



ISRAELOPHOBIA AND THE WEST

**THE HIJACKING OF CIVIL DISCOURSE
ON ISRAEL AND HOW TO RESCUE IT**

DAN DIKER (ED.)



Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs

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The Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (JCPA)

Founded in 1976, the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (JCPA), is a leading research and applied diplomacy institute specializing in national security, foreign policy, and public diplomacy. Dr. Dore Gold, former Director General of Israel's Foreign Ministry and former ambassador to the United Nations, headed the Jerusalem Center since 2000.

Cover photo: Anti-Israel demonstration in Cape Town, South Africa, 2014. (Reuters/Mike Hutchings)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Acknowledgements	5
Dan Diker	Introduction	7
Khaled Abu Toameh	Dueling Discourses: Diaspora Demonization Versus Palestinian Pragmatism	15
Alan Baker	The Thin Line between Legitimate Criticism of Israel and Anti-Semitism	25
Alan Dershowitz	The Case for Moral Clarity: Anti-Zionism, Anti-Semitism, and Legitimate Criticism of Israel	35
Dan Diker and Alan Baker	How to Rescue Civil Discourse on Israel	45
Dore Gold	The Africa-Israel Renaissance as a Response to Diplomatic Deligitimization	63
Daniel Gordis	Anti-Semitism, Anti-Zionism as Challenges to American Jewry	71
Malcolm Hoenlein	Walking a Thin Line: American Jewry's Tightrope Act in Tough Times	81
Pinhas Inbari	Israelophobia and the Weaponizing of the Oslo Peace Process	91
Asa Kasher	The Spectrum of Negative Criticism: From Objective Reasoning to Anti-Semitism	99
William Kolbrener	Anti-Semitism and Progressive Fundamentalism's Challenge to Israel	111
Yossi Kuperwasser	The New Anti-Semitism and the Threat to Israel's National Security	117

Luba Mayekiso	Israelophobia and the Apartheid Criminalization of the Jewish State	129
Olga Meshoe Washington	The Israel-Apartheid Lie and the Appropriation of South Africa's History	137
Fiamma Nirenstein	A Never-ending Struggle: Challenging Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism	147
Natan Sharansky	Fighting Anti-Semitism, Both Left and Right	157
Shmuel Trigano	Anti-Semitism as a Postmodern Ideology	169
Joshua Washington	Reaffirming Dr. Martin Luther King's Zionist Legacy	179
Messeret Woldemichael Kasbian	Constructive Criticism in Israel's Democratic Discourse	193
Elhanan Yakira	From Judeophobia to Anti-Israelism	209
	About the Authors	219

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A woman holds a placard at a demonstration supporting Jeremy Corbyn outside Labour Party headquarters in London, ahead of a Labour Party decision in 2018 opposing the complete adoption of the IHRA Working Definition of Anti-Semitism.

Photo: Sipa USA via AP/Ben Cawthra

Introduction

Dan Diker

Israelophobia and the West: The Hijacking of Civil Discourse on Israel and How to Rescue It, is the result of urgent and extensive consultations at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs during 2019. Our concern centered around the spike in violent anti-Semitic attacks against Jews in Europe and the United States and the simultaneous and intensifying defamation, delegitimization, and demonization of Israel – the Jewish collective. Israelophobia in Iran, the Arab states, and other Muslim-majority countries requires a separate, exhaustive study.

This volume evaluates the intensifying anti-Semitism against diaspora Jewry in Western countries and the converging rhetorical assaults on “sovereign” Jews in Israel – condemning them and their nation-state as “Nazi, apartheid, racist, genocidal, war criminal, illegal, illegitimate, colonialist, and anachronistic.” This invective has been characterized and justified as legitimate political criticism of Israel in mainstream Western discourse. It has become standard practice among faculty and “pro-Palestinian” student organizations on American university campuses, the United Nations, associated international bodies such as the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court, as well as European institutions and parliaments. For the first time, anti-Semitic tropes cloaked as political critique of Israel have even been voiced by several members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

At the same time, there have been recent efforts to counter these delegitimizing trends. Western governments and parliaments have condemned and even outlawed the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement as anti-Semitic.¹ Broadly accepted principles and definitions of anti-Semitism have helped shape the debate over what constitutes anti-Semitic rhetoric versus what can be defined as legitimate critical discourse. The “3D” Test,² the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Anti-Semitism, and the U.S. State Department classifications of anti-Semitism have established internationally-accepted moral base lines.³

Natan Sharansky, a former Israeli minister and previous Chairman of the Jewish Agency, is the author of the 3D Test and a contributor to this book. He has pointed out that rhetoric against Israel that *delegitimizes* and *demonizes* the Jewish State, while judging it by prejudicial standards *different* from any other nation-state, constitutes anti-Semitism. Sharansky’s 3D Test has been bolstered by other global authorities on the study of anti-Semitism, such as Professors Robert Wistrich,⁴ Jerold Auerbach,⁵ and Alvin Rosenfeld.⁶ They have also identified assaults on Zionism and Israel as the new face of anti-Semitism.

However, global expert assessments and internationally accepted definitions of anti-Semitism have done little to depreciate the use of anti-Semitic rhetoric against Jews and the Jewish state by Islamist, Palestinian, right-wing extremist, leftist radical, Black nationalist,⁷ progressive, and anti-Zionist groups in the United States.⁸

The opposite is true. Anti-Semitic events against Jews and Israel reached record highs in the United States in 2019.⁹ The challenge

has been compounded by free speech protections guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment. Protected speech in the United States has inspired deep confidence among these groups that any racist, anti-Semitic, even "eliminationist" speech against the Jewish state constitutes legitimate expression.¹⁰

ISRAELOPHOBIA

The ever widening gap between legally protected hate speech and reasonable civil discourse on Israel is the reason this book was written. Entitled *Israelophobia and the West*, this compendium stands as a conceptual counterpart to *Islamophobia*, or hatred of Islam, which has gained broad acceptance as a term of reference in Western human rights discourse. JCPA fellow Fiamma Nirenstein, a leading European scholar on anti-Semitism, has used the term "Israelophobia" for nearly two decades, characterizing Europe's hostility towards Israel, which it insists is mere political criticism.¹¹

Israelophobia's conceptual overlap between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism still begs a normative moral question: what is legitimate discourse and what constitutes anti-Semitic rhetoric against Israel that must be isolated and condemned in normative dialogue, whether in the diplomatic sphere or in the public square? For example, it is unanimously agreed in Western discourse that morally repugnant, racist slurs including "n***er," "spics," "chinks," "kikes," or "towel heads," while legally protected speech, have and should be universally condemned.

But what of hate speech when it comes to the Jewish collective? What constitutes morally repugnant, racist *Israelophobia*, and what, in contrast, defines civil, critical, and respectful discourse

on Israel? How can fair-minded people rescue political discussion and deliberation about Jews and the Jewish State from the contamination of delegitimization and demonization of Israel and the Jewish people?

The stakes in this dialogue have skyrocketed in recent years. Deadly anti-Semitic atrocities against Jewish communities in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, Poway, California, Halle, Germany, and Monsey, New York, during the writing of this compendium have underscored the importance of establishing guidelines for respectable discussion and debate.

The urgency of these issues and their central role in Israel, the Jewish diaspora, and in the general discourse have brought together former senior government leaders, respected diplomats, security officials, leading academics and thought leaders, and community and human rights leaders from Israel, Europe, South Africa, and the United States. The articles in this book represent the fruits of our discussions, deliberations, and critical assessments. *Israelophobia* explores motifs including:

- * The evolution of anti-Zionism into a modern incarnation of anti-Semitism.
- * The ideological roots of Israelophobia in Palestinian, pan-Arab, and Islamic discourse, as well as its influence on the Western discourse on Israel.
- * The masquerading of Israelophobia as legitimate political discourse, from Congress to university campuses by using political buzzwords that distort legal and political terminology.
- * The political ideologies of postmodernism and intersectionality and their effects on the discourse on Israel in academia and on university campuses in the West.

* The values, principles, and frameworks underpinning legitimate political critique of Israel.

The distinguished writers in this volume have addressed these themes from historical and contemporary points of view. Natan Sharansky has posited that the West has come full circle as both right- and left-wing anti-Semitism operate in parallel.

Professor Alan Dershowitz, argues that political “criticism” of Israel in most cases constitutes anti-Semitism in disguise, as such criticism nearly always singles out Israel among the nations in an unbalanced and biased way.

Brigadier General Yossi Kuperwasser, former head of IDF Intelligence Assessment, draws the connection between classic anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism and points out their threat to Israel’s national security.

Professor Asa Kasher, author of the Israel Defense Forces Code of Conduct, provides a theoretical framework to assist the reader in distinguishing between legitimate criticism of Israel and anti-Semitism.

South African attorneys Luba Mayekiso and Olga Meshoe Washington, both international human rights intellectuals, expose the Israel apartheid slander and refute the false, yet mainstream analogy between former South African apartheid and democratic Israel.

Ambassador Alan Baker similarly reveals commonly accepted “buzzwords” and distortions of legal terms that have been weaponized in the global defamation campaign against Israel.

Professor Elhanan Yakira, among Israel’s most distinguished political philosophers, urges readers to avoid referring to “anti-Israelism” as anti-Semitism, due to the latter’s widely accepted historical connotations and nuances.

Former Italian parliamentarian and journalist Dr. Fiamma Nirenstein exposes the current anti-Semitism as deeply rooted in international diplomatic discourse.

Professor Shmuel Trigano assesses the intersection between postmodernism and the new anti-Semitism as expressed in anti-Zionism.

Relatedly, Professor William Kolbrener offers a critique to the postmodern denunciation of Zionism and the Jewish State.

Malcom Hoenlein, Executive Vice Chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, draws a straight line between violent rhetoric demonizing Jews and Israel and violent anti-Semitic attacks against Jews on the streets and campuses of American cities.

Dr. Daniel Gordis, a scholar of Israel-American affairs, exposes the misunderstandings common in American Jewish liberal circles regarding the ethos and ethics of the Israeli body politic that often result in bias and Israelophobia.

Joshua Washington, an acolyte of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, reveals the challenges that the African American community faces today, in which anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism collide with the warnings that King issued about these phenomena, more than half a century ago.

Prominent Israeli Arab Journalist, Khaled Abu Toameh, compares and contrasts the extremist anti-Israel discourse mobilized by Palestinian academics and activists in Western universities with the practical, cooperative discourse that characterizes the local relationships between Jews and Arabs in Israel and in the West Bank.

Leading Palestinian affairs expert, Pinhas Inbari, reveals the ideological root of Israelophobia in the strategy, rhetoric, and philosophy of the Palestinian leadership in Ramallah.

Messeret Woldemichael Kasbian, an Ethiopian Israeli intellectual and community leader, assesses racism as a universal problem. She differentiates between constructive criticism of Israel as opposed to the defamation of Israel.

Finally, Dan Diker, editor of this volume, together with Alan Baker, former legal advisor to Israel's Foreign Ministry, outline principles that can rescue civil debate and restore a path to a more reasonable and respectful discourse on Israel.

We hope that this book can serve as a practical and helpful guide to a more constructive dialogue on Israel for government officials, diplomats, Middle East experts, journalists, commentators, academics, and community leaders, in the universal hope that people of goodwill, moral, ethical, and intellectual integrity will reset the standard of discussion and deliberation regarding Israel as it seeks a secure, durable, and peaceful relationship with Palestinian and Arab neighbors on all borders and throughout the Middle East.

Endnotes

- 1 <https://www.dw.com/en/german-parliament-condemns-anti-semitic-bds-movement/a-48779516>
- 2 <https://www.jcpa.org/phas/phas-sharansky-f04.htm>
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- 4 https://sicsa.huji.ac.il/sites/default/files/sicsa/files/wistrich_antisemitism.pdf
- 5 Jerold S. Auerbach. “Palestinian Identity Theft and the Delegitimization of Israel,” in *From Antisemitism to Anti-Zionism: the Past and Present of a Lethal Ideology*. Eunice G. Pollack, ed. (Brighton, Massachusetts: Academic Studies Press, 2017).
- 6 Alvin H. Rosenfeld (ed.), *Anti-Zionism and Anti-Semitism: the Dynamics of Delegitimization*. (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2019).
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- 9 <https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/anti-semitic-incidents-remained-at-near-historic-levels-in-2018-assaults>
- 10 JStreet Founder Jeremy Ben Ami stated that the best remedy against anti-Semitic speech is “more speech,” <https://www.timesofisrael.com/toi-debate-are-trump-bibi-securing-or-ruining-the-us-israel-relationship/>
- 11 <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/israelophobia/>

Dueling Discourses: Diaspora Demonization vs. Palestinian Pragmatism

Khaled Abu-Toameh

ABSTRACT

Most Israeli Arabs are unaware of the anti-Israel delegitimization campaign sweeping through Europe and the United States. In Israel, Arab citizens are engaged in a practical civil discourse with fellow Israeli citizens that aims to improve their quality of life and which reflects their desire to build a shared and more equitable society.

In contrast, radical pro-Palestinian activists and their supporters promote inflammatory propaganda in the Palestinian diaspora and academia, radicalizing the Western Left against Israel, without considering the actual and concrete interests of Palestinians or Israeli Arabs.

The pragmatic approach of Palestinians and Israeli Arabs addresses quality of life issues, such as better security and health care, enforcement of equal rights laws, and greater economic opportunity.

It may come as a surprise to Western observers that two contradictory Palestinian discourses are operating simultaneously. Outside of Israel, one discourse is being driven by Palestinian academics and activists who have led and galvanized the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions campaign against Israel.

This discourse has been mainstreamed and mass-marketed in Western academia, the international media, and institutions such as United Nations agencies. This diaspora discourse asserts that the Palestinians are the “good guys” victimized by the Israeli “bad guys” - colonialists, oppressors, and evil “apartheid” Jews.

This narrative, which reflects this compendium’s title, *Israelophobia*, is promoted in large part by Palestinian academics, faculty, and students at leading American universities. This extreme anti-Israel narrative has targeted Western universities as fertile ground for mobilizing faculty and students to reject and shun any connection to Israel.

This radical, diaspora campaign to delegitimize Israel stands opposite a far more pragmatic, cooperative Israeli Arab and West Bank Palestinian dialogue with Israel. The local dialogue focuses on topics of common concern: quality of life, health, Arab-Jewish cooperation, and socio-economic issues, which more closely reflect the reality in Israel and the West Bank.

There is a fundamental difference between the external and internal Palestinian discourses. For example, a panel discussion in London on Israel that includes local Jewish and Palestinian organizations, leaders, and activists, reflexively transforms into an anti-Israeli diatribe.

Palestinian Academics like Saree Makdisi, Noura Erakat, and Hatem Bazian, who play aggressive public roles in promoting this narrative in the United States, frequently brand Israel an apartheid, colonialist, genocidal state. Makdisi’s polemics compare Israel to apartheid South Africa. Bazian has called Israel “wholesale settler colonial thievery,” and Erakat refers to Israel as a “settler sovereign.” This extremist nomenclature frequently parallels the language of Palestinian officials, adding to its perception of authenticity in the West.

This is part of a strategy by the Palestinian Authority and its parent Palestine Liberation Organization leadership and affiliate NGOs to isolate Israel in the international community, just as former apartheid South Africa was isolated in the 1970s and 1980s, eventually leading to the regime's collapse.

There are two problems with this analogy. First, Israel, unlike former apartheid South Africa, is a democratic state with a Jewish majority. Second, the above-mentioned extremist discourse does not reflect either the Israeli Arab or West Bank Palestinian realities. How can a Palestinian live under "apartheid" if he has two governments, the Palestinian Authority and the State of Israel?

Since 1994, Palestinians in the West Bank have lived under the internationally sanctioned and de facto sovereign Palestinian Authority. West Bank Palestinians living under PA jurisdiction have a PA judicial system, parliament, police force, stamps, and Palestinian passports. Israeli-imposed travel restrictions are determined exclusively by security-related issues. However, numerous U.S. campus activists have told me that Israel is an apartheid state because of the "fence" in the West Bank. I told them that both Jews and Palestinians live on both sides of that "fence." This is a security requirement to guard against terrorism, not a racial issue. This is one of many misconceptions that has been exploited to cast Israel as a racist apartheid state in the mind of the international community.

The external, extremist anti-Israel discourse does not reflect the aspirations or represent the interests of Israeli Arabs, and is unrelated to their situation. Instead, Arabs in Israel are demanding greater enforcement of their legally guaranteed democratic rights, fewer building zoning laws, better jobs, and more law enforcement in their communities. This dichotomy in the discourse begins to

explain how the Israel debate among diaspora Palestinians has become an inflamed political issue about how to delegitimize Israel, not a discussion about bettering the lives of Israeli Arabs as equal citizens with guaranteed rights, or creating opportunities for West Bank Palestinians, in line with the Oslo accords.

To illustrate this point, there have been various recent demonstrations by Arabs in Israel as part of a campaign for better Israeli police action to fight violent crime in Arab towns and cities across Israel. None of the protesters demonstrated against Israel as an “apartheid state” or protested against “Israeli occupation.” Israeli Arab citizens and residents of East Jerusalem protested for *better* Israeli law enforcement and policing, not *against* Israeli law enforcement and policing. These Arab protests in Israel demanded inclusion and protection of democratic rights guaranteed by law. This reflects the exact opposite of a delegitimization campaign.

Israeli Arabs are not seeking separation from Israel, rather, they seek greater inclusion as Israelis. The encouraging result of these protests has been a growing cooperation between the Arab community and Israel’s public security echelons in collecting weapons and cracking down on crime. The head of this operation is a high ranking Israeli Arab Police officer, Brigadier General Jamal Hakrush of Kafar Kanna in Israel’s North.

Israeli Arabs are disconnected from the external campaign of delegitimization. In fact, most are unaware of it. In essence, two separate campaigns are taking place: one is a positive civil discourse, and the other is a destructive political one. BDS-style Israelophobia has to be understood in the context of a protracted political conflict that lends itself to unhinged tirades, as opposed to civil discourse, which reflects the real desire to build a shared and productive society.



A woman votes for Knesset
in Tayibe, Israel, 2019

Photo: Ahmad Gharabli/AFP

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1981

This contrasts with the inflammatory propaganda of Omar Barghouti, the co-founder of the BDS movement, who has coalesced with left-wing Western anti-Israel figures and groups in promoting Israel hatred without even considering the interests of Palestinians or Israeli Arabs. As a result, many academics who have expressed animus towards Israel have energized an Israelophobic narrative that legitimizes the perception of Israel as an illicit and illegitimate state.

Respected Western academics like Noura Erakat of George Mason University, Hatem Bazian of UC Berkeley, Rashid Khalidi of Columbia, and Saree Makdisi of UCLA, lend international academic credibility to the BDS movement. This credibility is irrelevant to Israeli Arabs and West Bank Palestinians. Even the rhetorically extreme Palestinian Authority is more pragmatic in its approach.

The above-mentioned academics have advanced their agenda by asserting Israel's illegitimacy as a Jewish and democratic state and by shutting down fair and reasonable academic debate. Ironically, these "liberal arts" academics' rhetorical extremism on Israel has emboldened Hamas and Islamic Jihad and undermined the Palestinian Authority. If these so-called "liberal" educators promote the terror group-affiliated BDS campaign, declare Israel an apartheid state that does not want peace, and decry illegal occupation, then how can Mahmoud Abbas ever negotiate with, or even meet with an Israeli Jew? Any cooperation would make him complicit in Israeli crimes.

This discourse justifies Hamas' terrorism. Hamas says, "You see, we told you that Jews don't want peace. Even in the international community, professors are on our side." The delegitimization of Israel strengthens Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and even Hizbullah. In this way, BDS and their ilk do a great service to radicals.

When I visited campuses in the United States, the Arab Palestinian academics and professors I heard speak sounded even more extreme than Hamas leaders I've met, and I've interviewed many Hamas officials. While engaging with them, I noticed their anger at the "Zionist colonial project" that created Israel. They invoked the language of "human rights," "occupation," "checkpoints," and "settlements" to veil their blind hatred, in an effort to make it appear logical to others, including fellow academics and high-level professionals.

Their tone and word choice - "the Zionist entity," "the state of Tel Aviv," referring to Jews living inside of Israel as "settlers," and to the borders of Palestine as those of 1948 - match the Hamas party line. This is the rhetoric employed by those who do not believe in Israel's right to exist and who wish to make Israel a pariah state in the eyes of the international community.

Those presented by the media and other groups as "famous Palestinian academics and highly respected professors" are completely unknown by most Palestinians. Being influential on U.S. campuses does not mean that they have a following in Tulkarm or Nablus. Their ideas and views do not appeal to Palestinians; in fact, they contradict their interests.

The great majority of Palestinian activists outside of Israel hold extremist views simply because they do not live in Israel, and do not have Jewish neighbors. They assume that Jewish settlers are all criminals. The only Jews they associate with in the West are those who confirm their suspicions, fears, and allegations. Most of them have not lived in the West Bank or pre-1967 Israel. Their upper middle class background provides them "license" to be more extreme than people on the ground in Israel and the West Bank.

These activists are more dedicated to hating Israel than helping Palestinians. If they really wanted to promote and serve the interests of their people, they would promote dialogue, pragmatism, and moderation, and call for an end to violence and boycotts, not the opposite. To the contrary, they expend their efforts to turn Israel into a monster, into a second apartheid South Africa, in order to delegitimize, weaken, and undermine the state. They are not a peace camp, and calling them “leftists” would be inaccurate, since spouting hatred against Israel does not make you “liberal.” This also goes for similarly extremist political rhetoric in the Palestinian Authority.

For example, PA incitement against U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo’s decision to recognize Israeli settlements as “not illegal per se,” is not grassroots nor is it spontaneous. The Palestinian Authority and the Fatah organize these activities. They are not spontaneous mass protests; they are well-planned demonstrations. There was no major violence because it was not a popular uprising; it was a politically motivated event. In fact, many Palestinians lampooned the Palestinian Authority on social media and elsewhere, criticizing Mahmoud Abbas. In Gaza, only 60 people demonstrated, making the promised “intifada” look like a big joke.

This reflects the contradiction between the discourse of “Israelophobia” outside of Israel and the pragmatic civil discourse in Israel. If I were to interview a Palestinian on the street, whether in the West Bank or in any Israeli city, about what he wants, he would likely say that he wants a work permit to gain better employment in Israel or to start a business, and that he would like to see the economy improve. He is not interested in demonstrating for an independent Palestinian state with

a capital in East Jerusalem, based on United Nations resolutions. Israeli Arabs are not marching on the streets demanding a Palestinian state there, in the West Bank, or even Palestinian police here in Israel. They are asking for greater Israeli police presence in Israel, when they need assistance.

Yet, in the media and abroad, people align themselves with politically correct rhetoric. PA officials speak of a two state solution with East Jerusalem as its capital, parroting the official PA line. However, the average Palestinian is not concerned with a PA leadership that has been accused of corruption, failure to protect Palestinians from local gangs and thugs, and a leadership that fails to protect Palestinian civil rights. The average Palestinian, like the average Israeli or the average American or European, wants stability, security, and prosperity. That means upwardly mobility, freedom of movement, Israeli-level health care, and good education for their children.

The real discourse among Israeli Arabs and Palestinians, reflecting their own interests, is what Israel does or does not do on the ground. Some Arab citizens of Israel are frustrated at what Israel *does not do*: Israel does not provide enough citizen services, employment, infrastructure, public funds, law enforcement, affirmative action, integration, or legal and political action against discrimination.

Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza are angry with Israel because of what Israel *does do*, what they see as unjust: overarching security measures and restrictions. Yet, West Bank Arabs are not trying to spread hatred and Israelophobia; in many ways, they demand the same things that Israeli Arabs want, which is for Israel to treat them better. They want improved infrastructure, health care, and education.

Israelophobia, or hatred of Israel, stunts progress for Israeli Arabs and Palestinians in the West Bank. That is because Israelophobia is about casting Israel as an illegitimate entity.

The Israelophobia narrative charges that Israel is not a democracy, does not respect human rights, oppresses people, and practices apartheid and racism. Yet the truth is exactly the opposite. Israel respects the freedom of the media and freedom of speech, it respects women's rights, gay rights, and it is a country where Arab Muslim and Christians are free to worship, just like in the United States.

The Israelophobia discourse is disconnected from reality, and makes me, and most other Arab Israelis, feel uncomfortable. These "pro-Palestinian" activists in Europe and the United States are not helping me. They are self-serving and politically narcissistic. They are merely trying to delegitimize the state that I am living in. Some of their claims contain a grain of truth that is blown out of proportion, but most of their rhetoric is just a vile distortion of the truth, that shows that they have a problem with Israel's existence. How can you support a movement that campaigns against your rights and interests?

We should talk less about national political issues and delve into more practical details about what Israeli Arabs and Palestinians want and need. In short, just like Israelis, Palestinians, and Israeli Arabs want a better life.

The Thin Line Between Legitimate Criticism of Israel and Anti-Semitism

Alan Baker

ABSTRACT

Legally and factually inaccurate catchphrases and buzzwords used by the media and far-left politicians and activists in the West taint the public discourse.

Most phrases and slurs routinely used against Israel have no factual or legal basis, yet they are accepted without reservation by the media, which has shirked its journalistic responsibility to analyze the truth and accuracy of what they report.

This rhetoric has seeped into the mainstream discourse and works against the objectives of cooperation and coexistence among Palestinians and Israelis.

Any perception of illegitimacy, criminality, illegality, or violation of humanitarian norms may easily straddle a thin line between genuine, substantive criticism of a specific action, and, on the other hand, generalized vilification of a person, group, country, or movement.

The tendency to transpose specific, pragmatic, and practical criticism into blatant generalization and racial and national stereotyping easily crosses the line and becomes demagoguery.

The distance between demagoguery and age-old anti-Semitism is virtually non-existent.

In the political context in which we live, and especially in the relationship between Israel, the Palestinian leadership, elements in Europe, the United States, and international organizations, the use of negative stereotyping and legally-related generalizations serves another central purpose. The aim is to generate public and international support for censuring, singling out, and condemning Israel using legal phraseology that is accepted in the international community as negative buzzwords for all the ills facing humanity and civilization.

The distance between such anti-Israel stereotyping and vilification on the one hand and anti-Semitism on the other is constantly narrowing.

Examples include ongoing and daily Twitter proclamations by Palestinian chief negotiator and PLO secretary-general Saeb Erekat and senior PLO propagandist Hanan Ashrawi.

Erekat, since the early days of the peace process, was considered a serious negotiator, fully conversant with Israel, its history, governance, culture, and social frameworks.

Nevertheless, on a daily basis, Erekat's speeches, interviews, social media, and meetings with delegations, contain generalized and false accusations against Israel and its leadership, of "*colonialism, apartheid, ethnic cleansing, illegal occupation, illegitimate settlements policy,*" and even a consistent demand that Israel withdraw to "*1967 borders*" (despite the fact that he knows full well that no such borders ever existed and no such requirement was agreed to in the Oslo Accords, negotiated by Erekat). In a similar vein, Ashrawi regularly repeats the empty but obnoxious stereotype-phrase "settler-colonialism."



A demonstrator in Toulouse, France, 2018. Photo: Alain Pitton/Nur Photo

They, as well as others in the international community, do this despite their full awareness that such generalizations are devoid of any factual and legal basis. Such vicious and willful allegations principally serve to manipulate internationally recognized phraseology to advance a political agenda geared to undermining the legitimacy of Israel, but with a clear ulterior subtext that may only be seen to have an anti-Semitic purpose.

The extent of negative generalization and vilification through the use of internationally recognized buzz words, consistently targeting only Israel, the Jewish state, to the exclusion of any other state or people, very easily transposes itself into delegitimizing propaganda against the Jewish people. The distance between this and anti-Semitism is non-existent. The line has been crossed.

Thus, the deliberate and easy use of empty or inaccurate expressions, lacking legal or factual basis, serves as a popular engine to influence the public, the media, international fora, and non-governmental and international organizations.

Regrettably, when used within an ambiance of Western liberal democracies, such usage is also intended to influence the traditional supporters of Israel including Jewish communities and citizens, all of whom, in facing ongoing domestic challenges to their loyalties, find themselves constantly in need of ingratiating themselves within their respective societies, with the aim of preventing anti-Semitism within their own communities. To do so, they are often influenced by the hostile and extreme criticism of Israel and join such criticism.

Examples of such catch-phrases and buzzwords include:

APARTHEID

A willful and drastic accusation against Israel, ignorant of its history and that of the Jewish People and lacking any comprehension of what indeed constituted apartheid.

