could be identified as a "Jewish" interest, whether it involved truthful reporting on the Holocaust or the struggle for a Jewish State, to which the *New York Times* was overtly hostile.

6. See Lenni Brenner, *Zionism in the Age of the Dictators* (London: Pluto Press, 1983) which was enthusiastically received on the British Left.

7. For a useful history of this resolution and of the struggle against the delegitimization of Israel, see Yohanan Manor, *To Right A Wrong. The Resolution of the UN General Assembly Resolution 3379 Defaming Zionism* (New York: Shengold Publishers, 1996).

8. Robert Wistrich, "The Anti-Zionist Masquerade," *Midstream* (Aug.-Sept. 1983): 12-13.

9. Quoted in Wistrich, *Between Redemption and Perdition*, 219; see also Conor Cruise O'Brien, *The Siege. The Saga of Israel and Zionism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986).

10. Robert S. Wistrich, "Zionism and its Jewish 'Assimilationist' Critics." For the hostile attitude of East European Jewish socialists towards Zionism before 1939, see Jack Jacobs, "Bundist anti-Zionism in Interwar Poland," *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* (Tel Aviv University) 33 (2005).

11. See Wistrich, *Between Redemption and Perdition*, 222; also Alain Finkielkraut, *Le Juif Imaginaire* (Paris: Seuil, 1980), 177-204.

12. Wistrich, *Between Redemption and Perdition*, 216.

13. Robert Wistrich, *Hitler's Apocalypse. Jews and the Nazi Legacy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 178-82. In this book I emphasized the unequivocally "exterminationist" character of Iranian "anti-Zionism" long before attention was paid to it by so-called Middle East experts.

14. I made a similar argument at a symposium held in London on 1 March 1993; see my contribution on "The Antisemitic Ideology in the Contemporary Islamic World," in *The Rising Tide of Anti-Semitism. Déjà-Vu?*, edited by Yaffa Zilbershats (Tel Aviv, 1993), 68-74.

15. Wistrich, *Between Redemption and Perdition*, 216-17. On the position of Jews as "protected peoples" (*dhimmi*) under Muslim rule, see Bat Ye'or, *Juifs et Chrétiens sous L'Islam. Les Dhimmis face au défi intégriste* (Paris: Berg International, 1994).

16. Yehoshafat Harkabi, "On Arab Antisemitism Once More," in *Antisemitism Through the Ages*, edited by Shmuel Almog (Oxford: Pergamon, 1988), 227-40: An earlier work by Harkabi, *Arab Attitudes to Israel* (London: Vallentine

Mitchell, 1972) was a pioneering investigation of contemporary Arab antisemitism, still useful today, though lacking any historical depth.

17. Robert S. Wistrich, *Muslim Antisemitism. A Real and Present Danger* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 2002) provides a broad panorama and many concrete examples.

18. See the essays by Jeffrey Herf, "Die neue totalitäre Herausforderung"; Robert Wistrich, "Der alte Antisemitismus in neuem Gewand"; and Matthias Küntzel, "Nationalismus und Antisemitismus in der arabischen Welt," in *Neuer Antisemitismus?*, edited by Doron Rabinovici et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2004), 191-210, 250-70, and 271-93, respectively.

19. The most comprehensive study of the *Protocols* to date is by Pierre-André Taguieff, *Prêcheurs de haine. Traversée de la judéophobie planétaire* (Paris: Mille et Une Nuits, 2004). A work of 947 pages, it is especially useful on the various conspiracy theories of antisemitism.

20. On this point, Matthias Küntzel, *Djihad und Judenbass. Über den neuen antijüdischen Krieg* (Freiburg: ça ira, 2002) provides helpful material.

21. Bernard Lewis, *Semites and Antisemites* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1986); Rivka Yadlin, *An Arrogant Oppressive Spirit: Anti-Zionism as Anti-Judaism in Egypt* (Oxford and New York: Pergamon Press, 1989); and Robert S. Wistrich, *Muslim Anti-Semitism: A Clear and Present Danger* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 2002).

22. See Robert S. Wistrich, "The Old-New Antisemitism" in *Those Who Forget the Past. The Question of Anti-Semitism*, edited by Ron Rosenbaum (New York: Random House, 2004).

23. On Qutb, see Ronald Nettler, "Islamic Archetypes of the Jews: Then and Now," in *Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism*, 69-73; and Paul Berman, *Terror and Liberalism* (New York: Norton, 2003), 85-86.

24. For the text of the Hamas Covenant, Raphael Israeli, "The Charter of Allah: The Platform of the Islamic Resistance Movement," in *The 1998-9 Annual of Terrorism*, edited by Y. Alexander (Amsterdam: Martins Nijhott, 1990), 99-134.

25. Many examples of jihadist rhetoric against Israel and the Jews are quoted in Raphael Israeli, *Islamikaze. Manifestations of Islamic Martyrology* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 281-344.

26. Al-Jazeera television, 15 May 2001; see MEMRI, no. 225, 6 June 2001 for the English translation. See also Goetz Nordbruch, "The Socio-Historical Background of Holocaust Denial in Arab Countries" (Jerusalem: Vidal Sassoon Center for the Study of Antisemitism, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2001) for a broad cultural analysis.

27. Robert S. Wistrich, *European Anti-Semitism Reinvents Itself* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 2005), 37-40.

28. *Ibid.*, 34.

29. *Ibid.*, 21. This Paulin poem "Killed in the Crossfire," referred to the iconic



---

death of Muhammad al-Dura during the second Intifada. The Palestinian boy was almost certainly *not* killed by Israeli bullets but was immediately transformed into an exemplary martyr of Israeli “childkillers.”

30. See the revealing interview with Theodorakis by Ari Shavit in *Haaretz* magazine, 27 Aug. 2004.

31. *Ibid.*

32. Alejandro Baer and Federico Zukierman, *Anti-Semitism in Graphic Humor—Caricatures and Vignettes of the Spanish Press about the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Madrid: Gnesher, 2003).

33. Pilar Rahola, “Judeophobia explains the pro-Palestinian Hysteria of the European Left,” *Proche-orient. Info* (2 Oct. 2002), an interview in French with Marc Tobiass.

34. Pilar Rahola, address to the 97th Annual Meeting, American Jewish Committee, Washington D.C., 7 May 2003. The author of this article was present and took some notes.

35. See Georges-Elia Sarfati, *L'Antisionisme. Israël/Palestine aux miroirs d'Occident* (Paris: Berg International, 2002).

36. Robert Wistrich, “Something is Rotten in the State of Europe: Antisemitism as a Civilizational Pathology,” in *Israel and Europe: An Expanding Abyss*, edited by Manfred Gerstenfeld (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 2005), 95-110.

37. Daniel Goldhagen, “The Globalization of Anti-Semitism,” in *Old Demons, New Debates. Anti-Semitism in the West*, edited by David Kertzer (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 2005), 179-84.

38. Andrei Markovits, “European Anti-Americanism and Anti-Semitism: Similarities and Differences,” in *Israel and Europe*, 125-42; see also Josef Joffe, *Nations we Love to Hate. Israel, America and the New Antisemitism* (Jerusalem: Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, Posen Papers in Contemporary Antisemitism, no. 1, 2005).

39. Alvin Rosenfeld, *Anti-Americanism and Anti-Semitism: A New Frontier of Bigotry* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 2003), 21.

40. *Ibid.*, 9.

41. Barry Rubin and Judith Colp Rubin, eds., *Anti-American Terrorism and the Middle East. A Documentary Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

42. Markovits, “European anti-Americanism,” 132.

43. Robert S. Wistrich, “Cruel Britannia: Anti-Semitism among the Ruling Elites,” *Azure*, no. 21 (Summer 2005): 100-26.

44. See the leader, “Some Silence would be Welcome,” in the *Guardian*, 24 Mar. 2006.

45. Alan Cowell, “A British Teachers’ Union Weighs a Boycott of Israeli Teachers,” *New York Times*, 14 May 2006; Bradley Burston, “The Need to Boycott Israel,” *Haaretz*, 9 May 2006.

46. Yossi Klein Halevi, “Hatreds Entwined,” *Azure*, no. 16 (2004): 27.

47. See John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (March 2006). A version of this paper was published in the *London Review of Books*, 28, no. 6 (23 Mar. 2006), and online at [www.lrb.co.uk](http://www.lrb.co.uk)

48. See Matthias Küntzel, “Die zweite Spaltung der Welt. Die Holocaust-Leugnung des iranischen Präsidenten hat Methode,” *Internationale Politik* (Apr. 2006): 75-83.

49. See the articles in *Antisemitism International* (2003), an annual research journal of the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, edited by Robert S. Wistrich.

50. Some of these concluding remarks are an adaptation from the written statement which I gave to the misnamed UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva. They were published in its official record on 10 Feb. 2004.

*Professor Robert Wistrich holds the Neuberger Chair of Modern Jewish History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Among his many books are Hitler and the Holocaust (2002) and Nietzsche: Godfather of Fascism? (with Jacob Golomb, 2002). His latest book, Laboratory for World Destruction: Germans and Jews in Central Europe will be published in 1007 by the University of Nebraska Press and SICSA.*

# Muslim Antisemitism and Anti-Zionism in South Africa since 1945

Milton Shain and Margo Bastos

One of the fundamental goals of apartheid was the social and intellectual separation of South Africa's so-called racial groups—Africans, “Colored,” Indians, and whites. Although the first three groups, generally lumped together as “blacks,” interacted with whites in the workplace, in domestic work arrangements, and in other informal settings, they never engaged seriously in the normal social sense. Thus the Muslim community, residing mainly (although not exclusively) in the Western Cape region, was far removed from its “white” neighbors.<sup>1</sup> Rigid separation between Muslims and white South Africans, including Jews, began to erode only in the late 1980s.<sup>2</sup> Socioeconomic boundaries

Shortly after its formation in 1996, a Muslim vigilante movement known as People against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD) made international news when a well-known Cape Town gangster, Rashaad Staggie, was shot, doused with gasoline, and burned alive in front of hundreds of onlookers.<sup>3</sup> Similar militancy was evident at a number of anti-Israel and anti-Zionist protests held in the 1990s, where “one Zionist, one bullet,” was the common refrain—echoing the well-known Pan-Africanist Congress slogan, “one settler, one bullet.” For whites in general and for Jews in particular, the sight of placard-waving Muslims, many in kaffiyahs, conjured up images of Iran, Algeria, and the West Bank and gave rise to a perception that Muslim fundamentalism was on the rise. To some extent this perception was accurate, since South African Muslim militancy also reflected worldwide developments. At present, there is both greater animosity toward the Jewish state and increased antisemitism. However, it would be incorrect to assume that Muslim–Jewish cordiality characterized the past. Rather, the geography of apartheid, coupled with state repression and the relatively insular and non-confrontational character of the conservative Muslim elite,<sup>4</sup> was what once enabled Jews to feel a false sense of harmony with South African Muslims.<sup>5</sup>

Generally ignored by the white and Jewish media, Muslims in South

Africa had long expressed anti-Zionist feelings; as early as 1925, the *Muslim Outlook* had criticized “Jewish capitalists” in Palestine for allegedly forcing Arab peasants off the land.<sup>6</sup> Whereas the white-owned and Eurocentric media sympathized wholeheartedly with the Jewish state from its establishment in 1948, Muslims viewed the newfound state as a catastrophe<sup>7</sup> and castigated Israeli military victories against Arab forces as barbaric.<sup>8</sup> Sharing in the humiliation of their “brothers and sisters,” South African Muslims used “Zionism” as a term of opprobrium and perceived Israel as an aggressor state.<sup>9</sup> Muslim expressions of frustration and anger, however, rarely entered the public (that is, white) domain.

But by the time Israeli forces occupied southern Lebanon in 1982, a new generation of Muslims had begun to challenge its more conservative elders. Inspired by new radical teachings and by the African student uprising in Soweto in 1976, and buttressed by Khomeinism and the international Muslim struggle against imperialism, younger Muslims increasingly rejected the more accommodating behavior of the Muslim establishment. Historically, many of the Muslim elite had identified with the white ruling class, taking refuge in a self-defined sense of religious and cultural superiority.<sup>10</sup> Notwithstanding, “progressive” Islamic groups also existed, some of them dating back to the 1950s: in the Transvaal, there was the Young

*Whereas the white-owned and Eurocentric media sympathized wholeheartedly with the Jewish state from its establishment in 1948, Muslims viewed the newfound state as a catastrophe and castigated Israeli military victories against Arab forces as barbaric.*

continue to exist; it will take decades to erode that informal but almost hermetic veil. One major change, however, is that a public platform is now afforded to all voices and viewpoints, including those of the Muslim population. During the 1990s, an articulate (and for some, disturbing) voice of Islam began to be heard by more and more South Africans.

Men's Muslim Association (1955) and the Universal Truth Movement (1958); in Natal, the Arabic Study Circle (1950) and the Islam Propagation Centre International (1957); and in the Western Cape, the Cape Muslim Youth Movement (1957) and the Claremont Muslim Youth Association (1958).<sup>11</sup>

In the Transvaal and Natal, the emphasis was on promoting wider understanding of Islam. In the Cape, however, Islamic groups were far more political. For instance, the *Islamic Mission*, a newsletter sponsored by the Claremont Muslim Youth Association, serialized the anti-state writings of Abdul A'la Mawdudi (1903–1979) and Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966).<sup>12</sup> The fortnightly *Muslim News*, together with other Muslim publications, increasingly vilified Zionist “intrusion” and focused attention on “the tragedy of Palestine,” regularly displaying photos of Israeli soldiers attacking Arab children and eyewitness accounts of “Israeli atrocities.”<sup>13</sup> Significantly, local Muslims were also warned about “Zionist designs.” Readers were implored to avail themselves of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and to familiarize themselves with its contents.<sup>14</sup>

Among the prominent anti-apartheid activists in the Cape was a cleric, Imam Adbullah Haron, who had a profound influence on South African Muslims.<sup>15</sup> Yet his death in police custody in 1969 was met with silence on the part of the Muslim clergy, and this in turn left younger Muslims feeling betrayed

and disillusioned.<sup>16</sup> The search began for a “socially relevant Islam,” as epitomized in the formation of the Muslim Youth Movement in 1970 and the Muslim Students Association in 1974.<sup>17</sup> A range of Islamic activities was increasingly coordinated and guided by what was understood to be an authentic modern Islamic paradigm that, while not focusing on apartheid, did not entirely ignore it.<sup>18</sup> In calling for an “Islamic way of life,” groups such as the Muslim Youth Movement “reflected the black consciousness movement’s appeal to an authentic black identity in South Africa.”<sup>19</sup>

Although substantial opposition to the new Islamism persisted, particularly among those consolidating Deobandi thought in the Transvaal and in Natal, “progressive” forces did have an impact.<sup>20</sup> On occasion, the state even intervened, several times banning the publication of anti-Zionist articles in the *Muslim News*.<sup>21</sup> Muslim militancy was particularly evident in the wake of the United Nations resolution of 1975 that equated Zionism with racism, which was hailed as a victory for the Palestine Liberation Organization and a defeat for the United States and Israel.<sup>22</sup> By the late 1970s, a Palestine Islamic Solidarity Committee had been established in Durban and the Muslim Youth Movement had embarked on an Islamic campaign that included study programs, camps, and manuals.<sup>23</sup> The material for these programs, much of it provided by Islamic groups abroad,

targeted Zionism, secularism, capitalism, and Communism as the major threats to Islam.<sup>24</sup>

Added impetus to South African Muslim militancy was provided by the success of the Iranian revolution in 1979. In its wake, the writings of Ali Shari’ati (1933–1977) and the Ayatollah Khomeini were included on Muslim Youth Movement reading lists. Although Iran was not seen as a model for South African Muslims, a group called Qibla was founded in 1980 that was patently inspired by the overthrow of the Shah. “Islamic Revolution in South Africa” became a popular slogan in Cape Town. Meanwhile, Muslim demonstrations against Israel and Zionism at the University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand (following the Sabra and Shatilla massacres in Lebanon in 1982) revealed the extent of anti-Zionism among younger South African Muslims.<sup>25</sup>

In 1983, the ruling National Party drafted a new constitution that granted limited political representation and the right to vote to “Coloreds” and to Indians. Muslims were included in the proposed franchise (Africans—some 70 percent of the population—were not). The proposed constitution,



Anti-Apartheid campaign against Israel



which came up for a vote in November 1983, was opposed by a broad coalition of groups that urged a boycott. Even the conservative Muslim Judicial Council, the largest representative body of imams and sheiks in the Western Cape, refused to support the National Party's initiative.

The nascent Muslim consensus concerning a "no-vote" on the constitution crumbled, however, with the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF), an umbrella organization that included not only non-Muslim groups but also Communists, "amoral" secularists, and Zionists.<sup>26</sup> The inclusive nature of the UDF presented a fundamental challenge to Muslims.<sup>27</sup> For a short period the Muslim Judicial Council, almost by default, affiliated itself with the UDF, as did Al Jihad, a small, self-styled Shia group. The Muslim Youth Movement, however, denounced it, while Qibla expressed opposition to its absence of revolutionary ideology. Even the *Muslim News* saw the UDF as "ideology-less" and "dangerous."

According to an article in the paper: "This is the WCC [World Council of Churches] cum Zionist and Stalinist politics which the MJC is playing at. This is not the 'Call of Islam,' it is the call of the Shaytaan [Satan] to take the oppressed of this country to a solution [from] Washington and

Moscow."<sup>28</sup> Affiliation with the UDF, for many, was tantamount to selling out Muslim identity.

The *ulama*, the conservative Muslim clergy, was also opposed to the UDF. As Farid Esack notes, the *ulama* had a well-established modus vivendi with the apartheid state, seeking

to avoid *fitnah* (disorder), to obey the political authorities, to identify with the lesser of the two evils (i.e., with apartheid rather than communism) and to hold on to the known, in this case, sexist and exclusivist clerical theology, rather than the unknown of communitarian theological reflections on the Qur'anic text.<sup>29</sup>

In essence, the UDF was seen as a threat to Islam; the conservative Muslim establishment was not prepared to see Christians, Jews, and the "Other" (however defined) as partners in its political struggle. Interfaith solidarity was considered sinful, harboring the potential, in the words of Adil Bradlow, to "reduce Islam to the level of a

religion in the western sense of the word."<sup>30</sup>

Bradlow argued that affiliation with the UDF would "prevent the presentation of Islam [to the oppressed] as the major liberating power" and would be "tantamount to an act of *shirk* [polytheism], associating others with Allah, for He Alone is 'Sovereign.'"<sup>31</sup> As Esack explains, such opposition to interfaith solidarity was rooted the notion that anything non-Islamic was, ipso facto, void of virtue, while any freedom outside the parameters of Islam was of no consequence.<sup>32</sup>

Notwithstanding, there were some Muslims who were determined to share in the anti-apartheid struggle with others, including Christians and Jews. This is not to say that they jettisoned the religious basis of their opposition to apartheid. Instead, building on a more humanistic and inclusive tradition—including the writings of Shari'ati and Taleqami (1910–1979)—these Muslims found justification for their views within Islam. In particular, leaders of the Call of Islam (established in 1984 by a breakaway group from the Muslim Youth Movement and the Muslim Students Association) represented a specifically South African Islamic face within the UDF. Their message, spread through mass rallies, pamphleteering, and involvement in political funerals, directly challenged the Muslim establishment.<sup>33</sup> One of their leaders, Ebrahim Rasool (Western Cape secretary of the UDF) argued that the UDF would "create the

conditions whereby Muslims will take their rightful place in the struggle. It does not simply take an appeal from the Qu'ran to create revolutionaries among Muslims."<sup>34</sup> Moresignificantly, Rasool and others advocating interfaith solidarity drew upon Islamic tradition and Qur'anic texts to legitimize their stance. "The Qu'ran makes it clear that non-Muslims per se are not our enemy," Rasool argued. "[Enemies] of Islam must be defined by the way in which they undermine Islamic values. Values like justice."<sup>35</sup>

In debates concerning interfaith solidarity, however, the position of the "Other," including the Jew, proved most contentious. While it would be wrong to suggest that there was an obsession with the presence of Jews, the "Zionist question" did complicate attitudes. By the 1980s, "progressive" South Africans shared a powerful mood of Third World anticolonialism. Within this framework the illegitimacy of Zionism was an important component, especially given South Africa's close technological, scientific, and military ties with the Jewish state, which dated back to the mid-1970s.<sup>36</sup>

Qibla capitalized on this mindset in its opposition to the UDF. Describing the organization as Zionist-controlled and operating at the behest of the international Jewish financial conspiracy, Qibla was able to tap into a deep-rooted anger that identified Zionism as the "citadel of imperialism." Indeed, for some observers, Jewish and Zionist

manipulation was responsible for apartheid.<sup>37</sup> The Muslim press regularly wrote about international financial machinations centered on Zionism. Even local newspapers, noted Sheikh Nazeem Mohammed, president of the Muslim Judicial Council, were "controlled by the Jews."<sup>38</sup> These conspiratorial ideas were taken further by Ibraheem Mousa, a journalist and academic, who spoke of Jews as being "in control of a large stash of economic power in South Africa."<sup>39</sup> Even those Jews committed to the struggle against apartheid were never fully trusted. The majority of Jews, claimed Sheik Mohammed, had "obviously thrown in their lot with the Afrikaners" and "identified themselves undoubtedly with the white people. There are those who are not aligned, but it has no effect on the entire Jewish community."<sup>40</sup> Charitable endeavors on the part of Jewish institutions during times of crisis—for instance, following the destruction of shanties in Crossroads, a black township outside Cape Town—were also viewed with skepticism.<sup>41</sup>

In the late 1980s, Muslims in the "Colored" areas began to take part in mass demonstrations, with the result, according to the BBC, that "the streets of Cape Town resembled those of Teheran."<sup>42</sup> Once Prime Minister Fredrick W. de Klerk lifted the ban on illegal organizations in February 1990, marches became even more common.<sup>43</sup> Bosnia, Kashmir, and "Palestine" were the main topics of protest, and both

the U.S. and Israeli embassies were frequent targets of picketing.

In May 1990, the Call of Islam initiated a conference that attracted Islamic organizations from throughout the country.<sup>44</sup> Although there were some indications that

*By the 1980s, "progressive" South Africans shared a powerful mood of Third World anticolonialism. Within this framework the illegitimacy of Zionism was an important component, especially given South Africa's close technological, scientific, and military ties with the Jewish state.*

more progressive positions were being accepted, even by critics of modern Islamic thought, a powerful strain of anti-state discourse persisted at the conference. Qibla continued to reject proposals for a negotiated settlement with the South African government. Its leader, Achmat Cassiem, also called for exclusivist Islamic unity in an appeal that attracted many conservative and radical Muslims.

The clearest indication of Islamic resurgence was the ongoing conflict between Jewish and Muslim students at the Universities of Cape Town and Witwatersrand. At a number of solidarity meetings for Bosnian Muslims, American and Israeli flags were burned.<sup>45</sup> Jews, notes Esack, "were invariably equated with blood-sucking Zionists, and Christians with imperialists."<sup>46</sup> Shortly before South Africa's first

democratic elections in April 1994, Cassiem founded the Islamic Unity Convention, a movement that claimed to be a union of 200 groups, although in essence it was a “front for marginalized religious figures and a few small organizations who accept[ed] the pre-eminence of Qibla and its leader.”<sup>47</sup> Muslim unity was proclaimed a “cardinal article of faith,” and the community was implored to boycott the election. Although this call was ignored, the “pure Islamic solution” became increasingly attractive as a moral malaise swept post-apartheid South Africa.

A visit in May 1994 by Yasir Arafat kept the Middle East firmly in focus. Speaking in a mosque in Johannesburg, Arafat told South African Muslims that “jihad will

*A visit in May 1994 by Yasir Arafat kept the Middle East firmly in focus. Speaking in a mosque in Johannesburg, Arafat told South African Muslims that “jihad will continue.... [Y]ou have to fight and start the jihad to liberate Jerusalem, your sacred shrine.”*

continue.... [Y]ou have to fight and start the jihad to liberate Jerusalem, your sacred shrine.”<sup>48</sup> The following year, placards reading “Kill a Jew and Kill an Israeli” and “Jewish Blood” were displayed outside the Israeli embassy in Cape Town.<sup>49</sup> At an international Muslim conference titled “Creating a New Civilisation of Islam,” held in Pretoria in April

1996, speakers referred to Jews as a powerful economic force and blamed Zionists for all of society’s evils. A few months later, anti-Israel and antisemitic mailings were received by the Union of Orthodox Synagogues in Cape Town. These condemned “Zionist Nazionist barbarity” and quoted the Qur’an: “Strongest among men in enmity to the believers wilt thou [Mohammed] find the Jews and the pagans.”<sup>50</sup>

It was in this context that PAGAD, a Qibla-inspired movement, emerged.<sup>51</sup> Against a background of unemployment and poverty and the breakdown of law and order in the aftermath of apartheid, Muslims began to participate in marches to the homes of known drug dealers. PAGAD, however, also had a more explicit political platform, as evidenced by its flaunted ties with Hamas and Hizbollah. According to Esack, such ties were expressions of identification with the Muslim community worldwide (the *ummah*). It was also indicative of a powerful anti-Zionism that constantly drew parallels between the former apartheid state and Israeli oppression of Palestinians.<sup>52</sup>

In January 1997, following a bombing in a mosque in Rustenburg, members of the Muslim community accused the Mossad of responsibility. A month later, Qibla led a vociferous march on the Israeli embassy, culminating in the usual Israeli flag-burning. A similar march took place in Johannesburg, organized by the Islamic Unity Convention. On the eve of Yom

Kippur that year, Muslims held pro-Hamas demonstrations outside a Pretoria mosque and placed a full-page advertisement in the *Pretoria News* criticizing the newspaper’s “biased and one-sided version of events in the Middle East.”<sup>53</sup> An incident in Hebron (in which a Jewish extremist distributed posters depicting Mohammed as a pig) led to heated protests in Pretoria and Cape Town. Shortly thereafter, a home that housed a Jewish book center in Cape Town was firebombed, and phone threats were made against a Jewish home for the elderly and a synagogue. Although Imam Rashied Omar, the vice president of the World Conference on Religion and Peace, issued a condemnation, the Muslim Judicial Council kept its silence.

Tensions between Muslims and Jews was exacerbated by the continued stalemate in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. When the mayor of the Cape Metropolitan Council, the Reverend William Bantom, was invited to attend an international mayoral conference in Israel in May 1998, Muslim organizations (supported by the African National Congress provincial caucus) pressured him not to go. Israeli jubilee celebrations in Cape Town that month were marred by Muslim protestors, led by Qibla, who shouted “One Zionist, one bullet” and “Viva Hizbollah and Hamas.”<sup>54</sup> In an exchange of letters to the Cape Times, Sheikh Achmat Sedick, the secretary general of the Muslim

Judicial Council, condemned South African participation in the jubilee; Seymour Kopelowitz, the national director of the Jewish Board of Deputies, countered that anti-Israel demonstrations were “clearly aimed at South African Jews and not towards people living many thousands of miles away in the Middle East.”<sup>55</sup> South Africa’s refusal to issue a visa to Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, spiritual leader of Hamas, sparked another round of protests.<sup>56</sup> In a telephone interview from Kuwait that was broadcast on a Cape Town Muslim radio station, Yassin denounced all Zionists as terrorists. Qibla protested against the government decision outside the gates of Parliament, and Sheikh Ebrahim Gabriels of the Muslim Judicial Council declared that Muslims “did not recognise the Israeli State which was founded illegally on Palestinian land.”<sup>57</sup>

The radicalization of Islam in South Africa from the 1970s onwards was marked by a distinctly negative shift in Muslim attitudes toward South African Jews and by increasing public protest in line with the “normalization” of South African society in the 1990s. Such protest, it should be noted, took place in a conducive atmosphere: leaders of the African National Congress, whose links with the PLO dated back to their years in exile, continued to maintain close ties with the organization in the post-apartheid era and fully supported the aspirations of

the Palestinian people (although recognizing as well Israel’s right to exist).<sup>58</sup> Notwithstanding, Muslim protests had a resonance beyond mere empathy for fellow Muslims in the Middle East.

The historic relationship between Jewish and Muslim South Africans incorporated within it the potential for conflict. Certainly in the Western Cape, some of the Muslim anger against Jews was underpinned by landlord–tenant relations in the inner city; by encounters within the textile industry (where Jews were prominent as employers and Muslims as workers); and, of course, by the general anger concerning white privilege with which Jews were traditionally associated. As Ebrahim Rasool noted with regard to more recent times, “the Jewish community is also by and large the business community, the owners of the big shops, the factories. More often than not, our relationship with the Jewish community is one where we are around negotiating tables with them. Our workers striking at their factories and so forth.”<sup>59</sup>

A dialectical relationship thus operated between negative stereotyping that was rooted in historic encounters, radical teachings, and social realities. This said, the most important factor influencing Muslim–Jewish relations in the last quarter-century is undoubtedly Zionism and the Jewish community’s public and unequivocal support for Israel. Even without the historic ties between the apartheid state and



Israel, tensions would have been unavoidable. Conflict, however, was ensured by the coincidence of the Pretoria-Jerusalem axis at the very time that liberation circles were framing their struggle in terms of an attack on global imperialism that was centered on the United States and Israel. By the 1980s, antisemitism—intimately linked to anti-Zionism—appeared to be deeply rooted. Taj Hargey, a Muslim academic, explained the connection in terms of an “incompetent clergy” that was unable to deal with Zionism intellectually and rationally and thus resorted to “sheer emotive” antisemitism. “So they go to the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. They mention other scurrilous material, usually long noses, being stingy—the Shylock imagery of Jews.”<sup>60</sup>

One sees here a range of attitudes, a “cultural code,” to use Shulamit Volkov’s terminology.<sup>61</sup> Volkov was referring to a cluster of ideas widely shared in Imperial Germany from the 1890s, including old-style nationalism, a conservative anti-emancipatory worldview, and antisemitism. In contrast, the Muslim cultural code incorporated

anti-imperialism, a general rejection of Western liberalism, capitalism, and socialism, and a virulent anti-Zionism. In both the German and the South African cases, antisemitism was a shorthand label for a whole cluster of ideas.

Given this package, it is easy to see the connections between anti-Zionism and antisemitism. Classic anti-Jewish motifs are often embedded in Muslim anti-Zionist discourse and propaganda. For some Muslim critics, Zionists are diabolically evil and hatred for Israel goes beyond the bounds of normal political conflict. Consider Achmed Deedat, author of *Arabs and Israel: Conflict or Conciliation?* (1989), who runs the Islamic Propagation Centre International in Durban. This is a well-funded organization, reportedly aided by the Bin Laden family, that for decades

has disseminated anti-Hindu, anti-Christian, anti-Zionist, and antisemitic leaflets to thousands of households.<sup>62</sup> With regard to Jews, the emphasis is on power, cunning, and duplicity—themes that are underscored by Bernard Lewis in his attempt to unravel the nexus between antisemitism and anti-Zionism.<sup>63</sup> Here, as elsewhere, it is clear that South African Muslim hostility is not confined to anti-Zionism. At one march in Cape Town, for example, Darwood Khan, a member of the African National Congress regional executive, was heard shouting, “Hitler should have killed all the Jews.”<sup>64</sup>

The narrow line between anti-Zionism and antisemitism is even more evident in Holocaust denial, which in recent years has made an appearance among the South African Muslim community. In

March 1997, for instance, a program on a Qibla-oriented Muslim radio station in Cape Town suggested that the Holocaust was exaggerated and that the peace process in the Middle East was an American Zionist swindle.<sup>65</sup> A year later, the same radio station featured an interview with Yaqub Zaki, a British Muslim historian who claimed that the “million plus” Jews who died during the Second World War succumbed to infectious disease. Zaki, a rabid antisemite, spends much of his time engaged in elaborate speculation concerning Jewish conspiracies. He believes, for example, that the Bolshevik Revolution was funded by the Jewish banking firm of Kuhn, Loeb, and Company; that Woodrow Wilson was an adulterer whom Jews threatened to expose in order to promote their nefarious goals. He is no less convinced that the Freemasons, controlled by Jewish financiers, were the force behind the Balfour Declaration. For Zaki, Communism and Zionism are opposite sides of the same coin. The ultimate insult was provided by the South African radio interviewer, who expressed hope that “tonight’s in-depth analysis of Zionism in Israel has cleared the opacity that there might have been with regard to what truth is and what falsity is.”<sup>66</sup>

There can be little doubt that Muslim-Jewish relations have deteriorated in the past two to three decades. Of course, the Muslim community should not be viewed as a monolith. As noted, various





intellectual discourses can be heard within the community, some of them innovative and progressive, with an emphasis on Islamic humanism, universalism, and interfaith cooperation. On the other hand, all Muslim groups share a hostile critique of Zionism. In some cases this hostility is separated from antisemitism; in others, Zionism and Judaism are conflated into a combination that incorporates antisemitic notions of international Jewish finance and imperialism.<sup>67</sup> This phenomenon was noted more than a decade ago by Farid Esack. “Nothing that the Jews do will be enough for Muslims,” he explained, when asked if Jews would be accepted by the Muslim community if they renounced all recognition and support for Israel.<sup>68</sup>

Esack’s depressing assessment still seems to hold. At one end are conservative Muslim forces, battered by the impact of democracy and liberalism, who seek an Islamic solution to their community’s problems—refusing to recognize the post-apartheid state even as they take advantage of South Africa’s newfound tolerance and freedom.<sup>69</sup> At the other end are the majority of Muslims who wish to accommodate Islam within the secular South African state.<sup>70</sup> The battle lines between these two stands are evident in the PAGAD phenomenon. Beginning with marches and action against criminals, the movement then moved into the terrain of punishing “religious gangsters.” In September

1998, the home of a progressive Islamic scholar, Ibraheem Mousa, was firebombed. This sort of action, coupled with general threats and other forms of violence, has generated a groundswell of feeling against PAGAD.<sup>71</sup>

Given the prevalence of Holocaust denial, and a conspiratorial cast of mind, the opening of the Cape Town Holocaust Centre in 1999 posed an obvious challenge for Jameel McWilliams, a reporter from *Muslim Views*, who was amongst a group of reporters invited to an opening press briefing. Despite an attempt to be balanced in an article on the exhibition, McWilliams exhibited underlying notions of Jewish culpability while hinting at Holocaust denial. Thus he explained that he was sorry more attention had not been devoted to the Weimar period which he believed would have provided an understanding of Hitler’s actions. “The hyper-inflation is one [reason for the collapse of the Weimar republic and Hitler’s subsequent rise to power], because rightly or wrongly, the Jews were blamed for it.” While admitting to being moved by visuals of the death camps, McWilliams nevertheless argued that these camps were the subject of controversy. “A lively ‘numbers game’ has long been in play, and the exact purposes of the camps debated,” he noted. Nonetheless, McWilliams did acknowledge that “even if these things are disputed” the camps were “terrible places.”<sup>72</sup>

In a subsequent series of articles

in *Muslim Views*, McWilliams made clear his real sentiments about the Holocaust. Global conspiracies,

*Zionism and Judaism are conflated into a combination that incorporates antisemitic notions of international Jewish finance and imperialism. This phenomenon was noted more than a decade ago by Farid Esack. “Nothing that the Jews do will be enough for Muslims,” he explained, when asked if Jews would be accepted by the Muslim community if they renounced all recognition and support for Israel.*

Zionist imperialism, Jewish dishonesty, and Holocaust denial all came to the fore. McWilliams introduced “revisionist” historiography and questioned the sacred nature of the “six million” figure—a form of “Holy Writ” as he put it. For those wishing to face the “truth,” *The Myth of the Six Million*, by Feygele Peltel Myendzizshetski; *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, by Arthur Butz; *The Six Million Swindle*, by Austin Joseph Rapp, and *Did Six Million Really Die?*, by Richard Harwood were recommended.<sup>73</sup> Issues of hygiene in the camps were introduced for those reflecting upon the “legendary figure of six million Jews dead in the Holocaust,” and stress was placed on non-Jewish victims of the Nazis. “Auschwitz was crowded by people who had only the most basic idea of hygiene. The result was the

spread of disease, especially typhus, which is caused by lice,” wrote McWilliams. “So how many really did die?” he asked:

Probably this can never be known with certainty, but it is an interesting fact that the Yar Vashim [sic] memorial in Jerusalem lists about one and a quarter million. What happened to the other four and three quarter million? Debunkers of the Six Million Myth, who describe it as the biggest hoax since the Donation of Constantine...generally concur that approximately one million Jews died in the camps from all causes.

If six million did indeed die in the camps, the probability is high that most of them were non-Jews.

*Muslim anger and conspiratorial thinking in South Africa reached its apogee just before and during the United Nations World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerances (WCAR) in Durban in August 2001.*

McWilliams went on to explain that the furnaces at Auschwitz were necessary to burn dead bodies to prevent the spread of disease. “We are constantly reminded of the suffering of the Jews by the media, by Hollywood, particularly Steven Spielberg. But where is the evidence that the Germans gassed six million Jews? Was there even a deliberate

policy of extermination by the Nazis of European Jewry?”<sup>74</sup>

As noted above, Holocaust denial is a virulent form of antisemitism and intricately tied to the anti-Zionist struggle. Thus it is not surprising that McWilliams accused Zionists of creating a guilt syndrome and repeating

the “Six Million” like a mantra, the chanting of which becomes more intense with the passing of time. It is now more than half a century since the camps were liberated and one would have expected voices to have been louder then rather than now. Could it have something to do with the desire and necessity to present Israel to the world as a legitimate state?<sup>75</sup>

In the final article in the series, McWilliams discussed the silence and skepticism of the Catholic Church with regard to the Holocaust as well as the use of the “Six Million” as a “red herring” to divert attention from Israeli “aggression” against the Palestinians. Regarding the Vatican, McWilliams suggested that the very silence of Pope Pius XII was an indication that the Holocaust never occurred. It was, he maintained, too big an operation to be conducted in secrecy and the Vatican “would have known about it and would have spoken out, but it didn’t.”

The nexus between Holocaust denial and anti-Zionism was again apparent when McWilliams claimed Zionists invariably justified “driving the Arabs out

of Palestine” by reference to “the legend of the Six Million.” “But what is so special about the suffering of the European Jews?” he asked. “What about the rest of us who lived for five years under Nazi occupation? What about all the other inmates of the concentration camps who died in them, possibly outnumbering Jews by far?” What about the millions of non-Jews who died in occupied Europe? One could go on and on “and yet we are constantly bombarded by the media with reminders of Six Million.” In an attempt to consolidate his thesis, McWilliams noted that the “disgusting treatment which has been meted out to the Palestinian Arabs would cause an international outcry if indulged by anyone other than the Zionists. But how often do we hear about Deir Yassin, Sabra and Shatilla, in which entire Arab villages were massacred?”<sup>76</sup>

Muslim anger and conspiratorial thinking in South Africa reached its apogee just before and during the United Nations World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerances (WCAR) in Durban in August 2001. Aided by what was palpably huge international support, the occasion turned into “an extension of the Arab-Israeli conflict,” and an opportunity “to insert wording into draft resolutions portraying Israel and Zionism as racist and minimizing Jewish suffering and anti-Semitism.” South Africa was a tempting context in which to equate

Zionism with racism, especially given apartheid South Africa's ties with the Jewish State.<sup>77</sup>

Prior to the conference, Cape Town witnessed a 15,000-strong Muslim march in Cape Town that brought the city to a halt. The group marched to parliament to protest against what they termed atrocities committed against the Palestinians by Israel. The march was clearly part of a build-up to the UN conference and included banners proclaiming Zionism as Racism and Sharon as a war criminal. Hamas was praised in the united struggle against Zionism. Sheik Achmat Sedick, secretary general of the MJC, appealed to the South African government to restore the "Zionism is Racism" resolution to the agenda of the WCAR and called for South Africans to "take immediate action against Israel by breaking off all diplomatic and trade relations."<sup>78</sup>

It became obvious as the conference approached that it would be, in the words of the *SA Jewish Report* editorial, "A Jamboree of Hypocrisy." Rather than dealing constructively with "the international scourge of racism" the gathering would be "a jamboree of resentment, hatred and narrow politics," noted the Jewish weekly.<sup>79</sup> Shortly before the Conference the SAJBOD lodged a strongly worded complaint with the South African Non-Governmental Organization Coalition, the official coordinating body of South African NGOs, after several of its representatives visited the Palestinian territories in early

July on a "fact finding mission" as guests of a pro-Palestinian group. The group declined to meet with Israeli officials and afterwards publicly attacked Israel, despite not having the right to make political statements on behalf of all South African NGOs.

Predictably, the NGO Forum of the Conference lambasted Israel in an ugly display of venom and anti-Zionism. According to Lara Grawitz, the South African Union of Jewish Students Zionist Officer, "neutral" delegations were influenced by the Palestinian media campaign at the youth summit. Attempts to present a positive view of Zionism were drowned out by Palestinian conference-goers who pushed the equation of Zionism with Racism and Israel as an apartheid state. The Jewish case was rapidly sidelined.<sup>80</sup>

Although the conference was an international event, local Muslim groups threw in their lot with the anti-Zionist feeding frenzy. This was "anti-Semitism in the guise of anti-Zionism," exclaimed Marlene Bethlehem, national president of the SAJBOD when commenting on the conference. Various other Jewish spokespersons condemned the charade. Judge Dennis Davis noted that the conference omitted the question of Israel's security and instead replaced South Africa with Israel as an apartheid society. "The onslaught on Israel and the Jewish people is an absolute scandal and it is racism and anti-Semitism of the worst kind," explained Mervyn

Smith, former national president of the SAJBOD. "It is a mobilization of sentiment that knows no emotional or hypocritical barriers."<sup>81</sup>

The irony of a conference meant to combat racism and prejudice turning into a "hate-fest" was not lost on the *SA Jewish Report*. The result, it noted laconically, "has been to demonstrate how alive and potent one of the most ancient forms of racism—anti-Semitism—is, in that it can be spread by formal international bodies like the UN."<sup>82</sup> "Radical Islam is on the march, and Israel has been identified as the 'little Satan' and lumped together with America, the 'big Satan.' Both are seen as enemies to be destroyed at all costs in a holy war," noted the *SA Jewish Report* three weeks



A poster at the Durban Conference, August 2001

---

later.<sup>83</sup> The sale of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* at the conference, distributed through the Muslim-run Ahlul Bait Foundation of South Africa, confirmed this judgment.

Given the cast of mind evident at Durban, it is not surprising that, following the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and on the Pentagon, conspiratorial ideas were taken further by Muslim commentators. After the initial perfunctory condemnation of the attacks, *Muslim Views* declared with the use of familiar rhetoric that the occasion was a “defining moment for Muslims.” The United States was attacked for its “Islamophobic” reaction and accusatory claims were made against media coverage in the wake of the event. The “almost immediate naming of Bin Laden as chief suspect and Islamophobic reactions around the world,” was condemned and the United States was accused of polarizing the international community. Third World and Islamic countries were considered potential targets of United States retaliation. This would, explained *Muslim Views*, exacerbate conflict in the Middle East. While offering sympathy to the victims and their families, the MYM and MJC warned against “hasty conclusions, especially after the discovery of the true perpetrator of the Oklahoma bombing.” The Media Review Network, an Islamic group, merely expressed concern that “Muslim terrorists” would be unfairly blamed.

As the analysis continued, Muslims criticized television coverage for being dominated by CNN and local talk shows were accused of “displaying a fair level of ignorance and prejudice of Islam and Muslims.” No mention was made of the numbers killed in the attacks, although readers of *Muslim Views* were provided with a report from the Council on American-Islamic Relations stating that there had been three hundred attacks on Muslims in America and that the FBI had harassed American Muslims in a mosque. In short, the emphasis of Muslim comment was not on the horrific nature of the attack but rather on the repercussions for Muslims. Thus attacks on Muslims and racial profiling on airlines were the focus of acerbic comment; the FBI’s implication of 19 suspects with Middle Eastern names was questioned. According to *Muslim Views*, Western hysteria masked any realization of the “real reason that America was attacked” and stopped any serious need to reflect on what the “US government is doing in the world.”<sup>84</sup> Invariably Zionist connections were identified. Ibn Al Fikr captured that nexus in a letter to *Muslim Views* which reminded readers that “the pilots who hijacked the planes are war criminals no less than Ariel Sharon. The main difference is they are dead and Sharon is still running amok in occupied Palestine. He continues to murder innocent civilians just as they did.”<sup>85</sup>

Sharon now lies in a coma, but the

nexus between Holocaust denial, anti-Zionism and antisemitism remains evident. In the wake of the Danish cartoon fiasco, a huge Muslim protest march took place in Cape Town. Although incendiary anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist speeches were reportedly nipped in the bud, there were displays of posters denying the Holocaust. “The biggest myths: Israel, the Holocaust, Freedom, Democracy” was inscribed on one, neatly capturing the Islamist worldview. What this had to do with a protest against cartoons bearing Muhammad’s name perplexed a reporter for a major Afrikaans-language daily. In an article, “Is it once again okay not to like the Jews?,” he noted that one person in the crowd explained that such placards were in order because Jews should not be allowed to make cartoons of Muslims. The Danes and Jews, he continued, were all in the same boat.<sup>86</sup>

## Notes

Our thanks to Abdulkader Tayob for his thoughtful comments. Needless to say, the opinions and conclusions offered here are those of the authors alone.

1. South African Muslims, mostly Sunni, numbered 553,585 (1.4 percent of the total population) in the 1996 census. Muslims were considered part of the "Colored" population; they are the descendants of 17th-century political prisoners brought to the Cape from Indonesia—ex-slaves, 19th-century immigrants, and the offspring of black/white miscegenation. See Ebrahim Moosa, "Islam in South Africa," in *Living Faiths in South Africa*, ed. Martin Prozesky and John de Gruchy (Cape Town: David Philip, 1995).
2. See John Kane-Berman, *South Africa's Silent Revolution* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1990).
3. See Cape Times, 5 Aug. 1996.
4. Muslim politics in the 1950s and 1960s revolved mainly around issues of Orthodoxy. See Abdulkader Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1995), ch. 2.
5. The historiography of South African Jewry has, by and large, ignored Muslim–Jewish relations. Among the exceptions are Gideon Shimoni's "South African Jews and the Apartheid Crisis," *American Jewish Year Book* 88 (1988); which made use of interviews of prominent Muslims, conducted by Tzippi Hoffman and Alan Fischer, in idem, eds, *The Jews in South Africa: What Future?* (Johannesburg: Southern Books, 1988). For more recent coverage on Muslim attitudes toward Jews, see Jocelyn Hellig, *Anti-Semitism in South Africa Today* (Tel Aviv: Project for the Study of Anti-Semitism, 1996), and Milton Shain, "Antisemitism and South African Society: The Past, the Present, and the Future," inaugural lecture, University of Cape Town, 1998.
6. *Muslim Outlook*, 18 Apr. 1925.
7. See Muhammed Haron, "The Muslim News (1960–1986): Expression of an Islamic Identity in South Africa," in *Muslim Identity and Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa*, ed. Louis Brenner (London: Hurst & Company, 1993), 222.
8. See, for example, the article titled "Barbarity of the Jews," which appeared in *Muslim News*, 14 July 1967 ("1948 and 1967 show that despite centuries of wandering in Europe [the Jews] have not lost their barbaric tendencies which previously incurred the wrath of God"). See also *ibid.*, 28 July 1967.
9. See, for example, *Muslim News*, 28 July 1967; Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 85.
10. See Farid Esack, *Qur'an, Liberation and Pluralism* (Oxford: One World Books, 1997), 20.
11. See Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 82–83. The Claremont Muslim Youth Association was initially part of Call of Islam, a short-lived umbrella group of Muslims who opposed the Group Areas Act. See Farid Esack, "Three Islamic Strands in the South African Struggle for Justice," *Third World Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (1988).
12. See Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, ch. 3; and Desmond Charles Rice, "Islamic Fundamentalism as a Major Religiopolitical Movement and its Impact on South Africa" (M.A. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1987), 438–52.
13. See, for example, *Muslim News*, 23 Aug. 1963, 22 May 1964, and 22 September 1968.
14. *Muslim News*, 10 Apr. 1971.
15. See Rice, "Islamic Fundamentalism," 452.
16. See Esack, *Qur'an, Liberation and Pluralism*, 52. See also the interview with Abdurrashid Omar in Hoffman and Fischer, *Jews in South Africa*.
17. Esack, *Qur'an, Liberation and Pluralism*, 33. For a detailed examination of the Muslim Youth Movement, see Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*.
18. Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, ch. 4, esp. 118–19.
19. *Ibid.*, 122.
20. *Ibid.*, ch. 4
21. See Haron, "The Muslim News (1960–1986)," 222–23.
22. See, for example, *Muslim News*, 28 Nov. 1975; interview with Ibraheem Mousa in Hoffman and Fischer, *Jews in South Africa*.
23. On the Islamic Solidarity Committee, see Haron, "The Muslim News (1960–1986)," 223.
24. See Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 140.
25. See *Varsity: Official Student Newspaper of the University of Cape Town* 41, no. 9 (Aug. 1982).
26. The UDF was essentially an internal wing of the then-banned African National Congress, whose leaders at the time were in exile.
27. See Abdulkader I. Tayob, "Muslims' Discourse on Alliance against Apartheid," *Journal for the Study of Religion* 3, no. 2 (Sept. 1990); and Esack, "Three Islamic Strands."
28. *Muslim News*, 13 July 1984, cited in Tayob, "Muslims' Discourse on Alliance against Apartheid," 38–39.
29. Esack, *Qur'an, Liberation and Pluralism*, 254.
30. Adil Bradlow, "United Democratic Front: An Islamic Critique" (1984), 9, cited in Esack, *Qur'an, Liberation and Pluralism*, 41. See also Ebrahim Moosa, "Muslim Conservatism in South Africa," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 69 (1989): 79.
31. Bradlow, cited in Esack, *Qur'an, Liberation and Pluralism*, 41.
32. *Ibid.*, 41.
33. Although the Muslim Youth Movement also took an anti-apartheid stance, it did not align itself with any political movement.
34. Quoted in "Muslims Mobilize," *New Era* (March 1988); cited in Esack, *Qur'an, Liberation and Pluralism*, 34.
35. Interview with Ebrahim Rasool in Hoffman and Fischer, *Jews in South Africa*.
36. In 1976, Prime Minister B. J. Vorster came to Israel on a state visit that yielded technological, scientific, and military agreements between the

two countries. See James Adams, *Israel and South Africa: The Unnatural Alliance* (London: Quartet Books, 1984), 17.

37. See interview with Ebrahim Rasool in Hoffman and Fischer, *Jews in South Africa*.

38. Interview with Nazeem Mohammed, *ibid.*

39. Interview with Ibraheem Mousa, *ibid.*

40. Interview with Nazeem Mohammed, *ibid.*

41. Interview with Ebrahim Rasool, *ibid.*

42. Cited in Esack, "Three Islamic Strands," 486.

43. Esack, *Qur'an, Liberation and Pluralism*, 224.

44. Tayob, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa*, 182–83.

45. Allie A. Dubb and Milton Shain, "South Africa," in *American Jewish Year Book* 94 (1994): 375.

46. Esack, *Qur'an, Liberation and Pluralism*, 225.

47. Farid Esack, "Pagad and Islamic Radicalism: Taking on the State?" *Indicator SA* 13, no. 14 (Spring 1996): 9.

48. Milton Shain, "South Africa," *American Jewish Year Book* 96 (1996): 357.

49. "South Africa," *Antisemitism World Report 1996* (London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research and American Jewish Committee, 1996), 311.

50. "South Africa," *Antisemitism World Report 1997* (London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research and American Jewish Committee, 1997), 356.

51. Esack, "Pagad and Islamic Radicalism," 9.

52. *Ibid.*, 10; Milton Shain, "South Africa," *American Jewish Year Book* 97 (1997): 419.

53. See Milton Shain, "South Africa," *American Jewish Year Book* 98 (1998): 402.

54. In addition, the Islamic Students Society at the University of Cape Town staged a protest opposite the Isaac and Jesse Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research in order to mark the 50th anniversary of the *nakba* (catastrophe) that had befallen the Palestinian people in 1948. See "The Battle of Kaplan," *Iqraa*, 29 May 1998.

55. *Cape Times*, 5 and 11 May 1998.

56. An invitation had been issued to Yassin by

two South African government ministers, Dullah Omar and Valli Moosa, who had met with the Hamas leader in Saudi Arabia in April 1998.

57. *SA Jewish Report*, 22 May 1998.

58. In this regard, it is noteworthy that Yasir Arafat was applauded when he equated Zionism with racism in an address he gave before the South African parliament in August 1998.

59. See interview with Ebrahim Rasool in Hoffman and Fischer, *Jews in South Africa*, 115.

60. See interview with Taj Hargey, *ibid.*, 155.

61. Shulamit Volkov, "Antisemitism as a Cultural Code: Reflections on the History and Historiography of Antisemitism in Imperial Germany," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* (1978).  
62. *The Mercury*, 26 Sept. 1998; Shain, "South Africa" *American Jewish Year Book* 97 (1997): 420; and Allie A. Dubb and Milton Shain, "South Africa," *American Jewish Year Book* 92 (1992): 413.

63. Bernard Lewis, *Semites and Anti-Semites* (New York: Norton, 1986), 237.

64. Allie E. Dubb and Milton Shain, "South Africa," *American Jewish Year Book* 95 (1995): 362.

65. *Ibid.*

66. Interview with Yaqub Zaki, "Prime Talk," 8 May 1998.

67. For an analysis of this conflation beyond South Africa, see Joseph Nevo, "Zionism Versus 'Judaism' in Palestine Historiography," in *Medieval and Modern Perspectives on Muslim-Jewish Relations*, ed. Ronald L. Nettler (Luxembourg: Harwood, 1995).

68. See interview with Farid Esack in Hoffman and Fischer, *Jews in South Africa*, 128,

69. Abdulkader I. Tayob, "Jihad against Drugs in Cape Town: A Discourse-Centered Analysis," *Social Dynamics* 22, no. 2 (1996): 27–28.

70. Suren Pillay, "Globalization, Identity and the Politics of Good and Evil: Re-presenting Gangsters and Pagad" (M.A. thesis, University of the Western Cape, 1998), 3.

71. Between January and October 1998, there were 165 incidents of urban violence attributed to PAGAD. See *ibid.*, 99, n. 36; also see Farid Esack's article, "Not Just the 'Other' but Ourselves," *Cape Times*, 16 Sept. 1998.

72. *Muslim Views* (Aug. 1999).

73. *Muslim Views* (Nov. 1999).

74. *Muslim Views* (Jan. 2000).

75. *Ibid.*

76. *Muslim Views* (Feb. 2000).

77. South African Jewish Report, 13 July 2001.

78. *Ibid.*

79. *Ibid.*, 3 Aug. 2001.

80. *SA Jewish Report*, 14 Sept. 2001.

81. *Ibid.*, 31 Aug. 2001.

82. *Ibid.*, 7 Sept. 2001.

83. *SA Jewish Report*, 28 Sept. 2001.

84. *Muslim Views* (Sept. 2001).

85. *Ibid.*

86. *Die Burger*, 18 Feb. 2006.

Professor Milton Shain is Director of the Isaac and Jessie Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research at the University of Cape Town. His latest book, co-edited with Richard Mendelsohn, is *Memories, Realities and Dreams. Aspects of the South African Jewish Experience*, published by Jonathan Ball in 2000.

Margo Bastos taught part-time in the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at the University of Cape Town. Her MA thesis was on "Muslim Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism in South Africa since the Second World War, with special reference to *Muslim News/Views*" (unpubl., University of Cape Town, 2002).

# Continuity and Change in Argentinean Antisemitism

*Martina Libertad Weisz*

*Historically, Nazism is dated and placed; culturally, it persists in systems that privilege violence, repression and xenophobia; in regimes bound to the single worldview that both mandates and justifies state terrorism.*

Saúl Sosnowski<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

Argentina has come a long way since the return of democracy in 1983. Strongly influenced by the horrors it witnessed during the military dictatorship of 1976-1983, Argentinean society decided to turn its back on its history of intermittent coups d'états, and commit itself to reinforcing its democratic institutions. This intention has been shared by the majority of the citizens, in spite of serious obstacles and chaotic episodes that have accompanied this path. The steady reinforcement of democratic institutions has undoubtedly had a beneficial influence on countering Argentina's traditional antisemitism. More recently, President Néstor Kirchner has been making some important contributions to this trend by taking the moral stance of acknowledging the country's recent past.

Unfortunately, these developments were also paralleled by an extremely high level of social polarization which dramatically weakens the underpinnings of democracy. Indeed, massive social marginalization, especially if it is combined with alarming levels of economic and political corruption, has a noxious effect on the stability of democratic regimes. Although the Jewish community—like the whole of Argentinean society—was more affected in recent years by the economic crisis than by anti-Jewish hate, the danger of being scapegoated still remains alive.

In spite of the fact that most of the country's

inhabitants are of European origin, Argentina is not following the old continent's path today. The Muslim and Arab local communities are of a considerable size, yet their successful social assimilation has favored the establishment of sound inter-communitarian relationships with both Jews and Christians. These sectors are not currently a trigger for the massive spread of anti-Jewish hate.

A similar assertion can also be made regarding the Left. True, in Argentina, as elsewhere, the political Left harshly criticizes Israel's policies towards its local Arab population, and towards Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. Moreover, a simplistic and Manichean view of the Middle East conflict, which the media helps to create, does at times reinforce traditional anti-Jewish prejudices

not only on the Left, but also in the rest of society. But the relative stability in the number of antisemitic incidents, together with the desire to refrain from the traditional antisemitic motifs and caricatures in relation to the Middle East which has been adopted by the media, suggests that antisemitism in today's Argentina remains beyond the limits of the "politically correct."<sup>2</sup>



The danger seems to be somewhere else, in the political utilization of antisemitism in order to create a generalized feeling of chaos and instability. This technique has already succeeded in the past, as a catalyst for installing authoritarian governments. Under this disguise, antisemitism appeared in moments of redistributive struggles, like the one already on course in Argentina. This conflict threatens to intensify unless a more equitable social pact is agreed upon. In that sense, the re-emergence of Catholic integrist movements and of neo-Nazi violence deserves to be watched closely. On the other hand, the absence of massive anti-Jewish incidents during the popular upsurge of December 2001

clearly indicates that the mythical Jew is not currently considered as a major enemy by most Argentines.

### ***The “Old-new” Antisemitism***

However, the issue of antisemitism continues to play a central role in contemporary Western intellectual debate. It became more marked following the outbreak of the second Palestinian Intifada against Israel, further intensified after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks against the World Trade Center in Manhattan and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., reaching a new peak following the war in Iraq.

In Latin America, as in other western countries, there has been an increase in antisemitism linked to the use of Nazi libels against America and Israel. This was especially blatant in Brazil, for example, when the journal *Correio Braziliense* published a caricature depicting the devil sitting at a table with a Star of David behind him. In Mexico, too, antisemitism is increasingly adopted by critics of Israel. In both countries, there are widely-visited web pages which prescribe the extermination of Jews as the remedy to end all suffering in the world.<sup>3</sup>

But Argentina remains the Latin American country where antisemitism is traditionally most visible. It also has the largest Jewish community in Latin America, comprising approximately 187,000 people (according to data from 2003).<sup>4</sup> Attracted by a public policy that called “all well-intentioned men” from throughout the world to come and populate Argentina, masses of Jewish immigrants had arrived at the end of the 19th and during the early 20th century.<sup>5</sup>



Carlos Latuff, Brazil

Unfortunately, their new home was not free from antisemitism. Israeli historian Haim Avni concludes that Argentine history reveals a constant presence of both popular and institutional antisemitism,<sup>6</sup> in

spite of the fact that there is only a low level of official anti-Jewish prejudice that persists.<sup>7</sup>

Jews were considered as enemies by Argentine nationalists at least since the second decade of the 20th century. The nationalist ideology, while having a multiplicity of forms, exerted a predominant influence over the country's elite and easily blended with Phalange, Fascist, and Nazi ideas. According to Daniel Lvovich, antisemitism in the first half of the twentieth century has been a common denominator in the differing versions of the local nationalist discourse.<sup>8</sup> Hence, it is not surprising that Argentina was the country where the first Latin-American pogrom took place, during the “tragic week” in January 1919. In addition, it saw the most extensive murder of Jews since World War II during the military dictatorship of 1976-1983. More recently, Argentina witnessed the most destructive antisemitic attack in the postwar era: a terrorist bombing of the AMIA (Ashkenazi community) building in Buenos Aires. At the same time, the Argentinean Jewish community has also become more socially accepted and integrated into the society at large, a process reflected in high levels of assimilation.<sup>9</sup>

The “Tragic Week” pogrom of 1919 took place amidst mounting propaganda after the First World War against the subversive “Russians”—i.e., the Jews. The violent episode was a reflection of the bloody class struggle deriving from rapid economic and political transformations in Argentina, and the echo of the revolutionary events in Europe. Government forces and the local conservatives attacked the Jewish population of Buenos Aires, perceived as a center of communist, anti-national, and anti-Catholic agitation. The attack was part of a strategy aiming at crushing the revolutionary uprising, which was identified with Jewry. To quote Haim Avni, “The prominence of the Jews in the revolutionary movement was at that time considered a proven fact.”<sup>10</sup> In this respect Argentina followed the same pattern as Europe and North America. Anti-Jewishness now became a constant feature in the country's social and historical development. In addition to the stereotype of the “subversive” Jew, we need to add the powerful impact of Nazi ideology, Catholic anti-Jewish activism, a nationalistic mind-set, and more recently militant Arab antisemitism.



