

**REMEMBERING 2016 & PROGNOSTICATING THE NEW YEAR  
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**[A Crystal Ball on 2017: David M. Weinberg, \*Israel Hayom\*, Dec. 30, 2016](#)**— Alas, my crystal ball has been working well in recent years, accurately anticipating the troubles before Israel.

**[Responding to Obama's Malicious Betrayal of Israel: Isi Leibler, \*Candidly Speaking\*, Dec. 29, 2016](#)**— As predicted, on the eve of his retirement President Barack Obama betrayed Israel.

**[The Main Antisemitic Incidents of 2016: Manfred Gerstenfeld, \*Jerusalem Post\*, Dec. 13, 2016](#)** — It has become a tradition that at year's end the Simon Wiesenthal Center publishes a selection of the year's major antisemitic incidents.

**[Hanukkah: The Festival of Religious Freedom: Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, \*Religion and Ethics\*, Dec. 19, 2016](#)**— Hanukkah is the festival on which Jews celebrate their victory in the fight for religious freedom more than two thousand years ago.

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**[Campus Antisemitism: The Year in Review: Kenneth L Marcus, \*Algemeiner\*, Dec. 26, 2016](#)**

## **A CRYSTAL BALL ON 2017**

*David M. Weinberg*

[\*Israel Hayom\*](#), Dec. 30, 2016

**Alas, my crystal ball has been working well in recent years, accurately anticipating the troubles before Israel. Outgoing U.S. President Barack Obama: Two years ago, I impeccably predicted in these pages that Obama would cut a grand nuclear deal with the Iranians at Israel's expense. One year ago, I forecast that Obama would sandbag Israel with a "December surprise" — a hostile U.N. Security Council resolution in the seam zone between the Nov. 8 presidential election and the Jan. 20 inauguration of a new president. I also guessed correctly that Obama would never mention the words Islam and terrorism in the same sentence; not even once, right down to the dying days of his sad eight-year tenure.**

**Looking ahead, I sense that Obama will continue to ride on Israel's case. He is young, angry, petulant and unrepentant, and a true believer in Palestinian and Iranian rights and in his own prodigious powers. The presidency of the United States was just a stepping stone, in his view, toward real global clout. Obama will remain a thorn in Israel's behind, and surely in the side of his successor too. Watch for a series of revelatory Obama interviews with Jeffrey Goldberg, in which Obama will undiplomatically pour out his wrath on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and further delegitimize Israel, while repeatedly referencing the "legacy of Shimon Peres" as cover for his contempt.**

**Incoming President Donald Trump: I was wrong to dismiss Trump's candidacy for president as hopeless, but right to suggest that moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem was a realistic possibility. Now it will happen. I don't think that the Trump administration will sanction Israeli annexations in Judea and Samaria, but it can quietly green-light renewed Israeli building in the greater Jerusalem envelope, including E1, along the lines of the "Bush letter" understandings of 2004.**

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**Equally important, Trump will reject the Obama administration's obsessive and false narratives about Israeli settlement construction being illegal, massive, and the main obstacle to peace. And he will acknowledge the plain reality that the status quo in Judea and Samaria is the least-worst option in the medium term. On another front, I doubt that Trump will throw the U.N. out of New York or cut its funding, despite Republican threats to do so. As the late, great Ed Koch once said of the U.N.: Every city needs a cesspool.**

**Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas: I was wrong in predicting last year that Abbas would finally resign from his dictatorial perch in the Palestinian Authority. But I am confident in calculating that even if he does so this coming year, the Palestinian Authority won't collapse. That's because there is no precedent in business or international affairs of anybody just walking away from a \$3 billion enterprise. More than 200,000 Palestinian families in the West Bank — a million people — are dependent on PA salaries and pension plans, paid by the international community and essentially buttressed by Israeli bayonets.**

