POISONING THE WELLS:
ANTISEMITISM IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICA

POISONING

ANTISEMITISM IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICA

THE WELLS

EDITED BY

CORINNE E. BLACKMER

AND

ANDREW PESSIN

ISGAP

Poisoning the Wells: Antisemitism in Contemporary America
© 2021 The authors and ISGAP

The Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP) is dedicated to the academic study of antisemitism and others forms of prejudice. The opinions expressed in this work are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of ISGAP, its officers, or the members of its boards.

The ISGAP monograph series is edited by Charles Asher Small.

Cover design and layout by AETS
Cover image by vladm/Shutterstock

Table of Contents

Foreword

Elie Wiesel was a survivor of and witness to the Holocaust, as well as an academic, an intellectual, and a humanitarian. He would often impress on scholars, students, and policymakers that antisemitism is not just a parochial problem affecting the Jewish people and the State of Israel, but an early warning system for the stability of society and the protection of basic notions of citizenship, including legal equality, democratic principles, and human rights. According to Wiesel, antisemitism begins with the Jews but never ends with them. Once this hatred is unleashed upon society, it knows no boundaries. When the leaders of 45 nations gathered to mark the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz in January 2020, they warned collectively of a new and dangerous increase in antisemitism globally. The academy must engage with this "oldest hatred" in a vigorous and scholarly manner that has a profound impact on education and academic curricula, as well as on policy development and implementation.

Antisemitism is one of the most complex and at times perplexing forms of hatred. It spans centuries of history, infecting different societies, religious, philosophical, and political movements, and even civilizations. In the aftermath of the Holocaust, some have even argued that it illustrates the limitations of the Enlightenment and modernity itself. Manifestations of antisemitism emerge in numerous ideologically-based narratives and constructed identities of belonging and otherness, such as race and ethnicity, as well as nationalist and anti-nationalist movements. In the contemporary context of globalization and postmodernism, antisemitism has taken on new forms that need to be decoded, mapped, and exposed. In fact, the emergence of populism and radical social movements on the extreme left and the far right, both religious and secular, including political Islam, pose a significant threat to all societies. These movements use antisemitism as a central element of their ideologies and political objectives. Moreover, this is happening in a context in which the academy has been too slow to engage with this subject matter in an open, free, and honest manner.

For a long time, experts and scholars believed that this longest of hatreds would not infiltrate American society, and the current and alarming upsurge in antisemitism in the United States has therefore caught many of them off guard. Against this background, *Poisoning the Wells: Antisemitism in Contemporary America* is a timely and important collection of essays that analyze, map, and decode contemporary antisemitism in the United States. The Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP) is honored to publish this

collection, which has been expertly curated by Corinne E. Blackmer and Andrew Pessin, and provide a platform for the dissemination of high-caliber scholarship on contemporary antisemitism, breaking the apparent taboo of silence on this issue within academic publishing and the academy. The publication of this volume of intelligent and revelatory essays forms the latest step in ISGAP's ongoing mission to combat antisemitism on the battlefield of ideas.

<div align="right">

Charles Asher Small
Founder and Executive Director of ISGAP
Oxford

</div>

Introduction

Corinne E. Blackmer and Andrew Pessin

In May 2021, as Hamas rained rockets and explosives on Israel, half a world away, those claiming to be anti-Zionist, not antisemitic, targeted diasporic Jews for harassment, vandalism, intimidation, threats, and physical assault, in the evident belief that Jews needed to pay for Israel's acts and must be held guilty for the widespread conviction that Israeli self-defense is indefensible. Following this deadly fighting, American Jews have become increasingly concerned about their safety to an extent that would have been unimaginable—even unthinkable—at an earlier time. Indeed, whatever remained of American Jewish innocence after the near-unprecedented onslaughts of the past five years or so came to an abrupt, catastrophic, and globally publicized end. These attacks were not isolated but rather fit into a disquieting, escalating pattern of antisemitism manifesting itself in many ways, ranging from the shunning, silencing, and bullying occurring on campuses, in houses of worship, and on the internet, to graffiti and vandalism, destruction of property, assault, and even killing. Antisemitism, presumed by most, including many Jewish Americans, to be buried in the infamies of European history, has regained a firm foothold in the nation that Yiddish-speaking Jewish immigrants had once called *Die Goldene Medina*.

