

Anti-Semitism is Alive and Well and Living in Ubiquity

“Oh, the Protestants hate the Catholics,
And the Catholics hate the Protestants,
And the Hindus hate the Moslems,
And everybody hates the Jews.”

(Tom Lehrer, “National Brotherhood Week.”)

Well, not everybody. Probably not even the 1.09 billion cited in the Anti-Defamation League’s peculiar survey. But enough, or more than enough. (One is more than enough.) Anti-Semitism is metastasizing across the globe.

1. Cannons to the right of us, cannons to the left of us.

Right wing anti-Semitism is easy to define. It’s, well, anti-Semitic. It doesn't pretend to be anything else. So, for example, the recent march in Paris of thousands of right-wingers chanting “France for the French.” Or Rumania, where a recent survey showed that a quarter of the population wants the country Judenrein. Or the rise of anti-Semitic political parties: Jobbik in Hungary, Golden Dawn in Greece. Here on the public petition site SumOfUs, we find the following: *“My name's Andreas and I'm originally from Greece. Finance giants like Goldman Sachs made close to \$450 million Euros off snatching livelihoods right from under ordinary Greeks like me. **Tell Goldman Sachs to return Greece's money to the people of Greece.**”*

Now Andreas probably has a point: International banks may well have ripped off Greece. But no doubt there were a number of them. I don’t know if Goldman Sachs ranked number one, but in any case we would think that Andreas would want all the money back, not just from one firm. Why

doesn't he give us the list of firms? In rip-off rank order, if he knows it? Instead we have, "Finance giants **like** [my emphasis] Goldman Sachs..." therefore, "... **Tell Goldman Sachs to return Greece's money.** [His emphasis.] Maybe Andre is not a member of Golden Dawn, but he captures their spirit.

A peculiar new phenomenon is the European right's use of Jews as a model of integration in order to attack non-integration of Muslim immigrants. This is the tactic of Marine LePen, current head of the French National Front party, who has foresworn anti-Semitism (for which her father, Jean-Marie, has disowned her). It is also the tactic of the Danish People's Party (right wing, but never anti-Semitic). Thanks for the compliment, but as Sholem Aleichem's Tevye the dairyman said to God, "Choose someone else."

Other right wing parties are more like these than like Golden Dawn and Jobbik. The Austrian Freedom Party expelled one of its members for endorsing a Facebook screed that said, among other things, "Zionist money Jews are the global problem." She belatedly backtracked, announcing that she had Jewish friends.

The left is more dangerous, since it denies the accusation of anti-Semitism, claiming that is it only "anti-Zionist." But anti-Zionism is not the same as legitimate criticism of Israel's actions. It is opposition to the Jewish state's right to exist. Examples abound, starting as far back as the beginning of modern Zionism. Some of the more recent perpetrators are the leaders of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement, who make no secret of their ultimate goal. Well, they do try to conceal it from some of their

more credulous followers, who would not describe themselves as anti-Semites, but who have not looked closely into their leaders' message. (It's on their websites.) Perhaps the term "useful idiots" is a bit harsh. The followers are so distressed (and who can blame them?) by Israel's occupation of the West Bank and its treatment of the Palestinians that they think that only a boycott will end it. They should be asked, why just Israel? Pointing out that Northern Cyprus is occupied by Turkey, the Western Sahara by Morocco, the Crimea by Russia, and last but not least, Tibet by China, which has killed over a million Tibetans, might give them pause.

Passing quickly over the divestment initiative, successful in closing SodaStream's West Bank factory, thus putting hundreds of Palestinians out of work, let us turn to the academic boycotts, more accurately called blackballing. Professional societies such as the Association for American Studies have called for ending all academic contacts with Israel. (This has been denounced by hundreds of university presidents.) The subsequent backtracking to "only boycotting institutions, not individual scholars," is a distinction without a difference, since individual scholars receive salaries, travel money, and research funds from their institutions. Then there are the delicious ironies of self-boycott. Case in point: When asked, "Why Israel?" a leader of the AAS said, "One has to start somewhere," justifying the choice by pointing to Israel as the major recipient of US aid¹. But then, why not boycott the donor? In which case the AAS's boycott would mean among other things a boycott of US academic societies, like, say, the AAS. Case in point: Omar Barghouti, one of the founders of the BDS movement, is

¹ Actually it's Afghanistan; Israel is second.

studying for his doctorate at Tel Aviv University. So if he calls for boycotting students at Israeli institutions, then whom will he be boycotting? (About his matriculation, Barghouti has said: My studies at Tel Aviv University are a personal matter and I have no interest in commenting.”) This leads to the anti-Semitic component of the boycott. If Israeli universities are to be boycotted, then that includes all of the Palestinians enrolled in them. Surely BDS will have to find a way to let them off the hook, a la Barghouti. They will probably come up with a disclaimer such as, “We exempt oppressed minorities.” So the only Israelis to be boycotted will be Jews.

