

Gaza, Hamas, and the Return of Antisemitism

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In the summer of 2014, the third war over Gaza between Israel and Hamas erupted, bringing in its wake a new explosion of global Jew-hatred that has been arguably more intense than any previous wave of hostility since 1945. At the end of May 2014, shortly before the outbreak of this latest round of fighting, I had convened a major three-day international conference at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem on the theme of Anti-Judaism, Antisemitism, and the Delegitimization of Israel. Nearly forty participants from four continents addressed the manifold and varied manifestations of a resurgent global anti-Jewish hostility, particularly noticeable in Europe and the Middle East. The jihadi-inspired murder of four people (including two Israelis) at the Jewish Museum in Brussels earlier that month was fresh in all our minds, as was the awareness that this was but the tip of the iceberg. Still, the emergence of this latest outburst of antisemitism took even seasoned observers of this phenomenon by surprise.

One of the striking features of this latest wave is the primary role of Islamist and Muslim demonstrators along with pro-Palestine groups on the left. Moreover, the indignation directed against Israel appeared stronger in the West than in leading Arab nations such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, or the Gulf States, except for Qatar. Indeed, there were many signs that these countries (as well as the Palestinian Authority) shared a common interest with Israel in seeing the defeat of Hamas and of Islamic radicalism more generally. It is too early to know whether this will constitute a major break in the hitherto implacable hostility of the Muslim-Arab world toward the Jewish State but it is certainly a significant development.

The conflict in Gaza has once more underlined the spearhead role played by Islamist “anti-Zionism” and antisemitism in stirring up antagonism toward Israel and encouraging Western moves to boycott and isolate the Jewish State. Despite the frightening religious bigotry, homophobia, misogyny, violent persecution of Christians in the Middle East, and the chilling Judeophobia, Islamists have

garnered considerable sympathy in the West as authentic representatives of the Palestinian cause. On the other hand, Israel—despite being the region’s only free, tolerant, and open society—has been continually vilified by much of the mainstream Western media and by large sectors of public opinion. While Israel is denounced for a purely fictional “genocide,” the lethal character of Hamas’s Jew-hatred has been largely ignored.

The Islamists have never made any secret of the centrality for them of the religious dimension of the Muslim–Jewish conflict—something very poorly understood in the West. This is clearly spelled out in the radically antisemitic Hamas Covenant of 1988, which constitutes the ideological basis for its continuing jihad to annihilate Israel. The Covenant draws on an ancient *hadith* attributed to Muhammad himself in which he purportedly declares: “The Day of Judgment will not come until Muslims fight the Jews, when the Jew will hide behind stones and trees. The stones and trees will say, O Muslims, O Abdullah [servant of Allah], there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him.”¹

For Islamists today, it is the Prophet himself who points them forward to an apocalyptic genocidal resolution of the conflict with the Jews. This is not a war between Palestinians and Zionists or between the Arab States and Israel, but strictly between Muslims and Jews in which no compromise is possible.²

The Covenant relies to a great extent on a conspiracy theory drawn from the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*—the Tsarist Russian forgery that has become very popular in the contemporary Arab-Muslim world. This fabrication is still widely disseminated on satellite TV and the internet, as well as being preached in the mosques and spread through the mass circulation press. In November 2002, the grotesque forty-one-episode extravaganza entitled “Horseman without a Horse,” based on the antisemitic myths of the *Protocols*, was screened during Ramadan on Egyptian TV and then throughout the Arab world, reaching at least 200 million Muslim viewers. Since then, the incitement has continued without respite in Iran and across the Arab world.³

Despite laws prohibiting “hate speech” in a number of Western countries, such propaganda has spread throughout the Muslim Diaspora during the twenty-first century. The results could be seen at the time of Israel’s war against Hizbullah in 2006. The trend continued during the Gaza conflict of December 2008/January 2009 and once again throughout the last few months. Placards, posters, and signs have appeared on the streets of Paris, London, Berlin, Barcelona, Caracas, Sydney, Chicago, Los Angeles, and many other Western cities carrying anti-Jewish messages such as “Hitler Was Right,” “Be Prepared for the Real Holocaust,” “Cleanse the Earth from the Dirty Zionists,” “Israel is the Antisemite,” or “The

