

## The war against the Jews

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The sustained anti-Israel de-legitimization campaign is a corollary of the millenarian obsession with the Jews in the Christian and the Muslim worlds. Since Israel is the world's only Jewish state, and since Zionism is the Jewish people's national liberation movement, anti-Zionism—as opposed to criticism of specific Israeli policies or actions—means denial of the Jewish right to national self-determination. Such a discriminatory denial of this basic right to *only one nation* (and one of the few that can trace their corporate identity and territorial attachment to antiquity) while allowing it to all other groups and communities, however new and tenuous their claim to nationhood, is pure and unadulterated anti-Jewish racism, or anti-Semitism as it is commonly known.

By any conceivable standard, Israel has been an extraordinary success story: national rebirth in the ancestral homeland after millennia of exile and dispersion; resuscitation of a dormant biblical language; the creation of a modern, highly educated, technologically advanced, and culturally and economically thriving society, as well as a vibrant liberal democracy in one of the world's least

democratic areas. It is a world leader in agricultural, medical, military, and solar energy technologies, among others; a high-tech superpower attracting more venture capital investment per capita than the United States and Europe; home to one of the world's best health systems and philharmonic orchestras, as well as to ten Nobel Prize laureates. And so on and so forth.

Why then is Israel the only state in the world whose right to exist is constantly debated and challenged while far less successful countries, including numerous "failed states," are considered legitimate and incontestable members of the international community? The answer offered by this article is that this pervasive prejudice against Israel, the only Jewish state to exist since biblical times, is a corollary of the millenarian obsession with the Jews in the Christian and the Muslim worlds.

On occasion, notably among devout and/or born again Evangelical Christians, this obsession has manifested itself in admiration and support for the national Jewish resurrection in the Holy Land. In most instances, however, anti-Jewish prejudice and animosity, or anti-Semitism as it is commonly known, has served to exacerbate distrust and hatred of Israel. Indeed, the fact that the international coverage of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the libels against Zionism and Israel, such as the despicable comparisons to Nazi Germany and apartheid South Africa, have invariably reflected a degree of intensity and emotional involvement well beyond the normal level to be expected of impartial observers would seem to suggest that, rather than being a response to concrete Israeli activities, it is a manifestation of long-standing prejudice that has been brought out into the open by the vicissitudes of the conflict.

## Anti-Zionism or Anti-Semitism?

Of course, it has long been a staple of Israel bashers to argue that they have never had anything against Judaism or Jews but only against Zionism and Zionists, and that their criticisms are to be understood as an expression of frustration with Zionism, not with Jews or Judaism. Yet, for all their protestations to the contrary, opponents of Zionism and Israel have never really distinguished among Zionists, Israelis, and Jews, and often use these terms interchangeably.

"I really can't see that there is any kind of way of dealing with the Zionist question except by a massacre now and then," wrote the Freya Stark, the noted British Arabist and anti-Zionist during a 1943 mission to the United States to promote Britain's Palestine policy. "What can we do? It is the ruthless last penny that they squeeze out of you that does it... the world has chosen to massacre them at intervals, and whose fault is it?"<sup>[1]</sup>

When in June 1967 the Israeli government ignored a French warning against preempting the imminent pan-Arab attack, President Charles de Gaulle lambasted the Jews—not the Israelis—as "an elite people, self-assured and domineering." Seven years later, the US chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. George S. Brown, vented his ire at Israel's supposed stranglehold of US foreign policy in no less indiscriminate terms. Making no distinction between Israelis and American Jews, he bluntly claimed that "they own, you know, the banks in this country, the newspapers, you just look at where the Jewish money is in this country."<sup>[2]</sup> And Anis Mansur, one of Egypt's foremost journalists and a one-time confidant of President Anwar Sadat, put the same idea in even blunter terms: "There is no such thing in the world as Jew and Israeli. Every Jew is an Israeli. No doubt about that."<sup>[3]</sup>

The truth of the matter is that since Israel is the world's only Jewish state and since Zionism is the Jewish people's national liberation movement, anti-Zionism - as opposed to criticism of specific Israeli policies or actions - means denial of the Jewish right to national self-determination. Needless to say, such a discriminatory denial of this basic right to *only one nation* (and one of the few that can trace their corporate identity and territorial attachment to antiquity) while allowing it to all other groups and communities, however new and tenuous their claim to nationhood, is pure and unadulterated racism. Yet it is precisely because it has been tacitly construed as epitomizing the worst characteristics traditionally associated with Jews that Israel could be portrayed in so lurid a light, and its destruction—as a redress of a historical anomaly rather than the genocidal act it actually is.

Take the repeated calls by Iran's president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad for Israel to be "wiped off the map." On one level, it is refreshing to see a politician who, unlike many of his Western counterparts, does not consider high political office and plain speaking as mutually exclusive. On the other, the sight of a head of state openly advocating the extermination of an existing state, which has done his country, from which it is separated by nearly a thousand miles, no wrong whatsoever, cannot but be absolutely terrifying.

Or can it? No sooner had the Nazi extermination of European Jewry become public knowledge than the nascent Arab League proclaimed (on December 2, 1945) an official boycott of "Jewish products and manufactured goods." Two years later, on October 11, 1947, as the UN General Assembly deliberated the creation of a Jewish state in part of Mandatory Palestine, the league's secretary-general Abdel Rahman Azzam threatened that such a move would unleash "a war of

extermination and momentous massacre which will be spoken of like the Tartar massacre or the Crusader wars."<sup>[4]</sup>

Such rhetoric has been used by a long line of Arab and Muslim leaders. During the 1950s and 1960s, it was Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser who led the call for Israel's destruction. After this goal was frustrated by the Jewish state's astounding victory in the 1967 Six-Day War, the baton passed to a new generation of aspiring pan-Arab champions, notably Syrian president Hafez Assad, Iraqi tyrant Saddam Hussein, and Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi. For his part, Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini, Ahmadinejad's revered spiritual mentor, had emphasized the need to obliterate the Jewish state well before coming to power in 1979; and during his reign, the destruction of Israel evolved into a foremost tenet of the Islamic Republic and has long outlived his death in June 1989.

And let us not forget the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), whose publicly stated goal since its creation in 1964 has been the destruction of the state of Israel. In June 1974, it introduced a new phased strategy enabling it to use whatever land Israel surrendered as a springboard for further territorial gains until the "complete liberation of Palestine"—that is, Israel's destruction—"could be achieved."<sup>[5]</sup> Yet in November 1974, PLO chairman Yasser Arafat became the first non-head-of-state to address the UN General Assembly; and in 1975, the year Israel suffered the ultimate indignity of the Zionism-is-racism resolution, the PLO established another precedent when it was invited to sessions of the UN Security Council on the same basis as member states. In 1980, just weeks after Fatah, the PLO's dominant constituent group, had reiterated its objective of liquidating Israel, the European Community issued the Venice Declaration that called for the PLO's "association" with the political process.

Small wonder, therefore, that despite their official commitment to peace with Israel within the framework of the Oslo process, Arafat and his PLO successors have never abandoned their commitment to Israel's destruction. Instead they have embarked on an intricate game of Jekyll-and-Hyde politics, constantly reassuring Israeli and Western audiences of their peaceful intentions while at the same time denigrating the peace accords to their Palestinian constituents as a temporary measure to be abandoned at the first available opportunity. Neither this duplicity nor the war of terror launched by Arafat in September 2000 seems to have discredited the PLO as a peace partner in the eyes of the international community.<sup>[6]</sup>

Against this backdrop of six decades of international acquiescence in constant calls for Israel's destruction, Ahmadinejad must have felt that he had been singled out a bit unfairly when his genocidal incitement was roundly condemned by world leaders and organizations. Yet while this uncharacteristically harsh response is certainly welcome, one wonders whether it was motivated by real concern for Israel's safety or by the West's growing frustration with Iran's dogged drive toward nuclear weapons.

