ON HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY, ABUSE OF MEMORY CONTINUES, ANTI-SEMITISM (SEE SWEDEN) ON RISE

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INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY
Baruch Cohen,
CIJR, Jan. 27, 2013

Today, January 27, International Holocaust Remembrance Day, proclaimed by the UN, is a daily remembrance for me. For the last 35 years I have shared my story with students in Montreal schools and universities.
Despite my age (93) I continue to share, whenever I am called, my story, talking with young people about the event that marked my life forever.

In 1933, when Hitler and the Nazi Party rose to power in Germany, my mother (we lived in Bucharest) called me to her side and said, “My dear son (I was the only boy in our family of four children), Hitler’s rise to power will mean the destruction of the Jewish People.”

Today’s rising anti-Semitism, which takes the form of “anti-Zionism”, is a call for hatred against the Jewish People, against the State of Israel, and hence against all Jews, of the Jewish People.

International Holocaust Remembrance Day is a universal statement against hate and prejudice, a call to unite the world, to affirm life! This day must also be a day to keep alive the memory of a great human being, a unique lover of humanity, the Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg, who – in a world which allowed both the rise of Hitler and the Holocaust – shouldered his human responsibility, and in 1944, in Hungary, personally saved thousands of Jewish lives!

Never forget! Never Again!

(Baruch Cohen is Research Chairman of the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research.)

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THE ABUSE OF HOLOCAUST MEMORY IN 2011-2012

Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld,
JCPA, January 27, 2013

[Editor’s Note: the following is an excerpt of a much longer article. For the full text please click on the link or download a PDF version here.]

The Holocaust has become a symbol of absolute evil in Western society. This has happened gradually over the past decades. One might have expected that more than sixty-five years after the end of the Second World War, the mention and memory of it would fade away. Indeed, “Holocaust fatigue” is widespread; many people do not want to hear anything more about the subject.

At the same time, many others increasingly mention and discuss the Holocaust. It took sixty years until in 2005, the United Nations General Assembly named 27 January as International Holocaust Remembrance Day. This is the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. Every UN member state also has an official obligation to honour the victims of the Nazi era and develop educational material about the Holocaust. In 2012, remembrance of the Holocaust was devoted to children. In his message, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said:

One and a half million Jewish children perished in the Holocaust – victims of persecution by the Nazis and their supporters. Tens of thousands of other children were also murdered. They included people with disabilities…as well as Roma and Sinti. All were victims of a hate-filled ideology that labeled them as “inferior.”

What are the main reasons for this increasing interest in the Holocaust?...One very partial explanation is the memorial meetings that take place every year in many places. Some are very emotional. An annual one is held at the location of the former Paris cycling stadium. There, more than thirteen thousand Jews who had been arrested were brought together in July 1942 before being sent to German death camps. In 2012, French president François Hollande gave a moving speech at the memorial meeting. He noted that the arrests were carried out by French policemen, and added that not a single German soldier had to be mobilized.
This was a very important statement, as it highlighted France’s share in the responsibility for the murder of Jews during the Holocaust. It was even more significant because the last Socialist president, François Mitterrand, was unwilling to acknowledge France’s assistance in the crimes. Hollande also said at the gathering that France would act with determination against anti-Semitism. Increased anti-Semitism in Europe is yet another reason for the Holocaust remaining a subject of considerable dialogue. This is the more so as on various occasions, anti-Semites make use of Nazi terminology.

Simultaneously with the growing interest in Holocaust, the distortion of its history and memory increases as well. To fight this effectively, one must first understand this phenomenon. The examples of distortion of the Holocaust come from many countries and many different circles. In the last year or two, there have been so many incidents that one can only describe a limited number of them.

The abuse of the Holocaust has become so major that within several categories of distortion, subcategories have emerged. This can be well illustrated from the first category of distortion, which concerns Holocaust promotion and justification.

The most extreme form of this is the promotion of a new Holocaust. This intense hate-mongering is mainly associated with sizable parts of the Muslim world. The main actors are the Iranian government and the Palestinian Hamas movement. But there are many others. For instance, in October 2012, a video showed how Egyptian president Mohammed Morsi answered “Amen” to an imam who prayed, “Oh Allah, destroy the Jews and their supporters.”

The call for the murder of Jews is much more widespread in the Muslim world than many in the Western world wish to know, admit, or publicize. One reason is that from all these examples of Holocaust promotion, several conclusions can be drawn that are to a large extent politically incorrect or even taboo. The basis of the Western multicultural position is the false claim that all cultures are equal in value. A culture where many prominent people promote murder, however, is inferior to a democratic culture. This does not make individuals living in such a culture inferior human beings. As the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”

The flawed idea that all cultures at a given time in history are equivalent has absurd implications. One is that Nazi culture in the mid-twentieth century was equal to the democratic culture of the Allies. Murdering six million Jews in the Holocaust fit German culture at the time. If there is no hierarchy of cultures, then there was nothing reprehensible about this genocide.