Historically, however, Argentina's most persistent form of antisemitism has been fuelled by anti-Judaism within the Catholic Church. Roman Catholicism is, to this day, the country's official religion. Moreover, until the constitutional reform of 1994, the nation's president had to be baptized. At the same time, Catholic-Jewish relations have undergone radical changes, particularly as a result of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), which redefined Catholic attitudes towards non-Catholic religions and Judaism in particular. Significant progress in the Argentinean Jewish-Christian dialogue has contributed much to countering traditional patterns of anti-Judaism. Yet the weight of the reactionary forces should not be underestimated. Indeed, since October 2004, there has been a new wave of right-wing Catholic activism, violently attacking people and institutions that openly oppose or criticize the Roman Catholic Church doctrine.<sup>11</sup> In some cases, like the November 2004 disturbances during a forum on women's sterilization techniques in Paraná (Entre Ríos), a group of youngsters verbally attacked Rabbi Daniel Dolinsky—one of the panelists—using authoritarian Catholic rhetoric with explicit antisemitic content.<sup>12</sup> In this context, one should note the declarations made in February 2005 by the Military Bishop Monsignor Antonio Baseotto suggesting that the Argentinean Health Minister should be thrown into the sea (echoing methods used by the Argentinean Navy to murder political dissidents during the Junta's de facto government) because of his declarations in favor of de-penalizing abortion. This outburst is an important indicator of the vitality of authoritarian tendencies in the Argentinean Church.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the political relevance of Monsignor Baseotto's recent declarations is multiplied if we consider his own history of repeated antisemitic expressions, and the strong support he has enjoyed from the Vatican authorities.<sup>14</sup>

The influence of traditional religious prejudice was not, of course, the only factor in Argentinean antisemitism. During the Nazi period, the Third Reich supported local antisemites and their organizations. Moreover, recent research by the CEANA (Commission for the Clarification of Nazi Activities in Argentina, created in May 1997 by President Carlos Menem) has

shed light on the existence of a well-organized network through which Juan Domingo Peron's government succeeded in bringing Nazi refugees to Argentina during the 1940s.<sup>15</sup> Although today unquestionably outside the political consensus, Nazi ideology still has a strong influence in xenophobic and ultra-nationalistic circles, such as the political party Partido Nuevo Triunfo.

Moreover, the political use of anti-Zionism in order to advance antisemitic aims has been present for many years in Argentina's political life. In 1962, the appointed director of the Arab League in the country, Hussein Triki, decided to seal a tactical alliance with antisemitic right-wing organizations like Tacuara, the GRN (Guardia Restauradora Nacionalista), and Mazorca by supporting them economically. A year later Triki founded the journal *Nación Árabe* (Arab Nation), in which one finds sweeping attacks on Israel and Jews. Triki was expelled in 1965 because of his intervention in the internal affairs of the country (by supporting one faction in the Army in the context of a fierce internal dispute in the armed forces). In the last four decades, anti-Zionism has become an active and growing element of Argentinean antisemitism. Some ultra-nationalists of the political right traditionally associate Zionism with Communism or with an anti-nationalist use of international finance. On the other hand, anti-Zionism on the left came to be seen as a necessary element of identification with national liberation movements as a whole.<sup>16</sup>



Significantly, all these trends converged and erupted during one of the bloodiest episodes of the country's history, the military dictatorship of 1976-1983. Once the repressive forces were unleashed, and the personnel in charge of the kidnapping, torture, and physical elimination of political opponents felt free to express their hatred and sadism at will, the persistent Judeophobia of Argentinean society flooded into the day-to-day life of the detention centers and concentration camps. The number of Jewish victims of this state-terrorism policy was proportionately ten times the number of non-Jews. Moreover, the Jews were subjected to a "special treatment" that involved specific humiliations, degradation, and vilification that in many cases employed Nazi terminology. According to several victims and witnesses, the military government did not hesitate to resort to torture in order to obtain information about the running of Jewish organizations, their ideological characteristics, and even the activities of local and world-famous Jewish personalities.<sup>17</sup>

*The number of Jewish victims of this state-terrorism policy was proportionately ten times the number of non-Jews. Moreover, the Jews were subjected to a "special treatment" that involved specific humiliations, degradation, and vilification that in many cases employed Nazi terminology.*

Paradoxical as it seems, such deep-rooted antisemitism coexisted with a high degree of acceptance and assimilation of Argentinean Jews into the larger society. The Jewish community, grateful for the generosity of a country which had granted it both

shelter and opportunities for social mobility, developed a high level of tolerance for anti-Jewish hate. Moreover, the social and economic success of relevant sectors of the community modified the place fulfilled by antisemitism among the Argentinean elite. Indeed, the ruling class had to become used to tolerating the Jewishness of some of their political and economic allies.

Nevertheless, successive Argentinean governments drew a clear boundary for the assimilation of Jews into the national melting pot. For example, no Jewish person

has ever reached senior positions in the security forces, or the upper levels of the Foreign Service. Significantly, in those organs of the State considered to be the guardians of the national ethos, Jews have been shunted aside.

This historical tradition has been modified since the recovery of democracy in 1983. For more than 20 years, Argentineans have been committed to building a democratic and pluralistic society, more receptive towards cultural, religious and ethnic diversity. But these developments have been partly neutralized by a process of massive pauperization and social polarization that democracy did not succeed in countering. In this volatile social context, one can hardly expect the disappearance of antisemitism. Although its situation has greatly improved since the pogrom of 1919, the Jewish community continues to be a potential target not only for displaced social unrest, but also for ultra-conservative violence and political de-stabilization. As historian Leonardo Senkman has pointed out, in the conditions of socio-economic instability exacerbated by a political culture of violence that undermines democratization, antisemitism continues to fulfill its classic functions.<sup>18</sup>

### ***Argentina and the Current Antisemitic Wave: The CES-DAIA Reports***

The five-year systematic compilation by the Social Research Center of the DAIA (Argentinean Jewish Community Centers Association) provides us with some helpful data in identifying specific features of the current antisemitic wave in Argentina.

The number of antisemitic attacks remained basically stable during recent years.<sup>19</sup> In addition, the report (based on statistics from the National Institute against Discrimination and Xenophobia [INADI] and others) indicated that in 2002, only 5% of the discriminatory actions that took place in Argentina had an antisemitic background.<sup>20</sup> These numbers contrast strikingly with those in France, where in 2003, 72% (!) of all the racist and xenophobic violent acts had an anti-Jewish coloring.<sup>21</sup> Interestingly enough, in France the Jewish population represents, as in Argentina, about 1% of the country's total population.

The CES-DAIA report chose to analyze the issue in

---

the wider context of discrimination against the “other,” against those who are “different.” When seen from this perspective, Argentinean society is perceived as largely homogenous and exclusive, although the main victims of such discriminative practices are no longer the Jews.

### ***Israel, the Intifada, and the Media***

Media content has become one of the main indicators of the current level of anti-Zionism and/or antisemitism. According to commentators like Robert Wistrich, Pilar Rahola, and Margaret Brearley,<sup>22</sup> it is possible to detect in the mainstream European media some well-known features of antisemitism hidden behind the harsh critique of Israeli government policies. A careful analysis of how each one of the three most important Argentinean periodicals—*La Nación*, *Clarín*, *Página/12*—report Middle East events may shed light on the question of “old-new antisemitism” in Argentina.

Three variables should be taken into consideration when trying to uncover a correspondence between the language used in depicting the conflict in the Middle East, and both anti-Zionism and antisemitism. The first variable is whether the texts display a *bi-focal vision* of the conflict, meaning the utilization of discriminatory patterns when describing facts related to the different parties involved. The second is the banalization of the Shoah, since this aims at undermining the very legitimacy of the Jewish State. The third variable is the use of rhetoric imbued with traditional and/or modern antisemitism to describe Israeli behavior or identity.

When judging both Israeli and Palestinian behavior, wide sectors of the Argentinean press clearly use a double standard. This intentional distortion seems to be at a lower level than that which is present in Europe, and varies in different newspapers and periodicals, yet it can be said that some important journals present a biased and Manichaeian simplification of events.

*Página/12*, for instance, writes about a “propagandistic victory” for Israel, when referring to the August 2002 UN declaration that concluded that Israel had not committed a massacre in Jenin.<sup>23</sup> If human rights violations from the Israeli side are constantly being pointed out and severely criticized, this newspaper—

considered to be “progressive” or center-left—not only avoids giving any information about human rights violations by the Palestinian Authority, but also accepts Palestinian terror attacks as an understandable if brutal reaction to Israeli repression.<sup>24</sup>

*Clarín*—the largest Argentinean daily—belonging to the nationalist political center, emotively describes how “the festivities taking place in Jesus’ birthplace will be dominated by melancholy because of the Israeli Army siege.”<sup>25</sup> In contrast, *Clarín* “objectively” informs its readers that “the phenomenon of suicidal terrorism is a means of combat of the most radical Palestinian sector in its endless battle against Israel and the occupation of the territories.”<sup>26</sup>

*La Nación*—a journal supporting economic liberalism, and considered a voice of the upper classes—presents a more balanced opinion, reflected in the publication of articles from the Palestinian representative in Argentina, Suhail Hani Daher Akel, and the then-first secretary of the Israeli embassy, Edwin Yabo.<sup>27</sup>

The adoption of a pro-Palestinian stance does not, of course, in itself demonstrate the existence of an antisemitic ideology. But the systematic banalization of the Shoah, and the utilization of traditional and/or modern antisemitic elements when describing Middle Eastern events do increasingly serve as a bridge between the two phenomena. Fortunately, these elements have only a marginal relevance in the local press.<sup>28</sup>

It can therefore be concluded that no gross, unequivocal antisemitic content has invaded the Argentinean popular press. Nevertheless, the long history of popular antisemitism in Argentina, and the impunity with which anti-Jewish crimes have been committed, still casts a shadow over some attitudes to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.<sup>29</sup> Thus one cannot exclude the possibility of antisemitism reemerging on lines similar to those apparent in the Western European press.

### ***The Arab And Muslim Community***

The role played by Islamic terrorism in contemporary antisemitism suggests that a genocidal potential exists in the ideological structure of extremist Islam.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, evidence of the involvement of young Muslims in

---

attacks on Jewish individuals and institutions is seen particularly in France, where 47% of attacks recorded worldwide occurred.<sup>31</sup> The European Union Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia's 2002-2003 report confirms this trend.<sup>32</sup>

Looking at demographic figures for Argentina and its neighbors, we find that the Muslims represent 1.5% of the population—about 300,000 people—whereas Jews make up approximately 1% of Argentines. Interestingly enough, the most numerous Palestinian community outside the Arab world lives in Chile, reaching up to 5% of the total population of 13 million people. Nevertheless, the 2002 Chilean census showed that there are only 2,894 Muslims and 14,976 Jews in the country. This gap between the number of Palestinians and that of Muslims is explained by the fact that most of the refugees came originally from Christian villages (Bethlehem, Beit Yala, Beit Sahur, and Beit Safafa).<sup>33</sup> In Brazil, the figures are both confusing and divergent. The leaders of the Muslim community consider that there are at least ten times as many Muslims as Jews, who number approximately 100,000 people. By way of comparison, there are about 6 million Muslims in France, compared to 600,000 Jews.<sup>34</sup>

The Argentinean Muslim community has its origins in the mid-19th century with the arrival of immigrants from Syria and Lebanon. Data provided to the UN by members of the community indicate that it has decreased by 50% in the last 30 years, mainly as a result of a high degree of assimilation in the “completely open Argentinean society,” and the arrival of fewer Muslim immigrants. At the same time, the Argentinean Muslim population has been going through a process of Islamization since the 1970s, and this has heightened its profile within the wider Argentinean Arab community.<sup>35</sup>

On February 20, 2003, the DAIA, along with the Argentinean section of the Latin-American organization FEARAB (an umbrella organization representing the Christian and Muslim Arab communities), and the Argentine government signed a joint declaration in favor of Argentina's support of the peace process in the Middle East.

This unprecedented declaration intended to reinforce

harmonious relations between the signatories, and constitutes the legal basis for mutual acknowledgement and respect, helping to counter both antisemitism and growing Islamophobia. These efforts are reflected in the lower level of Islamic antisemitism in Argentina, and in the strong negative stance taken by the representatives of Islamic organizations in Argentina towards acts of Muslim terrorism. Needless to say, this attitude contrasts with the stance of many Islamic organizations in Europe in general, and in Great Britain in particular, at least until the terror attacks of July 2005 in London.

It is useful to consider the types of public demonstrations organized by Arab and Muslim groups. Two important examples are the April 3, 2002 demonstration organized by the Federación de Entidades Arabes (Federation of Arab Entities); and an anti-war protest on February 16, 2003. This latter demonstration was organized by a wide variety of political and social activist bodies, but it was Abdul Karim Paz of the Argentine Islamic Organization who stood at its head. According to news reports, although both anti-Israel and anti-American slogans were shouted, there were no antisemitic expressions or incidents.

Three other demonstrations took place on April 13, 15, and 19 under the auspices of the Organización Islámica Argentina. Christian and Muslim Arabs, along with members of human rights organizations gathered to protest in front of the Israeli Embassy against Israeli “Operation Defensive Shield,” and in support of Palestinian demands. No antisemitic slogans or expressions were voiced.<sup>36</sup> This is an important point, as it was precisely during similar pro-Palestinian and anti-war demonstrations in countries like Belgium, France, and Italy, that members of the political left joined Arab-Muslim activists who used antisemitic slogans, and played down attacks on Jews and/or Jewish institutions.<sup>37</sup>

As a preliminary conclusion, it could be said that the cordial relations built by the Argentinean Arab and Jewish communities contributed to the lack of any massive Arab or Muslim antisemitic behavior. Moreover, the successful integration of the Muslim community in Argentina (in sharp contrast with the social and economic marginality of Muslim Arabs in

France) is arguably another positive variable against the spread of anti-Jewish hate. Nevertheless, these positive trends deserve to be carefully monitored, in the light of the influence that antisemitic ideas have been having in important sectors of the Islamic world.<sup>38</sup>

### ***The Amia***

The 1994 bombing of the Argentine Jewish Community building in Buenos Aires was, according to Sergio Rotbart, the largest antisemitic attack since World War II.<sup>39</sup> An analysis of the context and circumstances surrounding the massacre is therefore important for understanding the phenomenon of antisemitism in present-day Argentina.

The AMIA massacre starkly revealed the darkest side of the fragile Argentinean democracy. It represented a physical and symbolic crossroads where international terrorism met the indigenous criminal organizations that have been prospering for decades in Argentina. Protected by governmental complicity, the perpetrators of the attack still remain unknown and unpunished.

A central element in this picture is “the legacy of authoritarianism.”<sup>40</sup> Numerous irregularities became evident as the case proceeded in court, to the point that the judge was dismissed. It was all too clear that there had been complicity between local criminals and members of the judiciary and the state security branch. In July 2005, President Kirchner officially admitted the State’s responsibility for not having found the perpetrators of the attack.

One root of this institutional corruption lies in the lack of an in-depth examination of the security and military forces that participated in the state terrorism of 1976-1983, a lacuna which recent political decisions may at least partially fill. The terrorist strategy adopted during those years was defined as “genocidal” both by the Spanish judge Baltazar Garzón, and the researchers of the Centro de Estudio Sociales of the DAIA.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, the terrorist strategy deployed against political dissidents had a clear antisemitic bias.<sup>42</sup> There is arguably a causal link between antisemitic components in the ideology of the military government (including traditional Catholic, neo-Nazi, and anti-Zionist elements) and the immunity

from prosecution surrounding the terrorists responsible for attacking the Israel Embassy in 1992 and the AMIA bombing in 1994.<sup>43</sup>

The existence of such corrupt elements within the Argentine government does not of itself account for the “local connection” in the AMIA bombing case. Yet the fact that those responsible for the terrorism of the military dictatorship have not been purged has nurtured an intimate relationship between criminal networks and the state apparatus. This in turn means that illegal activities have continued to be protected from prosecution. At the same time, there are good reasons to suspect that some of those involved in the massacre were part of what Argentineans cynically call “the unemployed” (in Spanish: “la mano de obra desocupada”). The term refers to those who previously engaged in the terrorist activities of the military government, and with the awakening of democracy decided to use their personal contacts and know-how to engage in criminal activities. Thus, measures taken by President Kirchner since he assumed the presidency in May 2003—aiming at eliminating such shady elements—constitute an important step forward toward the destruction of both the judicial and political underpinnings of those criminal networks.<sup>44</sup>

Finally, one positive development following the AMIA community center bombing is that antisemitic rhetoric is now widely held to be beyond the pale, a factor emphasized in the CES-DAIA report.



Scenes from the Amia bombing, 1994

---

### ***The Far Right***

As we have seen, “classic” right-wing ideological antisemitism has not played a central role in the new international wave of anti-Jewish hate. In Argentina, there has been no increase either in the number of political parties or publications of the extreme right during the last decades, although there has been a significant rise in neo-Nazi political activity and vandalism during the last year.<sup>45</sup>

On the one hand, the neo-Nazi political party, Partido Nuevo Triunfo (PNT), has not been legalized.<sup>46</sup> Yet the Frente Popular party had a known antisemite, Aldo Rico, as its candidate in the 2003 Buenos Aires elections. It was able to garner 11.46% of the votes.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, several members of the Nazi PNT also managed to bypass the law and ran for the October 2005 Buenos Aires elections. Not surprisingly, they choose their allies amongst some former members of the military dictatorship’s terrorist forces.<sup>48</sup>

At the same time one can find the strategic use of anti-Jewish rhetoric coming from Islamist sources in the most important neo-Nazi web page of Latin America, *Libertad de opinión*.<sup>49</sup> Some of these articles were diffused on their web page as early as 1998, and the Islamic Organization for Latin America is linked to the site.<sup>50</sup> Here too, we can see how in Argentina the fallout from the Arab-Israeli conflict does affect the profile of contemporary antisemitism.

### ***Antisemitism, Islam and the Left***

The successful absorption of Muslim immigrants into the social, cultural, and economic structures of Argentina has not favored the adoption of antisemitic rhetoric by local Muslims or by the political left, traditionally the voice of the underprivileged. Furthermore, the ravages of the AMIA bombing discouraged any temptation by the most important leftist organizations to openly flirt with antisemitism. For instance, no unequivocal sign of “old-new antisemitism” can be found in the acts or declarations of the Peronist left, nor of the CGT (General Labor Confederation)—the largest workers union in Argentina.

At the same time, leading personalities of the human

rights network generally show respect towards the Jewish community, and sometimes even towards left-wing Zionism. For instance, the Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo posted an ad on the web page of the Zionist journal *Nueva Sión*. Needless to say, this would have been unthinkable in a European context.

There is no doubt that the traditional anti-Americanism of the Argentinean left, fuelled by the support of too many U.S. governments for repressive governments and policies in Latin America,<sup>51</sup> has nurtured and strengthened anti-Zionism among their rank and file. But there is no generalized alliance between the Left and radical Muslims based on anti-Westernism mixed with antisemitism. Finally, although public delegitimization of Israel is not mainstream in Argentina’s progressive sectors, there are some circles of the Left who do deny to the Jewish people the fundamental right to have an independent state.<sup>52</sup> This denial, when applied only to the Jewish state, is the expression of an obviously discriminatory bias.

### ***The Bendini Case***

The September 2003 controversy that erupted over remarks made by Army Chief of Staff, General Roberto Bendini has to be analyzed in the context of the authoritarian legacy which we have emphasized as part of Argentine history. We already noted that elements of traditional Catholic, neo-Nazi, and anti-Zionist antisemitism strongly affected the Argentinean army’s behavior especially during the 1970s and 1980s. Former Jewish detainees have insisted that they were singled out for torture and interrogation, incessantly questioned about the activities of Jewish organizations, and about “Zionist subversion.” Jacobo Timmerman, in his book *Prisoner without a Name, Cell without a Number*, testified that he was relentlessly interrogated not only about the mythical “world-wide Jewish conspiracy,” but also about the similarly spurious “Andinia Plan.”<sup>53</sup> Unfortunately, he was not the only Jew to go through this traumatic experience.

It was Dr. Walter Beveraggi Allende—a nationalist anti-Peronist—who in 1971 suggested that a “Plan Andinia” existed, supposedly as a “Zionist project” to create a second Jewish state in the Argentine south. This

bizarre fantasy may have been concocted in order to use the Jews as scapegoats during a period of social unrest. But testimony from Timmerman and others suggests that many in the Argentine armed forces were convinced it was definitive evidence of the diabolical and anti-Argentinean character of “international Zionism.”<sup>54</sup>

In an article in the September 12, 2003 issue of *Infobae*, Army Chief Bendini was accused of stating that the army saw a potential for conflict due to the “pretensions of foreign powers over Patagonia and the Argentinean Littoral.”<sup>55</sup> *Infobae* announced that these remarks were made in the course of a lecture he delivered at the Escuela Superior de Guerra indicating that among the “suspects” were “small groups of Israelis arriving in the country ostensibly as tourists.”<sup>56</sup> Their objective was supposedly to take control of water and oil reserves in that area. Thus we see that, if this account is accurate, the Army Chief was prepared to base Argentine military doctrine on the imaginary Andinia Plan, a local variation of the *Protocols of the Sages of Zion*.

Responding to protests from the Jewish community, General Bendini denied the charge, speaking before both Minister of Defense José Pampuro (who subsequently prepared a report on the matter), and Abraham Kaul of the AMIA. The following day, President Néstor Kirchner ordered the Minister of Defense to set up a commission to investigate the case. The defense minister also decided to investigate a retired general suspected of aiming to discredit General Bendini.<sup>57</sup>

Some members of the government felt that the scandal represented an internal dispute within the military. They feared that the underlying motive was to punish Bendini for agreeing to set up a War Council to judge Generals Ramon Diaz Bessone, Reynaldo Bignone, and Albano Harguindeguy. Indeed, the presidential spokesperson observed that it might not be a coincidence that the alleged Bendini statement was made public the same day that President Kirchner signed the decree establishing the Council.<sup>58</sup> The three generals had been accused of defending state terrorism in statements broadcast on French television.

It should be emphasized that these events occurred in the context of a purge of the military authorities aimed at

excluding from its midst at least the most influential anti-democratic elements. In April 2003, President Kirchner decided to “decapitate” the Armed Forces as a step toward investigating and punishing those who had been involved in illegal repression during the era of military dictatorship.<sup>59</sup> If we also recall the fact that General Bendini had assumed the post of Army Chief of Staff because of his personal relationship with President Kirchner, we can see that a “dirty campaign” against him was indeed a possibility.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, Bendini had replaced General Ricardo Brinzoni, who, in addition to being investigated for his role in the military dictatorship, had also been accused of antisemitic behavior and expressions.<sup>61</sup>

In the end, despite the publication of further information supporting *Infobae*'s allegations,<sup>62</sup> representatives of Argentina's Jewish community announced that they considered the episode closed for lack of evidence.<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, the Center for Legal and Social Studies (CELS)<sup>64</sup> declared on November 5, 2003 that the Ministry of Defense report on the case does not resolve questions about what General Bendini may have actually said during his lecture at the War School.<sup>65</sup> Besides, no punitive action has been taken against the alleged plotters, whose identities have only been referred to in a vague, impersonal way.

If the official version about a campaign to discredit General Bendini is true, it means that the objective was to mobilize the Jewish community in order to undermine Bendini's prestige, and erode the legitimacy of the military purge. Indeed, the case seems to expose the struggle of the most authoritarian elements in the Argentine military



---

against the ongoing process of democratization. Given the characteristics of the Army personnel involved, it could be deduced that these suspected manipulations

*The tendency to believe in the extraordinary influence of international Jewry is perhaps the “soft” contemporary version of what used to be the core of traditional Argentinean antisemitism. Such a form of anti-Jewish prejudice can at times even work as a protective shield for the local Jewish community against attempts to persecute it.*

are the result of an antisemitic worldview which both fears and hates what is perceived as a shadowy and powerful “international Jewry.” In that sense, the fact that the perpetrators of this affair are still unpunished is disconcerting. It suggests the

continued of oppressive and discriminatory forces in today’s Argentina, as well as a significant degree of official and public tolerance towards the abuses of those historically close to the centers of power.

The tendency to believe in the extraordinary influence of international Jewry is perhaps the “soft” contemporary version of what used to be the core of traditional Argentinean antisemitism. Such a form of anti-Jewish prejudice can at times even work as a protective shield for the local Jewish community against attempts to persecute it.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Strangely enough, contemporary Argentina continues to encapsulate some of the ambiguities which were especially striking during the Peronist period. During those times, the country became both a haven for Nazi war criminals and a relatively open society whose *modus vivendi* also gave the Jews a place. Despite these continuities, many things have nonetheless changed for the better. Over the past twenty years, the democratization process has undoubtedly contributed to the weakening of institutionalized anti-Jewish prejudices. All in all, there is some room for cautious optimism, although it should be remembered that it was precisely during the highpoint

of Jewish assimilation in Europe in the 1930s that the Holocaust took place. It can hardly be said that the present situation in Argentina is comparable to Europe between the two world wars. But it is important to remember that Argentina has had a strong antisemitic tradition, which generally served to legitimize the search for authoritarian solutions to social and political problems.

### **Postscript**

Since this article was completed, figures released for the year 2005 show a near-doubling of antisemitic incidents compared to previous years.<sup>66</sup> Radical anti-Zionism is also on the upswing. On July 17, 2006, several hundred of people, in a public demonstration organized by Arab and Islamic organizations (with the participation of leftist and extreme left political parties, human rights and social organizations), protested against Israel’s recent actions in Lebanon and Gaza.<sup>67</sup> The condemnation of Israeli “genocide,” and identification with the Islamic Republic of Iran (whose president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad openly called for Israel to be “wiped off the map”) by some Muslim and Leftist participants indicated a marked escalation in anti-Israeli propaganda. The “old” antisemitism also seems to be stirring its head. Catholic bishop Antonio Baseotto of the Military Ordinariate (referred to in the section on “Old-New Antisemitism”) will celebrate mass in August 2006 at the upcoming Ninth Encounter of Catholic Formation in Buenos Aires. Among the participants at this event one can find well-known antisemitic, extreme right, and falangist speakers.<sup>68</sup>

These events reflect the deep social, political, economic, and identity crisis which is taking place in Argentina today. In fact, it takes more than a few decades to build a democratic political culture in place of powerful authoritarian traditions. This is a difficult and often painful process, which endangers the social and political status of those who identified with or benefited from the old regime. Both the extreme right and the extreme left in Argentina aim at torpedoing the process of democratization, which has already achieved some important gains. In this political context, antisemitism is today not only a propaganda tool for the



strengthening of authoritarianism, but also one of the main indicators of the health of Argentina's democracy.

*I would like to thank Prof. Robert Wistrich for his professional expertise and personal encouragement during this research project. I am also grateful to Dr. Leonardo Senkman for his guidance and generosity. Finally, I am indebted to Prof. Haim Avni, Marisa Barylan, Adrián Jmelniczky, Viviana Schwartz, and Rubén Chababo for their helpful comments and technical assistance.*

## NOTES

1. Saúl Sosnowski, "Counting Nazis in Argentina: A Cultural Perspective," *Jewish Quarterly* (Spring 1999): 45-48.
2. The exclusion of antisemitism from the sphere of the "politically correct" has already been pointed out by Marisa Braylan and Adrián Jmelniczky, *Informe sobre antisemitismo en la Argentina 2004* (Buenos Aires: CES-DAIA, 2005).
3. See the *Antisemitism Worldwide 2003/4* (Ramat Gan: Stephen Roth Institute, Tel Aviv University; <http://www.tau.ac.il/Anti-Semitism/asw2003-4/general-analysis.htm> )
4. *American Jewish Year Book 2003* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 2003), 600.
5. Preamble of the National Constitution of Argentina (transl. Martina Weisz).
6. For a more detailed description of these concepts, see Haim Avni, "Antisemitism in Argentina: The Dimensions of Danger," in *Approaches to Antisemitism: Context and Curriculum*, ed. Michael Brown (American Jewish Committee and International Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization, 1994), 54.
7. *Ibid.*, 73.
8. Natan Lerner, "Las raíces ideológicas del antisemitismo en la Argentina y el nacionalismo," in *El antisemitismo en Argentina*, ed. Leonardo Senkman (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1989; Daniel Lvovich, *Nacionalismo y antisemitismo en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Javier Vergara Editor, 2003).
9. According to the report of the World Jewish Congress, "Argentine Jewry plays a prominent role in industry, commerce, politics, the free professions, and the arts. The democratic regime is seen as a catalyst accelerating the integration, and consequently the assimilation, of Jews in Argentina." <http://www.wjc.org.il>
10. Haim Avni, "Argentina: A Case Study in Dimensions of Government Antisemitism," in *Antisemitism Through the Ages*, ed. Shmuel Almog (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1988).
11. See, for instance, Ana María Battistozzi, "León Ferrari decidió levantar su muestra por las amenazas recibidas," *Clarín.com*, 25 Jan. 2005; Roxana Badaloni, "Polémica por travestis en una reunión nacional de mujeres," *Clarín.com*, 11 Oct. 2004 ( <http://www.clarin.com> ).
12. J. R., "El chillido de las tacuaras," *Seminario análisis de la actualidad*, 11 Nov. 2004.
13. Sergio Rubin, "El obispo castrense ratificó sus dichos ante el ministro Pampuro," *Clarín.com*, 23 Feb. 2005.
14. Mariana Carabajal, "Si la pornografía es negocio, el hebreo vende pornografía. Y si la droga es negocio, vende droga," *Página12/web*, 6 Mar. 2005 ( <http://www.pagina12.com.ar> ).
15. Raúl Kollman, "Lo que el informe del CEANA probó sobre Perú y los Nazis," *Página12web*, 14 June 2000; Uki Goñi, *The Real Odessa: Smuggling the Nazis to Peron's Argentina* (New York: Granta Books, 2002). Some important information about the period can also be found in Marcelino Fontán, *Oswald Menghin: Ciencia y Nazismo* (Buenos Aires: Fundación Memoria del Holocausto, 2005), and Beatriz Gurevich, *Proyecto Testimonio* (Buenos Aires: Ed. Planeta, 1998). For an excellent scholarly study on Nazi immigration to Argentina, see Leonardo Senkman, *Argentina, la Segunda Guerra Mundial y los refugiados indeseables, 1933-1945* (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editor Latinoamericano, 1991).
16. See Leonardo Senkman, "El antisemitismo bajo dos experiencias democráticas: Argentina 1959/1966 y 1973/1976," in *El Antisemitismo en la Argentina*, ed. L. Senkman (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1989).
17. See Marisa Braylan et al., *Report on the Situation of the Jewish Detainees-Disappeared during the Genocide Perpetrated in Argentina* (Buenos Aires: DAIA, 2000), 11.
18. These "historical foundations" lie at the core of Leonardo Senkman, *Antisemitism during Twenty Years of Re-democratization in Argentina: An Initial Assessment*, ACTA series (Jerusalem: SICSA, forthcoming).
19. Marisa Braylan and Adrián Jmelniczky, *Informe sobre antisemitismo en la Argentina 2004* (Buenos Aires: CES-DAIA, 2005).
20. Marisa Braylan and Adrián Jmelniczky, *Informe sobre antisemitismo en la Argentina 2003* (Buenos Aires: CES-DAIA, 2004).
21. *Rapport annuel—La lutte contre le racisme 2003*. Commission nationale consultative pour les Droits de l'homme, <http://www.commission-droits-homme.fr>  
In 2004, 62% of all racist and xenophobic attacks were antisemitic. See *Rapport annuel: La Lutte contre le Racisme et la Xénophobie 2004* (Commission nationale consultative pour les Droits de l'homme: <http://lesrapports.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/BRP/054000193/0000.pdf> )
22. See Margaret Brearley, "Bi-focal Vision: Israel and the Intifada in the British Press," *Antisemitism International 2003* (Jerusalem: SICSA, 2003).

23. "Victoria propagandística" in the original, in Jonathan Steele, "Ganar una batalla por segunda vez," *Página/12web*, 2 Aug. 2002.
24. See, for instance, April 17, 2002, Eduardo Febrro, "La ciudad devastada que quedó convertida en un gran cementerio," *Página/12web*, 17 Apr. 2002; Ferrán Sales, "La angustiante vida del otro lado del muro que alza Israel," *Página/12web*, 18 Nov. 2003.
25. "Las fiestas en el lugar donde nació Jesús estarán presididas por la melancolía debido al cerco del ejército israelí" in the original, in Shlomo Slutzky, "Tristeza y desaliento por una Navidad casi sin turistas en la bíblica Belén," *Clarín.com*, 24 Dec. 2003.
26. "El fenómeno del terrorismo suicida es una herramienta de combate del sector más radical palestino en su batalla interminable contra Israel y la ocupación de los territorios" in the original, in Marcelo Cantelmi, "Matarse matando," *Clarín.com*, 22 Jan. 2004.
27. See, for instance, Edwin Yabo, "Una sociedad con vocación suicida," *LA NACION LINE*, 1 Apr. 2002 (<http://www.lanacion.com.ar>); Suhail Hani Daher Akel, "Palestina, convertida en la sombra de Auschwitz," *LA NACION LINE*, 1 Apr. 2002.
28. See, for instance, n.a., "Saramago y una crítica feroz contra Israel," *Clarín.com*, 15 Oct. 2003; Mario Markic, "Israel-Palestina: el muro de la discordia," *Clarín.com*, 28 Dec. 2003; Silvia Pisani, "En Jerusalén, el temor aleja a los peregrinos de los lugares sagrados," *LA NACION LINE*, 16 Mar. 2003.
29. See Leonardo Senkman, ed. *El antisemitismo en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1989), 191; idem, "The restoration of Democracy in Argentina and the Impunity of Antisemitism," *Patterns of Prejudice* 24, no. 2-4 (Winter 1990): 34-59. Pepe Eliashev wrote about the suspiciously complacent attitude of *Clarín* toward anti-Jewish prejudice <http://news.daia.org.ar/shop/detallenot.asp?notid=803>
30. Robert S. Wistrich, *Muslim Anti-Semitism: A Clear and Present Danger* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 2002); Bernard Lewis, *Semites and Antisemites* (New York: Norton, 1986); Yair Sheleg, "Clear and Present Danger," *Haaretz.com*, 12 Dec. 2003.
31. <http://www.antisemitism.org.il>. See also Simcha Epstein, "Anti-Jewish Violence in Western Countries Since 2000: An Initial Assessment," *Antisemitism International 2003* (Jerusalem, SICSA, 2003), 54-58.
32. See *Manifestations of Antisemitism in the European Union 2002-2003* (Vienna: European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia, 2004), 319.
33. Jorge Zeballos Stepankovsky, "Postales de la Comunidad Palestina en Chile," in *Horizonte 1* (Oct. 2002).
34. According to data provided by the *International Freedom Report 2004* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, Department of State), <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/>
35. The process of Islamization in Argentina follows an international trend set forth by the energy crisis of 1973 and the Iranian revolution of 1979. See Gladys Jozami, "The Manifestations of Islam in Argentina," *The Americas* 53:1 (July 1996): 67-85. Abdelfattah Amor, *Los derechos civiles y políticos, en particular las cuestiones relacionadas con la intolerancia religiosa. Informe del Relator Especial, Sr. Abdelfattah Amor, presentado de conformidad con la resolución 2001/42 de la Comisión de Derechos Humanos. Visita a la Argentina*. (UN: ECOSOC, Jan. 2002). <http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/TestFrame/fbafdf78e413f2f8c1256bb8004cad43?Opendocument>
36. Leonardo Senkman, *Antisemitism during Twenty Years of Re-democratization in Argentina: An Initial Assessment* (Jerusalem: SICSA, forthcoming).
37. See *Manifestations of Antisemitism in the European Union 2002-2003*.
38. In Argentina we can detect the presence of antisemitic ideas in some Islamic circles, but they are far from being widespread. See, for instance: Raúl Kollman, "El regreso de los Sabios de Sión," *Página/12web*, 28 July 2006.
39. Sergio Rotbart, "La política exterior israelí ante el judaísmo argentino en tiempos de crisis: de la dictadura a la explosión de la AMIA," *Hagsbamá*, 1 Feb. 2000, <http://www.wzo.org.il>
40. See Leonardo Senkman and Mario Sznajder, eds. *El legado del autoritarismo* (Buenos Aires: Nuevohacer, 1995).
41. See *Nueva Sión* 840 (Mar. 1999): 6-8; and Marisa Braylan et al., *Report on the situation of the Jewish detainees-disappeared during the genocide perpetrated in Argentina* (Buenos Aires, CES-DAIA, June 2000).
42. *Report on the situation*.
43. Edy Kaufman, "The Antisemitic Dimension of Repression," *The Inter-ministerial Report on the Issue of the Fate of the Jewish 'Desaparecidos' (Missing Persons) in Argentina*. In Hebrew: "הממד האנטישמי בדיכוי" (מתוך הדו"ח של הוועדה הבין-משרדית בעניין גורל הנעלמים היהודים בארגנטינה) (Jerusalem: Israel Foreign Ministry and Israel Ministry of Justice, July 2003).
44. Sergio Kiernan, "A Tangled Road to Justice: the AMIA Trial Nine Years Later," American Jewish Committee <http://www.ajc.org>
45. For a systematic enumeration and description of these groups and publications, see the CES-DAIA annual reports: *Antisemitism in Argentina*. See also "Hay una proliferación de grupos nazis en Argentina," denunció el presidente de la DAIA," available on the web page of the Congreso Judío Latinoamericano, in its internet journal of August 31, 2005. [http://www.congresojudio.org.ar/index.htm?index\\_top\\_oji.htm%7Cindex\\_left\\_oji.asp%7Chttp%3A//www.congresojudio.org.ar/nota.asp%3Fnroo%3D758%26id%3D44](http://www.congresojudio.org.ar/index.htm?index_top_oji.htm%7Cindex_left_oji.asp%7Chttp%3A//www.congresojudio.org.ar/nota.asp%3Fnroo%3D758%26id%3D44)
46. See Raúl Kollmann, "A los nazis les dicen 'nein,'" *Página/12web*, 7 Feb. 2004.
47. More information about Aldo Rico is available in the CES-DAIA reports: *Antisemitism in Argentina*.

48. Raúl Kollmann, "Una ensalada de Nazis y represores," in *Página/12web*, 12 Sept. 2005.

49. More information about the web page can be found in the CES-DAIA reports *Antisemitism in Argentina*. In the end, the party gathered a derisory 0.19 % of the votes in the legislative elections of the City of Buenos Aires. See Julio Blank, "Antihéroes (oda a los más perdedores de la elección)," *Clarín.com* 30 Oct. 2005.

50. See, for example, [www.malas-noticias.com.ar/LIBERTADDEOPINION.htm](http://www.malas-noticias.com.ar/LIBERTADDEOPINION.htm); or [www.libreopinion.com](http://www.libreopinion.com).

51. See, for instance, Patrice McSherry, "Tracking the Origins of State Terror Network: Operación Cóndor," *Latin-American Perspectives*, 122, 29, 1 (Jan. 2002): 38-60.

52. Irwin Cotler, "Beyond Durban," Jewish Agency: <http://www.jafi.org.il/agenda/2001/english/wk3-22/6.asp>

53. Jacobo Timmerman, *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number* (New York: Random House, 1982).

54. See Leonardo Senkman, "El antisemitismo bajo dos experiencias democráticas: Argentina 1959/1966 y 1973/1976" in *El antisemitismo en Argentina*, ed. by idem (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1989).

55. Jorge Grecco, "Bendini difunde insólita doctrina para tratar de cuidar la Patagonia," *Infobae*, 12 Sept. 2003.

56. Ibid.

57. *Clarín*, 13 Sept. 2003.

58. *Página/12*, 13 Sept. 2003, 12.

59. Between his first day as a President, on May 25, 2003 and September of that year, Néstor Kirchner dismissed more than twenty generals.

60. Maria Elena Polack, "Entre procurar la verdad y esmerilar el poder de mando," *La Nación*, 13 Sept. 2003, 14.

61. See the CES-DAIA reports on *Antisemitism in Argentina* of 2000-2001 and 2002.

62. See "Escritos de militares complicarían a Bendini," *Diario Popular*, 17 Sept. 2003; and "Trabajo de capitanes del Ejército corroborarían dichos antisemitas y apoyo a represores de Bendini," *Noticias Argentinas* (news service), 16 Sept. 2003.

63. "Caso Bendini: la DAIA, satisfecha," *Clarín*, 23 Sept. 2003; "Para el titular de la AMIA la respuesta es satisfactoria," *La Prensa*, 19 Sept. 2003, 3.

64. The CELS is a non-governmental organization founded in 1979 for the promotion and protection of human rights and the strengthening of democracy in Argentina.

65. Victoria Ginzberg, "Una decisión no disipa las dudas," *Página/12*, 6 Nov. 2003.

66. See the CES-DAIA report on *Antisemitism in Argentina* 2005, 118.

Available online at: <http://www.daia.org.ar/daia.htm>

67. See Agencia, "Marcha contra la Guerra en Medio Oriente," en *Página/12web*, 17 July 2006; ANRed, "Marcha en Buenos Aires en solidaridad con el pueblo de Palestina", available on-line at: [http://anred.org/article.php?id\\_article=1597](http://anred.org/article.php?id_article=1597) (downloaded 20 July 2006).

68. See Sergio Kiernan, "Baseotto el capellán de Cabildo," *Página/12web*, 9 July 2006.

Martina L. Weisz studied political science and international relations at the Universidad Nacional de Rosario, Argentina, and has an MA in international relations from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She is currently a research assistant at the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

# Multiculturalism, “Race,” and Antisemitism in Brazil

*Bernardo Sorj*

Brazilian society does not discriminate against immigrants; it welcomes them. Brazil absorbed the largest contingent of Japanese immigrants outside of Japan, it has taken in millions of Arabs and a smaller number of Jews without generating ethnic conflict or discriminatory practices. It is an admirable accomplishment, possibly without equal in contemporary history. A large proportion of these immigrants, arriving in a country which experienced high rates of economic growth and social mobility, were rapidly able to rise through society and occupy important positions in the middle class and in the elite, thanks to the values and skills and

which will allow it to fulfill its self-image as the land of the future.

It might seem that the study of the Jewish community in Brazil is at first sight of no great sociological interest. A small group, amounting to less than 0.1% of the population, primarily middle-class and without much institutional weight in national affairs, the Jewish community appears to be yet another component of the successful and modern side of contemporary Brazil. We believe, however, that analysis of the dynamics of Jewish integration in Brazil can be particularly instructive for the purpose of understanding not only Brazilian culture but modern Judaism and antisemitism as well.

In this article, we shall attempt to explain the limited impact of antisemitism in contemporary Brazil. Jewish historiography and sociology in the twentieth century have been especially sensitive to antisemitic phenomena in the numerous societies where Jews live. However, they have shown much less concern for understanding why, in certain societies, antisemitism is slight or nearly non-existent. We shall also try to indicate certain characteristics of Brazilian Judaism generated by integration in local culture and society. Finally, we shall attempt to indicate certain dominant patterns in the studies of contemporary Brazilian Jewry in comparison with the Argentine case.

No culture can be explained or reduced to its myths of origin

but it constitutes an important explanatory factor when considering the way Brazilian society deals with foreigners. We need to take into account cultural phenomena such as the ludic approach to life, the special intimacy with the body, the syncretistic religious style, and the lack of symbolic hierarchies combined with very pronounced social inequalities in order to understand some of the peculiar features of Brazil.

## ***Racism and Jews in Brazil***

Our starting point is the belief that Brazil is a society with relatively low levels of antisemitic discourse or practices. This assumption is based on day-to-day information disseminated through the media, on reports by immigrants and on the empirical experience of the author. This assessment is confirmed in the *Anti-Semitism World Report*. In its 1995 edition it concludes that, “there is no indication of state-sponsored antisemitism since the end of Vargas regime (in 1945)” and that “Brazil has little popular antisemitism.”<sup>1</sup> In the two major cities where the broad majority of Jews are concentrated—Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo—antisemitic incidents affecting the quality of life and coexistence between communities or effective opportunities for social mobility are, on the whole, exceptional. In this regard, Brazil differs from much of the rest of Latin America.

The basic explanation for the absence of antisemitism in Brazil can be sought in Brazil’s ideology

*In the two major cities where the broad majority of Jews are concentrated—Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo—antisemitic incidents affecting the quality of life and coexistence between communities or effective opportunities for social mobility are, on the whole, exceptional.*

knowledge they brought from their countries of origin. The social ascension of immigrants, rather than generating racist ideologies or ethnic resentment, is perceived as a positive factor and a mark of personal accomplishment. This is so because Brazilian culture, collective identity, and its myth of origin favor innovation and change,

---

of “whitening.” According to this ideology, whiteness is the ideal to be attained, and therefore non-whites—blacks in particular—can be “improved” through miscegenation until they achieve whiteness. To the extent that Jews are accepted as whites—a premise questioned only by those Brazilian intellectuals with fascist leanings during the 1920s and 1930s—they are perceived to be a part of the solution rather than a problem. In this case, although Brazilian society is anti-black, its racism would not target other ethnic groups, such as the Jews.

This ideology was a specific development of modern European racism of the late nineteenth century. As Skidmore demonstrated, Brazilian elites were influenced by racist ideologies and imparted to them their own particular interpretations. Whereas European racists believed that miscegenation in Brazil would lead to the racial degeneration of society as a whole, the Brazilian ideology of whitening supposed that racial mixing would entail not the loss of white qualities but rather their acquisition by blacks. They would take on the features of the virtuous white race and lose their inferior characteristics.

This hypothesis largely explains why we think Brazil as a society is not antisemitic, but it does not account for specific forms of socio-cultural integration that affect Brazilian Jewry and other minorities.

The work of Roberto da Matta is

among those which most creatively pursues this issue. His thesis is that in Brazil, behind an ideology of universal cooptation, affability, syncretism, and liberal legal structures, there remains hidden a hierarchical power structure which is profoundly unequal and racist. Da Matta argues that what predominates in Brazil is a fable that presents whites, blacks, and Indians as equivalent components in which these three races provide the foundations for a country predisposed to miscegenation and racial tolerance. He attempts to show that Portuguese society, whose social structures were transferred to Brazil, was in fact shaped by strongly defined hierarchies; it was Catholic, dominated by legal formalism, mercantile, and its dominant strata were linked together in relations of dependence. The fable of Brazil’s three constitutive races should serve the purpose of ideally integrating the population within a common framework which (through whitening) someday will achieve homogeneity and harmony. Whether in the field of sexuality, music, or carnival, the ideology of racial integration has served to mask the realities of profound disparities in economic and political power. Furthermore, the very assumption of integration through “whitening” remains implicitly racist in its denial of black identity.

Da Matta juxtaposes the ideology of racial democracy and the legal apparatus of equality among citizens with the social practices where

profound inequalities predominate. The hierarchical thrust of “*você sabe com quem está falando*”—“do you know whom you’re addressing”—replaces the notion of citizens invested with equal rights.

And so, Brazilian society is indeed deeply hierarchical and rife with inequality among individuals. The ties of dependence reflect differentiated positions throughout the hierarchy which permit a sociability grounded in intimacy, trust, and consideration, along with anti-egalitarian social values. In such a society there is no need for segregation because hierarchies assure white superiority and the identification of the dominated with the dominant. In contrast, modern Anglo-Saxon racism, arising from a context of egalitarian and individualistic values, was deemed essential as a way of signaling difference. Modern segregation at least recognizes the *alterity* of the other, whereas in hierarchical systems everyone is part of a whole, with his or her own specific and unequal place. Difference therefore relates to the position each one occupies. This system allows for all manner of gradations and numerous degrees of “blackness” instead of a system of polar opposites.<sup>2</sup>

Hierarchical societies such as that in Brazil integrate everyone while maintaining inequality, whereas in egalitarian and individualistic systems, difference is sustainable only by means of segregation. A hierarchical society is one made up of *mestizos* where the most varied skin

colors exist alongside one another instead of races in opposition. We are in the realm of the phenotype rather than of the originating gene, of gradations in pigmentation rather than of purity of blood. Brazil's hierarchical society, albeit unequal, allows for the conciliation and cooptation of ethnic and socially distinct strata marching down the road of whitening. Class division according to infinite nuances of skin color allows one to escape confrontation, for it neutralizes the formation of clear identities. Brazil would thus constitute a society whose racism is shaped not by individualism but by hierarchy.

Da Matta's argument contains much insight, while being problematic with regard to an understanding of Brazil's inter-ethnic dynamics. We are especially interested in questioning those Anglo-Saxon aspects that Da Matta opposes to Brazil's hierarchical model, and its inability to account for the contradictory nature of Brazil's cultural mythology. Da

in all modern societies, including those shaped by the Anglo-Saxon tradition. So, too, in the case of Brazil with its very high rates of social mobility and significant turnover in the composition of the political and economic elite. In a Brazilian society driven by consumerism, racial prejudice increasingly becomes subordinated to the acquisitive capabilities of individuals. The definition of who is "white" is increasingly correlated with economic position. New social processes, such as the economic and cultural impoverishment of the Afro-Brazilians and Northeasterners, and the rise of urban violence in turn generate new foci for racism.

Da Matta is mistaken when he states that Brazilian society is "cordial" because it is hierarchical. The latter does not presuppose the former. Hierarchical societies in general are either contemptuous or indifferent toward the lower strata, with whom they entertain little if any communication. Brazilian society is at once hierarchical and open, intensely unequal and yet amenable to social mobility and cooptation. The paradox is that in Brazil hierarchies are sustained through expectations of social mobility and of a different future. The very pattern of Brazilian sociability—gregarious, playful, and weakly individualized—as well as its religious syncretism are expressions of the strong absorption of African cultural elements.

In this context, the account of

Brazilian national mythology seems incomplete in Da Matta's exposition. If on the one hand there is a clear racist component in the notion of whitening, there is also the expectation of *future homogenization*, which has little to do with an effectively hierarchical society. Originally there was the black, the Indian, and the outcast Portuguese who made up the colonial population. But this "original sin" coexists alongside the hope that, over time, its infinite natural riches and edenic beauty will prove sufficiently powerful to attract new population contingents. Through miscegenation, new immigrants will blur the stains in the national fabric and recreate an integrated and homogeneous society.<sup>3</sup> This vision of the future limits and qualifies the racist components of Brazilian culture.

The image of a society sustained through the possibility of a common ideal future breaks away from the modern European mythologies of the nation-state. This vision can explain the relative marginality of antisemitism, or the fragility of anti-imperialist ideologies, features which distinguish Brazil from the rest of Latin America.

A society oriented toward the future attaches importance to the new and is not afraid of innovation. Brazil's myth of origin situates the source of its problems in the past—in slavery and colonization by Portugal—and believes that harmony can be achieved in the future. Hence it views social change

*Brazil's hierarchical society, albeit unequal, allows for the conciliation and cooptation of ethnic and socially distinct strata marching down the road of whitening*

Matta's presentation of the "Anglo-Saxon" world as a coherent whole fails to sustain itself. In fact, contradictory elements abound

---

more positively rather than as a threat to national values. In the Brazilian myth of origin, the past is devalued and that which stands in close relation to it acquires negative connotations. That blacks and the Portuguese are the main butt of jokes in Brazil is no accident; they are the expression of a past which must be rejected. In a context where the new is perceived as desirable, the foreigner, rather than being the bearer of values alien to nationality, becomes instead the chief agent for its construction.

In myths of national origin based on the past, the enemy is generally external, and personified in “foreign influences.” In the original myth of Brazil—the “land of the future”—the enemy is internal. In order for the nation to achieve its potential, it must eradicate its past. Third world anti-imperialist ideologies set out to overcome and negate aspects of the past associated with a foreign legacy, which was oppressive and exploitative. However, in Brazil the more prevalent view holds that the past itself, perceived as the source of vice, must be forgotten and overcome; only then can the country’s virtues and promise be realized—contained in its vast natural riches, awaiting the moment when they can be effectively tapped and generate prosperity for all.

National mythologies are sustained through historical experience and political processes which reinforce or transform them. The fragility of romantic and nostalgic movements in Brazil is

associated with the fluidity and lack of direct or violent confrontation among its elites, which prevented resentment and frustration from crystallizing amongst declining social sectors. Brazil’s ruling class did not make an issue of its social origins to distinguish itself from the rest of the population, whether native-born or immigrant. The negative relationship to the past limited the formation of a “traditional” elite, whose prestige might have drawn on its “deep” roots and its presumed embodiment of Brazilian nationality itself. No less important was the leading economic role played by São Paulo (a city led by immigrants) and the cosmopolitanism of Rio de Janeiro. Brazil was also fortunate in being preserved from wars and external enemies. High rates of economic growth as well as the social mobility of the population were additional factors which weakened xenophobic and fascist proclivities.

The ideology of “Brazil—land of the future” became current during the 1950s as a result of the development of new middle classes generated by industrialization and modernization. The new strata that emerged during this period were sustained by an economic growth which had attained levels not often experienced in other countries. Confident in the powers of industry, science and technology to assure social progress, these sectors not only drew away from racial ideology but also valorized and absorbed popular artistic

forms that were in broad measure associated with Afro-Brazilians. The emergent ideologies sought to explain Brazil’s ills exclusively in terms of economic and political processes, to the complete exclusion of racial myths. If the practice of ascribing value to “whitening”

*In a context where the new is perceived as desirable, the foreigner, rather than being the bearer of values alien to nationality, becomes instead the chief agent for its construction.*

persisted, the discourse through which it sought ideological support ceased to be legitimate. Not until the late 1980s and 1990s—decades of economic stagnation, chronic unemployment and increases in the rate of crime—would some peripheral demonstrations of racism emerge with Blacks and Northeasterners as their target.

Brazil, as Brazilians themselves constantly recall, is a country without memory. (This feature, incidentally, is the only widely held recollection.) It is a country which seems to cast all collective experience into oblivion. But this “absence of memory” is in fact the positive technique of a society which rejects the past as wrongful and as regrettable baggage. The rejection of the past can, of course, produce perverse results: one cannot build a future in ignorance of one’s past. But at the same time, societies chained to the past deny themselves



Jewish immigrants to Brazil in the early 20th century

the creation of a novel future. In both cases the results are harmful.

Myths of origin based on the idealization of the past usually generate romantic, conservative, anti-modern, and anti-market ideologies. However, the valorization of the future casts Brazil as a place largely impermeable to these kinds of ideologies. Thus foreigners in Brazil more often than not symbolize progress rather than danger; they are the bearers of new ideas and practices that can assist Brazilian society in fulfilling its destiny.

In the specific case of the Jews, the anti-Judaism of the Catholic church has also diluted in society where religious syncretism predominates. Religious syncretism and diversity, alongside the interpenetration of cultures in Brazil has worked against discrimination toward the foreigner, the Jew, and the new immigrant.

### ***The Price of Brazilian Integration***

With the disintegration of traditional Jewish community life, modern Jews have become an integral part of the local society.

Modernity, for the Jewish people, has implied a negotiation in which equal rights were received in return for abandoning particular legal institutions and a communal way of life. For Jews, citizenship and its attendant rights meant the acquisition of a new identity, through which they became part of a greater national society. Modernity implied the existential and political separation between the Jew as an individual and his community, rupturing traditional mechanisms of socialization and giving rise to a permanently open question about the continuity of Jewish institutions and the meaning of Jewish identity.

The integration of Jews in Brazil naturally resembled processes occurring elsewhere in the modern world. However, the specificity of Brazilian culture and society has provided a particular coloring to these issues.

For the Jewish immigrant who had arrived from lands where discrimination and persecution were rife, Brazil was in many senses a promised land. He became integrated in national life and more often than not would join a middle class which took pride in being Brazilian. His rapid assimilation in society, on the other hand, accelerated the parallel erosion of his own distinctiveness. He entered a society which embraced gregarious sociability centered on casual conviviality, which upheld playfulness over discursiveness, and the artistic sensibility over studied reflection. Brazil is not

an especially conducive place for the preservation of ethnically differentiated identities.

Modern Jewish identity, born of powerful inner conflicts and in a response to antisemitism, would not find in Brazil conditions propitious to its development. In a society where social integration occurs at the level of intense personal relationships, the distinction between the public and the private is virtually non-existent. Nevertheless, it is in this distinction (which in Brazil is so tenuous) that the development of new forms of Judaism has been sustained in modernity. In a society where “privacy” is not a consolidated value, there is little room for the development of individually differentiated awareness—or individual anguish—nor for the search for identity and its roots. To be Brazilian is to enjoy life, to seek in the company of friends a release from existential dramas, and to be tolerant of all religious traditions and mystical experiences. It is not an easy task to fit this into the Judaic tradition of monotheism, extreme ritual differentiation between the Jewish and non-Jewish worlds, let alone emphasis on collective suffering and anguish.

Brazilian culture cultivates forgetting, while that of the Jews is sustained through remembrance. The Jewish culture of anguish implies dissatisfaction with the present and thus the desire to change it, while Brazilian popular culture stresses *deixa prá lá*—literally, “leave it aside”—in the



headlong effort to live for the present, hoping that better days will come. Judaism embraces an attitude of “pessimistic willfulness.” Brazilian culture is, however, marked by “optimistic fatalism,” an excellent antidote for depression, though it might reinforce social unaccountability and acceptance of the status quo. Brazilian culture, in no small measure due to its African influences, focuses on the human body and playful art, whereas in Judaism what prevails is the concept of abstraction and intellectual communication.

Brazilian culture believes in tomorrow but is centered in the present; the future is no more worrisome than the past is oppressive. In Jewish tradition, on the other hand, the past—whether in mythological rendition or in the still-present memories of history—has cast the future as a place to be feared, a source of uncertainty and anxiety. The present becomes the antechamber for future calamities and the place of recollection for those that have already taken place.

Although most Brazilian Jews have no direct experience of antisemitism, this issue remains a basic component of their identity. Images of antisemitism were nourished by the personal stories of parents and grandparents, by the teaching of Jewish history in Jewish schools, by the constant transmission through the media of images of the Holocaust and the Arab-Israeli conflict, seen as part of the ongoing struggle of the Jewish

people for its survival. All this has produced in Brazilian Jews a much more complex sense of being Jewish, in which antisemitism still plays a central role.

Brazilian Judaism has benefited from syncretism and also participates in it. Although there are no quantitative studies on the subject, the absorption of Kardecist and Afro-Brazilian spiritual practices and beliefs—as well as the willingness to resort to them—is fairly well disseminated among members of the community.

But in terms of its own cultural expression, Judaism in Brazil is exceedingly weak. There is a lack of public spirit, a negligible willingness to undertake philanthropic projects, to underwrite foundations or to encourage institutions of culture or learning. Brazil’s fragile Jewish community remains subject to “colonization” by ideological and institutional tendencies originating in the United States and Israel. Finally, the tendency toward middle-class cultural globalization—a trend in which Jews more often than not are strongly involved—even further diminishes the opportunities for developing a Brazilian Jewish cultural tradition. Thus, although Jews identify with the national culture and possess a Jewish way of being Brazilian and a Brazilian way of being Jewish, they have not created any major cultural or institutional expressions of a collective nature.