That this may well be the case is evidenced by the continued tolerance of more subtle forms of malignant incitement such as the Palestinian insistence on the "right of return"—the standard Arab euphemism for Israel's destruction through demographic subversion.<sup>[7]</sup> Worse, during the past decade or so, the actual elimination of the Jewish state has become a *cause célèbre* among many educated Westerners. The "one-state solution" (or a "bi-national state") as it is called is a euphemistic formula proposing the replacement of Israel by a state, theoretically comprising the

whole of historic Palestine, in which Jews will be reduced to the status of a permanent minority at the sufferance of the Arab-Muslim majority. Only this, it is said, can expiate the "original sin" of Israel's founding, an act built (in the words of one critic) "on the ruins of Arab Palestine" and achieved through the deliberate and aggressive dispossession of its native population.[8]

"I don't find the idea of a Jewish state terribly interesting," American Arab academic Edward Said told the Israeli daily *Haaretz* in August 2000. "I wouldn't want it for myself. Even if I were a Jew, I'd fight against it. And it won't last.... Take my word for it.... It won't even be remembered." Making his own vision of the future explicit, he added: "[T]he Jews are a minority everywhere. A Jewish minority can survive [in Arab Palestine] the way other minorities in the Arab world survived."

"Knowing the region and given the history of the conflict, do you think such a Jewish minority would be treated fairly?"

"I worry about that. The history of minorities in the Middle East has not been as bad as in Europe, but I wonder what would happen. It worries me a great deal. The question of what is going to be the fate of the Jews is very difficult for me. I really don't know. It worries me." [9]

Said at least took the trouble to feign concern for the fate of yet another six million Jews who were to be ethnically cleansed and their thriving state destroyed to make room for his envisaged "bi-national state"—though this did not lead him to reconsider this genocidal idea. New York University professor Tony Judt (himself a Jew) made no such effort. As far as he was concerned, there was "no place in the world today for a 'Jewish state,'" and the idea of Jewish statehood was "not just an anachronism but a dysfunctional one." "Today, non-Israeli Jews feel themselves once again exposed to criticism and vulnerable to attack for things they didn't do," he wrote in 2003. "The increased incidence of attacks on Jews in Europe and elsewhere is primarily attributable to misdirected efforts, often by young Muslims, to get back at Israel." [10]

Anti-Semites, of course, have never been short of excuses for assaulting and killing Jews, and infinitely larger numbers of Jews were exterminated shortly before the founding of the state of Israel than in the sixty-four years of its existence, not to mention the millions massacred in Europe and the Middle East since antiquity. Neither did European Jew haters await Israel's establishment to unleash on the remnants of the Holocaust. Anti-Semitic sentiments remained as pronounced as ever, especially in Eastern Europe, which witnessed a few vicious pogroms shortly after the end of World War II.[11] Even in Germany, Jews found themselves attacked and abused in public with sixty percent of Germans condoning overt acts of violence against Jews. Yet this bleak record did not prevent Judt, a student of European history, from falling for the canard that Israeli actions are the cause, rather than the pretext, for the worst wave of attacks on Jews and Jewish targets in Europe since the 1930s.

If it were not so appalling, one could even marvel in the irony that seventy years after being forced to wear yellow stars so they could be targeted for persecution, German Jews are being instructed to hide any signs of their Jewish identity for their protection!

## **Palestine Is Not the Problem**

But let us assume for the sake of argument that Israel and the PLO-dominated Palestinian Authority (PA) were to sign a formal peace treaty. Would this stop the effort to delegitimize the Jewish state campaign or eliminate anti-Semitism from the European scene? Hardly—for the simple reason that the Palestinian question has next to nothing to do with either of these. Though anti-Zionism has been the core principle of pan-Arab solidarity since the 1930s—it is easier, after all, to unite people through a common hatred than through a shared loyalty—the Arab states (and the Palestinians' international champions) have shown far less concern for the well-being of the Palestinians than for their own interests.

For example, it was common knowledge that the May 1948 pan-Arab invasion of the nascent state of Israel was more a scramble for Palestinian territory than a fight for Palestinian national rights. As the Arab league's secretary-general Azzam once admitted to a British reporter, the goal of King Abdullah of Transjordan "was to swallow up the central hill regions of Palestine, with access to the Mediterranean at Gaza. The Egyptians would get the Negev. Galilee would go to Syria, except that the coastal part as far as Acre would be added to Lebanon."[12]

From 1948 to 1967, when Egypt and Jordan ruled the Palestinians of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, the Arab states failed to put these populations on the road to statehood. They also showed little interest in protecting their human rights or even in improving their quality of life—which is part of the reason why 120,000 West Bank Palestinians moved to the East Bank of the Jordan River and about 300,000 others emigrated abroad. "We couldn't care less if all of the refugees die," an Egyptian diplomat once remarked. "There are enough Arabs around."[13]

Not surprisingly, the Arab states have never hesitated to sacrifice Palestinians on a grand scale whenever it suited their needs. In 1970, when his throne came under threat from the PLO, the affable and thoroughly Westernized King Hussein of Jordan had no qualms about slaughtering thousands of Palestinians, an event known as "Black September." Six years later, Lebanese Christian militias, backed by the Syrian army, massacred some 3,500 Palestinians, mostly civilians, in the Beirut refugee camp of Tel Zaatar. These militias again slaughtered hundreds of Palestinians in 1982 in the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila, this time under Israel's watchful eye. In the summer of 2007, the Lebanese army killed hundreds of Palestinians, including many civilians, in the northern refugee camp of Nahr al-Bared. None of the Arab states came to the Palestinians' rescue. Worse, in the mid-1980s, when the PLO—officially designated by the Arab League as the "sole representative of the Palestinian people"—tried to reestablish its military presence in Lebanon, it was unceremoniously expelled by President Assad of Syria.

This history of Arab leaders manipulating the Palestinian cause for their own ends while ignoring the fate of the Palestinians goes on and on. Saddam Hussein, in an effort to ennoble his predatory designs, claimed that he would not consider ending his August 1990 invasion of Kuwait without "the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Arab territories in Palestine." Shortly after the 1991 Persian Gulf war, Kuwaitis set about punishing the PLO for its support of Hussein—cutting off financial sponsorship, expelling some 440,000 Palestinian workers, and slaughtering thousands. Their retribution was so severe that Arafat was forced to acknowledge that "what Kuwait did to the Palestinian people is worse than what has been done by Israel to Palestinians in the occupied territories."[14]

If the Arab states have shown little empathy for the plight of ordinary Palestinians, the Islamic connection to the Palestinian problem is even more tenuous. It is not out of concern for a Palestinian right to national self-determination but as part of a holy war to prevent the loss of a part of the "House of Islam" that Islamists inveigh against the Jewish state of Israel. In the words of Hamas's covenant: "The land of Palestine has been an Islamic trust (*waqf*) throughout the generations and until the day of resurrection.... When our enemies usurp some Islamic lands, jihad becomes a duty binding on all Muslims."<sup>[15]</sup>

In this respect, there is no difference between Palestine and other parts of the world conquered by the forces of Islam throughout history. To this very day, for example, Arabs and many Muslims unabashedly pine for the restoration of Spain and look upon their expulsion from that country in 1492 as a grave historical injustice. Indeed, even countries that have never been under Islamic imperial rule have become legitimate targets of radical Islamic fervor. This goal need not necessarily be pursued by the sword; it can be achieved through demographic growth and steady conversion to Islam. But should peaceful means prove insufficient, physical force can readily be brought to bear. As illustrated by the overwhelming support for the 9/11 attacks throughout the Arab and Islamic worlds, this vision is by no means confined to a disillusioned and obscurantist fringe of Islam; and within this grand scheme, the struggle between Israel and the Palestinians is but a single element and one whose supposed centrality looms far greater in Western than in Islamic eyes.

### **The Public War against the Jews**

If there is so little genuine concern for Palestinian wellbeing, why have they been universally cast in the role of the ultimate victim to the total neglect of far worse human tragedies and atrocities? Because they have served as the latest lightning rod against the Jews, their supposed victimization reaffirming the latter's millenarian demonization. Had the Palestinians' dispute been with an Arab, Muslim, or any other adversary, it would have attracted a fraction of the interest that it presently does.