Hearing about or bearing witness to frequent, intense incidents of anti-Jewish animus from the right *and* the left, Jewish people are living at an inflection point where the distinction between antisemitism and anti-Zionism verges on collapse, no matter what any particular American Jew might think or feel about the Jewish state. Open-minded, well-educated, humanitarian, and at the forefront of every social justice movement in America, Jews have found that they risk becoming outsiders if they defend fellow Jews, Israel, or themselves; a phenomenon which has led many to fearful silence, isolation, and demoralization.

Anti-Defamation League (ADL) CEO Jonathan Greenblatt has described the recent surge in antisemitism as "particularly dramatic and violent," and "believes strongly that our leaders need to do more to prevent further incidents."[1] Analysis from the ADL's Center on Extremism found that antisemitic incidents in the United States had more than doubled since the military

---

[1] Quoted in Jemima McEvoy, "American Jews Still Reeling from Rise in Anti-Semitism after Israel-Hamas Conflict, Survey Shows," *Forbes*, June 14, 2021, https://www.forbes.com/sites/jemimamcevoy/2021/06/14/american-jews-still-reeling-from-rise-in-anti-semitism-after-israel-hamas-conflict-survey-shows/?sh=b7392811d6f, accessed June 14, 2021.

conflict and its immediate aftermath. Indeed, the number for May 2021 stands at 305—a 115% increase from the same period in 2020—and includes 190 cases of harassment, 50 cases of vandalism, and 11 assaults.[2]

In that fateful month alone, a pro-Israel protester had his kippah stolen and burned in an apparent hate crime in Cleveland. In South Florida, a group of teenagers hit a man walking home from a Chabad synagogue with a rock. That same week, a man tossed a bag of feces at a Chabad House, also in South Florida, while yelling antisemitic slurs, including "Jews should die."[3] A stranger in Las Vegas called the Jews "baby killers" who "are not going to exist" before assaulting a Jewish man.[4] In Los Angeles, at the end of the Jewish festival of Shavuot, two cars draped in Palestinian flags chased a lone man wearing Orthodox Jewish dress. In West Los Angeles, on the following night, a pro-Palestinian caravan targeted a small group of Jewish diners, throwing objects and hurling epithets at them, while a well-known kosher restaurant was vandalized—its front door smashed to bits. As a man left a synagogue in New Jersey with his wife and daughter, a group of men in a car started tossing garbage and hurling antisemitic slurs at them, including sexual threats: "Free Palestine!" "Die Jew!" "I'm gonna rape your wife!"[5]

Meanwhile, New York City, home to one of the largest Jewish populations in the world outside of Israel, has also witnessed a massive spike in antisemitic attacks. Pro-Palestinian demonstrators lobbed a firebomb at Jews in Manhattan, and a teenager bearing an Israeli flag was hospitalized with a concussion and an injured jaw after protestors beat him. On May 20, a day replete with other violent protests, a man named Waseem Awawdeh badly injured and pepper-sprayed a man wearing a kippah and, after the police charged him with felonious assault and a hate crime, said he had no regrets and bragged he would do it again if he could. Synagogues, Jewish community centers and schools, and kosher restaurants across the nation have been vandalized.[6]

May 2021 saw not only an explosion of antisemitic crimes against persons and property but also an unprecedented onslaught of academics condemning Israel and calling for BDS, for example in letters with hundreds of signatures

---

2 "Following Start of Mideast Conflict, Antisemitic Incidents More Than Double in May 2021 vs. May 2020," ADL website, June 7, 2021, https://www.adl.org/blog/following-start-of-mideast-violence-antisemitic-incidents-more-than-double-in-may-2021-vs-may, accessed June 14, 2021.

3 Samantha Mandeles, "List of 'Pro-Palestinian' Violent Attacks on Jews in the U.S. and Canada," *Legal Insurrection*, May 26, 2021, https://legalinsurrection.com/2021/05/list-of-pro-palestinian-violent-attacks-on-jews-in-the-u-s-and-canada/, accessed June 15, 2021.

4 "Following Start of Mideast Conflict."