The confirmation of this hypothesis can be found in the



fact that the Jewish community in Rio Grande do Sul, although much smaller than that of Rio de Janeiro or São Paulo (20,000 people) is the one case where distinctive cultural foundations have attained a certain dynamism. (It is the home state for the only important Jewish Brazilian novelist — Moacyr Scliar — who has explored Jewish themes in his writings). This is so because Rio Grande do Sul’s ethnic composition is predominantly European, and it possesses a marked regionalist tradition which prizes the traditions of its “gaúcho” past, embraces ethnic reflection, and where antisemitism appears to be most present.<sup>4</sup>

A society where cordiality and mutual patron-client relations prevail even in academic life, and which is marked therefore by the avoidance of confrontation and individualization in intellectual debate, is not favorable to the

development of a rational and discursive Judaism. It is, rather, along the artistic and mystical lines of Brazilian culture that Judaism might encounter greater opportunities for emergence and interaction with society at large. In this regard it is telling that Rabbi Nilton Bonder, perhaps the sole Brazilian author whose works are read by a wide readership—Jewish as well as non-Jewish—should have decided to explore the tradition of Jewish mysticism.

Obviously these remarks do not imply that the Jewish community has blended imperceptibly into Brazil's characteristic institutional shapelessness. It has established and consolidated an institutional system which maintains its traditional sponsorship for Jewish schooling, communal solidarity and support for the state of Israel alongside a high degree of social integration.

### ***Judaic Studies in Brazil***

During recent decades the agenda for the social sciences in Brazil has attached little weight to the study of race or to the ethnicity of immigrants who comprise Brazilian society. The explanation for this state of affairs is to be found, in no small measure, in the aforementioned attributes of a national culture with little inclination to focus on difference and explicit forms of racism.



Other factors have contributed to consolidate

this lack of concern. In academic life, ethnic studies by and large are sponsored through donations or political support by members of the ethnicities in question or by official agencies concerned with ethnic conflict. As we have seen, in the Brazilian context differentiating self-reflection is not particularly cultivated nor are “ethnic” elites especially inclined toward acts of generosity that might encourage this kind of exercise. Until recently, the Brazilian state showed no preoccupation whatsoever with ethnic issues or racism. Social scientists, themselves of varied ethnic backgrounds, were primarily engaged in a research agenda that stressed social problems associated with class, or more recently, with gender. They have foregone the opportunity to pursue other approaches.

Generally speaking, the social sciences in Brazil have displayed very little sensitivity to the ethnic dimensions of social life. As in the rest of Latin America, the theoretical concerns of social science in Brazil have been guided to a large extent by a Marxist framework, inadequately equipped to tackle what Benedict Anderson called “imagined communities.” The normative framework itself, centered on the issues of domination and exploitation, valorized analyses focused on social class and on national unification around a common project. Culture and identity have thus become subsidiary themes that emerge

only in connection with a concern with “popular culture” and the establishment of a national project.

Studies on Jews in contemporary Brazil are indeed few and far between. There are no research centers, institutions or publications that might be considered intellectual points of reference or vehicles for debate and new lines of reflection. Nevertheless, it is possible to make some observations about the extant bibliography on Jews in Brazil.

First, autochthonous efforts to conceptualize the Jewish condition in Brazil are rare. Although numerous scholars engaged in the social sciences in Brazil happen to be Jewish, studies that deal specifically with Jews or Judaism are practically nonexistent. This is perhaps an indicator of the success of assimilation in Brazilian society, which seems to generate little cause for anxiety among Jewish intellectuals.

Second, there is a lack of reflection on the part the community itself in regard to the specific features of Judaism in Brazil. By and large abandoned by Jewish intellectuals, themselves mainly secular and plagued by the scant participation in collective life, community leaders have adopted a defensive stance. They appealed to outdated rhetoric and educational materials “imported” from Israel and, to a lesser extent, the United States. Their discourse, which is centered on the theme of antisemitism and the memory of persecutions endured by the Jewish people, pays

---

little heed to the lived experience of the young Brazilian Jew.

Third, studies conducted in the United States and Israel which attempt to generalize about Latin American Judaism are fairly insensitive to cultural differences in Brazil.<sup>5</sup> Thus, for example, the wide gulf that exists between Jewish life in Argentina (where antisemitism is a day-to-day experience) and the everyday world of Brazilian Jews is not sufficiently analyzed.

For example, one of the distinct features in the national identity of Brazil's elite is the fact that the nation-state was not created through outright confrontation with the seat of colonial empire. In Brazil there was no war of independence as elsewhere in Latin America. From the outset it saw itself as an extension and renewal of Europe in the New World. The formation of an ideology for the nation-state in Brazil thus occurred through a slow process of affirmation of its own characteristics. In the rest of Latin America, the wars of independence against Spain compelled the emerging nations to forge an ideology of affirmation through negation of the colonial metropolis or against neighboring countries in order to establish their own territorial boundaries.

In most Hispano-American societies the formation of national identity arose through this break with the colonial metropolis and the assertion of national symbols centered on the power of the state. But the national ideology in Brazil

does not cast a problematic light on "foreign" roots. It accepts its continuities over historical time. If in the rest of Latin America, revolt *against* the foreign ruler became an integral component of the national identity, this was not the case in Brazil.

The Brazilian nation-state lacked a strong civic and nationalist ideology, demanding the undivided loyalty of "the people." This, too, made the experience of assimilation much easier for the Jewish community. Aside from the experience of Communist Party members, for whom identification with the party required the sundering of competing ties of collective loyalty, the assimilation of Jews in Brazil did not imply an active effort of self-denial. The situation in Argentina, on the other hand, was wholly different. Argentina's ruling classes were nostalgic for their European roots and remote from the national popular culture; the subaltern classes inclined toward proto-fascist mobilization; moreover, Argentinean Catholicism was of a traditional European sort; and civic ideology was encoded under the auspices of a strong "patriotic" component. Together, these ingredients generated a society thoroughly suffused with antisemitism and which would unrelentingly continue to raise the question of "divided loyalties." In Argentina the forces of rejection, xenophobia, and antisemitism would yield a more active and culturally self-conscious community,

characterized by a stronger degree of integration between the Jewish intellectual elite and the community at large, notwithstanding processes of demographic decline.

Each culture balances in its own way the weight and meaning it attaches to past, present, and

*Studies on Jews in contemporary Brazil are indeed few and far between. There are no research centers, institutions or publications that might be considered intellectual points of reference or vehicles for debate and new lines of reflection.*

future. In certain cases, such as in Europe, Argentina or Uruguay, the appreciation of the past as a period of bygone splendor unlikely to return, imparts to the present an air of decadence and points to the future as a harbinger of new uncertainties. In North American culture, the past, which is not so distant, serves up a system of values and images of self-confidence that turns the present into a launching pad for a future laden with opportunity and dreams of self-fulfillment. In Brazil, confidence in the present is founded on the negation of the past and the capacity to remove oneself from it.

The few studies of Brazilian Jewry, generally carried out by historians, have usually stressed episodes in Brazilian history associated with expressions of antisemitism. Jeffrey Lesser's book is a paradigmatic

example of this. Notwithstanding its numerous merits, Lesser's study packs a normative charge that leads him to overemphasize Judaeophobia and the trends that operated in Brazil in the 1930s and 1940s under the fascist-inspired dictatorship of Getulio Vargas. During this period certain intellectuals in government positions did appeal to European antisemitic ideologies to justify policies opposed to Jewish migration. Lesser's work, which possesses the virtue of recognizing the specificity of Jewish integration within Brazil, fails however to apply his own insight in a consistent fashion.

First, Lesser does not sufficiently distinguish between the discourse of certain components of Brazil's government and the socio-cultural reality. (The distance between

*Although antisemitism reached a peak during the Vargas dictatorship, this phenomenon did not have long-term consequences regarding the socio-cultural framework for Jewish accomodation to Brazilian society.*

state and society in Brazil remains, incidentally, an ever-present topic in the Brazilian social sciences.) Although antisemitism reached a peak during the Vargas dictatorship, this phenomenon did not have long-term consequences regarding the socio-cultural framework for Jewish accomodation to Brazilian society.

The weakness of antisemitism in Brazil cannot be explained as the result of limited real contacts with real Jews. According to Lesser, when Jews first arrived in larger numbers in Brazil, they were seen to be "neither very rich nor very poor, were rarely active politically, and rapidly acculturated to Brazilian society...." (p. 3), which helped to undermine existing prejudices among the elites. But Lesser is mistaken, for in Brazil there was a small but influential number of Jews who supported the Communist Party, just as there were other Jews who were able to rapidly succeed economically. A society predisposed to antisemitism could have easily seized on these facts to consolidate anti-Jewish attitudes.

Second, Lesser is not sufficiently attuned to a Brazilian political culture, strongly permeated by pragmatism, compromise, and the inclination to treat each matter as a unique case, in contrast to normal bureaucratic procedures. This gives rise to the paradox upon which Lesser so forthrightly insists: in spite of antisemitic elements in Vargas' pronouncements on immigration, the number of Jewish immigrants arriving in Brazil between 1933 and 1942 was greater than that for the preceding decade. It also exceeded the numbers for those Latin American countries with democratic and non-antisemitic governments.

The central dichotomies of Brazilian society escape the categories of analysis Lesser

employs. Neither philo- nor antisemitism constitute an organizing parameter for the social perception of otherness in Brazil. As the sociologist Bauman has observed, it is this perception of Jewishness as something different, whether good or bad, that determines the particular status of the Jew in Western culture.

Lesser's stress on antisemitism and on the discourse of the intellectual elite thus distorts the perception of political and social dynamics in Brazilian life and the position of Jews in Brazil. For in the end how can one explain that a semi-fascist government, acting on the advice of a seemingly antisemitic news mogul—Assis Chateaubriand—handed over to a Jew an industrial sector of such political and strategic importance as the production of newsprint.

### **Conclusions**

Democratic structures are certainly an important barrier against intolerance. But the Brazilian case, without diminishing the need to protect human rights, also shows that the struggle against ethnic prejudice can find sustenance in the culture and mythology of a given society.

Identities always sustain implicit or explicit images of otherness. The myths of national origin in the European tradition were built upon the juxtaposition and at times upon the negation of the other. In Brazilian culture the other is no less necessary in order to constitute oneself. But

the alien brings progress rather than degeneration. This national mythology has unfortunately been built at the expense of the diminishment of Afro-Brazilians and Amerindians. Nevertheless, the evolution of Brazilian national culture and patterns of sociability has diluted the pain of otherness and some of the anguish associated with difference.

The cordiality and informality of Brazilian society has to some degree modified the context of social inequality and ill-distributed rights of citizenship, reducing confrontational claims and avoiding social conflict. The great challenge that lies before Brazil is to transform its society without destroying the salutary aspects of its sociability.

A warning signal is the increasing importance of Afro-American antisemitic discourse (imported from the United States) among black Brazilian militants. Although still an isolated phenomenon, it may in the future produce increasing tension and provide an unexpected boost to Brazilian popular antisemitism.

Another problem is the continuing conflict in Brazil between the norms present in its sociability and democratic values. Cronyism, insensitivity to the common good, and the power of clientelism which almost always manages to prevail over universal standards of merit are serious defects in a society rooted in slavery, which is still plagued by social inequality and poverty.

Myths of origin and national culture offer no guarantees for the

future. Just as the preservation of democracies is a risky business, so is the maintenance of national values. They too are the products of history and therefore susceptible to change under the impact of future social crises. The dominant myth of origin for Brazil may yet change, too. The impact of globalization, individualization in modern urban life, poverty, and frustrated expectations may yet wear down the dominant beliefs and create breaches to be exploited by new political movements and charismatic leaders. The future of Brazil and its Jews is an open book with new pages yet to be written.

### Bibliography

- Anderson, B. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1991.
- Bauman, Z. *Life in Fragments*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995.
- Bell, David, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*. London: Heinemann, 1979.
- Biale, David, "The Melting Pot and Beyond: Jews and the Politics of American Identity," in *Insider/Outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism*, ed. by D. Biale, M. Galchinsky, and S. Heschel. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1998.
- Brumer, Anita, *Identidade em Mudança, Federação Israelita do Rio Grande do Sul*. Porto Alegre, 1994.
- Carvalho, J. M. "Visões do Brasil e dos Brasileiros," in *Lei e Liberdade—Forum 1996*. ed. by T. Quigley. Rio de Janeiro: Iser, 1997.
- Da Matta, R. *Carnavais, Malandros e Heróis: para uma Sociologia do Dilema Brasileiro*. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 1979.
- Da Matta, R. *Relativizando: Uma Introdução à*



- Antropologia Social*. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1989.
- Igel, Regina, *Imigrantes Judeus/Escritores Brasileiros*. São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 1997.
- Institute of Jewish Affairs/American Jewish Committee, *Antisemitism World Report 1995*. Northamptonshire, 1995.
- Lesser, J. *Welcoming the Undesirables: Brazil and the Jewish Question*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1995.
- Lewin, Helena, *Judaísmo—Memória e Identidade*. 2 vols., Rio de Janeiro: Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, 1997.
- Morais, F. *Chatô—o Rei do Brasil*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1995.
- Poliakov, L. *Le Mythe Aryen*. Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1971.
- Rattner, H., *Tradição e Mudança*. São Paulo: Editora Ática, 1978.
- Sachar, Howard, M., *The Course of Modern Jewish History*. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.
- Skidmore, T. *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1974.
- Sorj, B., ed. *Identidades Judaicas no Brasil Contemporâneo*. Rio de Janeiro: Imago, 1997.

— — — and M. Grin, *Judaísmo e Modernidade*. Rio de Janeiro: Imago, 1991.

## Notes

1. *Anti-Semitism World Report* (New York: Institute of Jewish Affairs and American Jewish Committee, 1995).
2. The U.S. experience of absorption and “whitening” of American Jews indicates that the Brazilian and American experiences cannot be reduced to simple oppositions. See David Biale, “The Melting Pot and Beyond: Jews and the Politics of American Identity,” in *Insider/ Outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism*, ed. by D. Biale, M. Galchinsky, and S. Heschel (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1998).
3. For Brazilian perceptions of nature, see J. M. Carvalho, “Visões do Brasil e dos Brasileiros,” in *Lei e Liberdade—Forum 1996*, ed. by T. Quigley (Rio de Janeiro: Iser, 1997).
4. One should not lose sight of the nuances that differentiate Jewries in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, for they are associated with the different levels in intensity of the dominant Brazilian national myths. Rio, capital of Brazil until 1960, is the city which most fully embodied Brazilian national mythology. São Paulo, which received much of its population in the 20th century, maintains more clearly differentiated ethnic identities.
5. Howard M. Sachar, *The Course of Modern Jewish History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990)

is one of the few works on the subject which, to my knowledge, gives due space to Brazilian Jewry, although it does not make any effort to understand the peculiarities of Brazilian culture and Brazilian Jewish identities. But this is also true for the bibliography produced by most American and Israeli “Latin-Americanists,” whose writings on Latin-American Jewry concentrate mainly on the Argentinean case and display a lack of sensibility for the particular cultural characteristics of Brazilian society and its relations with foreigners. In general, the participation of Marranos in the colonization of Brazil and the Getulio Vargas dictatorship period (1937-1945) are the principal objects of their attention. These subjects allow one to reinstate Brazilian Jewry within the traditional issues of persecution and antisemitism. Undoubtedly, researchers were not helped by the Brazilian sources on the subject. Although there is a relatively vast bibliography with memoirs of emigrants and literature (for example, Regina Igel, *Imigrantes Judeus/ Escritores Brasileiros* [São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 1997]), few social scientists produced relevant work on contemporary Brazilian Jewry. Besides the pioneer sociological study of São Paulo Jewry by H. Rattner, *Tradição e Mudança* (São Paulo: Editora Ática, 1978), there are a few more recent studies on the social patterns of Jews in Rio Grande do Sul (Anita Brumer, *Identidade em Mudança, Federação Israelita do Rio Grande do Sul* [Porto Alegre, 1994]), an uneven collection of short articles and memoirs (Helena Lewin, *Judaísmo—Memória e Identidade*. 2 vols.

[Rio de Janeiro: Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, 1997]), and a collection of sociological papers on Jewish identity in Brazil (Bila Sorj, ed. *Identidades Judaicas no Brasil Contemporâneo* [Rio de Janeiro: Imago, 1997]).

*Bernardo Sorj received his Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Manchester in England. Currently he is professor of Sociology at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro and director of the Edelstein Center for Social Research.*

# SYMPOSIUM

*On October 27, 2004, the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism organized a symposium on "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion in Japan." The following three papers are updated versions of those presented on that occasion.*



The front of Uno Masami's *If You Comprehend the Jews, You Will Understand the World*.

# The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, Aum, and Antisemitism in Japan

David G. Goodman

Beginning in the mid-1980s, dozens of books based on the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* began to appear in Japanese bookstores and sold millions of copies. Jews were described in these books and in the large, gaudy advertisements that appeared for them in mass circulation daily newspapers as a clandestine cabal plotting to destroy Japan and rule the world. The Jewish plot, the books charged, had already succeeded. The United States, Japan's chief ally and most important trading partner, was controlled by Jews, who formed a "shadow government" and manipulated U.S. policies for their own perfidious ends. Certain ministries within the Japanese government had already been taken over by Jews, it was said, and Japan was doomed unless something could be done. The enemy was ruthless, and the response, it was implied, had to be equally so.<sup>1</sup>

How should this phenomenon be understood? Many theories have been advanced. Some writers have understood the popularity in Japan of books based on the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* as sublimated anti-Americanism.<sup>2</sup> Others have traced antisemitism in Japan

back to Japan's World War II alliance with Nazi Germany.<sup>3</sup> A few have argued that Japanese attitudes toward Jews should be understood in longer-range terms, as an extension of Japan's complex history of imagining foreigners.<sup>4</sup> Some

*In the case of Japan, while clearly of only minor importance in the broader scheme of Japanese culture, the Jewish question and antisemitism contributed to the rise of fascism, helped justify the Asia-Pacific war, and by extension abetted its manifold atrocities.*

place outlandish ideas about Jews in the same category as fantasies about the paranormal, UFOs, and the Lost Continent of Mu. The exploits of the powerful and threatening *Yudaya* (Jews), they contend, are for the Japanese akin to the adventures of space aliens and the terror of mythical demons.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, some commentators have seen antisemitism in Japan as a paradox and historical anomaly. Antisemitic expressions, they believe, are actually inverted feelings of kinship and admiration expressed as fear and envy.

These analysts have pointed to the amity between the Japanese and Jewish peoples that has prevailed throughout the modern period, beginning with Jacob Schiff's financial rescue of Japan during the Russo-Japanese War, through the way Japan sheltered more than 20,000 Jews in Shanghai during World War II, up to Japan's continuing cordial relations with Israel in the postwar years. Ben-Ami Shillony has pointed to a strong sense of affinity he believes exists between the Japanese and Jewish peoples, who are both "successful outsiders," non-Western (or at least non-Christian) groups that have competed successfully with the West.<sup>6</sup>

All of these views contribute to our understanding of the phenomenon of antisemitism in Japan, and I would not discount any of them. Where I part company with some of my colleagues, however, is on the question of consequences. Some have contended that expressions of antisemitism in Japan are benign, epiphenomenal, and inconsequential. They argue that if the proliferation of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and its description of a worldwide Jewish conspiracy have had any consequence at all, it has been to instill a sense of awe and respect for Jews among the Japanese that, particularly during World War II, led them to befriend Jews rather than regard them as enemies.

By contrast, I have taken the position that, in Japan as in the West, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and its ideology have been imbricated with the politics and cultural history of the twentieth century. In this, I follow Hannah Arendt, who, while acknowledging that "the Jewish question and antisemitism [are] relatively unimportant phenomena in terms of world politics," points out that they nevertheless "became the catalytic agent first for the rise of the Nazi movement...then for a world war of unparalleled ferocity, and finally for the emergence of the unprecedented crime of genocide..."<sup>7</sup> In the case of Japan, while clearly of only minor importance in the broader scheme of Japanese culture, the Jewish question and antisemitism contributed to the rise of fascism, helped justify the Asia-Pacific war, and by extension abetted its manifold atrocities. I do not "consider Japan an anti-Semitic country,"<sup>8</sup> but I believe that antisemitic ideas and the *Protocols of the Elders of*



Zion have played an identifiable and deleterious role in the history of modern Japan, a role that continues to be played out.

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

The origins of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* are shrouded in mystery. Even its original language is debated. Suffice it to say that the work, which purports to be a collection of twenty-four secret lectures delivered by a figure called the “Grand Rabbi” to representatives of the Twelve Tribes of Israel (the Elders of Zion) clandestinely assembled in a Basle cemetery, is a forgery cobbled together from plagiarized sources around the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>9</sup> The tract, which occupies less than one hundred pages in English translation and purports to document an ongoing and successful Jewish conspiracy to control the world, was first published in Russian in 1905 as an appendix to a book by the mystic Sergei Nilus titled *The Great in the Small: The Coming of the Anti-Christ and the Rule of Satan on Earth*. The *Protocols* had very little impact, however, until 1917, when they were reprinted in an expanded edition of Nilus’s book, retitled *It is Near at Our Doors!* The year 1917 was the year of the Russian Revolution, and the Jews were held responsible for the Communist takeover. The *Protocols* was interpreted as an uncanny predictor of what had happened and an unparalleled guide to the methods and intentions of the Jews. Not only did the *Protocols* explain the revolution in simple terms as the product of a centuries-old Jewish conspiracy to wreak havoc on the gentile nations, overthrow divinely sanctioned monarchs like the czar, and subjugate the world’s people to a Jewish dictatorship, but it also exculpated the defenders of the *ancien régime* for their failure to protect the old order because of the powerful and diabolical nature of the enemy.

Translations of the *Protocols* began to appear almost immediately. The first one in English was issued in 1920 under the title *The Jewish Peril* by the prestigious publishers Eyre and Spottiswoode, who also issued the Authorized Version of the Bible and Prayer Book with the imprimatur of “His Majesty’s Printers.”<sup>10</sup> The automobile magnate Henry Ford published the *Protocols*

in the United States in the same year under the title *The International Jew* and became its most outspoken proponent.

The *Protocols* came to Japan at virtually the same time. In 1921, under the pseudonym Kitagami Baiseiki, Higuchi Tsuyanosuke (1870-1931) published a series of lectures titled *Yudayaka* (The Jewish peril), which introduced the main ideas of the *Protocols*. Three years later, Yasue Norihiro (1888-1950) under the pseudonym Hō Kōshi prepared the first complete Japanese translation as *Behind the World Revolution* (*Sekai kakumei no rimen*). Both Higuchi and Yasue had served as interpreters and Russian language instructors with the Japanese Army during the Siberian Intervention, an effort by American, Japanese, French, British, Canadian, and Czech forces to reverse the Russian Revolution. Japan dispatched a larger force to Siberia (72,000) and kept them there the longer (until 1922) than any another nation. Higuchi, who had trained at the Russian Orthodox Nikolai Seminary in Tokyo and received a divinity degree from the Theological Seminary in St. Petersburg, and Yasue, who had studied Russian at the Tokyo School of Foreign Languages, were introduced to the *Protocols* by White Russian troops while serving in Siberia.

During the 1920s and early 1930s, the *Protocols* and its theory of a global Jewish conspiracy spread in Japan.<sup>11</sup> As a political tract, it was originally popular with right-wing ideologues who used it to explain the failure of the Japanese military in Siberia and to promote their emperor-centered nationalism. As Japan became more isolated in the world and drew closer to Nazi Germany, concluding the Anti-Comintern Pact in 1936 and the Axis alliance in September 1940, however, the *Protocols* achieved much wider influence. “During the war,” the historian Saitō Takashi later recalled,

all the knowledge we had about Europe and America was what we could glean from our Western history and world geography textbooks. Books describing “the Jewish global conspiracy” and “the Masonic threat” were available, and our knowledge was so poor that we readily believed the theories they presented.<sup>12</sup>

The highly respected liberal historian Irokawa

---

Daikichi, who was a high school student during the war, later recalled making the following entry in his diary: Stalin, Chiang K'ai-shek, Roosevelt, and Churchill are all puppets of International Jewry; the roots of their strategy lie in secret Jewish organizations of Jewish military industrialists, international businessmen, finance capitalists, the members of secret societies, speculators, and the like; Hitler and the Nazis are the saviors of mankind for combating them.... Japan has also been victimized by the Jews, who initiated the present war. Any Japanese with an ounce of sense knows that we are not imperialists.... Our theory of "eight corners of the world under one roof" [Hakkō ichiu] is far greater, more introspective, and sublime than the theory of "the absolute superiority of the German volk...." Hitler is the hero of the century, an agent of Nietzsche, the savior of Western civilization, and anything but an imperialist!<sup>13</sup>

During the war, the *Protocols* was deployed to reinforce the sense of embattlement and galvanize support for the hostilities: Japan was not simply fighting against the Allies, it was also struggling to defeat the shadowy Jewish menace. At the same time, the *Protocols* was used to suppress domestic dissent and enforce ideological conformity by discrediting groups like the Christian Holiness Church, which sympathized with Jews and challenged the divinity of the emperor.

The Japanese did not persecute the 20,000 Jews living under their control in Shanghai during the war, despite those like Shiōden Nobutaka (1879-1962), who favored extermination. Shiōden was a retired army lieutenant general who had studied in Germany and, running in the final Diet election of the war in April 1942 on an explicitly antisemitic platform, polled more votes than any other candidate. But Shiōden was in the minority. Not that the Japanese were averse to persecuting the populations under their control, but they were unwilling to allow their Nazi allies to dictate their policies, especially on what was essentially a domestic matter.

The majority of Japan's "Jewish experts" were in favor of exploiting the Jews for the benefit of the Japanese empire. They were outspoken believers in the "global

Jewish conspiracy" and never doubted the veracity of the *Protocols*, but they drew conclusions from them that accrued to the benefit of the Jews.

Among these "Jewish experts" was Inuzuka Koreshige, the Navy captain responsible for the Jewish refugees in Shanghai between 1940 and 1942. Inuzuka had authored numerous articles based on the *Protocols*, vehemently arguing that the Jews constituted a powerful threat to Japan. Rather than exterminate them, however, Inuzuka concluded that Japan should exploit their power for the benefit of the empire. Among other things, Inuzuka co-authored a memorandum that Marvin Tokayer and Mary Swartz have dubbed the "Fugu Plan," which proposed that Japan create a Jewish homeland in East Asia in order to avail itself of Jewish capital and expertise.<sup>14</sup> The memorandum never became government policy, but it was indicative of efforts by some Japanese to mobilize Jewish support for Japan.<sup>15</sup>

After the war, in a stunning reversal that was nevertheless consistent with Japan's reinvention of itself as a peace-loving democracy and friend of the West, Inuzuka reinvented himself as a democrat and "friend of the Jews," and he played a prominent role in Japanese-Jewish organizations. Even after his wartime writings were exposed, he continued to serve as president of the Japan-Israel Association until his death in 1965. In Inuzuka's mind and in the mind of his wife Kiyoko, who later wrote a revisionist book defending him, there was no contradiction in Inuzuka's attitude toward the Jews: he had been totally consistent in his awed respect for Jews and his desire to foster a relationship with them that would benefit Japan.<sup>16</sup>

The *Protocols* fell out of favor but did not disappear after the war as Japan strived to recover and reestablish itself as a democracy. Matsumoto Fumi reprinted it in her 1958 book, *Building the Altar at Mount Fuji*<sup>17</sup>; and in 1971 Nagafuchi Ichirō published *The Jews and World Revolution: The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.<sup>18</sup> It was not until the 1980s, in the context of U.S.-Japan trade friction, however, that the *Protocols* once again became fashionable in Japan. Commentators exploited the *Protocols* in order to argue in one way or another that the United States was controlled by Jews who were

determined to destroy Japan as part of their conspiracy to take over the world.

But it would be a mistake to reduce the appeal of the *Protocols* to anti-Americanism. In the 1980s and 90s, the *Protocols* appealed to a broad spectrum, ranging from fundamentalist Christian ministers and prominent academics to left-wing ideologues and religious preachers. A description of some of the individuals who promoted the *Protocols* will reveal the broader range of motives Japanese advocates have had.

### **Four Portraits**

#### ***Uno Masami: Christian Fundamentalist Xenophobe***

The author who spectacularly reintroduced the *Protocols* in the mid-1980s was Uno Masami (1941- ). In two bestsellers published in 1986 that sold a combined total of more than a million copies, Uno reactivated and exploited latent Japanese images of Jews and showed that a savvy author could make a lot of money in the process. His theories were accorded a high degree of credibility in mainstream journalistic, business and political circles, worrying foreign and, to a lesser extent, Japanese observers.<sup>19</sup>

Uno resurrected and refurbished Japan's xenophobic ethnic nationalism, arguing that Japan faced a mortal threat from the Jews, who were out to destroy it. Uno explained the U.S.-Japan trade fiction by asserting that the United States was controlled by a secret, all-powerful Jewish "shadow government." Japanese-U.S. relations had to be understood as Japanese-*Jewish* relations, he insisted. He claimed that "if you understand the Jews, you will understand the world," which was the title of one of his 1986 bestsellers.<sup>20</sup>

Uno tried to discredit Japan's postwar democratic institutions, including the American-drafted postwar constitution, because they were agencies of the Jewish plot to destroy Japan.<sup>21</sup> Democracy and internationalism were simply the "Judaization of Japan," according to Uno, and he urged his countrymen to emulate Adolf Hitler and devise policies that would protect the interests of the Japanese ethnic nation (*minzoku no rieki*).<sup>22</sup>

Christian theology also played an essential role

in Uno's thought. A fundamentalist minister in the Osaka Bible Christian Church (Osaka seisho kirisuto ky kai), Uno had previously published explicit works of Christian prophecy, including *Great Prophecies of the Old Testament: The Jews and Armageddon*, which appeared in 1982. Uno was on his sixth trip to Israel in June 1982, when Israel invaded Lebanon, and events seemed to confirm his apocalyptic theories. Upon his return to Japan, he issued the sequel to his earlier book, titled *Great Prophecies of the Old Testament, Continued: Armageddon and the Qualifications of the Leader*.<sup>23</sup>

*Democracy and internationalism were simply the "Judaization of Japan," according to Uno, and he urged his countrymen to emulate Adolf Hitler and devise policies that would protect the interests of the Japanese ethnic nation (minzoku no rieki).*

In these books, Uno preached that the ultimate aim of the Jews is to precipitate World War III in order to bring about the Messianic Age.<sup>24</sup> As foretold by the prophet Ezekiel,<sup>25</sup> a Soviet invasion of Israel will precipitate the war, which the Jews will win.<sup>26</sup> A Jewish autocrat will be anointed and benevolently rule the world from the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem, but the Jewish dictatorship will last only three and a half years, after which the real Messiah, the returned Jesus, will appear on the Mount of Olives to usher in the true Millennium.<sup>27</sup>

Uno's argument is based on the book of Revelation (13:5-8) and closely resembles the apocalyptic theology of the American premillennialist preacher Hal Lindsey, whose immensely popular *The Late Great Planet Earth* was first published in 1970 and reportedly had sold eighteen million copies in the U.S. by the mid-1980s. The cataclysm Uno predicts is identical to the one Lindsey describes, and he uses the same exegetical evidence.<sup>28</sup>

Uno Masami thus combined Japan's indigenous xenophobia and ethnic nationalism with Christian fundamentalism in a conspiracy theory that derived from the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. In so doing, he achieved both financial success and respectability. Uno's

books were advertised prominently in all of Japan's major news papers; he was quoted in news articles about the Japanese economy<sup>29</sup>; and he was invited by a conservative faction of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party to speak at a Constitution Day rally in May 1987.<sup>30</sup> Not only did Uno's success embolden others to follow his example, but his notoriety made the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and its theory of a Jewish conspiracy to destroy Japan and rule the world common knowledge in Japan.

### *Yajima Kinji: Humiliated Academic*

It is often argued that feelings of humiliation go far to explain the acts of terrorism. In the Japanese case, feelings of humiliation do serve as a justification for the turn of some Japanese intellectuals to the theories of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Yajima Kinji (1919-94) is an example. A prominent professor of politics and economics, Yajima taught at a number of prestigious institutions over the course of his career, including Tokyo

Gakugei University, Tokyo Institute of Technology, Aoyama Gakuin University, and at Beijing University. Yajima was also a well-respected scholar. He translated the works of the important

[Yajima:] "Here is my view: I think the *Protocols* is a forgery. But the Jews are the only ones capable of the particular, concrete expressions in the *Protocols* regarding ideology, politics, economics, and religion."

Austrian economist Friedrich Hayek (1899-1992) and co-edited Hayek's collected works.<sup>31</sup> In 1979, Yajima translated the liberal philosopher John Rawls' highly influential *A Theory of Justice* into Japanese.<sup>32</sup> As a reliable expert on economic affairs, Yajima was twice quoted by *Time* magazine in 1987.<sup>33</sup>

Yajima's academic credentials notwithstanding, in 1986 he published the *Expert Way to Read the Jewish Protocols* (Yudaya purotokōru chō-urayomi-jutsu), which, purports to analyze Japan's current position in the world and predict its future over the next ten years on the basis of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.<sup>34</sup> By 1987, the *Expert Way to Read the Jewish Protocols* was

already in its 55th printing, and according to Amazon.com in Japan, it is still available and usually ships to readers in two business days.

In the introduction to the *Expert Way*, Yajima traces his fascination with the *Protocols* to his experience in October 1972, when he visited California during the Nixon-McGovern presidential campaign. He writes that he was invited to participate in a panel to discuss trade friction between Japan and the United States; but when he read the coverage of the event in the *Sacramento Chronicle* the next day, he was deeply offended by the way the paper described him. From Sacramento, he traveled to San Francisco, where he visited the Bohemian Grove Club, an exclusive men's club. There he became convinced that the world is not run by institutions, as the uninitiated might think, but by secret societies of the rich and powerful that operate behind the scenes. In the clandestine reaches of secret groups like the Bohemian Grove, individuals, business enterprises, and political parties that appear on the surface to be opposed are in fact working in concert. For Yajima, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is the manual or bible that details the consensus strategy of these powerful forces that control the world.

Aware that the *Protocols* is universally regarded by responsible people as a forgery, Yajima defends his decision to accept its theories in the following terms:

Here is my view: I think the *Protocols* is a forgery. But the Jews are the only ones capable of the particular, concrete expressions in the *Protocols* regarding ideology, politics, economics, and religion. Consequently, the *Protocols* were either written by someone more familiar with the Jews than the Jews themselves, or, if that is not the case, then it was put together from the results of all the research ever done on the Jews. In either case, there is no doubt that the contents consist of the wisdom of the Jews.<sup>35</sup>

Just as Uno Masami seems to have been influenced by the fundamentalist Hal Lindsey, Yajima was influenced by Gary Allen, a prominent right-wing ideologue for the John Birch Society and speechwriter for the former Alabama governor George Wallace.<sup>36</sup> Yajima

explicitly identifies the Jews as Allen's "insiders" and "power elite"; and he identifies the Council on Foreign Relations, the Royal Institute for International Affairs, and other favorite targets of conspiracy theorists as the loci of Jewish power.<sup>37</sup>

Ultimately, however, the purpose of Yajima's *Expert Way to Read the Jewish Protocols* is to respond to the sense of humiliation and inferiority engendered by a prominent Japanese academic's encounter with the United States. Despite his scholarly achievements, the world seems to have remained opaque to Yajima until he encountered the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which explained to him what was really going on beneath the surface. The *Protocols* helped to salve his bruised ego by revealing that he was a victim of the racist conspiracy at the root of world politics.

### *Ohta Ryū: New Left Ideologue*

The German socialist August Bebel coined the phrase "the socialism of fools" to describe the activities of those who blamed the Jews for the world's ills instead of the real culprit, capitalism. Bebel would have applied the phrase to Ohta (or, Ōta) Ryū, whose career reflects the steady degeneration of the Japanese left in the years since World War II.

Ohta was born Kurihara Ryūichi on the island of Sakhalin in 1930. He joined the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) in 1947 but left it ten years later, in the wake of Khrushchev's 1956 revelations of Stalin's crimes. After leaving the Party, Ohta formed the Trotskyist League of Japan (*Nihon Torotsukisuto renmei*), which was the immediate forerunner of the League of Revolutionary Communists (Kakkyōdō, short for Kakumei-teki kyōsanshugisha dōmei), which Ohta formed in December 1957 with Kuroda Kan'ichi and others. Kakkyōdō spawned the two most important sects of the Japanese New Left: the Revolutionary Marxist Faction (Kakumarū, short for Kakumei-teki Marukusu-shugihā) and the Nucleus Faction (Chūkaku). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, these two sects engaged in internecine urban warfare, known in Japanese as *uchi-geba* (internecine *gevalt*), which resulted in hundreds of violent clashes annually and caused numerous

deaths and injuries. This sectarian warfare disgusted the Japanese public and contributed importantly to the general loss of sympathy for the left in Japan in the 1970s and beyond.

Calling himself a "pure Trotskyist" (*jun-Toro*), Ohta left Kakkyōdō in July 1958, but he remained a seminal thinker in the Japanese New Left movement. He was involved in the establishment and dissolution of numerous left-wing sects and movements, and attempted, among other things, to infiltrate and hijack the Japan Socialist Party.

As the New Left degenerated and it became clear that it would never achieve its goals, Ohta turned his attention to other radical causes. He called, among other things, for a revolution among Japan's indigenous Ainu minority and for an ecological revolution to protect the environment. He promoted what he called *Tenju no gaku*, which demands the repentance of the human race, who are the enemies of the earth, and the peaceful coexistence of all species throughout the universe. He has also had parliamentary ambitions, and in 1990, he ran unsuccessfully for a seat in the Lower House of the Japanese Diet.

Ohta is a prolific author. A search on the Kinokuniya Book Web, an Amazon.com-like web site, produces eighty hits with Ohta as author or translator. Before 1991, Ohta's books focused on Marxist theory, with titles like the *Road to World Revolution* (*Sekai kakumei e no michi*, 1978) and, with Saeki Yōsuke, the *Revolution in Revolutionary Theory* (*Kakumei riron no kakumei*, 1979). In books like *Introduction to Japan's Indigenous People* (*Nihon genjūmin josetsu*, 1981) and *Japan's Indigenous People and the Emperor System* (*Nihon genjūmin to tennōsei*, 1982), Ohta concerned himself with Japan's dwindling Ainu minority; and he wrote about the environmental and animal rights movements in books like *Manifesto of a Japanese Ecologist* (*Nihon ekorōjisuto sengen*, 1986) and *Toward the Elimination of Animal Domestication* (*Kachiku seido zenpai-ron josetsu*, 1985).

Ohta wrote *Religion and Revolution* (*Shūkyō to kakumei*) in 1980, but he did not turn his full attention to religion and the occult until 1991, when he published

the *Principle of UFO's and Celestial Civilization* (UFO genri to uchū bunmei). Ohta's first book about Jews appeared in 1991: *The Global Strategy of the Seven Great Jewish Cartels* (Yudaya shichi-dai-zaibutsu no sekai senryaku), which he followed with a similarly titled sequel the following year. Since 1991, Ohta has published at least sixteen books with the word "Yudaya" (Jew) in the title and many more volumes of conspiracy theories that deal with the "Jewish threat." In addition to his original writings, Ohta has produced numerous translations, including Martin Luther's *The Jews and Their Lies* (2003) and works by American conspiracy theorists Eustace Mullins and John Coleman.

Today, Ohta Ryū is Japan's most prolific popularizer of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. He has also experimented with electoral politics, having founded the Society for Global Restoration (*Chikyū ishin kai*), which one surmises is identical to the Global Restoration Party (*Chikyū ishin tō*), which fielded candidates in the 1992 Upper House Diet election on a platform opposing "the ambitions of the Jews (Pharisees) to conquer the world and turn it into a global pasture for the human race."<sup>38</sup> Although the Global Restoration Party polled only 11,883 votes or 0.03 percent of the electorate,<sup>39</sup> it was the first time since 1942 that a candidate for public office in Japan had run on an overtly anti-Jewish platform.

Ohta Ryū is not the only Japanese leftist to be seduced by the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. In the October 28, 1993 issue of *Sapio*, a biweekly news magazine with a circulation (in 1989) of 230,000, for example, Hirose Takashi asserted that a Jewish conspiracy headed by the Rothschilds controlled the world's media, military, and governments; and he produced a chart to prove it.<sup>40</sup> But Ohta Ryū's career offers the clearest example of the descent of a Japanese leftist from orthodox communism to a quixotic struggle with imaginary demons. Ohta demonstrates how a left-wing activist was seduced by the *Protocols* and converted, in August Bebel's famous phrase, to "the socialism of fools."

### *Asahara Shōkō: Religious Fanatic*

By the mid-1980s, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* had been popularized in Japan and its central contention

that the Jews were threatening to destroy Japan and control the entire world was circulating widely, appearing in best-selling books, widely-read periodicals, and in large, gaudy advertisements in mass circulation daily newspapers. A political party had been formed and candidates had run for office on a platform drawn from the *Protocols*. The *Protocols*' conflation of the Jews and Freemasons,<sup>41</sup> the calumny that Jews control the media and manipulate world governments, including the U.S. and Japanese governments, was frequently repeated; and the identification of the United States as a "Jewish nation" was widely disseminated and, to some extent, believed.

In this milieu appeared Asahara Shōkō. Born Matsumoto Chizuo in Kumamoto in 1955, Asahara was legally blind from birth. Having partial sight in one eye, he nevertheless had an advantage over the completely unsighted pupils at the schools for the blind to which he was sent, and he had high intellectual aspirations. After failing it once, he moved to Tokyo in 1977 to try a second time (also unsuccessfully) to pass the entrance examination for Tokyo University. Always interested in the occult, he joined Agonshū, a neo-Buddhist sect, in 1981. In 1982, he was convicted of selling herbal medicines without a permit; and in 1984, he founded Aum Shinsen no Kai (Aum Mountain Hermit Society), the forerunner of Aum Shinrikyō, the Aum Supreme Truth cult.

The turning point in Asahara's career from simple charlatan to megalomaniacal guru came in 1985, when he claimed to have received his defining vision. In January 1986, he made a short trip to India and announced on his return that while there he had achieved enlightenment. In 1987, he changed the name of his sect to Aum Shinrikyō; and in 1989, it was recognized as a tax-exempt religious corporation by the Japanese government.

Asahara immediately began his quest to achieve salvation through a world-encompassing apocalypse. In 1989 he published *From Annihilation to Emptiness* (Metsubō kara kokū e), a bizarre reading of the book of Revelation through the prophecies of Nostradamus and Buddhist casuistry in which Asahara predicts that Armageddon will take place in 1999 and will usher in an

age that will be governed by the thought of Adolf Hitler and a resurgent Nazi Party.<sup>42</sup>

Although he does not acknowledge them, Asahara was clearly studying the deluge of antisemitic and neo-Nazi books being published at the time and was anxious to establish the superiority of his version of the apocalyptic predictions that were being made by any number of others. As the journalist Tachibana Takashi has suggested, *From Annihilation to Emptiness* relied heavily on the apocalyptic, neo-Nazi theories of the deranged psychologist Kawajiri Tōru, who, in a 1985 book titled *Scenario for Annihilation* (Metsubō no shinario), had claimed that Hitler was alive and well and living on Alexander I Island off the coast of Antarctica, where he was plotting World War III, which would bring ultimate peace and prosperity to the world.<sup>43</sup>

In February 1990, Asahara stood for election to the Lower House of the Diet, but, like Ohta Ryū, who ran in the same election, he was disastrously defeated, polling only 1,783 votes, even less than his photogenic lieutenant, Joyū Fumihiko.<sup>44</sup> Stymied at the polls and stunned by the failure of his “astral vision,” Asahara hosted an “Armageddon seminar” on Ishigaki Island in the Ryukyu chain in April to plan the implementation of his apocalyptic vision by other means.

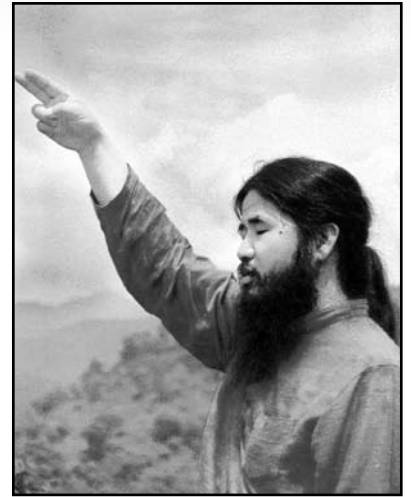
Aum began experimenting with weapons of mass destruction the same month by launching an unsuccessful botulism attack in Tokyo. Two years later, Asahara and members of Aum leadership visited Zaire, supposedly to missionize and provide medical assistance, but more likely to try to acquire the Ebola virus, which was then raging in area. In 1993, Aum began the large-scale production of sarin nerve gas and bought an army-surplus helicopter in Russia, presumably to use as a delivery vehicle. On June 27, 1994, Aum released poison sarin gas from a truck in Matsumoto, a city west of Tokyo. This was, as Robert Lifton has pointed out, “the first large-scale nonmilitary use of nerve gas anywhere on earth.”<sup>45</sup> Seven people were killed and hundreds injured, including judges who were about to rule against Aum in court. Then, on March 20, 1995, Aum members released sarin on the Tokyo subway system, killing twelve people and injuring more than 5,000 others.

In Asahara’s paranoid view, Aum was merely responding in kind to the diabolical threat posed by a global conspiracy out to destroy the sect. The theme that characterized Asahara’s entire worldview, the scholar Ian Reader has written, was the notion that Aum was surrounded by hostile forces and that a vast conspiracy bent on world domination was seeking to destroy Aum as part of its fiendish plans.... Aum was the only force left standing between the conspirators (who included the US and Japanese governments, the Freemasons, the Jews and numerous others) and their evil intentions.<sup>46</sup>

This concatenation of Jews, Freemasons, and world governments in a global conspiracy had no other source in Japan but the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

Three months before its attack on the Tokyo subway, Aum made its indebtedness to the *Protocols* explicit in the January 1995 issue of *Vajrayna Sacca*, its organ publication. The issue featured a ninety-five-page “Manual of Fear” (Kyōfu no manyuaru) that quoted liberally from the *Protocols* and officially declared war on the Jewish “world shadow government,” which, it asserted, was plotting to “murder untold numbers of people and...brainwash and control the rest.”<sup>47</sup> It identified the then-crown prince and princess (the current emperor and empress); UN High Commissioner for Refugees Ogata Sadako; the head of the neo-Buddhist Sōka Gakkai sect, Ikeda Daisaku; the business consultant mae Ken’ichi, and others as Freemasons (and therefore as Jews) who had “made a pact with the devil.”<sup>48</sup>

It is hard not to conclude that, in releasing sarin gas on the Tokyo subway in March 1995, Asahara and Aum saw themselves as retaliating against the vast global



Asahara Shōkō

conspiracy described in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Okuda Hirotaka comes to this conclusion in his book *Read Too Many Jewish Conspiracy Books and Aum is What You Get*, and the writer Nakajima Wataru agrees that “it all began with the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.”<sup>49</sup>

*Mass movements, widespread hatred, and discriminatory government policies are not required for there to be a threat. All that is needed today is a disaffected individual or group, rudimentary weapons of mass destruction, and an enabling ideology. The Protocols of the Elders of Zion provides such an enabling ideology.*

### Conclusion

To suggest, as some Japanese and foreign observers have, that the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and its epigones could circulate as widely as they did in Japan in the 1980s and 90s without ill effect is to misunderstand the nature of the threat they pose. After

Timothy McVeigh’s bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City in 1995, killing 168 people, and the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon in 2001, killing 3,000, it hardly seems necessary to repeat that we live in an age of terrorism, when an individual or fringe group armed with powerful weapons and an extremist ideology can cause untold damage. Mass movements, widespread hatred, and discriminatory government policies are not required for there to be a threat. All that is needed today is a disaffected individual or group, rudimentary weapons of mass destruction, and an enabling ideology. The *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* provides such an enabling ideology.

The *Protocols* is, to paraphrase Norman Cohn, a warrant for mass murder.<sup>50</sup> It is not only a justification for killing anyone whom one chooses to define as a “Jew,” it is also a catalogue of techniques for how to accomplish this on a large scale. In 1939, Hitler, who “did not care two straws...whether the story [of the *Protocols*] was historically true,” told an interviewer that the Jewish conspiracy depicted in the *Protocols* had taught him “political intrigue, the technique of

conspiracy, revolutionary subversion; prevarication, deception, [and] organization.”<sup>51</sup> Heinrich Himmler put it more pointedly when he said, “We [Nazis] owe the art of government to the Jews.”<sup>52</sup>

The *Protocols* presents world conquest by a small, disciplined group as a practical possibility. “The delusion of an already existing Jewish world domination,” Hannah Arendt observed, “form[s] the basis for the illusion of future...world domination” by others.<sup>53</sup> The *Protocols*, Arendt says,

present[s] world conquest as a practical possibility [and] implicate[s] that the whole affair [is] only a question of inspired or shrewd know-how, and that nobody [stands] in the way of...victory over the entire world but a patently small people, the Jews, who rule...it without possessing instruments of violence---an easy opponent, therefore, once their secret [is] discovered and their method emulated on a large scale.<sup>54</sup>

These lessons were not lost on Asahara Shōkō, who combined them with a Buddhist cosmology and rituals, yoga practices, Christian apocalypticism, and a belief in the prophecies of Nostradamus. By the time he appeared on the scene, the *Protocols* had been circulating in Japan as long as it had been in Germany and the United States, and it had played a role in Japanese intellectual life since the early 1920s. In the 1980s, Christian ministers, prominent academics, and left-wing ideologues were promoting the *Protocols* in order to further their diverse agendas. Mass circulation newspapers carried one-third-page ads trumpeting the idea that a Jewish conspiracy was in the process of destroying Japan and taking over the world. It was not necessary for the majority of Japanese to take these calumnies seriously, and in fact they did not, as survey research shows.<sup>55</sup> But a minority did believe them, and that was enough.

The Japanese case is also instructive and sobering in a larger sense. It suggests that real-world familiarity with Jews is not required for people to be seduced by the *Protocols*. As Jean-Paul Sartre observed, it is not the Jew who creates antisemitism, but antisemites who create Jews.<sup>56</sup> “Jew” for the antisemite is a free-floating signifier to designate the object of his animosity. Even



the emperor of Japan, as Aum showed, can be a “Jew.” Aum’s gassing of the Tokyo subway was, in this sense, not only the first large-scale act of urban terrorism, it was also the first act of twenty-first-century antisemitism. Today, anyone can be a “Jew,” and everyone, even the Japanese, are at risk.

## Notes

1. For a full description, see David G. Goodman and Masanori Miyazawa, *Jews in the Japanese Mind: the History and Uses of a Cultural Stereotype*, rev. ed. (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2000).
2. Robert J. J. Wargo, “The Jewish Conspiracy Scare: An Exercise in Paranoia,” *PHP Intersect* (Jan. 1988): 30-34; David G. Goodman, “Japanese Anti-Semitism,” *The World and I* (Nov. 1987): 401-409; idem, “Current Japanese Attitudes Toward the Jews and Their Implications for US-Japan Relations” (Occasional Paper, Sept. 1989, Program in Arms Control, Disarmament, and International Security, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.)
3. Muramatsu Takeshi, “Mata arawareta ‘Nachi no bōrei’” [“The Nazi ghost” appears again], *Sankei shimbun*, 10 Apr. 1987; Katō Shūichi, “Nihon ni okeru han-Yudayashugi” [Antisemitism in Japan], *Asahi shimbun*, evening edition, 15 June 1987; Yamaguchi Yasushi, “Naze ureru ‘han-Yudaya-bon’: shin-nashonarizumu ka” [Why “antisemitic books” sell: a new nationalism?] *Asahi shimbun*, evening edition, 8 Apr. 1987; Ian Buruma, “A New Japanese Nationalism,” *New York Times Magazine*, 12 Apr. 1987, 22-29; 38.
4. Yoshi Tsurumi, “Anti-Semitism in Japan: The Ghost that has Returned to Haunt,” *Pacific Basin Quarterly* (Winter-Spring 1990): 21-22; David G. Goodman, “Han-Yudayashugisha to shite no Momotarō [Momotarō as antisemite],” *Sekai* (Jan. 1988): 329-39; Fujiwara Hajime, “Tōsakuteki sakoku seishin o haisu” [(We should) reject the perverted spirit of a closed country], *Sekai shūhō*, 14 April 1987, 4-5.
5. *Tondemobon no sekai* [The world of outrageous books], ed. To-Gakkai [The Academy of Outrageous Books] (Tokyo: Yōsensha, 1995). The title is glossed on the cover of the book as “Mondo Tondemo,” a play on words meaning “outrageous world.” See also Ben-Ami Shillony, *Politics and Culture in Wartime Japan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 156-71.
6. Ben-Ami Shillony, *The Successful Outsiders: The Jews and the Japanese* (Rutland, Vt.: Tuttle, 1991).
7. Hannah Arendt, “Preface to the First Edition,” *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), xiv.
8. Contrary to our clearly stated position in *Jews in the Japanese Mind* (see p. 269 and passim), Gerhard Krebs erroneously attributes this view to Miyazawa Masanori and me in his otherwise worthwhile essay, “The ‘Jewish Problem’ in Japanese-German Relations, 1933-1945,” in *Japan in the Fascist Era*, ed. by E. Bruce Reynolds (New York: Palgrave, 2004), 125.
9. Maurice Joly’s *A Dialogue in Hell: Conversations Between Machiavelli and Montesquieu about Power and Right* (1864), an anti-authoritarian work, provided 160 paragraphs, more than half of nine out of the *Protocols’* twenty-four chapters. The conceit of the address of the Grand Rabbi derives from a 1868 novel by Hermann Goedsche (1815-78) titled *Biarritz*. See Stephen Eric Bronner, *A Rumor About the Jews: Reflections on Antisemitism and the Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 84.
10. Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide: the Myth of the Jewish World-Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, Brown Judaic Studies 23 (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1981), 152.
11. For a recent contribution to our understanding of the way the *Protocols* were domesticated in Japan in the 1920s and 1930s, see Christopher W. A. Szpilman, “Fascist and Quasi-Fascist Ideas in Interwar Japan, 1918-1941,” in *Japan in the Fascist Era*, ed. by E. Bruce Reynolds (New York: Palgrave, 2004), 81-85.
12. Saitō Takashi, “Rekishu to no deai,” *UP* (Tokyo University Press), Sept. 1975.
13. Irokawa Daikichi, *Aru Shōwa-shi: jibunshi no kokoromi* [One man’s history of the Shōwa era: an attempt at a self-history] (Chūō kōronsha, 1975), 91-92; 115; see also Kimura Hiroshi, “Yudayajin-netsu ni toritsukarete” [Taken captive by the Jewish fever], *Shokun* (Jan. 1971); and Mizuta Hiroshi in “Issatsu no hon, 137,” *Asahi shimbun*, 13 Oct. 1963. The Japanese were not unique. As Frank Dikötter notes, “Contempt for the Jews [among Chinese intellectuals], and even a feeling of hatred towards them, remained vivid for decades. Wu Zelin, an outstanding anthropologist active in the 1930s, recently recalled that he and his colleagues used to find the Jews ‘laughable, despicable, pitiable, admirable, enviable, and hateful.’” Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992), 114.
14. Marvin Tokayer and Mary Swartz, *The Fugu Plan: The Untold Story of the Japanese and the Jews During World War II* (New York: Paddington Press, 1979).
15. Details of these overtures are contained in Tokayer and Swartz.
16. Inuzuka Kiyoko, *Kaigun Inuzuka kikan no kiroku: Yudaya mondai to Nippon no kōsaku* (Tokyo: Nihon kōgyō shimbunsha, 1982).
17. Matsumoto Fumi, *Fuji kaidan’in konryū* (n.p.: Fujisan Myōkōin, 1958).
18. Nagafuchi Ichirō, *Yudayajin to sekai kakumei* (Tokyo: Shinjinbutsu ōraisha, 1971).
19. For a more detailed discussion, see David G. Goodman and Masanori Miyazawa, *Jews in the Japanese Mind*, expanded ed. (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2000), 1-2; 225-32.

20. Uno Masami, *Yudaya ga wakaru to sekai ga miete kuru* [If you understand the Jews, you will understand the world] (Tokuma shoten, 1986), 147. Hereinafter, *Sekai*.
21. Uno, *Sekai*, 149-50; and Uno Masami, *Yudaya ga wakaru to Nihon ga miete kuru* [If you understand the Jews, you will understand Japan] (Tokuma shoten, 1986), 161. Hereinafter, *Nihon*.
22. Uno, *Nihon*, 127; 135; 193-96.
23. Uno Masami, *Kyūyaku seisho no dai-yogen: sekai saishū sensō to Yudayajin* [Great prophecies of the Old Testament: The Jews and Armageddon] (Tokuma shoten, 1982) and *Zoku kyūyaku seisho no dai-yogen: sekai saishū sensō to shidosha no joken* [Great prophecies of the Old Testament, continued: Armageddon and the qualifications of the leader], (Tokuma shoten, 1982).
24. Uno, *Sekai*, 241-42; *Nihon*, 237-52.
25. Uno, *Sekai*, 7; 234-36.
26. Uno, *Nihon*, 244.
27. Uno, *Nihon*, 249-52; Uno, *Nihon*, 225-26.
28. See Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (New York: Bantam Books, 1973), especially 135-68. In the two works that brought him international notoriety when the *New York Times* cited them in March 1987, "Japanese Writers are Critical of Jews," *New York Times*, 12 Mar. 1987.
29. "En: haisui no kōbō" (The yen: last ditch defense), *Yomiuri shimbun*, 17 Jan. 1987.
30. "Backers, Protesters Mark Constitution's 40th Year," *Japan Times*, 4 May 1987.
31. *Collected Works of Hayek in Japanese*, 10 vols., ed. by Nishiyama Chiaki and Yajima Kinji (Tokyo: Shunjū-sha, 1986-90).
32. *Seigiron* (Tokyo: Kinokuniya shoten, 1979). This translation is of the 1975 edition of Rawls' original 1971 version.
33. See *Time*, 6 Apr. and 9 Nov. 1987.
34. Yajima Kinji, *Yudaya purotokōru chō-urayomi-jutsu* [The expert way of reading the Jewish *Protocols*] (Seishun shuppansha, 1986). The subtitle is "kore kara no jūnen" (The next ten years).
35. *Ibid.*, 57-58. This is essentially the same argument that Hitler made in *Mein Kampf* (Book I, chapter ix): "What many Jews may do unconsciously is here consciously made clear. And that is what counts." (Arendt, p. 358n.)
36. Allen's most popular books, *None Dare Call It Conspiracy and The Rockefeller File* were published in Japanese translation in 1986 and 1987 respectively.
37. For more details, see Goodman and Miyazawa, *Jews in the Japanese Mind*, 229-30n.
38. This slogan appeared on a campaign poster.
39. *Asahi shimbun*, 27 July 1992.
40. See pp. 20-21.
41. Akama Gō has been writing about the Jewish-Freemason conspiracy and its designs on Japan for almost twenty years. See, *Nihon = Yudaya inbō no kōzu—Nihon chūsū ha furiimeeson ni dō geikeki shite kita ka* (Japan is a construct of the Jewish conspiracy: how Japan's leaders have responded to the Freemasons' threat (Tokyo: Tokuma, 1986); and *Yudaya-furiimeeson saishū mokuroku* (The final revelation of the Jewish-Freemasons) (Tokyo: Raiin shuppan, 2001).
42. Asahara Shōkō, *Metsubō kara kokū e* (Tokyo: Aum shuppan, 1989), 40-45.
43. Tachibana Takashi, "Aum no 'Kongōjō' to wa nani ka," *Shkan Bunsbun*, 27 July 1995, 165.
44. Ian Reader, *Religious Violence in Contemporary Japan: The Case of Aum Shinrikyō* (Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 2000), 154-55.
45. Robert Jay Lifton, *Destroying the World to Save It* (New York: Henry Holt, 1999), 39-40.
46. Reader, *Religious Violence*, 11.
47. *Vajrayāna Sacca*, 6, 25 Jan. 1995, 3. Although dated January, this issue was actually published a month earlier, in December 1994.
48. *Ibid.*, 16-18.
49. Okuda Hirota, *Yudaya o yomu to Aum ga uarete kuru—Aum jiken no nazo o toku* (Tokyo: Kindai bungeisha, 1996). Nakajima Wataru, "Vaachuaru jidai no kaibunsho," in *Bessatsu Takarajima*, vol. 223: 37-48; see especially pp. 42-44.
50. Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide*.
51. Hermann Rauschnig, *Hitler Speaks: A Series of Political Conversations with Adolf Hitler on his Real Aims* (London: Thornton Butterworth Ltd., 1939), 235; 238.
52. Quoted in Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), 360.
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*, 360. I have converted the past to the present tense in this quotation and the preceding one in order to emphasize the continuing relevance of Arendt's observations, which is very much in the spirit of her work.
55. See Rotem Kowner, *On Ignorance, Respect and Suspicion: Current Japanese Attitudes Toward Jews*, ACTA Series, no. 11 (Jerusalem: Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1997).
56. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*, tr. George J. Becker (New York: Schocken Books, 1948, 1965).