Israel's system of government and its social and demographic makeup identify it as a liberal democracy, totally without the

characteristics of an *apartheid* state. However, the easy usage of the *apartheid* accusation – whether by Jimmy Carter, Mahmoud Abbas at the UN, Saeb Erekat on Twitter, the U.S. Green Party, or hundreds of politically-generated UN General Assembly resolutions without really understanding what *apartheid* was, or is, are all aimed at establishing in the eyes of the international public the parallel between Israel and former *apartheid* South Africa.

The aim is to delegitimize Israel as a state member of the international community and to achieve its dissolution and replacement, as was done with the South African apartheid regime.

Regrettably, even elements within diaspora Jewish communities and in Israeli media and politics, buy into this empty, anti-Semitic, and malevolent equation.

COLONIALIZATION

It is clear that Israel is not a colonial power, has not colonized, nor has it any intention to colonize the territories. Israel's acceptance of UN Security Council Resolution 242 of November 1967, its commitments to the Middle East peace process in general, and specifically in the Oslo Accords, are indicative of Israel's commitment to settle the issue of the status of the territories through negotiation, and not through unilateral colonization.

However, since *colonization* is a universally condemned international phenomenon, accusing Israel, even when there are no grounds for this, identifies and vilifies Israel in an extreme negative context as a regime that needs to be outlawed, thereby generating an additional level of international and public hostility and delegitimization.

ETHNIC CLEANSING

This expression was associated originally with the systematic and officially sponsored practices of the government of Yugoslavia *vis-à-vis* its Muslim population. It has now since extended to refer to situations in Africa. It has become another negative buzz-word thrown out against Israel to imply violation of basic humanitarian norms.

Israel clearly has no such policy, official or otherwise, and the very idea of ethnic cleansing is anathema to Jewish concepts of morality and to Israel's very character.

“ILLEGAL ISRAELI OCCUPATION”

This is another expression that is widely used negatively to describe Israel's status in the territories as illegal and illegitimate. But the expression is devoid of any legal basis.

“Occupation” is an accepted legal term in the international law of armed conflict. It is an accepted legal situation to which International Humanitarian Law devotes a series of international conventions and customary norms setting out accepted modes of behavior of both an occupying power as well as an occupied population.

Occupations exist and have existed throughout history, but its condemnatory usage singling out Israel as if it is the only occupying power in the world, is a negative and illegitimate concept, flawed and without legal basis, as well as blatantly transparent and false.

“OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES (OPT)”

This expression has become accepted UN terminology since the early 1970s, appearing in hundreds of UN resolutions and reports and used by leading politicians, especially in Europe. As such, it has become *lingua franca* in the international community, implying that Israel illegitimately stole and occupied territory that belongs to a Palestinian state.

The expression lacks any legal, historical, or factual basis.

There exist no binding UN resolutions nor any agreement or arrangement between or connected to the parties in the context of the peace negotiation process that determine that the territories are Palestinian, belong to the Palestinians, or that they have ever been part of any Palestinian sovereign entity, that has never existed.

The expression OPT, inserted into UN resolutions by the Palestinian leadership and supported by Arab, European and other states in the UN General Assembly, is nothing more than a political expression of “wishful thinking” by an automatic UN majority.

The aim of the agreed-upon Oslo Accords was and remains to reach agreement determining the permanent status of the territories. Whether they will be part of a Palestinian state or any other political entity can only be the outcome of negotiations.

Hence, the expression OPT is nothing more than a prejudgment of the outcome of negotiations that have yet to take place, and incompatible with the Oslo Accords.

“ILLEGAL” ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS

This expression has been given the political connotation implying that Israel’s settlement policy is illegitimate since it violates international law, rendering Israel as an outlaw and those Israelis residing in settlements as criminals.

This is a false and flawed connotation rooted in a slanted misinterpretation of the relevant norms of international law, purveyed by international humanitarian organizations, especially the International Red Cross, and the UN.

Following the mass, forced transfer of populations in Nazi Europe during the Second World War, international humanitarian norms and conventions detail the circumstances in which an occupying power is prohibited from transferring its citizens into the occupied territory.

Israel’s settlements policy bears no relation to prohibited forced and mass population transfers. Israel strictly abides by the international norms, enabling voluntary, temporary settlement on public land only, while ensuring total respect for private land ownership, pending the outcome of the permanent status negotiations with the Palestinians. In such negotiations, as agreed-upon by the Palestinians and endorsed by the international community, the issue of settlements and borders are to be negotiated in the final stages.

Determinations that Israel’s settlements policy violates international law and agreements with the Palestinians are thus not merely false, but also constitute a prejudgment of the outcome of the agreed-upon permanent status negotiations.

“ILLEGAL” GAZA BLOCKADE

This expression frequently used in UN reports and resolutions and by Palestinian propagandists is completely false and is intended to deepen the perception that Israel is a serial violator of international maritime law.

Following the May 2010 Turkish Flotilla incident, Israel’s maritime blockade of the Gaza Strip was examined by a UN panel of inquiry headed by Sir Geoffrey Palmer, former Prime Minister of New Zealand. The panel concluded that Israel’s maritime blockade is a legitimate security measure, fully justified in light of the terrorist nature of the Hamas administration of the Gaza Strip.

“DISPROPORTIONATE VIOLENCE” IN DEALING WITH TERROR

Israel is regularly accused of “disproportionate violence” in virtually every instance in which it has been obliged to defend itself against mass rocket attacks, terror tunneling into its territory, attempts to illegally violate the border fence and to infiltrate into Israel, explosive and incendiary balloons and kites sent as part of a concerted policy of agricultural and environmental terror.

Such manipulative accusations, including such absurd tropes as “child-killing,” inevitably generate support among large segments of the international community, media, and general public, by the UN, the UN Human Rights Council, as well as numerous governmental and non-governmental organizations ostensibly involved in human rights. They seek to hold Israel to standards that are not acceptable *vis-à-vis* any other country faced with such aggression.

In effect, they single-out Israel and deny its internationally acknowledged right to defend its borders, towns, villages, and citizens from such aggression. The implication of such singling out and denial of Israel's inherent right to self-defense is to deepen the negative connotation and delegitimizing of Israel in international circles.

The sum total of this sad phenomenon of buzzwords generated and intended to single out Israel only as the ultimate and consistent violator of international norms, has the ultimate aim of "piratizing" and outlawing Israel and removing it outside the pale of civilized states of the international community, as was done with the former South African apartheid regime.

The extension of such generalizations and vilifications to Israel as the Jewish state and the use of the above-noted stereotypic expressions generates and fuels anti-Semitism.

Such generalized criticism singling-out only Israel may be a sad attempt to be politically correct, but is clearly a barely visible veil for anti-Semitism.

The Case for Moral Clarity: Anti-Zionism, Anti-Semitism, and Legitimate Criticism of Israel

Alan Dershowitz

ABSTRACT

Much of the purported criticism of Israel is disguised anti-Semitism, characterized by its disproportionality and demonization of both Jews and the Jewish State.

The “progressive” movement, while presenting itself as “enlightened,” represses freedom of speech, thought, and conscience. Paradoxically, some progressives use anti-Semitic tropes to attack Israel and its supporters.

Bigotry and ignorance of the facts of Israeli life and its history, including that of the historically recent peace process, lead them to deny the Jews the right to self-determination, an act that is anti-Semitic by definition.

Much of what today purports to be criticism of Israel or the claim of ideological opposition to Zionism is merely disguised anti-Semitism, perpetrated by singling out the nation-state of the Jewish people for condemnation and demonization.

The United Nations, for example, devotes more time to condemning Israel than all the other countries in the world combined, and the only explanation for this is that they are motivated by a hatred of the Jewish people and a hatred of their Jewish state.

When, on university campuses, there are demonstrations against buildings going up in the West Bank (something I might personally be opposed to), while ignoring the misdeeds of Syria, Yemen, Iran, the Hizbullah, and Hamas, there is no other explanation but a hatred of the Jewish people. The world did not care when the Palestinians were being oppressed and occupied by Egypt or Jordan. The world only became concerned when occupation accusations shifted to the nation-state of the Jewish people. Israel is the “Jew among the nations,” and to single out only Israel for delegitimization, condemnation, and demonization is perverse and the current form of anti-Semitism.

To put this brief on anti-Semitism in historical context, “legitimate” anti-Zionism can be traced to German Jews who considered Judaism merely a religion and not a nationality. However, this is not the subject at hand, nor is it the mindset of today’s anti-Semitic “anti-Zionists.” The current debate does not center around the philosophy of Zionism, but on the demonization of Israel not because of what it does, but because of what it *is*, and that is, a sovereign state of the Jews. There is no name for this other than anti-Semitism.

First, to understand the new anti-Semitic movement, its core values and outlook must be understood. The so-called “progressives” are largely *regressive*, in that they repress free speech and deny due process. These new McCarthyites are not truly liberals because they do not allow for freedom of thought, freedom of conscience, and freedom of speech. They show a fundamental disrespect for others who think differently from them. I consider myself a liberal, as are Chuck Schumer, Nancy Pelosi, Bill Clinton, and Hilary Clinton. We are all liberals, but we are not anti-Israel.

Anti-Israel rhetoric does not stem from liberals for the most part, but from radical leftists. The radical Left has been anti-Semitic since Voltaire and Marx. The radical Left and the radical Right both have shared elements of anti-Semitism. A problem we now face is that this outlook is slowly creeping into the minds of liberals. Peter Beinart deserves some of the blame for this phenomenon, because he presents himself as a liberal, not a radical leftist, and he has begun to use tropes, that at least others interpret and use to make broader arguments against the Jewish people, such as the influence of Jewish money. These can be heard from other Jews, too.

For example, Eric Yoffie, a former head of the Reform movement, attacked me in an article in *Ha'aretz*, for defending Benjamin Netanyahu against his current indictment, saying I must be doing it for the money.¹ He said that it was a matter of American businessman Sheldon Adelson's money. I have never received a penny for defending Netanyahu. How is Yoffie different from U.S. House of Representatives Congresswoman Ilhan Omar tweeting, "It's all about the Benjamins, baby." The trope that Jews do everything for money and that Jews use money to do everything is pervasive, and even Jews are guilty of this when attacking other Jews.

When Yoffie attacked me, he resorted to anti-Semitic tropes, that I must be doing what I do for the money, even though I have never spoken to Adelson about this subject and would never take orders from anybody, even a client, as to what to say on a given subject, as a matter of principle. The use of anti-Semitic tropes is finding its way into our everyday speech, writing, and rhetoric, and it is a dangerous development.

Not only are classical anti-Semitic terms being used in rhetoric against Israel, but other loaded catchphrases are being blatantly misused to smear Israel. One such term is calling Israel



U.S. Congresswoman Ilhan Omar
(D-MN).

Photo: Mandel Ngan/AFP

“an apartheid state.” Historically, we should recall that the campaign that misnamed Israel as an apartheid country was initiated by none other than an anti-Semite named Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa. Bishop Tutu, though highly respected, has proven himself a bigot, constantly speaking of the Jewish people’s influence and money, and not even Jews of biblical times are safe from his harsh condemnations. He once said that Israel and the Jews are very un-Christian. I was banned from speaking at a university in Cape Town because of my criticism of Bishop Tutu.

The apartheid claim generally comes from anti-Semites, and it is based on ignorance. Anybody who fought the war against South African apartheid as I did, along with Bishop Tutu, Nelson Mandela, and Canadian Supreme Court Justice and jurist Irwin Cotler, knows what apartheid is. Apartheid is not giving “people of color” the right to vote, among other basic rights. In Israel, of course, the Declaration of Independence assures the Arab citizens of Israel full, complete, and equal rights, and obviously, the Knesset has Arab members. Apartheid is a fake argument, but it is one that resonates with ignorant people who do not understand history and cannot distinguish true apartheid from the country in the Middle East that has the most equality.

If you want to find apartheid situations in the Middle East, look to Saudi Arabia for apartheid based on religion and gender or talk about Iranian apartheid based on sexual orientation. But don’t pick Israel, which has the best record of equality on all of these grounds of any country in the Middle East, and one of the best records of any country in the world.

THE MYTH OF “ILLEGAL OCCUPATION”

Another false claim is that of “occupation.” This term has crept into the popular parlance by way of the media adopting this inaccuracy from sources of propaganda and anti-Israel rhetoric, with politicians following along, lacking basic understanding about the terms and their legal meaning. One culprit is a man I voted for twice and campaigned for twice, President Barack Obama. President Obama, who, in a vengeful last act, a month before he left his presidency, actually pushed through, and did not just refuse to veto, a resolution saying that the *Kotel* - the Western Wall - was illegally occupied, that the Hebrew University and Hadassah Hospital access roads are illegally occupied, that the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem’s historic Old City, which has been populated by Jews for 3,000 years, is “illegally occupied.”

First, the term “illegal occupation” is a misnomer. The term “occupation” is a term of art in international law. It applies to “belligerent occupation” of sovereign territories by an external sovereign, whether it was Nazi Germany’s occupation of European states such as France, Belgium, and Holland or whether it was the Allied post-war occupation of Germany or imperial Japan.

The specific situation in the West Bank areas of Judea and Samaria after the 1967 war is not occupation, since the Palestinians never had a state there. It would be accurate to say that the lands are under dispute and subject to negotiation in line with the Oslo Accords of the 1990s. Yet, China’s occupation of Tibet, or Russia’s occupation of Chechnya, or Turkey’s occupation of Northern Cyprus are overlooked, as are other parts of the world today where there is genuine occupation.

There can be no “occupation” when on numerous occasions, in line with Oslo and subsequent peace initiatives, Israel offered to concede disputed land in exchange for peace and recognition. I know this because I sat across the table from Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and asked him if he would be willing to say that Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish people. He replied, “No,” he would not. Abbas also refuses to recognize the partition of 1947, which divided the British Mandate land into two countries, two homelands, one for the Jewish people of Palestine and the other for the Arab people of Palestine.

You cannot honestly call the situation between the Israelis and the Palestinians “apartheid” when Prime Minister Ehud Olmert offered the Palestinians an end to the so-called “occupation” in 2008, or when Prime Minister Ehud Barak offered to end the “occupation” in 2000. That is not “apartheid;” that is not even an “occupation.” That is just disputed territory over which the Israelis are prepared to compromise. This only requires that the Palestinians sit down with Israelis, which the Palestinian leadership has refused to do for over one decade, feigning various reasons, the latest of which has been the 2019 American Embassy move from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, which is a simple recognition of the Jewish right to its actual historical capital and does not negate the right to a Palestinian capital jointly located there at a later phase.

Even the situation of Arabs living on the West Bank bears no relationship to apartheid. The leadership has repeatedly rejected offers of statehood. Moreover, Arabs living in Ramallah, Jericho, and other West Bank cities have more freedom and control over their lives than most Arabs living in Muslim countries.

False claims and legal inaccuracies hurled at Israel freely by the Left beg the question, “Can Israel do anything about the new anti-Semitic bias in the form of anti-Zionism or anti-Israeli sentiments?” The answer is, unfortunately, nothing.

In my new book, *Defending Israel: My Lifelong Relationship with My Most Challenging Client*, I document how every time Israel did something positive, every time it gave away some of its territories, every time it sat down and negotiated, every time it offered a two-state solution, every time it offered the Palestinians the West Bank, the BDS and other attacks on Israel grew. There is an inverse relationship between conciliatory Israeli actions and the criticisms and attacks on Israel. The Boycott Divest Sanction movement is not a protest against Israeli decisions or actions; it is a crusade against Israel itself.

Just ask the founder of the movement, Omar Barghouti, who says that he believes in Palestine “from the river to the sea,” which means Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Ashdod. This makes the idea that Israel can counter this kind of belief system historically untenable since it is an attack on the very existence of Israel. According to the anti-Zionists, the only thing Israel can do to stop the criticism is pack up and leave, give up and commit politicide, which no country in the history of the world has ever done, and which Israel will not do.

Concessions drive radical attacks on Israel, and these attacks are not based on the “occupation,” the separation fence, the response to Gaza, the moving of the embassy, or the recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights. The attacks on Israel are not based on what Israel does, rather, they happen because of what Israel *is*, and that is the nation-state of the Jewish people.



Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas meets with Archbishop Desmond Tutu to discuss the Palestinian Unilateral Declaration of Independence at the United Nations on September 22, 2011, at a hotel in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

Photo: Stan Honda/AFP

Peter Beinart wrote an article justifying arguments that Israel should not be the nation-state of the Jewish people, saying that it is perfectly legitimate to criticize and attack the entire Zionist enterprise, and that it is not anti-Semitic to say that Israel should not exist, any more than it is anti-Kurdish to say that there should not be a Kurdish country.² But it *is* anti-Kurdish to say that there shouldn't be a Kurdish country. There *should* be a Kurdish country. And it is certainly anti-Semitic to say that there should not be a nation-state for the Jewish people.

This brings us to the question of what is truly legitimate criticism of Israel. Legitimate criticism should focus on issues and actions, not on what Israel is. Criticism must be equivalent to both sides. It must be criticism which passes what I call “the shoe on the other foot” test. If you criticize Israel for something, and the Palestinians do it too and do it worse, you must criticize them equally. If you criticize Israel, and other countries in the world are as bad or worse, you must put it in the context of those other countries. That is the key to legitimate criticism; *equality, symmetry of criticism, no double standards*, no singling out Israel because it is the nation-state of the Jewish people. Much of the current condemnation of Israel does not meet that definition of legitimacy.

Endnotes

- 1 <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-dershowitz-s-ludicrous-pitiful-conspiratorial-and-dangerous-defense-of-netanyahu-1.6984632>
- 2 <https://forward.com/opinion/419988/debunking-the-myth-that-anti-zionism-is-anti-semitic/>

How to Rescue Civil Discourse on Israel

Dan Diker and Alan Baker

ABSTRACT

Critics claim that their condemnation of Israel's policies are legitimate, not anti-Semitic, nor discriminatory. They have asserted that scholars of anti-Semitism and supporters of Israel "weaponize" charges of anti-Semitism to deter criticism.

Yet much of what is termed "criticism" falls under the widely-accepted International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Anti-Semitism, which adopted standards against the defamation of the Jewish State that mimic classic anti-Semitic patterns.

*As opposed to the anti-Israel slander that has become *de rigeur* in the public discourse, legitimate political critique would include the presentation of facts, stripped of political hyperbole, and framed in principles of evenhanded assessment and well-reasoned legal, historical, security, and diplomatic context, resulting in a far more productive Western dialogue.*

Israel should be judged by the same principles and standards as other nations, to avoid the prevalent tendency to defame, delegitimize, dehumanize, demonize, and deny its existence and its citizens' collective rights. Respectful civil discourse on Israel should be embraced as a moral standard and the international diplomatic, media, and public dialogue.



Most of the articles in this volume have defined and explored *Israelophobia* as a phenomenon that is shaped by, converges with, and generates anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. As Professor Alan Dershowitz has noted, “The current debate... centers around the demonization of Israel not because of what it does, but because of what it *is*, and that is, a sovereign state of the Jews.”



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addresses the United Nations General Assembly in New York City in 2011.

Avi Ohayon/IGPO

There are, however, other prominent voices in this debate over Israel. They claim that criticism of Israel and condemnation of its policies do not necessarily constitute anti-Semitism, discrimination, or hate speech, but rather represent legitimate political critique. These Western critics have also asserted that some scholars of anti-Semitism, and supporters of Israel “weaponize” charges of anti-Semitism to deter legitimate criticism of Israel’s policies, particularly regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.¹

Ironically, some of the most outspoken adversaries of Israeli policy, including Professors Norman Finkelstein, Noam Chomsky, Marc Lamont Hill, Noura Erekat, and Saree Makdisi,² regularly level criticism against Israel that falls without doubt under the widely-accepted International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Anti-Semitism,³ the 2010 State Department⁴ working definition, and the “3D” Test of anti-Semitism against individual Jews and the Jewish State as detailed by Natan Sharansky in this compendium.

Where critics of Israeli policy have fallen short is in their failure to provide a set of substantive principles defining the character of what they insist is “legitimate criticism” and not Israelophobia or anti-Semitism. This challenge appears fairly straightforward to well-intentioned critics with intellectual integrity. Legitimate political critique would likely include the presentation of raw facts, stripped of political hyperbole, and couched in principles of evenhanded assessment and well-reasoned legal, historical, security, and diplomatic context.⁵ These qualifiers would more equitably ground civil discourse and legitimate, important policy criticism of any nation-state, Israel among them.

That is what this article sets out to do. This brief does not seek to engage in polemics arguing for “this” or “that” policy. Rather it proposes a set of underlying principles that can guide deliberation and frame criticism of policy in general. These guidelines include depoliticized factual analysis, context, and acknowledgment of Israel’s legal, historical, security, and diplomatic claims that anchor political discourse and critique, on four sensitive topics; settlements, occupation, the West Bank security barrier, and borders. These topics have been among the most politicized, distorted, and mischaracterized in the decades-long history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

THE DISCOURSE ON SETTLEMENTS

The issue of Israeli “settlements” has been discussed and debated without context and acknowledgment or appreciation of Israel’s rights and claims. Indeed, it is significant and even reasonable to acknowledge that Israel has historic, security, and legal claims regarding the land in Judea and Samaria that serve as the basis for its rights to establish Jewish settlements.⁶ Israel’s historical and modern legal claims deserve to be equitably considered and not rejected out of hand simply because the word “settlements” has been subjected to a mistaken and misguided connotation as “illegal” or devoid of legitimacy.

Critics may not agree with Israel’s substantive claims, and they are entitled and encouraged to argue against them. In the case of settlements, however, critics and supporters need to understand the legal arguments against settlements, as they appear in a memorandum prepared by former U.S. State Department legal advisor Herbert Hansell of the Carter Administration.⁷

At the same time, both critics and supporters of Israel’s legal claims to establishing Jewish communities must familiarize themselves with Israel’s legal refutation of the Hansell memo.⁸ Moreover, in 2020, the United States concurred with Israel’s legal reasoning and principled position on the legality of Jewish settlements. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo’s counter-claim and legal refutation of the Hansell opinion of 1978 must also be equitably and objectively considered as part of civil discourse on the settlement issue.

Context and comparisons to other settlements in other disputed areas must also be considered. The Turks have established settlements in occupied Northern Cyprus, the Moroccans in occupied Western Sahara, and the Russians in occupied Crimea.

Neither governments, international media, nor international human rights organizations have referred to those situations of settlement by branding Turkey, Morocco, or Russia as apartheid states, war criminals, or genocidal countries. Their rights, and the question of whether such settlement activity is justified if ever referred to, have not been rejected out of hand.

In short, fair assessment requires one to avoid rejecting *a-priori* Israel's legal, security, and historic claims to settlements merely because of the negative international connotation applied to the word "settlement." The issue must be considered substantively and objectively as meriting criticism or not, or as acceptable or not.

One may legitimately agree with the 1978 Hansell interpretation that settlement building contravenes the requirements of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention and that it does not answer the humanitarian criteria set out by international humanitarian law. However, any such viewpoint would need to note that Israel and the State Department legal advisors in the Trump Administration argue that the Hansell opinion is mistaken and that it wrongly interprets the Fourth Geneva Convention, which was aimed at preventing the Nazi regime's mass expulsions and forced transfer of populations into occupied territories under their control, as occurred in occupied Europe. This is not what Israel is doing. Therefore, that legal criticism is irrelevant if it is based on the misapplication of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

THE DISCOURSE ON OCCUPATION

This issue continues to suffer from the most politicized and distorted mischaracterization of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict's core disputes. The original text of the 1964 Palestinian Liberation



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks at the 70th UN General Assembly in New York in 2015.

Photo: IGPO

Organization (PLO) Charter denotes Israel's existence within the 1949 armistice lines as "illegal."⁹ This was a full three years before Israel was forced to enter the West Bank to defend its citizens from Jordan's artillery and sniper attacks against Jewish neighborhoods in Jerusalem.

Since then, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and his successor Mahmoud Abbas have weaponized the term "occupation." They have also transformed it into a non-existent legal concept of "*illegal occupation*," which some governments, international organizations, diplomats, media, and human rights activists have blindly adopted, thereby recasting Israel as an illegal, apartheid entity, and war criminal.¹⁰



The security fence separating the Arab village of Abu Dis from Jerusalem.

Photo: Moshe Milner

This distortion has even evolved into the term “*occupied Palestinian territory*” (“OPT”) despite the fact no sovereign Palestinian entity has ever existed. Apart from numerous politically-generated and non-binding UN resolutions, there has never been a binding legal international instrument that determines that the territories are Palestinian. But “OPT” has nevertheless become *lingua franca* within the international community.

Understanding the term “occupation” requires a depoliticized understanding of facts and their international legal context. International law considers occupation to be a legal situation falling under the international laws of armed conflict. It is a legal term of art. It refers to a provisional situation of belligerency in which one sovereign power occupies during an armed conflict, the territory of another sovereign power, pending an

agreed resolution between the parties in conflict. Occupying powers have both obligations and privileges under international humanitarian law.¹¹

“Occupation” was never the case with respect to Israel. Critics cannot ignore Israel’s oft-repeated claim that its status in the West Bank areas of Judea and Samaria is unique (*sui generis*) inasmuch as these areas were never considered to be sovereign Jordanian territory.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan’s annexation of the West Bank in 1950 was never internationally recognized. Critics accusing Israel of being an “illegal occupier” have ignored the fact that Israel legitimately took control over non-sovereign territories during the 1967 war. As such, it has been Israel’s consistent position that the Fourth Geneva Convention’s reference to “belligerent occupation” cannot be applicable to Israel’s unique status. The correct denomination of the status of the territory should, therefore, be termed “disputed” and not “occupied.”

One may indeed criticize an occupying power’s behavior in the light of norms of humanitarian law. But occupation, in and of itself, is not an illegal situation. It must be considered objectively, without the negative, political connotation that it has cynically been given by opponents and critics within the international community, as a means to defame, condemn, and delegitimize Israel’s legal, historic, and security claims that serve as the basis for its presence in the territories east of the 1949 Armistice Lines.

Critics with intellectual and moral integrity would be advised to research any situation of occupation with objectivity, on its merits. Serious, fair-minded discourse must deal with occupation substantively, devoid of any politicized context.



Construction of the security fence near the Megido Junction in northern Israel.

Photo: Amos Ben Gershon/IGPO

DISCOURSE ON THE WEST BANK SECURITY BARRIER

Civil discourse and fair consideration of the West Bank security barrier must take into account the extensive deception campaign that has misled and mischaracterized the undertaking of this defensive anti-terror measure.

The security barrier was established in 2003 following a tidal wave of infiltrations by Palestinian terrorists and suicide bombings in Israeli towns and villages, which had claimed hundreds of Israeli lives from 2000 to 2003.¹² From the start, the barrier was intended to be an interim security measure, not a political border. That is why it was erected virtually on the indefensible 1949 Armistice Line. Its construction was accompanied by constant legal supervision by Israel's Supreme Court to ensure that the security requirement did not prejudice the basic humanitarian

rights of the Palestinian landowners and residents on the eastern (Palestinian) side of the barrier. To the contrary, the land used was temporarily placed under Israel's security jurisdiction, and market rates of compensation and rent were offered to the owners of private land used.

This anti-bombing barrier reduced incidents of Palestinian suicide bombings by more than 90 percent.

However, the Palestinian Authority, PLO-affiliated NGOs in Ramallah, as well as the global BDS campaign rebranded Israel's West Bank security barrier as "the Apartheid Wall."¹³ The life-saving success of the security barrier has not prevented the international usage of the phrase "Apartheid Wall," advancing the false claim that the security barrier is nothing more than a land grab aimed at racial segregation, ethnic cleansing, and apartheid, as the global BDS campaign has charged.

Clearly, and despite the political distortion and false propaganda regarding the barrier, an objective overview of the historic and security context is critically important in understanding Israel's decision to erect the barrier - to block infiltration into Israel's cities and towns by suicide bombers and to guard against Palestinian sniper fire on some of Israel's main highways. In 2019 alone, the Israel Security Agency thwarted 560 significant terrorist attacks, including more than 300 shootings.¹⁴

It is no less important to note that the nomenclature "wall" is factually incorrect in that approximately 90 percent of the barrier is a fence, and some 10 percent a concrete wall in proximity to Israel's central north-south highway and residential areas.

The rational discourse on the security barrier should take into consideration the genuine and substantive reasons for its

existence, as well as Israel's Supreme Court's requirement that it remain a temporary measure as long as the terror threat continues, after which the barrier has to be removed. The court permitted the fence as a defensive, life-saving measure to block terrorist infiltration, yet, ordered it rerouted following petitions of some Palestinian landowners in the West Bank.

It is worth noting that that the construction of the fence was opposed by many Israelis, among them Israeli Arabs who had regularly shopped and dined in Bethlehem and other Palestinian-controlled cities in the West Bank, until Palestinian terror became too deadly to countenance.