**The PA's autocratic rule is the default and preferred paradigm for much of the Palestinian political elite (and for Israel). This gives the lie to the PA's threats to dissolve itself. Such threats are simply not credible. One more thing should be kept in mind: It is only ongoing invasive and pervasive security activity by the IDF that keeps the Palestinian Authority alive. Without this, there isn't a shred of a doubt that the PA would fall to Hamas rule within a matter of weeks. And then Jerusalem and Israel's Gush Dan heartland would be under assault from the strategic heights of Judea and Samaria. This is a reality that all those who still hanker for rapid establishment of a full-fledged Palestinian state prefer to ignore.**

**Russian President Vladimir Putin: My analysis of the situation in Syria going back two years remains prescient. While Russia and Iran share an interest in stabilizing the Assad regime, Putin has no reason to provide cover for Iranian and Hezbollah operations against Israel. Thus careful Israeli maneuvering, for which Netanyahu deserves credit, has driven enough of a wedge between Russia and Iran to preserve Israel's freedom to operate against terrorist operations over our northern**

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border.

The big question ahead is this: As Trump moves towards a strategic entente with Putin (with China as their common adversary), can Trump peel the Russians away from Iran, and secure Putin's cooperation in checking Iran's hegemonic troublemaking across the Middle East? I'm betting on this. Perhaps Putin will win the Nobel Peace Prize for bringing "stability" to Syria. After all, Obama won the prize for doing nothing at all.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu: He will overcome all the pesky, petty investigations into his finances. Challenges to his Likud leadership by Gideon Sa'ar and Moshe Ya'alon will come to naught. His governing coalition will hold firm too. However, Netanyahu will find it increasingly difficult to square the circle diplomatically, even with Trump in the White House. It will be hard to strengthen Israel's hold on Jerusalem and the settlement blocs, and assert Israel's rights on the Temple Mount while fending off lawfare in the International Criminal Court and other forums. Unless and until Netanyahu adopts a real discourse of Israeli rights in Judea and Samaria (historic, religious and national), and doesn't just talk about its security needs, Israel will continue to lose ground internationally...

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**RESPONDING TO OBAMA'S MALICIOUS BETRAYAL OF ISRAEL**

*Isi Leibler*

[Candidly Speaking](#), Dec. 29, 2016

As predicted, on the eve of his retirement President Barack Obama betrayed

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**Israel. The former long-standing congregant of the paranoid anti-Semitic pastor Rev. Jeremiah Wright who has a penchant for supporting to the Moslem Brotherhood, broke with forty years of U.S. bipartisan policy of protecting the Jewish state from the wolves at the United Nations.**

**His action as a lame duck president was a last ditch effort aimed at undermining his successor's intended policies, realizing that it is virtually impossible to rescind a Security Council resolution. At the end of his eight years in office he exhibited an unprecedented abuse of power knowing that in his last month he would be unaccountable, despite the fact that his vindictive initiative was totally opposed by Congress, the American people and even by many members of his own party.**

**European countries represented on the Security Council voted in favor of this abominable resolution 2334 which was essentially drafted and orchestrated by the US and ultimately initiated by New Zealand, a Western country whose foreign policy is largely determined by the extent that it promotes export of lamb. Its co-sponsors were the rogue state of Venezuela, as well as Malaysia and Senegal.**

**The resolution, passed during the week that Aleppo was conquered by President Assad in the midst of brutal torture and massacres of thousands of innocent civilians, highlights the duplicity and hypocrisy of the United Nations, a body dominated by anti-Israeli and rogue states with democracies groveling in an effort to appease the dominant Muslim nations. It will serve as an instrument for Israel's adversaries to further promote boycott, divestment and sanctions and the International Criminal Court will be encouraged to define Israel as a criminal state.**

**It officially nullifies the disastrous Oslo Accords, negates UN Resolution 242 and repudiates the concept of defensible borders. It paves the way for criminalizing all settlers, including those in the major blocs that will always remain part of Israel and even Jews resident in Jewish neighborhoods of east Jerusalem. It actually defines the Old City of Jerusalem and the Kotel (Western Wall) as occupied**

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**Palestinian territory.**

**In this context the Palestinians will demand that any future negotiations accept these bizarre territorial definitions as opening benchmarks - a status that no Israeli government would ever contemplate accepting. The UN Resolution has effectively negated the concept of direct negotiations, thus ensuring that a peaceful solution to the conflict is more remote than ever.**