# SYMPOSIUM

---

*David G. Goodman is Professor of Professor of Japanese and Comparative Literature at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His books include Jews in the Japanese Mind: The History and Uses of a Cultural Stereotype (with Masanori Miyazawa, 1995), After Apocalypse: Four Japanese Plays of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (1986). In addition to his English publications, he has written four books in Japanese, including Isuraeru: koe to kao [Israel: voices and faces] (1979).*

**The ACTA series of occasional papers presents shorter studies on recent phenomena, and provides analysis of current trends.  
Most ACTA papers are available at the SICSA website.**

<http://sicsa.huji.ac.il>

**For individual printed copies and information about bulk orders, contact:**

Vidal Sassoon International Center  
for the Study of Antisemitism  
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
Mount Scopus  
91905 Jerusalem, ISRAEL

email: [saragr@savion.huji.ac.il](mailto:saragr@savion.huji.ac.il) -or- [sicsa@mscc.huji.ac.il](mailto:sicsa@mscc.huji.ac.il)

# The *Protocols* in a Land without Jews: A Reconsideration

Rotem Kowner

The initial encounter of the Japanese with the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was rather accidental. Had Japanese forces not been involved in the opportunist Siberian intervention in 1918 and thereby come into contact with White Russian elements, the early translation of the *Protocols* into Japanese would not have materialized. It was, however, only a question of time. Japanese fascination with virtually any intellectual trend in the West, together with the existence of its own highly vibrant publishing industry, made the translation and publication of such a notorious book as the *Protocols* almost inevitable. This inevitability notwithstanding, there is still much irony that the *Protocols* has had such a long impact in Japan—one of the least likely countries, theoretically at least, to embrace

related to the role of Shylock in early translations of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, the majority of the Japanese population was oblivious to Jews and regarded them as a neutral entity.<sup>2</sup> Since then, the *Protocols* has been not only a catalyst, but also a mirror of negative Japanese attitudes to Jews in general. When antisemitic views were rife, interest in the *Protocols* grew, and when Japanese antisemitism languished, so did interest in the book. While the history of the *Protocols* in Japan is absorbing, the issue at stake, at least from an academic viewpoint, is the reasons underlying the book's success and its various usages, which may serve to illuminate the fluctuations of antisemitic attitudes in Japan specifically, and perhaps in other countries as well.

Critically, clarification may also help us to assess the consequences the *Protocols* might have in Japan. Admittedly, I share the fascination of my two distinguished colleagues, Professors David Goodman and Ben-Ami Shillony, with the usage of this book, but I do part company with them on the question of consequences. Although I regard the *Protocols* seriously and am hardly inclined to dismiss this book, I do not believe it is any sort of warrant for mass murder in present day Japan. It is, however, a reflection of Japanese xenophobic nationalism in general, and its bizarre antisemitic attitudes in particular, and should be treated as such.

## *The Historical Context of the Protocols*

The onset of international interest in the *Protocols* began more than a decade after its initial publication, and is related to the Bolshevik Revolution as well as to the fact that many Jews were in leadership positions in the Bolshevik movement at that stage. The strong fear of Communist upheaval outside Russia underscores the initial success of the book: it was not fear of Jews for being religious or ethnic Jews, but as harbingers of revolution.<sup>3</sup> At the end of World War I, Japan was burdened by social discontent, and its elite was apprehensive of the spread of Communist ideas into the working masses. The encounter with a foreign book that offered not only a partial account for the world turmoil but also a colorful warning seemed effective and the book was soon embraced. While the translation of *The Merchant of Venice* in the late nineteenth century is often cited as the dawn of negative Japanese attitudes to Jews, it was the *Protocols* which provided Japanese society with its first significant introduction to modern antisemitism. Some of the Japanese who welcomed the book, however, were also admirers of Jews, partly because they exaggerated Jewish power. From their local perspective they had a good reason to view the *Protocols* as confirming their positive preconceptions, and this duality has remained an unmistakable characteristic of Japanese attitudes to Jews to this very day.

*When antisemitic views were rife, interest in the Protocols grew, and when Japanese antisemitism languished, so did interest in the book.*

antisemitic views.<sup>1</sup>

Nonetheless, the initial Japanese publication of the *Protocols* heralded the emergence of antisemitic views in the country along with a growing public interest in the role of Jews in world politics and the economy. Until then, except for sporadic negative references to Jews

Two decades earlier, during the Russo-Japanese War, these future philosemites and antisemites received an unequivocal demonstration of Jewish “power,” when a single banker, Jacob H. Schiff of the New York bank, Loeb, Kuhn and Company, obtained for Japan about half of its desperately needed foreign loans.<sup>4</sup> Half a year after the conclusion of the war, when Schiff arrived to Japan to receive the Order of the Rising Sun from Emperor Meiji, virtually all the political, military, and business elite took part in the banquets given in his honor. Thereafter, Schiff’s meddling in world politics, at least in Japanese eyes, did not cease. Even as late as during World War I, he refused to allow his firm to participate in any Russian war financing.<sup>5</sup>

It is important to note that the *Protocols* were not unanimously accepted in Japan at face value. While some were quick to translate it, others were even quicker to refute it. In March 1921, about a year after the first translation of the *Protocols* to English, it was cited for the first time in a Japanese manuscript.<sup>6</sup> Within two months, Yoshino Sakuzō, a professor of law at the Imperial University of Tokyo and one of the greatest intellectuals of the Taishō era, objected to the “unfounded rumors” spreading in Japan regarding a Jewish conspiracy. In two articles published in the widely-read monthly *Chūō Kōron* in May and June 1921, he contended that the emergence of the book

in the West was used to mobilize anti-Bolshevik public opinion through traditional antagonism to Jews.<sup>7</sup> Yoshino’s objection notwithstanding, the interest in the *Protocols* generated in Japan following their publication in Western languages led to their full translation in 1924 by an army officer named Yasue Norihiro [Senkō] (1888-1950) under the pseudonym Hō Kōshi. This prompted the Army General Staff three years later to dispatch Yasue, who was on a study tour in Germany, to Palestine to further examine the Jewish situation there.<sup>8</sup>

Although antisemitic ideas began to take root in Japan during the 1920s, only during the following decade was there a substantial increase in antisemitic publications in Japan. They represented a conservative reaction to liberalism and socialism by ultranationalist scholars and military figures, and served as an explanation for the growing conflict with the United States and Great Britain. While reflecting much of the Japanese approach to the external world at that time, as Prof. Goodman and his co-author Miyazawa Masanori so perceptively demonstrated in their seminal book *Jews in the Japanese Mind*, these publications were merely a feeble echo of the identity crisis Japan experienced during its cataclysmic turn against the West. In this epoch antisemitism did not contribute, in my opinion, “to the rise of fascism” in Japan, as Prof. Goodman suggests, but rather the

opposite occurred, that is, the rise of fascism contributed to the greater interest in antisemitic writings, and

*Although antisemitic ideas began to take root in Japan during the 1920s, only during the following decade was there a substantial increase in antisemitic publications in Japan. They represented a conservative reaction to liberalism and socialism by ultranationalist scholars and military figures, and served as an explanation for the growing conflict with the United States and Great Britain.*

this issue of cause-and-effect is also relevant to Japanese attitudes to Jews in the 1990s. All the more, even in that earlier turbulent epoch the Japanese maintained their ambivalent attitude regarding the Jews. Similar to Yasue before him, the writings of Navy Captain Inuzuka Koreshige, who was in charge of the Jewish refugees in Shanghai from 1939 to 1942, are a vivid example not only for this duality but for the likelihood it may very well exist within the same person.<sup>9</sup>

While heavily relying on the *Protocols*, Inuzuka held Jews in awe and offered to create for them an Asian homeland, and expected to benefit from their influence and power. Believing that Jews controlled the finance, politics, and media in the United States and Great Britain, Inuzuka and Yasue,

by then colonel and the liaison with the Jewish Far East Council from 1938 to 1940, formulated the Japanese policy permitting the entry of Jewish refugees from Germany into Shanghai.<sup>10</sup> While it is true that German influence on Japan was weakened by the racial friction and limited military cooperation between the two nations, one can argue that the *Protocols* had a certain positive effect on Japanese decision makers in China and Manchuria, since it made them believe that Jewish power might be instrumental for their empire. In this sense, Japanese promulgators of the *Protocols* markedly differed from European antisemites who never interpreted the book in any positive, or at least constructive, light.<sup>11</sup>

*...one can argue that the Protocols had a certain positive effect on Japanese decision makers in China and Manchuria, since it made them believe that Jewish power might be instrumental for their empire.*

Ironically, by 1940 both Inuzuka and Yasue were regarded by German officials as “friends of the Jews.”<sup>12</sup> More important, however, is the fact that Japan, despite signing the Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany in 1936 and the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy in 1940, never joined the two in deporting Jews, using them as a labor force, or facilitating their extermination.

German pressure notwithstanding, Japan’s overall benevolent policy toward Jews (although marred occasionally by harsh treatment) during World War II, demonstrates the limited detrimental, if not ambivalent, effect the *Protocols* exerted in Japan in the first two decades after its publication.<sup>13</sup>

The decline of Japanese interest in the *Protocols* after 1945 is by no means less revealing. Except for one minor reference to it, in the twenty-six years that followed Japan’s surrender no author dealt with the book, nor it was republished.<sup>14</sup> Japanese society was occupied by fundamental needs such rebuilding its cities and industrial infrastructure and restoring its economy, and was less troubled by identity issues. For this reason the interest in Jews—always a marginal topic in the Japanese society—totally subsided. In 1970, however, a book by Yamamoto Shichihei (using the seemingly more authoritative pseudonym Isaiah Ben-Dasan), *Nihonjin to Yudayajin* (“The Japanese and the Jews”), heralded a new era of growing international aspirations and a return to global competition.<sup>15</sup> Two years earlier, the Japanese economy had surpassed that of Germany, becoming the second largest economy in the capitalist world. The Japanese quest for recognition following the success of the Tokyo Olympic games of 1964 and the World Exposition in Osaka in 1970 was accompanied by a renewed search for self-definition.

*Nihonjin to Yudayajin* offered just that, although it was basically about Japan rather than Jews. For this reason, but also for the writing style and the timing, it became a sensational success and sold more than three million copies. Less than a year passed before Nagafuchi Ichirô authored his own version of the *Protocols*.<sup>16</sup> In the mid-1980s Japan witnessed a second surge of antisemitic writings, which included many references to the *Protocols*, or at least notions of a Jewish ambition to gain control of the world. It is not surprising that this reemergence of the book occurred when it was predicted that the Japanese economy would supercede that of the United States, and the Japanese were facing a second identity crisis. Like the situation half a century earlier, this time, too, there was increasing friction with the United States, reinforced by rising nationalism in Japan.

#### ***Four Case Studies: A Reconsideration***

With this basic knowledge of the short history of the *Protocols* in Japan, we may now turn to reconsider the four fascinating case studies presented by Prof. Goodman. At first glance they appear to represent a mixed bag of motives, but in fact they have much more in common. The most evident common denominator shared by these figures is their period of activity. They all referred to the *Protocols* within a nine-year period starting in 1986 and ending

no later than 1995. During this short time span their antisemitic writings reached their peak and then dwindled or even completely stopped.<sup>17</sup> This time span coincides with a period of head-on economic competition with the United States and rising aspirations for world hegemony.

Symbolically perhaps, during 1986 Uno Masami and Yajima Kinji came into the public limelight with extremely successful antisemitic books, Asahara Shōkō officially founded the Aum Shinrikyō as a religious movement and left for a momentous visit to India, and Japan's Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro made a racist statement in which he touted the superiority of mono-racial Japan over the United States.<sup>18</sup> It all ended nine years later with the Great Hanshin earthquake in January 1995, the Sarin-gas attack in Tokyo in March, and the gloomy realization that the Japan was in a deep economic recession, outclassed by its mentor and rival, the United States. By that year, Yajima was already dead, Asahara arrested, and Uno and Ohta Ryū quit writing on Jewish issues.<sup>19</sup>

Another denominator is an economic motive disguised by ideological rhetoric. The majority of the figures presented—Uno, Yajima, and Ohta—apparently had strong commercial incentives since all the three made their livings, partly or fully, from writing and publishing books, and thus maximized their revenues by publishing best sellers on trendy topics. Vulnerable Japan

and the Jewish conspiracy against it, unfortunately, were among the more popular topics in that period. The shift of these authors to the realm of Jewish conspiracy theories was, by and large, opportunistic not only because it occurred in an era of growing interest in the topic, but also because it did not reflect any long-standing personal interest in Jews. The gamble proved profitable from the start and encouraged them to publish more.

Uno's literary career exemplifies this notion to the extreme. He began with co-editing a lexicon of computer and electronics terms and five years later, in 1982, he wrote his first two books on Jewish-related subjects, still mixed with occultism rather than sheer antisemitism. The books had only limited success and Uno abandoned the topic. He returned to it only in 1986, and at this stage, following the publication of his two bestsellers on Jews, he soared at last to a momentary literary stardom. His success was so instant and beyond any expectation that it shaped his energy and aspirations for the whole of the next decade. Along with selling over one million copies of these two books within a year, Uno became the core of a profitable industry.<sup>20</sup>

The literary record of Yajima and Ohta is also devoid of interest in Jews until the eruption of the Jewish "boom" in 1986. Yajima had focused on economics textbooks, but also wrote on other academic topics, while Ohta wrote about ecological issues, as well as on the origins of



Uno Masami

the Japanese. Yajima abandoned his earlier themes in 1986 when his antisemitic tract was sold several hundred thousand copies; Ohta did likewise in 1991. Somewhat late and hesitant, Ohta's departure from ecological topics was not as abrupt, however; in the same year he wrote on Jews for the first time, he also experimented with a book on UFOs. Apparently, the blind shot at the realm of antisemitism proved more profitable, and he immediately followed up with additional titles on the same topic. While the initial motive was by and large economic, all the three writers soon sought ideological support, perhaps to justify their initial opportunism and minimize their cognitive

on Jewish issues, such a rate of production obviously does not allow for any profound research or even enough time for a true acquaintance with one's supposed specialty. None of these writers was a serious scholar or "academic" writer, and their books on Jews, at least, were without references, hardly any bibliography, and were written in a highly polemic style. Customarily sold in soft cover at a relatively low price, the books were all aimed at *sarariman* (white collar workers) and occult fans.

The most intriguing case study, however, is that of the sect known as Aum Shinrikyô and its leader Asahara, currently on death row. Asahara's motives, at first glance, seem very different from the three other writers. At the heyday of Aum's activity, the use of Jews in the group's rhetoric was certainly not aimed at economic benefit for its leader. About a decade earlier, however, Asahara ventured to establish a sect of his own partly because of economic distress that followed his arrest for illegal sales of herbal medicine. Nonetheless, in striking contrast to the other cases, Asahara was from the start genuinely driven by a sense of destiny, and the economic motive was increasingly less important.

The most important difference is the marginality of Jews in the agenda of Aum. During the decade of its activity up to the Sarin gas attack, the group witnessed extreme changes in its ideology. Throughout its erratic evolution from a benign

New Age-like religious sect to a destructive cult, Aum borrowed numerous ideas and practices from various religions and traditions, but until almost the very end, Jews in general and antisemitism in particular were absent from Aum's agenda. It is important therefore to examine the winding road of Aum and the sources for Asahara's ideological flexibility to understand the sudden use of Jewish images later on.

In 1985, one year after leaving the "new" Buddhist sect Agonshû, Asahara adopted the prophecies of the 16th-century French physician and astrologer Nostradamus—an extremely popular topic among Japan's new religions and in other sectors during the 1980s—and began to articulate for the first time his fears of the possibility of a nuclear war and made them more explicit in 1987.<sup>22</sup> Asahara's early prophecies of such a conflict were closely related to the growing tension with the United States, and being aware of the conflict, he warned that Japan consequent rearmament would lead to war. Between 1988 and 1990 Aum moved from salvation to world destruction. Some scholars suggested that this slide to violence had begun with the beating of his followers for disciplinary reasons, partly because of Asahara's struggle to sustain his leadership and his consequent emphasis on obedience to him.<sup>23</sup>

At the same time, Aum's conflict with its surroundings worsened as the media intensified its scrutiny

*None of these writers was a serious scholar or "academic" writer, and their books on Jews, at least, were without references, hardly any bibliography, and were written in a highly polemic style.*

dissonance. Uno and Yajima turned to antisemitic ideologues and movements abroad, in the United States in particular, for theory and expertise, and the affirmation they received intensified their ardor and reinforced their conviction that the Jews posed a threat.<sup>21</sup>

All three were extremely prolific writers. Even Uno was able to compose no less than dozen books within seven years (1986-1992). Despite the pretense of expertise



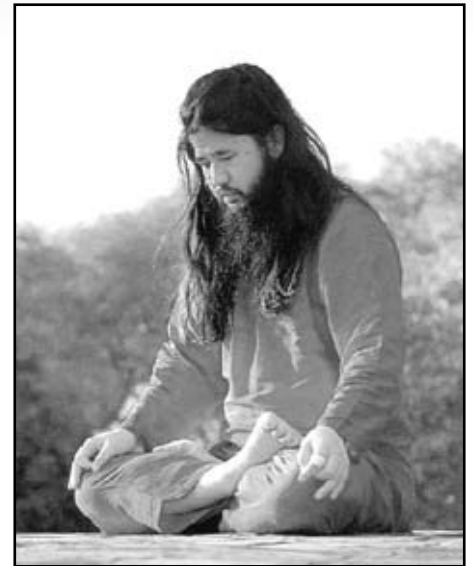
of the sect following disturbing reports from former members. In 1989 Asahara published a book entitled *Metsubô no Hi* (with the subtitle *Doomsday*) in which he incorporated Christian visions of apocalyptic war and used the word *Armageddon* for the first time. That year, the path of the sect to its ultimate catastrophe began to take shape when several members, under Asahara's instructions, killed a dissident member and shortly afterward murdered the entire family of a lawyer who had investigated the sect's activities. In May 1990, almost five years before their murderous subway attack, and still without any reference to the Jews, Aum members released lethal poison (botulinum) in Tokyo, but fortunately with no effect.<sup>24</sup>

Asahara's rhetoric tended to emerge following his actions, if not specifically to justify them. For example, in 1989 the sect established a laboratory for the manufacture of biological weapons, but its leader's fully fledged apocalyptic visions appeared only two years later. When his two-volume *Kirisuto Sengen* (*The declaration of Christ*) was published in 1991, it was evident that Asahara had passed another intellectual transformation and had moved further into the realm of Christian imagery.<sup>25</sup> He invoked the image of himself as Jesus, a messiah who seeks to bring salvation to a select few while the masses reject his deliverance. Asahara's attraction to Christianity brings him in proximity to the

Protestant Reverend Uno Masami. This somewhat unexplored commonality is not haphazard. Japanese Christian leaders have been a major source of antisemitic rhetoric since the early twentieth century. Although Christians were not alone in this practice, they used the image of Jews more than any other Japanese sect to emphasize the chosenness of the Japanese people and their ultimate role in world salvation.

Part of the problem in accounting for Christian antisemitism in Japan is the curious coexistence of fervent philosemitism by certain non-mainstream denominational churches.<sup>26</sup> Both antisemites and philosemites in Japan exploited the Jews to affirm their Japaneseness within a specific cultural discourse and thereby to strengthen their social position within Japanese society.<sup>27</sup> Asahara's turn to Christianity in 1991 unbolted the door for the use of the image of evil Jews, but while it was a major source for his future references to them, it was not the only one. Another source lay in his attempt to extend Aum's activities abroad, similar to many other Japanese sects following the path of *kokusaika* [internationalization]. The sect was successful only in Russia, where it recruited more than 30,000 followers starting in 1992, and also clandestinely purchased weapons.<sup>28</sup>

A third source for Asahara's turn against the Jews was related to his anti-Americanism. In 1993, two years after the first Gulf War and



Asahara Shōkō

at the height of Japanese-American tensions, he started to regard the United States as the world's main force of evil and incorporated it in his apocalyptic prophecies. The malicious role of the United States in Aum's eyes culminated during the Great Hanshin Earthquake, when the cult's "science minister" accused the American military of operating a machine that caused the catastrophe. Finally, in 1994 Asahara began to view the world around him as conspiring against Aum and himself personally.<sup>29</sup> At this stage he was engulfed with paranoia and committed to violence following the gas attack in the city of Matsumoto in June that year, which resulted in the death of seven innocent Japanese. Among the enemies he listed now were several more successful religious sects in Japan, a number of Japanese figures (including the influential politician

Ozawa Ichirô, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Ôgata Sadako, and the American-educated Princess Masako), the United States, Freemasonry, and the Jews.<sup>30</sup>

Asahara was a product of his time. In retrospect, the fickle evolution of his thought and the backdrop in which he was active made the exploitation of the image of conspiring Jews almost inevitable, and it is surprising only that Asahara did not resort to antisemitism earlier. However, it is evident that the anti-Jewish rhetoric followed his sect's violent acts rather than preceding and being used to justify it. The availability of this image in Japan, the attraction to Christian apocalyptic visions, the view of America and the forces supposedly standing behind it as the cult's main enemy, along with the recruitment of followers in Russia—all led to the ultimate characterization of the Jews as Aum's universal enemy in December 1994.<sup>31</sup>

Nonetheless, for Asahara, the Jews were not real people. They were problematic neither in a religious nor in an ethnic and national sense.

To him they represented a dark force, and he did not make any distinction between them and other dark forces. Nearly blind and semi-

educated, he knew very little of Jewish history and simply picked up the prevalent notion of Jews as conspiring to harm humanity and peaceful Japan. This portrayal may underrate, however, Asahara's sophistication and cold manipulative ability to materialize his goals. The choice of Jews as one of the sect's enemies was not done only because of the circumstances but was also due to his awareness of the effect such image would have on his potential followers in Japan and abroad.<sup>32</sup> Asahara's usage of the Jews was a byproduct of a decade of antisemitic writings and it illustrates the danger of such demonization.

### ***The Repercussions of the Protocols***

My reexamination of these four cases casts some doubt on the significance attributed to the Japanese fascination with the *Protocols*, and particularly on the present repercussions of the book. There is no question that the attitudes expressed by these four figures are strongly antisemitic, but they are so remote from Jewish reality that they do not pose a risk to Jewish existence, at least not in the immediate future. I strongly agree with Prof. Goodman's emphasis on the context of the Japanese attitudes to Jews, as well as on the place of antisemitic attitudes as a mirror for the broader Japanese discourse on nationalism, identity, and its place in the world since modernization. "Jews," in this sense, have played a much more profound role in the

Japanese discourse than the Japanese have had in any Jewish discourse. In this context, therefore, the saga of the *Protocols* in Japan should be perceived not only as a microcosm of the general attitudes Japanese have held toward Jews since the 1920s, but also of the attitudes the Japanese hold toward the West and consequently towards themselves.

There have been various views on the actual significance of Japanese antisemitic writings and their impact on Japanese society. They range from alarmist fears to calm sarcasm over the phenomenon. Some experts argue that Japanese antisemitism leads to anti-Jewish hatred and anti-Israel views, while others suggest that it is a marginal phenomenon that may even reinforce positive images of a successful group, thereby providing Jews and the state of Israel with some credit they do not necessarily deserve.

The exposure to antisemitic literature does not lead to a substantial shift in perceptions of the Jews, but it tends to slightly underscore its positive and negative facets. In some cases and for some individuals it may lead to suspicion and distrust, while for others, as Prof. Shillony pointed out, it may lead to greater respect and admiration. The majority of Japanese are ignorant of the *Protocols* and unaware of the long legacy of antisemitism in the world and in Japan.<sup>33</sup> This negative implication notwithstanding, antisemitism has not led to any cases of physical violence against



Asahara Shoko

Jews for being Jews. Even for Asahara, who planned attacks on American figures and institutions, the Jews remained in the realm of his imagination.<sup>34</sup>

Until the last stage of Aum violence, the Jews were marginal and purely symbolic, and were used as to spice up the ideology of the sect. For this reason Aum neither targeted the Jews nor harbored any intention to do so. Nor was their ultimate choice an American target, but ordinary Japanese citizens. The *Protocols* in Japan in this sense combines both a long-term demonization of Jews (of more than 80 years), with an occult image of a sinister group that clandestinely gathers and plans to rule the world. It is really not important, as Ohta admitted, if the book is genuine. The belief in the power of the Jews is stronger than any rational refutation and serves far more important goals than its authors could dream about.

Since the antisemitic surge of the late 1980s, Jewish organizations have made several attempts to halt the publication and distribution of it. Their most fruitful activities took place during the Marco Polo Affair, which arguably led to the demise of the journal, and to the appearance of many articles about Jews and the Holocaust, mostly positive and some even self-reflective.<sup>35</sup> Although Prof. Goodman rightfully criticized the Japanese failure to engage foreigners in an open debate instead of conducting “an intense, solipsistic monologue” about Jews and antisemitism, and contended that

such a reaction “was typical of the way many Japanese have dealt with the outside world for centuries,” it certainly was a breakthrough in the Japanese intellectual treatment of this issue in the last twenty years. The Jewish reaction and the Japanese response to it provide some insights to plausible dealings with Holocaust-denying activities in the future and the broader phenomenon of “intellectual” antisemitism in countries such as Japan, with limited acquaintance with Jews.<sup>36</sup>

All in all, the year of 1995 was a turning point in Japan’s postwar attitude toward Jews. Following the Marco Polo Affair and the Aum Shinrikyo attack that year, Japanese antisemitic writings received much public attention. Ever since, there has been a sharp decline in Japanese attention to Jews, and notably to Jewish conspiracy theories.<sup>37</sup> By contrast, the last several years were marked by a relatively high rate of translations to Japanese of serious works on Jewish history, persecution, and antisemitism. This tendency demonstrates a shift in Japanese interest if not a new maturity of some of the readership previously adhering to more sensational materials. In the present circumstances, Jews remain symbolic and the Japanese attitude to them fits Zygmunt Bauman’s notion of “allo-Semitism”: a non-committal and radically ambivalent attitude toward the Other.<sup>38</sup>

This development is obviously not a cause for alarm but rather for celebration. It qualifies Prof.

Goodman’s warning and softens its immediacy within a chronological perspective. The reasons for the change are to be found, in my opinion, primarily in Japan’s internal affairs and its global or regional position, in readers’ saturation with this material, and to a much lesser

*During the recent decade, friction with the United States over trade issues has diminished, and Japan found itself increasingly threatened by tangible powers with no Jewish ties, such as North Korea, and more recently, China.*

extent, in either the Jewish response or the Japanese backlash.<sup>39</sup> During the recent decade, friction with the United States over trade issues has diminished, and Japan found itself increasingly threatened by tangible powers with no Jewish ties, such as North Korea, and more recently, China. Japanese society has also been facing also internal problems typical of affluent societies, such as an aging population, low birthrate, and latent unemployment. In this new environment, where the quest for meaning replaces the urge for economic competition, symbolic Jews are not needed anymore and interest in them has subsided. When all is said and done, the seeds for another wave of antisemitism in Japan have not been eradicated, and in the appropriate circumstances, the *Protocols* might reemerge and once again be exploited against Jews.

## Notes

1. For the reasons that make Japan an unlikely site for antisemitism, see Rotem Kowner, *On Ignorance, Respect, and Suspicion: Current Japanese Attitudes Towards Jews*, ACTA no. 11 (Jerusalem: SICSA, 1997), 2.
2. At the same time, a very small segment of the Japanese population, mainly a few Christian sects, held positive attitudes to Jews. On early Japanese views of the Jews, see David G. Goodman and Masanori Miyazawa, *Jews in the Japanese Mind: The History and Uses of a Cultural Stereotype*, 2nd ed. (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 2000); Ben-Ami Shillony, *The Jews and the Japanese: The Successful Outsiders* (Rutland, Vt.: Tuttle, 1992).
3. On the spread of *The Protocols* among the White Russians in Siberia, see Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World-Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1969), 117-19.
4. On Schiff's assistance to Japan, see Gary Dean Best, "Financing a Foreign War: Jacob H. Schiff and Japan, 1904-05," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 61 (1972): 313-24; Suzuki Toshio, *Japanese Government Loan Issues on the London Capital Market, 1870-1913* (London: Athlone Press, 1994).
5. On Schiff's attitude to Russia after the Russo-Japanese War, see Priscilla Roberts, "Jewish Bankers, Russia, and the Soviet Union, 1900-1940, the Case of Kuhn, Loeb and Company," *American Jewish Archives* 49 (1997): 9-37.
6. *The Protocols* was cited in a report titled *Yudayajin ni kan suru Kenkyū* [Research concerning the Jews], written by Mori Kenkichi, a member of the Information Bureau of the Foreign Ministry. See Gerhard Krebs, "The 'Jewish problem' in Japanese-German relations, 1933-1945," in *Japan in the Fascist Era*, ed. by E. Bruce Reynolds (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 107-32, 108-109.
7. Yoshino Sakuzō. "Yudayajin no sekai tenpuku no inbō no setsu ni tsuite" (On the theory of a Jewish conspiracy for global subversion), *Chūō Kōron* (May 1921): 65-72; Yoshino Sakuzō. "Iwayuru sekaiteki himitsu kessha no shōtai" (the truth about the so-called global secret societies), *Chūō Kōron* (June 1921): 2-42.
8. On Yasue's visit to Palestine, see David Kranzler, *Japanese, Nazis, and Jews: The Jewish Refugee Community in Shanghai, 1938-1945* (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1976), 207.
9. On Yasue's ambivalence to Judaism and his appreciation of the Zionist effort, alongside fears of Jewish power, see Yasue Norihiro, *Kakumei Undō o Abaku—Yudaya no Chi o Fumite* (Unmasking a revolutionary movement: Setting foot on Jewish land) (Tokyo: Shōkasha, 1931), 1.
10. Kranzler, *Japanese, Nazis, and Jews*, 173-74; Pamela Rotner Sakamoto, *Japanese Diplomats and Jewish Refugees: A World War II Dilemma* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1998), 27-28.
11. On Inuzuka's plans, see Marvin Tokayer and Mary Swartz. *The Fugu Plan: The Untold Story of the Japanese and the Jews During World War II* (New York: Paddington Press, 1979).
12. It is unclear whether the motive was his age or views, but within a short time, the Army released Yasue from active service. See Krebs, *The "Jewish problem"*, 117; Françoise Kreissler, "Japans Judenpolitik (1931-1945)," in *Formierung und Fall der Achse Berlin-Tōkyō*, ed. by Gerhard Krebs and Bernd Martin (Munich: Iudicium Verlag, 1984): 187-210, 203-204.
13. On German pressure on Japan to segregate the Jews in Shanghai, see Bandō, *Nihon no Yudayajin Seisaku*, 299.
14. In 1958 Matsumoto Fumi reprinted Kubota Eikichi's translation of the *Protocols* from 1938; see Matsumoto Fumi, *Fuji Kaidan'in Konryū* (Building the altar at Mount Fuji) (Tokyo: Fujisan Myōkōin, 1958).
15. Isaiah Ben-Dasan [Yamamoto Shichihei], *Nihonjin to Yudayajin* (The Japanese and the Jews) (Tokyo: Yamamoto Shoten, 1970).
16. Nagafuchi Ichirō, *Yudayajin to Sekai Kakumei: Shion no Giteisho* (The Jews and the world revolution: the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*) (Tokyo: Shin Jinbutsu Oraisha, 1971).
17. The antisemitic activities of two of them stopped completely in the mid-1990s: Yajima died in 1994, while Asahara was arrested for murder in early 1995.
18. Ezra Bowen, "Nakasone's World-Class Blunder," *Time* (6 Oct. 1986): 40-41, 40.
19. In 2003, Ohta reappeared in a somewhat related topic, this time as a translator of Michael Hoffman and Moshe Lieberman's book, *The Israeli Holocaust Against the Palestinians*.
20. On Uno's exploitation of his literary success, see Silverman, *Jewish Émigrés*, 285n.
21. On the contacts that Uno and Yajima had with antisemitic groups and Holocaust deniers in the United States, see Goodman and Miyazawa, *Jews in the Japanese Mind*, 229-32.
22. Japanese "New Age" religions have made significant use of apocalyptic themes since the 1970s along with particular fascination with the prophecies of Nostradamus. On the prevalence of these prophecies and their appeal to Aum, see Robert Kisala, "1999 and Beyond: The Use of Nostradamus' Prophecies by Japanese Religions." *Japanese Religions* 23 (1997): 143-57, 144-45; Daniel Alfred Metraux, *Aum Shinrikyo's Impact on Japanese Society* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), 134, 141.
23. See, e.g., Ian Reader, *Religious Violence in Contemporary Japan: The Case of Aum Shinrikyō* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000), 160-61.
24. On Aum's first years see Reader, *Religious Violence*, 95-161; Metraux, *Aum Shinrikyo's Impact*, 138-42.
25. Asahara Shōkō, *Kirisuto Sengen: Kirisuto no Oshie no Subete o Okasu* (The declaration of Christ) (Tokyo: Aumu, 1991) and *Kirisuto Sengen 2: Sairin, Sabaki, Shūmatsu* (The declaration of Christ 2) (Tokyo: Aumu, 1991). The book was

translated into English under the revealing title *Declaring Myself the Christ*.

26. The most prominent of them are the *Genshi Fukuin Undô* (“Original Gospel Movement” popularly known as *Makuya*) and the *Sei Iesukai* (“The Holy Ecclesia of Jesus Church” known also as the *Beit Shalom* Church).

27. Shillony, for example, argued that identification with the early Jews enable Japanese philosemites to be Christian while still rejecting the West. Shillony, *Jews and the Japanese*, 142.

28. On Aum’s activities in Russia, see Yulia Mikhailova, “The Aum Supreme Truth Sect in Russia,” *Bulletin of the Japanese Studies Association of Australia* 16, nos. 2-3 (1996): 15-34.

29. For Asahara’s charges that American and Japanese airplanes sprayed poisonous gas on Aum’s compound, see D. W. Brackett, *Holy Terror: Armageddon in Tokyo* (New York: Weatherhill, 1996), 106.

30. Fujita Shôichi, *Aum Shinrikyô Jiken* (The Aum Shinrikyô incident) (Tokyo: Kyôiku Shiryô, 1995); 60-64; Ian Reader, *Poisonous Cocktail? Aum Shinrikyô’s Path to Violence* (Copenhagen: NIAS Books, 1996), 67-68; Brackett, *Holy Terror: Armageddon in Tokyo*, 106-107.

31. On the reference to the Jews, see “Manual of Fear: The Jewish Ambition—Total World Conquest,” *Vajrayâna Sacca*, no. 6 (25 Jan. 1995), 3. For further details on the article, see Goodman and Miyazawa, *Jews in the Japanese Mind*, 261-62; Ely Karmon, “The Anti-Semitism of Japan’s Aum Shinrikyo: A dangerous revival,” *Anti-Semitism Worldwide: 1998/1999* (Tel Aviv: Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Anti-Semitism and Racism at Tel Aviv University, 1999). The article appears also at <http://www.tau.ac.il/Anti-Semitism/asw98-9/karmon.html>

32. Asahara was attuned to manipulate public attention. In 1985 he appeared in *Twilight Zone*, a magazine dealing with New Age issues, claiming to be able to levitate. Asahara provided a photo of himself performing such levitation with

great pain on his face. During 1991 and 1992 he appeared in several television talk shows and was able to present a favorable impression. See Reader, *Religious Violence in Contemporary Japan*, 72-73, 174.

33. Kowner, *On Ignorance, Respect, and Suspicion*.

34. On such plans, see Brackett, *Holy Terror: Armageddon in Tokyo*, 107.

35. See Goodman and Miyazawa, *Jews in the Japanese Mind*, 271-76; Rotem Kowner, “Tokyo Recognizes Auschwitz: The Rise and Fall of Holocaust Denial in Japan, 1989-1999,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 3 (2001): 257-72; Herbert Worm, “Holocaust-Leugner in Japan: Der Fall ‘Marco Polo’—Printmedien und Vergangenheitsbewältigung,” in *Japan 1994/95: Politics und Wirtschaft*, ed. by Manfred Pohl, (Hamburg: Institut für Asienkunde, 1995): 114-61.

36. For some suggestions for practical measures, see Kowner, *Tokyo Recognizes Auschwitz*, 269-70.

37. Goodman and Miyazawa, *Jews in the Japanese Mind*, 270.

38. Zygmunt Bauman, *Life in Fragments: Essays in Postmodern Morality* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 207-208.

39. While the ups and downs in Japanese antisemitic writings are unrelated to Jews or Israel, the most efficient way to deal with it on a local level is to launch fully orchestrated operations that combine the use of Japanese and foreign media, the criticism of well-known foreign personalities, political intervention, and even economic sanctions. See Kowner, *Tokyo Recognizes Auschwitz*, 270.

*Prof. Rotem Kowner serves as the chair of the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Haifa. Among his publications on this topic are On Ignorance, Respect, and Suspicion: Current Japanese Attitudes towards Jews—an ACTA monograph published in 1997 by the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism.*

# Comments on the Essay of David G. Goodman,

*Ben-Ami Shillony*

David Goodman traces the extraordinary trail of the *Protocols* in Japan, from the translation of a White Russian inflammatory brochure during Japan's Siberian Intervention in 1918-1922, to intellectual respectability and war propaganda during the 1930s and 1940s, to a literary fad in the 1980s and a religious-terrorist ideology in the 1990s. He shows how in a country with hardly any Jewish presence, the theory of a Jewish plot to dominate the world struck roots and gained adherents, to the extent that the *Protocols* and books based on them still sell well in Japan. Goodman's conclusion is that if we do not expose once again this forgery and do not combat its literary manifestations in Japan, this infamous document will spawn antisemitism and bring about anti-Jewish and anti-Western attacks, as it presumably started doing in the Aum shinrikyō incident. He quotes Hannah Arendt to warn that antisemitism may become a catalyst of a Nazi movement, of military aggression and even of genocide.

Such a conclusion might be valid in a Christian or Muslim country, where antisemitism is rooted in the

*Some of the present-day friends of Israel in Japan are motivated by a belief in a cosmopolitan Jewish power which moves the United States, Europe and world markets. They may know that the Protocols are a forgery, but they think it wise to be on the side of those who dominate the world.*

dominant religion and where Jews have been persecuted and discriminated against for a long time. But in Japan, a land where until the late nineteenth century hardly anyone knew what a Jew was and even today the concept is enigmatic,

such a conclusion is exaggerated. Goodman is right in claiming that antisemitic literature, including the *Protocols*, should be repudiated wherever and whenever it appears, but in the case of Japan he seems to overstate the danger. Unlike Europe and the Middle East, in Japan the existence of what appears to us as antisemitic literature does not reflect a *hatred* of Jews and does not lead to anti-Jewish policies. Sometimes the opposite is true. During the Second World War, when antisemitic literature was widely disseminated and favored by the

establishment, although it was never approved as official policy, Japan saved thousands of European Jews who fled from Nazi-occupied Europe.

The Jews have been, and still are, regarded in Japan as a peculiar phenomenon, a unique part of the West, which in some ways controls it but in other ways is despised by it. The Jews are often seen as the epitome of Western culture. They represent all that the Japanese admire in the West—its riches, wisdom, power, ambition, and various skills. But they also represent all that the Japanese fear and hate in the West, whether it is cunning, materialism, pursuit of gain, egoism, and an ambition to dominate the world. Therefore attitudes toward the Jews, like attitudes toward the West, remain ambivalent. The Japanese who have shown interest in the Jews or have written about them cannot be divided into antisemites and philosemites, as most of them (except for the neutral scholars) are both.

In Japan, accepting antisemitic premises and belief in the *Protocols* has not produced a real hatred of Jews or calls for their banishment. Quite often it produced admiration and a wish to emulate the Jews and enlist their support. Goodman mentions the prewar and wartime "Jewish experts," like Yasue and Inuzuka, who translated the *Protocols* and wrote antisemitic treatises, but these were the people who advised the government to befriend the Jews and were instrumental in saving Jewish refugees. Their writings include warnings against Jewish schemes but also admiration for Jewish achievements. Some of the present-day friends of Israel in Japan are motivated by a belief in a cosmopolitan Jewish power which moves the United States, Europe and world markets. They may know that the *Protocols* are a forgery, but they think it wise to be on the side of those who dominate the world.

The only case in Japan in which the *Protocols* were involved in acts of terror was the case of the bizarre religious group *Aum shinrikyō*, which spread sarin gas in the Tokyo subways in 1995. This group regarded the "world shadow government of the Jews" as one of its enemies, but antisemitism was not its central platform. In its deranged ideology, which most Japanese find very difficult to understand, the other enemies were the

United States, the Pope, the large new Buddhist sect Sōka Gakkai, the Japanese government, and the present emperor. After the group was disbanded, it reorganized under the Hebrew name *Alef*.

Goodman mentions three prolific writers, Uno Masami, Yajima Kenji, and Ohta Ryū, whose antisemitic books sold very well in the 1980s and 1990s. Yet, this genre of conspiracy literature has little influence on public opinion let alone government policies. As Goodman admits, Uno based his apocalyptic predictions on biblical prophesies, Yajima identified the American Council on Foreign Relations and the British Royal Institute for International Affairs as Jewish tools, and Ohta's warnings against the Jews meshed with his warnings against UFOs and his call to liberate domestic animals. The fact that such books were bestsellers does not mean that they had any influence. A public opinion poll conducted by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith in 1988, at the peak of the antisemitic writings, showed that 80 percent of the Japanese were totally unaware of the existence of such a literature and of those who read it a mere 6 percent came to have a poorer opinion of Jews. Only 9 percent recommended that Japan should favor the Arab side in the Middle East, while 81 percent thought that Japan should remain neutral.

Let me conclude with a personal recollection. Some years ago, a group of Japanese businessmen visited the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. At the lunch in their honor, their leader, Nishiyama, expressed their admiration for Israel. He admitted that before going to Israel they knew nothing about the Jews and therefore they bought a book to read on the airplane. The book, he said, explained to them everything that they later saw in Israel and which made them appreciate it. Now that they had finished reading the book, they wished to present it to us. He then handed me the Japanese translation of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* with his personal inscription.

*Prof. Ben-Ami Shillony is a prominent Israeli scholar in the field of Japanese studies and (Emeritus) Professor in the Department of History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He is the author of The Jews and the Japanese.*

# Einstein on Antisemitism: Highlights from 1920, 1933, and 1938

*Simcha Epstein*

Looking at the academic literature dealing with Einstein one soon discovers that no comprehensive research has been dedicated to his positions on Zionism, antisemitism, or the Jewish question. No book has been written about Einstein and the Jews. No systematic

sifting of all parts of Einstein's huge correspondence which might address these topics has ever been made. What can be found are compilations of the same articles and letters, fragmentary pieces, and redundant collections of the same references to the same basic facts,

like his journey in the United States (1921) or his visit to Palestine in 1923. General biographies of Einstein do mention his attitude toward these questions, but they follow the same narrative path. And this, decades after the complete Einstein archives have been opened to scholars from all over the world, a period during which numerous books and articles have been published about Einstein as the leading scientific personality of modern times.

My design is to follow Einstein at three critical stages beginning in 1920, when for the first time he debated the question; moving to 1933, when he confronted the rise of Nazism; and in 1938, when he commented on the causes of anti-Jewish hatred. These three highlights are not aimed at dealing exhaustively with the subject; their sole intent is to unveil forgotten or neglected topics for analysis and reflection.

Einstein's fame in 1920 was well-established, since his post-Newtonian theory of the universe had been corroborated by empirical observation during the total solar eclipse of May 1919. He was on his way to the Nobel Prize, which he received in 1922. The year 1920 proved as pertinent for his commitment to the Jewish people as 1905, his "annus mirabilis," proved decisive for his scientific destiny. The few basic texts he wrote about the question in 1920 would not have the revolutionary impact that his four articles of 1905 had on physics,



Albert Einstein on Mount Scopus in 1923.



---

but they certainly comprise a coherent ideological manifesto reflecting Einstein's basic beliefs about antisemitism.<sup>1</sup> As we shall see, the main themes he developed were not at all original; they were familiar and indeed predominant in the Zionist movement, particularly among the German Zionists.<sup>2</sup>

As a key axiom, Einstein asserted that the Jews are not a religion but a nation. He vehemently contested those who spoke "about religious faith instead of tribal affiliation" and presented themselves as "German citizens of the Mosaic faith." He gave a sort of phenomenological description of the way Jewish identity is perceived as distinct by the Jews themselves:

When a Jewish child begins school, it soon discovers that it is different from other children, and that they do not treat him or her as one of their own. This being different is indeed rooted in heritage: it is in no way based only upon the child's religious affiliation or on certain peculiarities of tradition. Facial features already mark the Jewish child as alien, and classmates are very sensitive to those peculiarities. The feeling of strangeness easily elicits a certain hostility, in particular if there are several Jewish children in a class who, quite naturally, join closer together and gradually form a small, closely knit community.

What is true for children is also true for adults, said Einstein, who

added that "a Jew and a non-Jew will not understand each other as easily and completely as two Jews. It is this basic community of race and tradition that I have in mind when I speak of 'Jewish nationality.'"

This brought him, right away, to his definition of antisemitism:

In my opinion, aversion to Jews is simply based upon the fact that Jews and non-Jews are different. It is the same feeling of aversion that is always found when two nationalities have to deal with one another. This aversion is a consequence of the existence of the Jews, not of any particular qualities. The reasons given for this aversion are threadbare and changing. Where feelings are sufficiently vivid there is no shortage of reasons; and the feeling of aversion toward people of a foreign race with whom one has, more or less, to share daily life will emerge by necessity.<sup>3</sup>

A complementary text states:

the psychological root of antisemitism lies in the fact that the Jews are a group of people unto themselves. Their Jewishness is visible in their physical appearance, and one notices their Jewish heritage in their intellectual works, and one can sense that there are among them deep connections in their disposition and numerous possibilities of communicating that are based on the same way of thinking and of feeling.

In other words, the Jews are the

"target of instinctive resentment because they are of a different tribe than the majority of the population."<sup>4</sup>

Einstein in 1921 gave another illustration of his perception of antisemitism as a social and natural phenomenon:

*"In my opinion, aversion to Jews is simply based upon the fact that Jews and non-Jews are different."*

*Albert Einstein (1920)*

While, in my opinion, the economic position of the German Jews is grossly overestimated, Jewish influence on the press, literature and science in Germany is indeed very strong and impresses even a superficial observer. Very many are not antisemites, however, and are honest in their argumentations. They consider Jews to comprise a nationality different from that of the German and, therefore, feel themselves threatened in their national identity by growing Jewish influence.<sup>5</sup>

These lines express a conception which was widespread in Zionist circles in those days. Antisemitism was not conceived as an outcome of intellectual prejudice, cultural stereotypes, or political manipulation. It derived from the very presence of the Jewish minority among non-Jews and from the social and ethnic antagonism which

was almost naturally generated by that presence. Such theories of “objective antisemitism” were naturally unacceptable for Jewish liberal circles who considered that emancipation and equality of rights were the solution to the Jewish question. They believed that the Jews of Germany were part of the German nation, just as the Jews of France were part of the French nation. For Zionists, on the other hand, antisemitism was a despicable but normal phenomenon resulting from the very dispersion of the Jews among the non-Jews. The assumption received one of its most elaborated and theorized

expressions in Perez Bernstein’s famous essay, *Der Antisemitismus als Gruppenerscheinung. Versuch einer Soziologie des Judenhasses*.<sup>6</sup> Bernstein’s book was published in 1926, but had been written three years earlier, at the apex of the German postwar crisis. We find the idea in numerous German Zionist publications of the period.<sup>7</sup>

That Zionist conception leads to several conclusions, the most important being that antisemitism is both an *endless* and a *widespread* phenomenon. It resists all judicial, educational, and media efforts which may be devoted to its eradication; it knows no boundaries and arises

in one way or another, under every regime—indeed, in every country where the Jews reside in significant numbers. “Antisemitism as a psychological phenomenon will always be with us so long as Jews and non-Jews are thrown together,” wrote Einstein in 1920.<sup>8</sup> This perception of antisemitism as unavoidable was one of his chief assumptions about the Jewish question. It certainly explains Einstein’s incredulity when in 1943 he met in Princeton the two delegates (Mikhoels and Itsik Fefer) of the Jewish Anti-fascist Committee of the USSR. Told by them that the “Jewish Question” had been solved in the Soviet Union, he responded



Albert Einstein in Palestine, 1923.

that “wherever there is a Jew there must be antisemitism.”<sup>9</sup> Einstein was dubious about the prospect of erasing antisemitism from the surface of the planet, and he owed his fundamental doubts in this matter to his Zionist ideological background.

Just as he did not accept in 1943 the claim of the two Soviet Jewish emissaries that antisemitism had been eliminated there, he did not praise the efforts of Jewish liberals of the Centralverein to eliminate antisemitism from German society. In his 1920 texts, Einstein advocated three main reasons for refusing to participate in the *Abwehrarbeit* (defense work) of the Centralverein.

First, he saw no possibility of success in overcoming such a deeply rooted phenomenon as antisemitism with the weapons of law, education, and propaganda that composed the defense arsenal of the Centralverein: “The instinct of the masses cannot be changed through apologetics,” he wrote.<sup>10</sup> This skepticism towards the fight against antisemitism was, of course, a part of any Zionist analysis of the Jewish future in the Diaspora.<sup>11</sup> Einstein also accused the Centralverein leaders of confining their defense activities to the German Jews and ignoring, even betraying, the new immigrants from Eastern Europe, the *Ostjuden*,

who had settled in Germany. This reproach was certainly excessive and unfair, but fit perfectly the

*“Before we can effectively combat antisemitism, we must first of all educate ourselves out of it and the slave-mentality which it betokens.”*

*Albert Einstein*

ruthless polemics with which the Zionists of those days opposed the Centralverein, accusing them of being an assimilationist institution that rejected any solidarity with non-German Jews. The third,



and no less important, reason for Einstein's harsh antagonism to the Centralverein was that he repudiated the very ideological basis of that organization. He never accepted, as he wrote in 1920, that he should be considered a German of Jewish faith, of Jewish persuasion, or of Jewish origin. He even used to mock those Jews who pretended that they belonged to the nation among whom they lived, asserting that their Jewish identity was only a matter of faith, not of nationality. On the contrary, being "glad to belong to the Jewish people," he always insisted on the Jews being a nationality (*Nationalität*) of their own, scattered all over the world but maintaining and even enhancing by all available means

*Correlative to his perception of antisemitism as a universal and never-ending phenomenon, he added: "But where is the harm? It may be thanks to antisemitism that we are able to preserve our existence as a race; that at any rate is my belief."*

its cultural specificity and internal cohesion. This idea of Jewish unity would remain central to his beliefs about the Jews: "There are no German Jews, there are no Russian Jews, there are no American Jews. Their only difference is their daily language. There are in fact only Jews," he said in 1935 in New York.<sup>12</sup>

So what could be done against prejudice and hatred? It is precisely on that question that Einstein adhered most closely to the position taken by the German Zionists. If trying to convince non-Jews is ineffective, if all "enlightening" endeavors are doomed to failure, and counter-propaganda fruitless and vain, if the Centralverein is to be rebuked and not to be sustained, then the Jews facing their plight have only one road to follow: they need to concentrate their efforts on themselves and not on the non-Jews surrounding them:

Before we can effectively combat antisemitism, we must first of all educate ourselves out of it and the slave-mentality which it betokens. We must have more dignity, more independence, in our own ranks. Only when we have the courage to regard ourselves as a nation, only when we respect ourselves, can we win the respect of others; or rather, the respect of others will then come of itself.<sup>13</sup>

At first glance, the belief that "self-respect" will help Jews to neutralize hate and gain sympathy among non-Jews seems quite naïve and Einstein appears to suffer from a certain disconnection from reality. But we need to bear in mind that antisemitism, during the 1919-1923 wave, was perceived by contemporaries as a worrying and disturbing phenomenon, not as an overwhelming, destructive or unstoppable force: it was therefore plausible, for ideologies,

organizations, and intellectuals deliberately challenging the efficacy of the fight against antisemitism to champion "self-respect" as the only appropriate Jewish reaction. Secondly, "self-respect," in Zionist eyes, never claimed to be a response per se. It was correlated to the building of the Jewish National Home in Palestine, which aimed at a dramatic change in the political and geo-strategic situation of the Jewish people. In that sense, fostering "self-respect" in the public debate could be interpreted as a means of making clear to the Jews that no salvation could be found in trying to combat antisemitism in the countries of Exile (*Galut*). The ingathering the Jews to their own land was, in the long run, the only solution to the Jewish question. Einstein was consistent in that matter: he accepted Chaim Weizmann's proposal to travel with him to the United States in 1921 in order to raise money for the planned Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and he remained a close friend of the Zionist movement and (after 1948) of the State of Israel.

It must be noted that Einstein's animosity for the Centralverein, far from fading away, found an unexpected expression twenty-five years later. In 1945, he vehemently attacked the American Council for Judaism (ACJ), which was actively campaigning against Zionism in American public opinion. Einstein, who was quite incisive in his polemical thrusts, compared the ACJ to the worst organization he

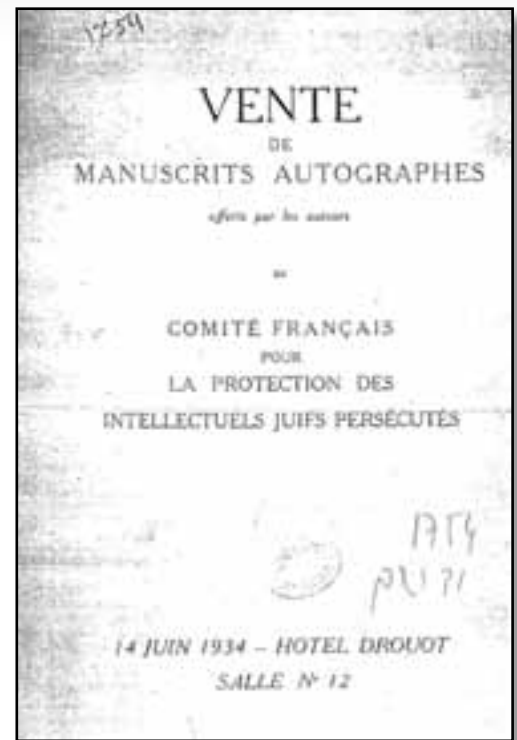
could conceive—the Centralverein, “of unhappy memory”

which in the days of our crucial needs showed itself utterly impotent and corroded the Jewish group by undermining that inner certitude by which alone our Jewish people could have overcome the trials of this difficult age.<sup>14</sup>

This last sentence is important, of course, because of that devastating reference to the Centralverein which was still depicted—in 1945!—as the ultimate paradigm of what Jewish communities should never do in the face of danger and adversity. Einstein conferred no importance at all on the struggle that had been competently and gallantly led by the Centralverein and other German-Jewish organizations like the Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten (RJF), in the last years of the Weimar Republic. He ignored the hundreds and thousands of public rallies against antisemitism that were organized, the millions of leaflets, booklets, and newspaper articles against Nazism that were printed and distributed, etc. He disregarded the fact that if the Centralverein was finally defeated, it was because it had to resist an adversary that was able to crush the mighty and impressive forces of the democrats, socialists, and communists in Germany, and thus could easily cope at the same time with all the Jewish defense organizations. The Jews were routed because their enemy was strong, not because they were weak, or passive, or unprepared.

More than that, Einstein remained loyal—even in 1945!—to the idea that an “inner certitude” could have helped the Jews when confronted with “the trials of this difficult age.” He still speaks in terms of “self-respect” like he did in the 1920s; as if such a feature could have brought any assistance to the Jewish communities facing that unprecedented tide of violence which was to devastate German Jewry and the Jews of Europe as a whole. This theme may have had some justification at the beginning of the 1920s, but it had become totally obsolete at the end of the 1930s, at a time when it was crystal clear that the Jews were not suffering from a lack of “inner certitude” but from a dramatic shortage of immigration certificates to Palestine and visas to the United States. Outdated even before the war, the theme of “self-respect” now sounded simply irrelevant. Indeed, it is a wonder that Einstein, knowing what happened to the Jews and how it happened, was still referring to it in 1945.

Alongside that precept of “self-respect,” there is another theme which appeared in Einstein’s writings from 1920-1921: it is the idea that antisemitism plays an important role in saving Jewish identity from assimilation or from complete extinction. Correlative to his perception of antisemitism as a universal and never-ending phenomenon, he added: “But where is the harm? It may be thanks to antisemitism that we are able to preserve our existence as a race; that



at any rate is my belief.”<sup>15</sup> That idea of antisemitism nourishing Jewish self-awareness was quite popular among Jews, and particularly among religious and/or nationalist Jews, in the 1920s. It completely disappeared from Jewish public discourse when it confronted the gruesome realities of the 1930s and 1940s.

Einstein did not maintain his refusal to join the fight against antisemitism. He accepted the honorary presidency of the Ligue internationale contre l’antisémitisme (LICA), a French movement led by Jews but formally composed of both Jews and Gentiles. Since its foundation in 1927, it had been very energetic in combating antisemitism in France and protesting against

---

its manifestations abroad. It was initially called the Ligue contre les pogromes, and it was under that name that the first contacts were initiated with Albert Einstein, who immediately agreed to associate his name with the organization.<sup>16</sup>

Einstein's acceptance of the honorary presidency of the LICA is certainly surprising if we bear in mind that on some very crucial issues no major disparity could be found between the French LICA and the German Centralverein. The two organizations stood on the same ideological ground in holding that equality of rights for the Jews was the solution for the Jewish question; they both proclaimed that antisemitism was a danger for all and not only for Jews; they thought that racism could be fought by law and counter-propaganda; they addressed public opinion, held public rallies, and published books, brochures, papers, and leaflets. It is true that the Centralverein before 1933 was incomparably stronger in terms of budget, membership, and militancy than its French counterpart, but this dissimilarity of resources did not prevent the two associations from propagating the same message and leading the same fight.

The main difference between them was that the Central Verein was politically neutral, whereas the LICA was left-oriented and would remain so until approximately 1938. A second and no less important difference was that the Centralverein was a specifically Jewish structure while the LICA, although

managed and animated by Jews, was a non-sectarian association in which Jews and non-Jews worked together against antisemitism and racism. Thus the LICA was less "Jewish" than the Centralverein and belonged to the same category as the German Abwehrverein. The leaders of the LICA were less implicated in Jewish communal affairs, and were undeniably more "assimilationist"—in the polemic sense given to that word by Jewish nationalists at that time—than the leaders of the Centralverein. Yet Einstein was willing to cooperate with an association professing in French, for the French, the same doctrine which the Centralverein was professing in German, for the Germans. He refused to give his name and fame to the Centralverein and offered them to the LICA.

Einstein's commitment to the LICA would nonetheless be limited in terms of content as well as duration. It did not survive the triumph of Nazism in Germany, and Einstein brought the relationship to an end in 1934, in circumstances which certainly deserve to be examined.

Let us observe his behavior after he left Germany at the end of 1932 and returned from America in March 1933. He settled in Belgium at Le Coq-sur-Mer, near Ostende, and also stayed in England for a few weeks until his final departure for the United States on October 7, 1933. During his West European intermission, he was frequently invited to give declarations to the

press or to take part in public events organized by groups which, like the LICA, tried to promote public opposition to Nazism. It should be remembered that France, being a democracy and having the strongest army on the continent, was the sole European country which represented a direct menace to the new German regime. The Nazis were aware of that fact and devoted substantial and sophisticated efforts to persuade the French that they had nothing to fear and that there was nothing credible in all the "lies" spread by the Jews and others about recent political events in Germany. The anti-Nazis were no less aware of that, and considered it of primary importance to publicize every possible piece of information about the present crimes and long-term intentions of the Nazis. The battle for public opinion was important everywhere, but in France, for those specific reasons, it had become crucial for the Nazis, and for their opponents as well.

