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How Can There Be Peace in the Middle East?

A Study of Anti-Israel and Anti-Semitic Cartoons in the Arab Media



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Introduction

After a Danish newspaper published a series of cartoons negatively portraying the Prophet Muhammad and Islam earlier this year, many in the Arab world protested—some peacefully, others violently. They were upset, they insisted, by the blatant insensitivity to their religion and its sacred elements.

While the wisdom of the Danish newspaper's decision to publish the cartoons surely can be debated, there is a clear element of hypocrisy in the position taken by many of the protesters. After all, the Arab media is filled with cartoons that demonize other religious communities, particularly Jews, though not only.

And by blending Jews and Israel together, many of these cartoons cannot simply be categorized as critical of Israel. They go far deeper, exploiting age-old anti-Semitic images and motifs that caused the Jews great hardship. The Jew or the Israeli, and they are usually indistinguishable, is depicted in the vilest way, most often with religious accoutrements to underscore the faith dimension. Jewish conspiracies, quest for global domination, deceit, greed, and blood libels are integral elements of the cartoons. Added to this is the newest angle—the Jew as Nazi, Israel as the Third Reich.

When pressed about these portrayals by AJC and others, Arab governments tend to invoke “freedom of the press” as a cover. But the sad truth is that, unlike Denmark, there isn't a great deal of press freedom in this part of the world. And in peddling such images of Jews and Israel, the Arab media is educating generation after generation of readers to despise Israel and distrust all Jews. That is hardly the basis for building a foundation of peace and mutual respect that is so necessary in the Middle East today.

David A. Harris



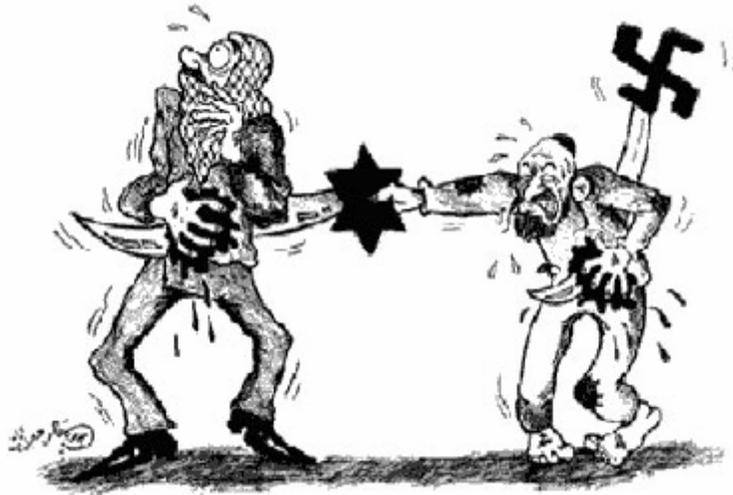
“The New Nazis”

A recent anti-Semitic technique commonly found in the Arab media features comparisons of Israelis and Jews with the Nazis. The Arab world in general, and the Palestinians in particular, are frequently viewed as the victims, or the “new Jews.” The analogy is used to influence public opinion and to minimize the horrors of the Holocaust and the suffering of the Jewish people.

Former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon seen passionately kissing Adolf Hitler. This shocking image clearly identifies Ariel Sharon and his policies with those of Adolf Hitler and the Nazis.