**In this poisonous anti-Israeli international climate, we should not be influenced by the pessimistic prophets of doom in our midst. We are more powerful today than ever before and in the course of our history we have successfully overcome far greater threats to our existence than the United Nations. Now is a time for us to display unity and strength. Despite the many initial concerns, we should thank the Almighty that the American people elected Donald Trump as president. Were we now faced with a Clinton Democratic Administration, which in all likelihood would retain Obama's policies, we would be confronting a real nightmare.**

**In this context, if the proclaimed decision to move the U.S Embassy to Jerusalem is implemented it will send the world a powerful message. To his credit, Trump used all his weight as an incoming president in efforts to ward off the UN resolution, albeit unsuccessfully. He described the UN "just as a club for people to get together, talk and have a good time" and stressed that after January 20th "things at the UN will be different". In the wake of his selection of pro-Israeli David Friedman as ambassador to Israel he appointed another pro-Israeli from his team, Jason Greenblatt as his point man for Middle East negotiations. He also demonstratively refused to grant an audience to retiring UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon.**

**In light of these developments most of the mainstream Jewish leadership who were in denial for over eight years should share a deep sense of guilt and shame. They remained silent as Obama treated Israel diplomatically as a rogue state**

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whilst he groveled to the Ayatollah. They continued voting for him and we now see how he repaid them. The only consistent critic was indefatigable Morton Klein, head of the Zionist Organization of America who has now been more than vindicated.

Individual American Jews are free to express their personal political opinions in any manner they deem fit, but mainstream Jewish organizations are obliged to avoid activity which reflects political bias. The disgusting behavior of liberal mainstream leaders exploiting their positions to promote a partisan bias against Trump, including accusations of anti-Semitism against him and his co-workers before and during the elections, now stands out as being utterly unethical and outrageous.

After the elections the Anti-Defamation League, the religious Conservative and Reform leaders all issued statements conveying their anguish and even mourning the results. Some of these publicly supported the election to the Democratic Party leadership of the Muslim extreme left-wing anti-Israeli congressman Keith Ellison whilst bitterly protesting Trump's appointment of a pro-Israeli ambassador. Others even protested that moving the US Embassy to Jerusalem would harm the peace process. The climax was the almost comic but bizarre boycott by major liberal mainstream Jewish organizations of a Hanukah celebration hosted by the Presidents' Conference at the Azerbaijani Embassy in Washington because it was being held in a Trump-owned hotel.

But now is the time for us to look forward and unite. This U.N. resolution was not just about settlements. It was to undermine the security of the state and pave the way for anti-Semitic boycotts and sanctions by those seeking Israel's demise. The resolution employing Obama's malevolent views made no distinction between isolated outposts and settlements in outlying regions and Jewish suburbs of Jerusalem including the Western Wall...

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### **THE MAIN ANTISEMITIC INCIDENTS OF 2016**

*Manfred Gerstenfeld*

[Jerusalem Post](#), Dec. 13, 2016

It has become a tradition that at year's end the Simon Wiesenthal Center publishes a selection of the year's major antisemitic incidents. When the list was started in 2010 it was two pages long. By last year it had tripled to six pages. Concerning 2016 there are two new aspects. The first is that a widely accepted definition of antisemitism has been in existence since May, namely that of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA).

Its acceptance required the approval of its 31 democratic member countries. The second aspect is that the perhaps largest antisemitic incident this year did not even mention Jews: in 2016, UNESCO accepted a resolution which refers to the Temple Mount exclusively as Al-Haram Al-Sharif/Al-Aksa Mosque. In so doing, it dissociated Jews (and Christians) from Jerusalem. This year it will be difficult for the SWC executives to do their work in view of the many major antisemitic incidents to choose from. A few suggestions thus may be helpful. The Black Lives Matter (BLM) coalition should be high on the list. Its platform falsely claims that Israel is an "apartheid state" which perpetrates genocide against the Palestinians.