Cancer of the Middle East, Israel Must Not Exist.” This has become a familiar part of the movement of solidarity with Palestine over the past six years. In a Los Angeles video clip from January 6, 2009, during the previous Gaza war, the crowd repeatedly chants “long live Hitler” and “put Jews in ovens.” In other videos from Chicago, New York, and Houston, one can hear the Islamist chant of demonstrators in Arabic and English, “Khaybar, Khaybar, O you Jews, the army of Muhammad shall return.”⁴ In a clip from Montreal, children scream: “Palestine is ours; the Jews are our dogs.” This form of incitement returned on a global scale in the summer of 2014. Before and after Bastille Day in Paris (July 14, 2014), a pro-Palestine mob, including many North African Muslim Arabs and some white leftists, were screaming slogans such as “Death to the Jews” before assaulting local synagogues. In Berlin, too, the current Gaza war provoked ugly protests predominantly among Turkish Muslims, with a clear antisemitic focus. The protesters could be heard mocking the “cowardly Jewish pigs” and calling them to “come out and fight.”

It is not only mob voices that transmit such violently antisemitic messages. Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, a prominent Islamic preacher who influences millions of believers across the Arab world through his weekly program on Al-Jazeera TV, stated the following on January 28, 2009 during the first Gaza War:

Throughout history, Allah has imposed upon the Jews people who would punish them for their corruption. . . . The last punishment was carried out by Hitler. By means of all the things he did to them—even though they exaggerated this issue—he managed to put them in their place. This was divine punishment for them. . . . Allah willing, the next time will be at the hand of the believers.⁵

Al-Qaradawi is no common garden-variety Islamist but a major scholar and prolific author who was given the red-carpet treatment less than a decade ago by London’s then-Mayor Ken Livingstone (a virulently anti-Israel leftist) for supposedly being a “progressive” Muslim role model. But this senior cleric has never shrunk from calling for the complete extermination of the Jews—“these treacherous aggressors . . . this profligate, cunning, arrogant band of people.” In a TV sermon on January 9, 2009, he publicly prayed: “Oh Allah, count their numbers, and kill them, down to the very last one.”

In fundamentalist Islamic terms, it is clear that the existence of Israel can never be accepted and that no binding agreements can ever be made with those to whom the Quran unequivocally refers as “sons of apes and swine.” In this religious dispensation, Jews are irrevocably cursed. They are infidels and disbelievers “laden with God’s anger,” permanently doomed to “abasement and poverty”—a position

as extreme as any ever held in the dismal history of Christian antisemitism. Such inflammatory statements are still widespread in much of contemporary Islam; however, they do not evoke any major protest from the West or unequivocal repudiation from liberal circles.

The dramatic rise of the global jihad since the victory in 1989 of the mujahideen in Afghanistan over the Soviet Union, followed by the impact of the 9/11 al-Qa'ida-orchestrated assaults in New York and Washington, gave tremendous impetus to the religious imperative behind jihadi antisemitism. Yet the phenomenon is not in itself new, having first acquired momentum in the Nazi era. The Syrian-born Sheikh 'Izz a-Din al-Qassam (in whose honor Hamas named its rockets and its "military" wing), and the undisputed Palestinian nationalist leader, Haj Amin el-Husseini—both of whom waged war against the British and the Jews in Palestine—were among the leading advocates of jihad in the 1930s. Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, was a radical antisemite in the Hitlerian mold, closely allied to Nazism from 1933 and fully supportive of Hitler's Final Solution during World War II. A friend of Himmler and Eichmann, he emphasized the many affinities between Islam and Nazism, especially in their drive to eradicate the "Jewish world enemy."⁶ Haj Amin did everything in his power to ensure that not a single Jew would escape from the inferno of Nazi-occupied Europe and was a major instigator of the devastating pogrom in Baghdad in June 1941.⁷

Since the heyday of the Grand Mufti, anti-Judaism, antisemitism, and anti-Zionism have indeed formed an inextricable trinity in the Arab world. Along with the Islamic concept that precludes non-Muslims from ever ruling any country once claimed by Islam, the detestation of Jews is one of the deepest sources of Palestinian and Arab rejectionism to the present day. Moreover, it is part of a broader religious war between Islamic and Western civilization—a battle between God and Satan—defined as an existential war and not simply as a question of borders. In the Islamist world-view, the territorial and military assault against the Jewish State in order to regain all of Palestine is part of the war for Allah and the honor of the entire Muslim *umma*.