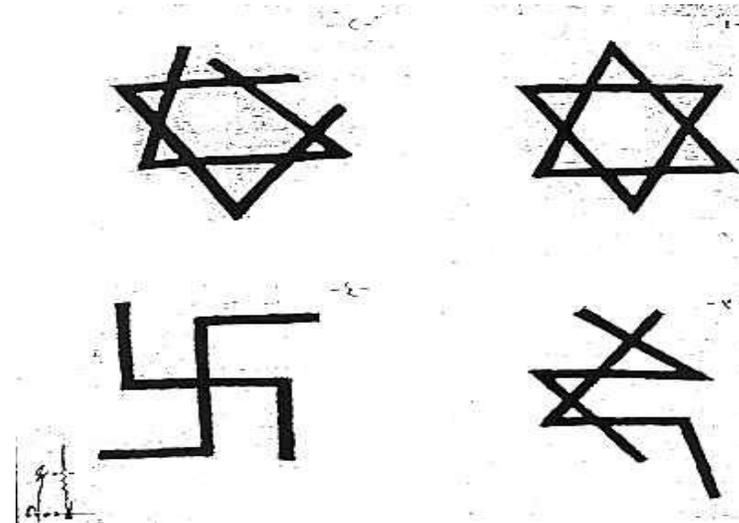


“The New Nazis”



A caricatured Jew (with a beard, side locks, hooked-nose, and skullcap) is stabbed with a sword bearing a swastika, while he simultaneously stabs an Arab with a sword bearing a Star of David. This cartoon suggests the transformation of the Jews as the new Nazis and the Arabs as the new Jews.

Al-Watan, Qatari daily, August 10, 2002.
(At <http://www.tomgrossmedia.com>)



The Star of David, a sacred symbol of the Jews, is reconfigured into a swastika – the symbol of Nazi Germany.

Al-Ahram, official Egyptian daily, May 23, 1998.
(From the Israeli Government Press Office)



American Jewish Committee

“The New Nazis”



Many images in the Arab media are used to equate Israel's response to terrorism with Nazi genocide. In this cartoon, Israeli jets fire missiles at the Gaza Strip. Smoke from the missiles forms a swastika, a poignant reference to the Nazis.



An image of the Auschwitz concentration camp with the flag of Israel on top of its infamous tower, and a sign in Arabic reading: “Gaza Strip or the new Israeli annihilation camp.”

Al-Watan, Qatari daily, September 27, 2005.
(At <http://www.tomgrossmedia.com>)

Al-Dustour, Jordanian daily, October 19, 2003.
(At <http://www.tomgrossmedia.com>)



American Jewish Committee

“The New Nazis”



Former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak is portrayed as Adolf Hitler, with blood dripping from his hands.



Former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is depicted slaughtering Palestinian children with a Nazi swastika-shaped ax.

Daily Star, Lebanese daily, April 3, 2002.
Joël et Dan Kotek, *Au nom de l'antisionisme: L'image des Juifs et d'Israël dans la caricature depuis la seconde Intifada* (Brussels: Éditions Complexe, 2003), p. 63. (At www.jcpa.org/phas/phas-21.htm)

Arab News, Saudi Arabian daily, April 10, 2002. (At <http://www.tomgrossmedia.com>)



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The “Demonized” Jew

Anti-Semitic cartoons rely on all-too-familiar stereotypes. Jews almost always appear grotesque and ugly, often with large hooked-noses and long, ratty hair. They are caricatured as Shylock-like, conniving and deceitful.



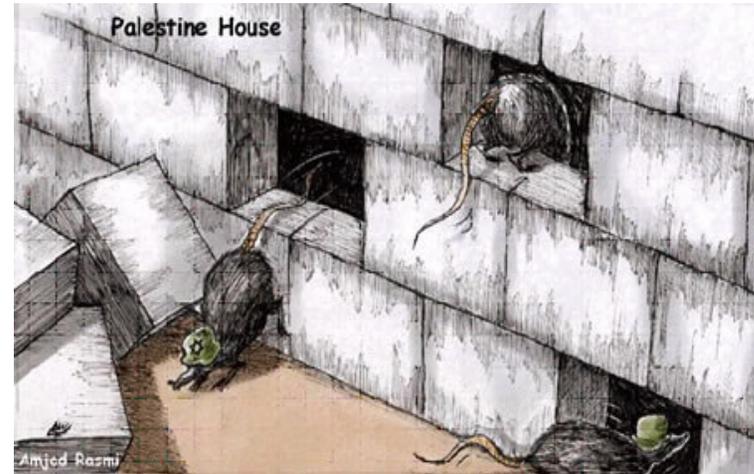
In this image, the Jew, Israel, and U.S. are shown devouring “the Arab League.” Notice the long hooked-nosed and scraggly hair. No distinction is made between Israel and the Jewish people. In the Arab media, they are most often portrayed as one and the same. Anti-Zionism becomes anti-Semitism when its critique targets Jews as a people rather than Israel as a political entity.

