

**O'S DANGEROUS POLICIES THREATEN ISRAELI SECURITY,
WHILE EU CONFRONTS PAST, & PRESENT, ANTISEMITISM**

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Isranet Daily Briefing, April 24, 2015

[https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/os-dangerous-policies-t
hreaten-israeli-security-while-eu-confronts-past-present-
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ISRAEL ALONE

Bret Stephens

[Wall Street Journal](https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/os-dangerous-policies-threaten-israeli-security-while-eu-confronts-past-present-antisemitism/), Apr. 20, 2015

Recent conversations with senior Israeli officials are shot through with a sense of incredulity. They can't understand what's become of U.S. foreign policy.

They don't know how to square Barack Obama's promises with his policies. They fail to grasp how a president who pledged to work toward the abolition of nuclear weapons is pushing an accord with Tehran that guarantees their proliferation. They are astonished by the nonchalance with which the administration acquiesces in Iran's regional power plays, or in al Qaeda's gains in Yemen, or in the Assad regime's continued use of chemical weapons, or in the battlefield successes of ISIS, or in Russia's decision to sell advanced missiles to Tehran. They wonder why the president has so much solicitude for Ali Khamenei's political needs, and so little for Benjamin Netanyahu's.

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In a word, the Israelis haven't yet figured out that what America is isn't what America was. They need to start thinking about what comes next. The most tempting approach is to wait Mr. Obama out and hope for better days with his successor. Israel and the U.S. have gone through bad patches before—under Ford in the 1970s, Reagan in the early '80s, Bush in the early '90s, Clinton in the late '90s. The partnership always survived the officeholders.

So why should it be different this time? Seventy percent of Americans see Israel in a favorable light, according to a February Gallup poll. The presidential candidates from both parties all profess unswerving friendship with the Jewish state, and the Republican candidates actually believe it. Mr. Obama's foreign policy is broadly unpopular and likely to become more so as the fiascoes continue to roll in.

Yet it's different this time. For two reasons, mainly. First, the administration's Mideast abdications are creating a set of irreversible realities for which there are no ready U.S. answers. Maybe there were things an American president could have done to help rescue Libya in 2011, Syria in 2013, and Yemen last year. That was before it was too late. But what exactly can any president do about the chaos unfolding now? Shakespeare wrote that there was a tide in the affairs of men "which taken at the flood, leads men on to fortune." Barack Obama always missed the flood.

Now the president is marching us past the point of no return on a nuclear Iran and thence a nuclear Middle East. When that happens, how many Americans will be eager to have their president intervene in somebody else's nuclear duel? Americans may love Israel, but partly that's because not a single U.S. soldier has ever died fighting on its behalf. In other words, Mr. Obama is bequeathing not just a more dangerous Middle East but also one the next president will want to touch only with a barge pole. That leaves Israel alone to deal as best as it can with a broadening array of threats: thousands more missiles for Hezbollah, paid for by sanctions relief for Tehran; ISIS on the Golan Heights; an Iran safe, thanks to Russian missiles, from any conceivable Israeli strike.

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The second reason follows from the first. Previous quarrels between Washington and Jerusalem were mainly about differing Mideast perceptions. Now the main issue is how the U.S. perceives itself. Beginning with Franklin Roosevelt, every U.S. president took the view that strength abroad and strength at home were mutually reinforcing; that global security made us more prosperous, and that prosperity made us more secure. Then along came Mr. Obama with his mantra of “nation building at home” and his notion that an activist foreign policy is a threat to the social democracy he seeks to build. Under his administration, domestic and foreign policy have been treated as a zero-sum game: If you want more of the former, do less of the latter. The result is a world of disorder, and an Israel that, for the first time in its history, must seek its security with an America that, say what it will, has nobody’s back but its own.