Few if any in the international community pay any attention to the ongoing abuse of Palestinians across the Arab world from Saudi Arabia to Lebanon, which deprives its 400,000-strong Palestinian population of the most basic human rights from property ownership, to employment in numerous professions, to free movement. Nor has there been any international outcry when Arab countries have killed Palestinians on a grand scale. The fact that King Hussein of Jordan killed more Palestinians in the course of a single month than Israel managed to do in decades was never held against him or dented the widely-held perception of him as a man of peace. As the supposedly pro-Palestinian journalist Robert Fisk put it in his memoirs, King Hussein was "often difficult to fault."<sup>[16]</sup> Kuwait's 1991 slaughter of thousands of innocent Palestinian workers passed virtually unnoticed by the international media. By contrast, any Palestinian or Arab casualty inflicted by Israel comes under immediate international criticism.

Take the blanket media coverage of Israel's military response in Lebanon (2006) and Gaza (2008-09), but not of the original Hezbollah and Hamas attacks triggering it, in stark contrast to the utter indifference to bloodier conflicts going on around the world at the same time. On July 19, 2006, for example, 5,000 Ethiopian troops invaded Somalia in what Addis Ababa claimed was an action to "crush" an Islamist threat to its neighbor's government. A month later, Sri

Lankan artillery pounded territory held by the rebel Tamil Tigers resulting in mass displacement and over 500 deaths, including an estimated fifty dead children following the Sri Lankan air force's bombing of an orphanage. But neither of these events gained any media coverage, let alone emergency sessions of the UN Security Council, just as the ongoing bloodbath in Iraq at the time, with its estimated 3,000 deaths a month by Hezbollah-like militants, sank into oblivion while the world focused on Lebanon.

And what about the-then long-running genocide in Darfur, with its estimated 300,000 dead and at least 2.5 million refugees? Or the war in the Congo, with over 4 million dead or driven from their homes, or in Chechnya where an estimated 150,000-160,000 have died and up to a third of the population has been displaced at the hands of the Russian military? None of these tragedies saw protesters flock onto the streets of Moscow, Montreal, Sydney, London, Dublin, Copenhagen, Berlin, Bern, Paris, Stockholm, and the US cities of New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, and Boston (to give a brief list) as was the case during the Lebanon and Gaza crises.

How can this be? Why do citizens in democracies enthusiastically embrace two of the world's most dangerous and effective Islamist terror organizations, overtly committed not only to the destruction of a sovereign democracy but also to the subordination of Western values and ways of life to a worldwide Islamic caliphate (or umma)?

Nor should we forget that Hezbollah has been implicated in dozens of international terror attacks from Brussels to Buenos Aires. Indeed, the response to its July 18, 1994 terror attack on the Israeli-Argentine Mutual Association (AMIA), a social center catering to Buenos Aires' large Jewish population, provides an illuminating contrast to the relentless coverage of the 2006 events in Lebanon. It was the worst terror attack in Argentina's history, killing 100 people and wounding more than 200. More died in this bombing than in any single action in the 2006 Lebanese war. Yet the BBC, which prides itself on its worldwide coverage, did not find the atrocity worth mentioning in its evening news bulletin. When confronted with a complaint by the normally timid Board of Deputies, British Jewry's umbrella organization, the corporation offered an apology of sorts, blaming the omission on a particularly busy day.

What were those daily events that could have possibly diverted the BBC's attention from the Argentina massacre? A perusal of the papers reveals the British premiership of Steven Spielberg's new film, *The Flintstones*, attended by the Prince of Wales. This was also the day when Gavin Sheerard-Smith, caned and imprisoned for six months in Qatar after being convicted of buying and selling alcohol, returned to Britain professing his innocence, and when David MacGregor, an agoraphobia sufferer jailed for a fortnight for failing to pay poll tax arrears, had his sentenced quashed. In the first Commons debate on the economy since Christmas, Chancellor of the Exchequer Kenneth Clarke claimed that the government had created the most favorable economic circumstances for a generation while an all-party report said that Britain would have to divert over £160 million of its aid budget from the poorest nations in Africa to Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union as part of a deal signed by Prime Minister John Major at the latest EU summit. An eventful day, indeed.

Given the BBC's indifference to the mass murder of Argentinean Jews by Hezbollah, it is hardly surprising that the corporation, along with much of the world's media, ignored the almost daily

rocket attacks by the same group on Israel's northern border, never mind the constant attacks from Gaza, following the Israeli withdrawal from both territories in 2000 and 2005 respectively.

And why shouldn't they? The killing of Jews and the destruction or seizure of their worldly properties is hardly news. For millennia, Jewish blood has been cheap, if not costless, throughout the Christian and Muslim worlds where the Jew became the epitome of powerlessness, a perpetual punch bag, and a scapegoat for whatever ills befell society. There is no reason, therefore, why Israel should not follow in the footsteps of these past generations, avoid antagonizing its Arab neighbors, and exercise restraint whenever attacked. But no, instead of knowing its place, the insolent Jewish state has forfeited this historic role by exacting a price for Jewish blood and beating the bullies who have hitherto been able to torment the Jews with impunity. This dramatic reversal of history cannot but be immoral and unacceptable. Hence the global community outrage and hence the world's media provision of unlimited resources to cover every minute of Israel's "disproportionate" response, but none of the devastation and dislocation caused to Israeli cities and their residents, hundreds of thousands of whom became refugees.

### **UN-ited in Hate**

Even the United Nations seemed to be backtracking from its November 1947 decision to establish a Jewish state as it increasingly came under the sway of the Arab and Muslim states, together with their Soviet and Third World allies. This process reached its peak in the notorious 1975 General Assembly resolution equating the idea of Jewish statehood with "racism and racist discrimination"; and while the resolution was rescinded sixteen years later, the UN has remained a foremost purveyor of anti-Israel and anti-Semitic incitement.

Time and again, year after year, its Commission on Human Rights discussed Israel's supposed human rights abuses while turning a blind eye to scores of actual atrocities around the world. Of the ten emergency sessions in the General Assembly's history, six focused on Israel while that body's annual meetings regularly feature numerous anti-Israel resolutions. The 59th Session (2004-05), for example, enacted nineteen anti-Israel resolutions, but not a single one on Sudan's ongoing genocide in Darfur where hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians perished. In a UN-sponsored "International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People," held on November 29, 2005—the fifty-seventh anniversary of the Partition Resolution—Secretary-General Kofi Annan, flanked by UN senior officials, sat on the podium beside an Arabic-language "Map of Palestine" that showed a Palestine replacing Israel.<sup>[17]</sup>

The world organization has 192 member nations, but the Security Council of that august body has devoted about a third of its activity and criticism to only one of those states—Israel. Similarly, about a third of all the resolutions adopted by the UN Commission on Human Rights have criticized Israel, which is the only country regularly dealt with at meetings as a separate and exclusive agenda item. In 2001 alone, the commission issued six condemnations of Israel, only to surpass this figure the following year when it passed eight anti-Israel condemnations. In contrast, no other state has ever received more than one condemnation in the same year from this body, and over three-quarters of UN members have never had a resolution passed condemning them, including such paragons of human rights as Saudi Arabia, China, Zimbabwe, and Syria, who under President Hafez Assad, lest we forget, razed the city of Hama in February 1982, killing between 20,000 and 30,000 civilians in the course of one hellish week.

The UN rarely calls for emergency special sessions and did not see any reason to hold such a meeting to discuss genocide in Rwanda, ethnic cleansing in Yugoslavia, genocide in Darfur or the horrific massacres in East Timor. But in 2003 alone, it felt the need to call an unprecedented three emergency sessions—two to condemn Israel's security barrier and one to criticize Israel for considering (considering, not even carrying out!!) the expulsion of Arafat. And yet Israel's use of military force combined over the sixty-four years of its existence has caused far fewer casualties and damage than each of these horrific events, not to mention those in Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Bangladesh, Bosnia, Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, Chechnya, Colombia, Congo, El Salvador, Eritrea, and Ethiopia (and that is only the first five letters of the alphabet; if we go to countries beginning with 'I' there is India; Indonesia; Iran; Iraq).