In contrast to Israel's Supreme Court's substantive factual and legal determinations regarding the necessity for the erection of the barrier, the UN General Assembly's knee-jerk condemnation of the security barrier as a *violation of international law* was rubber-stamped in a 2004 advisory opinion by the UN's International Court of Justice that categorically disregarded the life-saving purpose of the barrier and relied only on submissions by the Palestinians and Arab states.¹⁵

THE DISCOURSE ON BORDERS

A well-reasoned civil discourse on the topic of Israel's borders must take into account historical facts and contextual legal components regarding Israel's international legal rights in the area. Many observers and critics alike neglect or ignore these historical and legal rights that were recognized in 1917 in the Balfour Declaration's promise of a national home for the Jews in Palestine that was subsequently affirmed by the League of Nations, the legal predecessor to the United Nations. Israel's legal



An aerial shot of the
Jordan Valley
Photo: IGPO



Aerial view of the Jewish town of Efrat in the Gush Etzion bloc near Jerusalem.

Photo: Yaacov Saar/IGPO

rights have been incorporated into international law through a series of legal instruments and resolutions, such as the 1920 San Remo Declaration and the 1922 League of Nations Mandate Instrument for Palestine. These resolutions have been carried forward and protected by Article 80 of the UN Charter.

Thus, the false and simplistic Palestinian call to return to “1967 borders” is incompatible with the historic and legal background. However, the widely accepted yet legally flawed and false term “1967 borders” has nevertheless become a staple component of the Palestinian narrative despite the fact that no such borders have ever existed. The lines from which Israeli forces entered the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967 were nothing more than temporary 1949 Armistice Demarcation lines that the Arab parties to the agreements demanded remain temporary lines and not final political borders.

This fact and all rudimentary historic context have been missing in international discourse and deliberation on the issue of borders. Instead they have been replaced by highly politicized assertions that favor the Palestinians' misleading and viral narrative that established factually and legally false political terminology.

Author Alan Baker, former Legal Advisor to Israel's Foreign Ministry, referenced these broadly accepted buzzwords in his earlier essay in this volume. Such buzzwords prevent truth-based, depoliticized civil discourse on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Facts and historical context on the core issue of borders are critical. UN Security Council Resolution 242 (1967) called for negotiation on "secure and recognized boundaries," thereby indicating formally that the 1949 armistice demarcation lines were never secure and recognized boundaries. Any serious and well-reasoned deliberation over Israel's borders must take into account UNSC Res 242, which the British and American drafters and diplomats at the time stated clearly would not mean a return to the indefensible and unrecognized 1949 armistice lines.¹⁶

The international community, in buying into the blatant lie generated by the Palestinian leadership calling for Israeli withdrawal to the non-existent "1967 borders," has turned this into a form of "lawfare." Critics and neutral observers alike would be advised to seek a fact-based discourse on the issue of borders, taking into consideration the genuine and substantive security, historical, demographic, and religious factors necessary to determine any freely negotiated bilateral border, as directed by the Oslo accords, and more recently the U.S. peace plan. It takes two parties to determine a border which cannot be imposed by false and misleading clichés.

CONCLUSION

Since the establishment of modern nation-states with the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, Israel has been the only democratic nation-state whose existence has been constantly and consistently rejected and attacked since the day of its establishment in 1948, 36 months following the revelation of the Nazi regime's mass murder of European Jewry. It would appear reasonable that any well-reasoned civil discourse on Israel would include an appreciation of its security concerns, historical and legal rights, and its diplomatic claims.

The principles of fact and context-based discussion on Israel would result in far more productive international dialogue than the current one.

Finally, Israel should be judged by the same values as other nation states, values that overcome the current tendency to defamation, delegitimization, dehumanization, demonization, and denial of equal treatment under the law.¹⁷

Instead, respectful and well-reasoned principles outlined here underlie respectful civil discourse that should be embraced as a moral standard in the international diplomatic, media, and public dialogue on Israel.

Endnotes

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- 3 The IHRA Working Definition of Anti-Semitism, adopted in 2016, states: “Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.” <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/working-definition-antisemitism>
- 4 <https://www.state.gov/defining-anti-semitism/>
- 5 Professor Irwin Cotler, former Canadian Minister of Justice, has said that criticism with integrity would be characterized by avoiding the “5D’s” in the application of political criticism: demonization, denial of equality under the law, deligitimization, defamation, and dehumanization. In a discussion with the author, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, February 9th 2020,
- 6 <https://jcpa.org/article/israels-rights-territories-settlements/> See also <https://jcpa.org/article/the-legality-of-israels-settlements/>
- 7 See Hansell letter from 1978: https://www.hlrn.org/img/documents/USSDLegalAdvisorHansell_ltr.pdf
- 8 <https://jcpa.org/article/the-legality-of-israels-settlements/>
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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BvzSv28z97o&t=9s>
- 11 https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/ohchr_syria_-_belligerent_occupation_-_legal_note_en.pdf
- See also, Alan Baker <https://jcpa.org/israels-rights-territories-international-law/> and <https://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/294359/israels-rights-in-the-west-bank-under-international-law>
- Israel bases its right to use territories under its legal occupation based on the 1907 Hague Convention concept of “usufructuary”, see <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/WebART/195-200065>
- 12 Hundreds of Israeli civilians were killed in terror attacks between 2000 and 2003 and 213 victims in 2003 alone. <https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFA-Archive/2004/Pages/2003%20Terrorism%20Review.aspx>
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- 14 <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Shin-Bet-chief-Argaman-We-thwarted-560-terror-attacks-this-year614723->
- 15 <https://www.icc-cpi.int/Pages/item.aspx?name=20191220=otp-statement-palestine>
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The Africa-Israel Renaissance as a Response to Diplomatic Delegitimation

Dore Gold

ABSTRACT

Since the beginnings of the rebirth of Jewish statehood, there has been a strong ideological link between Israel and the African continent. Theodore Herzl, the founder of modern Zionism Wrote: “I am not ashamed to say, though I may expose myself to ridicule for saying so, that once I have witnessed the redemption of the Jews, my people, I wish also to assist in the redemption of the Africans.”

The Jewish People also had multiple bonds with the anti-apartheid movement. There were South African Jews who had fought in the Palmach Jewish militia in 1948 and were prepared to share their military experience with the ANC. Mandela himself had read The Revolt by Menachem Begin.

On July 4, 2016, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu embarked on a ground-breaking four-nation tour of Africa beginning in Uganda and reaching Rwanda, Kenya, and Ethiopia. It was the first time in 30 years that an Israeli prime minister made such a trip. At his first stop, which was the Entebbe airport, representatives from three other African states joined, including South Sudan, Zambia, and Tanzania.



Foreign Minister Golda Meir at festivities marking the start of the Gadna (*Gedudei No'ar*, the Youth Corps) course chats with participants from Africa and Asia in 1961.

Photo: Paul Goodman/IGPO

The purpose of the event at Entebbe was to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Entebbe raid when Israel sent elite commandos to rescue Israeli hostages hijacked aboard an Air France passenger jet by Palestinian and German terrorists. Entebbe was where the prime minister's brother, Yonatan Netanyahu, who commanded the operation, lost his life in 1976. But, in 2016, the event took on another dimension: Israel and Africa are reengaging.

Israel continued to undertake diplomatic initiatives in the African continent. Advised by an African foreign minister that South Africa would be a “hard nut to crack” for Israel, the Israeli foreign ministry nevertheless dispatched a diplomatic mission to Pretoria to negotiate and sign a set of new bilateral agreements. During 2016, Israel also focused on the Sahel region (north-central Africa south of the Sahara Desert), re-establishing diplomatic relations with Guinea (Conakry) on the Atlantic coast of Africa. Israeli efforts then focused on a belt of countries across the Sahara from Guinea to Mali, Niger, and Chad, up to the border of Sudan.

The following year, Netanyahu flew to Liberia to attend the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Summit in Liberia. Israel hoped to resume its observer status in the African Union (AU). While Israel had been an observer in this organization in the past, it found itself blocked from resuming its previous status by the head of the AU Commission, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, the ex-wife of the then-president of South Africa. In the interim, this made the subregional grouping, ECOWAS, more attractive.

WHY AFRICA?

Most observers associate Africa with poverty, disease, and economic underdevelopment. But there is an African economic development story that is drawing the great powers to the continent. According to *The Economist*, Turkish trade with sub-Saharan Africa alone grew 216 percent between 2006 and 2018. Trade with China grew 226 percent for the same period, while trade with India shot up 292 percent. The sub-Saharan countries themselves are showing enormous growth on their own of more than five percent annually in 2019.



Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir greets visiting Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini Kabhekuzulu in Jerusalem in 1991.

Photo: Tsvika Israeli/IGPO

Looking to the future, Africa is anticipated to undergo a virtual population explosion with Nigeria alone having a larger working-age population than either China or India by 2034. Nigeria's population is expected to exceed the population of the entire European Union together by 2050. All this points to future demand for foodstuffs, medical support, and security services. It also points to the need for Europe to influence this population

boom to its south –unless it is apathetic about a huge migrant population likely to flow northward.

Israel cannot compete with these international actors seeking their share of Africa's future growth. But Israel has specialized resources that are of particular utility to African states. Israeli medical teams and agricultural extension services are active in Africa. African states have been accustomed to building large water purification systems near their capitals. Israel also produces small water purification systems that are highly mobile. These might not be the first choice of central governments, but they have been sought by tribal chieftains who often seek decentralized solutions to their needs.

WHY ISRAEL?

Since the beginnings of the rebirth of Jewish statehood, there has been a strong ideological link between Israel and the African continent. The founder of modern Zionism, Theodore Herzl, wrote in his memoirs:

“There is still one other question arising out of the disaster of nations which remains unsolved to this day, and whose profound tragedy only a Jew can comprehend. This is the African question. Just call to mind all those terrible episodes of the slave trade, of human beings who, merely because they were black, were stolen like cattle, taken prisoner, captured, and sold...I am not ashamed to say, though I may expose myself to ridicule for saying so, that once I have witnessed the redemption of the Jews, my people, I wish also to assist in the redemption of the Africans.”

Herzl's words were quoted by Golda Meir, Israel's former prime minister, who previously served as foreign minister when she

launched an African diplomatic initiative for Israel in 1958, visiting Ivory Coast, Ghana, Liberia, Senegal, and Zaire. Israel's diplomatic reengagement with Africa was always regarded as inspiring by its foreign policy elites. As the constraints on that re-engagement were removed, Israel was able to restore ties with the continent.

The fall of Muammar Qaddafi, Libya's strongman, opened the doors for Israeli ties with Chad and the other Sahel states. Moreover, as Israel's relations with the Arab states improved, there was no reason why a similar improvement could not be pursued with those African states.

In early 2020, the president of Sudan, which shifted from the pro-Iranian camp to the pro-Saudi camp was prepared to meet the Prime Minister of Israel in public for the first time. The opportunities for a further expansion of African-Israeli ties were growing.

There was another aspect of Israel's return to Africa, but it is likely to be fully appreciated only in the years ahead. Israelis perceived that there was a growing rift between them and the Jewish communities of the West, especially the progressive parts of the American Jewish community. It remains to be tested whether joint undertakings in Africa could help supply the glue that could bond different parts of world Jewry that is facing a growing split between its universalistic and particularistic agendas.

It is especially necessary to correct the false narrative about Israel as an allegedly "apartheid state." The Jewish people had multiple bonds with the anti-apartheid movement that needed to be recognized.

Thus, in 1961 Nelson Mandela took refuge from the apartheid police at the famous Liliesleaf Farm outside of Johannesburg,



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu introduces then-Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dore Gold to Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni on July 4, 2016.

Photo: Uganda Presidential Press Unit

where the ANC undertook military training. There were Jews there who had fought in the Israeli Palmach militia in 1948, who were prepared to share their military experience with the ANC. Mandela himself recalled spending much of his time reading books, including one particular book entitled *The Revolt*, by Menachem Begin.

In 2016, this author shared this story with the hardline foreign minister of South Africa, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, using it to



Then Director General of the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dore Gold speaks with South African youth about Israel at Mandela House in Soweto in 2016.

Photo: MFA

break the ice between them. He stressed to her that the head of her national liberation movement read a book by the head of his Jewish national liberation movement about its anti-colonial war against the British precisely when Mandela was preparing for South African liberation.

There are certain truths about Jewish-African ties that need to be shared if the normalization of their relations is to be completed. The recent events, particularly African-Israel reengagement, indicate that the replacement of the older narrative about Africa and Israel with a newer, updated narrative has begun.

Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism as Challenges to American Jewry

Daniel Gordis

ABSTRACT

The status and security of Jews in America are under attack, and as a result, the alliance between American Jews and Israel is also besieged. Anti-Semitic hate crimes are on the rise, with some perpetrators belonging to the far-Right, while the Left has mainstreamed anti-Semitic tropes.

As a result, as their ancestors did in Europe, American Jews find themselves to be the ultimate “other” once again: to the Right, they are not sufficiently American; to the Left, they are not sufficiently a minority. Many American Jews feel discomfort with Zionist particularism, and identify instead with universalist progressives. They fear being ostracized for supporting Israel.

American Jews have trouble seeing criticism of Israel as anti-Semitic because of the way they perceive their own American nationalism and the separation of national identity from religious identity, though the anti-Israel barrage is fundamentally anti-Semitic in its denial of Israel’s existence.



Members of the Jewish community and their allies protest anti-Semitism and the National Students for Justice in Palestine conference at the UCLA campus in Los Angeles, California on November 6, 2018.

Photo: Ronen Tivony/Nur Photo

Let us begin with what is now undeniable – the status and cultural security of Jews in America are under attack, and as a result, the alliance between American Jews and Israel is also besieged. The causes and manifestations of these developments are far too complex to be addressed in a brief essay of this sort. But even in this space, we can describe some of the critical lenses through which today’s challenges – I would say crisis – ought to be viewed.

There have long been hints that Jews were going to become a legitimate target in America, much as they had been in Europe. During his campaign for the presidency, Donald Trump pretended not to know who David Duke was and thus avoided having to condemn him. That denial-with-a-wink did him no political damage. There were

campaign ads showing George Soros and other prominent Jews alongside images of dollars and money. That, too, bore no political cost. Much more alarming, though, were the Charlottesville protests, which led not only to the killing of an innocent woman but to the chant, by numerous protesters, of “Jews will not replace us.”

That chant spoke volumes. The “us,” of course, was “America;” and the clear implication of that chant was that Jews were no longer America. To put it differently, for some time, Jews had considered themselves “white,” part of the mainstream. “Jews will not replace us” made clear what had long been brewing – Jews were no longer “white;” like other minorities, they were meant to be consigned to the margins of American life. The killings in Pittsburgh at the Tree of Life Synagogue, while the work of one deranged man with a gun, illustrated the lethal power of a combination of hate, social media, and hundreds of millions of American guns.

Yet the game-changer – or the moment that made it clear that the game had changed – was the series of tweets by Congresswoman Ilhan Omar in early 2019 about Jews. Her tweets were not about Israel’s policy, but about classic anti-Jewish memes. It’s “all about the Benjamins,” she tweeted, once again linking Jews to money. Why has the United States been so supportive of Israel, she asked in an earlier tweet (which was subsequently deleted), because Israel has “hypnotized the world.” But a country, of course, cannot hypnotize anyone. Only people can. Israelis cannot effectively hypnotize America. The people who shape American foreign policy are Americans – the hypnotism accusation, therefore, was a dig not at Israel, but at American Jews, and their “control” over American foreign policy. Nor was that claim entirely new; it was just a variation on the theme put forth by Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer when they published *The Israel Lobby* more than a decade ago.

If matters have been slowly changing for a long time, why call what is happening now a game changer? What is much more alarming than Ilhan Omar's tweets themselves is the fact that when the House of Representatives, reeling from the overt Jew-baiting of one of its new members, could not muster the votes to pass a resolution condemning anti-Semitism. Omar herself was not to be mentioned in the resolution, yet even so, too many Democratic members of the House were going to vote against the resolution for it to pass. Rather than expose that deep rift in the party as the 2020 presidential campaign was just getting underway, Democrats broadened the resolution to include many forms of hate, and it passed.

However, none of that should obfuscate what we learned in the House that week – in today's climate, the House could not pass a resolution condemning anti-Semitism.

Now, some people will suggest that matters are not all that dire. The resolution, they suggest, singled out Omar even though she was not mentioned. And to assail her when so many others have made anti-Semitic comments in the past would be a “pile-on” on a woman, a woman of color, a hijab-wearing Muslim, and an immigrant. To pass a resolution on anti-Semitism, when it clearly had her in mind, would have been tantamount to Islamophobia.

That, though, is precisely the problem. The orthodoxies of progressive life in America protect immigrants, women, Muslims, and many other minority groups, but they do not protect Jews. Jews, therefore, find themselves where they long found themselves in Europe – alone. To the Right, they are not sufficiently American; and to the Left, they are not sufficiently a minority. What the Right and Left share – as they did when McCarthy and Stalin both persecuted the Jews at the same time, one accusing the Jews of being Communists and the other accusing them of undermining Communism – is their targeting the Jew not because of what the Jews are or believe, but because the Jews, once again, are the convenient “other.”

THE JEWISH REACTION TO THE ASSAULT

If one dimension of this crisis is the assault – sometimes explicit and at times more camouflaged – on the place of Jews in American society, what is no less problematic is how American Jews have and have not responded. When it comes to outright anti-Semitism, many lay-leaders of national Jewish organizations have been hesitant to take on the Left because they worry about being perceived as supporting President Trump. While Jews' antipathy to Trump (despite some ostensibly pro-Israel actions) is understandable, American Jews' modeling to a younger generation their refusal to unabashedly work to protect the advances that they have made in America will prove historically foolhardy.

American Jews are particularly stymied when it comes to battling the anti-Semitism that presents itself as criticism of Israel, or even anti-Zionism. Criticism of any country is legitimate; in fact, American Jews would say that their critique of America, from the Right, Left or elsewhere, is proof of their love for their country. What many American Jews have trouble teasing out is how criticism of Israel is often different from their own critique of America, because it is fundamentally opposed to the existence of the State of Israel; since the State has been key to the Jewish people's revival, that anti-Israel barrage is fundamentally anti-Semitic.

For years, the Jewish Voice for Peace masqueraded as a pro-Jewish statement, simply opposed to Israel's policies. It has finally come clean and acknowledged that it opposes Israel's existence. But BDS and If Not Now, among others, continue the charade, and the response of American Judaism has been muddied. The same with Ilhan Omar – she says that it's about the Benjamins, and is defended by those who say she has a right to critique Israel. Yet too few people have pointed out that she was not criticizing Israel,



but attacking Jews. The inability of many to make that distinction has paralyzed much of Jewish America, though that may be slowly beginning to change.

A deeper root of American Judaism's paralysis in the face of these attacks has to do with a longstanding American Jewish discomfort with Zionism. When Woodrow Wilson told recently naturalized citizens in 1915 that they could be American only if they were completely American, that they could not retain other national attachments, he was not engaging in Trumpian xenophobia,



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (right) and his wife Sara together with U.S. President Donald Trump (left) and First Lady Melania Trump at the Prime Minister's Residence in Jerusalem.

Photo: Avi Ohayon, IGPO

but rather, was welcoming immigrants wholeheartedly. Yet that demand that Americans be *only* Americans would become problematic for Jews once Zionism began to gain traction. Two years after Wilson's admonition, the British issued the Balfour Declaration. Given Wilson, how should American Jews have responded to Zionism? Could they embrace the movement without endangering their place in America?

The challenge of dual loyalty is thus older even than Israel itself. Louis Brandeis, appointed by Wilson to serve on the Supreme

Court, sought to fashion a form of American Zionism that could bridge that ideological divide, but it ultimately did not work. Chaim Weizmann called what Brandeis created a “Yankee Doodle Judaism” and ultimately wrested control of the Zionist movement from Brandeis. Shortly after Israel’s creation, Jacob Blaustein, then president of the American Jewish Committee, warned David Ben-Gurion not to overestimate Israel’s importance to American Jews; the AJC had supported the Partition Plan, he reminded the Prime Minister, because a Jewish state was the best solution to the problem of thousands of Jewish displaced persons in Europe. Ben-Gurion should not imagine that American Jews saw Jewish nationalism as the fulfillment of *their* dreams. A decade or so later, when Israel captured Adolph Eichmann and brought him to Israel for trial, many American Jews were incensed. Eichmann, after all, had not killed any Israelis – he killed Jews. So by virtue of what had Israel appointed itself the agent of Jews everywhere?

Fast forward half a century, and young American Jews, now committed to America’s progressive values with a religious intensity (for progressivism is, in fact, their religion), have inherited that discomfort with Israel and taken it further. The universalism of progressive America cannot easily accommodate a particularist project like Israel. For American Jews, to whom Judaism is a religion and not a nationality, a Jewish state seems strange, since peoples – not religions – have states. Desperate to be allied with African-Americans, gays and lesbians, immigrants and climate activists, young American Jews find themselves ostracized by progressives if they speak publicly about Israel attachments. It is easier, they have found, to abandon Israel as a cause, or at times, to join organizations that attack the Jewish state, to preserve their progressive credentials.

If it were only young American Jews who were confounded by this assault on Israel, and thus on American Jews who support Israel, matters would be serious enough. But the problem is not limited only to the young. Speak to successful Jewish professionals in their 40's and 50's in New York or Boston (the two American cities where I spent the most time) and you will hear people quietly say that they desperately want to be able to support Israel and fight the assault on the Jewish state, but they cannot afford to. Either socially or professionally, or both, the costs would be too high.

That is simply not the America in which many of us were raised. We had been taught that the singling out of the Jew was a European phenomenon that would not make its way to the shores of the United States. Yet that optimistic postulate has been largely upended of late. For many American Jews, the determination to fight back would require an ability to formulate some value proposition about Judaism, about why it matters, about why it merits surviving, about what its contribution to the world was, and might still be. But such a conversation requires infinitely more knowledge about Jewish civilization than the average American Jew can muster; as a result, the safest response to the assault on Israel and the Judaism of America is to shrink back, to try to stay under the radar.

That is precisely what the progressive assailants hope Jews will do; Jewish impotence will only hasten the assailants' victory. If the House of Representatives' failure to pass its resolution condemning anti-Semitism is any indication, it is not only Jews who are failing to fight back – it is also the very political party with which Jews have long been overwhelmingly associated. That is highly inauspicious, and one can only wonder how long and how dark will be the road we have now begun to travel.



Chabad Rabbi Yisroel Goldstein, injured in the deadly synagogue shooting in Poway, California, hugs his congregants after a press conference on April 28, 2019.

Photo: Sandy Huffaker/AFP

Walking a Thin Line: American Jewry's Tightrope Act in Tough Times

Malcolm Hoenlein

ABSTRACT

Political rhetoric and media hype obfuscate the real issues and dumb down discourse regarding Israel, with journalists shirking their ethical obligation of objectivity to present both sides equally.

An anti-Semitic “deviancy down” pattern has seen old tropes in the public sphere fire up harassment, violence, and murder against Jews in synagogues, on the streets, and on college campuses.

Political leadership and perpetrators of anti-Semitic hate speech must be held to account for their actions and words, and Jews must build solidarity and educate themselves and others of their history and the dangers of this hate.

American Jewry is suffering a spike in anti-Semitism expressed in both physical violence and verbal abuse, with the Pittsburgh and Poway synagogue shootings serving as the most horrifying examples of this disturbing trend. Many American Jews are now apprehensive about displaying their identity for fear of physical attack. In addition to classic hatred, personified in right-wing anti-Semitism, Jews are also being bullied, especially young Jews on college campuses, if they show their support for Israel.

The American Left has taken the offensive, associating pro-Israel stances with President Trump, and Jews who associate themselves with Zionism find themselves victims of progressive hostility and ire. After struggling for centuries for civil rights and contributing to American society in every way possible, American Jewry finds itself confounded by these events and uneasy about their future as Jews in the United States.

The progressive movement, including both non-Jews and many committed Jews, traditionally loyal to the Democratic Party, see Trump's close alliance with Netanyahu as evidence of assumed wrongdoing, making Jewish loyalty to Israel suspicious, uncomfortable, and even embarrassing. Jews do not stand up for Israel for fear of being seen as supportive of Trump, opening them to social alienation and ridicule.

Political discourse and media hype obfuscate real issues and dumb down debate regarding Israel, with journalists shirking their ethical obligation of objectivity to present both sides equally. From my viewpoint as an activist for American Jewry, at first the problem seemed to be the political situation in Israel and its presentation in the media, and the reaction it triggered among Americans, both Jews and non-Jews. Somehow, though, the problem morphed into an aggressive attack from both sides of the political spectrum.

Anti-Semitic statements both in relation to Jews, as in traditional anti-Semitism, and in the form of anti-Zionist pronouncements such as those made by Representatives Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib, among others, are becoming increasingly popular, causing intimidation, vandalism, and violence in schools, on college campuses, in the streets, and on social media. Former senator and UN Ambassador Daniel Patrick Moynihan once described this anti-Semitic "deviancy down" pattern: anti-Semitic tropes that

imply that Jews control the world with money, have dual loyalty to Israel and the United States, are wasting American tax money with military aid, and are ruthless to their Palestinian neighbors, all play on old anti-Semitic accusations – Jews are greedy, disloyal, and monstrous. Once these ideas, that are rooted in the Arab-Israeli conflict sink in, hatred and violence ensue on American soil, from the Left and the Right.

We see more aggressive actions on campuses with few exceptions. Jewish students who are not even active for Israel are targets for pro-Palestinian students who pin “eviction notices” on the doors of their dorm rooms. Jews are randomly called “Zionist pigs” just for wearing Jewish symbols or clothing. The Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS) movement on campus, represented by Students for Justice in Palestine and Israel Apartheid Week, have become fixtures at college, literally silencing the voices of Jewish students and keeping them in the underground, barring their defense of the Jewish state. Though some college presidents, such as the presidents of Cornell and Brown, have issued strong repudiations of BDS, we continue to see much more aggressive activities against Jews on campus, including physical attacks. Pitzer College, sought to cut off its affiliation with Haifa University. Harvard’s undergraduate council budgeted money for Israel Apartheid Week. In a conference co-sponsored by the University of North Carolina and Duke, eight anti-Israel Palestinian films were shown, with no representation of Israel on the discussion panel, and consequently, no balance. The nature of the BDS movement on campus and beyond is destructive and has a ripple effect in the Jewish community.

Unfortunately, this phenomenon is not limited to college campuses, as can be seen in manifestations in high schools across the country, with swastika graffiti on walls. The numbers of such events are

much greater than what is reported. Community synagogues, centers, schools, and organizations are very reluctant to take security measures, but that is changing. Our Secure Community Alert Network (SCAN) operation is swamped with requests. Every morning we get a report of anti-Jewish activity on and off campuses, and there are incidences – without exaggeration – every single day in the United States. Out of our concern for anti-Semitism across the United States, we have consulted with the Department of Homeland Security on these issues and have conducted exercises with their guidance.

More disturbing than vandalism is the anti-Semitic violence that is on an upswing in the United States, especially in light of the synagogue murders in Pittsburgh and Poway. In Brooklyn alone, there have been dozens of physical assaults on Jews in 2019, many of which were caught on camera. This seems to be a permanent fixture in the world of American Jewry and is no longer a passing phase. Ironically, it seems that right-wing anti-Semitism is encouraged and energized partly by progressive rhetoric on Israel.

The new progressives are filling a vacuum in American leadership, with many rallying around politicians with extreme opinions, such as Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, instead of embracing a more centrist position as was done in previous decades of American politics. This polarization of American society and politics hurts Jews. Politicians like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Bernie Sanders have spoken against Israel, and have come to Ilhan Omar's defense.

Jim Clyburn, the Democratic Party's deputy whip, one of the top members of their leadership, made a statement excusing Omar for her anti-Semitic tweets, as did Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi. Clyburn said Omar's suffering was more immediate than that of

Holocaust survivors.¹ Pelosi, who smiled at Clyburn during this speech, excused Omar by saying that Omar had a “different use of words.”² Old-line Democratic Party leaders made these statements, while the young power players, largely anti-Israel politicians, gain popularity outside of their constituencies and are asked to speak all over the country, broadening their support. The progressives have a problem with Israel’s growing power, which they resent ideologically. They do not realize that the BDS movement does not hurt Israel as much as it impacts the Palestinians financially by denormalizing their relations with Israel and, thereby, undermining their opportunities, careers, and sources of income.

Some issues regarding Israel and anti-Semitism have come to the fore in recent months: is criticism of Israel anti-Semitism? In many cases, there is no dichotomy between anti-Semitism and anti-Israel hatred, and it becomes an artificial distinction, with the primary use of criticism of Israel or Zionists being a camouflage for anti-Semitism. Legitimate criticism of Israel exists, when the standard used to judge other countries is the same, but not if Israel’s right to exist as the only Jewish state is questioned, or when Israel is required to place itself in grave danger, denying its right to self-defense. Those are the initial criteria. Accusing Israel of war crimes crosses the line, but saying that the “occupation” should end does not make you anti-Semitic. Yet, the double standard of applying anti-occupation opinion and related political activity only to Israel, is anti-Semitic.