How does it do this? By recalling what it was able to do for the first 19 years of its existence, another period when the U.S. was an ambivalent and often suspicious friend and Israel was more upstart state than start-up nation. That was an Israel that was prepared to take strategic gambles because it knew it couldn’t afford to wait on events. It did not consider “international legitimacy” to be a prerequisite for action because it also knew how little such legitimacy was worth. It understood the value of territory and terrain, not least because it had so little of it. It built its deterrent power by constantly taking the military initiative, not constructing defensive wonder-weapons such as Iron Dome. It didn’t mind acting as a foreign policy freelancer, and sometimes even a rogue, as circumstances demanded. “Plucky little Israel” earned the world’s respect and didn’t care, much less beg, for its moral approval.

Perhaps the next American president will rescue Israel from having to learn again what it once knew. Israelis would be wise not to count on it.

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IN FRANCE, THERE'S NO HATRED FOR ANY GROUP

EQUIVALENT TO THAT OF JEW HATRED

Barbara Kay

[*National Post*](#), Apr. 21, 2015

France's Prime Minister Manuel Valls has announced an action plan that will make the battle against hatred into "a great national cause," a plan that will include awareness programs and enhanced punishment for online hate speech, with stiffer prison sentences for hatred-based crimes. The superficially admirable plan springs from honest outrage on Valls' part — but outrage that has undergone a disquieting sea change since it was first expressed.

After the *Charlie Hebdo* and kosher-supermarket massacres in January, you may recall, Valls delivered a passionate, widely circulated speech on anti-Semitism in France, declaring the problem of Jewish flight so serious the French Republic must be judged a failure if Jews left en masse. Then, Valls pulled no punches regarding the source of the crisis: "We are at war with terrorism, jihadism and Islamist radicalism."

That January *cri du coeur* offered truths that were the gift of spontaneity. With time for second thoughts (and who knows what political pressure), the message Valls now delivers is quite different. Last week the prime minister told suburban high school students: "Racism, anti-Semitism, hatred of Muslims, of foreigners and homophobia are increasing in an unbearable manner in our country." He added, "French Jews should no longer be afraid of being Jewish and French Muslims should no longer be ashamed of being Muslims. Valls' capitulation to France's pre-Hebdo default of moral relativism is sad to behold. Valls' outrage now sees anti-Semitism not as a singular problem, rather as only one of multiple hatreds, and no

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more distressing than hatred of foreigners (who?), gays and — of course —
Muslims.

The truth, which Valls understood very well in January, is that there is no hatred for any group in France equivalent to that of Jew hatred, routinely expressed in virulent hate speech, vandalism, beatings and murder. Foreigners, gays and Muslims are not fleeing France. The institutions of foreigners, gays and Muslims are not being guarded around the clock. Fifty-five per cent of hate-driven acts are not happening to foreigners, gays and Muslims, but to Jews (1% of the population). Social and employment-related discrimination are problems for French Muslims, but discrimination is not hatred, and has been historically overcome by many immigrant communities everywhere on the road to integration. Most disturbingly, Valls' likening of actual Jewish victimhood and legitimate collective Jewish fear of Islamist terrorism to some Muslims' feelings of shame regarding Islamist terrorism is an offensively false analogy.

The only true hate crisis in France is anti-Semitism. In November, 2014, a French poll revealed disturbing levels of anti-Semitism amongst French Muslims, as well as "tolerance for violence targeting Jews among a rather significant percent of the population." According to Simone Rodan-Benzaquen, Paris-based head of the American Jewish Committee, most Muslims are anti-Semitic, a sentiment that rises in tandem with religious orthodoxy, but which crosses all lines of age, socio-economic status, levels of education and districts. In February, Rodan-Benzaquen confessed herself frankly pessimistic regarding Muslim Judeophobia in France: "It is possible that it is too late," meaning too late for France to ensure Jewish safety.

Seven thousand Jews left France in 2014. France is reaping what she sowed. For many years, pro-Arab French politicians and media willfully misread the normative anti-Semitism of all Arab societies as a by-product of the Middle East conflict. Intent on relativizing what has always been a one-way hatred, French elites demoted Jews from their appropriate status of French nationals, as Ashkenazi Jews have been for more than 200 years, into a "community of immigration," falsely accusing them of "communautarisme" (disloyalty to French republicanism), and

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shamelessly mischaracterizing Muslim anti-Semitism as a problem of “the two
communities,” both in need of “inter-religious dialogue.”