The cleansing of the Christian presence from the Muslim Middle East is revealing in this regard. The Islamic State of Syria and the Levant (ISIS), now controlling vast swaths of northern Syria and Iraq, recently obliged the ancient Christian Chaldean community of Mossul to either convert to Islam, abandon their property, or face immediate execution by beheading. Terrified by ISIS's brutal policies, the Christians fled to the Kurdish-controlled areas or escaped from Iraq. While this shocking story has finally awoken the Western media from its deep slumber regarding the barbaric character of jihadism, it is remarkable how little this has spilled over into an understanding of Hamas's own agenda. Hamas continues

to benefit in many quarters from a highly romanticized view of the Palestinian “other,” and politically it has even managed to raise its profile during the Gaza war to the point of being considered an equal partner for “negotiation” with Israel.

Among Hamas’s most prominent and passionate supporters has been Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the new Turkish president and long-time prime minister, mistakenly considered in the West a “moderate” and reputedly US President Barack Obama’s best friend in the Middle East. In recent years he has displayed extraordinarily violent Jew-hatred, repeatedly labelling Israel a “terror state” that commits “systematic genocide” against Palestinians. Erdoğan has indeed deliberately cultivated anti-Israel and anti-Jewish feelings in Turkish society.⁸ In 2013 he did not hesitate to proclaim that the growing opposition to his government was the result of a “Jewish conspiracy” or that the Turkish mining disaster in May 2014 had a “Jewish” angle. Erdoğan’s hostility evidently resonates in the Turkish population in which almost 80 percent apparently harbor anti-Jewish prejudices.

In recent years, Turkey has not only seen antisemitism double in strength but has also been witness to a striking vogue for racist conspiracy theories. Even secular left-wing journalists have joined the obsessive search for uncovering the Jewish or crypto-Jewish origins of public figures, including Erdoğan himself and former President Abdullah Gul. Equally symptomatic has been the astounding success of racist and anti-American movies such as *Valley of the Wolves: Iraq*—a Turkish film that grossed \$28 million at the box office.⁹ The film depicts Jews, Christians, and especially Americans as inhuman killing machines; there are even scenes that show an American Jewish doctor removing organs from injured civilian prisoners to be sold to his wealthy clients in New York, London, and Tel Aviv. Since 2000, antisemitic attitudes have become especially common in the media and among the political elite. This fits in with the general climate of anti-Western Turkish nationalism mixed with anti-Israel Islamic sentiments that has brought with it a hostile attitude to Turkish Jews. The trend is likely to continue given the Islamist ideology of Erdoğan’s popular ruling Justice and Reconciliation Party (AKP), which sees Turkey’s destiny as closely interwoven with the Muslim world rather than with the West.

The same pattern has been visible in Iran ever since 1979, when the Imam Ruhollah Khomeini overthrew the Shah, putting an end to the “Golden Age” of the 80,000-strong Persian Jewish community, as well as to the close ties of Iran with Israel. Khomeini’s antisemitism, it must be said, was always fiercely ideological, closely linked to his hatred for America, Israel, and the Shah. Zionism for him (and his successors) was the creed of a criminal, satanic, usurper regime whose domination of Palestine and *Quds* [Jerusalem] represented an intolerable affront to Islam. In Khomeini’s speeches, Israel’s presence in any part of Palestine

was depicted as tyrannical, oppressive, and analogous to a “cancerous growth” in the heart of the Islamic world.¹⁰ To fight Zionism, the Imam Khomeini instituted and institutionalized the annual “Day of *Quds*” on which hundreds of thousands of Iranians are bussed into Tehran to scream in unison “Death to America” and “Death to Israel.” Long before he came to power, Khomeini was a firm believer in the world Jewish conspiracy, which in his eyes was above all designed to subvert the Holy Quran and the Islamic faith. The liberation of Palestine and Israel’s annihilation were turned by Khomeini and his successors into key elements in the revival of the honor, glory, and greatness of Islam—to be led by a revolutionary, anti-imperialist Shi’ite Iran.

During Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s presidency from 2005 to 2013, official Iranian antisemitism escalated to new heights, and Holocaust denial (for the first time since 1945) acquired the status of a state-sponsored doctrine. The Iranian president and his advisers endlessly repeated antisemitic slurs, which explained how the “Zionists” were “behind the scene of the world’s main powers, the media, monetary and banking centers.” Zionists, it was said, controlled the US government, and through their invention of the Holocaust myth, had successfully blackmailed Germany and the entire West in order to reinforce Israel.¹¹ The longstanding ruler of Iran, the Supreme Guide Imam Khamenei, has also never lost an opportunity to portray Israel not only as a blackmailer but as a “deadly cancer” whose presence has enabled the world’s “arrogant powers” (especially America) to dominate and exploit the Middle East. Less than a year ago, Khamenei referred once again to Israel as the “rabid dog in the region,” describing its leaders as “beasts who cannot be called human.” This dehumanizing terminology underpins the Iranian leadership’s constant refrain that “Israel must be wiped out.” It blends together older motifs of sixteenth-century Persian Shi’ism, which regarded Jews as “ritually unclean,” messianic beliefs in the imminent advent of the Hidden Imam (the Shi’ia Messiah), and conspiracy theories drawn from the European arsenal of the *Protocols*. According to the prevailing Islamist ideology of Iran and its Lebanese Shi’ite ally, Hizbullah (largely an Iranian creation), the “Jewish-Zionist tumor” in the Middle East must be surgically removed if peace is to be restored to the region. This has also been the position of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and its offshoots, such as Hamas.¹²

Not surprisingly, Iran’s radical antisemitic ideology, along with its public denial of the Holocaust, has attracted many Western neo-Nazis and European negationists. There is a long list of obnoxious Western Holocaust deniers—including Roger Garaudy, Robert Faurisson, Mark Weber, Frederick Toben, Jürgen Graf, and Ernst Zündel—who admire Iran or have made the pilgrimage to Tehran.¹³ A number of well-known revolutionary leftists have also identified with Iran’s posturing as a militant defender of Palestine and supporter of the “oppressed

masses” throughout the Third World. Both Iran and the Lebanese Hizbullah have also enjoyed enthusiastic support from prominent leftist politicians, including the late Venezuelan head of State, Hugo Chavez; his successor, Nicolas Maduro; and the Nicaraguan leader Daniel Ortega—all Marxist socialists and close Latin American allies of Iran’s theocratic regime. Moreover, Hizbullah was even hailed as a “socially progressive” movement by a number of strongly anti-Zionist American Jewish academics such as Judith Butler, Noam Chomsky, Norman Finkelstein, and Richard Falk—the former UN rapporteur for the Palestinian territories, a longstanding enthusiast for Khomeini’s Iran, and a pro-Hamas apologist. Without Iran’s financial and military backing, it is evident that neither Hizbullah nor Hamas would have acquired the weaponry that has turned them into potentially lethal adversaries of Israel and its neighbors. Indeed, Iran’s influence can be seen in all the wars that Israel has had to fight in the twenty-first century—without the Iranian leadership having necessarily planned or desired their occurrence at each specific moment—whether in 2006, 2009, 2012, or 2014. The growing American retreat from the Middle East has greatly facilitated the creation of a dangerous vacuum that has been filled not only by Iranian proxies but by the fanatic Sunni warriors of ISIS.

The recent antisemitic fallout from the 2014 Gaza war has also highlighted the impact of Islamist rage in the twenty-first century and the myopia of the West regarding the danger it represents. Nevertheless, in the coverage of Hamas’s endless provocations of Israel, the mainstream Western media have studiously ignored its fundamentalist ideology, anti-Westernism, and undisguised antisemitism. Similarly, little attention has been paid to the centrality of *shabada* [martyrdom] and the cult of death at the heart of the worldview of Hamas, which explains its deliberate encouragement of civilian deaths among its own people. Palestinian civilians in Gaza were repeatedly urged by their cynical leaders to ignore Israeli warnings to flee and have been expected to act as human shields to protect Hamas terrorists sheltered in underground bunkers and tunnels. At the same time, both Fatah and Hamas have exploited the rising Palestinian body count to denounce Israeli bombing of Gaza as a Zionist “mass extermination” along Nazi lines. This utterly false claim has been disseminated in the internet comments and social media throughout the Western world, as well as in the mainstream media.

Not only Hamas but also the Palestinian Authority (PA) has indulged in what amounts to permanent anti-Israel incitement and a never-ending glorification of terrorists as “martyrs.” In addressing its own Palestinian constituency, Fatah has also denied Israel’s existence and historical legitimacy. In Palestinian textbook maps, for example, Israel does not appear at all, even within the “Green Line” [Israel’s pre-1967 borders]. While Hamas is entirely uninhibited in its antisemitism, Fatah is usually more cautious. It never hesitates, however, to slander Israel as

displaying a greater degree of “fascism” and “racism” than any other state in human history. Hence, it is less than surprising that in a 2014 global ADL survey of prejudice against Jews, the Palestinian-populated territories (including Gaza) should win the equivalent of an Olympic gold medal for antisemitism, with a level of Jew-hatred reaching 93 percent.¹⁴ This is all the more remarkable since the ADL index for antisemitism disregards all issues relating to Israel, except for one question about dual loyalties.