Einstein, at the beginning, seemed ready to participate. He wrote a short text on March 27, 1933, upon his arrival in Europe, a first appeal which was published without delay by the LICA in which he condemned the acts of "brutal force" exerted in Germany against all free-thinking people and against the Jews. He recommended complete support for the activities of the LICA, and expressed his wish that the response would be powerful enough to preserve Europe from regression to a barbarity that reminded one of times

---

that had seemed to be gone forever. He hoped that “all the friends of our so seriously threatened civilization” would succeed in concentrating their efforts to “eliminate that psychosis of the masses,” and he concluded: “I am with them.”<sup>17</sup> The general tone of the text is that of combat, which suited perfectly the atmosphere of mass mobilization and anti-Hitlerian emergency that the LICA was eager to engender in France.

Einstein was also associated with another organization created in Paris to protest antisemitism in Germany. He was invited by the Comité français pour la protection des intellectuels juifs persécutés en Allemagne, which called for an imposing anti-Nazi protest rally in Paris at the Palais du Trocadéro on May 10, 1933. Einstein could not participate, but he sent a short message of support to be read during the meeting. His May text is much more carefully worded than his March appeal. It meditates in serene and general terms about tolerance, freedom, and culture but does not evoke—even by a single word—the situation in Germany. It mentions neither the Nazis (and the way they are treating their adversaries) nor the Jews (and what is happening to them). It is so nebulous and vague that it could have been written by any one, at any time, about a whole range of subjects. Compared to the assertive speeches which were to be delivered at the rally, Einstein’s brief contribution sounds like a model of euphemistic oration.<sup>18</sup>

Einstein was also solicited by the

Ligue des droits de l’homme, which was the French equivalent of the German Liga für Menschenrechte, an association he had worked with in the 1920s. Einstein refused the honorary presidency of a big rally organized “against all fascisms” by the Ligue at the end of May 1933, but agreed, here too, to issue a few sentences to be read to the audience. In his text, he celebrated the principle of equality as a pillar of our civilization; he invoked Rousseau and Voltaire, but he remained elusive about the events in Germany.<sup>19</sup>

The contrast between his messages (the pugnacious appeal of March and the soothing declarations of May) is quite striking. In order to understand what happened, we have to refer to Einstein’s exchange of letters with the Prussian Academy of Sciences, which took place in April 1933, very shortly after the publication of his first appeal.<sup>20</sup> His correspondents tried to justify their decision to expel him from the Academy: they blame him for “atrocities-mongering,” mentioning specifically his March appeal for the LICA.

The allegation of “atrocities-mongering” (*Greuelhetze*) were typical of the official German response to the impressive universal wave of indignation generated by the reports of the Nazi violence of March 1933. They represented the key weapon of a German counter-campaign asserting that Nazi Germany was merely the guiltless victim of a crusade of vilification and hatred. These allegations also

played a domestic role in showing to the Germans that world Jewry was attacking and slandering their country from all sides. German

*He recommended complete support for the activities of the LICA, and expressed his wish that his response would be powerful enough to preserve Europe from regression to a barbarity that reminded one of times that had seemed to be gone forever.*

Jews were held responsible for that “atrocities” campaign, and the Jewish communities in the world were therefore summoned to halt their dark anti-German maneuvers if they did not want German Jewry to be severely penalized and punished: the national boycott of Jewish stores and shops on April 1 was thus defined as a day of “retaliation” against defamation and calumny. Einstein, who was one of the major targets of the Nazi campaign, and whose declarations and writings were closely monitored by the Nazis, was thus confronted with a very uneasy dilemma: he wanted to express his hostility to the new Reich, but he did not want to provide any pretext for reprisals, either individual or collective.

Einstein answered the Prussian Academy that he had “never taken any part in atrocities-mongering,” adding that

I have seen nothing of any such mongering anywhere.... The statements I have issued to the

Press were concerned with my intention to resign my position in the Academy and renounce my Prussian citizenship; I gave as my reasons for these steps that I did not wish to live in a country where the individual does not enjoy equality before the law and freedom to say and teach what he likes.

As for his appeal for the LICA, he revealed that it was made for an inner “purpose of enlisting support” and was not intended for the press.

I also called upon all sensible people, who are still faithful to the ideals of a civilization in peril, to do their utmost to prevent this mass psychosis, which is exhibiting itself in such terrible symptoms in Germany today, from spreading further.

He then deplored that the German press, “muzzled as it is today,” had reproduced a deliberately distorted

The Academy’s reply was that its decision was based on material published by the foreign press, and not by the German newspapers. Moreover, the Prussian Academy also claimed that it based itself on the original text of Einstein’s appeal for the LICA. The polemics went on and each side maintained its position, but it seems obvious that Einstein was striving to act according to two conflicting principles: his sincere and absolute condemnation of Nazism, which he did not try to conceal and which he was not ready to temper; and his refusal to take part in any activity which could be labeled as “atrocitismongering,” and that would lead to a public denunciation by the German government. Sensing that he had gone too far with the statement for LICA in March, he became over-cautious in May. He had nothing to lose, his bridges were burnt and he had no intention at all to return to Germany. But he was clearly reluctant to participate in any active anti-Nazi campaign and to give too much media publicity to his repudiation of what was going on in the Third Reich.

A first conjecture is that he felt physically threatened by the Nazis. The villa where he lived was protected by Belgian security, and he was closely guarded in Great Britain, too. Such were not the best conditions in which to be hyperactive against the Nazis. Rumors were spread about possible Nazi attempts to kill him, or to kidnap him and bring him back

to Germany. Bernard Lecache, on behalf of the LICA, proclaimed that his movement would immediately take revenge on already-designated “hostages” if something bad should happen to Einstein.<sup>21</sup> Lecache’s warning was purely rhetorical, but it was emblematic of the pressure put on Einstein and his anti-Nazi friends.

Another explanation for Einstein’s change of tone was that he had taken into account the reprisals that might be made against German Jewry in retaliation for the “atrocitismongering” he was allegedly spreading. He did not believe in the efficacy of vehement proclamations, and he was fully aware of the fatal consequences that violent anti-German rhetoric might have on the Jews in Germany. This hypothesis is not corroborated by written documentary sources, but it is no less plausible than the previous one.

His most significant text of the period is a letter in which he justified his refusal to take part to a public anti-Nazi rally in France. We do not know to whom it was addressed (to the LICA, to the Ligue des droits de l’homme, or some other anti-Nazi organization begging for his cooperation) but it is of great historical value since it is characteristic of his attitude in those critical days of 1933. The text was so substantial that it was reproduced in *Mein Weltbild*, published in 1934. It would figure as an attachment or better, as an epilogue to his well-known exchange of letters with the Prussian Academy of Science.<sup>22</sup>

*Einstein, who was one of the major targets of the Nazi campaign, and whose declarations and writings were closely monitored by the Nazis, was thus confronted with a very uneasy dilemma: he wanted to express his hostility to the new Reich, but he did not want to provide any pretext for reprisals, either individual or collective.*

version of his words, and that the Academy has taken its decisions without having read the correct version of his declaration.



---

In the first place I am, after all, still a German citizen, and in the second, I am a Jew. As regards the first point, I must add that I have worked in German institutions and have always been treated with full confidence in Germany. However deeply I may regret the things that are being done there, however strongly I am bound to condemn the terrible mistakes that are being made with the approval of the Government; it is impossible for me to take part personally in an enterprise set on foot by responsible members of a foreign government.

Einstein provided his French supporters with an analogy, aimed at clarifying his positions. He compared his present situation to that of Emile Zola at the end of the nineteenth century:

If Zola had felt it necessary to leave France at the time of the Dreyfus case, he would still certainly not have associated himself with a protest by German official personages, however much he might have approved of their action.

The parallel is not convincing, of course, since France in 1898 was still a democratic country. Supporters of Dreyfus had all the possibilities of protesting and acting publicly, whereas this opportunity no longer existed in Nazi Germany for opponents or victims of the new order. The only place they could speak freely was abroad, and if they

abstained from doing so, following Einstein's advice, they condemned themselves to silence: if you did not speak in Germany (because it was forbidden) and if you did not speak outside of Germany (because your words there could be perceived as anti-German), you simply would never speak.

Einstein's second reason for not taking part is that he is a Jew:

[A] protest against injustice and violence is incomparably more valuable if it comes entirely from people who have been prompted to it purely by sentiments of humanity and a love for justice. This cannot be said of a man like me, a Jew who regards other Jews as his brothers. For him, an injustice done to the Jews is the same as an injustice done to himself. He must not be the judge in his own case, but wait for the judgment of impartial outsiders.

Einstein's additional argument is no less illogical than the parallel with Zola. He proudly insists on his affiliation to the Jewish people and his connection with every Jew in the world, and it is *because of that loudly and highly proclaimed solidarity*, that he feels unable to speak and act in favor of his suffering brothers because this could be interpreted as being biased and partisan.

Being a German, he is hindered in responding to the dramatic events in Germany; being a Jew, he feels hampered in dealing with the deteriorating condition of the Jews; being a German Jew—and

this is indeed the amazing principle emerging from his text—he had to remain on the sidelines, quiet, even silent, in those very days when the future of German Jewry was at stake. Einstein's reasoning led to a rather paradoxical and bizarre finale, namely, that a German Jew is not allowed to speak for German Jewry. He must wait for a non-German and non-Jew to do so.

Einstein resigned from the honorary presidency of the LICA in March 1934, a year after his anti-Nazi appeal. He complained in a letter to Lecache that his name had been used without his permission in political affairs and he wanted to make sure that this would not happen again.<sup>23</sup> The LICA did not give any publicity to his defection, which would remain unknown to its audience and rank-and-file, but his name was gradually withdrawn from the official publications and from the stationery of the LICA. Later on, after 1945, and after his death in 1955, the French LICA proclaimed that Einstein was one of its leading personalities, without recalling—but who pays attention to such details?—that he had bluntly separated himself from the group in 1934.

Is there a meaningful connection between his attitude towards the Centralverein in 1920, and his attitude towards the LICA in 1934? The circumstances had considerably changed; antisemitism had significantly grown, but Einstein still felt uncomfortable with the organizations bearing the

burden of Jewish defense in those gloomy years when fascism was inexorably on the rise and when all efforts to halt Jew-baiting seemed increasingly doomed.

In November 1938, two weeks after the Crystal Night pogrom in Germany, Einstein was asked by a New York magazine for his point of view about antisemitism and the Jewish question. “Why do they hate the Jews?” appears to be an important text, because it represents an unusual attempt to provide a comprehensive and theoretical answer to the question. Einstein did not speak or write a lot in the 1930s and 1940s about such problems, and his 1938 text certainly deserves to be read and decoded.<sup>24</sup>

Einstein starts by recalling the

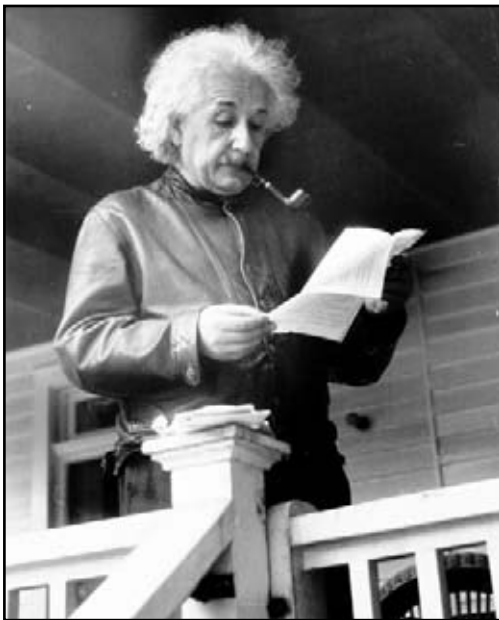
ancient fable of a horse repudiating his freedom. He preferred to be mounted and ruled by the rider because he hates and envies the stag, which runs faster than him, and because the skillful master knows how to divert that animosity against the stag to his own profit. The tale is certainly not the best that could have been envisaged, but the thesis it exemplifies is very clear: the horse represent the Gentiles, his rider is Hitler or any dictator of his kind, and the stag represents the Jew.

“But why did the role of the stag in the fable so often fall to the Jews? Why did the Jews so often happen to draw the hatred of the masses?,” Einstein asks. “Primarily because there are Jews among almost all nations and because they are everywhere too thinly scattered to defend themselves against violent attack.” He gives the example of tsarist Russia, where the rulers “sought to divert unrest by inciting the masses to hatred and violence toward the Jews.” He also evokes the Third Reich, where “the hatred engendered against the Jews not only protected the privileged classes, but enabled a small, unscrupulous and insolent group to place the German people in a state of complete bondage.” He drew a short but accurate historical survey of the phenomenon, showing the contradictions of the antisemitic discourse: Jews “were charged with falsifying the culture of nations by penetrating the national life under the guise of becoming assimilated. In the same

breath they were accused of being so stubbornly inflexible that it was impossible for them to fit in any society.” Einstein clings here to the well-established concept of the Jew as a scapegoat (or shall we say, here, a “scapestag”). This concept is not original; it is classical, but it serves as one of the main explanations given in the 1930s for the swift and universal expansion of antisemitism throughout the period.

But Einstein did not renounce his older interpretation of antisemitism as a social phenomenon. In the core of his text, he suddenly shifted to a radically different interpretation which, in fact, brings him back to his positions of the early 1920s. He asserts that “the members of any group existing in a nation are more closely bound to one another than they are to the remaining population” and that “there will always be friction between such groups—the same sort of aversion and rivalry that exists between individuals.” As far as the Jews are concerned, they form “such a group with a definite character of its own, and antisemitism is nothing but the antagonistic attitude produced in the non-Jews by the Jewish group. This is a normal social reaction. But for the political abuse resulting from it, it might never have been designated by a special name.”

And what is a Jew?, asks Einstein. Previously symbolized by a stag, the Jew here is symbolized by a snail, because it is known “that a snail can shed its shell without thereby ceasing to be a snail. The



Albert Einstein, Princeton, New Jersey, 1938. Courtesy of the Albert Einstein Archives, Jewish National and University Library at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Jew who abandons his faith (in the formal sense of the word) is in a similar position. He remains a Jew.” Einstein deals now with the collective features of the Jews:

The bond that has united the Jews for thousands of years and that unites them today is, above all, the democratic ideal of social justice, coupled with the ideal of mutual aid and tolerance among all men.... The second characteristic trait of Jewish tradition is the high regard in which it holds every form of intellectual aspiration and spiritual effort.

To the classical theme of the Jews serving as a scapegoat, Einstein appends another one, no less classical: the theme of the Jews being persecuted because they bear the flame of intellectual freedom and ethical resistance to tyranny:

Hence the hatred of the Jews by those who have reason to shun popular enlightenment. More than anything else in the world, they fear the influence of men of intellectual independence. I see in this the essential cause for the savage hatred of Jews raging in present-day Germany. To the Nazi group the Jews are not merely a means for turning the resentment of the people away from themselves, the oppressors; they see the Jews as a non-assimilable element that cannot be driven into uncritical acceptance of dogma, and that, therefore—as long as it exists at all—threatens their authority

because of its insistence on popular enlightenment of the masses.

This self-valorating theme (we suffer because we are the most intractable champions of the highest moral values of humankind) is easy to identify. It is massively employed—for very understandable reasons—in times of rising antisemitism, and particularly so in the 1930s. It relates much more to apologetics and to self-praise than to research and analysis.<sup>25</sup> It usually convinces the Jews but its influence among the non-Jews remains generally limited.

Einstein’s text is thus composed of differing interpretative schemes. It starts with the classical view of the Jews being used as a scapegoat for power purposes; it includes the perception of antisemitism as a “normal social reaction” to the very existence of a Jewish community in a given country; and it elevates itself to the munificent and heart-rending vision of the Jews being tormented because of the supreme moral rules they propagate all over the world. Antisemitism as a manipulative tool; antisemitism as a natural social phenomenon; antisemitism as an episode of the never-ending battle between Good and Evil: these three interpretations (the political, sociological, and eschatological) refer to different, and even contradictory, ideological systems but Einstein deliberately integrates the three in his text, without choosing between them.

His syncretic approach

reveals that Einstein, like all his contemporaries at the end of the 1930s, looks at antisemitism with a growing intellectual perplexity which the events to come will not help to clarify. There is certainly a link between that perplexity and the relative silence on this issue which characterized him later during the 1940s.

### Notes

1. We are speaking of three documents from 1920: two texts which have not been completely identified (articles? manifestos? letters?), entitled “Assimilation and antisemitism” and “Antisemitism. Defense through Knowledge”; and the well-known letter in which he announces his refusal to take part to the defense work of the Centralverein. Written in April 1920, this short but important “Confession” was published for the first time in the *Israelitisches Wochenblatt für die Schweiz*, 24 Sept. 1920. These three documents are reproduced with comments in the *Collected Papers of Albert Einstein* (hereafter *CPAE*), vol. 7 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002); the texts in English appear in the corresponding volume of translations (hereafter, *CPAE translations*) by Alfred Engel (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002). It must be noted that Einstein’s first article about the Jews is an intervention on behalf the Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe: *Berliner Tageblatt*, 30 Dec. 1919, in *CPAE*, 7: 238, 239. One of his University lectures on the theory of relativity was disturbed: “Antisemitic remarks per se did not occur, but the undertone could be interpreted that way,” he said to the press in February 1920, in *CPAE*, 7: 286.
2. Einstein’s point of view is very close to that of Kurt Blumenfeld; see for instance, Blumenfeld’s short essay “Antisemitismus,” *Zionistisches Handbuch*, ed. by Gerhard Holdheim (Berliner Büro der Zionistischen organization, 1923),

30-33; on the relations between Blumenfeld and Einstein, see Kurt Blumenfeld, *Sheelat Hayehudim KeHavaiah* (Jerusalem: Hasifriah Hatsionit, 1963), 110-17. About the attitude of the German Zionist movement towards antisemitism, see the editorial "Die antisemitische Gefahr," *Jüdische Rundschau*, 8 Dec. 1922; Richard Lichtheim, *Die Geschichte des deutschen Zionismus* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1954); Stephen M. Poppel, *Zionism in Germany 1897-1933: The Shaping of a Jewish Identity* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1977); Donald L. Niewyk, *The Jews in Weimar Germany* (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1980); Jehuda Reinharz, *Dokumente zur Geschichte des deutschen Zionismus 1882-1933* (Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr, 1981); idem, "The Zionist Response to Antisemitism in Germany," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 30 (1985): 105-40.

3. CPAE translations, 7: 153-54.

4. *Ibid.*, 156-57. The German text reads: "weil sie ein anderes Stammes sind als die Mehrheit der Bevölkerung," CPAE, 7: 295.

5. CPAE translations, 7: 234; the 1921 text is an interview of Einstein, "How I became a Zionist," *Jüdische Rundschau*, 21 June 1921. Its content is no less important for understanding Einstein's position than the three 1920 documents.

6. Perez Bernstein, *Der Antisemitismus als Gruppenerscheinung. Versuch einer Soziologie des Judenbasses* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1926); English trans. (New York, Philosophical Library, 1951); (Hebrew trans. Tel Aviv: Sifriat Maariv, 1980).

7. More generally, it should be recalled that those themes were already exposed by Ber Borochov, the main ideologue of the Poale-Zion in Russia, in the first years of the twentieth century. They were again popularized in the 1930s by Zeev Jabotinsky, the leader of revisionist Zionism.

8. From the letter where he announces his refusal to take part in the defense work of the Centralverein, CPAE, 7: 303, and CPAE

translations, 7: 159. I used the translation which appeared in *About Zionism. Speeches and Letters by Professor Albert Einstein*, translated and edited with an introduction by Leon Simon (London: Soncino Press, 1930), 23, 24.

9. Shimon Redlich, *Propaganda and Nationalism in Wartime Russia. The Jewish Antifascist Committee in the USSR, 1941-1948*, East European Monographs, no. 108 (1982): 114.

10. CPAE translations, 7: 157.

11. There are in fact two basic Zionist attitudes concerning the fight against antisemitism. The first accepts the principle of *Gegenwartsarbeit* in the communities, a principle which includes temporary participation in defense activities against hatred. The second attitude remains faithful to the old Zionist principle according to which the fight is absolutely useless. The German Zionist movement, in its overwhelming majority, belonged to the second category.

12. Quoted in Abraham Pais, *Einstein Lived Here* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 245.

13. *About Zionism*, 23.

14. Albert Einstein, *Essays in Humanism* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950; 1983), 117 (edition of 1983).

15. *About Zionism*, 23; see also p. 27: "There is nothing but the antithesis which the Jews represent, and which is called antisemitism, to preserve Jewish separateness. Without this antithesis assimilation in Germany would have been complete long ago."

16. See Bernard Lecache and Henry Torrès to Albert Einstein, 15 Feb. 1928; and Bernard Lecache to Albert Einstein, 26 Mar. 1928; see also the exchange of letters between Bernard Lecache and Albert Einstein in May 1930, all in the Albert Einstein Archives, documents 47/381-384. Einstein also accepted the honorary presidency of the Comité d'aide aux émigrés et réfugiés d'Allemagne pour des raisons politiques, raciales ou confessionnelles, which was a peripheral structure created by the LICA in 1933, *Le Droit*

*de vivre* (May 1933).

17. "Un appel d'Albert Einstein," *Le Droit de vivre* (Apr. 1933). The Appeal was first reproduced in *La Volonté*, 28 Mar. 1933, together with an interview of Einstein by Bernard Lecache.

18. Einstein's message in French: Comité français pour la protection des intellectuels juifs persécutés, *Séance solennelle du 10 mai 1933 au Palais du Trocadéro. La Protestation de la France contre les persécutions antisémites* (Paris, Librairie Lipschutz, 1933), 9, 10. Einstein's original letter, in German, is reproduced in: *Vente de manuscrits autographes offerts par les auteurs au Comité français pour la protection des intellectuels juifs persécutés*, 14 June 1934, Hôtel Drouot.

19. See the exchange of letters between the Ligue des droits de l'homme and Albert Einstein, May 1933, Albert Einstein Archives, documents 50/975, 976.

20. The exchange of letters with the Prussian (and also with the Bavarian) Academy of Sciences, in Albert Einstein, *Mein Weltbild* (Amsterdam, Querido Verlag, 1934), 120-30; in English in Albert Einstein, *The World as I See It*, transl. by Alan Harris (New York, Philosophical Library, 1949), 81-89.

21. "Réponse à Nuremberg," *Le Droit de vivre* (Sept.-Oct. 1933).

22. Einstein, *The World as I See It*, 88-89.

23. Albert Einstein to Bernard Lecache, 17 Mar. 1934, Albert Einstein Archives, documents 50/977-981.

24. "Why do they hate the Jews?," *Collier's*, 26 Nov. 1938).

25. "The aim is to exterminate not only ourselves but to destroy, together with us, that spirit expressed in the Bible and Christianity which made possible the rise of civilization in Central and Northern Europe," Einstein said in 1939, speaking for the United Jewish Appeal, "The dispersal of European Jewry." It appears in Einstein, *Essays in Humanism*, 104.

---

*Simcha Epstein is a historian and senior researcher  
at the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the  
Study of Antisemitism at the Hebrew University  
of Jerusalem.*

# Sartre at 100: Revisiting His Interventions into the Arab–Israeli Conflict<sup>1</sup>

Jonathan Judaken

Last year marked the centennial of what the prominent French intellectual Bernard-Henri Lévy has called “Sartre’s Century.” Born on 21 June 1905, Jean-Paul Sartre profoundly shaped the past hundred years as a novelist, dramatist, philosopher, social theorist, literary and art critic, journalist, and political activist. The great debates of our times rage on in his works and in the heated discussions they have engendered. The outpouring of articles, books, conferences, and exhibitions in the last few years indicate that his imprint will also inform how we take up these issues in the new millennium. Among these hot topics was Sartre’s stance on the Arab–Israeli conflict. In many respects, his positions were prophetic, almost always going against the grain, and well worth revisiting today in an age of revitalized Judeophobia and a seemingly intractable Israeli–Palestinian impasse.

To examine his views, let us begin near the end of his life. On 7 November 1976, accompanied by Simone de Beauvoir and Arlette-Elkaïm, Sartre arrived at the Israeli

embassy in Paris in order to accept an Honoris Causa in Philosophy from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. At the ceremony, the President of Hebrew University, Avraham Harman, recalled Sartre’s distinguished track record in fighting

*He moved from an equivocal position on Jews and Judaism and unequivocal support of the state of Israel in 1948 toward a committed neutrality on the Arab–Israel conflict around 1967, at the same time giving progressively greater support to Jews and Judaism after the Six-Day War.*

against racial prejudice and his courageous stand against antisemitism, which, he added, Sartre recognized “can take the mask of anti-Zionism.”<sup>22</sup> The Israeli ambassador, Mordechai Gazit, attested that Sartre’s sympathy for the struggle of the Jewish people and the State of Israel flowed directly from the core principles of his oeuvre and commended him for fighting for “the cause of the Jews of the U.S.S.R.”<sup>23</sup> In taking the microphone, Sartre acknowledged that he did not usually accept honors. Most famously, he had refused the Nobel Prize

in 1964. But in accepting the honor from the Hebrew University, Sartre explained that his decision to do so could justifiably be “interpreted as a political choice.”<sup>24</sup>

Sartre’s political choices reflect five overlapping periods in his intellectual development: the 1930s, the Vichy years, his postwar politics of engagement, his existential Marxism, and his final phase in dialogue with Benny Lévy. He moved from an equivocal position on Jews and Judaism and unequivocal support of the state of Israel in 1948 toward a committed neutrality on the Arab–Israel conflict around 1967, at the same time giving progressively greater support to Jews and Judaism after the Six-Day War. Nevertheless, a continuity characterizes the shifts in Sartre’s position: Israel functioned as a significant site for defining the underlying principles of his role as an intellectual.<sup>5</sup>

## ***Between Paris and Jerusalem***

Sartre’s *Réflexions sur la question juive* (1946), a theoretical treatise on antisemitism written just after the Liberation of Paris and before the liberation of Auschwitz, provided the philosophical grounding for his interventions on behalf of Israel. The book has two key parts. The first sharply castigates the cowardice of the antisemite for his refusal to face the human condition and for his “self-denial” (*mauvaise foi*) in trying to escape from it by objectifying “the Jew” as an abject Other against whom he defines himself. The second section explores the two choices Jews face in this situation—to be either authentic or inauthentic—recognizing in pride or denying in shame the fact that they are seen as Jews by others, whether they like it or not.

The duality of the Jewish situation that Sartre described in his book was condensed in the two appellations that he used throughout the text to name “Jewish identity”: *Israël* or *Israélite* and the term *Juif*. While there is a disconcerting slippage between these terms, one might associate *Israélite* with Sartre’s description of inauthenticity and the term *Juif* with his designation of the authentic Jew. The abiding problems of this discussion in the text would take us too far astray; suffice it to say that “the Jew” is caught between the Scylla of the antisemitic gaze and the Charibdis

of martyrdom, willingly sacrificing himself on the altar of a revolution that would finally end the curse of antisemitism, and with it all forms of oppression. However, in the concluding passages of the second main section of the *Réflexions*, Sartre himself recognized not only the ambiguity between these designations but the impasse that structured his entire conception of Jewish authenticity:

The choice of authenticity can, in fact, lead to conflicting political decisions. The Jew [*Juif*] can choose to be authentic by asserting his place as a Jew in the French community, with all that goes with it of rights and martyrdom; he may feel that for him the best way to be French is to declare himself a *French Jew*. But he may also be led by his choice of authenticity to seek the creation of a Jewish nation [*nation juive*] possessing its own soil and autonomy; he may persuade himself that Jewish authenticity demands that the Jew be sustained by a Jewish national community [*communauté israélite*].<sup>6</sup>

Zionism was, therefore, one option for the authentic Jew. But Jews who remained in France would be caught in a dilemma: “If we had not created for the Jew his *situation* as a Jew, it would be possible for him to exercise an option *between Jerusalem and France*.” But such an option is riddled with complications. Without moving to Israel, the acculturated and integrated French Jew could still preserve ties with his homeland since “Palestine might represent in his eyes a sort of ideal value, a symbol.” However, Jews who remained in France would be caught in an impasse: for Palestine would take on an immense significance not only for Jews. Even before the creation of the state of Israel, Sartre saw that antisemites would use this situation to bolster their charge of dual loyalties—of Jews as a “nation within a nation” or of Jews as a fifth column.<sup>7</sup>

While the authentic Jew’s choices were murky, caught somewhere between Paris and Jerusalem, the authenticity of the *intellectuel engagé* was clear. In “Situation of the Writer in 1947,” the concluding section of *Qu’est-ce que la littérature?* (What is literature?), Sartre maintains that “the writer’s duty is to take sides against all injustices wherever they come from.”<sup>8</sup> He follows this statement

by taking an unmistakable position on behalf of Israeli independence in what was then Palestine under the British mandate. This unambiguous *engagement* on behalf of the autonomy of the Israeli state and the national liberation struggle of Jews was repeated in several gestures in the months preceding Israeli independence—including at the trial of Robert Misrahi, accused of hiding explosives for *Lebi* (the Stern Gang), and in an issue of *Hillel*, the organ of the Union Mondiale des Etudiants *Juifs*.

In a message addressed to the French League for a Free Palestine shortly before the proclamation of the independence of the State of Israel on 14 May 1948, Sartre proclaimed that for many years, France and Europe “played Pontius Pilate,” tolerating the fact that the Jews [*Israélites*] were pushed in herds into the gas chambers.” He insisted at that historic juncture, “we cannot dissociate ourselves from the cause of the Hebrews.” Fearing another massacre of Jews by “Arab mercenaries awaiting the departure of the English” he called for the arming of the *Yishuv* (the Jewish settlements in Palestine). So while the situation of the Jews as Sartre spelled it out was rife with tension, it enabled the clear formulation of the politics of the engaged intellectual, who supported the Zionist national liberation struggle of the Jews as part of the anti-colonialist existential humanism that characterized Sartre’s postwar intellectual politics.



### ***Between Israel and the Third World***

In subsequent years, when Sartre was a fellow-traveler of the French Communist Party (1952-1956), his journal, *Les Temps modernes*, nonetheless condemned the destruction of Jewish culture in the U.S.S.R. and Sartre personally made several interventions at the Soviet Embassy on behalf of dissident Jews, many of whom sought refuge in Israel.<sup>9</sup> In the same period, his support of the liberation movement in Algeria brought him closer to a consciousness of the problems of the



Jean-Paul Sartre in the 1950s

Third World and to Arab nationalism. He was a proponent of Nasser's "Arab socialism," which he hoped would serve as a bridgehead to bring socialism into the Arab world. But in the context of the Suez crisis in 1956, while he was critical of both France and England's policies, he was silent on the role taken by Israel.<sup>10</sup>

Sartre's subsequent interventions in the Arab-Israeli conflict reflect his shifting understanding of the place of the intellectual. After his break with the PCF and in the wake of the Algerian

conflict, his conception of the role of the intellectual began to change. He started to critique what he called the "classical intellectual,"<sup>11</sup> articulating an alternative understanding of the "militant intellectual" in the lectures he gave in Japan in the fall of 1966, published later as *Plaidoyer pour les intellectuels* (A plea for intellectuals). He now argued that the intellectual is a "torn consciousness, impossible to suture,"<sup>12</sup> and thus it is only through the self-reflexive focus on the ambivalence constitutive of the role of the intellectual that he can be "a friend of the people."<sup>13</sup> In the final lecture of the *Plaidoyer*, he contended that the writer is necessarily engaged, but in a radically different task than what he proposed in *What is Literature?* Whereas he had previously claimed, "I distrust the incommunicable; it is the source of all violence," he now asserted, "the commitment [*engagement*] of the writer is to aim to communicate the incommunicable."<sup>14</sup> As a result, he claims, "It is the affair of the militant intellectual that he will live in tension."<sup>15</sup>

His interventions into the Arab-Israeli conflict began to stress the irreducible strains within the struggle and his own *agonized* experience of this: "I find myself torn between contradictory friendships and loyalties.... Today, we find that the Arab world and Israel are opposed and we are divided within ourselves and we therefore live this opposition as if it was our personal tragedy."<sup>16</sup> The complexities of the Arab-Israeli conflict helped to spur the changes in Sartre's intellectual politics and in ways that prefigured the post-structuralist gestures of Gilles

Deleuze and Michel Foucault's "specific intellectual" and Jean-François Lyotard's "postmodern intellectual."

Sartre now called the conflict the "*différend judéo-arabe*,"<sup>17</sup> employing the term in precisely the sense that Lyotard would later, when he articulated the task of the postmodern thinker as that of "bearing witness to the *différend*."<sup>18</sup> "As distinguished from a litigation," Lyotard wrote, "a differend [*différend*] would be a case of conflict, between (at least) two parties that cannot be equitably resolved for lack of a rule of judgment applicable to both arguments. *One side's legitimacy does not imply the other's lack of legitimacy*" (emphasis added). For Lyotard, conflicts over irreconcilable differences are inevitable and the postmodern condition is such that there is no universal discourse that can provide a final arbitration of disputes. This is very similar to what Sartre suggests should be the role of the intellectual in the Arab-Israeli conflict: to reveal the inherent differences in each side's positions and how their underlying presuppositions are irreconcilable and lead to strife. This is clearly different from what he had argued was the responsibility of the universal intellectual, which was to take a stance on how the opposing sides should resolve their hostility.

Sartre sought to use his position as an intellectual in order to open a space for the parties themselves to express those differences, which he hoped might then spark a dialogue between Arab and Israeli Leftists. The special issue of *Les Temps modernes* planned to coincide with Sartre's voyage to the Middle East in February-March 1967 embodied this new conception of the function of the intellectual.

Sartre's stance was evident in his statements at the press conference concluding his trip. In response to the questions of reporters who prodded him to take a position on the Arab-Israeli conflict, he disappointed many by his staunch impartiality, maintaining that he spoke from "the point of view of an intellectual who came to inform himself and who, moreover, has taken what I would not say is a position of neutrality, but of a strict absence in the number of the journal that he prepares for French public information on the problem of Israel and the Arabs."<sup>19</sup> He insisted that the whole French Left was



torn because of the dual legacy of the Algerian conflict and the memory of Jewish persecution. This rendered the Left strictly impartial. Emphasizing the immanent contradictions of an impartial *engagement*, an absent-presence, he continued, “neutrality, in truth, is not possible in a problem of this type. That would be to be above the battle... in any case we are not able to take a position. It is for you [Israelis] and them [Arabs] to take a position.”

The equivocation of Sartre’s engaged non-commitment during his voyage and in the special issue of *Les Temps modernes* is reflected in his *témoignage*, which bears witness to the immanent conditions of conflict rather than serving as an advocate for one side or the other. He insisted that both the Israeli and the Arab point of view are rigorously incompatible. This is because the two basic preconditions for dialogue and for peace on either side are directly in contradiction and neither side can or will recognize the prerequisites of the other: “Precondition on the side of the Israelis: recognition of the sovereignty of Israel...Precondition for the Arabs: the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to Israel... For us, neutrality only consists of putting into question these two preconditions.” Sartre’s response *qua intellectuel engagé* is thus to bear witness to the *différend*: to put the very preconditions of discussion into question, to recognize the issues that require negotiation and to open the debate by creating a space for the antagonists themselves to voice their perspective. His hope was that “from the moment where these two preconditions will be the object of common discussions, perhaps there will be a chance for peace.” This statement was made only days before the Six-Day War.

### ***The Six-Day War and its Aftermath***

Jews in France and around the world on the eve of the Six-Day War feared what Raymond Aron called an “*Étatcide*” (genocide of the people of the state of Israel) and joyously celebrated the rapid-fire victory of the Israelis and the unification of Jerusalem effected in June 1967. On November 27, 1967, in a press conference that the historian Robert Wistrich termed his “sermon to the Hebrews,”<sup>20</sup> President Charles de

Gaulle condemned Israel as the instigator of the war, ending France’s alliance with the Jewish State. The arms embargo imposed by de Gaulle was the beginning of a major shift in France’s foreign policy in the Middle East. In castigating Israel, de Gaulle crossed the line by also defaming the character of the Jewish people as a whole—calling Jews “a self-assured, domineering, elite people,” thereby echoing classic antisemitic stereotypes.

Aron led a chorus of voices criticizing de Gaulle, the symbol of the Resistance, the intransigent fighter for liberty and national glory, for invoking highly-charged images of Jewish arrogance,

*[Sartre] insisted that the whole French Left was torn because of the dual legacy of the Algerian conflict and the memory of Jewish persecution. This rendered the Left strictly impartial.*

superiority, power and domination. “De Gaulle has knowingly and deliberately initiated a new phase of Jewish history and perhaps of antisemitism. Everything has once again become possible; everything is beginning again,” Aron asserted.<sup>21</sup> In fact, Xavier Vallat, the former Vichy Commissioner for Jewish Affairs accorded de Gaulle’s comments precisely that value, gleefully writing in the right-wing weekly *Aspects de la France* that until de Gaulle’s pronouncements, journalists who dared to say that “the Jewish people...is imbued with its superiority and considers itself destined...to dominate the world” were immediately hauled into a court of justice.<sup>22</sup> The taboo on public antisemitism that had persisted since the Holocaust was undermined. In the ensuing years, antisemitic outbursts (often justified as anti-Zionism) took many forms from graffiti to terror attacks, from the desecration of cemeteries to assaults on Jewish establishments, synagogues and individuals. De Gaulle’s position and that of the French government was also reflected in a gradual shift in French public opinion after the Six-Day War.

Sartre’s position sharply opposed such harsh indictments of Israel whether on the Left or by Gaullists. He called the embargo of arms “an indefensible caprice

which has nothing to do with anything” and indicted de Gaulle’s entire foreign policy by saying that “people ought not to play the great power when they are not a great power.”<sup>23</sup> By 1969, however, Sartre was already refusing to decry Palestinian terrorism, since he said he could not “reproach the Palestinians for doing what I approved when it was the Algerian FLN.... [T]errorism is the weapon of the weak.” Likewise, however, he would not denounce the Israeli response to terror, believing they had a right to defend themselves.<sup>24</sup>

Sartre’s stance on the conflict was certainly more equitable than that which was apparent in the tide of Leftist opinion in France after 1967. The Shoah and the subsequent struggle to establish the state of Israel had influenced many on the Left to regard Jews as a hated and persecuted minority. Those who migrated to Israel were not seen as colonialists, but as escapees of the European tragedy, treated unjustly after 1945 by their English persecutors. Initially, there was greater sympathy for Jewish misfortune than for the cause of the Arabs. This only changed when the Left began to focus on anti-colonial struggles in the context of the Cold War. A new

image of Israel emerged in the Suez conflict when Israelis were now coming to the aid of the French parachutists sent to Egypt by Guy Mollet’s Socialist government. Now Israel was no longer the humiliated, but the humiliator, no longer the victim, but

the perpetrator, a military people, strong, victorious and the vanguard of “imperialism” in the Middle East.<sup>25</sup>

The Six-Day War cemented this change in opinion on the Left. In its aftermath, the plight of the Palestinians replaced the Algerian cause. Israel was represented as one wing of the American eagle’s new worldwide imperialism, whose most nefarious consequences were being wrought in Vietnam. The French Communist organ, *L’Humanité Nouvelle*, for example, asserted quite clearly that “Zionism [is] the spearhead of imperialism

in the Middle East” (25 May 1967). The Maoists of *La Cause du Peuple* denounced “the imperialist and Zionist plot” (February 1969). *L’Humanité Rouge*, contended that “Zionism is fascism” (4 January 1973) and for the French Trotskyists “the fundamental nature of the Zionist project” was “expansionist, racist, colonialist” (24 August 1973). There were thus, as Michel Winock puts it, “*structural* analogies between the Zionist/imperialist plot...and the old universal Jewish plot.”<sup>26</sup> Anti-Zionism was now in the process of replacing antisemitism on both the Left and the Right.

Sartre would respond to these currents by addressing the origins and consequences of the Six-Day War in a long interview with Arturo Schwarz that took a significantly more balanced approach than most on the Left.<sup>27</sup> He contended that the role of intellectuals in examining the Middle East conflict ought to abandon simple binary thinking that depicted one side as evil and the other as good: “It is our affair, as intellectuals, precisely because we write and speak, to condemn this manichaeism...there is no total justice on one side or the other, but we have to understand both sides completely.” Sartre rejected the claim that Israel was the lever of western neo-imperialism in the Middle East. He was likewise critical of the argument that Arab countries intentionally left Palestinians in refugee camps to apply pressure on Israel, maintaining instead that the economic situation of those countries clearly did not permit them to integrate these refugees.

On the one hand, he thought that Israel served as a scapegoat for Arabs. Given the social stratification in Arab societies and their lack of democracy, often what united them was to call for “the death of Israel.” On the other hand, he condemned the treatment of the Israeli Arabs as second-class citizens: they had their land taken away; they could be evicted; they suffered from an occupational glass ceiling, and were victims of the humiliating pass system between the territories. As for Jerusalem, he thought it should be a “completely neutral zone,” placed under the auspices of the United Nations and regulated by a variety of religious representatives. Going beyond the anti-Zionism of the extreme Left, Sartre contended that “Zionism is dead”: that it was

*“It is our affair, as intellectuals, precisely because we write and speak, to condemn this manichaeism...there is no total justice on one side or the other, but we have to understand both sides completely.”*

a political ideology whose time had passed because “there will be no new crisis of antisemitism.” He thus sought to usher in a post-Zionist perspective that might overcome the dead end in Arab-Israeli relations. Overall, his position was very close to that of the *Comité Israël-Palestine*, an initiative of young, independent leftist revolutionary militants who claimed that “it is not up to us to make peace or to dictate solutions to the two parties present; our only ambition is to contribute to building a bridge between revolutionary Israelis and Palestinians.”<sup>28</sup>

### **“Terrorism is the weapon of the weak”**

Peace was dealt a serious blow, however, when in September 1972 during the Munich Olympic Games, the Black September faction of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) kidnapped nine Israeli athletes, killing two others in the process, and murdering all of them in a firefight with German police. Sartre declared that the Israelis and Palestinians now existed in “a state of war.” Supporting the Palestinian action, he claimed, “in this war, the only weapon the Palestinians have at their disposal is terrorism. It is a terrible weapon but the oppressed poor have no other.” What is more, he declared that those French people who approved of the terrorism used by the FLN in their struggle for national liberation in Algeria must approve the action of the Palestinian terrorists. As an aside, he questioned whether “the Palestinians’ primary enemies may not be these feudal dictatorships, several of which have supported them verbally while at the same time trying to massacre them, and whether the first effort of the Palestinians, whose war necessarily dedicates them to socialism, must not be to side with the peoples of the Middle East against those Arab states that oppress them.” Nonetheless, Sartre indicated that the Munich massacre “perfectly succeeded” because the spectacle of the attack at the Olympics with the eyes of the world focused on the games undeniably put the Palestinian cause at the forefront of world debate. The “horrible courage” of the Palestinian terrorists had demonstrated that it was necessary to immediately resolve the Palestinian problem since it was now clear

“that this problem has become the problem of everyone.”<sup>29</sup>

Sartre’s stance this time was radical even by the standards of the extreme Left in France. Many of the diverse Trotskyist organizations condemned the attack outright. Even the declaration of the Nouvelle Résistance Populaire (NRP), the “military branch” of the Maoist Gauche prolétarienne (GP), did not support the terror tactics of the PLO. The NRP published “a critique of the Munich action” in an article in *La Cause du peuple*, the organ where Sartre had published his own response to the affair. The Munich massacre had such a profound effect on the Maoist Left that it was one of the reasons for its auto-dissolution shortly thereafter. Benny Lévy, one of the important Jewish leaders of the GP was powerfully shaken by the event and forced to ask himself, “What crime is imputable to a young Israeli athlete? Wearing a uniform? Being Jewish?”<sup>30</sup>



Benny Lévy was Sartre’s personal secretary in the 1970s. He lectured at SICSA in 2003.

### **Holy Days and Holy War: October 1973**

Sartre now saw each incident in the aftermath of the Six-Day war as one battle in a longer and on-going conflict that would reach fruition in the Yom Kippur war in 1973. He was interviewed at the time of the war and reaffirmed yet again that in the Arab-Israeli conflict he was neutral. But nevertheless, he stipulated that the war was animated by a profound Arab aggression and a desire to destroy Israel that he called “criminal.”<sup>31</sup> He distanced himself from the position of the French government that had vested oil interests and wanted to continue economic and cultural neo-colonialism in Arab countries. He nonetheless maintained that the new territorial borders created by the expansionist politics of Israel after 1967 were a real danger, that the Israeli government had become a conservative force, and that the occupied territories had become a new cause for war due to the subjugation of the Palestinians. He claimed that the Palestinian problem was now the motor that drove the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, he once more refused to offer a solution, asserting that this could

---

only come from within the Middle East. In ensuing years, he would protest on several occasions against the policies adopted by the Israeli government to handle the Palestinian problem: particularly the destruction of houses, and expulsions from the territories. He would also continue to express his disapproval of discrimination against the Arab minority in Israel.<sup>32</sup> But he also defended Israel in the international arena. In 1974, he joined Raymond Aron and others in signing an indignant petition against the anti-Zionist positions of UNESCO.<sup>33</sup> The following year, along with François Mitterrand, Pierre Mendès France, and André Malraux, he would also condemn the United Nations declaration that Zionism was racism.<sup>34</sup>

### ***Sadat and the Hope for Peace***

Sartre's hope for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East was revived by Anwar Sadat's courageous trip to Jerusalem on Sunday, 19 November 1977 to initiate an end to the conflict. In response, Sartre published a piece on the front page of *Le Monde* directly addressed to his comrades in Israel that was at once an appeal and an ethico-political demand.<sup>35</sup> For Sartre, the definitive gesture of Sadat's symbolic trip was when he visited Yad Vashem because with this gesture "the Arab recognized the Jew, the Israeli." This opening to the Jewish Other by Sadat contained the ethical imperative of a reciprocal response by the Israelis to the Palestinian Other, since Sartre maintained that Jewish ethics is "founded on this recognition [of the Other]." The categorical imperative to respond to the Palestinians also came with two political exigencies that Sartre sketched: restitution of the occupied territories and the creation of a Palestinian state. He closed by stating that Sadat's trip imposed a difficult choice upon the Israeli people and that faced with their choice, he understands their anxiety since, "it is that of freedom."

Sartre's last pronouncements on the Arab-Israeli conflict and more generally on Jews and Judaism would be coauthored with Benny Lévy, causing the well-known ire of Simone de Beauvoir and other members of "the family." They would mark his final return to thinking against himself, radicalizing his critique of the

role of the intellectual by opening himself to the other and to ethics through dialogue as the foundation for a new Left politics. These positions were a continuation of what Sartre had already announced, not least in his *Le Monde* article.<sup>36</sup> In a jointly signed declaration that initiated this final controversy during Sartre's lifetime, Lévy and Sartre affirmed together that Sadat's visit might well be a turning point in Israeli and Jewish history because the genius of Sadat's gesture was "to have begun at the end: the recognition of Israel" which in turn must be radically endorsed by an Israeli populace that also demands peace: "The Israeli-Jew-in-the-Arab-world cannot not choose anymore after November 1977 to be open to the Arab world or to close in on itself."<sup>37</sup> This stance required Israel to set aside the complex "reality" of the situation and to conduct negotiations on the moral plane, rather than rely on power diplomacy. Sartre and Lévy suggested that Israelis should respond to Sadat's recognition of the state of Israel by avowing that the Palestinians are a free people, an occupied people, who have a deep connection to their land. To insist only upon "peace with security" is to demand a peace without risk, they maintained. Permanent peace is a messianic ideal that can only be realized by taking the risk of recognizing the Palestinian Other.

Sartre's final reflections on "the Jewish Question" confirm that he returned to the paradigmatic figure of the Other, "the Jew," throughout his lifetime to reflect on the foundations of his politics and his role as an intellectual. To trace Sartre's interventions on behalf of Israel and in the Arab-Israeli conflict is to bear witness not only to the vacillations in his intellectual politics, but to the prescience of his shifting position through time. Many of his interventions were not only sound then, but remain so today. In the Arab-Israeli conflict, Sartre consistently abjured any pre-fabricated, ready-made simple solutions, insisting that peace demanded recognizing the presuppositions of the Other, which were always defined in specific situations. His last article on the conflict closes ironically with Theodor Herzl's utopian quote about the creation of the state of Israel: "if you will it, it will not be a dream." That statement might well encapsulate what Sartre's existentialism

always affirmed—the kernel of a messianic hope in these dark days of the early twenty-first century.

## Notes

1. A slightly different version of this article appeared as “Sartre, Israël et la politique de l’intellectuel,” *La Règle du jeu*, n. 27 (Jan. 2005): 152-65; reprinted in *Sartre et les juifs*, ed. by Ingrid Galster (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, May 2005): 211-21.
2. Jean-Paul Sartre, “Je suis depuis longtemps l’ami d’Israël,” *La terre retrouvée*, 49, no. 4 (853) (15 Nov. 1976).
3. On 7 January 1971, Sartre gave a short speech at the Mutualité on behalf of the rights of Jews in the U.S.S.R. who wanted to leave, demanding the release of Kuznetsov and ten others who had tried to escape by hijacking a plane and who were given a harsh sentence in December. Along with Simone de Beauvoir, Beate Klarsfeld, Arthur London, Daniel Mayer, and Jean Rostand, among others, he signed the “Appeal from the Left for the Russian Jews,” which protested the proceedings against Jews wanting to leave the U.S.S.R. He contended that not only Jews, but also all those who so desired should be granted exit visas. He also signed an appeal signed by forty-five intellectuals and published in *Le Monde* on October 28 calling for the granting of emigration rights to Soviet Jews. For his stance on behalf of Russian Jewry, see Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka, *The Writings of Jean-Paul Sartre*: vol. 1: *A Biographical Life*, trans. by Richard C. McCleary (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1974), 573, 583.
4. Jean-Paul Sartre, “Discours de Sartre à l’ambassade d’Israël pour l’acceptation de son diplôme de docteur *honoris causa* de l’Université hébraïque de Jérusalem 7 novembre 1976” in Ely Ben-Gal, *Mardi Chez Sartre: Un Hébreu à Paris, 1967-1980* (Paris: Flammarion, 1992): 313-14, 313.
5. This article is a distilled version of a longer chapter of my forthcoming book, where I elaborate extensively on this thesis. See Jonathan Judaken, *Jean-Paul Sartre and ‘the Jewish Question’: Anti-antisemitism and the Politics of the French Intellectual* (Nebraska and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2006).
6. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Antisemite and Jew* (New York: Schocken, 1965), 139.
7. On the image of the Jews as a “nation within a nation” see Jacob Katz, “A State within a State, the history of an antisemitic slogan,” *Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities Proceedings* 4 (1971): 29-58. Reprinted in *Emancipation and Assimilation: Studies in Modern Jewish History* (Farnborough: Gregg, 1972), 47-76.
8. Jean-Paul Sartre, *What is Literature?*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966), 197-98.
9. On this point, see Menachem Brinker, “Sartre et Israël (1939-1980): ‘Drôle de Position’” *Sillages*, no. 3 (Oct. 1980): 83-87, 84.
10. Brinker, “Sartre et Israël,” 85.
11. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Situations VIII* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), 373.
12. Jean-Paul Sartre, “Plaidoyer pour les intellectuels,” *Situations VIII*, 375-455, 422.
13. Jean-Paul Sartre, “L’ami du peuple,” *Situations VIII*, 456-476.
14. Sartre, “Plaidoyer,” 454.
15. *Ibid.*, 424.
16. “Jean-Paul Sartre et le problèmes de notre temps: Interview recueillie par Simha Flapan,” *Cahiers Bernard Lazare*, no. 4 (Apr. 1966): 4-9, 4.
17. Sartre, “Jean-Paul Sartre et le problèmes de notre temps,” 5.
18. Jean-François Lyotard, *Le Différend* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1988); *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), xiii. For Lyotard’s conception of the postmodern intellectual as one who bears witness to the differend, see my “Bearing Witness to the *Différend*: Jean-François Lyotard, The Postmodern Intellectual and ‘the Jews,’” *Studies in Contemporary Jewry: An Annual*, vol. 16: *Jews and Gender: The Challenge to Hierarchy*, ed. Jonathan Frankel (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000): 245-64.
19. See Jean-Paul Sartre, “Pour la vérité,” *Les Temps modernes*, 22, no. 253 bis (June 1967): 5-11, 6.
20. Robert Wistrich, “Preface,” in Henry Weinberg, *The Myth of the Jew in France, 1967-1982* (Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 1987), ix.
21. Raymond Aron, *De Gaulle, Israël et les Juifs* (Paris: Plon, 1968), 18.
22. Quoted in *Le Monde*, 29 Nov., 1967 and cited in Weinberg, *The Myth of the Jew in France*, 36. For the widespread reactions in the French and Israeli press and amongst intellectuals, see Weinberg’s full discussion, “The General and the Domineering People.”
23. Jean-Paul Sartre, “Un Juif d’Israël a le droit de rester dans sa patrie. En vertu du même principe, un Palestinien a le droit d’y rentrer,” *Le Fait Public*, no. 3 (Febr. 1969): 12-17; reprinted as “Interview” in *Situations VIII*, 335-46, 336, 337.
24. Sartre, “Interview,” 343.
25. Here I have summarized the argument of François Furet, “Entre Israël et la gauche française: Trente ans de malentendus,” *Nowvel Observateur*, no. 705 (16 May 1978): 88-9.
26. Winock, *Nationalism, Antisemitism, and Fascism in France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 150-51. The citations from the extreme left newspapers are also from Winock. Winock is careful to point out that “One should not confuse the anti-Zionism of the members of the Diaspora who refuse to recognize Israel as the center of the Jewish world, the religious anti-Zionism of ultraorthodox Jews, the anti-Zionism of Communists, which does not officially call into question Israel’s right to exist, and the anti-Zionism of the PLO, which fixes as its objective the disappearance of the Jewish state,

---

etc” (note 27, 334). See also, Jacques Givet, *La Gauche contre Israël* (Paris: Pauvert, 1968) and Léon Poliakov, *De l'antisémitisme à l'antisionisme* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1969).

27. Jean-Paul Sartre, “Israël, la gauche et les Arabes” reprinted in *Situations VIII*, 347-70.

28. All citations are from “Une conférence a réuni les ‘Comités Israël-Palestine’ de dix pays Européens,” *Le Monde*, 25 Mar. 1970, 4.

29. Jean-Paul Sartre, “A propos de Munich” in *La Cause du peuple-J'accuse*, no. 29 (15 Oct. 1972. Reprinted in Yair Auron, *Les juifs d'extrême gauche en Mai 68: Une génération révolutionnaire marquée par la Shoah*, trans. Katherine Werchowski (Paris: Albin Michel, 1998), 236-38.

30. The declaration of the NRP is also reprinted in Auron, *Les juifs d'extrême gauche*, 228-32; my quotations are from page 230. For Auron's complete analysis of the reaction by the extreme Left to the Munich massacre, see 227-44. For Lévy's response, see Auron, 240. See also Hervé Hamon and Patrick Rotman, *Génération*. vol. 2: *Les Années de poudre* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1988), 458-59, 665-66. Finally, see the excellent article by David Drake, “Sartre, le gauchisme et le conflit israélo-arabe” in *Sartre et les juifs*, ed. by Ingrid Galster (Paris: La Découverte, 2005), 225-33.

31. Published in *Al Hamishmar*, 26 Oct. 1973; it was reprinted in Ely Ben-Gal, *Mardi chez Sartre*, 309-12, 309.

32. On these points, see Brinker, “Sartre et Israël,” 87.

33. *Le Monde*, 17-18 Nov. 1974.

34. *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 17-22 Nov. 1975.

35. Jean-Paul Sartre, “A mes amis israéliens” *Le Monde*, Sunday, 19 Nov. 1977.

36. Jean-Paul Sartre and Benny Lévy, “Déclaration commune Jean-Paul Sartre—Benny Lévy refusée par Le Nouvel Observateur mars 1978” in *Mardi chez Sartre*, 322-27.

37. Sartre and Lévy, “Déclaration commune,” 325.

*Jonathan Judaken is an Associate Professor of Modern European Cultural and Intellectual History at University of Memphis. This article is taken from a chapter of his first book, Jean-Paul Sartre and the Jewish Question: Anti-antisemitism and the Politics of the French Intellectual (University of Nebraska Press). He will be a scholar-in-residence at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2006-2007.*

# The Report on the Romanian Holocaust and Its Consequences

*Leon Volovici*



A young and talented Romanian documentary maker, Florin Iepan, when asked recently about his future projects following the success of his film on Ceausescu dictatorship, responded:

Among my projects, I have an idea that I cannot yet call a project, named “I, You, and Antonescu.” It is also a documentary movie on something that is happening right now. I want to produce a portrait of this historical character who seems to hold a special place in the hearts of millions of Romanians but who, I think, is guilty of horrible crimes during the Second World War. And then I ask myself: What do we do with these characters that we secretly cultivate but, for the sake of Europe, or of I do not know which international protest, we do not make statues of them or we hide them? I have recently seen an editorial in a Romanian newspaper where Antonescu was cited as an example of uprightness, of patriotism. He was a patriot, but what do we do with a patriot who has the death of thousands

and thousands of people on his conscience? If we want to be part of the civilized world we got to have some values that presuppose a choice made not for the sake of integration into the European Union, but a change in the way the common people think. What do we do with this historical character: do we throw him away in history’s dust bin, together with the other dictators Romania had? Do we place him on a pedestal? Romanian society has not come up with an answer referring to this character. I think Romanians are looking for Antonescu in the future and present leaders of Romania; this is my suspicion. If we are looking for him, he is going to come back from history and again we will have a great patriot who will drag us into a dark history.<sup>1</sup>

In a very suggestive way, the young filmmaker pointed precisely to some of the dilemmas of his generation in one of the most thorny and difficult challenges now facing Romanian society: to c o n f r o n t not only the

communist heritage, but the heritage, no less dark, of the Antonescu regime responsible for the destruction of nearly half of the Jewish population of Romania and the territories under its authority during the Holocaust years. A foreign observer may be perplexed at the long delay—six decades after the end of the war—before these matters became an open topic of concern and reflection. This was the most distorted chapter in all of Romanian history. The mystification began toward the end of Antonescu’s rule, and continued, along with other propagandistic goals, during the communist period. It was renewed, from “private” or official initiatives, during the post-communist years.

One of the main sources for this phenomenon is an obsessive concern for the “good image” and good name of Romania and the



H.E. Foreign Minister of Romania, Dr. Mihai Razvan Ungureanu at the Sassoon Center where he delivered a lecture on “Romania and the Holocaust”



Prof. Robert Wistrich and H. E. Ungureanu

Romanian people. For this reason, all the official propaganda efforts during the Ceausescu period and for the first decade after his fall have been to cover up and hide the truth, to exonerate Romanian leaders of any responsibility for the crimes. Thus, after 1990 we witnessed an extensive production of antisemitic materials denying any Romanian responsibility for the deaths of Jews, and accusing the Jews themselves for their misfortunes. There were also opportunistic efforts by some political leaders to play an ambiguous game of formally accepting the truth, in order for Romania to become an accepted member of the Western world, but at the same time to make statements to please nationalistic and antisemitic groups, and to “socialize” with them for electoral reasons.

There is a real effort in Romania to build democratic institutions. At the same time there is an obvious

practice, especially at the level of the representatives of power, *to simulate* the exigencies of democratic thinking in order to become an honorable partner among the NATO members and the European Community. This is another significant source of political correctness in dealing officially with sensitive Jewish topics, especially the legacy of the Antonescu regime. There is a widespread belief that the key to entry in the Western “castle” is in Jewish hands. In this context, the representatives of power are playing—sometimes sincerely, sometimes less so—the role of the “good guys,” leaving antisemitic rhetoric exclusively to the “bad guys”—the nationalistic parties and newspapers, and the supporters of the new Right. After many expressions of support for the cult of Marshal Antonescu in the mass media, the former government in 2002 issued a decree banning monuments to the former dictator. Official statements and decisions oscillate between the concern to satisfy Western partners and concessions to nationalist groups who reject any critical evaluation of the past.