Nowhere has this hypocrisy been more starkly demonstrated than in the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in September 2001 in the South African town of Durban. For eight full days, delegates from numerous countries and thousands of NGOs indulged in a xenophobic orgy of anti-Israel and anti-Semitic incitement that made mockery of the conference's original purpose. Posters equating Zionism with Nazism were widely distributed while tens of thousands of hate-spouting demonstrators marched in the streets carrying banners proclaiming *inter alia* that "Hitler should have finished the job." Representatives of Jewish groups were subjected to taunts, physical intimidation, and organized jeering while the hate literature distributed during the conference included *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a virulent anti-Semitic tract fabricated by the Russian secret police at the turn of the 20th century and alleging an organized Jewish conspiracy to achieve world domination, as well as caricatures of Jews with hooked noses, Palestinian blood on their hands, surrounded by money, and Israelis wearing Nazi emblems. Pamphlets reading "Nazi-Israeli apartheid" were distributed daily at conference halls alongside flyers that asked (approvingly) "what if Hitler had won?" while representatives of such repressive states as Syria and Iran objected to the inclusion of anti-Semitism or the Holocaust on the grounds that anti-Semitism was a "complicated," "curious," and "bizarre" concept, and reference to the Holocaust would be imbalanced or "favoritism." Little wonder that resolutions charging Israel with "genocide and ethnic cleansing" and effectively calling for its dismantling were voted upon by regional caucuses and adopted by the NGOs' forum at the conference.

In protest at this breathtaking bigotry, the American and Israeli delegations walked out of the conference, together with representatives of the eleven Jewish NGOs, whose proposed resolution against anti-Semitism was not included in the final document. "This forum is now Judenrein," declared a prominent Jewish delegate, while US secretary of state Colin Powell denounced the "hateful language, some of which is a throwback to the days of 'Zionism equals racism;' or supports the idea that we have made too much of the Holocaust; or suggests that apartheid exists in Israel; or that singles out only one country in the world—Israel—for censure and abuse."[18]

### **The Auschwitz Complex: Zionism, the New Nazism**

If this double standard and dehumanization is not bad enough (how else can one describe the denial of a country's basic right to self-defense?), there is also the fact that this is the only case where one party to a territorial dispute—Israelis and their supporters across the world—is collectively stigmatized for government actions and targeted for political, economic, and academic boycotts as well as defamed as the heirs to the Nazis in the modern world.

The British government, and especially Prime Minister Tony Blair, has been widely criticized for sending troops to Afghanistan and Iraq, but nobody has held the British people collectively responsible for this decision or looked to boycott them for the fact that, on two occasions since 2001, their government sent troops into countries that had not directly attacked them and had posed no immediate threat to British security. In the years since Serbia and the Serb minority in Bosnia initiated the war in the Balkans and embarked on a program of ethnic cleansing against Bosnian Muslims, neither Serbian citizens, nor Christian orthodox communities from Russia to Greece who supported this aggression, were held collectively responsible for the war. The world community is in no doubt that the blame rested squarely on Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic and the military and political leaders of the Bosnian Serbs.

Israeli policies and actions in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and more recently in Lebanon, have never remotely resembled those adopted by the Serbs during the 1990s. Yet not only are Israeli politicians and officers condemned unreasonably for their actions and threatened with arrest in several European countries, but Israeli citizens, and Jews around the world, are also singled out for collective excoriation: from polls in Germany in which 51% of respondents expressed the view that Israel's current treatment of Palestinians is similar to that meted out to the Jews by the Nazis, to posters in Paris reading "Hitler has a son—Sharon"; from information signs, paid for by local government, in the Spanish town of Oleiros, flashing "Stop the neo-Nazis," to banners in a Dublin march demanding an end to the Palestinian holocaust and equating the Star of David with the Nazi swastika. Wherever one looks, we are bombarded with images of Israeli "storm troopers" pursuing "SS tactics" and engaged in "Blitzkrieg" operations.

Of course, there is absolutely no moral equivalence between Hitler's industrial slaughter of the Jews and Israel's treatment of the Palestinians. If you doubt this, ask yourself the following questions: Would it have been possible for Jewish schools in German-occupied Holland, Poland, Hungary, and numerous other countries to indoctrinate their students with the most outlandish anti-German propaganda and incitement? Would these same school children fresh from their brainwashing classes have been free to enroll, in the glare of the world's media, in summer camps dedicated to training a new generation of anti-German guerillas? Would their religious and secular leaders have been able to go on their own TV channels and call their occupiers the "sons of monkeys" with impunity? Of course not: The Jews under Nazi rule were too busy trying (in most cases unsuccessfully) to escape being bundled on trains and shipped to the gas chambers. To put it bluntly, while six million Jews, three quarters of European Jewry, died at the hands of the Nazis in the six years that Hitler dominated Europe, the Palestinian population under Israel's control of Gaza and the West Bank—from 1967 to the mid-1990s when these territories were transferred to Arafat's PA—has doubled, as life expectancy has risen from 48 to 73. Hardly a Nazi-like extermination program.

Indeed, the equation of Zionism with Nazism among Westerners seems to be far less related to the actual state of Israeli-Palestinian relations than to the desire to upload the burden of Christianity's millenarian persecution of the Jews in general and the Holocaust in particular. This is evidenced by the fact that this despicable analogy emerged not in response to the 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, or even to Israel's establishment in 1948, but at the height of the Nazi extermination of the Jews in World War II, gathering momentum in the years immediately attending the war. Thus we have a senior official at the British embassy in Baghdad shamelessly claiming (in 1943) that there is a "powerful Jewish organization in Palestine that is

run on Fascist lines and Nazi principles" and that "Jewish refugees from the Nazi's Fascist tyranny in Europe have introduced into Palestine a good few of the methods employed to regiment the German masses by Himmler's hoodlums." In 1945, Sir Edward Grigg (Lord Altrincham), British minister resident in the Middle East, warned a Cairo press conference of the "establishment of a kind of Nazi gangsterism in the Holy Land." While Sir Edward Spears, who had been British ambassador in Syria and Lebanon during the war, expanded on Grigg's view: "Political Zionism as it is manifested in Palestine today preaches very much the same doctrines as Hitler." Even Prime Minister Clement Attlee was not immune to the Zionism equals Nazism equation. "That was just Hitler's method," he responded on April 28, 1948, to an American request to allow Holocaust survivors to enter Palestine. "He put people in as tourists, but they were soon armed once they got in. The Jews would put them in as immigrants, but they would soon become soldiers, and it was known that they were already being drilled and trained."[19]

The truth of the matter is that if there is indeed something reminiscent of Nazism in the contemporary Middle East—in terms of style and political intent (albeit not the ability to implement them)—it is the Arab world's vile anti-Semitic propaganda and the persistent commitment of many of its parts to Israel's destruction. Even Egypt, at peace with Israel for over thirty years, may be, today, the world's most prolific producer of anti-Semitic ideas and attitudes. These are voiced openly by the extreme Islamist press, by the establishment media, and even by supporters of peace with Israel. In numberless articles, scholarly writings, books, cartoons, and public statements, Jews are painted in the blackest terms imaginable.

This state of affairs is hardly surprising given the Arab world's real time veneration for Hitler and Nazism. Hassan al-Banna, one time watch repairer and teacher who in 1927 founded the militant Islamist group the Muslim Brothers, was not only an unabashed admirer of the German tyrant but also organized the society's "shock battalions," responsible for most of its terrorist attacks during the 1940s, along the lines of the notorious Nazi SS.[20] So did Ahmad Hussein, spiritual father of the Young Egypt Society, a nationalist-fascist organization that mimicked its German and Italian counterparts, in which future president Nasser was schooled in the early 1930s. Nasser's fellow officer and successor to the presidency, Anwar Sadat, was an equally staunch Nazi sympathizer who was imprisoned in World War II, together with scores of fellow officers, for an attempted collaboration with the Nazi forces in North Africa.