In light of such demonization, one can better understand why recent pro-Palestinian demonstrations in Europe so swiftly spilled over into crude antisemitism. This has nothing to do with any traditional far-right or neo-Nazi agitation, which was conspicuous by its relative absence or low profile. At the heart of the contemporary wave of anti-Jewish agitation have been Muslims living in the European Union (EU)—especially in France, Holland, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Britain, and Germany. Since Muslim immigrants in Europe today probably number over 30 million people (5–6 percent of the EU population), their demographic weight and growing political presence can no longer be ignored. The increased identification of many Muslim immigrants with Islam and its impact on the more alienated urban youth is equally undeniable. The more frustrated this population feels—whether they be Arabs from North Africa or the Middle East, Turks, West African blacks, or South Asians (especially Pakistanis) in Britain—the more likely it is that they will be drawn into jihadi or antisemitic actions. Jews and non-Jews are paying the price, not only for Palestinian rejectionism, jihadi violence, and Muslim antisemitism, but also for Europe’s policy of appeasement of these dark forces.

Research has shown that antisemitic stereotypes are far more prevalent among Muslims in Europe than in the majority white populations. For example, close to half of British Muslims in December 2005 felt that “Jews are in league with the Freemasons to control the media and politics.” In Denmark, in 2009, 66 percent of Muslim immigrants interviewed displayed markedly anti-Jewish attitudes. Studies in Belgium from 2011 showed that 45–50 percent of Muslim students agreed with antisemitic statements such as “Jews want to dominate everything” versus only 10 percent of non-Muslims.¹⁵ This is a general pattern in the EU and it is aggravated by a preexisting Manichean view of the Middle East conflict among many Muslims in Europe. The assertion of a specifically Muslim identity, as well as hatred of Israel, seems to determine many of these hostile attitudes toward Jews. Sometimes, as in the case of Saudi-sponsored religious schools and textbooks in Britain, the antisemitic indoctrination is blatant and rampant.¹⁶ More often, the stereotypes come from the home, the mosque, the internet, and satellite TV, and are part of the cultural baggage the immigrants themselves bring from the Middle East, Africa, and Asia.

France represents perhaps the most revealing barometer of the current crisis of European Jewry and the “new” antisemitism in the EU, as it is home to approximately 6–8 million Muslims (some 10–12 percent of the French population) and 550,000 Jews—the largest Jewish community on the Old Continent. Incredibly, 40 percent of all racist acts committed on French soil in 2013 were directed at Jews, who represent less than 1 percent of the overall population.¹⁷ Contrary to the various myths about widespread Islamophobia, Jews are incomparably more likely than Muslims to be the objects of a hate crime. (This is also true of Britain, Canada, and the US.) Moreover, the perpetrators of these violent anti-Jewish racist assaults and harassment in countries such as France, Belgium, Holland, the UK, or Sweden are far more frequently Muslims than neo-Nazis or far-right extremists.

France has once again seen the largest escalation of anti-Jewish violence in recent months in Europe, with pro-Palestinian mobs laying siege to several synagogues in central Paris on the eve of the Bastille celebrations (July 13, 2014). The bulk of the protesters were *Maghrébins* [of North African origin] with a motley group of allies from the left, including Communists, trade unionists, ecologists, and the militant anti-Zionists of the Trotskyist New Anti-Capitalist Party. The protesters surrounded one synagogue filled with about 200 congregants, who had to barricade themselves inside. Several persons were injured as the mob, in a pogrom-like atmosphere, shouted chilling slogans such as “Death to the Jews” and “Hitler was Right” while trying to force its way into the building. The siege was only lifted an hour later, after police reinforcements belatedly arrived to help the small Jewish Defense League. Elsewhere, in Belleville, an eastern suburb of Paris, loud chants of “Slaughter the Jews” could be heard in Arabic at a pro-Hamas demonstration. Another synagogue was firebombed on July 11 in Aulnay-sur-Bois during Friday night services. Earlier the same day, in broad daylight, near the *Gare du Nord* railway station, a seventeen-year-old Jewish girl was insulted and pepper sprayed by a young Arab man shouting, “Dirty Jewess, *inshallah* [God willing] you will die.”¹⁸ Then, a few days later, in Sarcelles, a Parisian suburb with a mixed Arab–Jewish population, an Arab mob attacked Jewish-owned shops, destroying a pharmacy, a pizzeria, and several stores. The rioters burned cars and attacked Jews outside a synagogue, which they tried unsuccessfully to set alight. French police had to use water cannons, tear gas, and rubber bullets in scenes reminiscent of a Middle East intifada. Even the self-flagellating left-wing Parisian intelligentsia, with its “post-colonial” anti-Israel and anti-American reflexes, was temporarily shocked by these scenes.

