



## Poisonous Antisemitism

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Israel is not immune to scrutiny or criticism, nor should it be. However, disturbing and increasing signs of a new and virulent strain of antisemitism have surfaced which seeks to blame Israel alone for the plight of the Palestinians. In its extreme form, this new antisemitism, also known as “Israel bashing” is a deliberate strategy for pocide – the destruction of the Jewish polity and peoplehood via propaganda, the incitement of hate and violence against Jews everywhere.

In addition to the resurgence of European antisemitism, the Middle East, the chief consumer of classic “antisemitic texts, demonizes and attacks Jewish peoplehood and Israel.

Classic antisemitism assigns Jews, Jewish communities and world Jewry contrived traits and sinister objectives. They range from negative to demonic in character. Since Israel’s birth, however, and particularly in the past three decades, the focus of antisemitism has shifted from defaming the Jewish faith – its character and social organizations, to attacking Jewish peoplehood itself.

This shift reflects the fact that antisemites have always focused on whatever constituted the *core* of Jewish existence – that is, the content that at any given time is the wellspring of Jewish vitality and unity. Until two generations ago, Jewish life’s core was Jewish religious beliefs and cohesion as a religious community, and therefore ‘heretic’ doctrine and rituals and ‘clannishness’ were the prime charges in the antisemite’s arsenal.

Since the early 1950s, Jews have become increasingly secular and integrated into non-Jewish society. Especially in North America, two abiding themes have emerged as dominant binding forces for Jews, parallel to nominal religious affiliation: Jewishness had focused on the Holocaust – its memory and its meaning, and Zionism – identification with and support for the Jewish state. Rabbi Jacob Neusner, a leading American-Jewish theologian speaks of the emergence of a “civic religion” among American Jews that he believes is replacing synagogue-based identification with “a Judaism of Holocaust and Redemption.”

Antisemites have recognized this “political orientation” in what holds Jews together. Therefore, attacks on the traditional theological-cultural orientation of Judaism have been replaced by a form of political antisemitism that centers on Israel bashing. These attacks are led by international organizations who vilify and delegitimize the State of Israel, while remaining apathetic and even empathetic to a vicious brand of terrorism that targets Jews around the world, particularly Israeli Jews.

Of particular concern is the situation in Europe, where the number of cases of vandalism and anti-Jewish feelings generated by classic antisemitism is higher than at any time since the Holocaust. One can still encounter vandalism and anti-Jewish feeling toward diaspora communities generated by “classic antisemitism”

– including occasional attacks on individuals whose garb marks them as Jews, graffiti on synagogues and in cemeteries, and even arson.

Yet the kinds of attacks and their targets are shifting: In its most virulent form, the new antisemitism targets entire Jewish communities in the diaspora as objectives for terrorist attacks, due to the “culpability” of the Jewish People for identifying with and supporting Israel. In other words, their “crime” is Zionism. This includes two bombings of the Jewish community in Buenos Aires, and attacks on synagogues in Paris, Moscow, Brussels, Istanbul and elsewhere. Nevertheless, on the whole, the new antisemitism is often subtler and uses *existing* laws and social and political institutions (established for *enlightened* causes, such as world peace and fighting racism) as vehicles for Israel bashing - making it less likely for the public to identify deliberate attacks as antisemitic.

**While classic antisemitism and Israel bashing overlap, the latter is often far more ominous, omnipresent, acceptable and even respectable in certain social and political circles.**

- Classical antisemitism was primarily a European-Christian problem; Israel bashing is global in scope.
- Classical antisemitism found fertile ground in fringe groups and extremist ideologies that were rooted in theology, culture and politics. Israel bashing is an open, unashamed, mainstream phenomenon that is acceptable among social, political and cultural elites.
- Classic antisemitism targeted individual Jews and Jews as a minority group in the diaspora, undermining their right to live as equal members of free society. Israel bashing attacks Jewish peoplehood, the Jewish state, and the right of Jews as a collective to live as an equal member of the family of nations.

**A new coalition of players from the international arena are attacking and isolating Israel.**

This new alliance first developed in the 1970s, composed of Arab states, the former Soviet bloc, Third World countries and Western European nations. The practitioners include not only the United Nations, but even the International Red Cross.

In the first 25 years after the Holocaust (in the 1950s-1960s), Israel bashing was limited to two groups. The Arabs denied Jewish peoplehood and refused to recognize that Jews have the same right to self-determination as all other nations. Their opposition dates back to the advent of Zionism 120 years ago and is also based on Islamic teachings. The Soviet bloc made the study of Hebrew and any expression of any religion by its citizens a crime, and it also blocked Soviet Jews from immigrating to Israel.