Other Holocaust promoters can be found in neo-Nazi environments. There are also individuals or small groups who scrawl “Death to the Jews” graffiti, for instance. This also occurs frequently on social networks. “A good Jew” (“UnBonJuif”), which spread anti-Semitic jokes, became the third most popular hashtag among French Twitter users in October 2012. Several of them tweeted “A good Jew is a dead Jew.”

Some of those comparing attitudes of movements in the Islamic world to those of the Nazis present weighty arguments. Holocaust expert Yehuda Bauer points out:

Today for the first time since 1945, Jews are again threatened openly, by a radical Islamic genocidal ideology whose murderous rantings must be taken more seriously than the Nazi ones were two and more generations ago. The direct connection between World War II, the Shoah, and present-day genocidal events and threats is more than obvious. The Shoah was unprecedented; but it was a precedent, and that precedent is being followed.
Holocaust historian Robert Wistrich writes that hard-core anti-Semitism in the Arab and Muslim world is comparable only to that of Nazi Germany. Wistrich explains that Muslim hatred for Israel and Jews is “an eliminatory anti-Semitism with a genocidal dimension.” As common elements between Muslim and Nazi anti-Semitism, Wistrich lists fanaticism, the cult of death, the nihilistic wish for destruction, and the mad lust for world hegemony.…

Growing polarization in Western society is just one of several reasons for the increase in Holocaust abuse. More people are being falsely blamed as being or behaving like Nazis. Another, more specific reason is the explosion of anti-Semitism – often disguised as anti-Israelism – in Western society. This leads to an increase in Holocaust promotion and, above all, of Holocaust inversion – comparing Israelis to Nazis.

The massive abuse of the Holocaust poses the question: what can one do about it? There is no single way to fight against it. Education is very important, as are memorials, monuments, and many other activities. However, a crucial point remains that people should make an effort to prevent the abuse of Holocaust from entering into public debate. When this happens, it should be fought intensely.

Such actions often produce results, even if they arrive late. One example has already been mentioned: in October 2012, four years after he had said that there were no gas chambers, the extreme-conservative Catholic Society of Pius X removed Holocaust-denier Bishop Richard Williamson from its ranks.

An important step would be for the nations of the world to live up to their commitments under the UN Genocide Convention and bring Iranian leaders Grand Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad before an international court. The same should be done with the Hamas organization and its genocide promoters. That could become the beginning of a much wider struggle against Holocaust distortion.

MINISTRY REPORT: ATTACKS AGAINST JEWS ON THE RISE

Sam Sokol

Jerusalem Post, Jan. 28, 2013

There has been “an alarming rise in the number of attacks against Jewish targets” over the past year, according to a new report issued by the Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs Ministry on Sunday. The 2012 report on anti-Semitism, which was presented to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu by Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs Minister Yuli Edelstein during Sunday’s cabinet meeting, indicated that the confluence of extreme rightwing political movements and Islamic radicalism have been responsible for a new wave of anti-Semitic sentiment in Europe.

The report’s release was timed to coincide with the commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day on Sunday. Based on data collected by the Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry at Tel Aviv University, Edelstein noted that “the main conclusion emerging from the document... is that compared to 2011, there was an escalation in violent incidents against Jews around the world.”…

Edelstein also noted that a “preliminary analysis of trends” indicates that Israeli policy “does not constitute the main incentive for anti-Semitic actions against Jews.” Delegitimation of Israel does play a role in fuelling anti-Jewish activity, he said, but “Israeli policies will not affect or reduce these effects of racial hatred against Jews.”
The worst increase in anti-Semitism was seen in Western Europe, according to the report, which listed a number of incidents in France and Germany, including the bombing of a grocery store in Sarcelles, France and the shooting deaths of four Jews at the Otsar HaTorah religious school in Toulouse. Many synagogues in France are now surrounded by high concrete walls and receive special police security details on major holidays. It is also common for Jews in many French cities to remove their kippot for safety reasons when walking outside.

The ministry’s report also detailed the rise of anti-Semitic political movements in eastern and southern Europe, including the Golden Dawn party in Greece and the Jobbik party in Hungary. Most anti-Semitic incidents, it claimed, were either motivated by far-right political ideologies or by those affiliated with radical Islam. Figures published by the French Jewish communal organization SPCJ – Service de Protection de la Communauté Juive – in October, the report further noted, show that the number of incidents that occurred in France in 2011 was 45 percent higher than in the previous year.