Such sentiments were echoed in Iraq where pro-Nazi officers seized power in the spring of 1941 only to be deposed by the British army. In Palestine, then under British rule, a Nazi official reported to Berlin as early as 1937 that "the Palestinian Arabs show on all levels a great sympathy for the new Germany and its Fuhrer, a sympathy whose value is particularly high as it is based on a purely ideological foundation." He added: "Most important for the sympathies which Arabs now feel towards Germany is their admiration for our Fuhrer." Years after the war, Hajj Amin Husseini, former mufti of Jerusalem and leader of the Palestinian Arabs from the early 1920s to late 1940s, who spent the war years in Berlin helping the Nazi propaganda as well as its war and killing machines, boasted of his close friendship with Heinrich Himmler, Hitler's murderous henchman, and evoked Hitler's admiration for the Palestinians as proof of their true patriotism.[21]

## The Apartheid Canard

Another malignant anti-Israel slander that has become a commonplace over the past few decades compares the Jewish state to apartheid South Africa. Invented by the PLO in the early 1960s,<sup>[22]</sup> this canard quickly struck roots not only among Arabs and their Third World allies but also among many educated Westerners, such as Nobel Prize laureates Desmond Tutu,<sup>[23]</sup> Jimmy Carter,<sup>[24]</sup> and Mairead Corrigan-Maguire.<sup>[25]</sup> And the message could not be clearer: Just as the South African regime was emasculated, so its Zionist counterpart has to be destroyed.

As with the Nazi slander, the apartheid charge is not only false but the complete inverse of the truth. Whether in its South African form or elsewhere, such as the US south until the late 1960s, apartheid was a comprehensive and discriminatory system of racial segregation, on the basis of ethnicity, comprising all walks of life—from schooling, to public transportation, to social activities and services, to medical care. None of this has ever been applied to Israel. Not only have its religious and ethnic minorities been free and equal citizens of the Jewish state, but from the beginning of the Zionist enterprise in the early twentieth century, well before the establishment of Israel, Arabs had been leaving their places of residence en masse and flocking to Jewish towns and cities in search of a better life. In the words of a 1937 report by a British commission of enquiry headed by Lord Peel:

The general beneficent effect of Jewish immigration on Arab welfare is illustrated by the fact that the increase in the Arab population is most marked in urban areas affected by Jewish development. A comparison of the Census returns in 1922 and 1931 shows that, six years ago, the increase percent in Haifa was 86, in Jaffa 62, in Jerusalem 37, while in purely Arab towns such as Nablus and Hebron it was only 7, and at Gaza there was a decrease of 2 percent.<sup>[26]</sup>

Indeed, from the very beginning, the Zionist movement had always assumed that there would be a substantial Arab minority in the future Jewish state, and the general conviction was that they would participate on an equal footing "throughout all sectors of the country's public life," in the words of Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the founding father of the branch of Zionism that was the forebear of today's Likud party.<sup>[27]</sup>

In 1934, Jabotinsky presided over the drafting of a constitution for Jewish Palestine. According to its provisions, Arabs and Jews were to share both the prerogatives and the duties of statehood, notably including military and civil service; Hebrew and Arabic were to enjoy the same legal standing; and "in every cabinet where the prime minister is a Jew, the vice-premiership shall be offered to an Arab and vice versa."<sup>[28]</sup> Echoing this vision, David Ben-Gurion told the leadership of his own (Mapai) party in 1947 that the non-Jews in the Jewish state "will be equal citizens; equal in everything without any exception; that is, the state will be their state as well."<sup>[29]</sup>

Committees laying the groundwork for the nascent state discussed in detail the establishment of an Arabic-language press, the improvement of health, the incorporation of Arab officials into the government, the integration of Arabs within the police and the ministry of education, and Arab-Jewish cultural and intellectual interaction. Even military plans for rebuffing an anticipated pan-Arab invasion in the late 1940s were predicated, in the explicit instructions of the commander-in-chief of the Hagana, on the "acknowledgement of the full rights, needs, and freedom of the Arabs

in the Hebrew state without any discrimination, and a desire for coexistence on the basis of mutual freedom and dignity."[30]

The same principle was enshrined in Israel's Declaration of Independence, issued on May 14, 1948. The new state undertook to "uphold absolute social and political equality of rights for all its citizens, without distinction of religion, race, or sex." In particular, Arab citizens were urged "to take part in the building of the state on the basis of full and equal citizenship and on the basis of appropriate representation in all its institutions, provisional and permanent." While the declaration lacked constitutional status, its principles were taken as guidelines for governmental behavior; over the years, they would gain legal authority through supreme-court decisions and acts of the Knesset (parliament).

As a result, Israeli Arabs have enjoyed full equality before the law and have been endowed with the full spectrum of democratic rights—including the right to vote for and serve in all state institutions. (From the first, Arabs have been members of the Knesset.) From the designation of Arabic as an official language, to the recognition of non-Jewish religious holidays as legal resting days for their respective communities, to the granting of educational, cultural, judicial, and religious autonomy, Arabs in Israel may well enjoy more formal prerogatives than ethnic minorities anywhere in the democratic world.

Over the years, the Israeli Arabs have made astounding social and economic progress. Far from lagging behind, their rate of development has often *surpassed* that of the Jewish sector with the result that the gap between the two communities has steadily narrowed. Mortality rates, for example, have fallen by nearly two-thirds over the last decades while life expectancy of Israeli Arab males has risen from age seventy (in 1970) to 76.3 today. Not only does the latter figure compare favorably with the Middle East's average of sixty-eight, but the average Israeli Arab male can expect to live substantially longer than many of his white European counterparts.[31]

No less remarkable have been the advances in education. Since Israel's founding, while the Arab population has grown eightfold, the number of Arab schoolchildren has multiplied by a factor of 35. If, in 1960, the average Israeli Arab spent one year in school, today the figure is over eleven years; over the same period, adult illiteracy rates have dropped from 52 to 6.2% (3.5% among women younger than forty-five). This not only places Israeli Arabs miles ahead of their brothers in the Arab world—in Morocco illiteracy is at 69%, in Egypt at 61%, in Syria at 44%—but reflects a pace of improvement nearly double that of the Jewish sector.

Still more dramatic has been the story in higher education where the numbers of Arab graduates multiplied fifteen times between 1961 and 2001. Thirty years ago, a mere 4% of Arab teachers held academic degrees; by 2000, the figure had vaulted to 47%.

Standard of living? In the late 1940s, following the flight of its more affluent classes and the breakdown of economic relations with neighboring Arab states, the Arab minority in Israel was left largely impoverished. As they became increasingly incorporated into local economic life, Arabs experienced a steep rise in earnings and a visible improvement in their material circumstances. By 2002, 86% of Arab households—more Arab households than Jewish ones—occupied dwellings of three or more rooms. Contrary to the standard image of cramped neighborhoods and acute land shortages, population density in Arab localities is substantially *lower* on average than in equivalent Jewish locales.

As for income statistics, it is undeniable that, on average, Israeli Arabs still earn less than Jews. But to what is this attributable? For one thing, the average Muslim in Israel is ten years younger than his Jewish counterpart; all over the world, younger people earn less. Then, too, fewer Arab women enter the labor market than do Jewish women. The salience of these and other factors—family size, level of schooling, cultural tradition, and so forth—may be judged by looking at segments of Israeli Jewish society like the ultra-Orthodox or residents of development towns (localities established during the 1950s and 1960s to absorb the fresh waves of Jewish immigration, especially from Arab countries), whose income levels more closely resemble those in the Arab sector. In 1997, for instance, when the average monthly salary in Arab Nazareth was 4,450 shekels, the equivalent figure for mostly Jewish Upper Nazareth was 4,780 shekels. During the late 1990s, the unemployment rate in Israel's Arab sector was consistently lower than in Jewish development towns.