These big questions sometimes lead to legislative propositions. Another reference point for legislative change is local, state, and federal regulations regarding disallowing the BDS movement against Israel to affect contracts and trade between the American government and private bodies and Israeli government and companies. The BDS movement is now moving off campus and targeting city councils



Leslie Gollub, left, and Gretchen Gordon embrace at a vigil for the victims of the synagogue shooting at Chabad of Poway, California, in April 2019.

Photo: Denis Poroy Associated Press

and other bodies, such as state legislatures. They have targeted at least five city councils. This has become part of the debate. Political leadership and perpetrators of anti-Semitic hate speech must be held to account for their actions and words, and the American Jewish community must set them to task, refuse to lower standards, and assert pressure where it counts – not in direct confrontations, which will backfire and only garner adversaries more undeserved attention.

The Democratic Party has historically been bolstered ideologically and monetarily by the Jewish community, which has shown it allegiance and support for decades. In turn, Jews must learn to demand zero tolerance in the Democratic Party for anti-Jewish rhetoric or anti-Israel statements that are blatantly and unfairly biased against the Jewish state, and not meant to solve problems, but serve, rather, to rile up violence against Jews.

The initiative to legislate against anti-Semitic speech in a recent House of Representatives resolution and the fact that it could not be passed without being so weakened into insignificance is a symptom of political impotence. Not one of the presidential candidates on the Democratic side stood with organized Jewish leadership or Israel. The only Democratic exception was New York Mayor Bill DeBlasio.

It is our responsibility to maintain high standards and stand up to bigotry in absolute and direct terms. The lesson of history is that if we lower the standards, and keep on excusing words or actions, hoping the problem will go away, we are responsible for the results. We must shift the onus to those who are responsible for protecting American citizens' lives and well-being.

The fact that many Jewish organizations welcome the Democratic Party's watered-down resolution on anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and other hate speech, is disturbing. They may have done it with good intentions, but it sent the wrong message. Distance from the Holocaust and distance from suffering from anti-Semitic expressions and actions have made Jews complacent and resistant to action. The lessons from our Biblical sojourn in Egypt through time to the period of pre-war 1930s Europe are that we can no longer raise the bar. We must always expose the "big lie" in its modern incarnation.

We also have to look at the media much more seriously. They have been giving these politicians a free ride and even rallying support for them, portraying them as heroic figures. The media no longer deals with the facts about Israel. Part of the success the anti-Israeli Left has had is to obfuscate the issues on Israel, dumbing down the debate. Nobody talks about what is right or about what is happening on the Gaza border, since they're too busy talking about Representative Ilhan Omar's freedom of speech. The anti-Israel movement has taken inspiration from the European progressive movement and global human rights activity disseminated on the Internet. It is so easy today to spread lies and inaccuracies, and the effects are felt.

Despite the challenges and the hostility, we have been lucky to find partners in solidarity in the Asian-American and Hispanic communities and in labor unions, people who feel alienated and upset by extreme opinions and extreme hatred, and who are also disturbed by racist violence against minorities, and the hypocritical tolerance for it in the ranks of the Democratic Party.

American Jewry should aim to build coalitions with other groups who are like-minded, fight for strict legislation on anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist language, educate the younger generation to defend itself and its values, and rally in the streets and hold conferences for this cause. With this grave situation as a backdrop, it might be time for a *world conference of Jewry*, in which people can come together to discuss how to deal with this daunting problem and the tasks that might help alleviate it.

Israel should keep a supportive, yet low-profile, role in this battle, to present its own political and media facts in a way that will reflect well for American and world Jewry. Israel has to get organized and allocate funds to mobilize effective counter-efforts to anti-Israel

propaganda and biased reporting. Even Israel's internal politics affect how Jews are regarded in the United States. If an Israeli political party is seen as racist in the headlines in American news media, this affects how people see the Israeli situation, even if it is a side issue. A news item like this can make Israel look racist, no matter how small this faction is in Israeli society.

Israel finds itself in a difficult place as a sovereign state that has to take many factors into account that other countries do not, because Israel is not like other countries. Diaspora Jewry is very much impacted by Israel. No diaspora community of another country has this kind of symbiotic relationship with its host country. Americans are not unaware of this fact, though they do not appreciate it fully. This goes on to influence Democratic and Republican political campaigns trying to woo Jewish voters, and it certainly has consequences on social tranquility and how people live with one another day-to-day.

On our side, the American Jewish community must protect Israel from unfair attacks. At present, though, shifting the focus back to Israel is not helpful, since we are not talking about a debate of substance. No one is interested in hearing the other side of the story or even really examining what Israel's policies are or what they lack. Though we must continue to assert Israel's right to exist, our focus must be on foiling anti-Semitism head-on and protecting Jews' rights and freedoms.

We also have to focus more on high school and elementary school students. We need assistance in educating them in the history of the Jewish *yishuv* in Israel and subsequent modern Israeli history, which will help them identify with Israel and perhaps even inspire them to have the courage to defend the Jewish state in their college years and in their social circles. Neither Israel nor diaspora Jewish

community leadership has the language or the words to address millennials. We need to enlist the help of young pro-Israel Jews to get the message across, though many of them themselves remain critical, especially since President Trump is associated with Israel.

In sum, the Jewish community must unite for this cause. The Jewish community is open to guidance from partners around the world in fighting the battle in this uncharted territory. Fortunately, bipartisan support remains strong for Israel, and there is no reason to alienate any one group; in fact, it would be counterproductive to do so. American Jewry must proceed cautiously and intelligently, taking measured steps in effecting positive change.

Endnotes

1 “Democratic Whip Jim Clyburn (D-SC) defends Omar due to ‘personal’ experience” (The Hill): “I just think that we lose too many battles up here arguing over the stuff that’s kind of silly to argue over. Her experience is much more empirical — and powerful — than that of people who are generations removed from the Holocaust... I’m serious about that. There are people who tell me, ‘Well, my parents are Holocaust survivors.’ ‘My parents did this.’ It’s more personal with her, I’ve talked to her, and I can tell you she is living through a lot of pain.”

2 <https://www.securecommunitynetwork.org/about>

The Spectrum of Negative Criticism: From Objective Reasoning to Anti-Semitism

Asa Kasher

ABSTRACT

The examination of anti-Israel statements for elements of anti-Semitism should begin with pinpointing an exact definition of anti-Semitism, as a type of racial discrimination, as set out in the International Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination of 1965.

A negative assessment is a legitimate criticism when it is properly reasoned and based on principles, data, analyses, and forecasts, with the objective of reaching a sound evaluation. If a negative assessment is thus reached, it is legitimate criticism.

Meaning, context, and communication patterns must be analyzed to assess legitimate criticism. The speaker's justification for his or her statement on the subject can be evaluated by observing a personal connection to the subject, whether the subject is selective, and whether it concerns the speaker without bias.

1. ANTI-SEMITISM

A starting point for a discussion of anti-Semitism and how it relates, if at all, to anti-Zionism, should be the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), adopted by the United Nations in 1965 and enforced as of 1969.

In its first clause, ICERD defines racism (“racial discrimination”) as a combination of two elements. First, it includes a distinction made between people based on “race, color, descent, and national or ethnic origin,” and it is related to distinctions based on sex or religion (which are mentioned in parallel conventions). It then forbids the use of such distinctions, which create prejudice or inequality in the application of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, or any other field of public life.¹

The State of Israel signed ICERD on March 7, 1966. This was significant for two reasons. First, because anti-Semitism is racism against Jews *qua* Jews, and it is now utterly unacceptable – not only morally, but also by international law as manifest in the convention. In addition, the State of Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish People, but, as such, it does not require special treatment for members of the Jewish nation. Rather, it requires proper treatment, regardless of race, both to Jews and to members of all other groups, regardless of their color, origin, gender, religion, or culture. Israel’s Proclamation of Independence states the right of the Jewish People to “be like any other people.” This implies that the right of the Jewish People should be regarded as no more and no less than that of any other people. This was true in the context of the proclamation of the state and has remained true with respect to all forms of racism.

2. LEGITIMATE CRITICISM

A negative attitude can be expressed in various ways. Racism is one form of negative expression. The most extreme type of negative denunciation of actions or activities are exemplified by the political assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, and Yitzhak Rabin.

Legitimate criticism is the expression of a negative opinion in a reasoned manner. It is possible to argue a negative view of a specific action, decision, policy, rule, or constitutional law. One can provide a plausible reason for having a negative opinion of an individual who acts in a particular capacity, a group that acts on grounds of its views, an institution's policies, or a government's decisions based on its ministers' opinions. A negative assessment is a legitimate criticism when it is properly reasoned, based on principles, data, analyses, and forecasts, which are all taken into account while an evaluation is being formed of what is under consideration. If a negative assessment is thus reached, it is legitimate criticism.

A negative attitude can also be expressed without proper reasoning. A person who openly expresses feelings of hatred for Jews simply for being Jews does not qualify as a purveyor of legitimate criticism. The expression of hatred is a personal testament and not a claim based on arguments that lead to this negative position. Are feelings of hatred for Jews *qua* Jews an expression of anti-Semitism which is a form of racism?

The answer is complex, since expressing hatred may not express prejudice since it is possible to hate members of a group without discriminating against them. Yet, it is natural to interpret

expressions of hatred for Jews *qua* Jews or members of another ethnic group *qua* members of that group as racism, on grounds of the manifest prejudice and the presumed desire to turn hatred into practical discrimination. Expressions of hatred, such as those of Minister Louis Farrakhan, are presumably expressions of racism. The spirit of racism is encompassed by such expressions of hatred, even if it is not expressed unequivocally.

3. ANTI-SEMITISM OR LEGITIMATE EXPRESSION: THE STRUCTURE OF EXAMINATION

Assume we face an expression of a negative evaluation related to the Jews of Israel. We have to find out whether it is an anti-Semitic expression, which ought to be fought against, or whether it is an expression of criticism that is legitimate though wrong, which should be rebutted. We can then present a method for determining the true nature of the expression we have encountered.

First, a statement has to be assessed on two levels: the meaning of the utterance and the context of utterance, by whom has it been used, and under what circumstances, that is, at what time, and in which place it was made.

We must not only examine the expression and the circumstances surrounding its usage, but also the background against which it appears. For example, Israel often offers humanitarian assistance in cases of natural disasters in foreign countries, with an IDF team quickly dispatched to those locations. Israel's rescue team is usually the first to arrive and is sometimes the only one to arrive. This happened in Haiti in 2010. A foreign journalist wrote an article in which he claimed that the Israeli team was "harvesting



United States Congresswoman Ilhan Omar (R-MN), 2019.

Photo: Yasin Ozturk/Andalou Agency

organs for transplants.”²² This is a factual claim regarding the activities of the Israeli rescue team. The author had no evidence on which to base this claim, and indeed, it was false. Yet, the decision to publicize this fabrication shows us something about the journalist’s objectives.

The journalist apparently sought to achieve a certain objective by publishing this false claim, which casts aspersions upon the rescue team. It was intended to undermine the confidence the citizens of Haiti gave to the Israeli rescue team. Why diminish that confidence, when Red Cross International itself has ranked Israel as the top country in providing humanitarian assistance under such circumstances? If the journalist had written about other rescue crews behaving similarly, we could have seen it as a warning to the Haitians against corruption among rescue teams, in general. However, the claim was not made against all the teams, but only against the Israeli rescue team. It is apparent, therefore, that the decision to publish this fabrication stemmed from antipathy toward Israel just because it is Israel, in a commonly racist style.

Furthermore, Jews have historically been the targets of false claims regarding the usage of corpses for religious reasons, in the form of the infamous blood libels, the accusation of using the blood of Christian children in Passover *matzos*. These blood libels often resulted in the killing of Jews, both individually and *en masse*. It follows that this claim must not only be refuted, but also be marked anti-Semitic. The motive here is clearly anti-Semitic, and it should be exposed, especially since the dissemination of anti-Semitic stories could have practical effects, of which we should beware.

4. THE NEGATIVE VIEW OF THE “OCCUPATION”: A COMPLEX EXAMPLE

Sometimes negative opinions expressed about the State of Israel appear to be openly harsh expressions of anti-Semitic racism. One example is the social media declarations of a medical resident at the Kern Medical Clinic in Cleveland, Ohio, in 2019, tweeting that she would have liked to administer incorrect medication to Jews (“all the *yahood*”), citing her hatred of Israel as a justification.³ Occasionally, however, a negative view requires accurate analysis.

A negative expression up for consideration is “The IDF has set up a regime of occupation,” referring to the territory taken in the east of the country by the State of Israel during the Six-Day War. A discussion of this example will help us differentiate between negative opinions that are legitimate criticisms and those that are expressions of anti-Semitism.

Generally, the expression “regime of occupation” is not a simple description of facts, but one that invites a negative view. Behind this expression is a negative opinion from a moral, religious, or ethical perspective of the situation in which the IDF still rules the territories that it has held since 1967. For the sake of discussion, we assume the moral perspective is being used in the condemnation of the regime of occupation.

The claim that every occupation situation as such deserves a negative moral evaluation is misleading and wrong. Does the situation in Germany following World War II, when the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and France legally occupied the country, require a negative moral evaluation because it was an occupation? Did the situation in the territories that the IDF legally occupied during the Six-Day War deserve a negative

assessment immediately after the war, just because it was a situation of occupation? Affirmative answers to these questions would be absurd. However, not every erroneous expression of moral consideration can be defined as racism.

Similarly, the common expression “occupation corrupts,” which is a moral denunciation of the occupation, is also misleading and wrong. As an analogy, many drivers behave in a manner that would not befit them in other circumstances, such as cutting off other drivers, yet they would not act similarly in a line for a cashier at a cinema or a store. Should we be required to conclude “the road corrupts?” It does not seem so since the moral problem is not driving or the road, but the tendency of drivers to drive in an improper (actually, illegal) manner. This tendency is seen on the road more than at a pharmacy due to psychological reasons that can be pinpointed: the feeling of restraint and the avoidance of friction on a human line is generally stronger than that in a line of cars. The expression “occupation corrupts” demonstrates an inclination to remove responsibility for poor behavior from the people and transfer it to the situations in which they find themselves at the time. However, it is not an anti-Semitic expression of racism.

Returning to the expression, “The IDF runs a regime of occupation,” we examine the context of such statements in addition to their content. The first question to ask is, “Why are you involved with protesting this ‘occupation’?” There are four possible answers:

1. “I have a personal justification for being involved, and I am against all situations of occupation.” A Palestinian on a college campus could give this answer, being committed to expressing opposition toward the Chinese occupation of Tibet as well. The personal identification here is not based on racism, and it is self-evident that this individual’s opposition to all occupations removes suspicion of anti-Semitism.

2. "I have a personal justification for involvement, yet I do not have any general view of occupations in general." Such a statement, when made by a Palestinian student on some U.S. university campus, expresses national concern solely. This is not a racist view, but it is immoral. Morality, as expressed in the general duty to respect the dignity of every person *qua* person is incompatible with being utterly disinterested in the fate of all national fates except that of one's own nation. Even though such an attitude is not manifestly racist, there is some natural though not necessary possibility that negative attitudes of this kind lend themselves to practical expressions of their core view. However, a practice that expresses core ethnocentrism often takes the shape of practical discrimination of those who do not belong to the person's ethnic group, which puts it on the verge of racism.
3. "I have no personal justification for being involved in this, but I have a general negative opinion regarding any situation of occupation." It is possible to support a general claim against occupations and protest them. If the opinion is not biased against a specific occupation, it is not an expression of anti-Semitism. Nevertheless, there is the question of why the person has specifically come to be involved with the Israeli occupation, while he or she is silent on other occupations, especially since one has no personal connection with this occupation. Therefore, this kind of bias in political involvement or lack thereof could make us suspect this person of nurturing some implicit form of anti-Semitism, but this cannot be shown without the person getting involved in additional, clearer forms of behavior.

4. "I have no personal justification for my involvement with this, and I have no position on occupation in general." This kind of answer, though it is rarely expressed openly, would make us wonder why he or she is getting involved specifically in this issue. In the absence of a general position against all forms of occupation, one's expressions regarding just one of them can be explained only in terms of personal bias toward it. Without a personal issue, the expression displays an inexplicably hostile attitude toward this specific occupation. Then, the best explanation for this behavior is an underlying racist attitude with respect to Israel. Since Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish People, a racist attitude towards Israel reflects a racist attitude towards the Jewish People. It is, then, anti-Semitism of a kind.

In conclusion, we can differentiate between a negative appraisal that is legitimate criticism and a negative appraisal that is an expression of anti-Semitic racism:

1. A negative opinion that is relevant and properly reasoned can be considered legitimate criticism, whether we agree with its content or not.
2. A negative opinion based on irrelevant differentiation, for reasons of race, color, origin, gender, faith, and so forth, is immoral because it does not adhere to the obligation to respect every individual's dignity, rights, and liberties.
3. A negative opinion based on irrelevant differentiation, with the aim of practical discrimination, falls within the definition of racism. When applied to Jews *qua* Jews, it is anti-Semitism.

4. A negative opinion of an aspect of the State of Israel, based on some irrelevant differentiation, meant to create discrimination against the State of Israel, as opposed to other countries, is defined as racism. As Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish People, this kind of negative opinion falls within the definition of anti-Semitism.

Endnotes

- 1 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CERD.aspx>
Article 1 of the Convention defines "racial discrimination" as: ... any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.
- 2 <https://stephenlendman.org/2010/01/focus-on-israel-harvesting-haitian/>
- 3 <https://www.timesofisrael.com/dismissed-ohio-medical-resident-sorry-for-vowing-to-give-wrong-meds-to-jews/>



U.S. Congress members Rashida Tlaib (D-MI), Ayanna Pressley (D-MA), Ilhan Omar (D-MN) and Alexandria Ocasio Cortez (D-NY), collectively known as “the Squad,” at a press conference in Washington, DC, 2019.

Photo: Alex Wroblewski/Getty Images North America/AFP

Israelophobia and the Weaponizing of the Oslo Peace Process

Pinhas Inbari

ABSTRACT

Arafat exploited the peace process as a tool of political warfare, never straying from his goal of dismantling the Jewish State.

The Palestinian leadership methodically delegitimized Israel by denying Jewish history and Israeli political legitimacy while building their own, in an effort to replace and supersede the Zionist narrative and Israel.

This form of “diplomatic warfare” is prone to be more dangerous than physical terror, since it destroys Israel’s legitimacy, isolates it, removes it from an international framework, and grooms world public opinion against it, marking Israel for future elimination.

Palestinian Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat’s greatest innovation in the field of international relations was his success in transforming the peace process into a tool of war. Arafat never intended to walk on the path to peace that the Oslo Accords paved, with the aim of reaching a full and final peace agreement with Israel. The Oslo Accords were forced upon Arafat because of the PLO’s dire financial straits, caused by his support of Saddam Hussein’s invasion and declared annexation of Kuwait in August of 1990.



A child in Gaza stands on an Israeli flag and a photograph of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Photo: Said Khatib/AFP

Despite his agreement with Israel to engage in the 1993 Oslo peace process, Arafat never strayed from the declared goal of the PLO, which was the fulfilment of the Palestinian “right of return.” This essentially meant transforming the State of Israel into another Arab Muslim state. Arafat’s strategy was as successful as it was deceptive: he succeeded in legitimizing and ingratiating himself with the United States, the European powers, and the wider international community. Paradoxically, the PLO’s newfound international legitimacy enabled and empowered him to continue the PLO struggle to eliminate Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people. Arafat’s receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in full

military garb symbolized his strategy of depicting himself as a liberator, utilizing political violence and terror as a legal and acceptable form of a struggle for freedom.

Arafat's political thinking rested upon a certain kind of political replacement theory; he would undermine Israel's most important pre-Oslo advantage of international legitimacy and support while simultaneously legitimizing the PLO as an international diplomatic player.

There are at least two witnesses to Arafat's planned deception of Israel, and his taking advantage of the peace process with the true aim of waging war, as documented in the Second Intifada. The radical journalist Abd al-Bari Atwan wrote that immediately after Arafat signed the documents, Atwan criticized Arafat for the "capitulation agreements in Oslo." Arafat then responded to him in confidence, "I am going to Palestine through the Oslo gate, despite my reservations, in order to bring back to there [i.e. to Palestine] the PLO and the resistance. I promise you that the Jews will leave Palestine like rats abandoning a sinking ship. This will not come true in my lifetime, but it will in your lifetime."¹

Another insider was one of the heads of the People's Party in the West Bank, Abdel Al-Majid Hamadan, who came back from Tunis, shocked. He wrote, in *Al-Talyi'a*, the party newsletter, which was shut down by the PLO immediately after the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, that in Tunis he had heard that what Arafat really wanted to do was not to bring peace, but to transfer the "Fakhani Republic" from Beirut to the West Bank territories.

The "Fakhani Republic" served as the PLO headquarters in west Beirut's Fakhani neighbourhood.² This is where the PLO managed its terror operations in Lebanon, against Israel, and around the world.



PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat speaks after the Oslo II Accords signing ceremony at the White House in Washington, DC on Sept.28, 1995.

Photo: Yaakov Saar/Israel Government Press Office

That is, the peace process was not intended for any purpose other than to reconstruct, within the Palestinian Authority, the terror base that the PLO lost in Beirut, as a result of the First Lebanon War. This time, though, the PLO's goal was to renew terrorism with international support for the "war of liberation."

After Arafat's death, the tactics changed, but the strategy remained the same. The PLO, now led by Mahmoud Abbas, officially gave up the "armed struggle" ideal, that is, terror, but not its final aim: the elimination of Israel by the realization of the right of return. Instead of classic terror, the Palestinian Authority turned to "diplomatic terror," to realize its aim of "international legitimacy," again, under the banner of "liberation from the burden of the colonial subjugator," Israel. In this manner, the PLO cancelled its recognition of "Israel's right to exist." Since Israel is a "colonial oppressor" of territories not belonging to it, it therefore has no right to exist.

Obviously, it could be argued that Israel is a "colonial oppressor" in the 1967 territories, yet the Palestinian Authority's stance on Jerusalem omits this claim. Why? What do the Palestinians say regarding Jerusalem? That there has never been Jewish sovereignty in Jerusalem, and the Holy Temple never existed.³

This stance regarding Jerusalem clarifies the nature of the Palestinian refusal to recognize Israel as the Jewish nation-state, because, as such, the PLO would recognize Israel's rights to the Land of Israel as the historical Jewish heir of the Jewish sovereignty and continuum of the First and Second Temples. That is to say, it served the PLO's purpose to claim that Jews are a religion that has synagogues, but not a people that possesses land, and certainly not the land of Palestine, that belongs to Palestinians.

It follows that the negation of Israel's right is not only to rule over Judea and Samaria, but the entire territory in question. So, the PLO's recognition of Israel's right to exist on the eve of signing the Oslo Accords, has no value whatsoever.

This form of "diplomatic warfare" is prone to be more dangerous than physical terror, since it destroys Israel's legitimacy, isolates it, removes it from an international framework, and grooms world public opinion for its future elimination.

This is, in essence, the end goal of the BDS. Besides the boycott on Israel and the damage to the Jewish state, it "marks" a political body as illegal, as a usurper, legitimizing its liquidation, in order to do "historical justice," to punish the "Zionist thief," and to return the land to its "rightful owners," the Palestinians.

In a more far-fetched analogy: BDS is like a symbolic "yellow badge" that was attached to the clothing of European Jewry on the eve of the Holocaust, in order to remove them from the public sphere, to mark them with the objective of eliminating them.

Related to these aims, is the Palestinian school curriculum. The PLO's aging leadership understands that it will not succeed in its "vision" in its lifetime. The curriculum is meant to pass the torch of struggle to the next generation. The leadership did not manage to accomplish its aims in its first generation. So, with its exit, the torch shall not be extinguished, and the next generation is charged to realize the cumulative aspirations of the older generation.

I witnessed this first-hand when, in 2018, I visited the 'Aida refugee camp near Bethlehem. While I was speaking to refugees about the refugee crisis, I saw pupils leaving their classrooms with plastic rifles slung over their shoulders. It isn't difficult to guess what they were taught in the classroom about the guns' function.

At the entrance of the camp, there is a large monument of the Key of Return (a similar key statue also stands at the entrance to Mahmoud Abbas's private villa in Ramallah), and anyone who knows simple arithmetic can tell you that a rifle slung over the shoulder represents a means to the end of bringing the key to the door of the lost home in "occupied Palestine." This maximalist ideology, employed for decades by the Palestinian leadership, and which characterizes their ongoing political warfare, closes the door to the legitimacy of the Jewish national home and the hope of peaceful coexistence.

Endnotes

- 1 <https://www.memri.org/reports/senior-palestinian-journalist-arafat-told-me-he-went-along-oslo-accords-because-it-would>
- 2 <https://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198296430.001.0001/acprof-9780198296430-chapter-20>
- 3 <https://www.jpost.com/Israel/Jews-have-no-right-to-Western-Wall-PA-study-says>



An IDF rescue team searches for survivors following an Al-Qaeda truck bombing of the American Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, August 7, 1998.

Photo: IDF Spokesperson

Progressives, Israel, and the New Morality

William Kolbrener

ABSTRACT

In contexts other than the Israel/Palestine issue, progressives celebrate pluralism, the multiplicity of different perspectives, and the impossibility of one “master narrative” to annul that diversity.

Yet, in relation to Middle East politics, pluralism shuts down, and the Palestinian claim, manifesting itself in the fantasy of the secular one-state solution, is so powerful as to undermine the validity of any Jewish claim.

In a strange turn, literary theorists and cultural critics are often vocal supporters of BDS, in fetishizing the land and the kind of irrefutable claim it is meant to give to Palestinians.

In appropriating the languages of good and evil, often reinstating the Holocaust narrative with Jews as perpetrators, such rhetoric creates a dangerous either/or that fanatics – both Arabs and Jews – exploit.

From her platform at the Women’s March in January 2019, Linda Sarsour denounced anti-Semitism and then unsurprisingly promoted her anti-Israeli agenda: “We will protect our constitutional right to boycott, divest and sanctions in this country.” Earlier this year, Congresswoman Ilhan Omar recycled

one of the oldest of anti-Semitic tropes – remember ‘it’s all about the Benjamins, baby’ – and in a halfhearted apology went on to question Jewish loyalty to America after having compared AIPAC to the National Rifle Association (NRA) and the fossil fuel industry. With their support for BDS, Sarsour and Omar, the American purveyors of a new progressive anti-Semitism, have managed to reinstate an allegorical worldview of absolutes, of good and evil. But unlike in the conventional tale, the Jews are not heroes but villains. As the literary critic George Steiner noted, Western culture had always “blamed” Jews for the introduction of moral absolutes and the impossible standards accompanying them. Today, for progressives, Jews still anchor a binary moral universe, representing, however, not good but evil. Contemporary progressives have hijacked liberalism, replacing pluralism with a backward-looking moral agenda.

In regard to Israel/Palestine, when describing the competing claims for the land, progressives, if acknowledging Israel claims *at all*, dismiss them by associating them with the regressive theological text that no longer has currency, the Bible. Against this claim from the antiquated book, there is the visible and empirically compelling claim: in 1948 Palestinians were living on the land, *their* land. About this claim to the physical title to the land, the progressives are absolutist, and they brook no possible counterclaim.

In contexts other than Israel/Palestine, progressives celebrate pluralism, the multiplicity of different perspectives, and the impossibility of one “master narrative” to annul that diversity. Yet in relation to Middle East politics, pluralism shuts down, and the Palestinian claim, manifesting itself in the fantasy of the secular one-state solution, is so powerful as to undermine the validity of

any Jewish claim. In a strange turn, literary theorists and cultural critics – often vocal supporters of BDS – follow the likes of Sarsour and Omar (no pluralists themselves) in fetishizing the land and the kind of nonrefutable claim it is meant to give to Palestinians.

The very same humanities professors cite Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* to argue that nations are socially constructed, that nationhood is the product of shared narratives and discourses. But in the conflict between Arabs and Jews, Palestinian claims are determined to be, without any self-consciousness, objectively *real* and *true*, while the Jewish claims, textual as they are, are merely fictional. Like Anderson, the Palestinian nationalist Edward Said cited the importance of literary and cultural representations of nationhood – “national identity does not exist independent of the narratives that speak of it.” But in current iterations of BDS, Jewish claims to Israel are relegated to the historical dustbin. In the terms of the critical theorist Judith Butler – a vocal advocate of BDS – nationality, like any form of identity, is a “performance.” In regard to Palestine/Israel, however, the empirical not only takes precedence over storytelling but rules out the latter altogether.