Post-Second World War anti-Semitism has been a serious problem in France since the 1980s, when it was imported from North Africa, where it was endemic. Yet it was, until a few years ago, actually a government policy, in collaboration with France's pusillanimous media, to ignore hundreds of acts of anti-Semitism so as not to “throw oil on the fire” of Muslim rage. Valls' nuanced reframing tells us France is not prepared to tackle the root cause of its only existential hate crisis. So French Jews can choose: a continuing siege existence in a nation whose fear of its alienated Muslims trumps solidarity with its integrated Jews; or a new home in Israel, under external siege to be sure, but a nation where Jewish lives are privileged over political correctness. French Jews at least have a choice. The rulers who created the conditions that are forcing the choice don't. They're stuck in France. Who will be better off in the end?

Barbara Kay is a CIJR Academic Fellow

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**FORMER SS MEMBER, ON TRIAL IN GERMANY,
SAYS HE WAS 'MORALLY COMPLICIT' AT AUSCHWITZ**

Alison Smale

[New York Times](#), Apr. 21, 2015

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Seven decades after the liberation of Auschwitz, a 93-year-old former SS member— at the Nazi death camp shuffled into a German court on Tuesday to answer charges of complicity in the murders of 300,000 mostly Hungarian Jews in two months during the summer of 1944. With Holocaust survivors looking on, the former SS soldier, Oskar Gröning, certainly one of the last Nazis called to account, read a chilling but clear account of his life. It focused on the autumn of 1942 to the autumn of 1944, when he served in the SS at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

The tardiness of the case against Mr. Gröning, a widower who lives in this small town in northern Germany, did nothing to reduce the tension in the makeshift courtroom, normally an assembly hall. He and his accusers can expect to spend much of the next three months here, measuring the march of 20th-century history through the lives of Nazis and their victims.

Unlike those tried decades ago, Mr. Gröning does not deny that he was at Auschwitz and that he saw terrible things. The case turns on whether he is not only morally but also criminally responsible for what happened there. After the state prosecutor, Jens Lehmann, read the charges, Mr. Gröning spoke for an hour, then turned to Judge Franz Kompisch and said: “It is beyond question that I am morally complicit. This moral guilt I acknowledge here, before the victims, with regret and humility.” He asked for forgiveness. “As concerns guilt before the law,” he told the judge, “you must decide.”

His words riveted dozens of journalists, spectators, relatives of victims and some of the 65 plaintiffs who have joined state prosecutors in the case. After a break for lunch, the judge spent an hour questioning Mr. Gröning, who took his listeners back through decades to the rise and fall of Adolf Hitler. Mr. Gröning said he had been a bank accountant who was conscripted in the fall of 1940 and volunteered for the SS because it seemed “always to be out front” and came back “covered in glory” from the swift Nazi successes in Poland and France, sealing Hitler’s grip on Europe.

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The defendant, who was lucid almost throughout, said his first doubts about Hitler arose with the invasion of the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941, which Mr. Gröning said he considered unwise, given Russian tenacity and might. He said that he was responsible for collecting cash belonging to arriving prisoners at Auschwitz, as state prosecutors have charged, but that he also witnessed atrocities. He suggested that his doubts grew almost immediately upon his arrival at Auschwitz, when drunken guards talked of “getting rid of” prisoners.

The atrocities he witnessed, he said, included one night in December 1942 when he was roused from bed to help hunt down fleeing prisoners. In the process, he told the court, he saw prisoners herded into a farmhouse and an SS superior tip gas out of a can into an opening. The screams of the prisoners inside “grew louder and more desperate, and after a short time became quieter and then stopped completely,” Mr. Gröning said. “That was the only time I saw a complete gassing,” he said, emphasizing, “I did not take part.”