5 Mandeles, "Pro-Palestinian Violent Attacks," accessed June 19, 2021.

6 Ibid., accessed June 22, 2021.

from faculty and student governments at major universities, including George-town, Princeton, Brown, Stanford, University of Washington, and Rutgers. More than one hundred and fifty Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies departments have signed on, as have eight departments and more than forty faculty at UC Davis, four hundred plus academics from North Carolina universities, the University of California Press, and the editors of the *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*. At Harvard, eighty-nine student groups and nearly nine hundred students joined to condemn Israel.[7] And if that were not enough, the local chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine at Rutgers made a stunning statement that condemned the school's Chancellor and Provost for their letter condemning antisemitism, in part because they failed to mention Palestinians.[8] After repudiating their statement, the Chancellor and Provost caved in to these intemperate student demands and even apologized.[9]

These recent attacks on the Jewish state are taking place against a backdrop of ever-escalating BDS assaults on Israel, not only in higher education but also in otherwise politically progressive K-12 school districts and unions. The campus antipathy against Israel, which often serves to disguise antipathy against Jews, has persisted and even increased during the Covid-19 pandemic, even as the Zoom call replaced the face-to-face classroom. Student leaders and others invited terrorists to virtual lectures and denounced Zionism as racism in official organizational statements. To give but one example, at the University of Pennsylvania, the professor of a mandatory class on racism gave students a so-called privilege quiz. Next to each identity, the quiz listed a positive or negative value, and the higher the identity the more the students needed to check their presumed privilege. Not surprisingly, under the religion category, the quiz ranked Judaism as the most privileged of all, with twenty-five points assigned.[10] Moreover, the BDS movement has begun to spread in K-12 schools. The resolution in San Francisco claims that public school educators have a special responsibility to "stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people because of the 3.8 billion

---

[7] Raquel Coronell and Dohyon Kim, "Palestinian Student Groups, Faculty Denounce Israeli Government's Use of Force against Palestinians," *Harvard Crimson*, May 26, 2021, https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2021/5/26/statements-denounce-israeli-government/, accessed June 19, 2021.

[8] Students for Justice in Palestine – Rutgers New Brunswick (@sjprutgersnb), Instagram post, May 27, 2021, https://www.instagram.com/p/CPYayWbjVQi/, accessed June 19, 2021.

[9] Greg Price, "Rutgers University-New Brunswick Chancellor, Provost Apologize after Condemning Uptick in Anti-Semitic Attacks," *The Daily Caller*, May 27, 2021, https://dailycaller.com/2021/05/27/rutgers-chancellor-apologizes-antisemitism-email/, accessed June 19, 2021.

[10] Blake Flayton, "The Hate That Can't Be Contained," *Tablet*, November 25, 2020, https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/hate-cant-be-contained, accessed June 21, 2021.

dollars annually that the US government gives to Israel, thus directly using our tax dollars to fund apartheid and war crimes." Endorsing BDS and calling on Israel to end its "bombardment in Gaza and stop displacement at Sheikh Jarrah," a neighborhood in East Jerusalem where a property dispute helped ignite the recent conflict between Israeli Jews and Palestinians, the resolution never once mentions the Hamas rocket attacks on Israeli civilians that forced the counterstrikes to begin with.[11]

In politics, leftist elements of the Democratic Party and right-wing Republicans have both exhibited their animus towards Jews. The Congressional Squad, originally composed of Democratic Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar, Ayanna Pressley and Rashida Tlaib, has grown increasingly influential and emboldened. In 2019, over two hundred rabbis accused Omar of playing identity politics and warned against putting her on the Foreign Affairs Committee, where she blamed reaction against her antisemitic, anti-Zionist statements equating Israel with Hamas on prejudice against her as a Muslim woman of color.[12] Three members of the Squad referred to Israel as an "apartheid" state. Omar described "Israeli air strikes killing civilians in Gaza" as "an act of terrorism" during fighting between Israel and Palestinian armed groups in the Gaza Strip.[13]

Four House Democrats labeled these statements as antisemitic to their core but also condemned those of Republican Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene, who sent out a tweet comparing a Tennessee grocery store's rule requiring employees to display their vaccination status to the Third Reich's star-wearing requirement for Jews. Republican leaders Kevin McCarthy and Mitch McConnell joined in condemning Greene. "Marjorie is wrong, and her intentional decision to compare the horrors of the Holocaust with wearing masks is appalling," McCarthy said.[14] However, while Democrats and Republicans blamed

---

[11] Gabriel Greschler, "San Francisco's Teachers Union Becomes First K-12 Union to Endorse BDS Movement," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, May 26, 2021, https://www.jta.org/2021/05/26/israel/san-franciscos-teachers-union-becomes-first-k-12-union-to-endorse-bds-movement, accessed June 21, 2021.