Another prime candidate for the SWC list is Jeremy Corbyn, the extreme left-wing leader of the British Labour Party. Under his leadership antisemitism in the party has greatly expanded. Corbyn has called Hamas and Hezbollah his "friends" and for so many months refused to distance himself from that statement that when he finally did, it was meaningless. Corbyn promoted his strategy adviser Seumas



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Milne, who is a Hamas proponent. He also gave notorious antisemitic slur producer Ken Livingstone an important position in the party. The latter was later suspended because of antisemitic remarks about Hitler supporting Zionism. When the antisemitism in the party became clear, he chose an unqualified investigator who produced a highly unprofessional report on the issue. Corbyn's acts do not fit the IHRA definition. This shows that the definition in relation to anti-Israel antisemitism is far too concise and should be complemented by a more detailed definition of this type of antisemitism...

The Muslim world is a prime supplier of antisemitic recidivists. One of these is the Turkish President Tayyip Recep Erdogan. One statement from 2016 which qualifies him is "I don't approve of what Hitler did, and neither do I approve of what Israel has done," according to a translation by AFP. "When it's a question of so many people dying, it's inappropriate to ask who was the more barbarous." In view of Hungarian antisemitism at least one candidate from that country should make the list. Perhaps it should be the Hungarian government for awarding antisemitic Magyar Hirlap columnist and conservative party Fidesz publicist Zsolt Bayer the "Hungarian Middle Cross," the third highest decoration of achievement the government bestows.

No annual list of antisemitic slurs can be complete without including candidates from the Scandinavian hotbeds of hypocrisy and antisemitism, Norway and Sweden. The third largest Norwegian town, Trondheim, is now in the running as candidate for Europe's capital of the anti-Israeli version of antisemitism for deciding to boycott products from the settlements. SWC circles informed me that Swedish foreign minister Margot Wallström barely escaped the list of major antisemitic incidents last year. This year she should definitely be on the list for her comments calling for an investigation into whether Israel is guilty of extrajudicial killings of Palestinians during the most recent wave of terrorism. The leader of the Yesh Atid Party, Yair Lapid, explicitly called her an antisemite during a rally in Stockholm.

The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement is also an annually returning

antisemitic phenomenon. Seventy Jews wrote a letter to *The New York Review of Books* supporting only a targeted boycott of all goods and services from all Israeli settlements as well as investments there. They would be a representative candidate of the BDS list because of their double standards, which are a core element of antisemitism. The above selection may be somewhat helpful to the SWC executives. The problem is that it only contains a small part of the many candidates for this year's list.

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## **HANUKKAH: THE FESTIVAL OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

*Rabbi Jonathan Sacks*

[Religion and Ethics](#), Dec. 19, 2016

Hanukkah is the festival on which Jews celebrate their victory in the fight for religious freedom more than two thousand years ago. Tragically that fight is no less important today - and not only for Jews, but for people of all faiths. The Jewish story is simple enough. In around 165 BCE Antiochus IV, ruler of the Syrian branch of the Alexandrian empire, began to impose Greek culture on the Jews of the land of Israel. Funds were diverted from the Temple to public games and drama competitions.

A statue of Zeus was erected in Jerusalem. Jewish religious rituals such as circumcision and the observance of the Sabbath were banned. Those who kept them were persecuted. It was one of the great crises in Jewish history. There was a real possibility that Judaism, the world's first monotheism, would be eclipsed. A group of Jewish pietists rose in rebellion. Led by a priest, Mattathias of Modi'in, and his son, Judah the Maccabee, they began the fight for liberty. Outnumbered, they suffered heavy initial casualties, but within three years they had secured a

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**momentous victory. Jerusalem was restored to Jewish hands. The Temple was rededicated. The celebrations lasted for eight days.**

**Hanukkah - which means "rededication" - was established as a festival to perpetuate the memory of those days. Almost twenty-two centuries have passed since then, yet today religious liberty, enshrined as article 18 in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is at risk in many parts of the world. Christians are being persecuted throughout the Middle East and parts of Asia. In Mosul, Iraq's second city, Christians have been kidnapped, tortured, crucified and beheaded. Over the last two years, the Christian community, one of the oldest in the world, has been driven out, and the Yazidis, members of an ancient religious sect, have been threatened with genocide.**