Government allocations to Arab municipalities have grown steadily over the past forty years and are now on a par with, if not higher than, subsidies to the Jewish sector. By the mid-1990s, Arab municipalities were receiving about a quarter of all such allocations, well above the "share" of Arabs in Israel's overall population. In numerous cases, contributions to Arab municipal budgets substantially exceed contributions to equivalently situated Jewish locales: in 1996, for instance, relative disbursements to the Arab town of Tamra were three times higher than to the Jewish town of Yahud; nearly three times higher to (Arab) Abu Snan than to (Jewish) Even Yehuda; twice as high to (Arab) Iksal as to (Jewish) Azur.

The city of Haifa, to give a prominent example, was a model of Arab-Jewish coexistence with the two communities living side by side in peace and harmony. And while this idyllic coexistence was cruelly shattered by the 1948 war, when most of the city's Arab residents were driven to exile by their national leadership despite pleas by their Jewish neighbors not to do so, those who stayed behind were incorporated into the fabric of the nascent Jewish state as equal citizens.

With the subsequent growth of their numbers, owing to a higher natural increase and migration from rural and peripheral areas, the Haifa Arabs have regained their focal role, and the pre-1948 coexistence has been restored. Jews and Arabs live together, study together, belong to the same clubs, ride the same buses, shop in the same malls, and eat in the same restaurants. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that when on October 4, 2003, Hanadi Jaradat, a 29-year-old lawyer from Jenin, blew herself up in a bustling Haifa restaurant on a peaceful Saturday afternoon, murdering twenty-one people and wounding another sixty, the establishment chosen for the heinous crime was of joint Arab-Jewish ownership, and the victims—both Jews and Arabs.

Indeed, the occasional suggestions to redraw Israel's borders, in the framework of a comprehensive peace settlement, so as to allow predominantly Arab frontier areas to be included in the prospective Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, have invariably been rejected by the Israeli Arabs, who would rather remain citizens of the Jewish state than join their bothers in a newly created state. Even the residents of the territories, for all their criticism and grievances, have consistently ranked Israel among the most admired democracies in the world, in stark contrast to their scathing opinion of Arab regimes, including their own Palestinian Authority. As late as 2011, most of surveyed Palestinians in east Jerusalem, who are entitled to Israeli social

benefits and are free to travel across Israel's pre-1967 borders, said that they would rather become citizens of the Jewish state than citizens of a new Palestinian one.[32]

So much for Israel's supposed apartheid.

### **The Blame Game: From Blood Libels to 9/11**

And what about the constant outpouring of the most outlandish conspiracy theories and blood libels to which Israel, and Israel alone, has been subjected from the first days of its existence? Again, this phenomenon is not confined to the Arab and Muslim worlds where medieval myths of Jews as secret destroyers and poisoners of wells are in wide circulation (as late as October 2000, the largest Egyptian government daily, *al-Ahram*, which is probably the world's foremost Arabic-language newspaper, published an almost full-page article titled "Jewish Matzah Is Made of Arab Blood"), and where Jews are accused of every conceivable vice from the spread of aids, mad cow disease, and bird flu, to the murder of Palestinian children to take their internal organs, to the 9/11 attacks. It has been echoed by the tendency of Western political and intellectual elites to demonize Israel by endorsing the basest anti-Semitic conspiracy theories regarding Jewish and Israeli clannish domination of world affairs.

Of course, Jews have traditionally been accused of lacking true patriotism to their countries of citizenship, and instead seeking to embroil their non-Jewish compatriots in endless conflicts and wars on behalf of such cosmopolitan movements and ideals as "world imperialism," "international bolshevism," or "world Zionism." *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* made this claim. So did Adolf Hitler, an avid admirer of the anti-Semitic tract, who used his Nazi propaganda machine to misrepresent the horrendous violence he unleashed as a "Jewish war." As the United States eventually joined World War II following the Pearl Harbor attack, more than two years after the outbreak of hostilities, the Nazis and their Arab lackeys portrayed this move as proof of the supposed Jewish influence over the Roosevelt administration.[33]

This travesty struck a responsive chord over the ocean. Prior to World War II, it was a staple of the US officer corps that Jewish attempts to counter the virulent Nazi anti-Semitism disrupted US-German relations and might ultimately drive the country to war contrary to its real interests. The fact that these desperate pleas had no effect whatever on the administration, or that US-Nazi relations were doomed from the start given Hitler's maniacal desire for world mastery, did not seem to have bothered these detractors. As late as April 1948, General Albert C. Wedemeyer, plans and operations chief and a rabid anti-Semite who saw international Jewish conspirators around every corner, blamed the Zionist movement and Roosevelt's Jewish advisors for getting the United States into World War II.[34]

More than sixty years later, the obsession with the supposed influence of "world Jewry" is alive and kicking. Only now it is the 2003 Iraq war, rather than World War II, which was allegedly triggered by Jewish and Israeli machinations, and it is George W. Bush, rather than F.D.R., who is criticized for allowing himself to be conned by a Jewish cabal. (In fact, Israel had never viewed Saddam Hussein as an existential threat and was skeptical of the impending war against Iraq for fear that it would diminish the US ability to contain Iran's dogged quest for nuclear weapons—as indeed happened.)

According to Ahmad Thomson, a Muslim advisor to Tony Blair, the former British prime minister was the latest in a long line of politicians to have fallen under the spell of a "sinister" group of Jews and Freemasons, which saw the attack on Iraq as a means to control the Middle East.[35] This claim (albeit without the Freemasons) was reiterated *inter alia* in a "working paper" by Harvard professor Stephen Walt and his University of Chicago colleague John Mearsheimer, published in March 2006 under the auspices of Harvard University's prestigious Kennedy School of Government, which not only presented the Iraq war as the brainchild of a devious Jewish cabal but bemoaned the supposed hijacking of US foreign policy over the past several decades by the "Israel lobby," which has manipulated the largest power on earth "to set aside its own security in order to advance the interests of another state." [36]

Lobbying is, of course, the bread and butter of American social and political life, and "ethnic" or "national" lobbies, among many others, have exerted great influence on US foreign policy on numerous occasions. During WWII, to give a prominent example, the Irish lobby cowered F.D.R. into tolerating the denial of Ireland's ports to the allied anti-Nazi war effort—at an enormous human and material cost.[37] Likewise, for decades the China lobby helped prevent the recognition of and normalized relations with communist China, something that could have probably spared the United States the Korea and Vietnam wars among other detrimental developments. Yet none of these lobbies, not to mention the ruthless manipulation of US foreign policy by the Arab oil lobby, have attracted a fraction of the criticism vented on the "Jewish lobby." "Why it is supposed that principle requires that Jews, and Jews alone, refrain from consulting their ethnic loyalties, I don't know," wrote the eminent American Jewish intellectual Irving Howe, "but it is surely outrageous to suggest that the possession of such loyalties, which does not in itself distinguish Jews from anyone else, is a ground for dismissing the arguments made by democratic radicals and intellectuals in behalf of supporting Israel." [38]

### **No Business like the Bash Israel Business**

Given all this, it is hardly surprising that those who make a career of bashing Israel, in the media, academia, and politics, become major stars with access to the most valuable real estate in the press and with more invitations to travel the world disparaging Israel than they can take up.

Take the hullabaloo attending the Walt-Mearsheimer paper on the supposed stranglehold of the "Israel lobby" over US foreign policy. While the two have gone out of their way to cast themselves as courageous intellectuals who have taken great personal risk by "speaking truth to power" (Walt even bemoaned to a radical Muslim audience that standing up to Israel entailed adverse financial implications), the truth is that their paper catapulted them overnight from obscurity into the public limelight, netting them a reported \$750,000 advance by a prominent New York publisher to expand their ill-conceived and poorly researched paper to a book and landing Walt a personal blog in the widely read *Foreign Policy* internet magazine. Following in their footsteps a decade later, former *New Republic* editor Peter Beinert sought to have his fifteen minutes of fame with a similarly malignant book.[39]

Yet nobody has personified this phenomenon more than the late Edward Said, university professor of English and comparative literature at Columbia University, who died in September 2003. For decades, Said was venerated for his bravery in his role as the most articulate and visible proponent of the Palestinian cause. Despite Said's constant protestations that "Palestine...

is unfashionable and it brings no rewards," the truth is that it was his status as an activist and polemicist on the Palestine issue rather than his scholarly work, or academic career, that gained him international celebrity as well as plaudits, honors, and fame beyond the wildest dreams of most English professors.