The “Demonized” Jew



Standing against a backdrop of Jerusalem, the Pope declares, “Peace on Earth!!” A caricatured Jewish figure, portrayed as a devil holding a pitch-fork, is labeled “Israeli settlements.” He declares in response, “Settlements on Earth!!”

Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, official Palestinian Authority daily, March 22, 2000. Kotek, op. cit., p. 52. (At www.jcpa.org)



This cartoon comes from *Arab News*, an English-language Saudi daily. The drawing shows Jews as rats wearing helmets with the Star of David, a common Nazi image to dehumanize Jews and to portray them as deceitful and sub-human people.

Arab News, Saudi Arabian daily. (At <http://www.tomgrossmedia.com>)

The “Demonized” Jew



A demonized Jew, identified as Sharon, holds a battle ax dripping with blood while sitting atop UN resolutions condemning Israel. The cartoon caricatures the Jew with beastly features, large ears, and side locks.



A hooked-nosed, skullcap-wearing advisor to Prime Minister Sharon says, “The Prime Minister demanded that I bring the file of the previous peace agreements..!!” This cartoon presents a stereotype of the deceitful Jew who disregards agreements and promises.

Al-Ahram Online, Egyptian weekly, November 10, 2005.
(At <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/768/cartoon.htm>)

Al-Ittihad, United Arab Emirates daily, July 28, 2003. (At <http://www.aljazeera.info>)



American Jewish Committee

The “Demonized” Jew



This cartoon entitled “Normalization..!!” suggests the dangers inherent in the Arab world’s attempt to stabilize relations with Israel. The deceitful Jew, dressed in blue and white to represent an Israeli, and wearing a skullcap, confidently shakes the Arab man’s hand as he plunges off a cliff.



The Jew/Israeli in this image has a large nose covered in warts. The crafty, cunning Jew, smiling slyly, presents a gift labeled *hudna* or “truce” to the Palestinian, with explosives attached to it.

Al-Ittihad, United Arab Emirates daily, November 20, 2005. (At <http://www.aljazeera.info>)

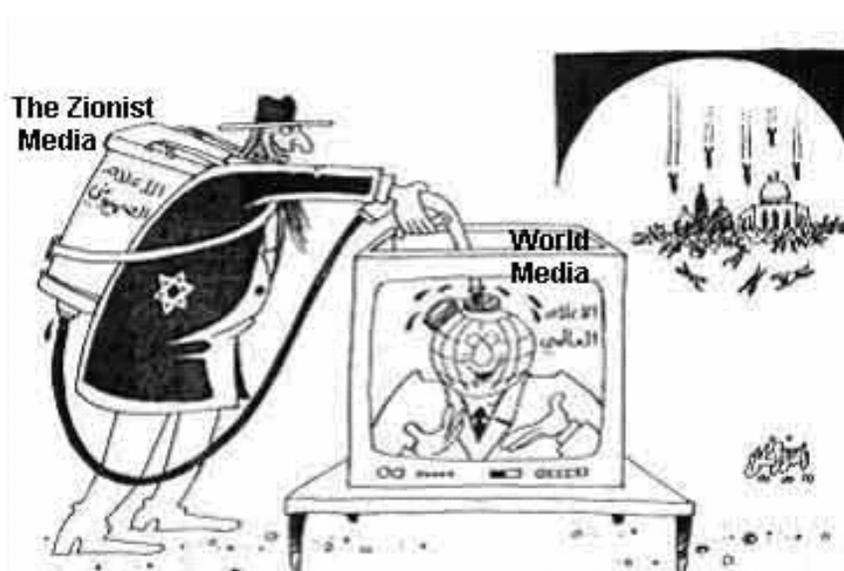
Tashreen, official Syrian daily, July 9, 2003. (At <http://www.aljazeera.info>)



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“Zionist Conspiracy”

The Arab media often paints Zionists as deceivers and liars who aim to destroy Islam, implement racist policies, and rule the world.