Reading his account with occasional guidance from his two lawyers, Mr. Gröning recalled minute details of his life in the SS, down to the imposing marble and wood carving in the hall where he and his comrades learned of their assignment to Auschwitz. It was presented, he said, as “a duty that will demand more from you than the front” and that had to be kept secret, even from family, but that was vital “to achieving the Final Solution” of eliminating Jews.

In November 1942, he recalled, a crying baby was found amid trash discarded by arriving prisoners. The baby’s mother had evidently abandoned it in hopes that she would then be chosen for a work crew and not sent to the gas chamber. A fellow SS member, angered by the cries, beat the infant to death, Mr. Gröning said, adding that he complained to a superior but that no action was taken. The recollections of both the gassing and the dead baby figured prominently in the two lengthy interviews Mr. Gröning gave a decade ago to the BBC and the newsmagazine *Der Spiegel*. The events notably occurred outside the period in 1944 for which he is being prosecuted.

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Mr. Gröning's case not only revives searing questions about individual guilt for Nazi crimes but also highlights the decades of legal inaction over Auschwitz, where an estimated 1.1 million people were killed. About 6,500 members of the SS worked at the camp; only 49 have been convicted of war crimes. Mr. Gröning first started talking about Auschwitz with associates and his two sons after a fellow collector at his stamp club fiercely denied the Holocaust. His case also illustrates how perceptions of the Holocaust and Nazi crimes have shifted over the decades. In 1945, Lüneburg, then in the British Allied sector of Germany, was the site of one of the first trials of former guards at the Bergen-Belsen and Auschwitz-Birkenau camps. Eleven of those on trial were executed in December of that year.

But retribution swiftly gave way to the need to rebuild Germany. The crimes committed at Auschwitz were at the heart of four big trials in Frankfurt in the 1960s. Then, for decades, little happened, as German prosecutors insisted that evidence had to tie those accused of war crimes directly to atrocities. Mr. Gröning's prosecution became possible only through the trial of John Demjanjuk, a Ukrainian who immigrated to the United States after World War II. He was eventually sentenced in 2011 in Munich to five years in prison for his involvement in the killing of 28,000 Jews at the Sobibor camp in Nazi-occupied Poland. He died in 2012, before his appeal could be heard.

For decades before that ruling, prosecutors in Germany had declined to charge anyone with complicity in the Holocaust. One of the people who helped pioneer the shift in German legal thinking was Thomas Walther, a former judge who went to work in 2006 for Germany's central office for tracking Nazi war crimes, based in Ludwigsburg. He pursued the Demjanjuk case and is considered instrumental in the subsequent trial and sentencing of Mr. Demjanjuk, a former autoworker in Ohio. In Lüneburg, Mr. Walther is the leading lawyer of 11 who are representing the 65 co-plaintiffs, some of whom arrived in recent days, ready to testify.

Among them is Eva Fahidi, 90, of Budapest, who lost 49 relatives in the Holocaust,

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including her mother and sister, who were sent to the gas chambers upon arrival at Auschwitz. She was not satisfied with Mr. Gröning's testimony and request for forgiveness. "After 70 years, he still behaves this way and is not capable of saying, 'I am a sinner,'" Ms. Fahidi said. Another survivor, Eva Kor, 81, of Terre Haute, Ind., was also adamant that "feeling guilty doesn't accomplish anything." While Ms. Fahidi said she longed for a formal judgment on Mr. Gröning, Ms. Kor argued that he should go out to schools and show "how much Nazism destroyed everybody's lives."

Markus Goldbach, Ms. Kor's lawyer, said he thought that the accused had gone further than ever before with his plea for forgiveness. "It is a surprise," he said, and may throw a fresh light on Mr. Gröning's claim that he made three requests to be transferred out of Auschwitz. These perspectives will most likely be debated throughout the trial, which coincides with modern atrocities in the Middle East and the commemoration of the Armenian genocide 100 years ago. "It is an important point in looking at genocidal acts which happen today — that perpetrators perhaps do get taken to court," Christoph Heubner, of the International Auschwitz Committee in Berlin, said in an interview before the trial. "Even when it is 70 years too late, it is a lingering, lasting signal."