Edelstein also said that anti-Semitic conspiracy theories have found fertile ground online and that Arab anti-Semitism remains prominent, although it has not seen a marked increase. A 2011 paper on anti-Semitism produced by the Kantor Center stated that while there was an increase in the intensity of violent incidents against Jews in 2011, the total number of such events worldwide during that year fell from 614 to 446. The report said France was the leading country for anti-Semitic incidents with 114 reported in 2011, followed closely by the UK with 105. Canada and Australia reported 68 and 30, respectively.

Dina Porat, head of the Kantor Center and the chief historian at Yad Vashem, noted that [while] “there was in 2012…a rise [in anti-Semitism],….it is not about numbers, but about tendencies,” she told The Jerusalem Post. …In tracking anti-Semitism over a period of years, Porat noted, she has seen that “the rise and decline of anti-Semitism is mainly connected to problems within Europe.” Anti-Semitic incidents in Western and Central Europe, she said, “are not necessarily [connected] to the Middle East or to the Palestinian-Israel conflict or to Israel’s conduct. They emanate from political, social and economic problems.”

In response to the report by the Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs Ministry, European Jewish Congress President Dr. Moshe Kantor stated that “anti-Semitism in Europe is reaching a tipping point, where certain Jewish communities on the European continent are in danger. We are also gravely concerned that the political rise of neo-Nazi parties in Europe has given racists and anti-Semites a certain level of impunity. This coupled with the rise of anti-Israel delegitimization on the Left, and among extreme Muslim communities, is creating an explosive cocktail for European Jews.” The EJC, he stated, is working to formulate “a plan with senior EU and European officials to increase education, policing and action to stem the rise of hatred against the Jews.”

After being briefed on the report, Netanyahu told his cabinet that, “In the perspective of the almost 75 years that have passed since the Holocaust, what has not changed is the desire to annihilate the Jews.” What has changed, he noted, was the “ability of the Jews to defend themselves.” The prime minister also asserted that “nobody will defend the Jews if they are not ready to defend themselves; this is another lesson of the Holocaust. It is impossible to rely on separate and independent action to defend the Jews if the Jews will not defend themselves.”

**WHAT HAPPENED TO SWEDEN?**

*Michael Curtis*

*Gatestone Institute*, Jan. 25, 2013
Just as Raoul Wallenberg remains as an example of courage, Sweden's Mayor of Malmo, Ilmar Reepalu, a Social Democrat who has held the office for 17 years, does not.

Last October, around 300 people assembled in Raoul Wallenberg Square in Malmo, to join in solidarity the few Jews of Malmo, now numbering about 600, whose community center had just suffered an explosion, and whose cemetery had just been desecrated by antisemitic graffiti. At the same time as this demonstration, on the other side of Malmo, a celebration was taking place to commemorate the birth of Raoul Wallenberg, who, in Hungary in 1944, saved thousands of Jews, from being sent to their death in the concentration camps of Nazi Germany.

From July 9, 1944 until his arrest by the Soviet army on January 17, 1945 at the age of 32, Wallenberg issued "protective passports" to thousands of Jews and rented 32 buildings, which he declared diplomatic facilities. He used diplomacy, bribery and blackmail to provide Jews with immunity from arrest. He persuaded General Schmidhuber, the Commander of the German Army in Hungary, to cancel Adolf Eichmann's plan to attack the Jewish ghetto and slaughter the 70,000 Jews there. About 120,000 Jews survived in Hungary alone as a result of Wallenberg's efforts.

The courage of Wallenberg is disappointingly absent in Sweden today. Once a moral superpower, Sweden cannot now claim to be seen as even an open or tolerant place. Instead, it has become a haven for antisemitic behaviour, as well as anti-Israel activity, by both Muslim activists and various political groups. Members of the Swedish parliament have attended supposedly "anti-Israel" rallies, which quickly descended into occasions for competitive antisemitic rhetoric. Jews are being "harassed and physically attacked," by "people from the Middle East," according to Malmo resident, Fredrik Sieradzik, in an interview with the Austrian paper, Die Presse. "Malmo," he said, "is a place to move away from."

Sweden is now a country where orthodox Jews are afraid to wear a skullcap, and where the largest tabloid paper, Aftonbladet, libellously claimed, in an August 2009 article, that Israeli soldiers were taking the organs of dead Palestinians. When the city of Malmo in 2009 hosted a tennis match between Sweden and Israel, no spectators were allowed for "reasons of security."