But from the mid-1970s forward, Israel bashing was no longer the exclusive province of the Arabs or the former Soviets, who had used it to win friends and influence leaders in the Middle East. Over the years, the international geopolitics of have and have-not nations – and Israel’s success by making the quantum leap

from being a developing country to a member of the exclusive club of Western nations – has led Third World countries in Africa and Asia to side with Third World Arab countries. Lack of any firsthand knowledge about or experience with Jews, makes them easy marks for believing antisemitic rhetoric disguised as anti-colonialism.

The watershed event that turned Israel bashing into a social and political pandemic was the unprecedented UN General Assembly resolution in 1975 that vilified Zionism, calling it a form of racism.

Zionism – the belief that the Jewish people, like any other nation, have the right to a homeland and the actualization of that right in the establishment of the State of Israel – is one of the post-colonial era’s most impressive success stories. With its democratic government, respect for minorities, vibrant Hebrew culture and hi-tech economy, Israel is a realization of the Zionist dream. It constitutes one of the most enlightened and successful national liberation movements on the face of the globe. And so the Zionism-equals-racism resolution was particularly incongruous, for Israel is also one of the most heterogeneous countries in the world: 40 percent of all Israeli Jews are people of color including Moroccan, Yemenite, Ethiopian, Iraqi and Indian Jews who originated in African and Asian Third World countries.

Since 1975, the Israel-bashing coalition has grown, become more vocal, eloquent, and influential. Western European countries joined the chorus as part of the general resurgence of traditional antisemitism in Europe, now in recovery from its “guilt” because of its complicity in the Holocaust.

Political and social ghettoization of Israel in the international arena goes beyond the UN. It includes refusal to accept the Israeli Red Star of David (Magen David Adom) emergency service as a full member of the International Red Cross, while the Arabic Red Crescent retains full membership, though it uses an Islamic religious symbol as its emblem in place of a cross, just as Israel’s first aid organization uses a Jewish star. This is but one example of the new antisemitism.

### **Policidal ‘Israel Bashing’**

Many Arab groups espouse pocide – that is, they call for the destruction of the Jewish polity of Israel.

Despite the peace process, the charters of many Palestinian organizations – religious and political – continue to call for obliteration of Israel. The PLO charter which Arafat promised to revise clearly states in Article 15 that its aim is the “elimination of Zionism in Palestine.”

Palestinians also employ euphemisms with the same aim. Discussion of “just rights of the Palestinian people” are sanitized calls for the demise of Israel as a Jewish state, since Palestinians who say this really are referring to the Right of Return of more than four million Palestinians to Israel - whose entire population is a mere seven million Jews and one million Arabs.

Radical Islamic clerics sanction pocide in *fatwas* (Islamic religious rulings). These religious leaders call for killing Jews everywhere, and some even proclaim it as a religious obligation to do so. Countless resolutions by Arab organizations refuse to recognize Israel as a legitimate member of the Family of Nations, and the UN regional framework (which includes the Asian group, with its predominance of Islamic countries) has been manipulated to serve as a platform for vilifying Israel. Radical states such as Iran and Iraq under Saddam Hussein took concrete steps to acquire weapons of mass destruction and a ballistic missile capability to destroy Israel.

### **Political antisemitism**

Political antisemitism centers on denial, discrimination or assault against the Jewish people's right to self-determination – an analogue to theological classical antisemitism that attacked the validity of Jewish religious belief. It is particularly popular among the Arabs, who claim Jews are no more than members of a religious faith that have no claim to peoplehood and are not eligible for a polity of their own – a complete misrepresentation of Jewish history.

To make their case; they ignore, falsify and destroy archaeological evidence of the Jewish ties to the Land of Israel, nationhood under two Jewish commonwealths in Biblical times, and the attributes of peoplehood (a distinctive language, culture, institutions, etc.) that Jews have developed and maintained throughout more than 2,000 years of exile.

In the international political arena, discrimination against Israel is particularly apparent at the UN and its organs. 26 percent of all Security Council resolutions adopted between 1947 and 1989 relate to the Arab-Israeli conflict; only 42 percent were neutral or balanced, and 96 percent of the one-sided resolutions were anti-Israel.