A stereotypical Jew pumps the “Zionist Media” into the “World Media.” An image of Palestinians and Jerusalem being bombed and burned looms in the background. The message is blunt: The real news is covered up by the Jewish conspiracy.

*Al-Ahram, official Egyptian daily, May 29, 2002.
(At <http://www.tomgrossmedia.com>)*



American Jewish Committee

“Zionist Conspiracy”



A demonic-looking Jew is seen holding President George W. Bush, who is depicted as a parrot. The Jew trains him: “Say: ‘I hate the Arabs.’” Bush repeats, “I hate the Arabs. I hate the Arabs. I hate the Arabs.”



A Jew, depicted with long side locks and a skullcap, declares, “Simple requests!!” as he presents President Bush with a list that reads: “Middle Eastern [sic], Dismantling Iran, Iraqi Oil.” The chair behind Bush is labeled “Second term.”

Akhbar Al-Khalij, Bahraini daily, June 10, 2002.
(At <http://www.tomgrossmedia.com>)

Al-Ittihad, United Arab Emirates daily, July 4, 2003. (At <http://www.aljazeera.info>)



American Jewish Committee

“Zionist Conspiracy”



A caricatured Jewish figure, with a hooked-nose and side locks, directs an Uncle Sam puppet to write “veto” on the blackboard. The cartoon alludes to the U.S. veto at the UN Security Council, and promotes the widely held conspiracy theory in the Arab and Muslim world that Jews control the U.S. government.



A stereotypical Jew is shown controlling the United States and instigating it to attack Syria. Notice that the U.S. is blindly following (finger is covered with blinders) the Jew’s command.

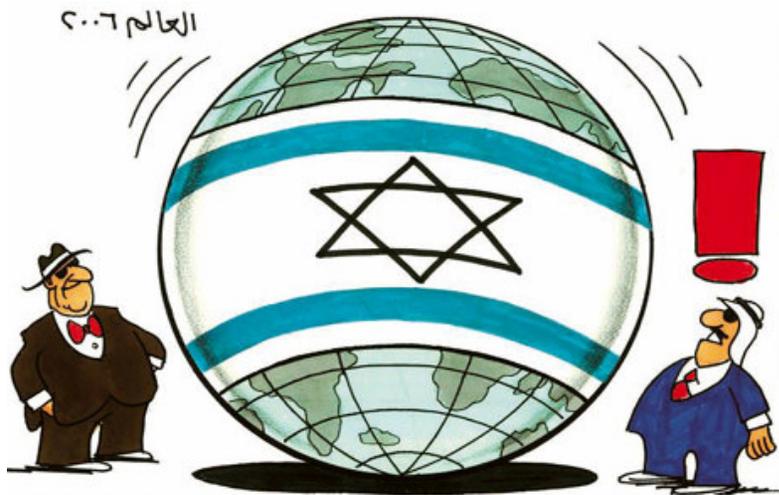
Al-Ra'i, official Jordanian daily, September, 2003.
(At <http://www.middleeastfacts.com>)

Al-iltihad, United Arab Emirates daily, February 23,
2005. (At <http://www.aljazeera.info>)



American Jewish Committee

“Zionist Conspiracy”



The world is covered by the Israeli flag. In Arabic it reads, “The World 2006,” showing once again the perception of Israeli domination and the Arab world’s startled disbelief.