France, it should be remembered, has been the scene of some frightening anti-Jewish violence ever since the beginning of the Second Intifada in October 2000. Since that time (despite the valiant efforts currently promoted by Prime

Minister Manuel Valls, supported by Bernard Cazeneuve, the interior minister and President François Hollande), the French state has been unable to put the genie back into the bottle. The Israel–Palestine conflict continues to serve as the festering sore and catalyst for the violence, though the official French mantra that antisemitism is essentially a foreign import from the Middle East is obviously too simplistic. The verbal and physical assaults are directed, after all, against French Jews and not Israelis. Moreover, after more than a decade, such attacks have become almost routine on the streets, in the schools of the republic, or in the Paris metro.

This wave of raw hatred has had a traumatic effect on French Jewry. It was preceded, of course, by the cold-blooded murders in 2012 carried out by Mohammed Merah—a radicalized young jihadi who had been trained in Afghanistan. Merah murdered a young rabbi and shot dead three small Jewish children in Toulouse’s Ozar Hatorah School at point-blank range, even filming himself in the act. The perpetrator was a French citizen of Algerian Muslim background, who grew up in a family thoroughly imbued with anti-Jewish hatred.¹⁹ In 2006, twenty-three-year-old Ilan Halimi was sadistically murdered on the outskirts of Paris by a gang all too appropriately named *Les Barbares* [the Barbarians], led by a French West African Muslim, Youssouf Fofana. The torture of Halimi, despite initial public and police denials, was undoubtedly an antisemitic act. The kidnappers had carefully selected a Jew in the expectation of extracting a large ransom from the Jewish community.²⁰

On May 24, 2014, another French jihadist, Mehdi Nemmouche, who had returned from Syria, deliberately chose a high-profile Jewish target in Brussels. The cumulative effect of these and many other less violent but deeply disturbing incidents suggests a grim prognosis for the future of French and European Jewry, even though most Jews appear to be reasonably prosperous, well-integrated, and encounter no discrimination in housing, education, religious practice, or in French public life. Nevertheless, European Jews, especially in France, find themselves caught between the Islamist wave and the rise of far-right populist-nationalists who did remarkably well in the last European elections in May 2014. For the first time in its history, the National Front (FN), led by Marine Le Pen, came in first with over 25 percent of the vote—a striking success but not a very encouraging result for French Jews.²¹ True, its present leader has distanced herself from her father’s notorious antisemitism and his racist Islamophobe rhetoric, but the FN ranks still contain more than their fair share of ultra-nationalists, racists, and fundamentalist Catholics. Moreover, the FN’s allergy to the very idea of Jewish communal representation and its hyper-consciousness concerning Jewish opposition to its rise does not bode well for French Jewry. On the other hand,

Le Pen's determined stance against further mass immigration and sharp disapproval of efforts to appease Islamists do have some potential appeal to Jewish voters.

Since 2000, there have been at least 7,650 antisemitic incidents in France. That figure represents only those cases actually reported to the police, which probably account for no more than 40 percent of the real numbers. This helps us to understand why close to half of the Jews in France, Belgium, and Hungary have contemplated emigration in recent years. With regard to France, it was anticipated even before the Gaza war that more than 5,000 Jews would make *aliyah* to Israel this year, which would be an all-time record for French Jews since the foundation of the Jewish State. This prompted Christophe Barbier, the leading editorialist and publisher of the center-left magazine *L'Express*, to accuse French Jews in early August of "bunkerization," betraying republican values, and supporting the far right in both France and Israel. Jews who deserted France for Israel, he charged, were in effect "cowards."²²

There is no doubt that the increasing infiltration of antisemitism—both Middle Eastern and European—has reached a new fever pitch as a result of the Gaza war. When a Turkish café owner in Liège (Belgium) feels comfortable mounting a sign worthy of Nazi Germany, announcing "Dogs welcome but not Jews," an evil wind is surely blowing. When a Flemish doctor in Antwerp rebuffs a ninety-year-old Jewish woman's request for medical treatment by telling her to go to Gaza or when South Asian youths scream "Heil Hitler" at Jewish pedestrians in an Orthodox neighborhood of Manchester, the loosening of residual taboos concerning antisemitism is all too apparent.²³ In Britain, antisemitic incidents this July reached an all-time high, though they were notably less violent than in France.²⁴