**Over the past year in Nigeria, Boko Haram has captured Christian children and sold them as slaves. In Madagali, Christian men have been taken and beheaded, and the women forcibly converted to Islam and taken by the terrorists as wives. Nor has Boko Haram limited itself to persecuting Christians; it has targeted the Muslim establishment as well. Sectarian religious violence in the Central African Republic has led to the destruction of almost all of its mosques. In Burma, more than 140,000 Rohingya Muslims and 100,000 Kachin Christians have been forced to flee.**

**The 2016 report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom speaks concludes that "serious and sustained assault" on religious freedom is a major factor behind the rolling series of worldwide "humanitarian crises." Countries where this crisis is acute include Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Turkmenistan, Nigeria, Central African Republic, Egypt, Iraq, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Vietnam. In Syria alone, where some of the worst crimes against humanity are taking place, 6.6 million people are internally displaced while 4.8 million have become refugees elsewhere...**

**Is there a way forward? More than half a century ago the Oxford philosopher John Plamenatz noted that religious freedom was born in Europe in the seventeenth century after a devastating series of religious wars. All it took was a single shift,**

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from the belief that, "Faith is the most important thing; therefore everyone should honour the one true faith," to the belief that, "Faith is the most important thing; therefore everyone should be free to honour his or her own faith."

This meant that people of all faiths were guaranteed that whichever religion was dominant, he or she would still be free to obey their own call of conscience. Hence Plamenatz's striking conclusion: "Liberty of conscience was born, not of indifference, not of scepticism, not of mere open-mindedness, but of faith." The very fact that my religion is important to me allows me to understand that your quite different religion is no less important to you. It took much bloodshed before people were prepared to acknowledge this simple truth, which is why we must never forget the lessons of the past if we are to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past. Hanukkah reminds us that people will fight for religious freedom, and the attempt to deprive them of it will always end in failure.

The symbol of Hanukkah is the menorah we light for eight days in memory of the Temple candelabrum, purified and rededicated by the Maccabees all those centuries ago. Faith is like a flame. Properly tended, it gives light and warmth, but let loose, it can burn and destroy. We need, in the twenty-first century, a global Hanukkah: a festival of freedom for all the world's faiths. For though my faith is not yours and your faith is not mine, if we are each free to light our own flame, together we can banish some of the darkness of the world.

*CIJR Wishes All Our Friends & Supporters:*

*Shabbat Shalom and Chag Urim Sameach!*

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**[12 Reasons the US Should Never Have allowed UN Resolution 2334](#)**: Hillel Neuer, *Times of Israel*, Dec. 29, 2016—What follows is part of an open letter I sent to U.S. Ambassador Samantha Power following the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 2334:

**[Israel Sees 27,000 New Immigrants in 2016, Slight Dip From Previous Year](#)**: *JNS*, Dec. 29, 2016— Israel saw approximately 27,000 new immigrants arrive this year, with newcomers from Russia and Brazil rising significantly but overall immigrations down from 31,000 in 2015, according to newly released year-end figures from the Jewish Agency for Israel and the Israeli Ministry of Aliyah and Immigration Absorption.

**[Meet The Winners: Our Pick For 2016's Coolest Israeli Startups](#)**: Einat Paz-Frankel, *No Camels*, Dec. 29, 2016—2016 was another remarkable year for Israeli innovation, with the Startup Nation showing no signs of slowing its breakneck pace. The startup ecosystem has made global headlines with a host of new cutting-edge technologies that have the potential to better our lives, and even change them for good.

**[Campus Antisemitism: The Year in Review](#)**: Kenneth L Marcus, *Algemeiner*, Dec. 26, 2016—This has been an extraordinarily eventful year in the campaign against campus antisemitism, especially from our perspective at the Louis D. Brandeis Center. On the one hand, Jewish students face a worsening climate. This year, an AMCHA Initiative study showed a 45% increase in campus antisemitism during the first half of 2016 as compared with the first half of 2015.

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