More than ancient coins with Hebrew inscriptions, the books Jews read, the stories Jews tell, the volumes on which Jews have provided commentary for 2,000 years, as well as the prayers they have recited, testify to the validity of their claim to the land. Of the 19 blessings that constitute the center of the three daily Jewish prayer services, six are directly concerned with the Land of Israel: the prayer for rain; the prayer for the return of justice; the prayer for the ingathering of the exiles; the prayer for the rebuilding of Jerusalem; the prayer for the return of the Davidic dynasty; and the prayer for the return of worship to the Temple in Jerusalem. The patriarchs are promised the land in Genesis; in Exodus, Moses and the people of Israel inherit it. Whether my ancestors in Europe had suitcases packed under

their beds awaiting the Jewish messiah and travel to Israel is not as significant as the mythography itself. Jews for millennia have written about the land, longed for the land, and some indeed lived in the land.

I am not rehearsing features of Jewish liturgy and sacred texts to convince Palestinians or anyone else to acquiesce to Jewish claims. Nor am I citing the Jewish Library – there *is no* independent Zionist Library – because I imagine that such claims are irrefutable. I do not want to convince others that my claims are valid for them, but that they are valid *for Jews*, valid *for me*. But remarkably today, progressives do not consider Jews to have any valid claim to the Land of Israel. They see the conflict exclusively through the lens of a colonialist narrative, and in the process propound a worldview in which Jews are *just* usurpers.

It might be reasonably asked, with the existence of the Jewish state an undeniable, even intransigent reality, why does the progressive rhetoric espousing BDS even matter? But in appropriating the languages of good and evil, often reinstating the Holocaust narrative with Jews as perpetrators, such rhetoric creates a dangerous either/or that fanatics – both Arabs and Jews – exploit. As the late Israeli author Amos Oz said before his death, the one-state solution will only come to the region through catastrophe and ultimately, the unthinkable *again*, genocide. Oz warned that nurturing that fantasy – normative among many millennials with little historical consciousness – not only encourages Arab extremists but also Jewish fundamentalists who counter with their own version of the one-state solution. Extremists love the dance of codependency: the current prime minister's embrace of extremists as part of his reelection campaign is a case in point. Progressives and the far right are engaged in that dance, trying to draw the rest of us in.



Linda Sarsour and Harvard professor Cornel West listen as Democratic presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., speaks at a roundtable discussion at the First Unitarian Congregational Society on April 16, 2016, in Brooklyn, New York.

Photo: AP Photo/Mary Altaffer

Far-right fundamentalism is not difficult to unmask. But progressives veil their fundamentalism with the rhetoric of liberalism. In the process, the morality of the West for which the Jews were once blamed gets turned on its head. Now in the guise of Zion, the Jew represents, for the progressive cosmos, a reminder of an older worldview, a manifestation of evil. The brilliant paradox of this strategy, always implicit in BDS rhetoric, is to sell this binary worldview to genuine liberals, a community that values pluralism, while all the time amplifying their own jeremiads against Israel. In the name of that pluralism, progressives return the world to simple absolutes, with Jews again their guarantor, but this time not from a divine Heaven but an Israeli Hell.



An anti-Israel demonstrator in Lyon, France, 2016.

Photo: Konrad K./Sipa

The New Anti-Semitism's Threat to Israel's National Security: What Can be Done?

Brig.-Gen. (res.) Yossi Kuperwasser

ABSTRACT

The new anti-Semitism has created a paradox that is difficult for Israel to confront. It allows Western radicals and progressives, including Jews, to be anti-Semitic by rejecting Israel's existence while claiming that they are merely "legitimately criticizing" Israel.

The mainstreaming of delegitimization poses a national security threat to Israel, which needs international support to achieve the political, military, and economic freedoms to defend itself.

Though Israel practically and visibly contributes to the national security of the United States, Israelophobia, the new anti-Semitism, strives to present the opposite view. American public support for Israel is becoming more of a partisan issue, allowing extreme players to take center-stage, penetrating the hearts and minds of progressives and some liberals, and strengthening Islamic radicalism worldwide.

Recent political developments in Europe and the United States have underlined the lack of clarity on the issue of anti-Zionism as a manifestation of anti-Semitism. This issue has emerged as a particularly potent one. Increasingly, politicians and academics in the West have come to delegitimize Israel, the "collective Jew,"

and Zionism, the political expression of Jewish self-determination, just as individual Jews throughout history have been, and continue to be, excoriated and assaulted because they are Jews.

Ironically, both progressive and radical Islamic leaders and activists in the global campaign to delegitimize Israel and Zionism, such as the BDS movement, have cloaked their denunciations in universal values, such as justice and equality.¹ The anti-Israel and anti-Zionist polemics have attracted many supporters, particularly younger followers, on university campuses in the United States and Europe, who lack the critical skills and historical perspective to see the merging of classic anti-Semitism and anti-Zionist agitation. It is of crucial importance to provide the intellectual tools, moral clarity, and historical context with which to analyze and assess the convergence of anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism in the context of Jewish sovereignty and national security in the 21st Century.

One important tool in analyzing anti-Semitic statements is the U.S. State Department's definition of anti-Semitism, based on the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition,² which links two types of anti-Semitism – the familiar, old kind, and the new kind, namely, anti-Zionism. Examination of statements by freshman U.S. Congresswoman Ilhan Omar reveals them to be reiterations of old anti-Semitic tropes, as defined by the State Department in its 2010 definition of anti-Semitism.³ The new anti-Semitism meets the criteria of the “3D Test of anti-Semitism” – *delegitimization, demonization, and double standards* - applied to Israel, as first presented in 2004 by Natan Sharansky, former Deputy Prime Minister of Israel and Soviet “prisoner of Zion.”⁴

Sharansky's message is that the line separating anti-Semitism from anti-Zionism has faded over time, and it is clear that these two phenomena are one and the same. Leaders such as German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Emmanuel Macron, and British Prime Ministers Teresa May and Boris Johnson, have acknowledged the convergence of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism and joined in the fight against it.

A differentiation between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism is claimed by some groups – radical Islamists, Palestinians, and Western progressives – who had not been identified with the old anti-Semitism. These groups have advanced new anti-Semitic concepts and beliefs that have penetrated more mainstream liberal discourse.

Though many on the political Left are averse to identifying with classically defined anti-Semitic rhetoric and groups, some appear to have cornered themselves in an internal contradiction. On the one hand, they are willing to apply the “3D” anti-Semitism Test to adversaries of the Jewish State. On the other hand, as self-declared harsh critics of Israel, they oppose branding anti-Zionism as anti-Semitism to avoid being labeled anti-Semites themselves.⁵ This dissonance explains why many members of the U.S. Democratic Party refused to censure Omar's statements or vote to condemn them as anti-Semitic, in a controversial congressional resolution in early 2019.⁶

There is a direct connection between classic and new anti-Semitism. However, anti-Zionism as the latest incarnation of the new anti-Semitism has been more difficult to diagnose unless we recognize that the anti-Semitism phenomenon has morphed.

Prior to the emergence of this new form of anti-Semitism, Jews could not be anti-Semites, since as Jews, they could not identify with the accusation of Jewish deicide, and they rejected the claim

that Jews are a debased and inferior race. Yet, when it comes to defamations employing nationalistic and alleged human rights arguments, there are many Jews who have joined the ranks of the new anti-Semitism.

This new anti-Semitism created a new, painful, paradoxical reality, making it very difficult for Israel to confront. This new face of anti-Semitism allows Western radicals and progressives, including Jews, to be anti-Semitic for the first time while thinking that they are merely espousing “legitimate criticism” against Israel.

Today, more Jews, especially in the United States, cast doubt on the existence of a Jewish People (noteworthy in this context is the damage caused by Shlomo Sand’s book *The Invention of the Jewish People*) and espouse anti-Zionist theories out of ignorance. The new anti-Semitism’s attraction to some political progressives, and, especially, liberal-Left identifying Jews in the West, poses a national security challenge to Israel.

THE NEW ANTI-SEMITISM AND ISRAEL’S NATIONAL SECURITY

The new anti-Semitism threatens Israel’s national security in two operative ways. One relates to Israel’s destiny: the State of Israel is the realization of Zionism, the national movement of the Jewish people, and the nation-state’s goal is self-definition, self-preservation, and ensuring Jewish cultural and economic prosperity. Therefore, arguments against the very existence of the Jewish people and its ancestral right to a nation-state threaten the essence and identity of the State of Israel. Attempts to harm the Jewish people’s connection to their land are aimed at injuring the State of Israel.



Anti-Israel BDS protestors in London, England, 2018.

Photo: Tayfun Salci/Andalou Agency

The second national security challenge to Israel emanating from the new anti-Semitism relates to the State of Israel's ability to ensure the international support essential for achieving the political, military, and economic freedom it needs to defend itself. The extent to which some of the ideas and mantras of the new anti-Semitism are accepted, not only by the extreme margins, but also by the center of the political map in the West, affects Israel's national security. This is particularly the case in the United States, the most important support base for the State of Israel. If the Democratic Party in Congress fails to make a clear statement about the bias expressed by U.S. representatives such as Omar and Rashida Tlaib, Israel's national security is compromised.

American support for Israel is built in part on mutual respect for democratic values. If the notion of Omar's anti-Semitic statement takes hold, or no political price is paid by whoever makes such claims, it is a problematic development for Israel, whose historic relationship with both sides of the political aisle in the United States is critical to its national security.

In 2012, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy published a paper on Israel's contribution to the national security of the United States.⁷ The new anti-Semitism strives to present the opposite view – that American support for Israel is not only morally unjustified, but also undermines the national security of the United States. Israel saw the meeting of values and interests that underpin the special relationship with the Americans as self-evident and transcendent of any political debate in the United States. Yet this may not be the case, and American public support for Israel is becoming more of a partisan issue.

The Democratic Party finds itself mediating a fierce debate over the Jewish state within party ranks. Some progressive Democrats have adopted a more harshly critical, even hostile, approach to Israel than in past years, while liberal and centrist Democrats have assumed an increasingly critical, if still supportive, attitude. These liberals have engaged in demonization and double standards regarding Israel while claiming that they accept Israel's right to exist. This contradiction has allowed extreme moves to take center-stage. Matters reached a climax with Democratic President Barack Obama's decision to advance United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334, which inaccurately determined Israel's ancient Western Wall to be "occupied Palestinian territory" and which generally lambasted Israel's positions in its conflict with the Palestinians.

These liberals may genuinely believe that their demonization is justified and necessary criticism that emanates from their love of Israel (or what they believe Israel should be) and their concern that Israel is bound to become an apartheid state if it sticks to its current policies. But, in fact, they fell prey, maybe unknowingly, to the unfounded progressive refrain that the current policy of Israel will inevitably lead to a one-state solution that will turn all of the Palestinians living in the territories occupied by Israel in 1967 into residents or citizens of Israel. This forecast is baseless, but it is so often repeated by the progressives that it has become axiomatic to concerned liberals and even fuels their unintended delegitimization of Israel.

Israel's relationship with Europe is essential though less vital to its national security than its relationship with the United States. Europe is committed to Israel's secure existence. However, the intensity of its commitment may have eroded. Germany insists that the State of Israel's existence is part of German identity and *raison d'être*, yet it still does not consider Hizbullah a terrorist organization, despite the Iranian proxy's open declarations of anti-Semitism. Germany's president also sent greetings to the Iranian regime on the fortieth year of its radical Islamist revolution.

The new anti-Semitism also affects Israel's national security because it impacts the attitude of the Islamic world toward Israel by strengthening Islamic radicalism, which holds anti-Semitic perceptions worldwide –in the Middle East, Europe, and the United States. U.S. Congresswoman Ilhan Omar's rhetoric echoes the ideologies of Islamic radicals. Omar has cooperated with CAIR, an organization that parrots Muslim Brotherhood messages in the United States.

To be clear, Israel has no problem with Islam or Muslims, but rather with radical Islam. Islamic radicals, and not Islamic pragmatists, are most active in the West. They have penetrated the hearts and minds of Western progressives and some liberals. U.S. Congresswoman Ilhan Omar spoke about American Jews' "loyalty to a foreign power" without mentioning Israel directly, notwithstanding her 2012 tweet, "Israel has hypnotized the world, may Allah awaken the people and help them see the evil doings of Israel." Her approach to U.S. Jews indicated that she was also intent on weakening relations between the State of Israel and the United States.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

What actions must we take to address the new anti-Semitism? First, just as the IDF holds a session for the General Staff to determine the definition of a "victory" in the military context, the political echelon must define desired and attainable goals in the struggle against anti-Semitism and the most efficient tools and methods of action required to achieve them. Eradicating global anti-Semitism from people's hearts seems far-fetched.

A more realistic yet still challenging goal is to change Western perception and acceptability of anti-Zionism and classic anti-Semitism. This understanding forged the conception of the 2016 IHRA Working Definition of anti-Semitism and its goal, which we are moving toward achieving. Ironically, the new anti-Semites may help achieve this hoped-for shift in Western perceptions. For example, when Ilhan Omar references the old anti-Semitism, it is widely denounced as unacceptable. The problem remains, though, that under cover of legitimate criticism of Israel, there are still attempts to legitimize anti-Zionism.

This is a struggle. An article by journalist Nathan Thrall in *The Guardian*, for which I was interviewed, purported to present the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions movement objectives as a legitimate position. It sought to claim that anti-Zionism was not anti-Semitism and to legitimize the “progressive” approach to penetrate the ranks of the mainstream liberal camp. This was important to Thrall, who presented progressive views, which now permeate liberal discourse. *The Guardian* refused to publish my full response to the article. Instead, my rebuttal appeared in *Tablet* magazine. The *New York Times* later published its own take on BDS and anti-Semitism that was more balanced than Thrall’s *Guardian* story, though it contained several misstatements that presented BDS as more palatable for the *New York Times*’ readership.

Sharansky’s 3D’s should be employed to instill the understanding that anti-Zionism is a new form of anti-Semitism. Non-Jewish friends of Israel should also be welcomed to join the struggle to counter all forms of anti-Semitism. Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of U.S. House of Representatives, should be as clear on the House floor in her rejection of anti-Zionism as she is regarding anti-Semitism, which she and other Democratic speakers demonstrated at the 2019 AIPAC conference.⁸

WHERE ARE TODAY’S EMIL ZOLAS AND DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHANS?

Other Israelis, beyond government representatives, are needed for this battle. Israeli leaders such as Nitzan Horowitz, head of the left-wing Meretz party, should point out the new anti-Semitism’s threat to Israel’s national security. His voice may be more effective with liberal and progressive communities in the West than the

Israeli government's voice.

Where relevant, legislation against all forms of anti-Semitism should be advanced. It is not sufficient that the U.S. State Department adopted the IHRA definition. The U.S. Congress should adopt it, too. It is precisely against the backdrop of the statements made by a freshman representative and the awkwardness felt by Democrats following the feeble attempt to censure her that an opportunity is created. We must aim to reveal the connection and equivalence between the old and the new anti-Semitism at every opportunity.

House resolution 246 of July 2019 condemned the BDS movement but fell short of calling it anti-Semitic, and Congress has yet to adopt the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism. The German Bundestag went a step further and declared, in May 2019, the BDS movement anti-Semitic, thereby stating that anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism.

Perhaps even more critical, if the Democrats want to prove that they are not an anti-Jewish party, such legislation should include penalties for those who express themselves in a manner defined as anti-Semitic, according to the IHRA definition. Ilhan Omar still has not paid a political price for her anti-Semitic statements, and she still retains her membership on the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Such legislation would render the new anti-Semitism/anti-Zionism illegitimate, just as classic anti-Semitism is rejected by the West.

Besides legislation, education and outreach are also necessary. The Palestinian narrative, based on the negation of the existence of the Jewish People and the history of Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel, is a form of delegitimization. This narrative

presents Zionists – read, Jews – as deplorables rejected by the West, to be violently eradicated without the privilege of self-defense, which contains both elements of demonization and double standards. The general public should be made aware of the cynical use of this narrative, that if carefully and objectively considered, exposes itself, proving that this new anti-Semitism is no different from the old anti-Semitism.

Endnotes

- 1 <https://bdsmovement.net/bnc>
- 2 <https://holocaustremembrance.com/working-definition-holocaust-denial-and-distortion>
- 3 <https://www.state.gov/defining-anti-semitism/>
- 4 Natan Sharansky, 3D Test of Anti-Semitism: Demonization, Double Standards, Delegitimization, Jewish Political Studies Review, <http://jcpa.org/article/3d-test-of-anti-semitism-demonization-double-standards-delegitimization/>
- 5 Nathan Thrall discusses this dissonance in his article on the BDS movement, which appeared in the Guardian on August 14, 2018, and in a piece in the New York Times:
<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/aug/14/bds-boycott-divestment-sanctions-movement-transformed-israeli-palestinian-debate>
- 6 <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/congress/democrats-split-response-ilhan-omar-s-latest-israel-comments-n979651>
- 7 <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/asset-test-how-the-united-states-benefits-from-its-alliance-with-israel>
- 8 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KkLOmdiJpGU>



An anti-Israel protest at the World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa, 2001.

Photo: Rajesh Jantilal/AFP

Israelophobia and the Apartheid Criminalization of the Jewish State

Luba Mayekiso

ABSTRACT

Zionism is a liberation movement like others across the African continent, South America, and Southeast Asia. The history of the indigenous people in all these continents mirrors that of the Jews concerning their quest for Israel, in that they were all brutally conquered by militarily superior foreign empires, which forced them to surrender control of their homelands and destiny. The notable difference is that the Jewish people were not just conquered, but the bulk of the population was expelled from ancient Israel. Yet the Jews' connection to their homeland and longing for restoration was never severed by displacement.

The depiction of Jews as colonizers occupying Arab ancestral land is bankrupt of all truth. It is a brazen lie that is as audacious as it is devoid of historical accuracy. It stands to reason that people cannot colonize or occupy their own land, and yet, only the Jewish people are forced to endure this unjust characterization.

Therefore, labelling Israel as an apartheid state can only be described as a new virulent form of anti-Semitism masquerading as legitimate political criticism.

The State of Israel has, against all odds, managed to thrive in a very difficult geopolitical neighbourhood. As with any other country, it faces regional and domestic challenges, be they economic, security, illegal immigrants, or racial tensions. To be fair, you can visit most of Europe, the United States, or even my home in South Africa, and you will find that despite the advent of our much heralded democracy, racial tensions continue to be an ugly blight that punctuates our national discourse, as no country on earth is immune to these challenges.

It is only logical that we judge Israel on the same basis as any other country, but, inexplicably most of us choose not to do so. We compound matters even more, choosing to impute certain socio-political policies upon both the State of Israel and Jewish people interchangeably, with full knowledge that they are blatant lies. One such lie is that Israel is an apartheid state. If you truly understand what apartheid is, you can appreciate that this libel is so far reaching and broad that it attacks the very foundational ethos of the State of Israel.

Apartheid was and remains one of the greatest crimes against humanity. It was a system that was not only evil by design but it was matched by its ruthless policies and pathologically brutal enforcement. Apartheid policies discriminated against, regulated, and oppressed every conceivable aspect of our black human existence. To understand apartheid you need to appreciate the historical sequence of events that paved its foundation as it did not mysteriously appear in a vacuum in 1948, but was the pinnacle of a centuries-old colonial project.

In his book *A History of South Africa*, Leonard Thompson, a respected historian, prolific author, scholar and the Charles J. Stillé Professor of History Emeritus at Yale University, writes in a chapter entitled “The Conquest Completed”:

“Although they differed in many other respects, white farmers and businesspeople, traders and missionaries, and government officials had a common interest in subjugating the Africans, appropriating their land, harnessing their labour, dominating their markets and winning their hearts and minds. By the end of the century (19th), they had completed the process of conquest that had begun in the time of van Riebeeck (1652). All the indigenous people of Southern Africa were incorporated in states under white domination.”

DOES THIS IN ANY WAY SOUND LIKE ISRAEL?

The period from 1910 to 1948 saw a steady increase of laws enforcing racial segregation and the disenfranchisement of Africans and this gave rise to the liberation struggle. Zionism was one of the driving forces behind the rebirth of the State of Israel and the proper definition of Zionism is that it is a national movement for the return of the Jewish people to their homeland and the resumption of Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel.

Similarly, over the past century we have seen a proliferation of liberation movements emerge across the entire African continent, South America and South East Asia. The history of the indigenous people in all these continents mirrors that of the Jews concerning their quest for Israel in that they were all brutally conquered by a militarily superior foreign empire, such as Britain, Spain, France, Portugal or Rome, which forced them to surrender control of their homelands and destiny. With the passage of time the conquered people have risen up in their quest for self-determination. The only notable difference with Israel is that the Jewish people were not just conquered but the bulk of the population was

expelled from their homeland. However, as with any conquered people, their connection to their homeland and longing for restoration was never severed by displacement.

It therefore follows that if it is just and desirable for indigenous people to be restored to their ancestral homelands and have the fundamental right to self-determination then such goal and rights must be equally afforded to the Jewish people concerning their homeland of Israel, otherwise, even we black South Africans should be denied that basic right if the world is consistent in its denial of Jewish restoration in Israel.

The “Israel is an apartheid state” libel is often used by those who know very little of apartheid or merely find it a convenient accusation because, bizarrely, it is accepted without the requisite burden of proof. Concerning apartheid, I talk from experience not gained from the safe comfort of reading about it in history books or of observing it whilst living a cushioned life a continent’s distance away.

I was born in an apartheid homeland because the Natives Land Act of 1913 ensured that as black people we owned only a measly 7 percent of our ancestral homeland and this ensured that we lived only within demarcated and economically unviable reservations.

Apartheid further decreed that a black child was intellectually inferior and should thus not be exposed to subjects like mathematics and science as the government deemed that we would have no use for them in adult life. It ensured that schools were segregated, the syllabus was inferior and resource allocation a paltry minimal. It was precisely in defiance of these racial limitations that my father challenged this education system and prevailed by enrolling my brother and me in a previously all-white private boarding school in the 1980s. This brought me face to face with apartheid as

I witnessed the contrast between how the white community lived, their wealth, their homes, and the privations of black existence. I was not allowed to watch movies with my white fellow students, visit the same beaches, use the same restrooms, travel on the same train carriages, and additionally, was subjected to unrelenting racial harassment for no other reason than the simple fact that I was black.

I have visited Israel more than any other country in the world and have been privileged to visit other countries including Brazil, Canada, France, Denmark, Italy, Malaysia, the United States, Singapore, Spain, Sweden and Thailand. My daughter has, by choice, spent two stints volunteering and working in Israel. As a Black South African I have felt more at ease in Israel than in any one of these other countries as in Israel my race has never determined how anybody interacts with me. More importantly, in terms of the racial segregation associated with apartheid, there are no separate public facilities for Jews that discriminate against Arabs, no separate universities or hospitals, no racial laws regulating who you can fall in love with or marry, and most importantly, the Arab population is afforded a full franchise including Arab politicians elected into the Knesset. This could not be any further removed from the apartheid that we knew and experienced.

The scenario of Jews being colonizers and occupying Arab ancestral land is bankrupt of all truth. It is a brazen lie that is as audacious as it is devoid of historical accuracy. It stands to reason that people cannot colonize or be deemed an occupiers of their homeland and yet for some inexplicable reason only the Jewish people amongst all other peoples are forced to endure this unjust stigmatic characterization. Therefore, labelling Israel as an “apartheid state” can only be described as a new virulent form of anti-Semitism masquerading as legitimate political criticism.

Holding Jews collectively responsible for the actions of the State of Israel is wrong. Jews are not a homogenous entity. Some support Israel whilst others do not. Further, others are religiously observant and others are not. Yet, as I write this article, Israeli Apartheid Week is taking place at a few South African universities and in support of this, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) will be picketing outside the offices of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies in Cape Town. When COSATU was asked why they were demonstrating outside the offices of a South African Jewish communal organisation rather than an Israeli one, COSATU's deputy international secretary, Zanele Mathebula, responded by stating that, "They have everything to do with Israel... they are the closest thing to Israel in Cape Town."

Similarly, in August 2014, the then Western Cape COSATU leader Tony Ehrenreich posted the following on his Facebook page: "The time has come to say very clearly that if a woman or child is killed in Gaza (during Operation Protective Edge), then the Jewish board of deputies, who are complicit, will feel the wrath of the people of SA with the age-old biblical teaching of an eye for an eye...the time has come for the conflict to be waged everywhere the Zionist supporters fund and condone the war killing machine of Israel."

It is immoral to apply double standards by requiring of Israel behaviour that is not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation. There is absolutely nothing wrong with legitimate criticism of the policies of the State of Israel but those should be directed at state actions and never at world Jewry in general, based simply on their ethnicity. Yet again, in South Africa, we have seen surrogate organisations of the Palestinian cause such as BDS organising demonstrations outside South African retail outlets such as Woolworths, Wellness Warehouse and Reggies, on the premise



A pro-Israel rally in South Africa.

Photo: South African Friends of Israel

that they stock one or two items, cosmetic products from either the Dead Sea, or pretzels from Israel on their shelves – heaven forbid!

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) defines antisemitism as “a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

It is fair to conclude that certain agencies within the United Nations, along with certain countries, political parties, civic organisations and individuals have long ceased to make a clear distinction between genuine criticism of the policies of the State

of Israel and anti-Semitism in general. Israel has become fair game for the most pernicious lies and continues to be held to impossibly exacting moral standards whilst certain countries are allowed to behave in a rogue manner.

It is a sad commentary and an indictment on the world that one has to pen such an article as this in defence of the rights of Jews to be treated as all other peoples and for Israel to exist as the nation-state of the Jewish People.

The Apartheid Lie and the Appropriation of South Africa's History

Olga Meshoe Washington

ABSTRACT

There is nothing inherently racist about Israel's specifically Jewish character or sovereignty, since Israel is comprised of a population boasting a wide diversity of races, religions, and ethnicities, who all participate as equals in the economic, social, and political life of the state.

The apartheid claim regarding Israel is a blatant lie employed for political aims, to deny Israel's right to self-determination.

This comprises a malevolent, anti-Semitic double standard because it singles out the Jews, denying them self-determination.

South African history, including the memory of the late Nelson Mandela, who himself supported Israel, has been misappropriated and distorted to support a false narrative of "apartheid Israel" by Israel's adversaries, who misuse the conditions set by the Oslo Accords meant to set the framework for future peace, as a weapon against Israel.

Imagine having your food served to you on a tin plate and not a normal ceramic one, because of the color of your skin. Imagine having to use the designated, concealed back entrance of a public hospital to be checked by a doctor in a designated room, out of sight of other patients of a different race. Those are two of the many experiences my parents and millions of other black South Africans experienced during apartheid South Africa.

THE APARTHEID LIE

Over the years, the term “apartheid” has become so synonymous with the State of Israel that it has lost its original meaning: the government regime in South Africa from 1948 to 1994 that segregated and discriminated black South African citizens from white South African citizens. This regime was regulated and institutionalized by a system of over 150 codified laws. By law, black people were dispossessed of their land, homes, and livelihoods, and forcibly relocated to designated, underdeveloped areas. By law, we black South Africans were prohibited from using the same transportation system, attending the same public schools or enjoying the same public facilities as white South Africans. By law, we could not move freely within our own country and were not allowed to participate formally in the main economy of the country. We were denied the right to vote. We were forbidden from marrying the person we loved if he or she were of a different race group. In addition, black people of different tribes were separated and grouped into mini-homelands to further strip us of our identity as black South Africans. Growing up in apartheid South Africa, I was told by white society that as a black person, I could dream only certain dreams; all others were reserved for white people.

The above descriptions of apartheid South African life are the antithesis of Israeli life. In Israel, by law, Israeli Arabs have the same rights as Israeli Jews. They study in the same school system and are treated as equals to all other Israelis in the same hospitals. Israeli Arabs vote, are elected to the Knesset, and have become Supreme Court justices. Although not required to join the army, some Arab Christian and Muslim citizens of Israel choose to serve in the Israel Defense Forces. Israeli Arabs enjoy the same privilege



A woman votes in Tayibe, Israel, 2019.

Photo: Ahmad Gharabli /AFP

as other Israelis to earn academic degrees at Israeli universities of their choice. Palestinians who live in east Jerusalem also enjoy this privilege, despite not being Israeli citizens. Buses and trains are open to all; they do not have the signs “Jews only” or “Arabs only” to separate commuters, as was the case in South Africa.

Some argue that the Nation-State law (formally titled “Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People”) adopted by the Israeli Knesset on July 18, 2018, which legally enshrines Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people, confirms Israel’s “apartheid” character. However, it does not impact or detract from the existing rights to equality and dignity of all Israeli citizens which remain enshrined and protected in Israel’s Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty. The Nation-State law merely reaffirms Israel’s Jewish majority character and underlying Zionist founding principles, the very reason for its modern creation as the democratic nation state of the Jewish people.