Operation Protective Edge, even more than its predecessors in 2009 and 2012, seems to have elicited extreme reactions, with anti-Zionist and "dissenting" Jews strikingly eager to advertise their presumed ethical superiority by denouncing Israel's "criminal" and "racist" policies. Following some of the press comments, internet traffic, and Facebook tweets, one could be forgiven for thinking that Israel had deliberately and sadistically targeted all Palestinian civilians. One could imagine that the Israel Defense Forces was an army of child-murderers, while Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which have always glorified the terrorist massacres of Israeli civilians, were merely a "militant" protective guard against the ruthless inhumanity of the Israeli army. This is a complete inversion of the truth. But that did not prevent the proliferation of nauseating slogans about Israel as a "terrorist state," or disturb the near-silence surrounding Hamas's deliberate policy of sending its civilians and children into harm's way. Nor have such tactics diminished the

aggressive support for Hamas displayed by so-called philosophers such as the Italian Gianni Vattimo.²⁵

In my view, this is an unmistakable indication of the moral sickness steadily gnawing away at Europe's innards as a result of its feeble response to Islamism and its own self-deceiving multiculturalist mythology. As we have seen, the characterization of Hamas as a typical liberation movement fighting for Palestinian national self-determination is deeply flawed—a symptom of European, Western, and international delusions. Even more delusional and rather insidious is the Palestinization of the old-new Christian Replacement Theology and the hypocritical moralizing of Anglican priests such as retired black South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who, like former US President Carter, never misses an opportunity to lash out at Israel while urging the recognition of Hamas.²⁶ Such voices ultimately legitimize antisemitism. Along with advocates of boycotting Israeli products (or academics) and purveyors of the totally skewed “Israel=Apartheid” analogy, they actively sustain the radical jihadists in their fundamentally wicked dream of destroying Israel. Even if they are not personally antisemitic, these “fellow-travelers” are *de facto* accomplices of the fanatic “warriors of Allah,” hell-bent on bringing down what remains of human freedom, respect for truth, the sanctity of life and democratic values. Indeed, from Berlin to Sydney, from Paris to Santiago, antisemitism is once again providing us with a litmus test for the moral health of Islamic and Western civilization. The societal and cultural pathology of antisemitism may well be incurable, but it is nonetheless essential that governments around the world do everything in their power to limit its toxic effects.

Notes

- ¹ See Yigal Carmon, “Contemporary Islamist Ideology Permitting Genocidal Murder,” *MEMRI Special Report*, no. 25, January 27, 2004.
- ² Robert S. Wistrich, *Muslim Anti-Semitism: A Clear and Present Danger* (New York, 2002).
- ³ See Robert S. Wistrich, *A Lethal Obsession: Antisemitism from Antiquity to the Global Jibad* (New York, 2010), pp. 731–927.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 937–38 for further examples.
- ⁵ “Allah imposed Hitler on the Jews to punish them...,” *MEMRI Special Dispatch* no. 2224, February 3, 2009.
- ⁶ Wistrich, *Lethal Obsession*, *op. cit.*, pp. 667–75; see also Klaus Gensicke, *Der Multi von Jerusalem, Amin el-Husseini und die Nationalsozialisten* (Darmstadt, 2007).
- ⁷ Shmuel Moreh and Zvi Yehuda (eds.), *Al-Farbud: The 1941 Pogrom in Iraq* (Jerusalem, 2005), pp. 27–68.