### **Ideological Israel Bashing**

The most glaring example of ideological antisemitism is the UN General Assembly's 1975 "Zionism is racism" resolution that repudiated Zionism's so-called discriminatory *raison d'être* as a Jewish state. One of the most popular rhetorical themes is to brand Israel as an "apartheid state," and call for Israel to become a "secular democratic state," another Palestinian euphemism for dismantling the only polity where Jews, by virtue of their decisive majority (in democratic elections with a universal franchise) control their own destiny and keep their gates open for Jews anywhere. One of the more recent examples of ideological antisemitism is the battle against Israel's security fence, being built to block Palestinian suicide bombers from infiltrating Israeli population centers. Palestinians label it "racist" and a form of "ghettoization" or "apartheid."

### **Cultural Israel Bashing**

On many university campuses, Middle East studies programs have been transformed into factories for biased dissertations that attempt to prove Israel was born in sin and is a militarized society. Countless campuses have student

organizations and Middle Eastern Studies professors who use their departments to vilify Israel and deny its right to exist, under the rubric of academic freedom.

Until recently, antisemitic remarks in public were considered bad form. Not so anymore. British journalist Petronella Wyatt, writing in the *Spectator*, says that “open expression [of antisemitism] has become respectable at London dinner tables.” A mélange of attitudes, sentiments and innuendos containing classic antisemitic messages and Israel-bashing content have become acceptable, even fashionable, in Europe, and are found elsewhere, including America. The Italian paper *La Stampa* published a front-page cartoon of a tank, emblazoned with a Jewish star, its gun pointing at the baby Jesus, who pleads, “Surely they don't want to kill me again?” The *Los Angeles Times* had no problem publishing a political cartoon showing Jews praying at the Western Wall labeled “HATE.”

### **European Antisemitism**

Europe is witnessing the worst explosion of traditional antisemitism since World War II. The attacks include the desecration of synagogues and cemeteries, and assaults on identifiable Jews. Those acts are paralleled by expressions of antipathy toward Israel that are reminiscent of European behavior toward Jews in the early 1930s.

Europeans as a whole have exhibited widespread indifference and silence in the face of horrific acts of terror against Israel. Instead of empathy, the EU threatens to impose economic sanctions against Israel in protest of the way Israel handles the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Since 2002, certain Europeans have called for boycotts against Israel, from agricultural exports to intellectual and cultural pursuits. In the UK and Norway scholarly papers by Israelis were rejected for publication and universities refrained from inviting Israelis to academic gatherings. Others have called for isolating Israel culturally by making Israeli performers unwelcome on European stages and excluding Israeli artists from fine arts group exhibitions.

False charges of so-called dual loyalty are designed to silence European Jews, while Israel bashers employ Nazi metaphors to lambaste Israel, paint Israel as a rogue state, and make it uncomfortable, if not impossible, for public figures to stand up for Israel. Such demonization has turned “disassociation with Israel” among the intelligentsia into a warped test of one’s “enlightened” values.

### **Organizational bashing of Israel**

Israel is denied equal status or access to international organizations, leaving the state with “pariah status” similar to the isolation of Jews from European society in the 1930s and the discrimination against American Jews in the 1950s when they were barred from certain country clubs and neighborhoods by “restrictive membership and real estate covenants.”

Prime examples of organizational antisemitism are the refusal by the International Red Cross to accept the Israeli Red Magen David organization and the UN acquiescence to Muslim countries, who bar Israel from serving in the

UN's regional organizational structure as a member of the Asia Group. Geographically, Israel clearly belongs to this designation. Israel is also the only UN member that was in limbo outside the UN's regional group system for four decades, and was thereby barred from holding a host of positions within the UN that are based on regional representation. Israel finally received permission to temporarily join the West European and Other Group (WEOG) in 2000, as an "other" member.

### **Judicial Israel Bashing**

Israel is denied equality before the law and is subject to abridgement of due process. Other schemes are designed to undermine Israel's sovereignty, withdraw recognition or ostracize the Jewish state, and defame Israeli society in the eyes of the world community, all under the guise of 'concern' for human rights.

UN bodies are used as a bludgeon to bash Israel and give credence to Arab claims of Israeli wrongdoing. This includes an obsession with Israel at the Commission on Human Rights, where 30 percent of the commission's resolutions are devoted to condemning Israel, while major human rights violators enjoy complete immunity from scrutiny or condemnation.

The UN Asian Group accused Israel of practicing "a new kind of apartheid, a crime against humanity, a form of genocide" then presented its "findings" at the World Conference against Racism in Durban in September 2001. The gathering was turned into an Israel-bashing orgy that led the United States and Israel to walk out. Even the Geneva Convention's protocols have been compromised by selective politicization to bash Israel. The High Contracting Parties never met once to discuss Cambodia's killing fields, the 800,000 Rwandans murdered in the course of three months in 1994, and the more than 170,000 people that have been killed in Syria in less than two years. Israel is the only country in the Geneva Convention's 52-year history to be the object of a country-specific denunciation.