Against this background appeared the initiative to establish an international commission to analyze the historical facts concerning the Romanian chapter of the Holocaust and to prepare a detailed report. The political circumstances were rather ambiguous—a mixture of good will and political interest, rather than a substantial public debate. After

some contradictory declarations issued by the government denying or minimizing Romanian responsibility for the mass murder of the Jews during the war, and a very controversial interview with President Ion Iliescu, that provoked consternation and international protests, Iliescu took the initiative of forming a commission, in the fall of 2003. He invited the Nobel Prize laureate, Elie Wiesel, representatives of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and of Yad Vashem to support this initiative. The 30-member commission, headed by Elie Wiesel, included experts from Romania, the United States, Israel, France, and Germany, as well as public figures representing the Jewish community from Romania, a representative of the Roma community, and experts involved in public activities for the preservation of the memory of the Holocaust.

The mandate of the commission was to study the events that took place between December 1937 (when the short-lived Goga government issued the first radical anti-Jewish laws) and May 1945, concerning the discrimination, persecution, and physical destruction of part of the Jewish population. The Commission also addressed the persecution of and crimes committed against segments of the Roma (Gypsy) population in Romania between 1942 and 1944. The Romanian government pledged to allow researchers access to all necessary documentation in its archives. After



more than a year of work and three meetings, each of which was a week-long intense discussion, a report of about 400 pages was presented to the public in November 2004. It was published simultaneously in English and Romanian, and made available on the internet [ <http://www.yadvashem.org/> ] edited by the three vice-chairmen of the commission: Tuvia Friling (Israel), Radu Ioanid (United States), and Mihail E. Ionescu (Romania). A separate massive volume includes a large collection of documents from Romanian and German archives, proceedings of the meetings and decisions of Antonescu governments, and many official acts concerning the fate of the Jews during the war.

The task of the commission was to prepare a synthesis of the existing research and to come up with a consensus among the Romanian experts and those from Israel, United States, France and Germany. Aspects of the Antonescu period and its aftermath were presented in separate chapters on the roots of Romanian antisemitism, Romanian-German relations before and during the Holocaust, official antisemitic propaganda during the war concerning the “Judeo-Bolshevik danger”; the exclusion of the Jews from Romanian society through anti-Jewish legislation, the main phases of the destruction and the deportation to Transnistria of the Jewish population of Bessarabia and Bukovina; the deportation of the Roma population and their

treatment in Transnistria; the life of the Jewish community in the former Romanian “Old Kingdom”; the Holocaust in Northern Transylvania under Hungarian authority; cases of solidarity and rescue (the “Righteous among the Nations”). A special and very sensitive chapter is dedicated to the postwar and post-communist tendency to distort, deny, or minimize the specific and contradictory Romanian participation in the Nazi “Final Solution.”

Actually, each chapter represents a detailed and substantial survey of the existing research on the main phases of the Holocaust, mainly based on the work of historians (all of them members of the commission) such as Jean Ancel, Radu Ioanid, Lya Benjamin, Randolph Braham, Paul Shapiro, and Viorel Achim (a specialist on the history of the Roma population). From my own experience as a member of the commission, I can affirm that the proceedings took place in satisfactory conditions, without any pressure to influence the final conclusions. There were, of course, different interpretations of the documents and polemics, especially on evaluating the number of the victims. In any case it was not a matter of two opposing “fronts” representing a “Romanian” and a “Jewish” position, but rather a divergence of opinion resulting from different interpretations of the existing archival sources. In the long term, the report represents a consensus on the present state of

research and provides an excellent basis for further study. Only the future can determine whether the Romanian political leadership will be capable and willing to convey to the young generation these findings and analyses of an extremely grave period of Romanian history.

Summarizing the main findings

*The Commission concluded that between 280,000 and 380,000 Romanian and Ukrainian Jews were murdered or died during the Holocaust in Romania and the territories under its control.*

of the historical part of the report, the following conclusions became evident:

- The Romanian Jewish community was partially destroyed during World War II. Systematic killing and deportation were perpetrated against the Jews of Bessarabia and Bukovina. Transnistria, the part of occupied Ukraine under Romanian administration, served Romania as a gigantic killing field for Jews.
- The Commission concluded that the Jewish population of Romania was subjected to the Holocaust, and that part of the Roma (Gypsy) population of Romania was murdered during this period as well. The Romanian authorities were the main perpetrators of these crimes in terms of both their

- planning and implementation.
- The question of the number of Romanian Jews and of those in the territories under Romania's control who were murdered during the Holocaust is a complex issue, which will require more research. The Commission concluded that between 280,000 and 380,000 Romanian and Ukrainian Jews were murdered or died during the Holocaust in Romania and the territories under its control. The Israeli historian Jean Ancel, author of major studies on the topic, disagreed with this evaluation, and based on his own extensive research, estimated that the number is considerably higher, at least 420,000 Jewish victims.<sup>2</sup> These

*After so many years of distorting the historical truth about the Holocaust, Romanian public opinion was hardly willing to confront the findings in the report prepared by the international commission.*

statistics of the Report include more than 45,000 Jews—probably closer to 60,000—who were killed in Bessarabia and Bukovina by Romanian and German troops in 1941. At least 105,000—other findings state as many as 120,000—of the deported Romanian Jews died as a result of the expulsions to

Transnistria. At least 130,000 indigenous Jews—or according to other statistics as many as 180,000—were liquidated in Transnistria (especially in Odessa and the districts of Golta and Berezovka). Of the Jews killed or allowed to die under Romanian jurisdiction, close to 20,000 from Regat were killed in the Iași pogrom and as a result of other anti-Jewish measures. Sometimes Romanian officials worked with German help, but more often they required no outside guidance. Nazi Germany was largely responsible for killing Romanian Jews in Bessarabia, Bukovina, and mass killings in Ukraine and later in Transnistria. The Romanian authorities were accomplices in varying degrees to these murders. Of the 150,000 Jews of Northern Transylvania, 135,000 were killed in Nazi concentration camps after being deported by the Hungarian gendarmerie; no Romanian authority was involved in this operation. A high proportion of Roma/Gypsies who were deported also died. Of the 25,000 (half of them children) sent to Transnistria, at least half perished.

- In the summer of 1942, Romanian officials agreed to deport Romanian Jewry to Belzec, a Nazi death camp in occupied Poland, and themselves planned the deportation of tens

of thousands of Jews in Regat and southern Transylvania to Transnistria. Yet, the very same officials rejected, in the fall of 1942, German pressure to deport their country's Jews to Nazi camps. Such contradictions go a long way toward explaining the survival of at least half of Romania's Jews under Romanian authority. From a prewar population of nearly 800,000 Jews, 345,000 to 385,000 Romanian Jews survived the Holocaust.

- The documents do record numerous instances of Romanians—both civilian and military—rescuing Jews. But these initiatives were isolated cases. In the final analysis they were exceptions to the general rule.

### ***Echoes of the Report in the Romanian Press***

After so many years of distorting the historical truth about the Holocaust, Romanian public opinion was hardly willing to confront the findings in the report prepared by the international commission. Since the initial coverage of its presentation to the Romanian president, in the presence of many diplomats and journalists, no substantial comment or debate has taken place. The book was distributed only by the Romanian Foreign Ministry, and not until April 2006 was a reprint for regular distribution in Romanian bookshops completed.

As expected, just as with the official announcement of the establishment of the commission, the main attacks came from those individuals and groups who had been very active in denying any guilt on the part of Antonescu and his regime. The commission was bluntly accused of “criminalizing” the Romanian people, a widespread cliché replacing another one in official use during the communist period, when critics of the regime were accused of “denigrating the Romanian nation’s achievements.” One of the most active and virulent Holocaust deniers, Ion Coja, author of several books on the evil Jewish conspiracy against Romanian people and a professor of linguistics at Bucharest University, immediately took the initiative to create an “International Commission for Investigating and Evaluating the Romanian-Jewish Contention.” It was conceived as a retort to the “Wiesel Commission” and “the attacks against the historic truth concerning the relations between Romanians and Jews.”<sup>3</sup> Coja claimed the commission was part of a plot, representing “a real crime against humanity,” aimed at inducing in the mind of Romanians... a feeling of national guilt towards the Jews.... Crimes imagined by the Zionist strategy, [but] never committed by Romanians.”<sup>4</sup> An extensive “scientific” paper contesting the Report’s findings and blaming the “Jewish Bolsheviks” was published by another university professor from Sibiu.<sup>5</sup> The journal *Obiectiv*

legionar, issued by the new followers of the Iron Guard, openly called the Wiesel Commission report “criminal.”<sup>6</sup>

The most rabid and clamorous opponent of the report was the writer Paul Goma. From his Parisian exile, the former anti-Ceausescu opponent—in the 1980s, the Western press called him “the Romanian Solzhenitsyn”—has become in the past few years the standard-bearer for distorting the facts concerning the mass murder of Jews in Bessarabia. In many pamphlets, and especially in the book *Săptămîna Roșie 28 iunie-3 iulie 1940 sau Basarabia și Evreii* (The red week, June 28–July 3, 1940, or Bessarabia and the Jews; 3d ed., Bucharest, 2004), he claims that the massacres against the Jewish population were not the result of any systematic policy of the

Antonescu regime, but the expected aftermath of revenge for the crimes committed by “the Jews” during the “red week” and in the following months when Bessarabia passed under Soviet control, until German and Romanian troops entered the region in June 1941. Written in an inflammatory style, Goma’s texts are filled with antisemitic invective (citing the “biblical” sins of a vengeful and bloodthirsty people with its “eye-for-an-eye” law), the ravages of “Jewish Bolshevism” and the criminal politics of the state of Israel and American Jews. Former President Iliescu was even accused by Goma of “betraying the fatherland” for agreeing “with all the terms of the dictate of famous falsifiers, insolents, liars, denigrators of Romania and the Romanians.”<sup>7</sup> Goma’s frantic antisemitic ravings



“Facing History: Senate Hall, 4 July 2005

The Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism  
 המרכז הבינלאומי לחקר האנטישמיות על שם וידאל ססון  
 The Hebrew University of Jerusalem • המוסד לביטחון המדינה

You are invited to a lecture by  
 H.E. Foreign Minister of Romania  
**Dr. Mihai Razvan Ungureanu**

**Facing History:  
 Romania and the Holocaust**

Prof. Hillel Bercovier, Greetings  
 Vice President of Research and Development  
 The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Prof. Robert Wistrich, Chair  
 Head, Vidal Sassoon International Center  
 for the Study of Antisemitism

Dr. Leon Volovki  
 Vidal Sassoon International Center  
 for the Study of Antisemitism

Monday, 4 July 2005, at 7:00 PM  
 Meierdorf Faculty Club,  
 Mt. Scopus Campus,  
 Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Reception at 6:30 PM

**R.S.V.P!**  
 For registration:  
 Tel. 02-588 2404, 02-588 2991  
 e-mail: [sica@msc.huji.ac.il](mailto:sica@msc.huji.ac.il)  
<http://www.huji.ac.il>

The lecture will be held in English

received some remarkable responses from a number of historians and intellectuals—Laszlo Alexandru, Ovidiu Pecican, Ion Vianu, Nicolae Manolescu, and Gabriel Andreescu—former admirers of the once well-known dissident.<sup>8</sup> Although isolated and discredited after 1990 as a result of his frequent defamation of many Romanian intellectuals in exile (including former friends), Goma, in his new role as a fighter against the Jewish “dictate,” nonetheless found more than a few supporters among nationalist groups of the extreme right and even in some intellectual circles.

Alongside the establishment of the national institute for the study of the Holocaust, recommended in the Wiesel report, Paul Goma made a counter proposal—asking for the establishment of an Institute “for the study of Bolshevik terror in Romania,” a terror allegedly “supported with enthusiasm by the Jews during fifty years.”<sup>9</sup>

Following the model of the Wiesel commission, and unrelated to this proposal or any antisemitic motivations, after increasing demands coming from organizations of former anti-communist political prisoners and other public figures, a similar commission was created in order to investigate the crimes of the Romanian communist regime.

There were also some serious critiques of the report like that made by Ion Solacolu, the editor of the journal *Dialog*, representing the “Circle of Romanian Democratic Intellectuals” in exile. His objections concern the way the report presents some aspects of Romanian policy during the period prior to the war. For many years, Solacolu published in his journal documents, testimonies, and essays about Antonescu’s anti-Jewish policy and the deportation and the massacres in Transnistria. In this regard, he was a rather isolated and courageous voice among the Romanian political exiles. His disagreement with the report concerned the direct relation which it sought to establish between the Romanian antisemitic legacy since the mid 19th century, and the program of annihilation

and mass deportation promoted by Antonescu and his government. Solacolu writes:

I think there are very few Romanian intellectuals, even among the most open ones, who are willing to discuss the Holocaust on this basis. Or other topics referring to the Romanian Jews. And then, what for? If the Wiesel Commission does not aim at starting a wide debate over these issues inside Romanian society, then what does the Commission want to achieve by promoting this chapter? I am afraid that such a text, instead of facilitating, or opening a possible discussion, so thin at the moment, rather blocks it, closes it off. And then I ask again, what for?”

Solacolu emphasized the radical novelty of what happened during the Holocaust years:

Firstly and generally, the shift from the so-called “traditional” (or perennial) antisemitism to criminal antisemitism and then from the latter to genocide is not a development that can occur gradually; naturally, it is a jump. That starts at the moment when antisemitism becomes state policy, when, with the help of antisemitic propaganda, political capital is being gained and political power is being enforced. This is the key stage, the dangerous moment when antisemitism can achieve its own dynamic, thus getting out of control, as no

one is interested in stopping it anymore.”<sup>10</sup>

With the failure of the Romanian democratic institutions in the late 1930s, dependency on the interests of the Great Powers began to play a decisive role. The rise of Hitler and the Nazi policy to destroy the Jewish people “had completely changed the coordinates for our country as well.” It was a change aggravated by the danger of expansion of Bolshevik Russia and then by the world war which made possible radical steps and mass killings. Traditional antisemitism is not therefore in a relationship of “cause-and-effect” with the Holocaust.

But while the contextualization of Romanian policy in a broader European perspective is important, one cannot ignore the local antisemitic atmosphere, stimulated and strengthened by Romanian political discourse and education. External pressure coming from Nazi Germany and Romanian isolation after 1938 are beyond doubt. However, Romanian political leaders, from Goga to Antonescu, did not adopt a policy forced on them by the Germans, but developed their own antisemitic discourse and aspirations to impose a radical antisemitic policy. Antonescu was not Hitler’s puppet. When he ordered massacres and deportations, it was on his own initiative, and he decided to end that policy when it was no longer in his interest, and he did so despite German pressure.

The official rhetoric of

Antonescu’s regime justified its entire discriminatory legislation not by referring to the Nazi model (even if its influence is obvious), but to the nationalistic and antisemitic Romanian tradition which provided national legitimacy for this policy. It is very likely that the massacres could not have happened without the circumstances generated as a result of the war provoked by Nazi Germany, which became Romania’s chief ally. However, it is beyond doubt that an entire antisemitic educational indoctrination and propaganda prepared the ground for perceiving the Jews as alien and a dangerous element to be eliminated.

It is at this moment that the passage occurred from traditional antisemitism to a policy of radical anti-Jewish discrimination in tune with Romanian tradition. The effect on the population during the war was not to inspire a general fanatical state of mind, but rather indifference or passive acceptance of Antonescu’s policy and crimes. The Romanian Jewish writer Mihail Sebastian described this atmosphere in his diary, shortly after the Iași pogrom in the summer of 1941:

Everybody disapproves, everybody is outraged, yet each is a small roller in this immense antisemitic factory that is the Romanian state, with its offices, authorities, press, institutions, laws and procedures. I feel like laughing when Vivi [Visoianu] or Braniste try to assure me that General Nicolescu is

“surprised” and “resents” what is going on. But beyond this surprise and resentment they and another ten thousand like them sign and ratify not only with their silence and passivity, but even by direct implication. (August 5, 1941)<sup>11</sup>

### ***First Consequences and Conclusions after the Report***

A National Institute for the Study of Holocaust in Romania was inaugurated on October 10, 2005 as one of the first significant implementations of the commission’s recommendations. October 9, 1941 – the day on which the deportations to Transnistria began, became the official date for commemorating the Holocaust. Commenting on these initiatives, the historian Adrian Cioflanca has recently written that declarations of regret and the commemorations “are necessary

*Romanian political leaders, from Goga to Antonescu, did not adopt a policy forced on them by the Germans, but developed their own antisemitic discourse and aspirations to impose a radical antisemitic policy.*

but are insufficient in order that the understanding of the responsibility for the criminal mistakes of the past and the realization of their depth may achieve social and cultural amplitude.”<sup>12</sup>

Despite the ineffective and

insufficient dispersion of the report, it has nonetheless become an important source of information for those teachers and intellectuals eager to know the truth about the Antonescu regime. Those who, as in my case, are in contact with young Romanian historians and students, note some important changes in the way the Holocaust is being approached by them, a tendency which the report will certainly consolidate. Even if political opportunism motivated the founding of the Commission, the report has led to a positive dynamic among those primarily interested in researching the facts.

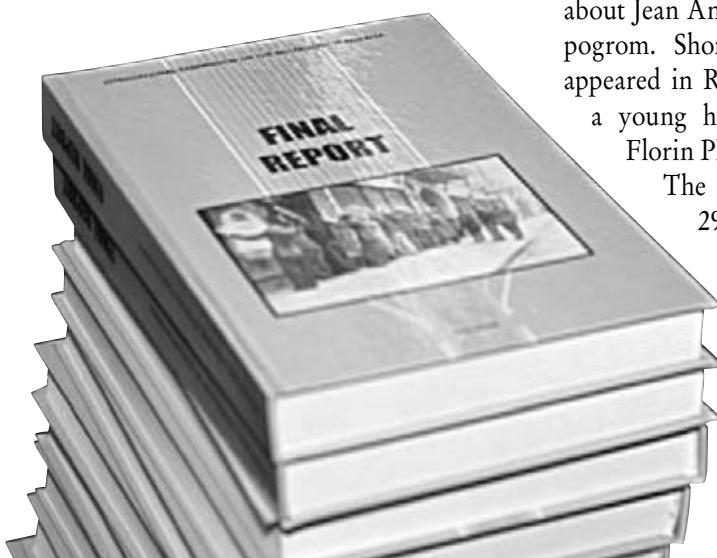
An increasing number of young historians and graduate students now approach the subject more openly, and are publishing studies or preparing doctoral dissertations on Romanian antisemitism, the Holocaust in Romania, and Romanian Jewish history in general. There are also positive

changes on the political level. Speeches by the new Romanian president, Traian Basescu, have been marked by a discourse free of rhetorical ambiguities and double language. An outstanding example of these changes is the young foreign minister, Mihai Razvan Ungureanu, himself an historian specializing in the history of the Jews in Romania. His recent speech at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem under the auspices of the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism proved again that he is one of the Romanian intellectuals and politicians who best understand the need for honesty and openness in dealing with the darkest chapters of his country's past.

The process of spreading information about this period is only beginning, but the first effects are obvious. It is hard to imagine, for example, that only a few years ago, a commentary such as the following could have been published about Jean Ancel's book on the Iași pogrom. Shortly after the book appeared in Romanian translation, a young historian, Alexandru-Florin Platon, wrote:

The massacre on June 29, 1941 in Iași  
c o n t i n u i n g  
during the  
following days  
under the just  
as sinister form  
of the "death  
trains"—was the  
most tragic event  
in the history of

Romanian Jews before and during Second World War; it was paralleled only by the deportation of the members of the same ethnic group from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to Transnistria. Foretelling what happened in the two provinces after July 1941, the pogrom in Iași was, just like the deportations to Transnistria, a hidden episode in Romanian historiography in recent decades and not internalised in the collective memory of the Romanians. One of the most tenacious myths created in our country after the Second World War was that of the "exceptional" situation of the Jews in Romania during the war. Among all the satellite countries of the Axis, Romania was the only one that allegedly protected the Jews from massacre, the only one where the "Final Solution" was not applied. Things indeed happened like this but—now we know—only partially. Events outside this interpretive pattern, like the deportations from Bessarabia and Bukovina or the pogrom in Iași were either concealed, or blamed on the German allies and on some "degenerate" local "elements." The victims, in their turn, suffered a "denomination" [that is, being called "victims" rather than "Jews," LV] aimed at effacing their ethnic origin.<sup>13</sup> Here, too, is a very suggestive



opinion on this issue by Mircea Cartarescu, the best known and respected writer of the young generation:

For a long time I believed in the myth of a Romanian people that was good, wise, and tolerant, not given to excesses, to radical solutions. We never fought wars of conquest; all we did through history was to protect our “poverty, and needs and our own folks.” And I really believed, even during the extreme right dictatorships, that we refused to send Jews to concentration camps and treated them better than other people did. Unfortunately, this myth also had to fall. Books have appeared recently that uncover, to our frustration, unhappiness, and embarrassment, the unsuspected dimensions of Romanian antisemitism.... No matter how bitter this glass is, today we have to drink it to the bottom: it is our duty to admit our historical guilt towards the Romanian Jews. It is the first step towards regaining our honour as a civilised, European people.<sup>14</sup>

The report of the Commission did not serve as closure either for a long-term debate within civil society or among Romanian historians. Rather, it represents a new starting point for serious discussion. Better late than never.

## Notes

1. Rodica Palade, “Interview with Florin Iepan,” in 22, no. 794, 24 May 2005.
2. See Jean Ancel, *History of the Holocaust: Romania* [in Hebrew], vols. 1-2 (Jerusalem 2002); *Transnistria*, vols. 1-3 (Tel Aviv 2003).
3. *România Mare*, no. 707, 30 Jan. 2004.
4. Ion Coja, “Apelul românilor,” *România Mare*, no. 800, 11 Nov. 2005.
5. Corvin Lupu, “Impactul problematicei Holocaustului asupra României contemporane și aspecte ale relațiilor dintre români și evrei,” *Transilvania*, no. 3, 2005.
6. See the analyses of the extremist reaction to the Report in the context of recent manifestations of Holocaust denial: Andrei Oișteanu, “De la București la Auschwitz și retur,” 22, no. 777 (25 Jan. 2005); William Totok, “Receptarea Raportului final al Comisiei Wiesel în presa română și germană,” *Timpul*, no. 6-7 (June-July 2005). See also Laurence Weinbaum, “Where Memory is a Curse and Amnesia a Blessing: A Journey through Romania’s Holocaust Narrative,” Policy Study No. 27 (Jerusalem: Institute of the World Jewish Congress, 2004).
7. Paul Goma, “Plângere penală,” *România liberă*, 2 Dec. 2004; “Să învățăm de la evrei?,” *Ziua*, 24 Febr. 2005; “Jurnal 2005,” *Viața românească*, no. 6-7, 2005; “A fi antisemit,” *Rost*, no. 34 (Dec. 2006).
8. Laszlo Alexandru, Ovidiu Pecican, Ion Solacolu, “Spirala: Paul Goma și problema antisemitismului,” *Dialog*, no. 263-268 (2004); Gabriel Andreescu, “Goma și tema antisemitismului,” *Ziua*, 17 Febr. 2005; Ovidiu Simonca, [Interview with Ion Vianu], *Observer cultural*, no. 261 (2005); Nicolae Manolescu, [Interview with Rodica Palade], 22, no. 813 (4 Oct. 2005); Laszlo Alexandru, *Toate pînzele sus! Polemici* (Cluj 2005), 98-176. For an analysis of

Goma’s attitude on Ion Antonescu and the Jews, Michael Shafir, “From Dissidence to Holocaust Minimization.” Paper presented at the Conference “Antisemitism, Multiculturalism and Ethnic Identity,” June 12-15, 2006. Jerusalem, Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism.

9. *Ziua*, 1 Oct. 2005.

10. Ion Solacolu, “De la antisemitism la Holocaust,” *Dialog*, no. 269-274, (2005; in press; quoted with the author’s permission).

11. Mihail Sebastian, *Journal 1935-1944*. Translated by Patrick Camiller (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2000), 391.

12. Adrian Cioflanca, “Holocaustul este (încă) o țară străină,” *Suplimentul de cultură*, 47 (Oct. 2005).

13. Alexandru Florin-Platon, “Barbaria cu față umană,” *Contrafort*, 7-8 (July-Aug. 2005).

14. Mircea Cartarescu, “O vină istorică,” *Jurnalul național*, 5 July 2005.

*Leon Volovici received his Ph.D. from Jassy University, Romania. Currently he is Head of Research and a member of the Managing Board of the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and one of the Series Editors of ACTA (Analysis of Current Trends in Antisemitism), published by the Center. He published Nationalist Ideology and Antisemitism: The Case of Romanian Intellectuals in the 1930s (Pergamon, 1991), and edited the journal of the prominent Romanian Jewish writer, Mihail Sebastian.*

# “Good Morning, Mr. Hitler!”

Dana Arieli-Horowitz



What makes the film “*Good Morning, Mr. Hitler*” so impressive? There are many reasons, but let us focus on the seemingly most trivial one: this film is especially unusual and even “shocking” because it is in brilliant color.

A few months before she died in December 2004, Susan Sontag published an article in the *New York Times* entitled “Regarding

the Torture of Others.” It followed the exposure of the horror photographs of American soldiers torturing Iraqi prisoners in Abu Ghraib; Sontag writes:

For a long time—at least six decades—photographs have laid down the tracks of how important conflicts are judged and remembered. The Western memory museum is now mostly a visual one. Photographs have an insuperable power to determine what people recall of events....

To borrow one expression from Sontag’s fascinating article, I would like to make a claim that the “memory

*The stark contrast between Nazi leaders in their Sunday best enjoying a weekend of Nazi art and “culture,” and the Jews incarcerated in the camps, challenges our conventional categories.*

museum” of most of us includes monochromatic images of Nazi Germany. We may have all seen color still photographs, but most of the images that come to mind when we remember

Nazi Germany are black and white.

Viewing Nazi Germany in black and white underlines our sense of Auschwitz as a “different planet.” The monochrome creates a historical distance, making it easier for us to deal with the horror; it produces a barrier between now and then, between the world as we know it, in color, and that “different planet,” a colorless palette.

In contrast, the colorfulness in this film creates a dissonance, instantly canceling the historical distance. These vivid colors may indeed be difficult to bear for

some of us, especially living in Israel.

Watching “*Good Morning, Mr. Hitler*”, it is difficult to keep one’s cool facing the sea of swastikas and red flags; the mass of red creates a sensational impression of kitsch and death. Covering the National Socialist capital of art, Munich, in red flags attests to the symbolic brainwash which will be further explored later.

I believe watching this footage is uncanny precisely because it calls attention to the “humanity” of the leading figures of Nazi Germany. In this context, the “different planet” attitude fails. One hardly knows what is more difficult to watch: that bright pink hat of Frau Ley, as if this were the horse races at Ascot, or Albert Speer (Hitler’s architect) flirting with the woman in the white hat, the widow of Paul Troost, who designed the House of German Art. Like the shiver that ran down my spine the first time I read in the Michelin Green Guide of Berlin that suggests “Relaxing in Wannsee” [2000 edition, p. 252]. It is no less chilling to keep to listen to what Charlotte Knobloch, President of the Munich Jewish community, has to say. As she points out, only a few minutes’ train ride separates Munich from Dachau. While Munich was decorated in red, a completely different palette ruled in Dachau. The stark contrast between Nazi leaders in their Sunday best enjoying a weekend of Nazi art and “culture,” and the Jews incarcerated in the camps, challenges our conventional categories. The answer of the girl chosen to ride the horse at the art exhibition parade makes things all too clear; when asked where the Jews were, she says “I don’t know. I haven’t the faintest idea.”

The informal shooting angle that the film offers brings to light the “normality” and outward banality of the Nazi leadership even more. This is a different kind of record of what happened in Nazi Germany. For decades we have been conditioned to see the Third Reich’s controlled recording of events. We have been exposed to Leni Riefenstahl or Fritz Hippler’s “official” shooting angles. You must have felt the contrast between the familiar black and white footage from Leni Riefenstahl’s film, *The Triumph of the Will*, and “*Good Morning Mr. Hitler!*”, which provides an unmediated documentation. Its power partly stems from the conditions in which it



---

was filmed. The Nazi leadership, from its top down to the mundane subordinates, is recorded by an amateur photographer, Hans Feierabend. It is quite clear that the people were caught unawares, at least in some cases, such as Adolph Wagner, Munich's Gauleiter. Note that the physical proximity of the photographer and his subjects—Adolf Hitler in particular—does not make it easier to accept his family's claim that Hans Feierabend was against the Nazis.

In Nazi Germany there was strong awareness of the possibility of assassination, particularly in light of the many political murders that had occurred during the Weimar Republic. Hence, the proximity of Hans Feierabend implies complicity. The photographer's son offers an explanation: his father was a member of the "Amateur Photographer's Association." Yet it is highly unlikely that this was a neutral group of photography enthusiasts. The tight regulation of the Reich's Ministry of Culture over every aspect of Germany's creative life seems to rule out this option. We are familiar with the case of painter Emil Nolde, who had joined the Nazi party in 1920, and having become disillusioned, refused to become a member of the Reich Chamber of Culture; subsequently he could not even purchase paper for painting. Hence his famous series of aquarelles titled "the un-painted paintings." The neutrality claim is repeated again and again, especially with regard to artists in Nazi Germany. Hungarian film director Istvan Szabo expressed this well in his fascinating trilogy with the film *Mephisto* at its heart (*Mephisto* 1981, *Colonel Redl* 1985, *Hanusssen* 1988).

How did this great arts festival come to take place in Munich after 1937, and continue for eight years? How can we account for the fact, pointed out in the movie by Prof. Robert Wistrich, that less than six weeks before World War II broke out, the entire Nazi leadership attended the opening of such an art exhibition? Was there ever a historical precedent for a political leadership's intrusion to such an extent into the domain of art? I believe this point underlines the uniqueness of the Nazi case in comparison to other dictatorships, like the USSR, where the utmost was done to mobilize and control artists. The role assigned to art in Communist and Fascist totalitarian

regimes was essentially instrumental. In Nazi Germany, by contrast, art was at the heart of ideology. Its power comes from its perception as an ideal. It was not just a means to an end—it *was* the end.

This can be shown in Hitler's speech at the ceremony which laid the cornerstone of the House of German Art on October 15, 1933. He believed that if he did not strive to found an alternative art, the National Socialist revolution might collapse. He said:

Admittedly art has nothing to do with propaganda, but it is the profoundest expression of a people's true soul. This soul has, however, been besmirched and led astray by Jewish and Bolshevik propaganda, so that it has been cut off from its roots. To that extent, the task of propaganda is to help the healthy perceptions of the public back to freedom and truth.

[Hitler to Goebbels, 1932, cited in Robert S. Wistrich, *Weekend in Munich: Art, Propaganda, and Terror in the Third Reich*. London: Pavilion Books, 1995, 56.]

It should be stressed that there is a significant difference between the Stalinist or Maoist parades and these Nazi art displays. While other dictatorial regimes also liked to demonstrate military strength, with the visual effect as an added value, "Nazification" in Germany took place through art; culture became power.

The industry of culture reflected in the 1939 arts festival—the flags, the symbols, the brown shirts, the black uniforms, and costumes—involved over 1,700,000 working hours. But for the Nazis this was the least they could do. The festival accompanying the opening of the Great German Art Exhibition was to repeat itself in Munich even during the war years. Hitler made a point of always attending the opening, and treating the Nazi leaders to his long-winded speeches on culture.

The three days of German art strikingly recorded in this film are reminiscent of pagan rituals, but also designed to suggest a millennial sequence of culture, culminating in the establishment of the Third Reich. This is not only about costumes and decorations. The Spartan discipline was translated into lessons in proper walking, as one of the women in the film attests. The events surrounding the opening the Great German Art

גרסת הסיימון, 1900.com

מספר 1000 רישום 1000 1000

# ערב עיון: חולצות חומות אמנות מטהרת

**בהשתתפות:**  
יו"ר: גבי יעל מונק  
החידרה להיסטוריה ומיאוריה, בצלאל

**פרופ' רוברט ויטריך**  
ראש החרכז הבינלאומי  
לחקר האנטישמיות  
ע"ש ויראל ששון

**ד"ר דנה אריאלי-הורוביץ**  
ראש החידרה להיסטוריה ומיאוריה,  
בצלאל

**במהלך הערב יוקרן  
הסרט התיעודי:  
"בקר טוב,  
מר היטלר!"**

הסרט התיעודי "בקר טוב, מר היטלר" מבוסס על מסמכים  
צבאיים אולם שכולם בידי הנאצים והנאציזם (1933-1945)  
במסגרתם נבדלו, לרוב, יצירות אמנות הנאציות בהדגלים.  
הסרט הוקרן לראשונה ב-1995, בערוץ 4 של ה-880  
בשיתוף עם התערוכה "האמנות הנאצית והאמנות הישראלית"  
במוזיאון תל אביב, י"ג עד י"ד, 1995.

**יום רביעי | 18.05.2005 | סי באייר חשש"ה**  
**בשעה 19:30 | אודיטוריום 222**  
**באקדמיה לאמנות בצלאל |**  
**קמפוס הר הצופים של**  
**האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים**  
**התכנסות וכיבוד קל בשעה 18:00**  
יש לאשרר השתתפות מראש,  
**טלפון: 2991 | 02-5882494**  
**http://sicsa.huji.ac.il**

בצלאל אקדמיה לאמנות ועיצוב ירושלים

The Vidal Sassoon International Center for the  
Study of Antisemitism  
מרכז בינלאומי לחקר האנטישמיות ע"ש ויראל ששון  
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem • ירושלים

Invitation to "Good Morning Mr. Hitler!", which took place at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Exhibition are recorded in detail in Goebbels' diaries. They point to Hitler's direct and incessant involvement in the issue of art. The parades that we have just watched are described in a diary entry of Goebbels from July 1939 as "an intoxication of forms. Wonderful. We are all deeply moved. The Fuhrer more than anyone."

A few days before the first Great German Art Exhibition was opened, in 1937, Goebbels observed: "We are discussing the various festivities. Don't let it rain." Evidently most of the time it did not rain, but the weather was sunny—what one German witness in the film smilingly calls "Hitler weather."

This enormous festival was not just about marching in Munich, but about the "noble creations" of Great German "Aryan" art, the ultimate alternative to and therapy for the "degenerate art" offered by the mentally ill, by perverts, Communists, and Jews.

This fascinating film, conceived by Luke Holland, Paul Yule, and Robert Wistrich, provides us with an entirely novel perspective with which to understand not only the relationship between art and politics, or the aesthetic dimension of Nazi racism, but also the seductive hold of Nazism over the German masses in the 1930s.

### Bibliography

Arieli-Horowitz, Dana. *The Romanticism of Steel: Art and Politics in Nazi Germany* [in Hebrew]. Jerusalem: Magnes Press at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1999.

Wistrich, Robert. *Weekend in Munich. Art, Propaganda, and Terror in the Third Reich*. London: Pavilion Books, 1995.

Presented at a symposium co-organized by SICSA and the Bezalel Academy of Art, 18 May 2005, with the showing of the documentary film "Good Morning, Mr. Hitler!". Translation by Avigail Tsirkin-Sadan.

Dr. Dana Arieli-Horowitz is head of the History and Theory Unit of the Bezalel School of Art, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

# Submission to the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism in the UK

*Robert S. Wistrich*

During the past five years, antisemitism has emerged as a serious problem in Britain. According to the annual report of the Community Security Trust (CST), which tracks antisemitic incidents in Britain, 2004 was the worst year of antisemitic violence, vandalism, and harassment since it began to keep statistics in 1996. These numbers include 83 physical assaults (up from 54 in 2003, or a 54 percent increase) and 365 acts of abusive or threatening behavior (up from 233 in 2003, or a 57 percent increase). All told, the CST recorded 532 serious antisemitic incidents in Britain in 2004—more than double the 228 recorded in 1996, and a rise of over 40 percent from the previous year. In absolute numbers, Great Britain is today second only to France in serious antisemitic incidents among European countries—with Russia a distant third.

Antisemitism in Britain today takes many forms. There is the racism of the extreme Right, the Israel-bashing of the radical Left, and the increasingly vocal Islamist Judeophobia. In recent years, London has indeed become a world center for Muslim demonization of Jews and Israel. Some of this antisemitism flows from virulent, completely disproportionate criticism of the Jewish state. It is of course the case that not all such attacks should be considered antisemitic or illegitimate. But in some of the mainstream British media, what passes as “criticism” frequently leaves the bounds of considered debate and indulges in

flagrant double standards and the implicit denial of Israel’s right to defend itself. Even the BBC is not immune. The prejudice against Israel is not just a matter of bias among individual editors and reporters. Media Tenor, an independent Bonn-based research group, conducted a 2003 study which found that the BBC’s Middle East coverage was 85 percent negative, 15 percent neutral and 0 percent positive toward Israel.

The Jenin affair was one of the more telling symptoms of Israel-baiting in the British media. Many British journalists hailed the grossly inflated claims of 3,000 Palestinian dead after Israel’s assault on the refugee camp in April 2002 as proof of a major atrocity, without any attempt at serious verification. A. N. Wilson, a leading columnist of the London *Evening Standard*, informed his readers that “we are talking here of massacre, and a cover-up of genocide.” The *Guardian* compared Israel’s incursion into Jenin with Al-Qaida’s attack of September 11 on New York. Phil Reeves of the *Independent* spoke of Cambodia-style “killing fields,” quoting without any verification totally false Palestinian claims of “mass murder” and wholesale “executions.”

How easily anti-Israeli defamation slides into antisemitic imagery was illustrated by Dave Brown’s cartoon in the *Independent* showing Ariel Sharon devouring the flesh of a Palestinian baby. Sharon was shown wearing a Star of David and Likud fig leaf, and in the background Apache helicopters fire missiles and blare

“Vote Likud.” This cartoon would not have looked out of place in the Nazi paper *Der Stürmer*. It also recalled images of the medieval blood libels. But the Press Complaints Committee in the United Kingdom dismissed all protests. This caricature was subsequently awarded first prize in the British Political Cartoon Society’s Annual Competition for 2003.

More worrying still is that Britain has begun producing its own bombers—such as Asif Mohammed Hanif, a Briton who blew himself up in a Tel Aviv seaside bar in May 2003, killing three civilians and wounding scores of others. Since then, home-grown Muslim terrorism struck in the heart of London, on 7 July 2005. This was not an anti-Jewish action but part of the global Jihad which threatens the West as a whole. But for some leading Muslim clerics like Sheikh Omar Bakri Muhammad (recently expelled from Britain), Jews, Christians and the West are all part of the “infidel” enemy to be destroyed. He and Abu Hamza—another British Imam—openly recruited Muslim youth for “holy war” in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine. At the same time, Islamists like al-Muhajiroun (“the Exiles”) spokesman Anjem Choudary talk about Britain and the West as mere pawns, controlled by the “Zionists.” Israel is often portrayed in such circles as a “cancer in the heart of the Muslim world” to be eliminated only by radical surgery. This is the antisemitic language of the current Iranian president who publicly calls for Israel to be wiped out.

The inroads of Muslim Judeophobia in Britain were exposed by the Old Bailey trial of Sheikh Abdallah el-Faisal, in February 2003. The cleric, a Jamaican convert to Islam, educated in Saudi Arabia, was found guilty of inciting to murder and racial hatred on the basis of his lectures and videocassettes—some of them on sale at specialist bookshops in Britain—and sentenced to nine years in prison. In one spine-chilling speech, el-Faisal ranted: “People with British passports, if you fly into Israel it is easy.... Fly into Israel and do whatever you can. If you die, you are up in Paradise. How do you fight a Jew? You kill a Jew.”<sup>1</sup>

Some prominent politicians have unfortunately either trivialized such expressions of hate or contributed in other ways to a hostile climate towards Jews. In February 2005, London Mayor Ken Livingstone angrily compared a Jewish reporter for the *Evening Standard* to a concentration camp guard. Shortly thereafter, Livingstone published a piece in the *Guardian* claiming that Ariel Sharon “is a war criminal who should be in prison, not in office,” adding that “Israel’s own expansion has included ethnic cleansing.” The Muslim Public Affairs Committee, responding to Jewish critics of the mayor, published an article on its website entitled “Zionists Want Their Pound of Flesh!”

Passions in London were further stirred by the May 2005 election contest in Bethnal Green, the second-most populated Muslim district in Britain. The highly charged race

pitted sitting Labor MP Oona King, a black Jewish woman, against **George Galloway**, a former Labor MP now representing the anti-war Respect party, a blend of far Left and Islamist politics. After youths threw eggs at King as she honored East End Jews killed in Nazi bombing raids, one young Muslim told the *Daily Telegraph*: “We all hate her. She comes here with her Jewish friends who are killing our people and then they come to our backyards.”<sup>2</sup> King lost by 823 votes.

There was more to come. On May 21, 2005, a major rally was held in Trafalgar Square, with a crowd waving Palestinian flags and anti-Israel banners. Jeremy Corbyn, a backbench Labor MP, called for the British government to “cease all trade with Israel,” while Tony Benn, a former Labor MP, labeled **George Bush** and Ariel Sharon as the “two most dangerous men in the world.” Paul Mackney, president of the country’s second-largest union of teachers, demanded the expansion of the AUT boycott against Israel to include additional unions, while Andrew Birgin of the Stop the War coalition called for the dismantling of the Jewish state. “The South African apartheid state never inflicted the sort of repression that Israel is inflicting on the Palestinians,” he said to cries of *Allahu akbar!* from the audience. “When there is real democracy, there will be no more Israel!”

The rally’s most prominent speaker, however, was **George Galloway**, who took the opportunity

to launch an international boycott of Israel. “We will join them,” he said, referring to the Palestinians, “by boycotting Israel. By boycotting Israeli goods. By picketing the stores that are selling Israeli goods.” To cheers and applause, Galloway added, “It’s about time that the British government made some reparations for the Balfour declaration.”

For most Jews, such discriminatory boycotts are eerily reminiscent of antisemitic methods. Andrew Wilkie, a professor of pathology at Oxford University, flatly rejected the application of an Israeli student simply because of his nationality. On June 23, 2003, Wilkie told the student that he had “a huge problem with the way that Israelis take the moral high ground from their appalling treatment in the Holocaust, and then inflict gross human rights abuses on the Palestinians.” Wilkie was widely criticized but many share his outlook.

In April 2005, the AUT, which has some 40,000 members, voted by sizable majorities to impose a boycott of two Israeli universities, Bar-Ilan University and the University of Haifa, in solidarity with the Palestinian cause. According to the AUT secretary-general, this ban would “take the form described in the Palestinian call for academic boycott of Israeli institutions.” The rushed vote was held on Passover eve, preventing most Jewish members from taking part, and opponents of the motions were denied right of reply due to “lack of time.” Just before the vote, speakers addressing

the AUT's executive union meeting declared Israel to be a "colonial apartheid state, more insidious than South Africa," and called for the "removal of this regime." The boycott was reversed but the campaign continues.

The hostile climate of opinion has been accompanied by an increase in violent assaults in the last two years of 77 percent (from 47 in 2002 to 83 in 2004)—a rise in the number of synagogue desecrations as well as serious attacks in Finsbury Park, Swansea, and Edinburgh. A near-tripling in antisemitic incidents in British schools prompted the National Union of Teachers to issue new guidelines in July 2003 for combating antisemitism. There were also acts of vandalism in the months following the American invasion of Iraq, such as the desecration of a Jewish cemetery in the East End of London, where more than 400 graves were smashed. In June 2005, particularly ugly desecrations took place in Manchester and London cemeteries. In both cases, nearly 100 gravestones were broken, toppled, or daubed with anti-Jewish slogans.

During 2005, much changed for the worse when it comes to antisemitism in Britain. Between 15-20 percent of Britons could be defined as antisemitic according to a sampling by the *Jewish Chronicle*. As many as one in five Britons believe the Holocaust is "exaggerated"; a similar percentage would not vote for a Jewish prime minister, and a much higher number hold conventional antisemitic

stereotypes about the link between Jews and money. As elsewhere in Western Europe, over 50 percent of Britons think Israel is the greatest danger to world peace.

The old-new antisemitism in Britain is not the kind of hatred which prevailed in Europe 60 years ago. The emerging multicultural society of Great Britain will not tolerate cries of *Sieg Heil*, jackboots, or the openly racist mythology that was irrevocably stained by the Holocaust. Still, antisemitism in Great Britain is very troubling, particularly when it seems to echo throughout society, turning classical myths of Jewish power and the demonization of Israel into a common feature of polite discourse which permeates the political, cultural, academic, and media elites. Israel-bashing has led to a more general vilification of Jews and incitement to violence, even where no such goal was intended. At the same time, prewar racist antisemitism has mutated, attributing to Jews and the state of Israel the worst sins of antisemitism itself: racism, ethnic cleansing, genocide and "crimes against humanity." Attempts to "Nazify" Judaism, Zionism or Israel are an especially ugly form of prejudice, well attuned to the contemporary *Zeitgeist*.

This is not to say that British culture is inherently or overwhelmingly hostile to Jews. Great Britain, the birthplace of liberalism continues to be an open society today, with a stable democracy, a free press, and an independent judiciary dedicated

to protecting individual liberties. For several centuries, and through World War II, Great Britain was, relative to the rest of Europe at least, a model of tolerance. No one is suggesting that the Jews of the United Kingdom are about to enter a dark era of persecution or the curtailment of basic individual rights. Nevertheless, there is every reason for concern and for a proactive attitude to counteract the current danger of antisemitism.

Great Britain has regrettably become home to a wave of anti-Jewish sentiments, innuendoes, motifs, symbols, and public statements which have gained a degree of legitimacy in British public discourse far beyond what is either healthy or acceptable.<sup>3</sup>

## Notes

1. "Muslim cleric guilty of soliciting murder," *Guardian*, 24 Feb. 2003.
2. Richard Alleyne, "Jewish MP pelted with eggs at war memorial," *Daily Telegraph*, 11 Apr. 2005.
3. (Addition and clarification) When the Mayor of London gratuitously compares a Jewish reporter to a Nazi concentration camp guard, and more recently (since this testimony) tells the Reuben brothers, Jewish property developers, to "go back to Iran and try their luck with the Ayatollas" (although they are of Iraqi extraction, born in India, and have lived in Britain for more than forty years) we are not talking about anti-Zionism or criticism of Israel. The fact the Mr. Livingstone refused to apologize to the Jewish community but did apologize to "the people of Iran" (whose President openly calls for the annihilation of Israel and denies the Holocaust happened) merely underlines the gravity and grotesqueness of his remarks.

A transcript of the second part of this session could not be produced due to technical reasons. An official summary of the evidence has been included and has been approved by all three witnesses as a fair representation of their oral evidence.

***Notes from Session 2,  
Part 2  
13 February 2006  
All-Party  
Interparliamentary  
Inquiry into Antisemitism***

***Evidence taken at the House of  
Commons in Westminster***

***Panel***

Rt Hon Dr Denis McShane MP  
("McShane" below)

Tim Boswell MP ("Boswell")

Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP  
("Duncan Smith")

Nigel Evans MP ("Evans")

Rt Hon Bruce George MP  
("George")

Lady Sylvia Herman MP  
("Herman")

***Witnesses***

Dr Paul Iganski ("Iganski" below)  
– University of Essex

Dr Brian Klug ("Klug") –  
University of Oxford

Professor Robert Wistrich  
("Wistrich") – The Hebrew  
University of Jerusalem

Dr Paul Iganski

Declines the opportunity to make  
an opening statement.

McShane refers to PI as being an expert on statistics. He quotes the submission of Howard Jacobson to PI regarding the feeling of antisemitism, and asks PI how antisemitism can be measured accurately?

Iganski replies that the current statistical measures of antisemitism do not capture that actual number of incidents. Thus, the number of antisemitic incidents is understated.

Boswell asks Iganski whether this stems from a failure to classify an antisemitic incident in a uniform manner. PI explains that only 17 police forces across the country have facilities to record the number of antisemitic incidents.

Boswell asks whether such statistics not being available is unhelpful, and Iganski agrees. It's unhelpful that there's a lack of a specific category of antisemitism under the wider issue of antiracism. PI goes on to explain that the Met Police force and its recording of antisemitic incidents is a good model to follow. Incidents are recorded according to the MacPherson definition of a racist incident (i.e., if it is perceived to be so by the victim or witnesses), so they get flagged on the database as racist and antisemitic. Not all forces have that kind of data recording. Police forces just don't have the information on antisemitism and some of them can't break down their figures for racist incidents.

McShane states that some police forces in this country would not have a Jewish community to police. PI agrees but asserts that the lack of recording facilities is evident in forces with a Jewish community, too. The documentation of antisemitism is relevant to every police force, even if there aren't substantial numbers of Jews living in the area.

McShane asks Iganski to clarify the current statistics available, as we are swirling around in statistics. Iganski goes on to explain the police and CST statistics and definitions—where they differ, and where they converge. For example, the gap between police and CST figures can be illustrated as follows—only 1 in 5 incidents in the British Crime Survey are reported to police, so the police figures represent an undercount. The Survey itself doesn't include samples of Jewish communities. CST's definition of an antisemitic incident is narrower than that of the police.

McShane asks Iganski how to categorise antisemitism. PI gives the example of a shopkeeper selling antisemitic literature. PI explains that only a small amount of antisemitism is currently manifested in antisemitic violence. Leaflets, etc. don't have to target a Jew or specific victim for antisemitism to exist. It's harder to track the spreading of hate material. Violent incidents represent the minority of antisemitic incidents in general. Police services depend on crimes being reported.

---

**Boswell** explains his understanding of the difference between “soft” and “hard” antisemitism. **PI** replies that hate crimes against students on campus and other such crimes are an indicator of an undercurrent of hatred. Analysis of reports shows that many antisemitic incidents were either aggravated incidents or opportunistic, i.e., it’s part and parcel of everyday life, an undercurrent, and it doesn’t take long for this bigotry to come to the surface, e.g., when a situation gets heated.

**Herman** asks **Iganski** whether he could explain the statistics in a generation-based manner? **Iganski** answers with the fact that young Jewish men are the most likely to be attacked. In the Institute for Jewish Policy Research survey in 2002, 20% of 18-30 year old men said that they had been called a Jew in an insulting way—the highest proportion by age group.

**Evans** asks whether the profile of perpetrators of antisemitism is the same as that of the victims. **Iganski** explains that the offenders also tend to be young men.

**McShane** picked up on tone and used Le Pen as an example. It’s possible to convey antisemitism by tone and emphasis alone even if the words themselves are acceptable.

**Dr Brian Klug and Professor Robert Wistrich**

**Klug** chooses to make an opening

statement in which he asserts the need for clarity on the conceptual issue of antisemitism.

**Klug** asserts that it’s not about statistics. The problem is a conflation of different phenomena and there is a need for clarity. There is a need to identify the different phenomena that are giving rise to fear and anxiety in the Jewish community. At the moment, they are being conflated to give the impression/perception that antisemitism is returning and part of society. Everything gets reduced to classical antisemitism.

**McShane** invites **Wistrich** to comment on that.

**Wistrich** explains that since October 2000, the second intifada, a new wave of antisemitism has emerged. The statistics of antisemitic incidents show clear patterns across all countries. He refers to statistics in the UK and in France—both showing high levels. In fact, the highest levels of antisemitic incidents are seen in Britain, France, and Russia. CST in Britain reports that 2005 was second-worse year since 1997. France also saw a slight drop in 2005, but levels are still far higher than before 2000. **Wistrich** acknowledges that it is difficult to compare all of these countries. However, he finds it odd that, given the link between the second intifada and the increase in antisemitic incidents, there are few attacks on Israeli targets, with the majority

of attacks aimed at Jewish targets. There has been a study of this in France. Antisemitism develops an autonomous dynamic of its own to the point that it no longer needs the trigger of the Middle East.

**McShane** makes a point about the proposed boycott by a small group of British architects of Israel’s construction industry in protest of the building of Israeli settlements and the security barrier in the Occupied Territories) and the Church of England’s vote on divestment—whether anti-Israel statements can ever be antisemitic.

**Wistrich** replies by reference to the recent Anglican Church decision to divest itself of all investments in Israel. This is not an antisemitic act per se. But it has consequences. It adds to a climate of hostility. This begins with Israel but can end with antisemitism.

**Evans** asks **Wistrich** whether there is a new antisemitism?

**Wistrich** replies that there has not been a return to classic antisemitism. The new antisemitism has swamped the old antisemitism. The definition of the new antisemitism would include the fact that it is more likely to occur among Muslims than Christians, more likely to be on the left than on the right, it’s more likely to be “antiracist” in character rather than nationalist, more likely to be found among “universalists” rather than anti-cosmopolitans. It is

more focused on the state of Israel, and, in its extreme form, expresses an intolerance of the existence of the Jewish state that has genocidal implications. Compare this to the old antisemitism, which is about not tolerating the existence of Jews in the Diaspora.

**Duncan Smith** refers to the growth of ‘dinner party antisemitism.’”

**Wistrich** agrees that a key point here is to distinguish between anti-Israel sentiment, anti-Zionism, and antisemitism. But many people find it very convenient—to conceal their antipathy to Jews by bashing Israel. **Wistrich** explains that much depends on the tone used to convey the message. Is it possible to separate the state of Israel from its religion? Yes, you can be anti-Israeli, or anti the Israeli government without even being anti-Zionist, but there are cases where this is a distinction without a difference, for example Islamic conflation of Jew/Israeli/Zionist. Hostility to Israel provides respectable reasons for a sentiment that’s no longer respectable. So much depends on the tone of the comments.

**McShane** turns to **Klug** and asks his opinion on the collective Jew and Israel. **Klug** replies by reference to Zionism as a movement and the Jewish state. He outlines his theory on anti-Zionism as a mask to antisemitism. There is a current fallacy that if antisemitism can take

the form of anti-Zionism, then all anti-Zionists must be antisemites. There may be a variety of causes for those sentiments but we can’t always assume that the reasoning behind them must be antisemitic. In particular, he explains the “affirming the consequent” fallacy by way of a medical analogy—he explains that there could be many causes of a headache—meaning that there could be many root causes that show the same symptom. Not all headaches point to a brain tumour.

**Boswell** asks **Klug** whether he felt that there had been a misstatement of the problem, and if so, whether this affects the problem to be confronted. **Klug** agrees with this and refers **Boswell** to his submission which, in part, deals with this issue.

**Klug** details examples of coverage in this country of Amos Oz described as a “Jew-hating Jew” by a prominent rabbi. He acknowledges the problems in the Middle East but underlines that they exist between Israelis and Palestinians too. When we talk about the Middle East, it’s not just about government policies. It also involves questions of legitimacy.

**Duncan Smith** gives **Klug** three examples to comment on:

1. The boycott of Jewish businesses because of the Israeli government
2. The call for Israel to be eradicated because it is seen as the root

cause of disturbance in the Middle East—anti-Jewish or anti-Israeli?

3. “I dislike Israelis” therefore I dislike Jews.

**Klug** explains that there are lots of ambiguous cases. He feels that Example 1 above is not legitimate. Whether it is antisemitic or not depends on its source. If it were an ethno-religious source, it would not be antisemitic. This would be the wrong frame of reference. There’s a new prejudice against Jews. But to call it antisemitism is misleading and reduces it to the old antisemitism, which it is not.

**Duncan Smith** replies that the intelligent antisemite would use this as a veil.

**Klug** responds that this is a new form of prejudice, but it is not antisemitic.

**Duncan Smith** puts forward his understanding of the 2 different stereotypes of Jews—one being the traditional type, and the other relating to Israel. The latter is a new, more modern antisemitic stereotype of the Jew that takes its characterisation from Israel (aggressive, warlike, manipulator of governments).

**Klug** responds that this is a different phenomenon.

**Duncan Smith** replies by asking whether it matters?



---

**George** refers **Wistrich** to his own constituency, to some of the individuals named in Wistrich's submission, such as **George** Galloway and Ken Livingstone, and exclaims that he cannot believe they are both talking about the same country. He feels that Wistrich's submission is a gross overstatement of the problem. Islamophobia is much more common in his constituency.

**Wistrich** replies that he does not believe he has overstated anything. **George's** constituency may contain very few Jews and is not necessarily representative of Britain as a whole. As for Mr. Livingstone, his outbursts are deeply offensive to Jewish Londoners (see note 3 in previous section). There is a gap between the views of the elite and those of the ordinary people. He gives the example of the difference between the tabloids and the *Guardian* and the *Independent*. Islamophobia is more prevalent at the popular level of opinion, but antisemitism is seriously underestimated. Antisemitism has a long history. It changes its form and adapts to its times. The Holocaust and the State of Israel are two defining events that shaped modern Jewish identity. The Holocaust showed where antisemitism could lead, and from then on the old (Fascist and Nazi) forms of antisemitism could never be respectable in public discourse. Israel is the new collective "Jew," the chosen scapegoat of the nations—especially in the Arab and

Muslim world. The power of such stereotypes is great. He goes on to consider the history of antisemitism. Today, the older and newer forms exist together. For example, he shows how antisemitism is closely related to contemporary conspiracy theories—the United States and the Jews allegedly control the Middle East policy of western nations. It is antisemitic to suggest that the Jews "manipulate" America in the interests of Israel and to destroy Islam. Here the language slides into the traditional and stereotypical mould of wealthy Jews secretly operating behind the scenes to pursue their own drive for power and profit.

**Wistrich** refers to Dave Brown's cartoon of Ariel Sharon devouring babies in the *Independent*, and how the image evidences the traditional form of antisemitism evoking memories of the medieval blood libel and contemporary "anti-Zionist fantasies" of the bloodthirsty Jew. He also refers to the cover of the *New Statesman*—the Star of David piercing the supine British flag, in the context of the Jewish lobby. This is an example of interchangeable references to the Jewish/Zionist lobby. He continues by pointing out that obsessive and repetitive insistence on such manipulations by British Jews raises the spectre of dual loyalties and thereby feeds antisemitic prejudices.

**Wistrich** also refers to the threat of radical Islam via the recent poll published in the *Times* showing that 46% of Muslims in Britain believe

the Jews and the Freemasons to be involved together in a conspiracy to control the British media and politics. He explains the antisemitic sources of this belief, which today also include satellite broadcasts from the Middle East and the internet. He also refers to Sheikh Yusuf Al Qaradawi as being a known antisemite, misogynist, and as having vehemently and openly anti-homosexual attitudes—yet he was given the red-carpet treatment by Ken Livingstone less than two years ago and was hailed by London's Mayor as a "progressive." He is certainly not a progressive. **Wistrich** feels that the case of Abu Hamza may be a turning point in exposing to the British public the virulent antisemitism and anti-Westernism behind radical Islam.

antisemitism multiculturalism & ethnic identity

The Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism

המרכז הבינלאומי לחקר האנטישמיות

אנטישמיות, רב-תרבותיות וזהות אתנית

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים

All sessions and events will be held on the Mt. Scopus campus of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

כל מושבי הכנס והאירועים ייערכו בקמפוס הר הצופים, האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים

Monday 12 June 2006  
Beit Maersdorf

18:30 RECEPTION

Opening Session

Chair: Prof. Doron Mendels (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Greetings: Prof. Steven Kaplan (Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Keynote Address: Prof. Robert Wistrich (Director, The Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism - SICA)

Antisemitism and Multiculturalism: The Uneasy Connection

The Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism (SICA)

was established in 1982 as an interdisciplinary research center dedicated to an independent, critical approach to the accumulation and dissemination of knowledge necessary for understanding the phenomenon of antisemitism. The Center engages in research on antisemitism throughout the ages, focusing on relations between Jews and non-Jews, particularly in situations of tension and crisis.

Director: Prof. Robert S. Wistrich

R.S.V.P!

Please register by 11 June 2006!