Here is a statement by a leader of an American organization:

“We came here to Palestine to stand in love and revolutionary struggle with our brothers and sisters. We come to a land that has been stolen by greed and destroyed by hate. We come here and we learn laws that have been cosigned by ink but written in the blood of the innocent. Blood and greed: familiar tropes to Jews. The organization is Black Lives Matter.

And here are statements by two anti-anti-Zionists, hardly right-wingers:

“When people criticize Zionists they mean Jews, you are talking anti-Semitism.” Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“To attack Jews is anti-Semitism, but an outright attack on the State of Israel is also anti-Semitism.” Pope Francis.

The European Union sees it differently. In 2004, the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), an arm of the EU, concluded from a study of fifteen member states, that:

- There is no such thing as “the new anti-Semitism.” It is just the old anti-Semitism, with new perpetrators using Israel as substitute Jew, and old perpetrators posing as victims of “suppression of free speech” in order to promulgate Holocaust denial.
- Criticism of Israel’s policies is not per se anti-Semitism, but much of what is called anti-Zionism, as well as unbalanced criticism of Israel, is in fact anti-Semitism.
- The European media are complicit in both promulgating and rationalizing anti-Semitism.
- The primary perpetrators of anti-Semitic violence in many of the EU countries are Muslim/Arab/pro-Palestinian.
- The growth in anti-Semitism is real and documented; it is not a myth, as some anti-Israel leftists would have it.

The report calls for even more and better monitoring in the EU countries, and for even stronger governmental and extra-governmental measures to combat anti-Semitism in all its forms.

The EU was having none of it. Here was their press release about the report: “Although difficult to generalize, the report says that the largest group of perpetrators of these activities appears to be young, disaffected white Europeans. A further source in some countries: young Muslims of North African or Asian extraction. Traditionally anti-Semitic groups on the extreme right also have played a part in stirring opinion.” The whitewash machine in full spin cycle.

Since that time, the EU has removed any reference to Israel. Thus, the EUMC's conclusion that some criticism of Israel is anti-Semitic has been replaced by the EU's decision that no criticism of Israel is anti-Semitic.

A new phenomenon on the left is the "balance" of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia; that is, if one mentions the former, one must also include the latter. The reverse is not true. This is designed to invalidate the recognition of anti-Semitism.

Muslim immigrants to Europe often bring with them the anti-Semitism that they learned in their home countries. For the Islamists, this is coupled with attacks on free expression, as we saw in Paris with the murders at the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo and the murders of Jews in a kosher supermarket, and in Copenhagen with the murder of an attendee at a free speech lecture and the murder of a security guard at the Copenhagen synagogue. Not long ago a group of pro-Israel, pro-peace Danish Jews and non-Jews and Iranian dissidents had to be taken away from their rally in buses because the police couldn't guarantee their security, due to increasing threats from young Muslim men, some driving past in their cars shouting anti-Semitic slogans and waving Hamas flags. An eyewitness filmed several young men shouting "Fucking Jews" at the rally participants. Another popular cry is "Hamas, Hamas, Jews to the gas." (This certainly resolves the question as to whether Israel is a Jewish state, although probably not to Prime Minister Netanyahu's satisfaction.) Are these Islamists leftists? Hardly, but they are supported by the left, which rationalizes their actions as legitimate responses to Israel's.

2. The world is round

This is a translation of “Di velt iz kaylekhdik,” the Yiddish aphorism that describes the frequent alliance of extreme right and left. So for example, Holocaust denial is hardly restricted to the aforementioned Jean Marie LePen or others on the right. In his 1983 book, *The Other Side: the Secret Relationship Between Nazism and Zionism*, based on his doctoral dissertation, Mahmoud Abbas denied that six million Jews had died in the Holocaust, dismissing it as a “myth” and a “fantastic lie.” He has since recanted, but the myth is widespread throughout the Muslim world.

The late leftist Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez had this to say in a Christmas Eve speech: “The world offers riches to all. However, minorities such as the descendants of those who crucified Christ have become the owners of the riches of the world.”