Arab leaders have fed the world press a steady stream of fabricated Israeli "war crimes" designed to poison world opinion and generate international investigative commissions. Those alleged war crimes included preposterous allegations that Israelis "expose Palestinians to depleted uranium-tipped ordinance" or inject Palestinians with AIDS. Totally fictitious war atrocities, such as the famed "massacre" in Jenin and other tales of manufactured brutality are a permanent feature of Palestinian reports and press releases regarding every clash between Israeli troops and Palestinians.

Recently, European courts have been enlisted as vehicles of intimidation. Israeli politicians, members of the Israel Defense Forces and other security forces have been charged with complicity in war crimes and named as defendants in civil suits for injury to Palestinians. Those charged include Israel's Prime Minister and the Director General of the Ministry of Defense. While the suit against Sharon was subsequently dismissed on grounds of 'diplomatic immunity', only when Left-wing activists eager to use the courts to advance their agendas went 'a bridge too far' threatening to do the same to past Presidents of the United States and other senior American officials did Belgium's political Establishment take steps

to curtail its controversial “universal competence” legislation concerning war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

The latest attempt to use the judicial system escalated in 2003 from the national level to the international justice system when the International Court of Justice was cynically used to attack Israel through a contrived “advisory opinion” requested by the UN General Assembly about the ‘legality’ of Israel’s security fence (see discussion of the anti-terrorism fence in the chapter on “A Secure Israel”). The Court’s blatantly biased decision will only encourage more attempts to use all levels of the legal system to paint Israel as an ‘outlaw’ or a ‘rogue state,’ and harass and demonize its leaders and citizens.

### **Economic Israel Bashing**

The Arab Boycott, established in 1945 against Jewish products and manufacturers, and later expanded with a secondary boycott that covered both Israeli products and the products of countries that trade with Israel, largely disintegrated in the early 1990s. Remnants of the boycott continue, as when Israelis in 1998 were barred from attending the Cairo Book Fair. Europe is now the prime theater for boycotts against Jews, with calls to shun Israeli products, and a wider boycott on Israeli products produced in the Territories. In April 2002, for instance, a Scottish Labor Party MP called for a boycott of Israeli oranges and Norway’s largest trade union tried to organize a consumer and cultural boycott of Israel.

### **Holocaust Denial**

Arab countries have become the chief publishers and disseminator of antisemitic classics such as *Mein Kampf* and *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, books the Arabs say prove that Jews control the world. So-called exposés and ‘groundbreaking scholarly research’ by Arab authors that distort facts concerning the Holocaust make a ‘unique’ contribution to a growing body of Holocaust denial literature.

Academic literature, including scholarly papers and doctoral dissertations, claims that the Zionists collaborated with the Nazis and extorted reparations from Germany to build their illegal state. One of the most enduring motifs in the Arab arsenal is the claim that the establishment of Israel was a price paid by Arabs for European misdoings, a distortion of historical fact that ignores over 60 years of Zionist endeavor (1897-1939) to build a Jewish homeland and prepare for statehood, all preceding the Holocaust.

At the same time, Palestinian society seeks parity with Israel in terms of victimhood. Under that rubric, Israel’s war of independence in 1948 is translated into the *Naqba* or *cataclysm* in Arabic, often translated as “the Palestinian Holocaust” in a host of English-language texts, which cynically frame accusations against Israel in Nazi terminology. That kind of vocabulary includes Arafat’s constant claims that Israel is guilty of “genocide” “ethnic cleansing,” and that Palestinians are “ghettoized” by closures and the security fence.



## **Terrorism Targeting Jews as Jews**

Arab terrorism is not random terrorism. The perpetrators (Arabs) and the victims (Jews) possess clear different national identity.

Singling out Israeli Jews (and diaspora Jews and their institutions) as targets for international terrorism has a long history. Yet the aspirations of the perpetrators have escalated, as the scope of the carnage has moved from mostly single-victim acts to concerted efforts to target groups and crowds. The attacks are designed to inflict maximum carnage by employing suicide bombers and explosives laced with nails and ball bearings.

Terrorism that targets Jews aspires to reach mega-terror proportions, designed to kill thousands at a time. Those include an unsuccessful attempt to blow up a major fuel and gas storage facility that would have incinerated thousands of residents in nearby neighborhoods, preparation of a 200-kilogram car bomb intended to destroy the Azrieli Center in Tel Aviv (Israel's symbolic equivalent to the World Trade Center), and attempts by Palestinians to manufacture or obtain chemical weapons.