יש להשלים ההרשמה עד 11 ביוני 2006

Tel: 02-5882494, 02-5882991

Fax: 02-5881002

E-mail: sica@mscc.huji.ac.il

Special Thanks:

Mr. Felix Posen  
Mr. Daniel Posen  
Mr. Vidal Sassoon

Thanks:



Anti-Defamation League



Ambassade de France en Israël



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
Conference Committee

Tuesday 13 June 2006  
Beit Maersdorf

Session I  
09:00-10:30

Chair: Prof. Bianca Kühnel (Director, European Forum, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Opening Remarks: Prof. Robert Wistrich (Director, SICA)

Prof. Anton Pelinka (University of Innsbruck)  
*The Concept and Function of Antisemitism*

Dr. Simon Epstein (SICA)  
*The Jewish Question in Multi-National States*

Dr. Leon Volovici (SICA)  
*The East-European Jews between "Cultural Autonomy" and "Ethnic Identity"*

10:30-10:45 - COFFEE BREAK

Session II  
10:45-12:15

Chair: Prof. Gabriel Motzkin (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Prof. Mitchell Ash (University of Vienna)  
*Jewish Emigrés from Central Europe and their Research on Antisemitism after 1933*

Dr. Klaus Hoedl (University of Graz)  
*Jews and Others in Postwar Austria*

Dr. Anthony Kauders (Kevin University)  
*Liberalism, Multiculturalism, and Jewish Identity in the Federal Republic of Germany, 1945-1990*

12:15-13:30 - LUNCH

Session III  
13:30-15:00

In French with simultaneous interpretation into English

Chair: Dr. Alain Michel (Tel Aviv University)

Dr. Georges Bensoussan (Mémorial de la Shoah, Paris)  
*La République et le défi de l'intégration*  
*The Republic Confronting the Challenges of Integration*

Prof. Shmuel Trigano (Université Paris X-Nanterre)  
*La France multiculturelle et le référent juif dans le "nouvel antisémitisme"*  
*The Assertion of Minority Identities and the Jewish Referent in the "New Antisemitism"*

Dr. Nelly Las (Affiliated with SICA)  
*Féminisme, laïcité et antisémitisme en France*  
*Feminism, Secularism, and Antisemitism in France*

15:00-15:15 - COFFEE BREAK

Session IV  
15:15-16:45

In French with simultaneous interpretation into English

Chair: Dr. Simon Epstein (SICA)

Mr. Jean-Yves Camus (European Center for Research and Action on the Racism and Antisemitism)  
*Identité nationale et multiculturalisme dans la France contemporaine*  
*National Identity and Multiculturalism in France Today*

Prof. Tobie Nathan (Embassy of France in Israel)  
*Les problèmes d'identité des populations d'origine africaine et leurs relations avec la communauté juive de France*  
*The Identity Problems of the French Population of African Origin and Its Relationships with the Jewish Community of France*

Mr. Morad El-Hattab (French Philosopher and Writer)  
*Le haine des Juifs et d'Israël et le Laissez-passer des haines refoulées*  
*The Hatred against Jews and Israel and the Laissez-passer of the Repressed Hatreds in France*

Wednesday 14 June 2006  
Beit Maersdorf

Session V  
09:00-10:30

Chair: Dr. Leon Volovici (SICA)

Prof. Yehuda Bauer (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Yad Vashem)  
*Holocaust Education and the Fight against Antisemitism*

Dr. Raphael Vago (Tel Aviv University)  
*Globalization and Identity Politics in Russia, Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe*

Prof. Andras Kovács (Central European University, Budapest)  
*Antisemitism in Present-Day Hungary: from Prejudice to Ideology?*

10:30-10:45 - COFFEE BREAK

Session VI  
10:45-12:15

Chair: Mr. David Witztum (Israeli Television and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Dr. Yfaat Weiss (University of Haifa)  
*Crimes against Humanity: Jews and Others*

Dr. Annette Seidel-Arapaci (University of Leeds)  
*Between Multikulti Pedagogy and Racisms: Holocaust Memory, Migration, and "Otherness" in Germany*

Dr. Gilad Margalit (University of Haifa)  
*The Germans as Victims: Memory, Identity, and Suffering*

12:15-13:30 - LUNCH

Session VII  
13:30-15:00

Chair: Prof. Sander Gilman (Emory University, Atlanta)

Prof. Bassam Tibi (Cornell University)  
*Islamic Fundamentalism and Western Multiculturalism*

Dr. Margaret Brearley (WZO, former advisor to the Archbishop's Council)  
*The Anglican Church, Jews, and Multicultural Society in Britain*

Prof. Mario Sznajder (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)  
*Antisemitism, National Identity, and the Fascist Legacy in Italy*

15:00-15:15 - COFFEE BREAK

Session VIII  
15:15-16:45

Chair: Prof. Anton Pelinka (University of Innsbruck)

Dr. Michael Shafir (Bar-Ilan University Chai-Napoca)  
*From Dissidence to Holocaust Minimization: Anti-Israelism and Anti-Semitism in Present Day Romania*

Hieromonk Jovan Culibrk (St. Peter's Theological College, Cetina, Serbia and Montenegro)  
*The Challenge of Multiculturalism: the Failure of Yugoslavia*

Dr. Leonardo Senkman (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)  
*Multiculturalism and Antisemitism in Argentina*

Special Evening Session  
At the Truman Institute Building  
19:00

Premiere Screening in Israel  
of the documentary *Obsession*

A film about the threat of radical Islam to Western civilization (Director: Wayne Kopping)

Discussion:  
Ms. Nonie Darwish (Arabic for Israel)  
Prof. Robert Wistrich (Historical Advisor of the film *Obsession*)

Limited seating - please register by 12 June 2006!

Thursday 15 June 2006  
Beit Maersdorf

Session IX  
09:00-10:30

Chair: Prof. Robert Wistrich (Director, SICA)

Ms. Flamma Nirenstein (University of Bamel)  
*The Left, Jewish Identity, and the Multiculturalist Ideology*

Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld (Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs)  
*The Problems of Dutch Multiculturalism and the Resulting Fallout for the Jews*

Ms. Bat Ye'or (Author of *Eunuchs: The Arab-Arab Axis From Europe to Eurasia*)

10:30-10:45 - COFFEE BREAK

Session X  
10:45-12:15

Chair: Dr. Dana Arieli-Horowitz (Bazalel Academy of Art and Design)

Prof. Richard Landes (Boston University)  
*On the Return of Conspiracy Thinking to the Mainstream*

Dr. Joel Kotek (Mémorial de la Shoah, Paris)  
*Islamist and Nazi Caricatures of Jews*

Prof. Raphael Israeli (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)  
*European Themes in Contemporary Arab Antisemitism*

12:15-13:30 - LUNCH

Session XI  
13:30-14:30

Chair: Mr. Elyahu Honig (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Prof. Suzanne Rutland (University of Sydney)  
*Australian Multiculturalism: Immigration, Race, and Religion*

Mr. Kenneth Jacobson (Associate National Director, ADL)  
*Antisemitism and the Multicultural Society: the Case of the U.S.*

14:30-14:45 - COFFEE BREAK

Session XII  
14:45-16:15

Chair: Prof. Gideon Shimoni (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Prof. Alvin Rosenfeld (Indiana University)  
*Antisemitic Language: Contemporary Rhetoric of Hostility to Jews and the Jewish State*

Prof. Sander Gilman (Emory University, Atlanta)  
*The Literary World of Multiculturalism: Jewish Debates in Israel, France, Britain, and Germany*

Concluding Remarks:  
Prof. Robert Wistrich  
(Director, SICA)

# The Multicultural Challenge: A Four Day Conference in Jerusalem

*Tsvi November*

Between the 12th and 15th of June, 2006, the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem hosted a major four-day international conference entitled *Antisemitism, Multiculturalism and Ethnic Identity*. The conference was conceived and organized by Professor Robert Wistrich, Director of the Center, who on the opening night gave a wide-ranging and powerful keynote address entitled “Antisemitism and Multiculturalism: The Uneasy Connection.” Leading academics, journalists, authors, and activists from across Europe, Israel, the United States, Australia, and other countries presented well-written papers based on observation and research. The high point of the conference was, no doubt, the screening of *Obsession*, a forceful and stunning documentary featuring spine-chilling clips from Saudi Arabian, Palestinian, Egyptian, Iranian, Hizbullah, and Al-Jazeera TV, along with interviews with Israeli, American, and reform-minded Arab commentators. The film is all about radical Islam and its global jihad. It was directed by Wayne Kopping and co-produced by Raphael Shore. The scientific adviser and a moving spirit behind the documentary was Professor Robert Wistrich who, together with such noted experts as Sir Martin Gilbert and Daniel Pipes, also appeared in the film. In the film, Ms. Nonie Darwish, an Egyptian-born Arab woman who now lives in the United States explains the radical Muslim thinking that underlies the scenes of huge crowds of raving men (and sometimes women, too) shouting “Death to America,” “Death to Israel,” and “Islam is destined to rule the world.” Often, these mass demonstrations in Lebanon, Iran, Pakistan, the Palestinian territories, and elsewhere include burning the U.S. flag and effigies of President Bush, Sharon, and others. After the screening, Ms. Darwish—one of three Arab/Muslim speakers who participated in the conference, gave a thirty-minute talk that provided keen insights into the radical Islamist worldview. Ms. Darwish personally underwent this hate indoctrination (her terminology) while growing up in Gaza and living in Egypt before immigrating to the United States at the age of thirty.

During the conference, many trenchant points were

made. First, antisemitism is not just a Jewish problem, but has tremendous ramifications for the future of Western civilization as a whole and the maintenance of a more or less sane world order. History shows that antisemitism starts with Jews but does not end with them. As a reaction to Nazi racism and the Holocaust, it is no longer acceptable for polite, liberally-inclined Europeans to be anti-Jewish. Jews, in fact, are well accepted today as part of the European mainstream. Furthermore, the large wave of immigration into Europe from all over the world, and especially from former colonies in North Africa and Asia, has transformed almost all Western democracies into multicultural nations. Historically, it was the Jews who advocated multiculturalism and pluralism as a framework for tolerance within which they could be both Jewish and British or German, American, French, etc. Multiculturalism presumes a certain degree of mutual respect and acceptance of other ethnic groups within a common political framework based on shared fundamental values. On the first two days, this theme was explored historically in lectures that focused on the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires, and on Germany and Eastern Europe before and immediately after the Holocaust. Two sessions in French analyzed the dangers and anxieties facing the Jews of France at the present time.

Today multiculturalism has backfired because the vast majority (close to thirty million) of immigrants in Europe are Muslims who for the most part are not integrating themselves into European societies. Indeed, some Muslim clerics openly proclaim Islam’s intent to replace Christianity in Europe. Some demographers calculate that Europe will be Islamic in about fifty years since all Western European birth rates now fall well below the replacement level. Furthermore, the female replacement rate, another indicator of demographic contraction, is also negative. Of course, this does not hold true for Muslims in Europe since they produce many more children per family than do their non-Muslim neighbors. There is a fairly large segment of the world-wide Muslim population—estimated by Dr. Daniel Pipes at around 15%—who support al-Qaeda. The most militant among them have carried out terror



Bat Ye'or

attacks in London, Madrid, and elsewhere. Their actions not only threaten the West and the stability of the Middle East but also those moderate Muslims who do accept Western ideas of equality and mutual respect between different ethnic groups and religions. Muslim radicals are vehemently anti-Israel and antisemitic, and are mainly responsible for the precipitous increase in the number of attacks on Jewish persons and institutions in recent years.

To appease Muslims, most European governments have long since adopted a pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel stance. As Bat Ye'or, the author of *Eurabia*, elucidated in her talk, there is a constantly expanding European-Arab sphere of cooperation which is leading to Christian *dhimmitude* (social inferiority of non-Muslims). Some European politicians like London's mayor, Ken Livingstone, while insulting Jews, accept and welcome Arab hate-mongers like Sheikh al-Qaradawi. In the Netherlands, one lawmaker has even suggested adopting the Islamic shari'a law code. Demagogic politicians sometimes adopt anti-Israel and even antisemitic positions so as to attract Muslim voters.

Dr. Margaret Brearley, a former member of the Anglican Archbishops Council who works with the London Jewish Cultural Centre, spoke about antisemitism in Britain which is now at an all-time high. She detailed the Anglican Church's strong anti-Israel stance and activities as well as their efforts to cultivate links with the UK's Muslim community which is

estimated to number between two and four million. Dr. Brearley went on to say that multiculturalism is still well accepted by the British but has, nevertheless, resulted in the creation of ghettos where Muslims concentrate and live in tight-knit neighborhoods in which mainstream British values based on "live and let live" attitudes are rejected. She reminded her audience of Abu Hamza al Masri and other radical Islamic clerics who openly preach antisemitism and encourage holy war against Christians, Hindus, and Jews. They make good use of their rights to free speech in the democratic country they despise. A public opinion poll among Muslims in Britain in early 2006 found that 37% of Muslims feel that the Jewish community is a legitimate target for attacks. The Anglican Church, which is in a state of steep decline, has set out on a path of accommodation with Muslims that inter alia finds expression in strongly anti-Israel and anti-Jewish motifs.

Most Europeans today, as Professor Shmuel Trigano also pointed out, side with the Arabs in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and many radical left-wingers question Israel's very legitimacy. Essentially, old fashioned antisemitism has been replaced by anti-Zionism. Like antisemitism, attacks on Israel are often unfactual, illogical, and based on a double standard.

Fiamma Nirenstein, a columnist for *La Stampa*, hosts her own TV show in Italy and has authored studies about the left's collusion with Islam's anti-Western agenda. She made a passionate plea to stand up to the new antisemitism and fight radical Islamic terrorism. Nirenstein believes that Judeo-Christian civilization and modern civil society is threatened by Islamic radicals and their leftist apologists. The West's response must be firm. Some of her points, like those of Bat Ye'or, aroused



Ms. Fiamma Nirenstein



Prof. Anton Pelinka

controversy and disagreement.

The conference did not examine all the manifold varieties of multiculturalism or the ways in which it differed from ethnic or religious pluralism. But Professor Anton Pelinka of the University of Innsbruck did note that there are several

types of antisemitism (i.e., socio-economic, socio-psychological, geopolitical, and religious). He pointed out that antisemitic harangues seek and provide self-contained simplistic explanations that do not require proof. Anti-Americanism, according to Pelinka and several other speakers, is widespread in Europe because people believe that America dominates the world, attacks countries near and far, selfishly exploits the world's economy and is, of course, guilty of the worse sin of all; namely: supporting Israel and Israeli "colonialism."

Professor Richard Landes of Boston University analyzed conspiracy theories that blame Jews for the world's ills. He went on to discuss the conspiracy theories that purport to explain the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center. Landes said that some of the 9/11 conspiracy theories assert that President Bush, the Mossad, etc. are responsible for the 9/11 attack because "we (the USA) are really the bad guys" who had the most to gain from the destruction of the Twin Towers in New York City, while Bin Laden is just an "underprivileged Third World protestor" against American hegemony, capitalism, colonialism, globalization, and imperialism.

The power of conspiracy theories to take root among large numbers of believers is founded on the capacity of such theories to point a finger at the people who allegedly benefit most from the situation at hand. Everything then fits into place to enable believers to understand the *hidden* forces working against them (e.g., the "Elders of Zion"). Dr. Joël Kotek's graphic presentation of Nazi

and Islamic caricatures of Jews demonstrated some of the similarities between such conspiracy theories and forms of demonizing Israel. One feature of this visual and symbolic antisemitism is its close connection to anti-Americanism, a point made by several lecturers at the conference.

The question of Europe's anti-Americanism also arose in Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld's incisive analysis of ethnic tensions in the Netherlands. He pointed to three important themes: Europe is militarily weak because European nations have been relying on US protection since World War II; Europe is dependant on Arab oil for its very survival; and European statesmen cannot take a position on any issue without first taking Muslim Arab public opinion into consideration. Professor Robert Wistrich in his keynote lecture had already noted that Europeans are envious not only of American power but also of its relatively successful attempt at creating a viable multicultural society. There has been noticeably less antisemitism in the United States except for the fringe neo-Nazi adherents, far left pro-Palestinian groups, and black activists who openly insult Jews and instigate racial friction on college campuses. A balanced presentation written by Ken Jacobson of the ADL (presented by Arieh O'Sullivan) confirmed this diagnosis. It was followed by a lucid description by Suzanne Rutland of how Australia's multiculturalist society (in many ways good for the Jews) is today being challenged by Muslim extremists.

To sum up, we see increasing Arab/Islamic pressure on Europe but there is still a state of denial and reluctance in elite opinion to accept that international jihad in its varying forms is a serious threat. Meanwhile, Europeans are still trying to placate and appease Arabs. A key element in European-Arab cooperation remains anti-Israel rhetoric. But, as Professor Alvin Rosenfeld noted, the latter has become *the* modern adaptation of antisemitism—embraced by part of the liberal left (which has



Dr. Joël Kotek

traditionally included large numbers of Jews) in the name of anti-colonialism, the defense of human rights, and pro-Palestinian advocacy. Since the left is against (inhuman) capitalism and globalization, it is also, by definition, anti-American as well as being viscerally anti-Israel. Paradoxically, the multicultural left accepts and supports European Muslim communities even though Islam relegates women to subservient status, does not tolerate homosexuality, and is not favorably disposed to democracy or openness (as evidenced by the world-wide rampage protesting the publication of the Mohammed cartoons in Denmark). Prof. Bassam Tibi from Göttingen, speaking from a moderate Muslim standpoint, demonstrated how Western multiculturalism has in fact provided a convenient façade for radical Islamists to undermine the universalist values of the West.

In his opening address, Prof. Robert Wistrich set the tone for the conference by suggesting that multiculturalism has proven to be a Trojan horse for contemporary Europe, allowing in large numbers of Muslims who are antagonistic to a secular, liberal life-style. Another commentator bluntly added that

multiculturalism, as it has evolved in Europe today, has already contributed to a significant increase in antisemitism. It has therefore become highly problematic for the Jews who are now part of the establishment in many Western countries. Jews in Holland, France, Belgium, and elsewhere are frequently advised to remove outward signs of Jewishness. Even on the academic/intellectual level antisemitism (in the form of being anti-Israel) has manifested itself in various boycott initiatives. But Russian, Chinese, Iranian, Saudi, and Egyptian academics are never boycotted or condemned for their countries' aggression and abuses of human rights. The prevailing double standard allows Europeans to indict Israel academicians with impunity. The Jerusalem conference highlighted these and other trends, providing new and original perspectives on the problem of antisemitism by linking it with complex issues of multiculturalism, ethnic identity politics, and globalization, that are usually treated separately. With a few minor exceptions, the overall standard of lectures was excellent and the organization was impeccable as we have come to expect from the Sassoon Center.

*Tzvi November is a free-lance journalist and educator living in Jerusalem.*

***The Felix Posen Bibliographic Project is a major, annotated database on antisemitism. It is an invaluable resource for scholars, researchers, policymakers, journalists, and activists.***

***It's available 24/7. To access the database, go to the SICSA website and click on "Felix Posen Bibliographic Project." <http://sicsa.huji.ac.il>***

***For help with specific projects, you can also contact Sara Grosvald at [saragr@savion.huji.ac.il](mailto:saragr@savion.huji.ac.il)***

## *Laïcité, féminisme et antisémitisme en France* *Feminism, Secularism, and Antisemitism in France*

Dr. Nelly Las

The question of the Jews, antisemitism, and Israel has been grafted unexpectedly on the recent debates on secularism in France, focused on women's and Islam's rights. These questions appear as an essential although diffuse aspect of the "clash of civilizations" of the partisans of America and Zionism. It is not the first time that feminism is linked to the Jews, who are either denigrated as being at "the origin of patriarchy" by some feminist theologies, or inversely as being the source of feminism ("feminism as a Jewish invention"). How does this apparently incongruous triangle formed by secularism, feminism, and antisemitism articulate in the current French debate?

In order to understand the relevance of the principle of secularism in France linked to the political ideal of freedom of conscience and equality, it is necessary to acknowledge the painful historical process which led to the exclusion of the Catholic Church from civil affairs, and more particularly from education at the beginning of the 20th century. The Jews enthusiastically adopted this secularism, which allowed them to be integrated into society as a whole, and even to reach the higher echelons in the administration of the State. Since the Dreyfus Affair, Church-state separation appeared to them as the most secure bulwark against antisemitism, at least against the clerical variety.

Secularism contributed to the emancipation of women, thanks to the institution of mandatory girls' schools (Ferry law, 1881). At the same time, it has long worked against their political equality because of the fear of "women's hold over the Church" (the right to vote was only granted to women in 1944). The feminism of the 1970s was intimately linked to secularism, not only because of its claims for sexual freedom and the autonomy of a woman's body, but also because of its approach to all religions, which were considered

instrumental in controlling women and preserving their subordination.

Almost a century after the establishment of the law separating Church and State (1905), the French Republic faces a crisis which questions the secularist principle in its privileged territory: the public school. The affair concerning the wearing of the Islamic veil only developed in conjunction with the rise of fundamentalist influence in French schools when the veil came to be adopted as a mark of identity. The "fundamentalist banner" became for some people the symbol of political and religious proselytism, while for others it was considered a bulwark against sexual harassment. Moreover, the affair was aggravated by the wave of antisemitic aggression mainly perpetrated by young Arab-Muslims identified with the Palestinians, and its serious repercussions which even reached the schools (E. Brenner, *Les territoires perdus de la République—Antisémitisme, racisme et sexisme en milieu scolaire*, 2002). Simultaneously, there was the extension of violence in the *cités*, where girls are often obliged to bear a veil in order to be "respected" (cases of collective rape described in *L'enfer des tournantes*, and the burning alive of a young Muslim woman in Vitry-sur-Seine was an extreme example of it).

Serious incidents involving both sexism and antisemitism contributed to the appointment of the Stasi commission, whose main task was "studying the application of the secularist principle in the French Republic" (July 2003). Even though neither of these two reasons (sexism and antisemitism) has been officially claimed as a justification for the law, they have been the main subjects articulating the public debate on secularism. Yet while the first reason has been brought to light by all the protagonists, the second one is still to be deciphered.

The disagreement among feminists in the affair of the Islamic veil is not centered around the classical divergences on difference between the sexes, but rather around two differentiated world-visions. The first one is in the majority and follows the secular-universalistic line of the French tradition. It considers the veil as both a symbol of women's oppression and as a banner of the "intégristes" (fundamentalists):

If we let those girls wear the veil at school in the

name of tolerance and of a pseudo-freedom, which arguments will we have afterwards for denying them the burqa in the near future? We need to understand that if we accept this symbolism of the feminine body as a devilish menace, it will be tantamount to the end of equality between the sexes. (Elisabeth Badinter).

The second view originates in Third World multiculturalism, which considers French universalism as *dépassé* (surpassed) and colonialist. The veil is seen as a form of emancipation, and those opposing it are considered racists (this discourse is less consensual when referring to polygamy, excision, or the stoning of adulterous women). One of the most outstanding French feminists strongly opposing the veil law is Christine Delphy. She is one of the founders of the women's movement in France, and a theorist of radical materialist feminism. Today, she extols "feminism with Islam" at the side of Tariq Ramadan. In what concerns antisemitism, her answer is revealing: "European antisemitism disappeared with my generation, before and after the war.... The exclusion of the youth of Muslim origin: that is the new antisemitism."

What is the stance of the women in question, whether Muslim believers or secular feminists? Among those in favor of integration and against the veil, the movement "Ni putes ni soumises" (Neither whores nor

subordinates) declares that the fight against antisemitism is also their own, and they reject the instrumentalization of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Fadela Amara). As for the pro-veil advocates, whose religious education is often done through recordings of the sermons of openly antisemitic Islamic preachers (Hassan Iquioussen, Mohamed Latreche), it is not hard to imagine which image of the Jews they have absorbed.

The questions to answer are: why does advocacy against the veil law come together with the alliance with Islamists, and why should the fight against anti-Arab racism compete with the very existence of antisemitism, or even justify it? This is the enigma of multiculturalism imported from America: in the polemics on the veil, numerous French Jews attached to their identity and religion have an a priori tendency to choose in favor of the right to difference and against a law that includes the wearing of the *kippa*. But in the victim competition, multiculturalism is positioned against the Jews, considered as "white," affluent, and colonizers. This is the paradox of the "new antisemitism," with its Islamist, pseudo-feminist, anti-racist, and anti-secular allegiances."

***La haine des Juifs et d'Israël et le  
"laissez-passer" des haines refoules  
Hatred Against Jews and Israel and the  
Laissez-passer of Repressed Hatreds in  
France***

*Morad El-Hattab  
French Philosopher and Writer*

Anti-Jewish "mythology" has not risen with such virulence since the end of the Second World War, yet it has found little resistance in too many political and intellectual milieus. In every period in the history of the Jewish people, there has emerged a "modern" antisemitism adapted both to the circumstances of the period and to the interests of antisemites of all kinds.

Focused on an absolute anti-Zionism and the demonization of Israel, this new form of antisemitism centered on the axis of the Middle-East conflict, does



Dr. Nelly Las



not exclude the millennial accusations against the Jews, through a synthesis which gives them a new meaning by undergoing some ideological metamorphoses. Hence, this Judeophobia presents itself as a third-world, anti-colonial, and anti-American/anti-capitalist “humanism.” Shaped by an “infinite tolerance,” justifying the unjustifiable, it masks itself with a falsification of language, allowing the liberation of the antisemitic word. Thanks to the demonization of Israel, there are no more antisemites; no need to feel ashamed.

In Durban in September 2001, under the aegis of the United Nations, a conference officially concerned with the fight against racism and the denunciation of slavery mutated into a lynching of the “Zionist entity,” with an anti-Jewish virulence rarely achieved since the Nazi period. An odd grouping of non-governmental organizations put forth the simplistic argument that “If Israel did not exist, both peace and justice would reign over the Middle East.” No democratic countries protested this travesty, save for Israel and the United States (whose official representatives left the conference); only a muted disapproval was issued by the European Union.

Hatred of Israel is the *laissez-passer* of repressed hatreds, the target against which so many resentments, ghosts, and lies are projected. We can search for its causes, or ask ourselves about its resurgence and its recrudescence, but it is all in vain. Antisemitism does not need causes since it can endorse all of them. The only condition for it to reappear, in all its virulence, is the underhand work of disinformation exercised with absolute impunity.

The hatred of Israel and Zionism by the Trotskyites, deprived of their last revolutionary utopia after the fall of the Berlin wall, has caused them to lose their reason. It is easier today to justify Pol Pot rather than Israel in many liberal and left-wing circles. The hatred of Israel and the Jews is so deep that all other misfortunes of the world and the millions of human beings who have been victimized by totalitarian regimes are forgotten. Instead we find the banalization of suicidal terrorism, kidnapping, and the murder of civilian populations.

Without any doubt, there exists an image of Islam

as enemy, but even worse, there is also an Islam which presents itself as an enemy. I believe that Muslims should not fight the *image* of Islam as enemy, but rather deal with Islam itself, which often presents itself in an aggressive way. “The best jihad,” proclaims a hadith, “is telling the truth to a tyrannical sovereign.”

The last UN report on “Human Development in the Arab World 2004” highlights the backwardness of the Arab world. I am stunned by the attitude of certain religious and political Muslim leaders who loudly cry for a holy war against Israel and the United States without ever inciting the people to lead the jihad against its own vices. The facts are saddening:

- The productivity of the Arab countries has been decreasing during the last 40 years, and their development has remained stagnant for 20 years.
- 30% of the Arab population live on less than 2 dollars per day.
- One Arab women in two is illiterate.
- The access to technology is trifling: 1% of the Arabs own a computer.

Yet neither Israel not the United States are guilty or responsible for this excruciating record of the Arab world.

Besides, the Quran emphasizes the superiority of the *alim*, the wise and intelligent. Only 250 of its verses are dedicated to legislation, while 750 of them, one-eighth of the Koran, aims at “giving birth to reflections” and “increasing science” (Sura 20: 113-114), and not at producing “kamikazes” who kill innocent people!

Terrorism does not cure the ills of the planet, it



Morad El-Hattab

aggravates them. I believe that condemnation of terrorism should be absolute, universal, and unconditional. In Camus's words: "Whatever the cause we defend is, it will always be dishonored by the blind massacre of an innocent crowd where the murderer knows in advance that he will reach both the woman and the child."

### ***Islamic Fundamentalism and Western Multiculturalism***

*Prof. Bassam Tibi  
Cornell University*

Antisemitism is a European ideology and disease that unfolded a deadly virus of racism transmitted to other cultures outside of Europe, primarily to the Arab world and other countries of the Islamic civilization. However, this import from Europe has been able to strike roots there, becoming an indigenous phenomenon that no longer can be explained by a reference to an import. It is perplexing to see this once imported phenomenon now being exported back to Europe via Arab-Islamic global migration. One of the major sources of the contemporary new antisemitism is the ideology of Islamism. The major precursor of this

contemporary ideology is Sayyid Qutb in his widely spread catechism "*Ma'rakatuma ma'a al-Yahud*" (Our struggle against the Jews) now also reaching out to the Islamic diaspora in Europe.

Multiculturalism is an ideology of cultural relativism presenting itself in a self-congratulatory manner as a new European outlook of tolerance and openness vis-à-vis other cultures. It claims to be a post-colonial view abandoning the hitherto dominant European *mission civilisatrice*. In general, the new ideology dismisses even the universal validity of the European concept of individual human rights and of secular democracy. Antisemitism is only condemned when it comes from local Europeans; if it originates from within other cultures, "tolerance" is granted and openly displayed. An example: when two synagogues in Germany were desecrated in October 2000, Chancellor Schröder drew on the assumption that the perpetrators were neo-Nazis and called for an "uprising of the decent people" (*Aufstand der Anständigen*). The police found, however, that the crime was done by Arab Muslim immigrants. The outrage was then transformed into a multicultural understanding for the "despised," who were allegedly expressing their protest against the way "Jews treat Arabs." In the court these arguments were brought forward and the sentence was accordingly very slight. In France, these events have become "normal" and the police advise Jews to abandon all signs of their Jewishness as the best way to avoid assault. Europe's contemporary multiculturalism thus has become a cover of the new antisemitism now returning to Europe via Arab-Islamic migration.

One needs to look at the invention and construction of Muslim cultural identity in the diasporic environment in light of the contemporary phenomenon of identity politics. The Berlin-based newspaper *Tagesspiegel* reported on schools with a predominantly Arab-Muslim population, quoting students who underlined their identity by shouting: "Hier kommt kein Jude rein" (no Jews allowed to enter). We encounter here a direct connection between multiculturalism and identity politics. Multiculturalism is the indiscriminate tolerance of European cultural relativists displayed



Prof. Bassam Tibi

towards the migrants' identity politics cultivated in those parallel societies currently mushrooming throughout Europe. John Kelsay addressed these parallel societies as "Islamic enclaves in the West, but not of it." The Islamists indoctrinating young Muslims born in Europe are committed to the new antisemitism; they make full instrumental use of civil rights. In the name of religion they teach in faith schools an inclusive identity that undermines any effort toward integration in European societies as citizens, and they also spread the new antisemitism.

In conclusion, allow me to refer to a debate at the Essen synagogue on the concept of *Leitkultur* (leading or dominant culture) first outlined in my book *Europa ohne Identität?*. The President of the 2004 German parliament, Dr. Norbert Lammert, aimed at reviving the debate on *Leitkultur* for the integration of migrants. In fact, the debate was planned between him and myself. At least five times I put forward the concern that combating the new antisemitism of the Islamists in the European diaspora should be part of the consensus over *Leitkultur*. The president never responded to any of these references. Instead the concern of the mostly non-Jewish audience in the synagogue of Essen was "Islamophobia—as voiced by the diaspora Muslims attending." In fact, the notion of Islamophobia (established for ideological reasons) constructs a connecting line between antisemitism and anti-Islamism—with the attempt to place both on an equal footing. The pursuit is an instrument of propaganda of those Islamists at pains to highjack the Muslim diaspora in Europe and to protect themselves against any criticism in equating it with an Islamophobia.

The reference to the Essen debate displays the downgrading of antisemitism (which is real) and the upgrading of the allegation of an Islamophobia (which is constructed) in an environment of multiculturalism and identity politics. These are the realities creating a growing concern not only for Jews, but also for liberal Muslims like this presenter. In the project on transnational religion at Cornell University, published as *Religion in an Expanding Europe* (edited by Tim Byrnes and Peter Katzenstein, Cambridge University Press, 2006), I outlined the future choice for Europe:

Europeanization of Islam or Islamization of Europe. This project was run in the United States rather than in Europe, because European opinion leaders do not welcome such a debate.

***The Anglican Church, Jews,  
and Multicultural Society in Britain***

*Ms. Margaret Brearley  
Archbishops' Council and London Jewish  
Cultural Centre*

The Anglican Church, numbering 75 million worldwide, faces considerable tensions, particularly over the fraught issue of homosexuality. Senior British clergy strive to prevent schism between the liberal Episcopalian Church in the United States (ECUSA) and far more conservative Anglicans in the Third World. Within Britain itself, some Evangelical Anglican clergy have threatened to withdraw from the established Church. Moreover, the number of committed Anglicans appear to be dwindling. Regular Anglican church attendance is under 1 million, below that of Roman Catholics and roughly equivalent to mosque attendance by Muslims.

While missionary activity specifically targeted at Jews continues, promoted by the Church's Ministry



Dr. Margaret Brearley

---

among the Jews (CMJ), Anglican-Jewish relations are further complicated by the overwhelming vote of the General Synod in February 2006 to divest from Caterpillar (later rejected in committee). The vote, supported by the Archbishop of Canterbury, reflected the growing influence of the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre in Jerusalem, founded in 1989 by Canon Naim Ateek, whose highly politicized Palestinian liberation theology has had impact far beyond Anglican circles. The corollary of Sabeel's mission to encourage Christians worldwide "to work for justice and to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people" is active support for the attempt to delegitimize and isolate Israel, and what Ateek calls the "Israeli government crucifixion system" through the divestment campaign, adopted already by the World Council of Churches, the American Presbyterian Church in 2004, and others.

Countering this campaign, which may temporarily have abated, is a dynamic new pressure group, Anglicans for Israel, formed early in 2006. But Sabeel will continue to campaign vigorously among Anglicans, inspire Christian anti-Israel activism, and strongly attack Christian Zionism. Sabeel is supported by numerous Anglican clergy including John Gladwin, Bishop of Chelmsford, and the Anglican Archbishop Riah Abu El-Assal of Jerusalem. Its anti-Israel stance is underpinned in influential books by Anglican clergymen Colin Chapman and, especially, Stephen Sizer, whose theology of anti-Zionism reinforces anti-Judaic replacement theology, further advances the "dejudaization" of Anglicanism and is, I believe, deeply damaging to Christian-Jewish relations.

Anti-Israel attitudes among Anglicans are further intensified by bodies such as CAABU, Christian Aid and the Living Stones Network. Canon Andrew White's view in 2003 that such attitudes in the church "go beyond legitimate criticism of Israel into hatred of the Jews" was echoed in February 2006 by Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, who stated that the Synod's disinvestment vote—just after the election of Hamas and calls by the President of Iran for the annihilation of Israel—would have "the most adverse repercussions...on

Jewish-Christian relations in Britain."

Moreover, antisemitism in Britain, statistically at its highest postwar level already in 2004-2005, reflects what Jonathan Sacks described in January 2006 as a global "tsunami of antisemitism." Since monitoring began in 1984, there have never been so many arson attacks, desecrations of synagogues and Jewish cemeteries, or vandalism of Jewish buildings, epitomized in the slogan "Free the World. Kill a Jew" daubed on a Jewish building in Leeds (2004). Attacks against Jewish people have become, for the first time, even more numerous than attacks on Jewish property. Jewish students face intense pressure on university campuses due largely to Islamist agitation; Jewish societies have been banned at several universities. In 2006, the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, made remarks widely construed as anti-Jewish.

While Barry Kosmin and Paul Iganski rightly attribute the "new Judeophobia" to a new post-9/11 alliance between "elements of the new left, far right, radical Islamists, anti-globalists and human rights campaigners," it can be argued that a contributory factor in intensified antisemitism is multiculturalism as currently practiced within Britain. Werner Menski has noted that, despite continuing systematic discrimination, many recent immigrants have rapid upward social mobility through having established effective networks which provide "multiple strategies of self-help and loyalty." The white, working class poor are largely without such networks and can find themselves marginalized, alienated, and resentful. This, together with recent large-scale increases in immigration (net legal immigration of 166,000 annually since 1997 plus some 3.7 million temporary and permanent immigrants from central and eastern Europe since May 2004, and an unknown but large number of illegal immigrants), and the leftwards shift of recent Conservative politics, is resulting in electoral strengthening of the far-right British National Party.

Most importantly, antisemitism among British Muslims (numbering 1.6 million according to the 2001 census; numbering at least two to four million according to Muslim leaders) has been fanned by radical

Islamist organizations, including Hizb-ut-Tahrir, Al-Muhajiroun, and the Muslim Public Affairs Committee, and by Islamist clerics. In February 2006, Abu Hamza al-Masri, an Egyptian-born radical cleric whose followers took over mosques in several British cities, was jailed after being found guilty of inciting murder and race hatred. Specifically, Abu Hamza preached hatred of Jews. He described the Holocaust as a punishment from Allah, and argued on the basis of a popular *hadith* that Jews should face further torture. His rhetoric implied action. He told British Muslim audiences that they may kill non-Muslims: “Killing a *kuffar* (unbeliever) for any reason, you can say it is OK even if there is no reason for it.” Known Al-Qaeda terrorists were recruited at his London mosque. Abu Hamza’s views reflect those of other London-based jihadist clerics, including Abu Qatada, who in 1999 advocated the killing of Jews, and Omar Bakri Mohammad. Recent converts are equally contemptuous of Jews and Christians; Omar Brooks (Abu Izzadeen) preached in March 2006 that “all Jews and Christians are going to hell fire” and that there is now “war...between the Muslims and the non-Muslims.” David Myatt, a neo-Nazi jailed for killing three people in bomb attacks in London, has recently converted to Islam; he now supports the killing of disloyal Muslims, promotes violent jihad and attacks “the hoax of the so-called Holocaust” and Zionism.

This potentially lethal form of antisemitism should be taken seriously because of its potent influence within the Muslim community, significant numbers of which are alienated from modern British society. In a poll taken immediately after the 7/7 London bombings and the failed July 21 London bombings by radicalized Muslims, the findings were equally alarming: 6% considered the bombings to be fully justified, while 24% had some sympathy with the feelings and motives of those who had carried them out. According to a more recent poll (February 2006), 7% of Muslims consider suicide bombing in Britain to be justifiable; another 37% consider the Jewish community in Britain to be a legitimate target as part of the struggle for justice in the Middle East.

### ***The Problems of Dutch Multiculturalism and the Resulting Fallout for the Jews***

*Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld  
Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*

Multiculturalism implicitly assumes that cultures and religions are broadly equivalent. A Pew Research Center poll in July 2005 on Islamic extremism showed that in the Netherlands 85% of the population viewed Jews favorably, 83% viewed Christians so, while only 45% viewed Muslims favorably, 51% viewing them unfavorably. This was the highest negative percentage concerning Muslims in the Western countries polled.

Muslims in the Netherlands represent close to one million out of a total population of sixteen million. Almost all or their parents or grandparents arrived in the last few decades. About 350,000 are of Turkish, and about 300,000 of Moroccan origin. It is likely that the defining moment for a substantial degradation of the perception of Muslims was the cruel murder of mediamaker Theo van Gogh by the radical Muslim Mohammed Bouyeri on 2 November 2004.

In Dutch media and political circles increasingly explicit mention is made that the Moroccan community has among its members highly problematic individuals, including potential terrorists. This is a further indication of Dutch society having largely abandoned the frequent multicultural assumption that each cultural group, ethnic or religious, will contribute its best aspects so that society as a whole becomes better.

Multiculturalism is increasingly under attack in the Netherlands. Voices have become stronger to make immigration more selective and difficult, while imposing greater demands on immigrants, de facto targeting mainly non-Western ones. The multicultural illusions were fostered in the past by the myth the Dutch—like many other European nations—had created about themselves: that they were broadly liberal, tolerant, charitable and non-discriminatory.

The immigration of so many Muslims in such a short time has substantially affected the Jewish community in various ways. Many Muslims are very assertive about

---

their religion in public in a country which has become secularized over the past decades. The Muslim attitude strengthens to some extent the position of religion in the Dutch public square.

The list of negative factors, however, is much longer. The number of Muslims, in particular Moroccans, who are at the origins of violent antisemitic incidents is far larger than their share in the Dutch population. Furthermore parts of the immigrant population have strengthened the anti-Jewish and anti-Israel forces in the Netherlands. In order to obtain Muslim votes some Dutch politicians have taken initiatives against Israel.

Holocaust teaching at some schools has been disturbed by Muslim pupils. There have also been incidents on National Memorial Day a few years ago which were caused by Muslim youngsters. The increasing scrutiny of religious or ethnic rituals and attitudes in the Muslim community has had several fall-out effects for the Jewish communities as well.

Intimidation, though not only by Muslims, has had a negative impact on the behavior of Jews, who sometimes also lower their public profile. One can conclude that the broad impact of the Dutch pipe dream of the multicultural society has led to an overall negative impact on Dutch Jews. It seems also reasonable to claim that its impact on the Jewish community has so far been much more negative than on Dutch society at large.

### *From Europe to Eurabia*

---

*Ms. Bat Ye'or*

*Author of Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis*

The characteristics of current Judeophobia in Europe are different from previous antisemitism. It is closely linked to the strategic, political and economic contingencies of Europe's Arab and Muslim policies; to the changed demographic pattern of Europe due to Muslim immigration; and to the disintegration of Europe's identity.

Although there are individual antisemites, present Judeophobia is not really a phenomenon of individuals and political parties. Rather, it is an element of a political

and cultural strategy that embraces all countries of the European Union. It is integrated into its ideology, its institutions, network and functioning, and worked out at the highest levels of decision-making and implementation. This new Judeophobia is not aimed at individual Jews—at a population that since the Shoah has become in Europe marginal and insignificant on the demographic and political levels. It is expressed through an implacable and disdainful hate for the Israeli State and by the glorification of Palestinism, the ideology that promotes the elimination of the Jewish State. This position is anonymous, cynical, secretive, and deceitful. One does not express anti-Jewish racism, one *celebrates* Palestinism and its doctrine of extermination. There is no point in wasting one's money and one's energy in trying to prove Israel's right to exist, or to imagine that this policy stems from ignorance, for it is a coldly calculated program, worked out into its finest details.

This new Judeophobia is in fact inseparable from Europe's longterm policy of fusion with the Arab world, which includes the mass immigration from Muslim countries, with the demographic, sociological, political, and religious changes this is bringing about. These changes are not the result of chance but of a planned and intended strategy whose unfolding one can follow in the texts of the numerous Euro-Arab conferences and EU documents. I have called this transformation of Europe, "Eurabia."

Eurabia represents an ideology, a strategy, a policy, and a culture whose nerve-center and way of working are exemplified by the Anna Lindh Foundation at Alexandria, linked to the Swedish consulate. It promoted an alliance between the European Community/EU and the Arab world—operative at all levels, regionally and internationally. It aimed to create a strategic Euro-Arab pole hostile to America, backing Arafat and the PLO against Israel. Developed over three decades, the Eurabian ideology and strategy in the Euro-Arab framework bound the EU and its member-State governing bodies to those of the Arab League. This framework is called the Euro-Arab Dialogue. It has developed into the Mediterranean Partnership, which includes Israel. It covers the whole **Euro-Arab relationship** in strategy,

policy, business, social and human affairs, culture, academia, and media.

In the 1970s the EC and the Arab League went into this association with different but converging aims. Europe aimed at protecting itself from Arab terrorism; assuring its energy supplies; dominating Arab markets; and turning Arab jihadism against Israel and the United States by adopting a pro-Arafat stance, as well as sponsoring Palestine; maintaining the conflict's purulency by internationalizing the Palestinian cause until Israel's demise. The twinning of Judeophobia and anti-Americanism fitted into the strategy of the Euro-Arab alliance; it is inseparable from it and forms one of its pillars. The other pillar is the war against Israel which is also a smoke-screen hiding the Islamization of Christian theology and the subversion of Western values.

The Arab League and the countries of the Islamic Conference saw in this alliance with Europe the means to separate Europe from America; to divide and weaken the Western camp; to achieve technological parity with Europe; and with the Mediterranean Partnership, to set up a vast Euro-Arab demographic, political, and cultural zone. In this way, through multiculturalism and immigration, Islam and Arab culture could be introduced as a force for the Islamization of the European continent. Europe would thereby—with the combined effects of demographics, terrorist pressure, and oil—become a continent-vassal of world Islam. Multiculturalism is in fact a crucial dimension of the Euro-Arab strategic alliance.

Multiculturalism became the instrument for the subversion of Western thought. For Muslim leaders, multiculturalism in Europe is a fundamental requirement in the Euro-Arab agreements for it allows Muslim immigrants not to integrate and to spread their own culture. As far as Israel is concerned, the purpose of the cultural jihad in academia is to replace Israel by Palestine on the cultural and theological levels.

The new Judeophobia is situated at the geostrategic level in the combined Euro-Arab alliance against Israel. Its themes belong to traditional European Judeophobia, but they are integrated into the context of Islamic jihad.

That is why the new Judeophobia bears within it the destruction of the West, of its institutions and of its culture.

### ***Australian Multiculturalism: Immigration, Race, and Religion***

*Prof. Suzanne Rutland and Sol Encel  
University of Sydney*

From the time that the Australian colonies federated to become the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901 until after World War II, Australia was a mono-culture with a policy of maintaining its population as 90% Anglo-Celtic through its immigration policy, known as the "White Australia Policy." Australia did not have a department of immigration and all non-British migrants had to apply to Australia House in London. This policy changed radically with the Japanese threat after 1941 when the Labor government realized that Australia needed to "populate or perish. In 1944 a government sub-committee decided that while British migrants were preferred, non-British European migration was to be encouraged and in 1947 the Labor government opened its doors to non-British, European immigrants through the International Refugee Organisation (IRO). Under the Liberal government of 1949 to 1972, this policy was maintained, but non-whites continued to be excluded and the policy of Anglo-conformity was fostered through policies designed to encourage rapid assimilation to the dominant Australian culture. A major sea change occurred with the election of a Labor government in 1972 that led to the end of the White Australia Policy and the gradual implementation of multiculturalism.

"The Australian Jewish leadership did not immediately welcome this new approach of multiculturalism. Particularly in Sydney, the more established Anglo-Jewish community understood their identity in



Prof. Suzanne Rutland

---

religious rather than ethnic terms. Melbourne Jewry, which had attracted a higher proportion of East European survivors after 1945 and had emerged as the largest Jewish community in Australia, was more willing to support the concept, especially since the German-born Walter Lippmann, who arrived in Australia shortly before World War II, became a leading proponent of the multiculturalism in the 1970s.

Gradually, however, the community recognized the benefits of multiculturalism, which contributed to the rapid growth of Jewish day schools, as it made maintaining separate education institutions to develop specific religious/ethnic cultures more acceptable, as well as providing government funding for ethnic communities for various projects such as community radio and television. By the 1980s, the mainstream Jewish community supported cultural pluralism, maximizing its benefits through utilizing racial vilification and anti-discrimination legislation, ensuring respect for Jewish religious practices such as *shechitah* and the erection of the *eruv* in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth, whilst at the same time accepting the majority Christian culture, as discussed by Dr Geoffrey Braham Levey in his 2004 study of “Jews and Australian Multiculturalism.” Levey concludes that “while this ‘salad bowl’ image of Australian multiculturalism remains hotly contested both by advocates of Anglo-conformity and an Australian melting pot, there is little doubt where the sympathies of most of Australia’s Jews lie.” (p. 193) With its embrace of multiculturalism, Australian Jewry has been successful in integrating into Australian society, whilst maintaining a strong Jewish identity, a myriad of Jewish organizations, and one of the lowest intermarriage rates in the Western world, even though this is increasing with the present generation.

### *Comparing Muslim and Jewish Identities in Australia*

In comparison with all other ethnic groups, Arab Muslims have integrated less successfully into Australian society on every level—economically, culturally, educationally, and socially—although other, more

Western, Muslim groups such as the Turkish Muslims have integrated more successfully. There are a number of issues, which have militated against acculturation to Western society and are part of Muslim identity. These include the attitude to women; the objection to girls’ participation in physical education, which cuts Muslim girls off from full participation in school activities; traditional Muslim taboos on borrowing money and paying interest; and demands to implement sharia law even if it contradicts Australian law. In Australia, food has been less of a problem with halal meat available, and the wearing of the hijab or chador not seen as an issue.

Muslims have been both the victims but also the victimizers in Australia, particularly in the western suburbs of Sydney where the largest percentage reside. The failure of Arab Muslim acculturation is almost certainly related to the riots at the Sydney beachside suburb of Cronulla in December 2005. Over the last decade there have been problems with gang rape involving Muslim men, such as the recent case of four young Pakistani men who in their defence claimed that they did not realize this was unacceptable in Australia. Jewish children and teachers in government schools with large Muslim populations have experienced both verbal and physical abuse. Muslim bookshops sell Islamic literature preaching hatred or violence, whilst some underprivileged young Muslims are drawn to the firebrand preachings of radical Muslims and clerics. Since 2000, the Jewish community, particularly in Sydney, has faced a surge in antisemitic attacks, part of which is due to radical Muslims.

In comparison, Jews have integrated and acculturated very successfully. It is noteworthy that the Lebanese Christians have a very similar profile to the Jews, so it is not just being Arab, but being Muslim Arab that has caused problems in acculturation. Indeed, both the Premier of NSW, Morris Iemma, and Governor Marie Bashir whose husband, Sir Nicholas Shehadie, was a well-known football player and Lord Mayor of Sydney, are of Lebanese Christian background. Thus, in terms of acculturation relating to identity, it is the combination of Arab origin and Muslim faith that can be problematic.



### *Differing Positions of the Liberal and Labor Parties*

In dealing with these issues there are clear differences between the Liberal and Labor parties. In August 2005 Liberal Prime Minister, John Howard, established a fourteen-member Muslim Reference Group with the aim of assisting Australia's Muslim communities, "to build a common future with all Australians...to challenge extremism and promote the common goals of harmony and understanding" together with Muslim leaders. In 2006, following Howard's speech to this group, the Liberal Treasurer, Peter Costello, stated on national television: "If those are not your values, if you want a country which has Sharia law or a theocratic state, then Australia is not for you." The Labor Party has not supported this approach with Labor Senator, John Faulkner's making a strong plea for tolerance and stating in parliament on 1 March 2006 that: "This assault on Australian values by Mr Howard and his ministers is all about turning Australians of Muslim faith into this generation's bogeymen, for cheap political gain."

### *Conclusions*

Since the 1970s, Australia has supported a multicultural policy in which each ethnic/religious group is encouraged to maintain its own culture and religion and the Jewish community has benefited from this policy. The dilemma arises, however, when a minority ethnic culture clashes with mainstream Australian mores. It is this dilemma that needs to be faced in terms of the recent Arab Muslim migration to Australia.

***The ACTA series of occasional papers takes an in-depth look at current issues relating to antisemitism, with an analysis of trends in various parts of the world, as well as providing background information on subjects in the news.***

***Individual copies are available on request. For information about purchasing multiple copies, contact the Center at [sicsa@mscc.huji.ac.il](mailto:sicsa@mscc.huji.ac.il)***



Prof. Sander Gilman



Hieromonk Jovan Culibrk



Prof. Alvin Rosenfeld



Mr. Eliahu Honig



Ms. Nonie Darwish



Dr. Georges Bensoussan



Prof. Robert Wistrich



The Argentinean Trio: Mariana Janin, Racheli Walach, and Martina Weisz



Dr. Simcha Epstein, Prof. Robert Wistrich, and Danielle Boccara



Danielle Boccara, Chef Moshe Basson of Yad Hashmona, and the pièce de résistance



Ms. Annette Seidel-Arpaci and Mourad El-Hattab



Dr. Leon Volovici, Prof. Andras Kovacs, Prof. Sander Gilman, and Prof. Mitchell Ash



Prof. Shmuel Trigano and Ms. Nonie Darwish

# From Multiculturalism to Antisemitism: An Interview with Prof. Robert S. Wistrich

*Interviewer: Hodaya Karish-Hazoni*

When Prof. Robert Wistrich hears the word “multiculturalism,” in the context of the “Jewish Question” and antisemitism, he is well aware of its nuances, for good and for bad.

Today, it is no longer politically correct to be antisemitic. It is unsophisticated, improper, and in certain countries it is even illegal. Self-righteous criticism of Israel’s policy in the territories is another matter entirely. Prof. Robert Wistrich knows that the distinction is not merely academic and is careful in applying the antisemitic label. As a historian and head of the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Prof. Wistrich systematically follows contemporary anti-Jewish currents in the Western and Arab world. He believes that the current spearhead of global antisemitism (which is potentially genocidal) derives from radical Islam and often masks its true intent by sanctimonious talk about human rights for the Palestinians.

When we met for the interview in Prof. Wistrich’s office on the Hebrew University Mt. Scopus campus, the world media was still engrossed with the tragedy of the Ghalia family members who had been killed on the Gaza beach. In spite of the IDF protest of innocence, most of the media concluded that Israel was to blame. Robert Wistrich is not someone who rushes automatically to label such condemnation of Israel as ‘antisemitism.’ “There is a wider issue which constantly recurs in such debates,” he explains. “First, is contemporary criticism of Israel’s policy antisemitic or not, and second—whether anti-Zionism is in effect antisemitism. Put this way, as a historian, as a researcher, I cannot subscribe to sweeping generalizations. Of course, it is historically untrue to claim that anti-Zionism and antisemitism are always synonymous. And yet, there are a growing number of cases, where the distinction between the two becomes fuzzy and even meaningless. Indeed, they are almost impossible to differentiate in much of the Arab world today.

“In the wider Arab world and the Palestinian Authority in particular, numerous statements are made that are seemingly criticism of the State of Israel, but are not essentially different from well-known antisemitic expressions that we know from history,” he says. “If

Israel is portrayed as a “rogue state” by definition, as a state that almost daily commits genocide, a state that seeks the “ethnic cleansing” of the Palestinian people – not only is that a wicked falsehood, but it is propaganda meant to demonize an entire state, and its people. According to my definition, saying that Israel is the source of all evil in the Middle East or in the world as a whole is pure antisemitism. Singling it out for unique and obsessive attention also tends to be anti-Jewish.

We must distinguish, he adds, between what is reasonably defined as criticism, and antisemitism that is intended to destroy the State of Israel. “Everyone has his own criticism of the state,” he explains, “myself included. So what?” Such criticism is an integral part of the democratic way of life. It must not be confused with mendacious slogans claiming that Israel is committing “crimes against humanity”. That is indeed defamation. Equally grotesque is the claim that antisemitism is a fiction invented by the Israeli establishment: “When radical Muslims invoke anti-Jewish conspiracy theories that is not a Zionist ploy to silence criticism! Antisemitism is not merely a slogan, a casual prejudice, a political game, or a ‘card’ that Zionists or anyone else invents. It is a solid reality with tangible consequences.”

## *Well Poisoners*

As for automatically blaming Israel for the killing of the Palestinian family on the Gaza Beach, Professor Wistrich says that it is not really an antisemitic attack: “There is, of course, a familiar anti-Israel bias in the media that we have known for decades, which undoubtedly creates a negative image. But it is not antisemitic per se unless there is a statement about the *criminal essence* of the Jews who cruelly and deliberately murder Palestinians. Talk about cruel, wicked, bloodthirsty Jews is antisemitic!

“War propaganda which exists in every conflict around the world is nothing new. The Palestinians, the Hizbollah and other Arab enemies of Israel do everything in their power to slander and defame Israel. Sometimes the motifs are unmistakably anti-Jewish but not in all cases.”

*How would you judge something like what Suba Arafat once said to Hillary Clinton, that Israel*



*was polluting the air and poisoning the wells of the Palestinians?*

“That is different. Because accusations of poisoning, or the fable that Israel is using diluted uranium against Palestinians is reminiscent of medieval blood libels about well-poisoning Jews. That medieval lie draws a picture of Jewish people as having no morality, no limits, no humanity or decency. In a word they are monsters.

“The death of the 12 year old Palestinian boy, Muhammad Al-Dura, on the second day of the second Intifada, and the representation of the IDF as a military machine of child-killers, responsible for his death, is definitely charged with antisemitism, whether intended or not. It is sobering and indeed shocking to see Muslims repeating blood libels derived from the Christian Middle Ages with such enthusiasm. But it has been going on for several decades and it is a terrible stain on their culture.”

*So on the religious aspect too, Islam has adopted the Christian motif of antisemitism?*

“Unfortunately, many Arabs, but also Muslims in

general, have swallowed an absolute lie. The supposed ritual murder of Gentile children by Jews is a grotesque fantasy. You find this intellectual garbage all over the Arab world – in the press and in religious sermons. It is an antisemitic stigmatization *par excellence* to portray Jews as ritual murderers and as a bloodthirsty people. Especially horrible were the caricatures of Ariel Sharon drinking Arab blood. We have seen it in various Arab TV series broadcast to the millions, in the Gulf States, in Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt. Think of *Rider without a Horse* or *Al-Shattat* (the Diaspora). What disgusting opium for the masses!”

As part of his sustained effort during the past four years to bring antisemitism into the public arena, Professor Wistrich organized the major international conference on “Antisemitism, Multiculturalism, and Ethnic Identity,” held two weeks ago at the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Conference participants also included three Arab speakers, exceptional in their strong opposition to antisemitism and anti-Zionism.

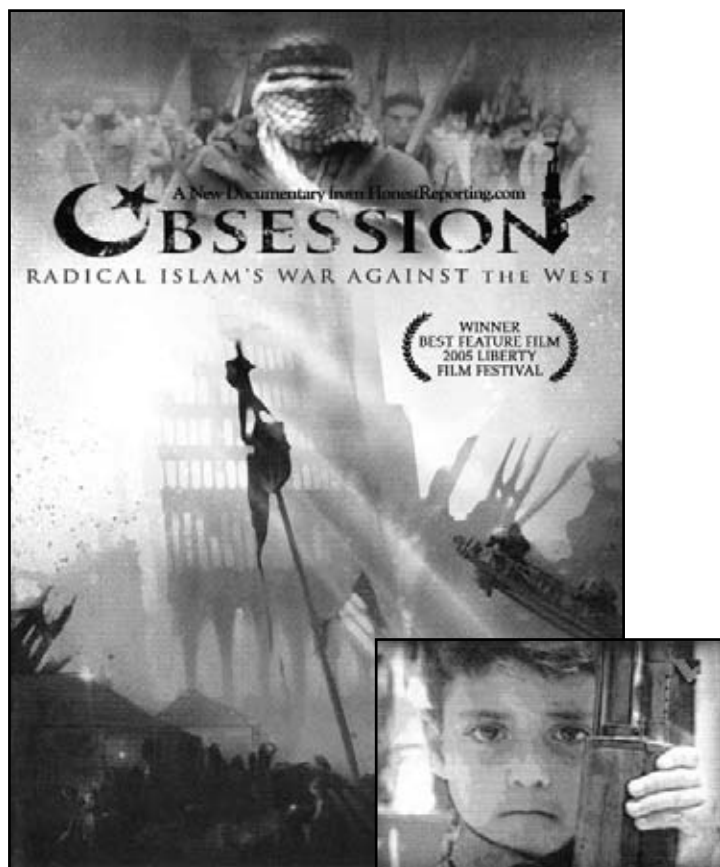
“I invited Prof. Bassam Tibi, an authority on Islamic fundamentalism,” says Wistrich, “an Arab of Syrian origin residing in Germany, a long-standing expert on the subject. He has written a number of critical books on Islamism and the danger it represents to Western values and enlightened thought. He is a moderate Arab intellectual. He draws a sharp distinction (which caused some controversy at our conference) between Islam and Islamism. According to him, Islamism, that is, militant and political radical Islam, has hijacked Islam as a faith and turned it upside down – reversing its true message – turning into a extremist, antisemitic and belligerent creed which wishes to restore the Muslim Caliphate, to conquer the world, to wage a victorious war against the West. As a Muslim moderate he regards these ambitions as dangerous and disastrous.

“I also invited to the conference a young philosopher of Moroccan origin from France, Morad El-Hattab, who

in a touching presentation expressed his impassioned disagreement with the anti-Jewish trends in the West and Islam. As a believing Muslim, he feels hurt and threatened by it, by this perversion of his faith in such a negative and inhuman direction.”

The third Arab speaker who was invited to the conference is Nonie Darwish. Cairo-born, she spent her childhood in the 1950s in the Gaza strip. Her father was sent there by Nasser, then President of Egypt, to command the Fidayun’s actions of infiltration into Israel in order to kill civilians. In her lecture at the conference, she recalled having been brought up in an atmosphere of fervent hatred towards Israel. When she was eight years old, her father was killed and officially became a “Shahid.” Since then, she says, she has developed a revulsion towards the culture of hatred in which she was educated. As an adult, she immigrated to the USA, and following the 9/11 terrorist attack, began to write letters supporting Israel and against the current fanaticism of Islam, which preaches such appalling anti-Jewish hatred and violence.