Seit
1967
CIRCA

**1 MILLION
INHAFTEERTE
PALÄSTINENSER**

**STOP
APARTHEID
ISRAEL!**

A protester at an annual Al-Quds day demonstration in Berlin, Germany, June 2019.

Photo: Annette Riedl/Picture-Alliance/
DPA/AP Images

Israel's Jewish character was recognized and validated by the League of Nations in 1922, its successor organization the United Nations in 1945, and again upon Israel's acceptance as a formal member of the United Nations in 1949. Just as Japan is the homeland of Japanese people and France is the homeland of French people, Israel is the homeland of Jewish people. The existence of these sovereign countries as homes for their respective peoples is not discriminatory in nature. Of all these nations and so many others in the 193 member states of the United Nations, Israel is the only nation accused of being an apartheid state. This malevolent double standard constitutes anti-Semitism according to the internationally accepted 2016 International Holocaust Remembrance Association working definition of anti-Semitism.

Despite being a Jewish State, Israel's population is comprised of approximately one-quarter Muslims and is the only state in which other religions, such as Christianity, not only coexist with Judaism but are thriving. Israeli Jews themselves are of more than one color; more than half of the Israeli Jewish population are descendants of immigrants from North African and Middle Eastern lands. Jews from India, China, and South America also call Israel home. Said differently, the majority of Israel's population is non-white.

THE PEDDLING OF AN ANTI-SEMITIC LIE

Anti-Zionists often refer to the late former president of my country, Nelson Mandela, as an authoritative validator of the apartheid lie. One of the most used quotes from Nelson Mandela for this purpose is, "We know too well that our [South Africa's] freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians," from his speech given on the International Day of Solidarity with the

Palestinian People in 1997. What is not told is that Mr. Mandela visited Israel in 1999, something those who perpetuate the apartheid narrative do not want the world to know. On this visit, Mr. Mandela said, “I cannot conceive of Israel withdrawing [from territory - D.D.] if Arab states do not recognize Israel within secure borders.” This is a Zionist statement. While Nelson Mandela was pro-Palestinian, he was not anti-Israel.

In addition to dishonestly misrepresenting the positions of authoritative and respected individuals such as Mr. Mandela to underpin their deceptive narrative, information sites aimed at journalists are often guilty of furthering the apartheid narrative. The Institute for Middle East Understanding (IMEU) is a resource hub for journalists seeking information on the socio-economic, political, and cultural aspects of Israel (which it calls “Palestine”) and Palestinians, for purposes of educating the general public. Despite touting itself as an independent non-profit organization, IMEU describes Israel as an “occupier” that engages in “ethnic cleansing” in Jerusalem. It also nefariously ascribes Israel’s administration of the West Bank, the result of a bi-lateral diplomatic agreement with the Palestinian Liberation Organization and which was internationally witnessed and guaranteed by the Oslo Interim Accords in 1995, as the basis for Israel being an apartheid state.

The Oslo Interim Accords divided the West Bank into three zones. Depending on the zone, Israel or the Palestinian leadership was assigned all, some, or no civil and security jurisdiction of the zone in question. Not only is it factually incorrect and dishonest to describe Israel’s civil and/or security administration of the zones, per the Oslo Accords, as “apartheid,” it is a deliberate omission and distortion of history.

It is true that racism exists in Israel. Racism also exists in mature democracies such as the United States and Great Britain. It also exists in today's democratic South Africa. If the United States, Great Britain, or South Africa are not described as an apartheid state, it begs the question why Israel is signaled out as being an apartheid state because racism can be found within it.

A SETTLER-COLONIAL STATE?

What of the argument that Israel is a colonial-settler state? That question may be answered by another: can a native become a settler?

From as far back as the second millennium BCE, there has always been a significant Jewish presence in the land, which comprises the modern state of Israel, Gaza, and Judea and Samaria - the disputed territories of the West Bank. Historical data and archeological artifacts testify to the existence of Jewish culture, politics, and an economy for the past 3,000 years. These dates demonstrate that Jews are the indigenous people of the land. The immigration of Jews from across the world to the State of Israel does not equate to the increasing occupation of dispossessed land by the dispossessors, but the return of the indigenous people to their homeland. This homeland includes east Jerusalem and west Jerusalem. Indigenous people cannot be settlers. The Jews are not settlers. Israel is not a colonizer.

Calling Israel a colonial settler state is an insult to every African nation that was colonized. It also dismisses the fact that the economic and political instability that characterizes much of Africa today owes most of its existence to Europe's egregious colonialization of all but two African nations.

THE TRUE COST OF THE ISRAEL APARTHEID NARRATIVE

Lies empower evil. Lies about blacks empowered apartheid in South Africa. Lies about Jews made the Holocaust possible. With all its imperfections, Israel is not an apartheid state. This false claim masks the true anti-Semitic intentions of those who call Israel an apartheid state. It has misled many well-intentioned people around the world into opposing the only true democracy in the Middle East. This apartheid lie continues to embolden anti-Semitic acts on innocent Jews in the privacy of their homes, during their times of worship, and on college campuses. It odiously characterizes non-Jewish Zionists and supporters of Israel as accomplices of Israel's fictitious crimes against humanity. More importantly, it compromises the chances of peace in the Middle East.

Equally important but oftentimes forgotten, the apartheid label assigned to Israel redirects focus away from holding the Palestinian Authority and Hamas accountable for their ill-treatment and abuse of the Palestinian people.

APPROPRIATING APARTHEID DISHONORS SOUTH AFRICA AND SOUTH AFRICANS

Calling Israel an apartheid state trivializes the humiliation and injustices endured by black South Africans who lived through apartheid and who still, together with their children and grandchildren, bear the scars of its legacy. If black South Africans enjoyed the rights enjoyed by Israeli Arabs, there would have been no need for South Africa's liberation movement. There would not have been a Nelson Mandela, as the world knows him, or other freedom fighters who spent much of their

lives incarcerated, and whose families sacrificed much for the democracy South Africa enjoys today.

It is thus morally repugnant for any person, any organization, or any government to incorrectly appropriate South Africa's apartheid history to Israel. It is also repulsive to rally people across the world on the painful, collective, real experiences of black South Africans for a cause premised on falsehood. Black South Africans must declare that their moral authority on what apartheid is and what it is not cannot be bought; that their history cannot be manipulated to perpetuate a narrative that erases the boundary between legitimate criticism of policies of the Israeli government and anti-Semitism. It is incumbent upon all persons who genuinely desire to see peace in the Middle East and who have a sincere interest in the liberation of the Palestinian people from their oppressive leaders, to seek the truth and speak the truth against a narrative that is the core of an agenda to delegitimize, demonize, and ultimately destroy the State of Israel and Jewish life in the diaspora.



Soldiers stand guard in front of a synagogue in Lille, France, 2015.

Photo: Philippe Huguén/AFP via Getty Images

A Never-ending Struggle: Challenging Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism

Fiamma Nirenstein

ABSTRACT

The delegitimization of the State of Israel is the core of anti-Semitism today, since Israel and Jews will forever be psychologically associated, and since Israel expresses the essence of Jewish aspirations and behavior, making the “anti-Zionism is not anti-Semitism” argument null and void.

Anti-Semitic ideas that led to the Holocaust have reappeared in restyled postmodern political garb. Israel's existence crushes the postmodern utopian illusion that opposes nationalism or ethnic particularism in any form.

The economic and cultural crisis in the West has invited the populist masses on both the Right and the Left to publicly express their frustration, misery, and ignorance in a moral subjectivism that manipulates the interpretation of history into an oversimplified narrative. In this distortion of history, good and bad are juxtaposed, violent political actors becoming legitimized by claiming corruption, imperialism, exploitation, and colonialism as the enemy.

The reaction to this damning rhetoric has been weak, apologetic, and confused. We must fight this ideology directly by acquiring a broader grasp of Jewish and modern Israeli history, gaining firsthand knowledge of the Jewish State, and using legal and legislative tools to fight BDS and the like.



An anti-Israel protester holds a placard reading “Who would say David is Goliath now?” in Mexico City, 2014.

Photo: Yuri Cortez/AFP

Jean-Paul Sartre said that anti-Semitism contains a strange kind of optimism that postulates that once the evil embodied by the Jewish people is eliminated, harmony will finally be re-established. This so-called “optimism” has never, in many incarnations, shown itself more explicitly than now in the tenets of the leftist anti-Zionist movement: when the Jewish State —the very essence of global Jewish life today—is destroyed, the world’s problems will be solved. The Middle East will be quiet and stable; the world will know a mythical universal peace between all religions; the Muslims will see the West in a positive light, terrorism will end, and the security and stability that the United Nations and the European Union have promised (yet have never obtained) will finally rest upon us.

Israel's existence crushes this postmodern utopian illusion. Anti-Semitism, therefore, has devoted its new struggle to the global strategy to destroy the Jewish State — which involves an elaborate media campaign to delegitimize the concept of “nation,” to view terrorist violence as “resistance,” and to package this calculation as “human rights.”

The delegitimization of the State of Israel is the core of any form of anti-Semitism today. Even the most traditional demonization of the Jews, with its blood libels and age-old anti-Semitic tropes, finds expression in the modern Israel-centered narrative. The international press reported that Israeli first responders - doctors, nurses, soldiers, firemen, and disaster-relief teams - fly afar to disaster zones to help wherever an earthquake, tsunami, or cyclone hits the local population, but with the purpose of stealing human organs for a profitable sale.¹

It is hard to imagine that a rational mind could believe these stories. Yet, in light of United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) reports of the IDF activity on the Gaza border, depicting soldiers not as defending their fellow citizens from cruel terrorist attacks, but “attacking innocent bystanders and demonstrators” and “committing war crimes,” even while being attacked by violent Hamas operatives who try to invade their country, it is more understandable. This attitude is perpetuated by the UN, whose Human Rights Council dedicates about a quarter of its special resolutions to condemning Israel,² while fewer than ten percent deal with human rights violators such as Myanmar, Sudan, or Syria, a despotic regime that has killed some 400,000 of its own people.

The loaded terms “genocide,” “colonialism,” and “apartheid,” used in connection with the Palestinians, are the red flags of modern anti-Semitism. Jews are depicted as the new Nazis, making

their state morally corrupt and undeserving of existence. These modern demonizations stem from a belief that the Jews are “a cancer that must be eradicated,” in the words of Iran’s Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.³ This new anti-Semitism has spread across Europe by refugees who were poisoned by anti-Semitism in their countries of origin. Their tainted views have been blindly adopted by the extreme left, and have been mainstreamed by gullible and misguided politicians and bureaucrats in the European elite.

In people’s minds, Israel and Jews will forever be connected: Israel is the Jewish homeland with a Jewish “soul,” expressing the essence of Jewish aspirations and behavior. There is no way of psychologically separating Israel from Jews, and this is why the argument “Anti-Zionism is not anti-Semitism” is null and void.

This kind of anti-Semitism has become pervasive. Ninety percent of European Jews who recently suffered violence, either verbal or physical,⁴ report that they have met with Holocaust inversion related to Zionism or Israel, clearly showing how anti-Semitic attacks now focus on Israel as the great “persecutor, murderer, ethnic cleanser, human-rights violator, and apartheid state”. It’s interesting to note that according to a CNN poll in 2018, about 30 percent of people interviewed in Europe knew virtually nothing about the Holocaust.⁵

But the anti-Semitic ideas and rhetoric that led to the Holocaust have reappeared in restyled political garb. If the Israelis are the new Nazis, and the Palestinians are then the new Jews, then worldwide Jewry are Nazi proxies and supporters, consequentially delegitimizing both Israel and diaspora Jews.⁶ In a twist on this theme, another anti-Semitic claim is that Israel exploits the memory of the Holocaust to gain advantage and whitewash its wrongdoings.

Several years ago, Natan Sharansky offered a guide for detecting anti-Semitism against Israel, which he termed “the 3Ds”: delegitimization, demonization, and double standards.⁷ European Union guidelines, by which trade and commerce with the so-called “occupied territories” are sanctioned, and its products labelled to discourage their purchase, illustrate double standards.⁸ This rationalizes diplomatic warfare against Israel, the main vehicle being the Boycott Divestment and Sanction movement. BDS cleverly conceals its intentions to eliminate Israel while presenting itself as a defender of human rights.

BDS has been conducting a campaign to delegitimize the existence of the State of Israel, while it has simultaneously functioned as a sophisticated political machine that legitimizes its own struggle. In the name of freedom of speech and criticism, European and American politicians on the extreme left have found their way to the microphones, to social media, and to other platforms in the democratic West. For example, an Israel-hater like British Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn was a step away from becoming prime minister of the United Kingdom. In the United States, for the first time in its history, a Democratic member of Congress, Ilhan Omar, declared contempt for Jews and Israel without receiving much moral or political censure, deflecting her accusers, by accusing them of Islamophobia directed against her.⁹ Omar used the old mantra: “Mine is a legitimate criticism, and anti-Semitism has nothing to do with what I said.”

The historical, social and cultural reasons for this new anti-Semitism are connected to a strange turn of events. The economic and cultural crisis in the West has invited the masses to publicly express their frustration, misery and, unfortunately, their ignorance.¹⁰ A new tribalism has invaded today’s popular culture



A protester in Mexico City holds a likeness of an Israeli flag with its Star of David replaced by a swastika, 2009.

Photo: Ronaldo Schemidt/AFP

in the form of moral subjectivism—an oblivion of the rules born in Judeo-Christian Western civilization, replaced by the norms of convenience. The populist masses on the right and left are the protagonists, manipulating the interpretation of history, telling their narrative in simplified language, and encouraging violence, where good and bad are juxtaposed. In these simplifications, violent political actors become legitimized by claiming corruption, imperialism, exploitation, and colonialism on the part of their supposed enemies.

It is incorrect to place the brunt of the blame for most of the anti-Semitism seen today on the political right. Nationalism in of itself is not anti-Semitic, nor are nationalists necessarily

anti-Semites. While white supremacists, neo-Nazis and neo-fascists are still active, they have little real influence. The far right does not have the moral authority or weight to sway the masses as do the far left, which riles up anti-Jewish hatred in rallies and marches decrying “the apartheid state” and “occupation,” providing cover to the murders and attacks in France, Belgium and other parts of Europe, and bolstering anti-Israel anti-Semitic incitement by the United Nations and by European Union bodies.

DUPLICITY AND DOUBLE STANDARDS

To the postmodern leftists, the contemporary forms of the Magna Carta, the old language of civil rights (as opposed to their new language of human rights) and good order become the enemy.¹¹ These become a matter-of-fact markers for a partisan struggle against violators real or imagined, very often ignoring the deeds of the real violators. The most blatant example of omission in this progressive agenda are the human rights crimes of the Muslim world, where women and LGBTQ people are oppressed, those who dare to have a major difference of opinion with their regime are punished with torture and death, and where terrorism is considered a fight for freedom. All of these human rights offenses are forgiven and forgotten, while the free, democratic nation state of the Jewish people, Israel, is condemned.

The West’s response to this damning rhetoric has been weak, apologetic, and confused. We must fight this ideology directly. Though there is a commendable effort in the educational and social arenas to keep the memory of the *Shoah* alive, by no means is it a solution to anti-Semitism or to the broader ignorance of Jewish history, including

the history of Israel. Israel is the center of the attack, not the memory of the Holocaust or the racist arguments that brought it about in the first place. The logical consequence is that all Jews are considered the fifth column of a criminal, colonialist country.

WHAT MUST BE DONE

To contain the wave of anti-Semitism, we must expand the acceptance of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism,¹² and implement legal measures against BDS. It's also important that governments appoint commissioners that check and combat anti-Semitism, to improve security measures and efforts to detect nests of anti-Semitic criminality on the Internet, as has been done in Germany.¹³

Yet all of these activities will remain ineffectual without the knowledge that defending the Jews begins with defending Israel, since, conversely, Israel is the ultimate defender of the Jews, providing them a national refuge. This must be felt deeply, by encouraging Jews and others to visit Israel as part of university courses, school trips, and conferences, in order to gain firsthand knowledge and a true image of Israel, its people, its army, its skills, and its challenges. This is particularly important for diaspora Jews. Why? Because today, Israel also serves as an international "shield" for diaspora Jews, ensuring that "never again" is not an empty phrase. However, it has become apparent that some diaspora Jews, while deriving greater security from the fact of Israel's existence, still appear to prefer their local interests over defending the Jewish State, which is still surrounded by enemies.

Those who delegitimize Israel, whether the Iranian regime, the Muslim world, the Palestinian leadership, their representatives in international institutions or NGOs, must be answered in turn, and they also must be exposed: their cultural values, their crimes against humanity, their attitudes and legislation regarding women, gays, and freedom of conscience, and their relations with extreme, terrorist groups and ideologies. They must be made to answer for themselves.

Additionally, nation-states that are interested in maintaining good relations with Israel must begin to defend their own Jewish citizens. There are some encouraging signs. In Hungary, the anti-Semitic political party Jobbik has been marginalized by Viktor Orbán's pro-Israel government,¹⁴ as has the far-right Holocaust denying party Golden Dawn in Greece.¹⁵ In Saudi Arabia, as in Kuwait and in the Gulf states, Sunni countries are interested in new diplomatic relations with Israel;¹⁶ Israeli athletes can now play "*Hatikvah*" when they win and stand on the podium in competitive sporting events in these locations.¹⁷

The struggle against anti-Semitism remains a major challenge. Anti-Semitism is a many-headed Hydra that disregards the past; it's still alive and kicking. Though it's commendable to keep teaching the history of Jewish persecutions in schools, including those of the Holocaust, we must focus on the next step.

Anti-Semitism must be pinpointed in the here and now —namely, in anti-Israel hatred and invective. A tough, well-aimed new campaign must be conceived to combat this, teaching proponents about anti-Zionist and anti-Israeli history and propaganda. As opposed to the Jews' vulnerable, fragile, and often tragic situation before the establishment of the Jewish State, now that Israel exists, Jews can and should counter anti-Semitism with action and strength. This will not obliterate anti-Semitism, but it will help to dispel the lies on the left and the right.

Endnotes

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Fighting Anti-Semitism, Both Left and Right

Natan Sharansky

ABSTRACT

Many in the West are confused by the new, historically unprecedented anti-Semitism of the political left. However, this contemporary anti-Semitic libel of the Jewish State parallels classic anti-Semitism against Jews. Jews who lived in Stalinist Russia easily identify this symmetry. Soviet propaganda regularly vilified Jews by accusing them of being “Zionists.” This anti-Semitic tool gained international credibility in the United Nations’ infamous “Zionism is racism” resolution in 1975.

Paradoxically, the world now uses rhetoric identical to Stalin’s in the name of postmodernism, an outgrowth of neo-Marxism, guided by the noble ideas of equality, human rights, and universal peace. This view sees nationalism as an evil relic of the dark past, and Israel as the epitome of a combative ethnic nation-state, a remnant of colonialism, as “deplorable.” This serves as the basis for vicious anti-Zionist propaganda that views Israel as an undesirable and illegitimate entity.

We formulated the 3D Test in response to the anti-Semitic defamation of Israel, to reveal how anti-Israel propaganda parallels anti-Semitic propaganda against individual Jews, repeating the historical pattern of anti-Semitism, now aimed at Israel. It includes three criteria: 1. Demonization, 2. Delegitimization, and 3. Double Standards.

The 3D Test helps diagnose and unmask unacceptable anti-Semitic statements, noting their style and pattern, while allowing for legitimate criticism, which is good, productive, and acceptable.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two millennia, anti-Semitism has infected peoples, religions and civilizations, battering its Jewish victims on religious, racial, nationalist and post nationalist grounds. Whether it's the massacre and expulsion of Jews from ancient Jerusalem, the assault on Alexandria's Jewish community in the year 38 of the common era, the trumped-up charges against French officer Alfred Dreyfus in the 1890's, or Germany's *Kristallnacht* in the late 1930's, each episode is seen to emanate from a mix of political, social, economic, cultural, and religious factors, that seem to elude one deeper cause.

However, a closer look at the historical processes that have led to the current alarming state of anti-Semitism against Jews whether in Israel, Ireland, or Indiana reveals an eternal truth; throughout the ages anti-Semitism has consistently targeted and undermined each era's center of Jewish identity. Religiously-based hatred of Jews during the Middle Ages was distinct from the racially-based anti-Semitism of the modern era. Today, anti-Semitism assaults Jews by attacking Israel, the center of Jewish collective identity. However, it is more difficult for many to understand Israel-centered anti-Semitism, because it is not as self-evident.

Many in the West are confused by the “new” Left anti-Semitism, since it is historically unprecedented. However, contemporary anti-Semitic libel of the Jewish State parallels classic anti-Semitism against Jews. Jews who lived in Stalinist Russia easily identify this symmetry. Soviet propaganda regularly vilified Jews by accusing them of being “Zionists.” This anti-Semitic tool gained international credibility in the United Nations’ infamous “Zionism is racism” resolution in 1975.

Paradoxically, the world now uses rhetoric identical to Stalin’s in the name of postmodernism, guided by the noble ideas of equality, human rights, and universal peace, which sees nationalism as the obstacle to an ideal world without nations and borders. In this “dream,” Israel as a Jewish national state is “problematic,” and symbolizes the last remnant of colonialism and the dark past.

STALIN’S ANTI-SEMITISM/ANTI-ZIONISM

In my childhood in the 1950’s Soviet Russia, “Zionists” was a code word for Jews. In the 1940’s, the Stalinist government placed restrictions on and conducted purges of Jews, calling them “Zionist agents” or “*kosmopolit*,” a term referring to the cosmopolitan, international, and rootless nature of Jews.¹ In Stalinist Russia, anti-Semites did not bother to hide their hatred of the Jews; it was clear to us. “Zionists” and “cosmopolitans” that the terms represent two ironically opposite criticisms: “Zionists” implies that the Jews are disloyal because they are *nationalists*, loyal to Israel instead of the Soviet Union, and “cosmopolitans” suggests that the Jews are disloyal because of their *internationalist* nature. In Communist Party documents, the Soviets officially claimed to vehemently oppose all types of racism, but ironically, they included both anti-

Semitism and Zionism. This would lay the foundation for Soviet propaganda “conquering” the United Nations and the international community’s vindication of Soviet anti-Semitism.

1975 UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 3379: ZIONISM IS RACISM

The international community ratified Stalin’s anti-Semitic propaganda by equating Zionism with racism in UN General Assembly Resolution 3379 of November 1975.² This was the sequel to the anti-Israel battle that had begun in 1965 when the Soviets tried to push for the inclusion of Zionism as a kind of racial discrimination, as they proposed it be included in the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.³ The Convention was affirmed, but the Russian proposal failed. However, this would change in 1975 when the international community vindicated Stalin’s anti-Semitism by passing UN General Assembly Resolution 3379 affirming that “Zionism is racism.” The American ambassador to the United Nations, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, noting the Soviet-sponsored resolution, admonished the UN assembly, saying “the abomination of anti-Semitism has been given the appearance of international sanction.”⁴ In fact, at the time, the free world, including Europe, stood with Israel against the “Zionism is racism” resolution.

Before this turning point in 1975, the Soviet Union’s attacks on Israel were disregarded as bogus. Yet now, if Zionism was racism, and racism was a crime, it followed that Zionism was also a crime. This justified, popularized, and mainstreamed Soviet anti-Semitic propaganda. This resolution lent credibility in the international



Anti-Semitic graffiti in Warsaw, Poland, 2019.

Photo: Jaap Arriens/Nur Photo

community to the Soviets' obscured messages regarding the Jewish state, which clouded the similarities between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism.

In 1975, most of the nations who supported the “Zionism is racism” resolution were third-world countries and Soviet satellites. Today, however, many in the free world have changed sides. Due to the popular human rights and global discourse of leftist postmodernism, Israel’s detractors come from the developed Western world and insist that anti-Zionist polemics are legitimate criticism of Israel.

THE “3D TEST” AS A RESPONSE TO ANTI-ISRAEL INVECTIVE IN THE SECOND INTIFADA

When I was a minister in the Israeli government during the start of the Second Intifada in the early 2000s, disturbing anti-Israel media agitation encouraged a worldwide wave of anti-Semitism. A cartoon of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon,⁵ monstrously eating Palestinian children, won a prize for the best caricature of the year. Jose Saramago, a Nobel laureate, visited Israel and spoke of “concentration camps” and “the spirit of Auschwitz.”⁶ However many people in the free world did not recognize the rhetorical and political attacks on Israel as anti-Semitism. It became clear that we needed objective criteria.

In response to defamation of Israel, Ron Dermer, Israel’s ambassador to the United States, and I formulated the “3D Test” to show how anti-Israel propaganda paralleled anti-Semitic propaganda against individual Jews. The 3D Test is a formula to recognize the repetitive historical pattern of anti-Semitism, now aimed at Israel. It includes three criteria for detecting anti-Semitism in the form of “anti-Zionism:” 1. Demonization, 2. Delegitimization, and 3. Double Standards.

These are tools with which to reveal anti-Israel bias and hatred that takes the form of classic anti-Semitic speech. The “3D Test” is a metaphor for “3D glasses,” worn by moviegoers at a three-dimensional film. Without these “3D spectacles,” the movie appears distorted, unclear, or blurred.

Now internationally accepted, the 3D Test clarifies and sharpens the parallels of classic anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism, bringing them into full focus and facilitating the unmasking of the new anti-Israel face of Jew hatred. The same arguments that were



Author and Israel detractor Peter Beinart speaks in Atlanta, Georgia in 2012.

Photo: David Goldman/AP

historically used against Jews are now being brought up against Israel as the “collective Jew.” This is especially important in the postmodern world, which denies a connection between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism.

Examples of the 3Ds abound: anti-Israel protest signs depicting Jews with horns and tails, perpetuating the belief that Jews are demonic or satanic,⁷ anti-Israel cartoons with classic anti-Semitic themes, such as one of a dying Jesus, represented as a Palestinian, in his mother Mary’s arms, with the text, “Do not kill him twice,”⁸ or depicting Jews as a Christ-killers, now applied to the Jewish State, are all examples of demonization.

Depicting an Arab Palestinian as Jesus, at the same time delegitimizes Israel by distorting and manipulating Jewish history, reminiscent of the supersessionary Christian claim that Judaism was replaced by the New Testament. The reversal of historical “victim” roles as in the “Zionism is Nazism” inversion claim, the denials of ancient Jewish archeological discoveries, Jewish indigeneity, Jewish peoplehood, all common in traditional and social media sources, all aim to delegitimize the Jewish State and its connection to the Jewish people.

The third measure, “double standards,” are commonly reflected in UN resolutions exclusively condemning or censuring Israel, over the course of decades since the organization’s inception. This singling out of the Jewish State has occurred while representatives of the world’s most oppressive dictatorships sit on UN councils and committees that condemn Israel. This double standard is reminiscent of the thousand-plus discriminatory laws of czarist Russia against Jews.

POSTMODERNISM AND ANTI-SEMITISM

Why, when in 1975 the free world knew that Zionism was not racism, now, in the postmodern world, do they think that Zionism is racism? Additionally, today, just like in Soviet Russia, it has become common for people to use the word “Zionism” as a slur. However, the difference today is that it has become more difficult to recognize anti-Zionism’s connection to anti-Semitism. Stalinist Russia and today’s postmodern worldview reach similar conclusions about Zionism. The postmodern world, born of respect for the noble causes of human rights, social justice, and peace, uses the same formulas to blast Zionism as did the Stalinist anti-Semitic regime.

Postmodern political thought, popularized, and postulated by French intellectuals, rejects nation-states as antithetical to its sacred aims. This was well expressed in John Lennon's signature song, "Imagine:" "Imagine there's no countries....no religion, too...Imagine all the people sharing all the world."⁹ Postmodernism was largely an outgrowth of neo-Marxism, in which nationalism, group identity, and religion are considered the obstacles to achieving the ultimate goal of world peace. Israel, the epitome of a combative ethnic nation-state, a relic and remnant of the colonial past order, is "deplorable." This serves as the basis for vicious anti-Zionist propaganda that views Israel as an undesirable and illegitimate entity.

As opposed to Stalinist communism, in which individual citizens were cogs in the Soviet machine in which no individual had rights beyond their instrumental value, in the postmodern ideal, individual human rights embody the highest value. The postmodern ideological frame will deny any connection to anti-Semitism because it views Judaism as a faith and an individual choice. Any form of national identity of Jews or others is considered antithetical to the ultimate postmodern vision for the world. Soviet communism and postmodernism reach the same conclusion in opposing Zionism, each from an opposite angle, as if the ideas of Stalin's Russia have revisited the free world, now manifested in the language of peace, equality, and freedom.