The individual most conspicuous in the denial of this reality is the mayor of Malmo, Ilmar Reepalu. This reality consists of attacks on Jews in a city where the Jewish population has been reduced from 2,000 to about 600; where Molotov cocktails are thrown at Jewish funeral chapels, and antisemitic graffiti is scrawled throughout the town. The mayor nevertheless denies the increase in antisemitism there. When he does allude to the subject, he argues that the violence comes from right wing extremists, not from Muslims who now make up a considerable part of his Malmo population.

Reepalu asserts that "We accept neither Zionism nor antisemitism. They are extremes that put themselves above other groups, and believe they have a lower value." Of the small Malmo Jewish community, he says: "I would wish for the Jewish community to denounce Israeli violations against the civilian population of Gaza. Instead, it decides to hold a demonstration [in reality a pro-peace rally] which could send the wrong signals." Reepalu speaks of Israeli "genocide" in Gaza.

Reepalu, as is common with people in other countries in Europe in their failure to consider that government, laws and human rights partly exists to protect the minority from the majority. He blames the local Jews' use of free speech and freedom of assembly for attacks on them: If only the Jews would stop speaking and gathering peacefully, the distorted logic goes, no one would be attacking them. Historically, the opposite is true: even when Jews remained quiet, and spent years in hiding, as many often did, the only acceptable form of behaviour, apparently, was not to exist.
After years of unremitting antisemitic activity in Malmo, many Jews have either left or are thinking of leaving, largely for Stockholm, England or Israel. Reepalu's comment was: "There have not been any attacks on Jewish people, and if Jews want to move to Israel that is not a matter for Malmo." From time to time the mayor has claimed that his views were misrepresented, but the full recordings, published on the website of the paper Skanska Dagbladet, make clear that they were not.

One can only hope that the memory of Raoul Wallenberg, the exemplification of Sweden's height as a moral superpower, may lead some of those exercising power in Sweden to deal with the forces of accelerating bigotry at their doorstep, and their own bigotry inside.

*Michael Curtis is author of Should Israel Exist? A Sovereign Nation under Attack by the International Community.*

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**ON TOPIC**

**68 Years After the 'Liberation' of Auschwitz --Lessons Learned and Unlearned:** Rabbi Abraham Cooper, *Fox News* Jan. 26, 2013—On January 27, 1945, Soviet troops liberated the Auschwitz Birkenau Death Camp. Actually “liberated” is the wrong word. Opened the gates of hell is more appropriate a term. The numbers of murdered are staggering. According to the Encyclopedia of the Holocaust nearly a quarter of the 6 million Jews killed in Holocaust were mass murdered there, most in gas chambers. Of the 400,000 political prisoners brought to Auschwitz, only 65,000 left alive; of the 16,000 Soviet POWs, 96 returned home.

**UK Paper Posts Anti-Israel Cartoon On Holocaust Day:** *Jerusalem Post*, Jan. 27, 2013—The Sunday Times of London marked Holocaust Memorial Day [by] running a virulently anti-Israel cartoon depicting a big-nosed Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu paving a wall with the blood and limbs of writhing Palestinians.

**That Unwitting Indecency:** Sarah Honig, *Jerusalem Post*, Jan. 24, 2013—I wish more Israelis were with me in outlying County Kerry, Ireland, just recently. There, in the tiny town of Cahersiveen, my doubting compatriots would have been reminded of what we face in the international community and why it has nothing much to do with how liberally we conduct ourselves, how many confidence-building concessions we make at the expense of our physical safety or how much we sacrifice of our rights to our historic homeland. It’s all gallingly beside the point.

**Seeing The World Through Anne Frank’s Eyes — Via An Ipad:** David Shamah, *Times of Israel*, Jan. 25, 2013—Thanks to a new iPad and Nook app by the UK-based Beyond The Story, students will be able to learn about the Holocaust in a far more effective and experiential manner than ever before. Together with *Viking Penguin*, publisher of “The Diary,” the company has developed a tablet version of the book which includes interactive links, videos, voice-overs and historical background along with never-before released material supplied by the Switzerland-based Anne Frank Foundation. The app is being released on January 25 to commemorate International Holocaust Remembrance Day, and the 70th anniversary of the date on which Anne Frank started her diary.”

**New Book Exposes World’s Indifference to Nazis After World War II:** *The Algemeiner*, Jan. 25, 2013—A new book claims that governments around the world were unwilling to track down Nazi criminals in the wake of World War II because of “vested interests.” The “Nazi Hunt: South America’s Dictatorships and the Avenging of Nazi Crimes, by German historian Daniel Stahl, calls the half-hearted efforts of postwar governments a ‘coalition of the unwilling.’ Stahl writes that the French feared prosecutions would expose their collaboration during the war, the South Americans feared a spotlight on their own murderous regimes and the West Germans wanted to help ‘old comrades’ get away.”

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