A hooked-nosed, skullcap-wearing Israeli figure plants the Israeli flag on a globe symbolizing Zionist domination over the world. The caption on the left reads: “Israeli phony documents showing ownership of Palestinian houses.” The man declares, “And I also have official documents that show Israel owns the globe!!”

Al-Ittihad, United Arab Emirates daily, June 11, 2002.
(At <http://www.aljazeera.info>)

Al-Ittihad, United Arab Emirates daily, July 17, 2003.
(At <http://www.aljazeera.info>)

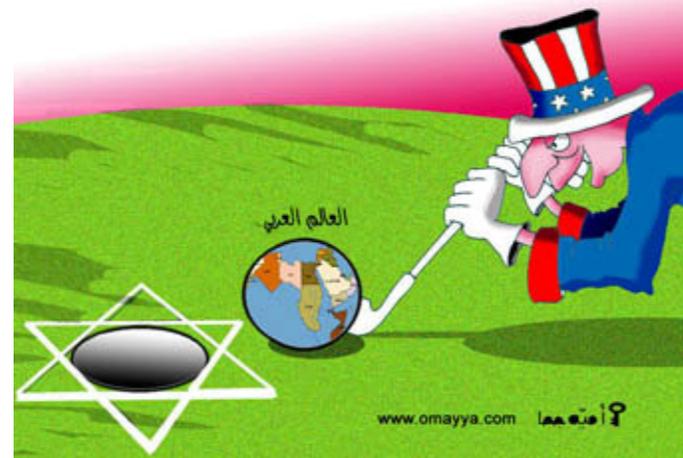


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“Zionist Conspiracy”



A demonic, black-suited, hooked-nose figure – labeled “the Zionist lobby in America” – and an Uncle Sam figure – labeled “the American lobby in America” – ask each other simultaneously: “Who are you? And what are you doing here?”



An Uncle Sam figure drives a golf ball labeled “The Arab World” into a hole marked with a Star of David, representing Israel.

Al-Ittihad, United Arab Emirates daily, June 11, 2002.
(At <http://www.aljazeera.info>)

Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, official Palestinian Authority daily, March 22, 2006.
(At <http://www.aljazeera.info>)



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Israel Portrayed as “Saboteur of Peace”

Jews/Israelis are often shown in Arab cartoons murdering universal symbols of peace. This reflects a pervasive belief that Jews are the perpetrators and the Palestinians — or Arabs — are the victims.

Former Israeli Prime Minister Sharon, with stereotypically Jewish accoutrements (shown wearing a skullcap though he is a secular Jew), torches the earth and with it the dove of peace.



Arab News, Saudi Arabian daily, April 27, 2005.
(At <http://www.aljazeera.info>)



American Jewish Committee

Israel Portrayed as “Saboteur of Peace”



An Israeli figure dominates the globe, covering the earth in blood as a figure representing Islam (shown in green) clings to a white flag of surrender on the opposite pole.



This cartoon reflects a widely-held belief in the Arab world that Jews were behind 9/11. Israeli jets are shown crashing into the Twin Towers, which spell the Arabic word “peace.”

Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, official Palestinian Authority daily, May 13, 2005.
(At <http://www.tomgrossmedia.com>)

Al-Watan, Qatari daily, June 23, 2002. (At <http://www.tomgrossmedia.com>)



American Jewish Committee

Israel Portrayed as “Saboteur of Peace”



Sharon and Bush are shown teaming up to kill the peace dove. In another depiction of the so-called Zionist conspiracy, Sharon is seen controlling the situation, while Bush assists.



Sharon holds a peace dove in one hand and hides an ax in his pocket with the message, “Sharon’s plan for peace,” signifying his true intentions.

Al-Ittihad, United Arab Emirates daily, June 27, 2002.
(At <http://www.aljazeera.info>)

Al-Ittihad, United Arab Emirates daily, June 11, 2002. (At <http://www.aljazeera.info>)



American Jewish Committee

“Blood Libel”



Blood libels, baseless allegations about Jews murdering people, especially children, and using their spilled blood for ritual purposes, were a common form of anti-Semitism during the Middle Ages. The blood libel has recently resurfaced, often in political cartoons, combining elements of classical anti-Semitism with anti-Zionism.