The belief in the existence of Jewish cabals is typically thought of as a right wing phenomenon, *a la* the Austrian Facebook correspondent mentioned earlier. But change “Jews” to “Zionists” or “the Israel lobby” and the phenomenon moves left.

In 2005, the Council for the National Interest Foundation (CNIF) published a full-page ad in the New York Times entitled “AIPAC’s Agenda is Not America’s.” The CNIF, founded by former Congressmen James Abourezk, Paul Findley, and Paul McCloskey, works, according to the ad, “to promote a rational and even-handed Middle East policy in the long-term interest of America, Israel, and the Arab states.” Here is an excerpt from the ad:

“The many organizations that make up the Israel lobby include several whose main effort is to intimidate editors and producers in the media and prevent an open discourse about Israeli policies and our uncritical support for those policies.” Really? How come the Jewish cabal couldn’t stop the Times, with its readership of millions, from publishing the CNIF ad? How come CNIF has a website open to anyone? The irony apparently escapes them.

In the *New York Times* in 2005, regarding the charge that Jewish students at Columbia University were harassed by pro-Palestinian professors, we find a letter from leftist Joan W. Scott, then-chair of the Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure of the (apolitical) American Association of University Professors: “Your April 7 editorial about Columbia University doesn't address the real issue of the controversy: the threat to the integrity of the university by the intervention of organized outside agitators who are disrupting classes and programs for ideological purposes....” Organized outside agitators? The only reason non-enrollees are in a classroom is because the professor has allowed it. If we don't want them there, we simply say, “You are not enrolled. Please leave, or I will call Security.” And organized by whom? What cabal has such power that it can force professors to open their classrooms to non-enrolled disruptors? In addition, the term “outside agitators” has an ugly provenance. It was used in the 60’s by Southern whites (tautologically right-wingers) to vilify civil rights workers. It has now apparently achieved respectability on the left.

3. To stay or not to stay

A recent survey found that 29% of European Jews have considered emigrating. French *aliyah* is soaring, while the number of attacks and murders increases. There has been an 84 percent increase in anti-Semitic hate crimes in France *since* the murder of Jewish shoppers at the kosher supermarket in Paris. Jews in various European countries are urged by the authorities to hide any signs of Jewishness: kippot, Stars of David, let alone Hassidic garb. The high-holiday services of the Rue Copernic synagogue of Paris are held in an auditorium on the outskirts of the city, and only members and invited guests are told where. The mayor of Malmö, Sweden defended attacks on Jews by Muslims because the Jews gave “mixed messages” during the 2010 Gaza War. School principals in Denmark have counseled Jewish parents to send their children to schools out of their neighborhoods, because, so they claimed, the children’s presence would upset the Muslim students.

So should they stay? Most say yes. Despite the increase in anti-Semitic acts, governments are providing extra protection to the Jews and prosecuting the perpetrators. In some places, such as, believe it or not, Warsaw, it is now common to see kippot on the street. Jewish culture has risen from the ashes in Poland. Jews are leaving Malmö, but moving to Stockholm, not out of Sweden. Netanyahu’s call for the French Jews to “come home” was met with fury from the Jewish organizations. Danish Jews will never leave, certainly not after forty thousand people showed up for a demonstration after the killings. Two of my Danish friends, both academics in Jewish studies, are optimistic that the free speech advocates and the Jews (strongly overlapping constituencies) will struggle together and defeat the Islamists and their supporters, and that Jews will continue to make Europe their home.

I think the jury is still out. There must exist a critical mass of anti-Semitic incidents that will lead to a Jewish exodus. Whether it will be reached is unknown, but so far so good.

In the US, things are different, to say the least. Vitriol against Israel is far less common than in Europe. On the one hand there are BDS, Black Lives Matter, CNIF, and Joan Scott; on the other, Jews have been voted America's favorite minority. (So now we can worry about intermarriage.) The worst anti-Semitic acts of late were the murders in a Kansas City Jewish community center and a Jewish old age home. But the victims were Christian. This tragedy is ironic testimony to the disappearance of barriers between American Jews and non-Jews.

4. Prediction is hard, especially of the future.

What next? Changes in Israel's actions (read: government) may undercut some of the growing popularity of BDS. It will have no effect whatsoever on its leadership, nor on anyone else, right or left, who thinks that the Jews are an all-powerful cabal, and that they are not entitled to a state of their own. No we aren't, and yes we are.

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