There has been a counter-reaction to the postmodern denial of nationalism, as witnessed in ultra-nationalism and neo-fascism on the right-wing extreme of the political spectrum. Forces on the Left say they love Jews, but hate Israel, while those on the Right admire Jewish nationalism, but hate Jews. Extremism on both sides has inflamed anti-Semitism.

Nationalism is still a self-evident phenomenon, as is liberalism, and both can be positive forces but can also be driven to negative extremes. In Europe, we observe obvious expressions of nationalism, from Brexit to the Eastern European countries, with many far-right parties gaining power and momentum. In the United States, the Alt-Right movement has gained traction.

Today, both in the United States and in Europe, neither anti-Semites nor anti-Zionists bother to mask their hatred of Jews and the Jewish State. A Belgian parade float recently depicted big-nosed Hasidic Jews with rats and money bags,¹⁰ demonstrating that conventional, classical anti-Semitism is still acceptable. On the other side of the spectrum, anti-Zionist hatred is still less recognized as anti-Semitism. Why is this? Anti-Zionists still view Israel as a vestige of nationalism and “colonialism.” This postmodern mindset justifies anti-Israel harassment and even violence on college campuses directed at Jewish students, which, as expressions of anti-Semitism, have become increasingly more common.

The 3D Test has been an effective tool to expose the anti-Israel form of anti-Semitism. However, today since classic anti-Semitic statements are openly being used to demonize the Jewish state, the 3D Test may become obsolete. We don’t need a 3D Test to understand that U.S. Congresswoman Ilhan Omar’s statements that “Israel hypnotizes the world” and that American Jews are loyal to a foreign power¹¹ are anti-Semitic tropes.

However, 3D is still unexpectedly valuable when Jews in today’s public discourse misrepresent anti-Israel and anti-Semitism as political critique. For example, Jewish author and perennial Israel detractor, Peter Beinart, denied the anti-Semitic nature of Omar’s statements.¹² This is a fundamental error. The 3D Test still helps

us to diagnose and unmask unacceptable anti-Semitic statements, noting their style and pattern, while allowing for legitimate criticism, which is good, productive, and acceptable.

In today's world, in the world of the new nationalism on the Right and postmodernism on the Left, anti-Semitism exists in two parallel realities. Anti-Semitism exists on the extremes of both the political Left and Right, with each camp recognizing it in their opponents, while denying it in their own spaces. Both sides should be held responsible for energetically fighting anti-Semitism and denouncing it with moral clarity in their own political camp.

Endnotes

- 1 “Rootless cosmopolitan” was a pejorative term widely used during the Soviet anti-Semitic campaign of the late 1940s and early 1950s, culminating in the infamous “Doctors’ plot” against Jewish doctors. *Kosmopolit* referred especially to Jewish intellectuals, and their alleged lack of allegiance to the Soviet Union. <https://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~hpcws/egorov.htm>
- 2 https://ecf.org.il/media_items/1395
- 3 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CERD.aspx>
- 4 <https://unwatch.org/moynihans-moment-the-historic-1975-u-n-speech-in-response-to-zionism-is-racism/>
- 5 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dave_Brown_\(cartoonist\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dave_Brown_(cartoonist))
- 6 <https://www.haaretz.com/1.5224268> In 2002, renowned Portuguese writer and Nobel Prize-winner Jose Saramago, drew comparisons between Israel’s blockade of the West Bank city of Ramallah and the Holocaust. Referring to the IDF’s siege on Ramallah, Saramago said that it had the “the spirit of Auschwitz,” and “This place is being turned into a concentration camp.”
- 7 http://www.zombietime.com/sf_rally_february_16_2003/
- 8 <https://www.theguardian.com/global/gallery/2008/dec/19/middleeast-israelandthepalestinians>
- 9 <https://www.lyrics.com/lyric/3403160/John+Lennon/Imagine>
- 10 <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/08/world/europe/belgium-carnival-anti-semitism.html>
- 11 <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/11/opinion/ilhan-omar-antisemitism.html>
- 12 <https://forward.com/opinion/national/419206/the-sick-double-standard-in-the-ilhan-omar-controversy/>

Anti-Zionism as a Postmodern Ideology

Professor Shmuel Trigano

ABSTRACT

Anti-Zionism is an ideology, that can be deconstructed, but it is not an erroneous opinion that one can criticize. We may fight it, but we cannot argue with it. Serious intellectual and academic proofs, our previous strategies as academics, have not convinced the true believers of “Palestinianism,” which has become a kind of Western progressive religion.

The anti-Zionist ideology facing us is not just a passing phase nourished by the manipulation of history by Palestinian nationalism; it is part of a societal configuration within the framework of what has become Western global democratic society. We are entering a new age of Jew-hatred.

The best way to counter an ideology is to attack it. You cannot fight a myth or a lie with a simple defense or justification. You must instead pit the myths of the ideology against themselves. It is important not to respond to invented accusations and not to accept the terms of the opponent, but to target the same objects that in turn target the ideology.

To imagine that one can draw a border—even a fine one—between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism is to think that the controversy over the latter is based on rational argumentation and historical knowledge. This is what we did in France and Western Europe for 20 years,¹ without success in debunking it. Anti-Zionism is a belief, and therefore it is impervious to rationality and facts

that contradict it. How can one argue about whether someone's judgment on Israel goes beyond the measure of a "legitimate criticism" if the facts he uses as proofs are shameful lies? One obvious example is calling Israel an "apartheid" state when the Israeli Arab party is the third largest party in the Knesset and its political ideology denies the State of Israel's legitimacy. The discussion turns nonsensical when based on lies.

Anti-Zionism is an ideology, which means that it can be deconstructed, but it is not an erroneous opinion that one can criticize. We may fight it, but we cannot argue with it. Serious intellectual and academic proofs, our previous strategies as academics, have not convinced the true believers of "Palestinianism," which has become a kind of Western progressive religion.

Everything has been said *ad nauseam* against this ideology, especially in recent years, after witnessing new heights of anti-Semitic activity originating from the anti-Zionist Left. If indeed, logical speech has become ineffective, only direct confrontation remains an option.² American Jewry must waste no time in learning from the historical and recent experiences of European Jews and take heed.

These conclusions do not stem solely from empirical judgments, but from analysis. The anti-Zionist ideology facing us is not just a passing phase nourished by the manipulation of history by Palestinian nationalism; it is part of a societal configuration within the framework of what has become Western global democratic society. We are entering a new age of Jew-hatred.

Throughout history, Jews have experienced three modes of hatred which correspond to three ages of civilization: traditional society, democratic modernity, and postmodernity. Each of these



Women's March leadership Ginny Suss, Carmen Perez, Mia Ives-Ruble, honorary co-chair Gloria Steinem, Linda Sarsour, and Tamika Mallory stand together in Washington, DC, on January 21, 2017.

Photo: Theo Wargo/Getty Images NA/AFP

epochs, respectively, fostered a different type of hatred: religious, racial, and today, “humanist.” Before the modern age, the Jew was hated as a deicide (or traitor to Muhammad or Luther); in modernity, as a foul race and international conspirators; and today, Jews are perceived as racists who infringe on *human* rights.

In all three ages, the Jews were attacked as a collective, yet in different ways. In the medieval empires, the Jews were the captive nation, shut up in the ghetto as a target. In the democratic nation-state, it was the Jewish community, defined as a people hidden among the national citizenry. Today, in the age of the global village, it is the State of Israel that is considered intrinsically racist. Each of the three cases, respectively, is typified by different

forms of the collective existence of the Jews: ghetto or *mellah*, denomination, or nation-state. Today the target of the attack is, above all, the sovereignty of the Jewish people in the form of a nation-state. This creates a *political* hatred.

THE ULTIMATE IDEOLOGY OF ANTI-ZIONISM

Anti-Zionism is backed by a broader ideology, dominant today in Western democratic countries, which sustains it, legitimizes it, and guarantees its worldwide impact. This ideology is called postmodernism, which also has numerous satellites: postcolonialism, multiculturalism, and gender doctrine, with “deconstruction” being the keyword. Objectively, its aim is to dismiss all the “narratives” of the West in order to promote the “Other,” or, rather, the non-Western “Others” narratives. Contrary to modern anti-Semitism, which considered the Jew to belong to a foreign race, the new anti-Semitism classifies Jews as belonging to the “Same” and not the “Other.” This creates an intense paradox: the new hatred of the Jews is born and develops in the multicultural environment, on the basis of the apologetics of “diversity.”

Postmodernist ideology is founded on a series of antinomies: the collective and the individual subject, as well as the nation and the individual, are its elective targets. It positions minorities against nation; gender against identity; participative democracy against representative democracy; “international community” against the state; tribunal against executive power; governance against government; human rights against civil rights.³ Clearly, the State of Israel stands on the dividing line of this series of antinomies, appearing to be the quintessence of the enemy.

Anti-Zionism thus is postmodernism applied to the State of Israel, to the Jews as a people, to the Jewish people as a nation, to the Jew as gender-related (as in the idea that Judaism is a source of “phallocracy”), to the Jew as a singular identity (as opposed to the “Other”), to Judaism as a coherent and integrated system, to Israel as territory, and so on. “Zionism” is viewed as conjoining all that resists this new ideology and power system. The Jew targeted by anti-Zionism is thus wholly the opposite of the post-Holocaust philo-Semitic myth that idealized the Jew as a victim, and more precisely, an undifferentiated (so-called “universal”) victim, a figure that aims at lessening European guilt and allows European consciousness to absolve itself of its culpability by identifying with the “victim.” The greater the adoration of the “wandering” or “victim” Jew, the greater the hatred of the sovereign Jew.

Thus, when we put anti-Zionism in the global framework of postmodernist ideology, the argument against Israel also applies to all the democratic nation-states of the West. Israel is a vector of an issue far greater than that of the Jews. Postmodernism is essentially the ideology suitable to the European Union, the cradle of anti-Zionism; a society in which a new power tries to establish a new order, where a profound crisis of nation-states and national identity coincides with simultaneous massive immigration from states under the threat of *jihad* that announce a possible war of identities.

This state of affairs allows European Islamic activists to legitimately join the current dominant ideology via its “postcolonial” annex. Anti-Zionism thus becomes the banner of Muslim fundamentalists, the extreme Left, of the alternative and so-called “progressive” movements that have found in Palestine the mythical hero, the “universal class” that the proletariat was for Marxism, and that

Catholics see as the “New Israel” of their supersessionist theology. For the same reason, for governments, anti-Zionism plays the role of a system of symbolic communication and negotiation with their Muslim population, which has made Palestine its emblem. This is what has been called “intersectionality,” the key to the success of Palestinianism, which contributes to making Palestine the embodiment of all frustrations and claims.

THE WAR OF THE JEWS

The recent development of anti-Zionism in both Israel and the Diaspora has seen the phenomenon of Jewish elites rising to accuse other Jews of racism and tribalism, in an attempt to discredit Israel by using the claim that Zionism has created an “apartheid” Jewish state. Israel’s postmodern intelligentsia hatched these accusations through ideologies of “post-Zionism,” “new history,” “new sociology,” “new archaeology,” and other postmodern academic movements. These are the mainstay of the new anti-Semitism, providing it with false accusations in addition to moral immunity since it emanates from Jews who authorize its legitimacy. It is particularly sad to see the basis of hatred against Israel originating from within Israel itself.

This is a sign of the gravity and reality of the anti-Jewish threat from the outside. We can understand this phenomenon as a consequence of the hostile pressure exercised by the environment. Such a situation, classically, causes the collapse of the Jewish social bond. It is expressed first by a rupture between the Jewish elites and the Jewish masses.

Indeed, the elites are in structural contact with the oppressing milieu: in making concessions on their link with the rest of the Jews and condemning them, they hope to continue to belong to the now globalized, dominant elite and true center of postmodernism. Hannah Arendt called this typically modern Jewish tendency “Jews by exception.” Such a phenomenon existed in periods of persecution and oppression: the Spanish Inquisition and its apostates; Nazism’s phenomenon of 1930s *Jüdischer Selbsthass* (Jewish self-hatred), discussed in Theodore Lessing’s book of that name; and other similar historical incidences.

Its apparition in Israel was not just a disagreement and a political debate but a *Kulturkampf*. The dramatic way in which the former Israeli ambassador to France, Tel Aviv University historian and well-known *JCall* speaker Professor Eli Barnavi, described this conflict is significant:

Yes, there are two Israels, my Israel, oriented to the secular and rational world; and the other, idolatrous Israel, focused on a deified land and prisoner of archaic beliefs.... Between the two, there is no possible compromise.... In the combat opposing them, each camp has its allies in the Jewish world and among the Gentiles. They have their followers, Jews of the Diaspora entrenched in their ancestral fears who scent anti-Semitism everywhere and are ready to fight for Abu Dis, to the last Israeli, or American evangelists.... We have our followers, “moral Jews...” and Gentiles who still agree to maintain a balance.⁴

These elites call for an intervention by Western powers against their own country to “save” it from fascism. On October 1, 2009, Eli Barnavi called for international intervention in the radio

broadcast *Les Matins de France Culture*. Among other statements, he declared: “James Baker...said, it was recorded...‘We will screw the Jews.’ It was music to my ears.”

This has awoken the eternal demons of the Western world. The conflict of the two Israels has thus become quasi-international with, at its center, the best “Israel”: Palestine. The discourse of the post-Zionist and postmodernist Jewish milieus has helped to ruin, and even criminalize, the identity of the Jews as a people and the rational coherence of Jewish civilization, among other things, in an attempt to rewrite Jewish history and identity. Thus, this enterprise has joined that of the European postmodernists at war against their own cultures and nations, especially European nation-states, at one with the logic of a European Union “empire” in the making.

Hatred Systems	Anti-Judaism	Anti-Semitism	Anti-Zionism
Types of Civilization	Traditional Society	Democratic Modernity	Postmodernity
Types of Hatred	Religious	Racial	Humanist
Types of Accusation	Deicide	World Conspiracy	Fascism and Racism
Jewish Collective Dimension	Ghetto	Denomination	Sovereign State Ethnic Communities (Diaspora)
Political Regimes	Empire	Absolute Monarchy and Nation-State	Global Village

HOW CAN WE FIGHT ANTI-ZIONISM TODAY?

The best way to counter an ideology is to attack it. You cannot fight a myth or a lie with a simple defense or justification. You must instead pit the myths of the ideology against themselves. It is important not to respond to invented accusations and not to accept the terms of the opponent, but to target the same objects that in turn target the ideology.

In this, Israeli and Jewish elites have failed miserably in neglecting the considerable history of violent liquidation of eleven significant Jewish communities in the Arab-Muslim world, most of whom became Israelis (600,000 Jews in the 1950s). The *Nakba* (the dispersal of Palestinian Arab families), an absolute source of the delegitimization of Israel in today's anti-Zionism ("original sin" in the words of the post-Zionists), does not resist this comparison. Similarly, accusations of apartheid and racism cannot stand up to the turpitude of the Palestinians and the current status of non-Muslims throughout the Muslim world. The accusation against Israel is "moral," yet this "morality" is instrumentalized for wrong. This is one of the main characteristics of anti-Zionism. Moralistic and scholarly discourses are useless in what is a real confrontation, with every ideological attack announcing a future, violent one. If your opponent calls you a "fascist," he will not repeat it again if you call him a "Stalinist."

Endnotes

- 1 In 2000, I created the Observatory of the Jewish World and published an alert bulletin for politicians (obs.monde.juif.free.fr). <http://obs.monde.juif.free.fr/>
- 2 After 18 thick issues of a review devoted to the study of anti-Zionism, *Controverses*, I concluded that everything had been said and that it was necessary to end its publication (<http://controverses.fr/>).
- 3 I have developed this analysis elsewhere: S. Trigano, “La nouvelle idéologie dominante.” *Le postmodernisme* (Paris: Hermann, 2011).
- 4 *Le Point*, no. 1965 (May 13, 2010), 54.

Reaffirming Dr. Martin Luther King's Zionist Legacy

Joshua Washington

ABSTRACT

Some voices in the Black American community have attempted to recast Dr. Martin Luther King as a harsh critic of Israel, who, if he were alive today, would join a chorus of the Jewish State's toughest adversaries. Some have attempted to hijack Dr. King's legacy to serve an anti-Semitic agenda. Others have misused his quotes and speeches to justify support for the "Palestinian cause."

However, these claims falsify the historical record, since Dr. King was a staunch Zionist who opposed the Black radical left movement of the late 1960s, which aligned with far Left opponents of Israel. Dr. King championed Israel's security, self-determination, and territorial integrity.

The resurgence of anti-Semitism in the West and an unprecedented ideological assault against Israel in recent years have aroused debate over the historical relationship between Israel and the Black American community. Against the hills and valleys of Black-Jewish relations during the past century, controversy also surrounds the legacy of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King's stance on Israel and the Jewish people. Some voices in the Black American community have attempted to recast Dr. King as a harsh critic of Israel, who, if he were alive today, would join a chorus of the Jewish state's toughest adversaries.¹



Leaders in a Vietnam war protest stand in silent prayer in Arlington National Cemetery, Feb. 6, 1968. Front row, from left: Rev. Andrew Young, executive vice president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Bishop James P. Shannon, Roman Catholic auxiliary bishop of Minneapolis and St. Paul; Rabbi Abraham Heschel, professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York; the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

Photo: AP Photo/Harvey Georges

However, these claims falsify the historical record. Dr. King was a staunch Zionist. The historical record speaks for itself. On March 25, 1968, Dr. King was honored at the 68th Annual Convention of the Rabbinical Assembly of Conservative Judaism.² At the convention, one rabbi asked him the following question:

“What would you say if you were talking to a Negro intellectual, an editor of a national magazine, and were told, as I have been, that he supported the Arabs against

Israel because color is all-important in this world? In the editor's opinion, the Arabs are colored Asians and the Israelis are white Europeans. Would you point out that more than half of the Israelis are Asian Jews with the same pigmentation as Arabs, or would you suggest that an American Negro should not form judgments on the basis of color? What seems to you an appropriate or an effective response?"

Behind this question stood an anti-Israel sentiment emanating from the more radical civil rights activists at that time in the black community. The radical Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) had released a scathing anti-Zionist article called "The Palestine Problem: Test Your Knowledge," wherein members of the committee wrote 32 "Did you know" questions, peddling the same anti-Israel propaganda heard today.³ Some of the false and misleading questions included propagandistic statements such as the following:

- * "Did you know that the Zionists conquered the Arab homes and land through terror, force, and massacres? That they wiped out over 30 Arab villages before and after they took control of the area, they now call "Israel."
- * "Did you know that Zionism, which is a worldwide nationalistic Jewish movement, organized, planned and created the "State of Israel" by sending Jewish immigrants from Europe into Palestine (the heart of the Arab world) to take over land and homes belonging to the Arabs?"
- * "Did you know that the famous European Jews, the Rothschilds, who have long controlled the wealth of many European nations, were involved in the original conspiracy

with the British to create the “State of Israel” and are still among Israel’s chief supporters? That the Rothschilds also control much of Africa’s mineral wealth?”⁴

These and other anti-Israel and anti-Jewish questions were posed in the article. This is what American Jews were facing from the black community, and this is why Dr. King was asked the question.

Reverend King responded in no uncertain terms. “On the Middle East crisis... the response of some of the so-called young militants, again, does not represent the position of the vast majority of Negroes. There are some who are color-consumed, and they see a kind of mystique in being colored, and anything non-colored is condemned. We do not follow that course in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and certainly most of the organizations in the civil rights movement do not follow that course.”

Dr. King went on to say:

“Peace for Israel means security, and we must stand with all of our might to protect its right to exist, its territorial integrity. I see Israel, and never mind saying it, as one of the great outposts of democracy in the world, and a marvelous example of what can be done, how desert land almost can be transformed into an oasis of brotherhood and democracy. Peace for Israel means security and that security must be a reality.”

Dr. King continued:

“On the other hand, we must see what peace for the Arabs means in a real sense of security on another level. Peace for the Arabs means the kind of economic security that they so desperately need. These nations, as you

know, are part of that third world of hunger, of disease, of illiteracy. I think that as long as these conditions exist, there will be tensions; there will be the endless quest to find scapegoats. So there is a need for a Marshall Plan for the Middle East, where we lift those who are at the bottom of the economic ladder and bring them into the mainstream of economic security.”

Dr. King was no stranger to Middle East affairs, and his words to the Jewish community at the convention were not only poignant, but also prophetic. The “quest to find scapegoats” also characterizes today’s politics, as white nationalists, far-leftists, and Palestinian social justice warriors accuse Israel of causing the world’s ills, from creating Al Qaeda and ISIS to blood libels, including performing medical experiments on Palestinian women and stealing Palestinian organs.⁵ Prominent university professors have condemned Israel as the root of the world’s problems.⁶ These accusations are duplicitous. As many people know, Israel is a leader in solving many of the world’s greatest problems. It is a global leader in water desalination, agriculture, technology, and research for cures for diseases from diabetes to cancer.

Despite Dr. King’s testimony, some have attempted to hijack his legacy to serve an anti-Semitic agenda. Others have misused his quotes and speeches to justify support for the “Palestinian cause.” Israel’s detractors have insisted that if King were alive today, he would condemn Israel and exclusively support the Palestinians. If Dr. King’s living words will not convince this school of thought, his legacy will make things clearer.

Dr. King’s former attorney, Dr. Clarence Jones, noticed the attempt to claim Dr. King as an enemy of the Jewish state and said this on February 28, 2014:

“I am always a little taken aback. I am seeing people quoting [Dr. King] frequently out of context to develop a thesis, an argument that he would not be in support of the State of Israel. That is absolutely insane. From the standpoint of someone who has represented the great legacy of this extraordinary man, Martin Luther King, Jr., I say to my African American brothers and sisters, the time is now for every African American person, every person of stature in the African American community, to come forward and stand with Israel in the alpine chill of winter, to show that we are ‘wintertime soldiers.’”⁷

In 1975, when the United Nations passed Resolution 3379 stating, “Zionism is a form of racism,” Dr. King had already been assassinated seven years prior. Fortunately, his legacy lived on to fight this resolution. In the same year, the Black Americans Supporting Israel Committee (BASIC) was formed.

BASIC was founded by civil rights activist and the late Dr. King’s right-hand man, Bayard Rustin, along with the Civil Rights Movement leader A. Philip Randolph. Not only was it a black Zionist movement, but it was a response to the anti-Israel sentiment rising within the black community. These were its tenets, which are as relevant today as they were in 1975:⁸

1. We condemn the anti-Jewish “blacklist.”

We have fought too long and too hard to root out discrimination from our land to sit idly while foreign interests import bigotry into America. Having suffered so greatly from such prejudice, we consider most repugnant

efforts by Arab states to use the economic power of their newly acquired oil wealth to boycott business firms that deal with Israel or that have Jewish owners, directors or executives and to impose anti-Jewish preconditions for investments in this country.

2. We believe blacks and Jews have common interests in democracy and justice.

In the fight against discrimination, black Americans and American Jews have shared profound and enduring common interests that far transcend any differences between us. Jews, through individuals and organizations, have been among the most staunch allies in the struggle for racial justice, sharing with us the conviction that equality is indivisible and that no minority is secure in its rights if the rights of any are Impaired.

3. We support democratic Israel's right to exist.

The democratic values that have sustained our struggle in America are also the source of our admiration for Israel and her impressive social achievements. No nation is without imperfections. But Israel's are far outweighed by the freedom of her democratic society. Only in Israel, among the nations of the Middle East, are political freedoms and civil liberties secure. All religions are free and secure in their observance. Education is free and universal. Social welfare is highly advanced. Her communal farms (Kibbutzim) are models of social idealism, creative innovation, cooperative spirit. Israel's labor movement, the *Histadrut*, has earned the deep respect of freed trade unionists throughout the world.

4. Arab oil prices have had disastrous effects upon blacks in America and in Africa.

The impact of the massive increases in the price of oil has fallen disproportionately on the shoulders of black Americans. But we are not alone in our suffering. Millions of men, women, and children in Black Africa face starvation because the economies of their countries, already crippled by drought, were further weakened because of oil price increases. The chief cause of Black Africa's disastrous economic situation is the price that the Arabs are exacting for oil – at the same time that they paid lip service to “African solidarity.” The Arab oil-producing states have offered only small loans to the Black African nations, and then only in return for humiliating political concessions. Israel, small and isolated as it is, has done much to aid the economic development of Black Africa through creative technical programs. Together with other Americans, we enthusiastically join in reaffirming the rights of Israel exist as a sovereign state.

5. We support peace through mutual recognition.

All people long to see an end to the tragic Arab-Israeli conflict. We have learned from our struggle here in America that the only way to resolve a conflict of nationalities is through mutual acceptance and reconciliation. The Arabs have refused to accept the legitimacy of the State of Israel. Israel consistently demonstrated the desire to make concessions in the interest of peace with her Arab neighbors. But she has refused to accept the conditions that would threaten her existence as an independent sovereign nation.

6. We support genuine Palestinian self-determination.

We support the rights of the Palestinians to genuine self-determination, but not at the expense of the rights of Jews to independence and statehood, and not at the command of economic blackmailers or of terrorists who would force their own “solution” at the point of a gun. We have compassion for all who have suffered in this conflict, not least for the Palestinian refugees. But who can avoid asking why so many of these people continue to live in poverty in the midst of Arab wealth?

The spokesmen for the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) have been elected. They represent only themselves. Who can forget the murder of Israeli athletes at the Olympic games, the bomb letters, the airplane hijackings and attacks on the ground, sudden massacre of the innocent civilians at the Tel Aviv airport? Regardless of what the Arab world calls it, in the horrified shock of the people, it's indiscriminate murder of innocents.

7. We will work for peace.

In the months ahead, we will work for a just and stable peace, a peace that will not be a prelude to a new war but the beginning of an era of cooperation and goodwill between Israel and her Arab neighbors.

BASIC garnered support from hundreds of prominent black American figures, including Hank Aaron, Dorothy Maynor, Harry Belafonte, Rosa Parks, Count Basie, Rev. Martin Luther King, Sr., Coretta Scott King, and Lionel Hampton, who also served as treasurer.



Street sign for Martin Luther King Street in Jerusalem.

Photo: Tirza Shorr

BASIC was born just after UN General Assembly Resolution 3379, which declared that Zionism is racism. Bayard Rustin responded to that resolution in a column, writing:

“Zionism is not racism, but the legitimate expression of the Jewish people’s self-determination...From our 400 year experience with slavery, segregation, and discrimination, we know that Zionism is not racism.”⁹

Little has changed in the past 45 years regarding the PLO's attempts to delegitimize Zionism and the Jewish State. In the aftermath of the UN General Assembly's cynical passage of Res. 3379, Rustin condemned the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) as "an organization committed to racism, terrorism, and authoritarianism," which promoted Israel hatred so that the Palestinian leaders didn't have to "liberate their people from poverty and misery." When Rustin saw a rise in black support of the PLO, he stated in a *New York Times* article entitled "To Blacks: Condemn P.L.O. Terrorism,"¹⁰ that by supporting the PLO, the black community faced three risks:

"First, we risk causing serious divisions within our own ranks; second, we risk the forfeiture of our own moral prestige, which is based on a long and noble tradition of nonviolence; and third, we risk becoming the unwitting accomplices of an organization [committed] to the bloody destruction of Israel — indeed of the Jewish people."

Rustin's riposte to the PLO's "Zionism is Racism" canard, like King's condemnation of it, proved prophetic. Today, the West has embraced the still terror-supporting PLO and the Palestinian Authority as a legitimate state among the nations, when in truth, the PLO's ideological positions vis-a-vis eliminating Israel are the same as the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, and the Iranian regime's Hezbollah terror proxy.

This reigning moral confusion has caused Israel to be outcast in some mainstream Western circles, delegitimized and defamed particularly in academia, and even among some members in the U.S. House of Representatives. History has come full circle; Israel has come to be seen by some of its vociferous detractors as the villain and the PA-PLO as the hero. This moral confusion has

created rifts and divisions in the West, and no less in the Black American community.

The fight we Black Americans are facing now is one against division within our ranks. We face a critical challenge: Will we continue the legacy of Martin Luther King and support and strengthen Israel? Or will we delegitimize and weaken the Jewish state, risking inadvertent support for terrorism, and fail to see anti-Zionism as the new anti-Semitism that Dr. King warned us about more than 50 years ago?¹¹

Like King and Rustin, we, as Black Americans, will stand and fight. We must stand for moral clarity, speak out for Zion's sake, and fight for the truth of the historical record for the sake of our community.

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An Israeli flag parade in the streets of Jerusalem on Jerusalem Day, 2010.

Photo: Avi Ohayon/IGPO

Constructive Criticism in Israel's Democratic Discourse

Messeret Woldemichael Kasbian

ABSTRACT

Anti-Israel activists have extrapolated foreign narratives onto the Ethiopian experience to underscore Israel's alleged racism. Self-proclaimed progressive "critics" of Israel use the "race card" to reinforce a Palestinian political narrative and to foment political polarization within Israeli society.