“Darwish appears in the documentary which we screened for the first time in Israel—*Obsession*, in the making of which I was also closely involved. Nonie founded an organization in California named *Arabs for Israel.com* which publicly expresses support of Israel. At the conference she gave a persuasive lecture about hate indoctrination and what it does to Muslims themselves. I brought these three individuals to Jerusalem to show Israeli society that there are significant Arab voices out there who vigorously dissent from the anti-Jewish mania. They may be a small number of voices at present, but they exist; and we should keep in mind that all great historical changes have modest beginnings. It is most important to give such individuals a chance to be heard and to strengthen them. I prefer them to the many ‘trembling Israelites’ and hyper-critical Jews in Israel and the Diaspora who are always trying to undermine the justice of our cause. Dissident Arab intellectuals know the Muslim world from within – the abysmal lack of basic freedom of speech, of free debate, the oppression of women, the base appeal to prejudice—and they know to what extent it distracts the Arab population from its real problems.” At the same



---

time, Professor Wistrich emphasizes: “I have no doubt that the stark reality represented by Arab Judeophobia was fully exposed at our conference.”

Among other things, the Sassoon Center conference dealt with the paradox of multicultural openness and acceptance of “the Other” from the perspective of the antisemitic obsession. “There is something distorted in present day multiculturalism, which is so fashionable not only in North America, but also in Europe and in other parts of the world,” says Professor Wistrich. “It is remarkable that open Western societies embracing pluralist values, which are supposed to be good for Jews – have in effect produced in the past thirty years some virulent new strains of antisemitism. Partly this grows out of an almost demented glorification of the Palestinians, which has nothing to do with reality. But the ‘pluralist’ attitude has also been problematic since it tends to marginalize Jews in the West as part of the oppressive ruling elites. On the other hand, Muslim immigrants in Europe today are seen as victims; they are therefore always right and should be appeased. The Jews are no longer perceived as *victims*. They are rich, powerful, exploitative, and aggressive. This is not merely untrue but also an antisemitic stereotype.”

One of the conference sessions dealt with feminism. Here, too, the gender struggle for equality was supposed to transcend nationalities and borders—but Jewish feminists have in recent decades found themselves in a very defensive and sometimes inferior position because of their origin and the question of Israel. At the same time, Professor Wistrich points out that many of the pioneer voices of criticism with the Arab/Muslim world are women. Last year he invited the Canadian Muslim feminist Irshad Manji to speak in Jerusalem about her book, *The Trouble with Islam Today*—an event which was very successful.

“The attempted boycott of Israel is a nasty example of how the liberal West is betraying its own values.” Instead of acting as a mediator,” says Prof. Wistrich, “encouraging real dialogue; instead of being a positive source of independent thought, many intellectuals and academics in Western Europe, the USA and Canada,

have become promoters of vicious libels against the State of Israel. They organize conferences on Israel as a racist Apartheid state and call for the indiscriminate boycott of Israeli academia as if we were the major serial violators of human rights in the world. Of course, they never mention the real culprits. They could not care less about Sudan, the bigotry in the Arab states, Iran, Russia, China etc. only Israel must be denounced and dismantled. That, too, is antisemitism and actually extremely racist. An ‘anti-racist’ leftist racism! Jews are sometimes in the forefront of this perversion.”

*How, then, do you explain this self-hatred, which keeps popping up again and again in history?*

“This academic year I gave a course with Professor Golomb at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem on the recurring historical phenomenon of Jewish self-hatred. It is certainly evident today both in the Israeli academic milieu and in the general media. It is easy to find Israeli and Jewish intellectuals who think Israel is to blame for all the problems in the Middle East and even in the world in general. They are only too eager to spread this ‘good news’ to the wider world and be hailed as champions of justice. They rant on about the Jewish lobby, the Christian lobby, the foreign policy of the United States. Those are often worse than Arab anti-Zionists. In fact I prefer an open-minded Arab intellectual, even if he or she is anti-Israel to the Chomskys, the Finkelsteins and Ilan Pappes of this world for whom I have no respect at all. They are much more dogmatic, sarcastic, narcissistic, and self-righteous than most Arabs I know. I suppose they believe in what they say. But I do see it as a pathological phenomenon, because they are driven by hate and anger against their own people. For Chomsky, the Hizbollah terrorists are heroes.

“The self-haters should learn the lessons of history. When Spanish Jews tried to convert *en masse* to Christianity, the Inquisition soon followed. When Jews supported Communism in Russia it boomeranged against the Jewish people. Zionism is a historical and existential necessity but we still need to be more prudent and intelligent in our actions as well as determined in deterring our enemies.”

Professor Wistrich makes a point of emphasizing that the antisemitic wave is not irreversible. "It is true that in the past five years," he explains, "there has been a growing demonization of the Jews. It began right after the breakout of the second Intifada. Paradoxically, what strengthened this wave was the 9/11 terror attack in America, along with the opposition to the war in Iraq. Europe's inability to absorb its mass Muslim immigration and its desire to appease radical Islam also played a harmful role in promoting antisemitism. This has begun to slowly change for the better. But the long-term demographic and electoral weight of Islam in Europe does not augur well for Jews."

But in contrast to other speakers on the subject, some of whom fear that Europe has already surrendered without a fight and become "Eurabia", Robert Wistrich thinks that all is not yet lost. "A few weeks ago a survey was published, by a very serious German institute," he reports, "according to which, a clear majority of Germans identify Islam with fanaticism and believe that a war of civilizations is taking place. That is what ordinary people in the Netherlands also think. They have seen the terrorist attacks in Madrid, the riots in France, and the bombings in London last July. The sheer violence and destructiveness of today's Islamist campaign could lead to a fierce reaction, though I'm not counting on it. Europeans are careful not to express what they really think. But there is a lot of racism against Muslims under the surface. One day it may erupt. That will not solve Jewish problems, however, since the radical Right is generally antisemitic as well. We have no interest in creating a bigger rift with Europe than we already have. But Israel must do a much better job in explaining itself to others in a way that fits our time."

"Recent years have seen an erosion of our historical identity as Jews and Zionists. I am very concerned, because history has taught us where this can lead. For example, the Palestinians have been claiming for years that there is no historical connection between the Jews and Jerusalem, that the First and Second temples never even existed. The narrative they invented drains Judaism of any link with the land of Israel. Unfortunately such falsehoods have captured a significant part of Western

opinion in the past thirty years. Israel should have made sure a long time ago that its own narrative is heard, updated and properly understood. Nature abhors a vacuum and policy-makers in Israel allowed this Zionist vacuum of values to develop. Above all there is a lack of conviction and belief, not enough pride in being a Jew."

At this point Professor Wistrich is unsparingly critical of Israel's diplomatic appointments to the world, which have not always done it justice: "Moreover there is a deeper problem. Too many Israeli politicians, diplomats, academic representatives, and spokespeople do not understand why we are here and what we represent. So how can they represent the country? How can someone who has doubts about the legitimacy and morality of what we do, be an effective advocate?"

"Israel's case has always been a strong one, but it has been years since it was presented with true conviction. Why do our representatives keep retreating, apologizing, stuttering. Where is their faith? What do they stand for? What does Israel stand for? We face fanatical ideological enemies. We have to believe in our cause, in its fundamental justice and stand firm. I hope the present government will do so. With enemies like Hamas, Hizbollah, and Iran, we are faced with what I would call annihilationist antisemitism driven by a monstrous ideology of "holy war" (*jihad*)."

#### *How about an optimistic message in conclusion?*

"I'm a pessimist in the short term but an optimist in the long run. We live in an era of globalization," says Prof. Wistrich, measuring his words carefully. "Antisemitism, too, is global. Israel remains in the eye of the storm. It is as if we were preparing a countdown to Armageddon or if you want to be more optimistic – the "birth pangs of the Messiah. This is a scary time and increased antisemitism is one of its symptoms. But we have lived with the disease for over two thousand years; we have survived it, and even flourished. If we go down, so will human civilization. I hope the rest of the world will get the message before it's too late."

*A shorter Hebrew version of this interview first appeared in Hebrew in Makor Rishon, 30 June 2006.*



# Activities of the SICSA Staff

## **Prof. Robert S. Wistrich**

During the past twenty months, as the roll-call of SICSA's public activities reveals, Prof. Robert Wistrich has been working literally without pause in seeking to enlighten the world about the dangers of antisemitism. He has made countless appearances on TV, radio, and in press interviews—both in Israel and abroad—on subjects relating to Arab-Muslim antisemitism, anti-Zionist campaigns, the boycott of Israel, the Vatican, central and eastern Europe, and on the position of Jews in France, Britain, the United States, Germany, and elsewhere. He has given many keynote lectures at different universities in Israel and abroad, as well as being invited to speak at high profile public forums like the OSCE conferences (Vienna, Berlin, Cordoba), the UN Human Rights Commission (Geneva), and in the British Parliament (on three occasions). During the last week of January 2006 he was extensively interviewed on radio and television in both France and Belgium, about the complex relationship between Holocaust commemoration and the revival of antisemitism in Europe. He addressed the Catholic Bishops Conference in Lyon on January 30, 2006, lectured at the London Jewish Cultural Centre in February 2006, and at the Hebrew University gathering of donors in Miami in the same month.

Prof. Wistrich has advised a number of European governments and high officials during the past two years on ways to understand and combat antisemitism. He helped to frame the US State Department's global report on antisemitism, which was submitted to the US Congress in January 2005; he has appeared before Israeli parliamentary committees, and was in close touch with the Global Forum initiated by former Minister-without-portfolio, Nathan Sharansky. In addition, he was a keynote speaker at conferences of the American Jewish Committee and the ADL in the US.

In the past two years, he has met with two successive French foreign ministers in Jerusalem, with the Romanian foreign minister Dr. Mihai Ungureanu, former Spanish Foreign Minister Ana Palacio, Speaker of the Austrian National Parliament Andreas Khol, and with a considerable number of ambassadors from European countries, concerned about the rise in antisemitism in

their own countries and across the Middle East.

One of the high points of the past year was the invitation to Prof. Wistrich to deliver a series of lectures on antisemitism and the Holocaust at the University of Nanjing in July 2005. On that occasion he was also interviewed on Chinese television about similarities and differences between the Nanjing massacre of 1937 and the Shoah. Professor Wistrich also organized the Israeli premiere of the film he helped to edit *Obsession: Radical Islam's War against the West*, first shown at the SICSA international conference of June 2006.

## **Recent Publications**

### **Books**

*Ma'abada le-heres ha-olam. Germanim ve-yehudim be mercaz-europa* (Jerusalem: Carmel Press, 2006)

*Laboratory for World Destruction. Germans and Jews in Central Europe* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, forthcoming).

### **Articles and Book Chapters**

"Playground for Jihad? The Case of Great Britain," in *Old Demons, New Debates: Antisemitism in the West*, ed. by David I. Kertzer (New York: Holmes and Meier, 2005), 81-92.

"Antisemitism—A Civilizational Pathology," in *Israel and Europe: An Expanding Abyss*, ed. by Manfred Gerstenfeld (Jerusalem 2005), 95-110.

"Antisionisme et antisémitisme," in *Eglise et Peuple Juif* (Lyon: Comité Episcopal pour les relations avec le Judaïsme, 2005), 96-104.

"Austria ve-hasheelah ha-yehudit" in *Ha-Shoah be historia ha-yehudit* [The Holocaust in Jewish history], ed. by Dan Michman (Jerusalem, 2005), 243-74.

"Karl Kraus: Prophet or Renegade?" in *Jüdische Aspekte Jung-Wiens im Kulturkontext des fin-de-siècle*, ed. by Sarah Freimann-Morris (Tübingen: *Conditio Judaica*, 2005), 15-32.

“Pius XII and the Shoah,” in *Three Generations of Historians on Germans and Jews under the Nazi Regime*, ed. by M. Zimmermann et al. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2006), 21-41.

“Jews and Antisemitism in Central European Culture,” in *Die kulturelle Seite des Antisemitismus*, ed. by Andrea Hoffmann et al. (Tübingen, 2006), 1-25.

“Ga’ava ve deah qeduma be-britannia ha-gdolah,” *Tchelet* 21 (2005).

“Anti-Zionism, Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial,” *Posen Papers in Contemporary Antisemitism*, no. 6 (Jerusalem: SICSA, forthcoming).

“Drawing the Line. On Antisemitism and anti-Zionism,” *Jewish Quarterly* 198 (Summer 2005): 21-24.

“Die Saatbeete für Terror und Hasskultur zerstören,” *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 25 June 2005.

“Wann ist die Kritik an Israels Regierungspolitik antisemitisch?” *Der Standard*, 2 July 2005.

“Europa shel hitkahshut le-emet: anti-zionut ve-antishemiut,” *Ha-umma* 162 (Winter 2006): 17-26.

“Europe’s new frontier of bigotry,” *Midstream* (Jan.-Feb. 2006).

“Megamot hadashot be-antishemiut ha-ma’arav europeit,” *Nativ* (Nov. 2004): 30-39.

“The Jihadist Challenge,” *Midstream* (Nov.-Dec. 2004): 8-12.

“Multiculturalisme et Antisémitisme,” *Shalom* (Spring 2006): 53-57.

“Islamischer Antisemitismus,” *Illustrierte Neue Welt* (Feb.-Mar. 2006): 4-6.

“Yesh rak el echad—aval anachnu lo ma’aminim bo: 150 shana l’huldeto shel Freud,” *Haaretz*, 7 May 2006 (Literary supplement).

“Makom le-deagah,” *Maariv*, 25 Apr. 2006, 2.

*Antisemitism in Western Europe at the Beginning of the 21st Century* (World Jewish Congress Research Series, 2005).

*Reinventing European Antisemitism* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 2005).

“Remembering Kielce,” *Jerusalem Post*, 3 July 2006.

### **Dr. Simcha Epstein**

Dr. Simcha Epstein took part in a number of international academic conferences, including “Die kulturelle Seite des Antisemitismus zwischen Aufklärung und Shoah” (Tübingen, October 2004) and “1906-2006: Nouveaux regards sur l’Affaire Dreyfus” (Rennes, March 2006). He also lectured to audiences in Israel and abroad, including groups of journalists, representatives of universities, and delegations of politicians from France, Belgium, Switzerland, and Québec. He addressed, among others, the Israeli governmental Forum against Antisemitism (December 2004 and December 2005), the Pedagogic Committee of the Israeli Ministry of Education (February 2005), and a conference of the World Jewish Congress (August 2005). He gave a number of interviews to Israeli and foreign radio and TV channels. He also participated in activities organized by the French Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah (FMS).

During this period, he taught a seminar in the Political Science Department of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem on modern antisemitism. He also taught also a course in the History Department together with Prof. Robert Wistrich on antisemitism and anti-Zionism.

His book (in French) about Philosemites becoming Antisemites and Antisemites becoming Philosemites is scheduled for publication at the end of 2006.

---

## **Dr. Leon Volovici**

### ***Seminars and Conferences***

Dr. Volovici participated in a week-long seminar on teaching the study of the Holocaust and antisemitism for Romanian educators and teachers, Bucharest and Cluj (April 2004). He also took part in two conferences on “Traditional, Modern, and ‘New’ Antisemitism,” at the Cluj University and at Bucharest University, Romania (April and May 2004).

He also took part in the international conference on “Insiders, Outsiders and Modern East European Jewry,” in Honor of Professor Ezra Mendelsohn, at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, January 2006.

He was a participant at the international conference on “The Iași Pogrom” June 2006, Iasi University.

### ***Lectures***

Dr. Volovici lectured on Antonescu’s policy toward the Romanian Jews, at a panel discussion at the Romanian Institute for Recent History, Bucharest (April 2004).

He presented a series of lectures on antisemitism at the Bucharest University, Romania in April 2005.

He also gave a series of lectures on antisemitism and the Jewish-Romanian intellectual relationship at the Bucharest and Iasi universities, April 2006.

A guest lecture on the Eastern European Jewish perception of Europe was given at the Faculty of History, Bucharest University, April 2006.

### ***Meetings***

In a meeting at the French Embassy in Bucharest, Dr. Volovici spoke with Mr. Jacques Huntzinger, French Ambassador in charge of the international dimension of the Holocaust (May 2004). In June 2004, he met at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem with the French commission dealing with compensating victims of the anti-Jewish policy in occupied France; and took part in a survey on the judicial and political aspects of the same topic in Eastern Europe.

Dr. Volovici was a member of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania, and joined the one-week series of working meetings at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington D.C.

(May 2004); at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem (September 2004); and Bucharest (November 2005). He is a co-author of the *Final Report of the International Commission for the Holocaust in Romania* (Iași: Polirom, 2005).

He participated in the advisory meeting of the Hanadiv and Ford Joint Program on Researching Racism and Antisemitism, London, May 2006.

In addition to the above, Dr. Volovici serves as editor for Romanian Jewish history for *Jews in Eastern Europe: The YIVO Encyclopedia* (in preparation since 2002).

## **Martina Weisz**

Martina Weisz was awarded her Master’s Degree in International Relations by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

She met with Doña Ana Palacio (former Foreign Minister of Spain), Drs. Alejandro Toledo and Elaine Karp (former President of Peru and his wife), and Manuel and Rajel Tenenbaum (Director of the World Jewish Congress in Latin America and his wife).

Ms. Weisz was one of the panelists at a symposium commemorating 30 years since the last coup d’état in Argentina, together with Dr. Atilio Molteni, Argentinean ambassador to Israel, Prof. Robert Wistrich, Prof. Mario Sznajder, and Dr. Leonardo Senkman. She has also participated actively with the Hebrew University Forum of Researchers on Latin America, coordinated by Dr. Leonardo Senkman.

Ms. Weisz has also published an article in Spanish on antisemitism in Argentina in the *Ecos*, and another, “Argentina durante la dictadura de 1976-1983: Antisemitismo, autoitarismo y política internacional,” which will appear in *Indice 24*, an academic publication of the CES-DAIA (Center for Social Studies of the Jewish community in Argentina).

### ***Tübingen Conference Proceedings***

Proceedings of the October 2004 Tübingen Conference co-organized by Tübingen University and the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism were published as *Die kulturelle Seite des Antisemitismus zwischen Aufklärung und Shoah*, edited by Andrea Hoffman, Utz Jeggle, Reinhard Johler, and Martin Ulmer (Tübingen, 2006). Participants in the conference included Prof. Robert Wistrich and Dr. Simcha Epstein, who contributed articles to this important publication.

### ***Hebrew University of Jerusalem Prize for Excellence***

Our staff at the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism was recently awarded a prize for excellence by the Hebrew University's prize committee. This was the sole prize given for the year 2005-2006 for a team. The award citation notes:

The Center's intense activities include organizing frequent major academic events, some international, producing and circulating scientific publications and building a network of connections with colleagues in the public and global spheres.

The Sassoon Center's team was found to be outstanding for their competence, contribution to fulfilling the Center's goals, and the high level of cooperation between team members, as well as the actual successful accomplishments. The Center's events, which are often broadcast online in real time, are excellently planned, keeping within budgetary restraints.

Members of the team manage the website, maintain extensive correspondence with researchers, archives, and libraries in Israel and worldwide. They are highly motivated, efficient, and hard-working, and when the task at hand requires it, they make efforts even beyond regular working hours. They display a good team spirit.

SICSA team members:

Ruchama Roth, Administration  
Sara Grosvald, Information Specialist  
Alifa Saadya, In-House Editor  
Dina Saam, Office Coordinator  
Avigail Tsirkin-Sadan, Office Coordinator  
Martina Weisz, Professional Research Worker



# RECENT SICSA ACTIVITIES

Since October 2004, the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism (SICSA) has conducted an extraordinarily intensive program of symposia, conferences, special evening debates, film screenings, and seminars, attracting consistently large audiences and international media interest.

On October 10-11, 2004, SICSA co-sponsored an international conference together with Tübingen University in Germany on «Cultural Antisemitism between Enlightenment and Shoah.» The Center sent five Israeli researchers—Prof. Robert Wistrich, Dr. Simon (Simcha) Epstein, Prof. Jacob Golomb, Dr. Schaul Baumann, and Prof. Evyatar Friesel to present papers. Most of the discussions were held in German.

A very well-attended colloquium in English, chaired by Prof. Robert Wistrich took place on October 27, 2004 on «The Protocols of the Elders of Zion in Japan.» Papers presented by Professors David Goodman, Rotem Kowner, and Ben-Ami Shillony appear in this issue of *Antisemitism International*.

On November 17, 2004, Prof. Wistrich invited Dr. Georges Bensoussan [pseud. Emmanuel Brenner] to speak in French at Hebrew University's Beit Maersdorf Faculty Club on «Antisemitism and the Turmoil in French Schools Today.» There was a lively debate and the speaker was later interviewed by Emmanuel Halperin on Israeli TV.

A fascinating debate took place before a packed audience on Mount Scopus on January 9, 2005 in Hebrew on German/Jewish questions, entitled «Between Berlin and Jerusalem.» This was followed by a brilliant presentation in English on February 16, 2005 at Beit Maersdorf given by Ms. Irshad Manji on «Islam, Women, and Antisemitism.» Ms. Manji, a Canadian «Muslim Refusenik» and feminist, spoke before about 200 people under SICSA auspices—the first time she really became known to the Israeli public. SICSA was able to arrange several TV and newspaper interviews for Ms. Manji.

On May 9, 2005 SICSA had two big events centered around documentary films which its director, Prof. Robert Wistrich, co-produced, wrote, and helped to edit. The first, «Understanding the Holocaust» (co-directed by Rex Bloomstein, 1997) was shown at the Jerusalem Cinémathèque and was followed by a stimulating

discussion with the audience. The screening coincided with the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the death camps in Europe. The second event, on May 18, was the showing of «Good Morning, Mr. Hitler!», a BBC Channel 4 documentary on Nazi art and propaganda, which Prof. Wistrich produced with Luke Holland and Paul Yule. It drew a large audience, including many Bezalel students. The highly successful evening was jointly organized with Dr. Dana Arieli-Horowitz (whose article appears in this issue).

This was followed on June 5, 2005 by the lecture of Dr. Bernard Kouchner (former French health minister and founder of Doctors without Borders) in the framework of the Board of Governors forum at the Hebrew University, and chaired by Prof. Robert Wistrich. Dr. Kouchner spoke before a packed auditorium in the Truman Building on the subject of «Human Rights and Antisemitism.» The lecture, originally scheduled by SICSA for January 5, 2005, had been cancelled because of Dr. Kouchner's involvement in tsunami relief efforts.

The 2004-2005 academic year concluded with the public guest lecture in English by Romanian Foreign Minister, Dr. Mihai Razvan Ungureanu, «Facing History: Romania and the Holocaust.» Delivered with tact and sensitivity in the Senate Hall of the Hebrew University on July 4, 2005 before a full house, it coincided with the historians' «Final Report» on the Shoah in Romania, published with the cooperation of the Romanian Government (see Leon Volovici's article on this subject in this issue).

The academic year 2005-2006 began with a debate organized by SICSA on November 8, around a recent book by Dr. Shaul Baumann (an associate of the Center) dealing with Jacob Wilhelm Hauer's German Faith Movement in the Third Reich. Prof. Shlomo Aronson, Prof. Gabriel Motzkin, and Prof. Robert Wistrich participated in a lively discussion in Hebrew about neo-paganism



Prof. Robert Wistrich and Ms. Irshad Manji

in Nazi Germany, to which the author Dr. Baumann responded.

The centenary of Jean-Paul Sartre's birth was marked by SICSA on December 7, 2005 with a fascinating evocation in Hebrew of the French philosopher's views on Israel, the Jews, and antisemitism which continued for three-and-a-half hours (!) with the rapt attention of the audience in Beit Maersdorf. The participants included two Israelis who knew Sartre personally—Dr. Ely Bengali and Prof. Menahem Brinker—as well as Dr. Denis Charbit, Prof. Jacob Golomb, and Prof. Robert Wistrich (see the article by Jonathan Judaken in this issue).

One of the most successful events of the year, in terms of its media echo, was the evening held in English and devoted to the «new antisemitism» in Great Britain. It took place on March 8, 2006 at Beit Maersdorf before a full house. Ms. Brenda Katten gave a vivid first-hand account of her experiences and Prof. Wistrich spoke from a broader historical perspective (see also in this issue, notes on his testimony before the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism).

On March 23, 2006, SICSA marked the 30th anniversary of the military coup in Argentina by a special evening in Hebrew that examined the legacy of the Argentinean dictatorship (1976-1983) and its influence on antisemitism and subsequent moves toward democratization. H.E. Ambassador Atilio Molteni of Argentina participated, along with Prof. Mario Sznajder,

Dr. Loenardo Senkman, and Ms. Martina Weisz (see her article in this issue).

This was followed by another extremely well-attended event, this time in French, which was held on April 5, 2006 at Mount Scopus on the topic «Peut-on partager la Mémoire de la Shoah?» (Can the memory of the Shoah be shared?). The principal guest speaker, Jean Mouttapa (author of *Un Arabe face à Auschwitz*) was joined by Father Emile Shoufani, the French Ambassador to Israel Gérard Araud, and the Hebrew University Vice-President Hillel Bercovier in a special evening that sought to find some common ground between Catholics, Jews, and Muslims. Participants discussed the pioneering visit to Auschwitz by a large group of Arabs led by Father Shoufani, a Greek Catholic priest from Nazareth, accompanied by some French and Israeli Jews, including a number of Holocaust survivors.

The climax of the academic year was SICSA's international conference on «Antisemitism, Multiculturalism, and Ethnic Identity», spread over three-and-a-half days at Beit Maersdorf, June 12-15, 2006. No less than 38 lectures were delivered, and ample time was provided for questions and answers which sparked some very animated discussions (see Tsvi November's account of the conference in this issue). One of the highlights of the conference was the first screening in Israel of a new 77-minute documentary, *Obsession*, directed by Wayne Kopping. Prof. Robert Wistrich served as the historical advisor for this film, as well as helping to edit its final version. The documentary, which is about radical Islam's war against the West, received some excellent reviews in the United States. The guest speaker, Ms. Nonie Darwish—who appears in the film—is a courageous Muslim woman who grew up in Gaza and now lives in the United States, where she fights against jihadist extremism. She received a standing ovation from the audience in the Truman Auditorium. Subsequently, Prof. Wistrich arranged for her to be interviewed on Israeli television, and she was received by the President of Israel.

Many of these events were broadcast in real time over the internet, and most of them can be viewed on the SICSA website <http://sicsa.huji.ac.il>



(L to R): Martina Weisz, Prof. Robert Wistrich, Sara Grosvald, former Spanish Foreign Minister, Ana Palacio

# SICSA EVENTS (2004–2006)

## Events

### Symposium:

#### ***The Protocols of the Elders of Zion in Japan***

27 October 2004, Beit Maersdorf  
 Prof. Robert S. Wistrich (Chair), Head, Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism  
 Prof. David Goodman, University of Illinois  
 Prof. Ben-Ami Shillony, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
 Prof. Rotem Kowner, University of Haifa

### Lecture:

#### ***Georges Bensoussan L'école au coeur de la vague antisémite en France (The Turmoil in French Schools Today)***

17 November 2004, Beit Maersdorf  
 With the participation of  
 Emmanuel Halperin  
 Simcha Epstein  
 Robert S. Wistrich

### Symposium:

#### ***Between Berlin and Jerusalem: Jewish Problems—German Problems***

9 January 2005, Beit Maersdorf  
 Doron Mendels (Chair), The Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
 Angelika Timm, Visiting Scholar at Bar Ilan University  
 David Witzthum, Israel Television, Channel 1  
 Robert S. Wistrich, Head, Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism



**Special Guest Lecture:**

**Irshad Manji,**

**author of The Trouble with Islam Today  
Islam, Women and Antisemitism:  
Journey of a Muslim Refusenik**

16 February 2005, Beit Maersdorf

**Prof. Steven Kaplan** (Greetings), Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

**Prof. Robert S. Wistrich** (Chair), Head, Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism

**Documentary Film Screening and Discussion:  
Understanding the Holocaust**

(UK, 1997; 60 minutes, English; Dir. Rex Bloomstein, Robert S. Wistrich) In commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Europe.

9 May 2005, Jerusalem Cinemathèque

**Prof. Robert S. Wistrich**, Co-Director of the Film and Director of the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

**Dr. Zeev Mankowitz**, Melton Center for Jewish Education, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

**Symposium:**

**Brown Shirts – Cleansed Art**

18 May 2005, Bezalel, including the Screening of the documentary “Good Morning, Mr. Hitler!” was screened. It was based on color material shot by an amateur photographer Hans Feierabend in Munich in July 1939, on the “Greater German Art Exhibition”. The film was first screened in 1993, on BBC Channel 4. Directors: Luke Holland and Paul Yule; Academic Advisor: Prof. Robert S. Wistrich

**Dr. Yael Munk** (Chair), History and Theory Unit, Bezalel

**Prof. Robert S. Wistrich**, Head, The Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism

**Dr. Dana Arieli-Horowitz**, Head, History and Theory Unit, Bezalel





*Special Guest Lecture:*  
*H.E. Dr. Mihai Razvan Ungureanu, Foreign  
Minister of Romania*  
***Facing History:  
Romania and the Holocaust***

4 July 2005, Senate Hall

**Prof. Hillel Bercovier** (Greetings), Vice President of Research and Development, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

**Prof. Robert S. Wistrich** (Chair), Head, Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism

**Dr. Leon Volovici**, Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism

*Symposium:*  
***Christianity, Neo-Paganism, and  
Antisemitism in the Third Reich***

8 November 2005, Beit Maierdsdorf

Chair: **Dr. Simcha Epstein**, Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism

**Prof. Shlomo Aronson**, Dept. of Political Science, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

**Prof. Robert S. Wistrich**, Head, Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism

**Prof. Gabriel Motzkin**, Dept. of Philosophy, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

**Dr. Shaul Baumann**, Author of *Die Deutsche Glaubensbewegung und ihr Gründer Jakob Wilhelm Hauer (1881-1962)*

*Symposium:*  
***Sartre, Israel and Antisemitism***

7 December 2005, Beit Maierdsdorf

Chair: **Prof. Jacob Golomb**, Dept. of Philosophy, The Hebrew University

**Dr. Ely Ben-Gal**, Department of Jewish History, Jordan Valley College

**Prof. Robert S. Wistrich**, Head, the Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism

**Dr. Denis Charbit**, Department of Political Science, Open University

**Prof. Menachem Brinker**, Dept. of Philosophy, The Hebrew University

*Symposium:*  
***A New Antisemitism?  
The Case of Great Britain***

8 March 2006, Beit Maierdsdorf

Chair: **Prof. Gideon Shimoni**, Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

**Ms. Brenda Katten**, Chairperson of the Israel, Britain and the Commonwealth Association

**Prof. Robert S. Wistrich**, Head, Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism

*Symposium:*  
***Dictadura, Democratización  
y Antisemitismo en Argentina  
(Dictatorship, Democratization, and  
Antisemitism in Argentina)***

Marking 30 years since the military coup in Argentina (24 March 1976)

23 March 2006, Beit Maierdsdorf

**H. E. Atilio Molteni**, Ambassador of Argentina in Israel

Chair: **Prof. Robert S. Wistrich**, Head, Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism

**Prof. Mario Sznajder**, Dept. of Political Science, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

**Dr. Leonardo Senkman**, Dept. of Spanish and Latinamerican Studies, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

**Ms. Martina Weisz**, Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism

*Lecture:*  
***Jean Mouttapa (author of Un Arabe face à  
Auschwitz)  
Peut-on partager la Mémoire de la  
Shoah? Des français juifs et arabes à  
Auschwitz  
(Can the Memory of the Shoah be  
Shared? French - Jews and Arabs - in  
Auschwitz)***

5 April 2006, Beit Maierdsdorf

**Prof. Robert S. Wistrich** (Chair), head, Vidal Sassoon

International Center for the Study of Antisemitism  
**Prof. Hillel Bercovier**, Vice-president for Development  
and Research, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
**Mr. Gérard Araud**, Ambassador of France in Israel  
Father Emile Shoufani, Greek Catholic Archimandrite  
in Nazareth

## ***Research Seminars***

*22 November 2004*

### ***Antisemitism in Arab Caricatures after the Camp David Agreements***

Mr. Aryeh Stav, Editor of *Nativ Journal of Politics and  
the Arts*

*13 December 2004*

### ***The Media, Antisemitism, and Terrorism: A Dilemma for Democracy***

Dr. Fiamma Nirenstein, Luiss University, Rome,  
Correspondent in Israel for *La Stampa*

*9 January 2005*

### ***Antisemitism in Poland and the Ukraine Today***

Prof. Ireneusz Krzemiński, University of Warsaw



Left to right: Leonardo Seukman, Robert Wistrich, Atilio Molteni (Argentine Ambassador), Martina Weisz and Mario Sznajder

---

28 February 2005  
***The Historical Committee for  
the Holocaust in Romania: Its  
Repercussions on Romanian Public  
Discourse***

Dr. Leon Volovici, Vidal Sassoon International Center  
for the Study of Antisemitism

21 March 2005  
***The Image of "The Jew" in La Civiltà  
Cattolica, 1850–1949***

Mr. José David Lebovitch-Dahl, European University  
Institute, Florence

4 April 2005  
***Jewish Responses to Jean–Paul Sartre's  
Réflexions sur la question juive***

Dr. Nelly Las, Institute of Levinas Studies, Jerusalem

23 May 2005  
***The Jews and Modern China***

Mr. Theodore Kaufman, Chair, Association of Former  
Residents of China in Israel

21 November 2005  
***The Image of the Jew in  
Thomas Mann's Novels***

Dr. Alexander Raviv

12 December 2005  
***Antisemitism Down Under***

Prof. Suzanne Rutland, University of Sydney

17 January 2006  
***Prejudice in the Academy: Antisemitism  
and "Racial Science"***

Dr. Klaus Hoedl, Center for Jewish Studies, University  
of Graz

20 March 2006  
***Antisemitism and Anti-Zionism in  
Sweden 2000–2005***

Mr. Zvi Mazel, Former Israeli Ambassador to Romania,  
Egypt, and Sweden

3 April 2006  
***From Assimilation to Antisemitism:  
The "Jewish Question" in Poland,  
1850–1914***

Prof. Theodore R. Weeks, Southern Illinois University

8 May 2006  
***Holland and the "Israeli Question"***

Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld, Chair, Jerusalem Center for  
Public Affairs and the Media

## *Analysis of Current Trends in Antisemitism*

This series analyzes current trends in antisemitism worldwide, identifying serious potential threats.

ACTA is engaged in researching data on contemporary antisemitism in its ideological, political, media, and artistic ramifications. Analyses are published as a series of occasional papers.

### **Simon Kreiz *Jewish and Israeli Stereotypes in the Russian Detective Novel***

Detective stories have gained great popularity in Russia over the past decade. Because this genre is rarely read with a critical eye, readers may accept latent messages without serious examination.

Today's Russian detective novels depict Jews in a variety of professions, epochs, and locations. Given that these novels are much more widely read than serious texts or newspaper articles, they may serve as a reader's only source of information about Jews or Israel. A careful look at the representations of the Jew and Israel in detective literature can help us understand the state of these images in Russian popular culture. The works of five current authors are examined, with an eye toward the common features of their books, and the continuity of images from previous generations of writers. Overall, the modern novelists are ambivalent toward Jews and Israel; they reject the official antisemitism of tsarist Russia and Soviet anti-

Zionism, while implicating Jewish characters for their comparative wealth and success.

### **Danny Ben-Moshe *Holocaust Denial in Australia***

This paper explores the nature of Holocaust denial in Australia. It does so through a study of the beliefs and activities of the three organizations for whom Holocaust denial is a central belief: the Australian League of Rights, the Australian Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and the Adelaide Institute. Their activities, their international ties, and their relationship with the broader racist Right in Australia is considered. The paper concludes by reflecting on the future directions and responses to Holocaust denial.

### ***The following titles appeared in 1993–2005:***

1. Barry Rubin: *The PLO between Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism, Background and Recent Developments*. 1993. [out of print]
2. Simon Epstein: *Cyclical Patterns in Antisemitism: The Dynamics of Anti-Jewish Violence in Western Countries since the 1950s*. 1993.
3. Theodore H. Friedgut: *Antisemitism and its Opponents in the Russian Press: From Perestroika until the Present*. 1994.
4. Herta Herzog: *The Jews as 'Others': On Communicative Aspects of Antisemitism*. 1994.
5. Leon Volovici: *Antisemitism in Post-Communist Eastern Europe: A Marginal or Central Issue?* 1994.
6. Tali Tadmor-Shimony: *Antisemitism on the Information Superhighway: A Case Study of a UseNet Discussion Group*. 1995.
7. Daniel Perdurant: *Antisemitism in Contemporary Greek Society*. 1995.
8. Simon Epstein: *Extreme Right Electoral Upsurges in Western Europe: The 1984–1995 Wave as Compared with the Previous Ones*. 1996.
9. Gilad Margalit: *Antigypsyism in the Political Culture of the Federal Republic of Germany: A Parallel with Antisemitism?* 1996.
10. Shlomit Levy: *Israeli Perceptions of Antisemitism*. 1996
11. Rotem Kowner: *On Ignorance, Respect and Suspicion: Current Japanese Attitudes towards Jews*. 1997.
12. Laslo Sekelj: *Antisemitism and Jewish Identity in Serbia after the 1991 Collapse of the Yugoslav State*. 1998.

13. Victor A. Shnirelman: *Russian Neo-Pagan Myths and Antisemitism*. 1998.
14. Liudmilla Dymerskaya-Tsigelman and Leonid Finberg: *Antisemitism of the Ukrainian Radical Nationalists: Ideology and Policy*. 1999.
15. José L. Rodríguez-Jiménez: *Antisemitism and the Extreme Right in Spain*. 1999.
16. András Kovács: *Antisemitism in Hungary Today*. 1999.
17. Goetz Nordbruch: *The Socio-Historical Background of Holocaust Denial in Arab Countries: Reactions to Garaudy's The Founding Myths of Israeli Politics*. 2001.
18. Anat Peri: *Jörg Haider's Antisemitism*. 2001
19. Michael Shafir: *Between Denial and "Comparative Trivialization": Holocaust Negationism in Post-Communist East Central Europe*. 2002.
20. Yaakov Ariel: *Philosemites or Antisemites? Evangelical Christian Attitudes towards Jews, Judaism, and the State of Israel*. 2002.
21. Joanna Michlic: *Coming to Terms with the "Dark Past": The Polish Debate about the Jedwabne Massacre*. 2002.
22. Jovan Byford: From "Traitor" to "Saint": *Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović in Serbian Public Memory*. 2004.
23. Robert S. Wistrich: *The Politics of Resentment: Israel, Jews, and the German Media*. 2004
24. Georges Bensoussan: *Antisemitism in French Schools: Turmoil of a Republic*. 2004.
25. Danny Ben-Moshe: *Holocaust Denial in Australia*. 2005.
26. Simon Kreiz: *Stereotypes of Jews and Israel in Russian Detective Fiction*. 2005.

### ***In Preparation***

- Gershon Nerel: *Prejudice in the Church: Between Messianic Jews and Palestinian Christians*.
- Leonardo Senkman: *Antisemitism during Twenty Years of Democratization in Argentina: An Initial Assessment*.

Abstracts and full ACTA papers can be read online at <http://sicsa.huji.ac.il/actatxt1.html>

Research proposals for the ACTA series may be submitted to the ACTA staff.

The information and documentation service of ACTA enables researchers and students to easily access articles, reports, surveys, and specialized journals that deal with current antisemitism. Advice and assistance is provided by the ACTA staff. Inquiries are welcome.

Sara Grosvald  
972-2-5882870  
e-mail: [saragr@savion.huji.ac.il](mailto:saragr@savion.huji.ac.il)

# Posen Papers in Contemporary Antisemitism

The Posen Papers in Contemporary Antisemitism is a new series established by the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism. The Posen Papers aim to provide a rapid response and immediate orientation in the present wave of global antisemitism, and provide a variety of opinion on current issues.

## ***Series Editor: Prof. Robert S. Wistrich***

No. 1. Josef Joffe: *Nations We Love to Hate: Israel, America, and the New Antisemitism*. 2005.

No. 2. David G. Goodman: *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion: Aum and Antisemitism in Japan*. 2005.

No. 3. Rotem Kowner: *On Symbolic Antisemitism: Motives for the Success of the Protocols in Japan and its Consequences*. 2006.

No. 4. Manfred Gerstenfeld: *Antisemitism and Permissiveness in Dutch Society*. 2006.

***The Felix Posen Bibliographic Project is a major, annotated database on antisemitism. It is an invaluable resource for scholars, researchers, policymakers, journalists, and activists.***

***It's available 24/7 worldwide. To access the database, go to the SICSA website and click on "Felix Posen Bibliographic Project."***

***<http://sicsa.huji.ac.il>***

***For help with specific projects, you can also contact Sara Grosvald at [saragr@savion.huji.ac.il](mailto:saragr@savion.huji.ac.il)***

# The Felix Posen Bibliographic Project on Antisemitism

The Felix Posen Bibliographic Project comprises a current on-line database accessible through the Israel University Inter-Library Network and in printed volumes. It has a unique position in the world of scholarship for several reasons. First, it is truly comprehensive, i.e., it lists books and articles published throughout the world on the subject of antisemitism. This is made possible through the very special connection which the Project's research team has developed with the Jewish National and University Library located on the Givat Ram campus of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The National Library, itself a priceless asset for Israel, the Diaspora, and world-wide Judaica scholarship, is committed to acquiring the majority of works published around the world dealing with Jews and Judaism. The Posen Bibliographic Project and its highly trained staff of abstractors have immediate access to the library's acquisitions which greatly facilitates its endeavors. These holdings cover a diverse range of disciplines—history, psychology, sociology, anthropology, literature, and art.

The second unique aspect has been the cumulative and consistent service that the Felix Posen Project has provided for researchers in the field since it first began publication in 1984. Other bibliographies are much more limited in scope and rarely offer more than a one-time publication. This project has been continuous, and in 2004 it celebrated its twentieth anniversary.

Third, the Bibliographic Project is not confined to a particular language or country. One can find entries on works in all European languages, in Hebrew, Yiddish, and other languages where relevant. Thus, its range and scope is impressive and uncompromisingly global.

Fourth, there is the special quality of our experienced staff of abstractors, who have immigrated to Israel from many countries, such as the United States, Russia, Romania, Poland, Hungary, Switzerland, and Argentina. Their ability to read works in their original languages and their knowledge of Jewish history makes it possible for them to produce reliable abstracts of high quality.

Fifth, the abstracts themselves are substantial and are provided for each item in the bibliography. This is a service that is unique in the world when it comes to

the study of antisemitism—and of immense benefit to professional scholars, students, lay people, community leaders, and others who seek a truly dependable guide to the constantly expanding ocean of newly published materials on antisemitism. Since no one person can be expected to master all the relevant publications or languages, our Project becomes literally indispensable for any individual interested both in the broad picture and in the concrete details of this particular subject matter. Elsewhere, the reader will find only bibliographies with no abstracts or at best a very brief one. The Bibliographic Project, on the other hand, offers readers a real window into the essence of what is being published today across the globe.

The Felix Posen Bibliographic Project can be accessed online via the Center website, which provides a description of the scope of the project and instructions for searching the database. <http://sicsa.huji.ac.il>

## ***Publications of the Felix Posen Bibliographic Project***

- Susan Sarah Cohen, ed., *Antisemitism: An Annotated Bibliography*, Vol. 1 (1984–85). New York: Garland, 1987. xxix + 392 pp. ISBN 0-8240-8532-9
- *Antisemitism: An Annotated Bibliography*, Vol. 2 (1986–87). New York: Garland, 1991. xxxiv + 559pp. ISBN 0-8240-5846-1
- *Antisemitism: An Annotated Bibliography*, Vol. 3 (1987–88). New York: Garland, 1994. xxxiv + 544 pp. ISBN 0-8153-1282-2 1994. Best Bibliography Award, Research and Special Libraries Division, Association of Jewish Libraries
- *Antisemitism: An Annotated Bibliography*, Vols. 4–6 (1988–1990). Munich: K. G. Saur Verlag, 1997.
- *Antisemitism: An Annotated Bibliography*, Vols. 7–9 (1991–1993). Munich: K. G. Saur Verlag, 1998.

- *Antisemitism: An Annotated Bibliography*, Vols. 10–11 (1994–1995). Munich: K. G. Saur Verlag, 1999.
- *Antisemitism: An Annotated Bibliography*, Vol. 12 (1996). Munich: K. G. Saur Verlag, 2000.
- *Antisemitism: An Annotated Bibliography*, Vol. 13 (1997). Munich: K. G. Saur Verlag, 2000.
- *Antisemitism: An Annotated Bibliography*, Vol. 14 (1998). Munich: K. G. Saur Verlag, 2001.
- *Antisemitism: An Annotated Bibliography*, Vol. 15 (1999). Munich: K. G. Saur Verlag, 2001.
- *Antisemitism: An Annotated Bibliography*, Vol. 16 (2000). Munich: K. G. Saur Verlag, 2001.
- *Antisemitism: An Annotated Bibliography*, Vol. 17 (2002). Munich: K. G. Saur Verlag, 2004.
- *Antisemitism: An Annotated Bibliography*, Vol. 18 (2003). Munich: K. G. Saur Verlag, 2005.
- Rena R. Auerbach, ed., *The “Jewish Question” in German-Speaking Countries, 1849–1914*. New York: Garland, 1994. xxv + 385 pp. ISBN 0-8153-0812-4. Outstanding Academic Book, 1995, CHOICE Reviews of Academic Books
- *“The Protocols of the Sages of Zion”: A Selected Bibliography*, with Introduction by Robert S. Wistrich (Jerusalem: Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2006), v + 83 pp. USD 6.00/NIS 30.

### **Ordering the Bibliographies**

The series *Antisemitism: An Annotated Bibliography* is published by K. G. Saur Verlag, Munich, including reprints of the first three volumes. For further information please contact:

Ms. Barbara Fischer  
 Editorial Dept.  
 K. G. Saur Verlag GmbH & Co. KG  
 Ortlerstr. 8  
 D-81373 Munich, GERMANY  
 FAX 49 89 76 902 350

You may order directly from the Saur website:  
<http://www.saur.de/jewish/jeindex.htm>



---

*Criticism of Ideology. The Case of Henning Eichberg*

- Ulrich Herbeck (Free University of Berlin)  
*“Jewish Bolshevism”: On the History of Russian Antisemitism before and during the Russian Revolution*
- Prof. Brian Horowitz (USA)  
*Russian-Jewish Interaction, 1880-1913: Cultural Cooperation in an Epoch of Antisemitism*
- David Shapira (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)  
*In the Eye of the Storm: Chief Rabbi Yaacov Kaplan—The Ordeals of the Jewish Community in 20th-century France*

### ***Felix Posen Fellows Who Have Attained Their Doctoral Degrees***

- Göran Adamson (London School of Economics and Political Science),  
*The Sudden Post-1968 Rise of the Austrian Freedom Party, Four Hypotheses*
- Semion Goldin (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)  
*Russian Jewry under Tsarist military rule during World War I*
- Isabelle Rohr (London School of Economics and Political Science)  
*The Franco Regime and the Jews: Antisemitism and Rescue Activities*

- Annette Seidel-Arpaci (University of Leeds)  
*Minority Experience and Self-Positioning against the Background of Vergangenheitsbewältigung and Renationalization in Germany*
- Daniel Tzadik (Yale University)  
*The Ulama and the Other: The Attitude of 19th Century Iranian Clerics towards the Jews*

### ***Recent Publication Of A Felix Posen Fellow***

Laurent Joly has published his doctoral dissertation as Vichy dans la “Solution Finale” 1941-1944: Histoire du Commissariat Général aux Questions Juives (Paris: Grasset, 2006).

SICSA Events and Research was compiled by Avigail Tsirkin-Sadan

### ***Sassoon Center Lectures, Conferences, Symposia***

***Throughout the academic year, the Vidal Sassoon Center organizes lectures, symposia, and special events. Many of these are broadcast live on our website. Check our website frequently to find information about upcoming events. <http://sicsa.huji.ac.il>***

***In addition, you can access recordings of recent events.***

# SICSA Publications

## The Studies in Antisemitism Series

**University of Nebraska Press**  
<http://nebraskapress.unl.edu/>

Robert S. Wistrich. *Laboratory for World Destruction: Jews and Germans in Central Europe*. 2007 (in press).

This book provides an original and compelling perspective on the complex historical processes that led to the unraveling of Central Europe between 1870 and 1939, opening the door to Nazism and the Holocaust. Prof. Wistrich focuses on the fate of the Jews from their emancipation to the ferocious backlash of Hitlerism. His book examines their dizzying success in reshaping German and Austro-Hungarian society, the capitalist economy, the free professions, and modernist culture in general; but it also shows how a deadly combination of ethnic conflicts, racist antisemitism, and pseudo-democratic mass politics exploded the cosmopolitan multiculturalist illusions of liberal progress. The vividly written and thoroughly researched chapters on Freud, Nietzsche, Herzl, Nordau, Karl Kraus, Karl Lueger, and the young Hitler, as well as the portraits of Rosa Luxemburg, the Austro-Marxists, Adolf Fischhof, Nathan Birnbaum, Stefan Zweig, and other contemporaries, add a human-all-too-human dimension to the unfolding tragedy, which has many resonances for the present.

Graciela Ben-Dror. *The Catholic Church in Argentina and Antisemitism, 1933-1945*. Argentina has always identified itself as a Catholic country, and during the 1930s, the Church came to have great influence in shaping government policy. One matter of particular interest to the Jewish community was the willingness of Argentina to accept European Jewish refugees. Dr. Ben-Dror looks at the attitude of the Argentinean Church on this and other issues affecting the Jewish community.

Olaf Blaschke. *Jews and Catholics in the German Empire*.

In reevaluating the nature of relations and conflicts between German Catholics and Jews, Olaf Blaschke looks at the issue of Jewish integration in German society, the genuine reasons for conflict and animosity between the two groups, and the Jewish perception of Catholic antisemitism.

Andrei Oișteanu. *The Image of the Jew in Romanian Traditional Culture*.

Andrei Oișteanu's study establishes the origins, the evolution in time, the geographical dissemination, and the survival (or, on the contrary, the decline and demise) of the stereotypes that make up the physical, spiritual, and moral profile of the "imaginary Jew." He has sought to understand the way in which popular antisemitism was born and matured in the Romanian cultural sphere, together with the way in which (conscious and passive) popular antisemitism has influenced (conscious and active) political antisemitism from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards.

Darren O'Brien. *The Pinnacle of Hatred: The Blood Libel and the Jews*.

The charge that Jews kidnap, mutilate, murder and use, or consume, the bodies or the blood of non-Jews, usually children, is very much alive in 2006. This book examines the evolution of the origins, and the terminology, of these accusations. Traditionally, the "blood libels" have been an integral part of Christian anti-Jewish invective and Christian antisemitism. Anti-Christian radicals, Nazism and now radical Islam appropriated the charges as key weapons in their anti-Jewish ideologies and practices.

Robert S. Wistrich, ed. *Lying about the Holocaust: Negation, Victimhood, and Other Traumas*

The authors of this impressive collection of essays examine the many variants of Holocaust denial and outright lying, those that emerged in the early postwar period, through the resurgence of right-wing movements in Western and Eastern Europe, and its current emphasis in Arab "anti-Zionist" propaganda. A list of chapters:

1. Robert S. Wistrich, Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial
2. Danny Ben-Moshe, Holocaust Denial in Australia
3. Alain Goldschläger, The Trials of Ernst Zündel
4. Milton Shain and Margo Bastos, Muslim Antisemitism and Anti-Zionism in South Africa since 1945

5. Rotem Kowner, *Holocaust Denial in Japan: The Marco Polo Affair and Its Consequences*
  6. Michael Shafir, *In the Shadow of the Holocaust: Denying the Shoah in Post-communist Countries*
  7. Joanna Michlic, *The Debate on Jedwabne: Reshaping Public Memory of the Holocaust and Polish National Mythology*
  8. Simcha Epstein, *The Roger Garaudy Affair: Facts and Circumstances*
  9. Goetz Nordbruch, *Arab Reactions to Roger Garaudy's The Founding Myths of Israeli Politics*
  10. Matthias Küntzel, *President Achmadinejad and Holocaust Denial in Iran*
- William Korey, *Russian Antisemitism, Pamyat, and the Demonology of Zionism*. Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995. ISBN 3-7186-5740-6 (hardcover) ISBN 3-7186-5742-2 (softcover)
  - Ronald Modras, *The Catholic Church and Antisemitism: Poland, 1933–1939*. Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1994. ISBN 3-7186-5568-3 (hardcover); ISBN 90-5833-129-1 (softcover, June 2000) College Theology Society Best Book Award, 1994

### ***Previous Publications***

- Cesare G. De Michelis, *The Non-existent Manuscript: A Study of the Protocols of the Sages of Zion*. Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 2004. ISBN 0-8032-1727-7 419 pp.
- Anthony D. Kauders, *Democratization and the Jews, Munich, 1945–1965*. Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 2004. ISBN 0-8032-2763-9 326 pp.
- Vadim Rossman, *Russian Intellectual Antisemitism in the Post-communist Era*. Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 2002. ISBN 0-8032-3948-3 309 pp.

### ***Titles in the Series from Harwood Academic Publishers***

- Robert S. Wistrich, Editor, *Demonizing the Other: Antisemitism, Racism, and Xenophobia*. Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999. ISBN 90-5702-497-7
- Robert S. Wistrich, Editor, *Antisemitism: A History*. Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999. ISBN 90-5702-497-7
- Richard H. Weisberg, *Vichy Law and the Holocaust in France*. Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, and New York: New York University Press, 1996. ISBN 3-7186-5892-5
- William Korey, *Russian Antisemitism, Pamyat, and the Demonology of Zionism*. Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995. ISBN 3-7186-5740-6 (hardcover) ISBN 3-7186-5742-2 (softcover)
- Ronald Modras, *The Catholic Church and Antisemitism: Poland, 1933–1939*. Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1994. ISBN 3-7186-5568-3 (hardcover); ISBN 90-5833-129-1 (softcover, June 2000) College Theology Society Best Book Award, 1994

Harwood Academic Publishers has been acquired by the Taylor & Francis group. Publications in the Studies in Antisemitism Series can be purchased online via their website: <http://www.tandf.co.uk>

### ***Titles in the Series by Pergamon Press***

- Robert Everett, *Christianity without Antisemitism: James Parkes and the Jewish Christian Encounter*. Oxford: Pergamon, 1993. xiv + 346 pp. ISBN 0-08-041040-5
- Deborah Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*. New York: Free Press, 1993. ix + 278 pp. ISBN 0-02-919235-8
- Ronald Nettle, *Past Trials and Present Tribulations: A Muslim Fundamentalist's View of the Jews*. Oxford: Pergamon, 1987. 104 pp. ISBN 0-08-0347916
- Elisheva Revel-Neher, *The Image of the Jew in Byzantine Art*. Oxford: Pergamon, 1992. 200 pp. with 100 illustrations, 10 in color. ISBN 0-08-0406556
- Frank Stern, *The Whitewashing of the Yellow Badge: Antisemitism and Philosemitism in Postwar Germany 1945–1952*. Oxford: Pergamon, 1992. xxv + 455 pp. ISBN 0-08-040653X

- Leon Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology and Antisemitism: The Case of Romanian Intellectuals in the 1930s*. Oxford: Pergamon, 1991. xi + 213 pp. ISBN 0-08-041-24-3

### ***Studies in Antisemitism: History***

- Shmuel Almog, *Nationalism and Antisemitism in Modern Europe, 1815–1945*. Oxford: Pergamon, 1990. xxv + 159 pp. ISBN 0-08-377742 (softcover); ISBN 0-08-0372546 (hardcover)

### ***Joint Project with the Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History and the Historical Society of Israel, Jerusalem***

- Michel Abitbol, *From Crémieux to Pétain: Antisemitism in Colonial Algeria, 1870–1940* [Hebrew]. Jerusalem: Shazar, 1988. 188 pp. ISBN 965-205-122-7

- Shmuel Almog, *Nationalism and Antisemitism in Modern Europe 1815–1945* (Hebrew). Jerusalem: Shazar, 1988. 181 pp. ISBN 965-227-051-2
- Nathaniel Katzburg, *Antisemitism in Hungary 1867–1944* [Hebrew]. Jerusalem: Shazar, 1992. 203 pp. ISBN 965-227-082-2
- Rivka Yadlin, *Anti-Zionism as Anti-Judaism in Egypt* [Hebrew]. Jerusalem: Shazar, 1988. 157 pp. ISBN 965-227-050-4
- Miriam Yardeni, *Huguenots and Jews* [Hebrew]. Jerusalem: Shazar, 1998, 193 pp. ISBN 965-227-122-5.
- Graciela Ben-Dror, *The Catholic Church and the Jews, Argentina 1933–1945* [Hebrew]. Jerusalem: Shazar, 2000. 320 pp. ISBN 965-227-151-9

Additional copies of this issue of *Antisemitism International* can be had from the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, payable by check or money order (includes postage and handling).

\$16.00 per copy outside of Israel

NIS 60 per copy in Israel

To order, contact: Vidal Sassoon International Center  
for the Study of Antisemitism  
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
Mount Scopus  
91905 Jerusalem, Israel

# Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism

## *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

### **Director**

Prof. Robert S. Wistrich

### **Academic Committee**

Prof. Doron Mendels	Dept. of History, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Chair of Academic Committee
Dr. Dana Arieli-Horowitz	Head, History and Theory Unit, Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design
Prof. Yehuda Bauer	Jonah M. Machover Professor fo Holocaust Studies (Emeritus), Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Prof. Eli Lederhendler	Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Prof. Shaul Stampfer	Dept. of History of the Jewish People, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

### **Editorial Board, ACTA Analysis of Current Trends In Antisemitism**

Dr. Leon Volovici, Head of Research  
Prof. Robert S. Wistrich, Director  
Dr. Simcha Epstein, Senior Researcher

### **Felix Posen Bibliographic Project**

Susan S. Cohen, Editor  
Sylviane Stampfer and Sara Grosvald, Managing Editors

### **Publications And Documentation**

Alifa Saadya  
Sara Grosvald  
Martina Libertad Weisz

### **Posen Papers In Contemporary Antisemitism**

Prof. Robert S. Wistrich, Editor

### **Administration**

Ruchama Roth

### **Office Coordinators**

Avigail Tsirkin-Sadan  
Dina Saam

### **Editorial and Abstracting Staff for the Felix Posen Bibliographic Project**

Ilana Dana  
Dr. Yisrael Eliot Cohen  
Ruth Engelberg  
Mirjam Factor  
Eva Odrischinsky  
Daniel Romanovsky  
Sylviane Stampfer  
Rachel Agnes Vazsonyi  
Dr. Hanna Volovici  
Renate Wolfson  
Manuel Zkorenblut

The Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism is an interdisciplinary research center founded in 1982. The Center is dedicated to an independent approach to the accumulation and dissemination of knowledge necessary for understanding the phenomenon of antisemitism. The Center supports research on antisemitism throughout the ages, focusing on relations between Jews and non-Jews, particularly in situations of tension and crisis.

The Center will consider sponsoring projects in a variety of disciplines, such as history, political science, psychology, sociology, economics, literature, and the arts.

The Center has published monographs on such subjects as nationalism and antisemitism; Arab and Muslim antisemitism; the roots of Christian antisemitism; images of Jews in literature and the arts; Jewish perceptions of and responses to antisemitism; the extreme Right and neo-Nazism in Western Europe; intellectuals and antisemitism; and communist and post-communist antisemitism in Russia and Eastern Europe.

Research proposals submitted for approval by the Academic Committee must be received by October 1.

Research proposals should be directed to Dr. Leon Volovici, Head of Research, at the address below, or via email: [msvolo@mscc.huji.ac.il](mailto:msvolo@mscc.huji.ac.il)

**To request an application form, please contact:**

The Vidal Sassoon International Center  
for the Study of Antisemitism  
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
Mount Scopus  
91905 Jerusalem, Israel

Tel: 972-2-588-2494

Fax: 972-2-588-1002

Email: [sicsa@mscc.huji.ac.il](mailto:sicsa@mscc.huji.ac.il)

<http://sicsa.huji.ac.il>

ISSN 1565 4850