- ⁸ Semih Idiz, “Erdogan Fans Anti-Israeli, Anti-American Sentiments for Political Gain,” *Hurriyet Daily News*, June 14, 2010; Richard Herzynger, “Türkische Absege,” <http://m.welt.de/print/diewelt/debatte/article130805280/Tuerkische-Abwege.html>.
- ⁹ http://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Valley_of_the_Wolves:_Iraq.
- ¹⁰ Wistrich, *Lethal Obsession*, op. cit., pp. 845–61.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 885–93.
- ¹² See Robert S. Wistrich, “Post-Mubarak Egypt: The Dark Side of Islamic Utopia,” *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, VI: 1 (2012), 22–32.
- ¹³ See Robert S. Wistrich, “Negationism, Antisemitism, and Anti-Zionism,” *Holocaust Denial: The Politics of Perfidy*, Robert Wistrich (ed.) (Berlin, 2012), pp. 258–67; and Matthias Küntzel, “Judeophobia and the Denial of the Holocaust in Iran,” *Holocaust Denial: The Politics of Perfidy*, Robert Wistrich (ed.) (Berlin, 2012), pp. 235–54.
- ¹⁴ See *ADL Global: An Index of Antisemitism* (New York, 2014), which surveyed attitudes toward Jews in over 100 countries.
- ¹⁵ See Manfred Gerstenfeld, interview by Mark Elchardus, *Israel National News*, May 21, 2013. Elchardus studied Dutch-speaking schools in Brussels and the attitudes of students fourteen years of age and older. See also the detailed research by Günther Jikeli, *Antisemitismus und Diskriminierungs-wahrnehmungen junger Muslime in Europa* (Essen, 2012), which confirms the prevalence of “classic” antisemitic stereotypes among young Muslims (Jews are rich, stingy, conspire against non-Jews, etc.). These attitudes are indeed widespread, significantly more so than among non-Muslims.
- ¹⁶ See the important investigation by Denis MacEoin, *The Hijacking of British Islam* (London, 2007), sponsored by Policy Exchange (<http://www.policyexchange.org.uk>). The US-based Center for Religious Freedom of Freedom House also issued a pioneering report on Saudi textbooks, *Saudi Arabia’s Curriculum of Intolerance* (2006), <http://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/CurriculumOfIntolerance.pdf>.
- ¹⁷ See *Rapport sur l’antisémitisme en France, 2015* (Paris, 2014) produced by the Service de Protection de la Communauté Juive. The 2012 report, based on French Interior Ministry statistics, showed that 55 percent of all racist violence targeted Jews. The number of violent hate crimes recorded against Jews was ninety-six. There were only nine violent anti-Muslim acts, though there are ten times more Muslims than Jews living in France.
- ¹⁸ Sam Sokol, “European ministers denounce ugly anti-Semitic demonstrations and attacks,” *The Jerusalem Post*, July 22, 2014; “Heurts à Barbès et Sarcelles,” *LeMonde.fr* with AFP, July 21, 2014; Adam Le Bor, “Exodus: Why Europe’s Jews are Fleeing Once Again,” *Newsweek*, July 29, 2014.
- ¹⁹ Marc Weitzmann, “In the Beginning, the Brothers, They Told Me to Kill,” *Tablet*, July 29, 2014, <http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/180009/france-toxic-hate-3-toulouse/>.
- ²⁰ Wistrich, *Lethal Obsession*, op. cit., pp. 339–44 on the Halimi affair.
- ²¹ See Robert S. Wistrich, “The Dark Side of Europe,” *Jerusalem Report*, June 30, 2014.
- ²² Michel Gurfinkiel, “Barbier, Beelzebuth, and the French Intifada,” <http://pjmedia>.

- com/blog/barbier-beelzebuth-and-anti-semitism-the-french-socialists-conundrum/. Barbier's piece was ominously entitled "Les Nouveaux Baal Zebud," implying a link between French Jews and the devil, who in Christian tradition is often called Beelzebuth; in the Hebrew Bible, Baal-Zebuth was a bloodthirsty Canaanite god.
- ²³ Jerry Lewis, "UK Jews feel anti-Semitic backlash," *The Jerusalem Post*, July 20, 2014.
- ²⁴ Laura D. Staetsky and Jonathan Boyd, "Perceptions and Experiences of Antisemitism among Jews in the UK," Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR), July 2014; this report offers a detailed sociological perspective on these issues.
- ²⁵ Anna Momigliano, "Well-known Italian philosopher: 'I'd like to shoot those bastard Zionists,'" *Haaretz*, July 24, 2014.
- ²⁶ See Desmond Tutu, "My plea to the People of Israel: Liberate yourselves by liberating Palestine," *Haaretz*, August 14, 2014. In that article, virtually all blame for the Gaza war is placed on Israel, Hamas is invisible, and Israelis are in effect asked to join in the boycott of their own country. Archbishop Tutu's "peace" record with regard to Israel includes the repugnant repetition of the "apartheid wall"-in-Israel myth, the demonization of the "Jewish lobby," the call for an arms embargo on Israel, and assiduous support for BDS. In the present state of the world, one could say with a touch of irony that he fully "merits" the Nobel Peace Prize and the Presidential Medal of Freedom he received from Barack Obama.

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