Said was smart to embrace the Palestinian cause in the late 1960s, at a time of growing Western sympathy for Third World causes and anti-colonial ideology, which in turn enhanced the belief that Zionism was an anachronistic, even illegitimate ideology, while the Palestinian struggle was one of liberation. Over the next three decades, nobody was more adept than Said at pronouncing the freedom fighter slogans and anti-colonial language that made generations of Westerners weak at the knees, and no one was more adept than Said at presenting Israel as nothing but the artificial colonial creation of Western imperialists. Not surprisingly, his views on Palestine quickly endeared him to the world's media. In 1971, Said wrote his first piece for *Le Monde Diplomatique*. In 1973, he made his debut in *The New York Times*. Both articles were on the Arab-Israeli conflict. By 1977, he was a member of the Palestine National Council, and by 1979, he had published *The Question of Palestine* and was being invited to Paris by *Les Temps modernes* to attend a seminar on peace in the Middle East with Jean Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir in the apartment of Michael Foucault. The young English professor, who had labored in obscurity prior to embracing the Palestinian cause, had come a long way. Said may have been a competent literary critic, his early studies of Jane Austen and Joseph Conrad may have been valid contributions to the scholarly field, but from this point on, this work had little to do with his reputation or standing. Palestine became, as one admirer puts it, "an almost overwhelming repetitive theme in Said's work," and it was now near on impossible to draw a line between his polemics on the Palestine question and the rest of his writing.[40]

Likewise, the British journalist Robert Fisk has been venerated by legions of fans for drawing the world's attention in his reporting to Israel's supposed injustices and crimes against the Palestinians. Like Said, one of Fisk's major complaints about the Western media is the way it oversimplifies the situation and plays on the prejudices of its audience in reporting on the Muslim Middle East. But also like Said, he is himself guilty of the same vice in his approach to Israel. In his recently published memoirs, he tells us that it is "something of a relief to find Israelis eloquent and brave enough to challenge this colonial mentality." In truth, Israelis (unlike their Arab neighbors) do not need to be brave to make a public stand against their government on any issue—it is a free society with a free press, and many of the most harsh critics of government policy are in leading positions in the media, universities, and other state-funded institutions. The extent of this one-dimensional approach to reporting on Israel means that nobody reading Fisk would know that violence, turmoil, and upheaval were part of the fabric of the Middle East long before the dreaded Zionists established their state. If you believe this, you'll believe anything. But perhaps that is what these cohorts of Israel-bashers have been banking on all along.

More recently the Israeli "New Historians," who made their entry onto the scene in the late 1980s, have been lionized as pioneers of anti/post-Zionism who courageously defy the oppressive and heretical Zionist ideology. Claiming to have uncovered the "historical truth" about the creation of the State of Israel and the advent of the Arab-Israeli conflict, they have become celebrated figures cashing in on the prestige, book deals, and travel opportunities on offer across the world for Jewish Israel-bashers. As Tom Segev, an Israeli journalist and "new historian" jokingly told one American journalist, "we perform at weddings and bar

mitzvas." [41] This despite the total unfamiliarity of most "new historians" with the Arab world—its language, culture, history, and politics; their condescending treatment of the Palestinians as passive objects; their failure to unearth new facts or offer novel interpretations; [42] and the fact that the recent declassification of millions of documents from the period of the British Mandate and Israel's early days paint a much more definitive picture of the historical record, and one that is completely at odds with the anti-Israel caricature painted by the "new historians."

Other Jews, like US academic Norman Finkelstein, have been feted in Germany, among other places, for their highly offensive claims that Israel and the Diaspora Jewish communities have overplayed the Holocaust for their own benefit. [43] Even worse, a number of Jews, including Hebrew University professor Moshe Zimmermann and the late Israeli philosopher Yeshayahu Leibowitz, lionized by Said and Fisk, have drawn parallels between the actions of Israeli governments and the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and the Nazis. Since this claim enables Europeans to shed some of their own guilt over the Holocaust, it has been adopted with alacrity. A Euro-barometer poll conducted in nine European countries and released on the eve of Holocaust Memorial Day 2004, found that 35.7% of respondents believed that Jews "should stop playing the victim for the Holocaust."

The recent surge in anti-Semitism and attacks on Jews and Jewish targets on a level unknown in Europe since the 1930s would seem to take this mindset one step forward. If all Jews are Israelis, and all Israelis are Nazis, then their targeting is legitimate. And, of course, this attitude has been spurred on by the tendency of Europe's political and intellectual elites to demonize Israel: Remember the January 2002 *New Statesman* cover of a gold Star of David piercing a Union Jack, with the headline below: "A kosher conspiracy?"

The 2006 Lebanon war has once more underlined just how widely Jews and Israelis are perceived as one and the same. During the crisis, there was a doubling of anti-Semitic attacks and incidents in the UK compared with July 2005 and a threefold increase in these events in Canada over the same period in the previous year. At the same time, the Jewish Memorial for Holocaust victims in Brussels and Berlin's Holocaust memorial have been desecrated and daubed with swastikas as have two synagogues in Sydney, Australia, and one in the Brazilian town of Campinas; twenty Jewish shops in Rome were also vandalized and daubed with swastikas, and a Pakistani-American walked into the Jewish Community center in Seattle in July 2006 and opened fire on innocent Jewish civilians, killing one and wounding five.

What makes this state of affairs all the more galling is that the media and Western political leaders have been bending over backward since 9/11 to prevent the spread of Islamophobia when the truth is that it is Jews, not Muslims, whose lives have been most adversely affected by increasingly hostile attitudes on the ground—after all, it is the Jews, not Muslims of France, who have been emigrating in record numbers to find a safe-haven. It is Jews who feel vulnerable to attack, who have faced the most violence, and whose institutions from synagogues to community buildings to Jewish newspaper offices have been under heavy police guard for years because of events in the Middle East—no Muslim community in the West has had to undertake similar security precautions. And yet, just as politicians and the media ignored Hezbollah and Hamas missiles on Israeli population centers but jumped up and down over Jerusalem's military response, they also ignore the reality that it is not Islamophobia but anti-Semitism that is the

major hate crime in Europe, and increasingly in the US, Canada, and Australia, with both Israel and these countries' Jewish communities bearing the brunt of this vicious assault.

## **Conclusion: Israel and the Human Conscience**

The equation of anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism will no doubt be dismissed as "Zionist propaganda" by many opponents of Israel. But in fact, this argument not only runs counter to the prevailing wisdom among Israeli academics and intellectuals, for whom such claims are anathema, but it also challenges one of the most fundamental tenets of Zionism—that the creation of a Jewish state, where the Jewish diasporas would congregate and become normalized, would solve the "Jewish problem" and ameliorate if not eliminate altogether the phenomenon of anti-Semitism.

What this line of thinking by the founding fathers of Zionism failed to consider, however, is that the prejudice and obsession that had hitherto been reserved for Jewish individuals and communities would be transferred to the Jewish state. If prior to Israel's establishment Jews had been despised because of their helplessness, they are now reviled because of their newly discovered physical and political empowerment as evidenced by the repeated criticism of Israel's supposed use of "disproportionate force" whenever it defends itself against indiscriminate terror attacks by groups committed to its destruction.

For millennia, the Jewish people, in the words of the eminent philosopher Martin Buber, was a sinister, homeless specter. This people, which resisted inclusion in any category, a resistance which the other peoples could never become quite accustomed to, was always the first victim of fanatical movements and vile prejudice and branded as the cause of mass misfortunes. As the poet Heinrich Heine, himself a convert from Judaism, once wrote, Judaism is "the family curse that lasts a thousand years"; and no matter how much it has tried, the state of Israel—like individual Jews and Jewish communities before it—has never been able to escape this disturbing reality.