A biased world press, including prestigious mainstream newspapers such as the *Washington Post*, uses the term "militants" to describe Arab suicide bombers who target Jews in Israel, while the same Arab suicide bombers who target Americans in the U.S. are called "terrorists." That is how the press sanitizes and indirectly sanctions terrorism against Israeli civilians as legitimate acts.

## **Theological Antisemitism**

Christian religious education portraying Jews as Christ killers may be a relic from the past. Yet since the time of Mohammed, Islam's theological antisemitism has often surpassed classic European antisemitism.

The ways in which Jews, Judaism, and Israel are presented as 'the perfidious enemy of Islam' are appalling in their totality. The imams and ayatollahs call for a genocidal, worldwide *jihad* against the Jews that is so explicit and comprehensive that in a report for the American Jewish Committee, Dr. Robert Wistrich, a distinguished scholar of antisemitism, labeled the phenomenon "a clear and present danger."

With a virulence not seen since the Nazis, the antisemitism raging throughout Arab and Muslim societies is beginning to rear its ugly head in Europe, becoming an immediate threat to Jews and Israel and should be seen as a serious warning by the entire civilized world.

Rabid antisemitic sermons are amplified with the assistance of state-controlled media in Arab countries. And though the media plays a key role disseminating such propaganda, it is only one element used to advance state-sponsored antisemitism; other vehicles and institutions include schools and mosques.

## **State-sanctioned Hatred of Israel and Jews**

Nazi stereotypes of Jews and other forms of vilification of Israel that inflame the Arab world today were first ‘fueled’ by Soviet anti-Zionist propaganda in the late 1950s and 1960s, designed to ‘prove’ Jews were not a nationality (for domestic reasons) and to paint Israel as illegitimate imperialistic entity (for foreign policy reasons). The maliciousness of antisemitic literature reached new heights in the 1980s under Brezhnev. Arab states were major consumers not only of Soviet arms, but also traditional antisemitic material and anti-Zionist literature – although the pupil has long since exceeded the master in terms of fantastic lies and unbridled venom.

The Palestinian Authority (PA) is guilty of using every state organ under its control to vilify Israel, but it is not alone. The same hate is continuously present in other Arab countries, including Egypt, which signed a peace treaty with Israel. The Arab popular press is rife with classic Nazi motifs that demean and demonize Judaism the Jewish people, and Israel. Egypt even produced a multi-million dollar, 30-part TV series based on *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, the 19<sup>th</sup>-century tsarist Russian forgery that “proves” Jews dominate the world, and there is no sign of any letup in the stream of antisemitic content being churned out by the Arab world.

**“Jew, go to Palestine” was the antisemite’s derisive call of the 1930s  
“Jew, get out of Palestine” is the shrill call of Israel bashers today**

Those two demands cited at the opening of this article led columnist Eliyahu Amikam to sense with growing trepidation that slowly Jews are being singled out as having no “legitimate place” on the face of the earth. The column, published in a Hebrew daily following the UN’s 1975 “Zionism is Racism” resolution, was entitled ‘*Am Ratziach*,’ best translated as “A Murderable People.” The grammatical structure was set to parallel expressions such as a “washable garment” or “erasable tape.” for just as a “microwavable dish” requires special preparation, being a “murderable people” requires special preparation.

The decision to embark on a “Final Solution” to the Jewish problem (i.e., wholesale genocide) was taken in 1942 at the Wannsee Conference; nine years after the Nazis took power and began to persecute the Jews. The Nazi’s genocidal antisemitism was preceded by a slow, gradual process of delegitimization and dehumanization of Jews:

- April 1, 1933, economic boycott.
- April 4, 1933, expulsion from the civil service.
- September 5, 1935, passage of the Nuremburg Racial Laws.
- November 9, 1938, attacks on Jewish institutions on *Kristallnacht*.
- 1939-1941, concentration of Jews in ghettos.
- May 1941, shooting of Jews in small groups by special SS units.

- January 20, 1942, decision on a “Final Solution of the Jewish problem” and a program of systematic engineered mass murder.

Too many manifestations of Israel bashing today – the slander, demonizing, segregation, discrimination, and delegitimizing of Israel and Jewish peoplehood – copy the patterns one observes in the 1930s - the ostracizing of Jews and stripping them of their rights and their humanity. Such Israel bashing needs to be identified for what it is: a dangerous form of antisemitism.