Israeli soldiers gleefully kill a figure labeled “the Palestinian people,” while other Jews and Israelis drink the blood and make a toast, “To peace!”

Al-Ahram, official Egyptian daily, April 21, 2001,
Kotek, op. cit., 76.
(At www.jcpa.org/phas/phas-21.htm)

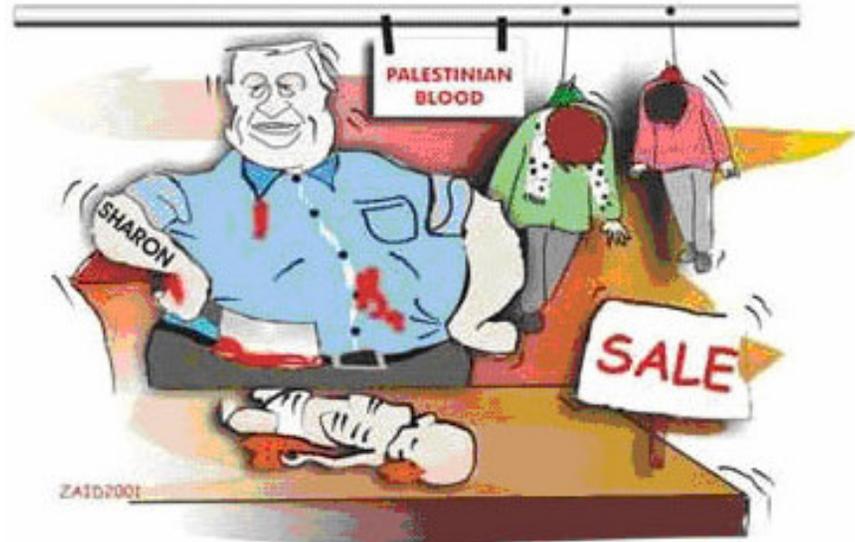


American Jewish Committee

“Blood Libel”



Ariel Sharon bathes in a cup of blood. He is drunk from the blood of the Palestinian people.



Ariel Sharon, depicted as a butcher, proudly sells a dead Palestinian baby. The cartoon, with English captioning, was clearly intended for a non-Arabic-speaking audience.

Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, official Palestinian Authority daily,
April 22, 2003.
(At <http://www.tomgrossmedia.com>)

Official website of the Palestinian Authority State
Information Center, April 6, 2003.
(At <http://www.tomgrossmedia.com>)



American Jewish Committee

“Blood Libel”



A stereotypical Jew, identified by the Star of David on his hat, carries a child on a spear.



A Palestinian, screaming to his death, sits in a cauldron, heated by the fiery breath of Ariel Sharon. A stereotypical Jew (notice his side locks and hooked-nose) controls the flame.

Akhbar Al-Khalij, Bahraini daily, June 2002.
(At <http://www.middleeastfacts.com>)

Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, official Palestinian Authority
daily, May 2004. (At
<http://www.middleeastfacts.com>)



American Jewish Committee

“Blood Libel”



A blood-splattered, fanged, and clawed Ariel Sharon is depicted as a cannibalistic vampire wearing a skullcap and a Star of David. Armed with a butcher's knife, he devours his human prey and leaves body parts and piles of skulls in his wake as he declares, "I will rid humanity of overpopulation."

Al-Kifah Al-Arabi, Lebanese daily, October 21, 2002.
(At <http://www.aljazeera.info>)



Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz pours "Palestinian blood" over Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert as he bathes in a blood-filled bathtub. On the wall behind the two figures are three campaign posters promoting Olmert.

Al-Dustour, Jordanian daily, March 8, 2006.
(At <http://www.aljazeera.info>)

Acknowledgments

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