A saddening thought, indeed. But is there any other explanation as to why, more than sixty years after its establishment, Israel remains the only state in the world whose citizens are presented as the heirs to the Nazi mantle; whose economy faces relentless calls for sanctions, boycotts, and divestment; whose policies and actions year in and year out are condemned by the international community, and whose right to exist is constantly debated and challenged?

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[1] Efraim Karsh and Rory Miller, "Freya Stark in America: Orientalism, Anti-Semitism, and Political Propaganda," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (July 2004), 327.

[2] Joseph W. Bendersky, "From Cowards and subversives to Aggressors and Questionable Allies: US Army Perception of Zionism since World WW I," *Journal of Israeli History*, 25:1 (2006), 123-24.

[3] Rivka Yadlin, *Genuis Yahir Veosheq: Anti-Zionut ke-Anti-Yahadut be-Mitsraim* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 1988), 127.

[4] *Akhbar al-Yom* (Cairo), Oct. 11, 1947. For background of the statement and its full translation see: David Barnett and Efraim Karsh, "Azzam's Genocidal Threat," *Middle East Forum*, Fall 2011, 85-88.

[5] "Political Program for the Present Stage drawn up by the 12th PNC, Cairo, June 9, 1974," *Journal of Palestine*

*Studies*, Summer 1974, 224-25.

[6] Efraim Karsh, *Arafat's War: the Man and his Battle for Israeli Conquest* (New York: Grove, 2003).

[7] As early as October 11, 1949 the prominent Egyptian politician Muhammad Salah al-Din, soon to become his country's foreign minister, wrote in the influential Egyptian daily *al-Misri* that "in demanding the restoration of the refugees to Palestine, the Arabs intend that they shall return as the masters of the homeland and not as slaves. More specifically, they intend to annihilate the state of Israel" (quoted in Israel's Foreign Ministry, Research Department, "Refugee Repatriation—A Danger to Israel's security," Sept. 4, 1951, Israel's State Archives, ISA, FM 2564/1).

[8] Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Vintage, 1980), 12–13.

[9] Edward Said, "My Right of Return," interview with *Haaretz* journalist Ari Shavit, Aug. 18, 2000.

[10] Tony Judt, "Israel: The Alternative," *New York Review of Books*, Oct. 23, 2003.

[11] The most infamous pogrom took place in the Polish town of Kielce, where on July 4, 1946, local mobs attacked surviving and returning Jews in the city after false rumors spread that Jews had abducted a Christian child whom they intended to kill for ritual purposes. The rioters killed at least 42 Jews and wounded approximately 50 more.

[12] "Interview [by] Clare Hollingworth with Azzam Pasha, Mar. 23, 1948, ISA, S25/9020; Cairo to London, Jun. 4, 1948, FO 371/68527.

[13] David Ben Gurion's Diary (Sde Boker), Jun. 2, 1949.

[14] Daniel Pipes, "The Hell of Israel is Better than the Paradise of Arafat," *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2005, 43-50.

[15] Yale Law School, the Avalon Project, " Hamas Covenant," Articles 11.

[16] Robert Fisk, *The Great War for Civilization: the Conquest of the Middle East* (New York: Vintage, 2007).

[17] Hillel C. Neuer, "The Struggle against Anti-Israel Bias at the U.N. Commission on Human Rights," *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*, No. 40, Jan. 1, 2006; "UN Wipes Israel Off the Map—Photos – Nov. 29, 2005, UN Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People," <http://www.eyeontheun.org/view.asp?l=21&p=142>.

[18] Edwin Black, "Ford Foundation Aided Groups Behind Biased Durban Parley," *Forward*, Oct. 17, 2003; *Jerusalem Post*, Sept. 2, 2001; Anne F. Bayefsky, "Terrorism and Racism: the Aftermath of Durban," *Jerusalem Letter/Viewpoints*, No. 468, Dec. 16, 2001 (<http://www.jcpa.org/jl/vp468.htm>); Irwin Cotler, "Durban's Troubling Legacy One Year Later: Twisting the Cause of International Human Rights Against the Jewish People," *Jerusalem Issue Brief*, Vol. 2, No. 5 (Aug. 20, 2002).

[19] "Record of Conversation which the Prime Minister and Secretary of State had with the United States Ambassador on the 28th April 1948," FO 800/487.

[20] For Banna's ideology and political career see: *Hassan al-Banna: Shaheed* (Karachi: International Islamic Publishers, 1981); Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Robert St. John, *The Boss: The Story of Gamal Abdel Nasser* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1960), 41-42.

[21] Muhammad Amin Husseini, *Haqa'iq an Qadiyat Filastin (Cairo: Maktab al-Hay'a al-Arabiyya al-Ulya li-Filastin, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1956; Abdel Karim Umar, Mudhakkirat al-Hajj Muhammad Amin al-Husseini (Damascus: Ahali, 1999), pp. 107, 124-27.*

[22] See, for example, Fayez A. Sayegh, *Zionist Colonialism in Palestine* (Beirut: Palestine Liberation Organization Research Center, 1965).

[23] "Tutu Condemns Israeli Apartheid," *BBC News*, Apr. 29, 2002.

[24] Jimmy Carter, *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006).

[25] "Mairead Corrigan-Maguire: Stand Up to Israeli Apartheid," *Stop de Landroof* (<http://www.stopdebezetting.com/wereldpers/mairead-corrigan-maguire-stand-up-to-israeli-apartheid.html>), accessed Mar. 19, 2012.

[26] *Palestine Royal Commission, Report. Presented to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in Parliament by Command of his Majesty, July 1937* (London: HMSO; rep. 1946), 93 (vii).

[27] Vladimir Jabotinsky, *The Jewish War Front* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1940), 216.

[28] *Ibid.*, 216-20.

[29] David Ben-Gurion, *Bama'araha* (Tel Aviv: Mapai Publishing House, 1949), Vol. 4, Part 2, 265.

[30] Hagana Commander-in-Chief to Brigade Commanders, "The Arabs Residing in the Enclaves," Mar. 24, 1948, Hagana Archiva (HA), 46/199z.

[31] Statistical data in this article is mainly taken from Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics ([http://www1.cbs.gov.il/reader/?M1val=cw\\_usr\\_view\\_Folder&ID=141](http://www1.cbs.gov.il/reader/?M1val=cw_usr_view_Folder&ID=141)). See also two articles by Amnon Rubinstein in *Haaretz*, Sept. 10, 2002 and Apr. 7, 2003.

[32] David Pollock, "What do the Arabs of East Jerusalem Really Want?" Jerusalem Center for Public Policy, Sept. 7, 2011.

[33] Jeffrey Herf, "Convergence—the Classic Case: Nazi Germany, Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism during World

War II," *Journal of Israeli History*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (March 2006), 75, 77-78.

[34] Bendersky, "From Cowards and Subversives," 114-15, 118.

[35] "Jews and Free Masons Controlled War on Iraq, Says No. 10 advisor," *Daily Telegraph*, Sept. 12, 2005.

[36] John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Harvard University: John F. Kennedy School of Government, March 2006), 1.

[37] Efraim Karsh, *Neutrality and Small States* (London: Routledge, 1988; reissued 2010), 70-72.

[38] Irving Howe, "Vietnam and Israel," in Irving Howe and Carl Gershman (eds.), *Israel, the Arabs and the Middle East* (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), 343-44.

[39] *The Crisis of Zionism* (New York: Times Books, 2012).

[40] Efraim Karsh and Rory Miller, "Did Edward Said Really Speak Truth to Power?" *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Winter 2008), 13-21.

[41] Michael Kennedy, "rewriting History," *Inquirer Magazine*, Feb. 1, 1998, p. 12.

[42] Thus, for example, Benny Morris (of Ben-Gurion University in Beersheba) admitted that in writing *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem* (1987), he had "no access to"—elsewhere he said he "was not aware of"—the voluminous documents in the archives of the specific Israeli institutions whose actions in 1948 formed the burden of his indictment: the Hagana underground organization and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). See: Morris, "Revisiting the Palestinian Exodus of 1948," in Eugene Rogan and Avi Shlaim, *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 37.

[43] Norman G. Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry* (London: Verso, 2003).

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