Utilizing the binary black/white racism frame is convenient because of its historical pervasiveness and the accompanying emotional trigger that blinds people to political nuance.

Ethiopians should pursue an assertive strategy through legal and effective means to guarantee their democratic rights. The Israeli government, on its part, must provide its citizens reassurance that their rights are being protected and that their lives are being considered.

Racial discrimination and inequality exist even in the most democratic of societies, and Israel is no different than any Western country when it comes to racism. However, labeling Israel a "racist country" is blatantly false. Israel took great risks to rescue over 120,000 Ethiopian Jews during several secret missions to Ethiopia, at great economic cost.¹ Israel, like other democracies,

should seek to improve social and economic policies and prevent prejudicial discrimination, yet accusing Israel of being a “racist country” is an act of demonization and delegitimization.²

Israel’s self-definition as Jewish does not make it racist, nor do its immigration or land rights policies, since many states afford citizenship and ownership exclusively to those of a particular heritage. Jewish citizenship has nothing to do with color, and presenting Israel as a “white supremacist” country is absurd. Some form of “white privilege” exists in most societies with dominant European populations, but this was never the spirit of the Jewish State, which has been falsely called a “white settler colonialist project” by its opponents.

The only colonialists in the area were the Ottomans and the British, not the 19th Century Zionists who came to Israel from Europe and Arab countries like Yemen to join the pre-existing Jewish old *yishuv* population. By any stretch of the imagination, any ethnic population returning to its indigenous homeland cannot be termed “colonialists.” Further immigration waves that added to the ethnic diversity of Israel resulted in over half of Israelis being “non-white.”

In addition, European Jews were never considered “white” by their Arab neighbors, and Arabs viewed Jewish fellow Middle Easterners simply as Jews, not “colonialists.”

Contrary to the false “racism” claim, the very *opposite* of racism was the inspiration that guided the Jewish liberation movement called Zionism, its essence stemming from the biblical principle of *kibbutz galuyot*³ – the ingathering of the exiles – invoked as one of the aims of the Jewish State in Israel’s Declaration of Independence.⁴

Kibbutz galuyot imbues every area of Israeli life, and in its political form goes beyond color and ethnicity by *actively pursuing* world Jewry to make *aliya* in the spirit of the traditional teachings of the Torah, which consider living in the land to be a merit or a *mitzvah*, a divine commandment.⁵ This *raison d'être* has brought millions of Jews to dwell in Israel, including those who most would not define as “white,” including Yemenites, Indians, and Ethiopians, making Israel *less* exclusive than most other countries. Taking on Jewish lifestyle and values via conversion, regardless of color or ethnicity, is similar to citizenship requirements in other countries.

The Zionist idea aimed to create a Jewish and democratic state that would balance traditional and specific Jewish values and classic and universal democratic Western values. As a democratic society, Israel boasts of a tolerant atmosphere that is inclusive of the LGBTQ community, non-Jewish citizens, and visitors with long-term visa status, including refugees, diplomats, and foreign workers.

No one forces Jews to come to Israel. Yet Israel feels a collective responsibility for the welfare of every Jew, including diaspora Jews in need. Over decades, Israel has undertaken an amazing feat by trying to assimilate Jews of vastly different cultures and backgrounds into one nation with the aim of reestablishing Jewish culture, life, and the Hebrew language in the Jewish homeland. It would be unrealistic to expect this project to go smoothly, so Israel must continuously and ardently work to confront and overcome challenges.

RACIAL INEQUALITY IN THE DEMOCRATIC CONTEXT

Racism, discrimination, white supremacy, and privilege are global problems and not exclusive to Israel. Racism stems from a fear of the unknown, difficulty accepting differences, and a resistance to engage others and recognize their humanity. Racism is a term that has come to include other discriminatory phenomena and not just the traditionally perceived black/white framework.

In our context, Ethiopians, both in Israel and Ethiopia, are not immune to holding prejudices toward Ethiopians of other ethnicities. Currently, Ethiopia is experiencing social and economic degeneration and fragmentation due to ethnic tensions.⁶ Three million Ethiopians have become homeless due to recent political infighting and ethnic politics. In addition, gender inequality and sexist attitudes permeate life in Ethiopia.⁷

In my general experience of observation, racial prejudice is experienced by those with lower socioeconomic status. Half of Ethiopians in Israel live under the poverty line.⁸ Ethiopians have grappled with the difficulties of relocation and acculturation even after decades of living as Israeli citizens with full democratic rights, struggling with problems of low self-esteem and alienation.

Ethiopian Israelis have faced discrimination in employment, housing, and preschool acceptance.⁹ To make matters worse, many older Ethiopians have not achieved Hebrew language proficiency, which is crucial in fully partaking in society at large, and feeling more comfortable, relaxed, approachable, and less threatened.

Differences in cultural perceptions further impede integration, widening the gap. For instance, in the West, avoiding eye contact makes you appear suspicious, whereas, in Ethiopia, looking directly into someone's eyes is considered rude. A lack of language



On the Ethiopian Sigd holiday, Ethiopian Kessim celebrate at the promenade near Armon Ha’Natziv in Jerusalem, 2009.

Photo: Mark Neyman/IGPO

proficiency also adds to shyness and a less direct approach. Such seemingly minor misunderstandings, more than usually, lead to painful cultural clashes or could, tragically, escalate to fatal consequences in scenarios involving youth and the police.

Ethiopians, like other newly arrived ethnic groups, can also be “cliquey” and are die-hard conservatives when it comes to holding on to their traditions and culture. This practice of living in more ethnically insular communities is not particular to Ethiopians; in Israel, many communities with similar foreign backgrounds including Americans, French, Russians, Georgians, and South Africans, live in enclaves. Some Israelis see this as a kind of self-imposed ghetto segregation that hinders assimilation.

THE LAW AND ISRAEL'S ETHIOPIAN YOUTH

A more urgent and painful issue for Ethiopians has been differential treatment by law enforcement and police brutality, which has not been satisfactorily addressed by the government. The tragic deaths of Yehuda Biadga¹⁰ and Solomon Tekah¹¹ in 2019, among other incidents related to police brutality,¹² illustrate this calamity. Over-policing has included common and random harassment of Ethiopians.

The prime minister has avoided commenting on these events, and the facts of these cases and others were insufficiently reviewed by the government-media interface, casting Israel as lawless and even inhumane on the world stage. Sweeping these issues under the carpet has had a boomerang effect and has contributed to the alienation of the Ethiopian population, the tarnishing of Israel's image, and even the delegitimization of Israel. The Israeli government must unequivocally address this issue and demand that the police force adopt professional and nondiscriminatory practices.

Worldwide, people have become much more sensitive and aware of police brutality. This is in part due to the prevalence of the internet and cellphone cameras which capture violent events in real-time. These clips are often circulated without the context of the circumstances that preceded the event, making it problematic to understand this phenomenon fully. The American "Black Lives Matter" movement has brought attention to racial over-policing in the United States. Some activists compared the situations in the two countries, which creates a false analogy. Extrapolating the American narrative and applying it to Israel ignores crucial historical differences, which leads to a faulty conclusion.

A common problem has been “walking backward” into history for political exploitation. The black/white narrative is that of the “white” oppressor – in the American case, white slave owners, and in the Israeli case - the Zionist founders, who exploited black or brown people. The exploited in the American case were Black slaves, and in the Israeli case, Mizrahim and Black Jews. Yet this analogy is faulty; formerly free Africans were taken as slaves to the United States hundreds of years ago and, even after their emancipation, suffered racism and segregation.

In contrast, Ethiopian Jews suffered oppressive religious prejudice in Ethiopia. They were rescued by the State of Israel, flown to the Jewish homeland to which they dreamed of returning to for centuries, and granted greater freedom, which they attained immediately upon arrival. The same can be said of Mizrahim fleeing from oppression in Muslim lands.

An underlying theme in the story of African Americans is the cruel way in which Africans were unwillingly ripped away from their home continent and lives, and taken to a strange and distant land, to be a foreign implants in the Americas. This, of course, is a valid narrative, but, in contrast, it does not parallel the feeling of familiarity and connection that both Jewish and Christian Ethiopians feel towards the Holy Land. There is a deep, spiritual, and organic historical link between Israel and Ethiopia, as brought down in Ethiopian legend and folklore.¹³

It is in this spirit of historical continuity that Jewish Ethiopians came to Israel, as free people, who were afforded full citizenship, like other diaspora Jews, who also, incidentally, found integration into Israeli society difficult. Needless to say, few Ethiopians would opt to return to Ethiopia.



In yet another racially-charged accusation, American anti-Israel activists like Women's March leader Linda Sarsour and Black Lives Matter activist Marc Lamont Hill have correlated American police brutality towards African Americans with the anti-terror training that American police have received from the Israel police



Ethiopian Israelis take part in a memorial service on Mount Herzl in memory of Ethiopian Jews who perished on their journey to Israel, 2014.

Photo: Kobi Gideon/IGPO

force. Sarsour and Hill do this to serve their own political agendas, using identity politics and intersectionality as the vehicles.¹⁴ The potential damage this police conspiracy theory may be causing to Jews who live in black communities in the recent waves of anti-Semitic violence is hard to prove, but suffice it to say that the



Ethiopian Jews demonstrate for reunion with their relatives and for the release of prisoners in Ethiopia in front of the Prime Minister's office in Jerusalem, 2005.

Photo: Moshe Milner/IGPO

internet brings these false narratives into the intimate spaces of people's lives: their phones, their homes, and their minds.

Yet, understandably, like African Americans, the Ethiopian community has been justifiably frustrated and, at times, enraged with racial discrimination and related police brutality. As a result, some Ethiopians have been inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement in forming attitudes towards government authorities and in conducting protests.¹⁵ Similarly, the same way the American movement became politicized, the Ethiopian law enforcement issue has become politicized. The foreign press and Israel's detractors have exploited these tragic events as an anti-Israel "free-for-all."

Ethiopians must vehemently reject this misappropriated, sensationalism, and instead, we must concentrate our efforts on targeted legal and political action to *actually* improve our quality of life and not cynically serve other people's interests.

The Ethiopian community should express its own narrative and take care to employ the right medium in attaining long-term goals and informing initiatives. We live in a relatively small country and should demand politicians' personal involvement in checking cases of discrimination and effectively working to remedy these situations. In order to see this happen, there must be a collective awakening in Israeli society – both by Ethiopians themselves and by other Israelis – that will allow us to see how our narrative is being twisted and used against our own best interests.

CHANGING THE ETHIOPIAN NARRATIVE

In daily life, racism is often the “elephant in the room.” My personal strategy against racism is rooted in my sense of pride: I refuse to publically acknowledge discrimination and choose to disregard and willfully ignore negative comments and attitudes. Giving credence to prejudices by emotionally engaging with them only serves to empower them. Our resilience can serve to immunize us from needing others to recognize our humanity. Only we, as individuals, can bridge gaps, and we should not expect politicians to do this for us. We must reject the poison of racism by reasserting our identity, and by earning and reinstating our self-worth. Pride means not partaking in self-victimization and not seeking the validation of white people.

In recent years, many immigrant groups in Israel have gone through a similar process. In the past, Ashkenazi immigrants struggled to blend into a Middle Eastern cultural reality in the old *yishuv*; later, during wartimes, Mizrahim were shamed for listening to Arabic music and speaking Arabic, the language of “the enemy.”

Yet today, there is a cultural renaissance in Israel. Israelis have begun to feel confident in both their Israeli nationality and in their historical diaspora ethnic identities, with less inner conflict. This is often expressed through art and culture: people are learning Yiddish and singing in Judeo-Arabic, and are often enchanted and fascinated by cultures unrelated to their own. That unusual and original mix is the essence of the Jewish State - a shared set of Jewish values, together with the cultural gifts that are the actualization of *kibbutz galuyot*.

Ethiopian-Israelis must realize their place in this mix and actualize their potential in contributions to Israeli society, in order to take their rightful place within it. From my personal integration experience, I have learned that native Israelis, who are known for being assertive and candid, appreciate and applaud this course of action.

HEALTHY CIVIL DISCOURSE AIMS FOR PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE COMMUNITY

Ethiopian-Israelis must organize and formulate a plan for the advancement of the community that addresses past problems and pitfalls. Bureaucratic missteps have stalled progress. The Israeli government has budgeted programs and projects for the Ethiopian community.¹⁶ However, money earmarked for these endeavors - sports, art and culture, and research centers - has been returned to the government treasury due to bureaucratic and decision-making

obstacles.¹⁷ Planning and budgets must be followed and monitored for efficiency and changed appropriately according to community needs.

Israel also needs to place greater confidence in its Ethiopian community through sound social marketing strategies that would remind the community of its rights and make it feel protected. By doing so, not only would it perpetuate and reinforce the stand of the government, but it would also sensitize those who would exploit uninformed, naïve citizens. Creating awareness of and protecting citizens' legal rights are cornerstones of any democracy.

The police issue must be resolved: the government must step up and acknowledge the problem and stop it, as recommended in the government's 2016 Palmor Report.¹⁸

We also must maintain perspective: there's room for improvement, but things are not that bad. Recent statistics have shown a reduction in arrests in the Ethiopian community¹⁹ and an upswing in higher education achievements and military advancement²⁰

Israel has come far for a “young” 70-year-old country. It is nothing less than a phenomenon, even in the area of social rights, while there is still room for improvement. With all of the difficulties, Israel's character as a free democracy enables and protects us as we conduct an open dialogue. As a healthy democracy, Israel is the only self-critical country in the Middle East. It is not a dictatorship that shuts down dissent. Ethiopian-Israelis need their democratic reassurance that their rights and lives are being protected.

The important goal of fostering a sense of unity between Ethiopians and all fellow Israelis is not a political issue; it is an issue of social cohesion and moral clarity. Whether we succeed today, tomorrow, or in ten years, we, like other Western democracies, must take the necessary steps to ensure legally guaranteed democratic freedoms and a fairer, more just, and equitable society.

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In Jewish tradition, the midrash tells of Moses being a king in Cush – ancient Ethiopia. The first verse of the Scroll of Esther states that the Persian empire of the time stretched from “India (Hodu) to Ethiopia (Cush).” The biblical commentators remark that this was the span of the Jewish world at the time, hinting a Jewish presence in ancient Ethiopia. See <https://ohr.edu/7253>

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Demonstrators protesting opposite the Israeli Embassy in London on May 11, 2018, mark 70 years since the “Nakba” of 1948, and in solidarity with Hamas’ “Great Return March” protests in Gaza.

Photo: David Cliff/NurPhoto

From Judeophobia to Anti-Israelism

Elhanan Yakira

ABSTRACT

The anti-Israel movement is the newest incarnation of Judeophobia and is historically unprecedented in the development of anti-Semitism in that it has been initiated, activated, and perpetuated by Jews and Israelis. Yet, calling it “anti-Semitism” is counterproductive, since that term has become a trigger to be countered by semantic arguments or complaints of silencing.

The Left regards itself as anti-fascist, implying that it is also stands against anti-Semitism. Since fascism is “rightist,” it follows that the Left - the anti-Right - cannot be anti-Semitic. Therefore, when confronted as anti-Semites, Israelophobes resort to portraying themselves as victims of an anti-democratic, even fascist, persecution. The argument over which side is perpetuating anti-Semitism is irrelevant since there are multiple Judeophobicias that exist side-by-side, being that it is a deep-rooted, vigorous cultural phenomenon.

We must avoid apologetics, self-victimization, or fighting back by self-righteous bullying, which only do damage. Instead, we must deal with anti-Israelism by exposing the moralistic narcissism of its supporters by directly questioning their arguments’ factual, intellectual, and moral validity.

Anti-Zionism and anti-Israelism are new incarnations of older forms of Judeophobia. Like anti-Semitism, anti-Israelism, a hatred of the Jewish State, is a deep-rooted cultural phenomenon that will not disappear. Anti-Israelism dates back at least to the First Lebanon War in the early 1980s. Israel awoke late to recognize its importance and oppose its rise. In order to succeed in the struggle against anti-Israelism, we must avoid apologetics, or attempts to characterize it as an avatar of anti-Semitism. It is counterproductive, even if it is true.

Instead of equating anti-Zionism or anti-Israelism with anti-Semitism to emphasize their offensiveness, each of these two phenomena are in of themselves unacceptable: they expose the intellectual and moral bankruptcy of their advocates. BDS and other anti-Israeli campaigns have caused little concrete damage to Israel; their real victims are mainly Jewish and Israeli students on American and, to a lesser degree, European university campuses.

Israelis are about 40 years late in dealing with the disturbing trend of anti-Israelism. What occurred in the wake of the failed Israeli-Palestinian negotiations in the early 2000s and the outbreak of the Second Intifada, and is still with us today, is a continuation of the events of the early 1980s during the First Lebanon War and the Sabra and Shatila massacre: it can be best described as an orgy of Israel-hatred.

In the early 1980s, as a student in Paris, I was part of the large Parisian Israeli community of students, diplomats, and Mossad people. I tried convincing a few of my colleagues and acquaintances that the anti-Israel sentiment had taken a grave turn and that Israel should do something about it. These people usually replied, "Forget about it, it's not worth the effort." I was right, but so were they. Anti-Israel hatred is grave and does constitute a real threat, yet fighting it is not worth serious effort.

Despite pathological anti-Israel hatred, our situation ironically continues to improve in almost every way, especially in comparison to the Arab world.

Trying to stem the anti-Israel tide is futile. It is reminiscent of a comic character in an Israeli television skit, who explains the term “dialogue” to a class studying Shakespeare. “Very simple,” he says, “It’s like a monologue, only that in a monologue one person talks to himself, and in a dialogue two people talk to themselves.” This always seems to have been the case regarding anti-Jewish or anti-Israeli hatred: those who try to oppose it are talking to themselves.

The American historian Steven Katz, who is responsible for the most comprehensive attempt to prove that the Holocaust was a unique occurrence and not as just another case of genocide, agrees with this assessment. The considerable efforts, intellectual or otherwise, invested in the struggle against the anti-Israeli discourse, have not been successful in curbing it. The volume of the debate rises and falls, its content changes and develops, yet its basic message remains loud and clear.

Anti-Israelism is typically characterized by the use of the Holocaust as ideological ammunition and rhetoric, and by the inordinate contribution of Jews and Israelis to anti-Israel culture. In January 2019, a discussion was led at Columbia University by two Israeli historians, Amos Goldberg and Alon Confino, both of whom study the Holocaust, among others.¹ They authored a book that was recently published in its English version, titled *The Holocaust and the Nakba*.² The original Hebrew version was published a few years earlier.

The idea that one can discuss the Holocaust in one breath and in the next, the Arab defeat in what we, the Israelis, call the “War of Independence,” and then mainly discuss, in this context, the destruction that befell Palestinian society because of that defeat,

is preposterous. As it often happens when the Holocaust is used for ideological purposes, dividends are collected from the psychological power of the Holocaust. Anti-Israel advocates try, notwithstanding the paradox, to minimize the Holocaust's overall importance and place in the Israeli and Jewish ethos. The participants in the Holocaust-Nakba dialogue, more specifically, knew the rules of the game quite well: they say the right things, such as "There is no comparison," and "We must not compare," and "The Holocaust was the worst crime ever." Yet comparing is just what they are doing.

I contributed an article to this book, which discussed the way in which a positive initiative – fostering an Arab-Israeli dialogue on the Holocaust – had evolved into an indecent comparison between the destruction of European Jewry and the defeat of the Palestinians in the war that they forced upon the Jewish *yishuv* in 1947. The article was included in the Hebrew version of the book, perhaps due to the editors' fairness. More interesting, though, is the fact the article was not included in the English edition.

Not only are we talking to ourselves, though, we are also having the wrong discussion. Almost everyone who deals with these phenomena, assumes that anti-Zionism and anti-Israelism³ are new and current incarnations of anti-Semitism, of Jew-hatred, or of Judeophobia, name it what you will.

Yet the stubborn effort to prove that anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism, and that anti-Israelism is a form of Jew-hatred, is a tactical error whose damage outweighs its benefits. I have no doubt that anti-Israelism is a new version of traditional Judeophobia. Yet, even if true academically or theoretically, it does not follow that insisting this point serves the struggle against it.

There are several reasons for this. First, the word "*anti-Semitic*" has become a trigger word. The Holocaust already delegitimized

that phenomenon completely, primarily, but not only, among the elite. The far-right, neo-fascist, white-supremacist circles are not disturbed by being called anti-Semites, and some radical right-wing hooligans are even proud of it. But everyone else, including less violent factions of the radical Right, is insulted by the association with anti-Jewish attitudes. Many of them, incidentally, even find an apparent ideological ally in Netanyahu's Israel.

For the anti-Israel Left, righteous and moral by (self-) definition as it is, claims about the anti-Semitic nature of their "criticism" immediately result in complaints of attacks on their freedom of speech. The Left characteristically regards itself as anti-fascist, which implies that it is also against anti-Semitism. Auschwitz was the work of Nazis, and Nazism was a kind of fascism. Fascism is "rightist," and so it follows that the Left - the anti-Right - cannot be anti-Semitic. Anyone who is involved in arguing about Israel is familiar with this phenomenon: the "Left," in its anti-Israeli discourse, when called anti-Semitic, portray themselves as victims of anti-democratic, even fascist, persecution.

The Arabs have another claim: How can we be anti-Semites when we are also Semites? This is utter nonsense, since "Semitism" refers, at most, to a language group. Including other groups of people besides Jews in the term "anti-Semitic," makes for a racial, or racist, fantasy. This is one reason why it is better to use terms like *Judeophobia* or *Israel-hatred*, since these are two specific phenomena, not manifestations of one general phenomenon. Judeophobia undoubtedly exists in the Arab world.

In the anti-Israeli discourse, the rhetorical means of "We're anti-Semites? We *are* Semites!" can also be heard explicitly or implicitly by the most important and interesting part of the pathological anti-Israeli spectrum - Jews - non-Israelis, and, principally, Israelis.



A man burns an Israeli flag emblazoned with a swastika in Rabat, Morocco in 2014.

Photo: Fadel Senna/AFP

Jew-hatred is an ancient phenomenon, “the oldest hatred” as the late Robert Wistrich, one of its most important researchers, called it. It has undergone many transformations and takes different and strange forms, making its history more than a simple continuum. Sometimes these forms have only structural similarities. Beginning with the theological-religious opposition to Judaism in the early Church’s battle for legitimization against rabbinical Judaism, it continues through the violent hatred and demonization of Jews in medieval times, turning, in modern times, into racial

anti-Semitism, and culminating in present-day anti-Zionism and anti-Israelism. Though this is just a partial list, it suffices to show that there are multiple Judeophobias that evolve diachronically, but they often exist side-by-side. Sometimes they share thematic elements, but what makes them all parts of one coherent history are their structural similarities. Foremost among them is their potential to become a collective license for murder.

Yet the frequent participation of Jews is unprecedented. True, there is a history of Jews opposing Judaism. The apostle Paul, otherwise known as Saul of Tarsus, is one paradigmatic case. Jewish converts to Christianity were very effective in the Church's theological struggle against Judaism. A number of the most effective Christian participants in the infamous Christian-Jewish disputations were Jewish converts. Yet today, the phenomenon of Jewish and Israeli participation in the anti-Israeli project is unparalleled.

The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, for example, was fueled by the initiative of Jews such as Steven and Hilary Rose, a British Jewish academic couple who began speaking of an academic boycott of Israel as early as 2002.⁴ Although the BDS movement is now largely led from Ramallah (and Acre, where Omar Barghouti, one of its more effective advocates, lives), the Roses can be credited with initiating what would soon become a worldwide movement that morphed into PACBI, the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, part of the global BDS movement.⁵

Today, Jews and Israelis stand at the forefront of the battle against Israel. Judith Butler, to mention only one example, is a well-known progressive, an influential and diligent public intellectual. She is very active in the anti-Israeli discourse and does not call only for sanctioning Israeli academic institutions or divesting from Israeli

industry; she also propounds a pseudo-theory about the need to change Israel's "ideological foundations." The foregone conclusion of this theory is that Israel should cease being a Jewish state. In 2006, to cite another notable example, Butler provoked a severe public controversy by portraying Hizbullah and Hamas as "progressive Left organizations" at a teach-in at UC Berkeley.⁶

Butler's words need no comment. However, I suggest that contending with academics of her kind has very little effect, if at all, in the ideological battleground. It is a war lost in advance. It is another manifestation of the structural similarity between older Judeophobes and their younger fellow travelers. Although many Jews and non-Jews alike have fought the same ancient hatred against Judaism and Jews, the convoy of hatred never pauses, nor does it have the intention to stop in the near future, because it is a deep-rooted and vigorous cultural phenomenon.

One paradox in this phenomenon is that anti-Israelism is a form of anti-Semitism though it pretends to be about Israel since its victims are almost exclusively diaspora Jews. Israelis, so far, are almost untouched by anti-Israel campaigns. These lines were written as the Eurovision song contest was being broadcast from Tel Aviv. The BDS movement did not succeed in ruining the celebration, despite the triumphant pronouncements of its activists. Its success is minuscule, if at all.

Neither the Israeli economy nor academia, and not even the settlements or the "occupation," have been hurt. Who has? Jewish and Israeli students on university campuses, and people like Alain Finkielkraut, who was attacked on a street in Paris. In the Israeli academy we barely feel any damage caused by BDS. Although here and there someone may be denied participation in a scholarly conference, or refused membership on a professional committee, or denied the chance to have a paper or article reviewed, in

general, there is little impact, at least so far. We should be well aware of the fact that BDS has not been weakened, as legal and other actions against it usually achieve either nothing or limited and temporary victories.

While we should not stop denouncing this phenomenon and doing battle with it to the best of our ability, we should not expect a victory. However, we can hope to win some battles. We must completely avoid apologetic discussions, feelings of victimization, and claiming that the world is against us; it isn't. We have many allies, some of whom strongly criticize us when we are deserving of it. They remain nevertheless committed to the basic ideas of Zionism and are loyal to the State of Israel.

We must likewise shun bitterness, resentment, and self-pity. We often strike back by bullying with self-righteousness, fury, threats, and verbal attacks, which does no good, and to the contrary, only does damage. We must deal with intellectual anti-Israelism, which places Israel's public image in doubt and demonizes it, not by trying to justify ourselves to our enemies, but by exposing the outrageous character of anti-Israelism. We must bring into question, for example, the moralistic narcissism or the pretense of holding the moral high ground.

Our counter-discourse need not be based on exposing the anti-Semitic character of anti-Israelism, but on directly questioning its moral and intellectual validity. Anti-Zionism is a moral outrage because it is based on lies and the endorsement of violence. Traditional anti-Semitism was also based on falsehoods, yet it laid the groundwork for the great crime of the annihilation of European Jewry, yet we also should never forget that the State of Israel is not the vulnerable Jewry of Europe.

Endnotes

- 1 <http://www.mei.columbia.edu/mei-event/talk-the-holocaust-and-the-nakba-a-new-grammar-of-trauma-and-history>
- 2 <https://cup.columbia.edu/book/the-holocaust-and-the-nakba/9780231182973>
- 3 Namely the principled opposition to the Jews' claim for self-determination in the Land of Israel on the one hand; the less ideological and more affective rejection of the State of Israel as such, on the other.
- 4 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/jul/15/comment.stevenrose>
- 5 <http://jcpa.org/book/the-palestinian-academic-cultural-boycott-of-israel-deception-unmasked/>
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Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs

FROM ISRAELOPHOBIA AND THE WEST:

“History has come full circle, and just as in the ‘good old days of Stalin,’ when they spoke of Zionists, they meant Jews, and when they spoke against Jews, they meant Israel.”

Natan Sharansky, former Deputy Prime Minister of Israel and Chairman of the Executive the Jewish Agency for Israel

“As a black South African who suffered under the former apartheid regime, and who has visited Israel, labelling Israel, a democratic and Jewish state, as an ‘apartheid entity’ can only be described as a new virulent form of anti-Semitism, masquerading as legitimate political criticism.”

Luba Mayekiso, South African attorney and co-founder of the Africa for Israel Christian Coalition

“BDS’s apartheid crusade to dismantle the Jewish majority nation-state delegitimizes its Arab, Muslim, and Christian communities. It has ‘kidnapped’ other Israelis and exploits them as pawns in its cynical political war.”

Khaled Abu Toameh, Distinguished Senior Fellow, Gatestone Institute and Palestinian affairs reporter and commentator, the Jerusalem Post

“Much of what today purports to be criticism of Israel, or the claim of ideological opposition to Zionism, is merely disguised anti-Semitism perpetrated by the singling out by the nation-state of the Jewish people in an unbalanced and biased way.”

Alan Dershowitz, Felix Frankfurter Professor of Law, emeritus, Harvard University Law School



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