Thomas Walther Spoke about the Oskar Gröning case at the CIJR office in January—Ed.

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AN OPEN LETTER TO CORNEL WEST

Judea Pearl

[Jewish Journal](#), Apr. 21, 2015

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Dear Professor West, This is a humble request sent to you from a rank-and-file Jewish professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, where you are scheduled to deliver a keynote address in honor of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, titled "Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity." My request may sound odd, perhaps even audacious, but it needs to be said as we are preparing to commemorate the life and legacy of Rabbi Heschel, his moral grandeur and his spiritual audacity.

I will be as blunt and straightforward as possible: You should excuse yourself from delivering this lecture. My reasons are also blunt and straightforward: No matter how eloquent your speech and how crafty your words, the audience you will face at UCLA will not be able to take them too seriously in light of your recent decision to become a leading propagandist for the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. You have to forgive us for being pedantic in these matters, and perhaps not as flexible and nuanced as one might hope, but our history has taught us the importance of devising crisp and visible litmus tests to distinguish friends from foes. It so happened, and you know it as well as we do, that the term BDS has become our most reliable litmus test. In other words, we have come to equate promoters of BDS ideology with those who seek the destruction of Israel, hence the demise of the Jewish people.

Thus, as much as we might try to separate the words you would be saying in honor of Rabbi Heschel from those you uttered in a Feb. 25 interview with David Palumbo-Liu at Stanford (published in Salon), in which you took great pride in promoting cultural and academic boycotts of Israel, our minds will resist the separation. Our minds will be warning us, again and again, that the person speaking before us wants our destruction.

The human mind is a funny machine, Professor West, unlike for politicians and entertainers, our mind seeks consistency and coherence in everything that we see and hear. This stubborn mind will therefore not allow us to forget that in your Aug. 12, 2014, interview with Sean Hannity, you could not find even one historical link between the Jewish people and the land of Israel. None! Nada! Blank! Not one

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~~word of empathy for a multiethnic society of immigrants who've fought 67 years of~~
besiegement and hostility. None! Nada! Blank! Thus, Professor West, you will have
to forgive those stubborn minds if they remind your audience that the keynote
speaker at the Heschel memorial conference does not represent the ecumenical
legacy of Rabbi Heschel (1907-72), but the moral deformity of BDS.

I believe your UCLA hosts, and certainly your UCLA audience, will accept your
apologies if you decide to cancel your engagement. They would understand.

CIJR Wishes All Our Friends & Supporters: Shabbat Shalom!

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On Topic

[Charles Krauthammer on His Distinguished Career in Writing and Ideas: Youtube,](#)
[Apr. 12, 2015](#)

[Washington-Lausanne-Munich?: Martin Sherman, Jerusalem Post, Apr. 23, 2015](#)
—As more and more details emerge, one thing is chillingly clear. Only the
dogmatic, the delusional or the disingenuous could deny the deadly dangers that
pursuit of Barack Obama's Iran initiative will almost certainly usher in.

[Taking Jihad to School - French Programs Emphasize Secularism: Abigail R. Esman,](#)
[IPT News, Apr. 22, 2015](#) —On a street in Paris's popular 6th Arrondissement, men in
camouflage wielding Famas assault rifles patiently stand guard throughout the
day.

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[Former SS Guard: 'Couldn't Imagine' Jews Surviving Auschwitz: *Times of Israel*, Apr. 23, 2015](#) —A former Auschwitz guard being tried on 300,000 counts of accessory to murder has testified that it was clear to him Jews were not expected to leave the camp in Nazi-occupied Poland alive.

[On College Campuses, Saving Democracy From Itself: Noah Beck, *Algemeiner*, Apr. 20, 2015](#) —Every democracy must defend itself against those who exploit its liberties to destroy it from within.

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