[12] Elad Bernari, "Rabbis Urge Pelosi to Remove Omar from House Foreign Affairs Committee," *Arutz Sheva*, June 17, 2021, https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/308237?fbclid=IwAR3ab18NpewmaNdl7R3HgtBAvrjd9mPRpRvp-la906YEmvo-4jYcoXpia7s, accessed June 21, 2021.

[13] Zachary Evans, "Four House Dems Label 'Squad' Statements on Israel 'Antisemitic at Their Core,'" *National Review*, May 26, 2021, https://www.nationalreview.com/news/four-house-dems-label-squad-statements-on-israel-antisemitic-at-their-core/, accessed June 21, 2021.

[14] Caroline Downey, "GOP Leaders Condemn Marjorie Taylor-Greene's Holocaust COVID-Restrictions Comparison," *National Review*, May 25, 2021, https://www.nationalreview.com/news/gop-leaders-condemn-marjorie-taylor-greenes-holocaust-covid-restrictions-comparison/, accessed June 21, 2021.

each other for condoning antisemitism, both parties failed to respond in a coherent, non-partisan fashion. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi demurred from removing Omar from the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and Republican leaders did not formally censure Greene.

The internet, where, in previous years, the world's oldest hatred flourished, has recently witnessed an avalanche of antisemitism, with comments advocating a second Holocaust, or lauding Hitler, and exhorting Muslims to unite for a violent *jihad.* Just before these most recent manifestations, the Covid-19 pandemic inspired some innovative expressions of Jew-hatred. For instance, the internet saw the evolution and explosive growth of online conspiracy theories blaming Jews and other minorities—particularly Asian Americans—for spreading the coronavirus.[15] While many of these theories originated in white supremacist forums, they swiftly migrated to mainstream venues, as people, feeling anxious and trapped, spent hours upon hours online, where they found scapegoats for the lockdowns, mask requirements, and other restrictions on their day-to-day lives.[16]

Since antisemitism serves as the canary in the coal mine of societal polarization and political unrest, the harrowing election year, culminating in the January 6 Capitol Insurrection, provided further fuel to ignite anti-Jewish sentiment. Online, QAnon conspiracy theories achieved unprecedented influence over Americans, informed by antisemitic tropes, with Jews as the traditional hatred of choice.[17] The antisemitic trope of blood libel, the allegation that Jews murder Christian children during Passover for ritualistic purposes, grounds the QAnon belief that a global "cabal" conducts rituals of child sacrifice.[18] In addition, QAnon shares with the Right in general a profound antipathy against George Soros, a wealthy philanthropist whose name conjures presumed Jewish influence in global affairs, that dovetails with their antisemitic conviction that international bankers seek to dominate the world.[19]

---

[15] "Coronavirus Crisis Elevates Antisemitic, Racist Tropes," ADL website, March 17, 2020, https://www.adl.org/blog/coronavirus-crisis-elevates-antisemitic-racist-tropes, accessed June 21, 2021.

[16] "On Social Media, Haredi and Orthodox Jews Are Scapegoated and Blamed for Covid-19." ADL website, April 29, 2020, https://www.adl.org/blog/on-social-media-haredi-and-orthodox-jewish-communities-are-scapegoated-and-blamed-for-covid-19, accessed June 21, 2021.

[17] Richard J. Evans, "Anti-Semitism Lurks behind Modern Conspiracy Theories," *Irish Times*, February 16, 2021, https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/anti-semitism-lurks-behind-modern-conspiracy-theories-1.4485495.

[18] Jewish Virtual Library, s.v. "Blood Libel," https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/blood-libel, accessed June 22, 2021.

[19] "Jewish 'Control' of the Federal Reserve: A Classic Antisemitic Myth," ADL website, https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/jewish-control-of-the-federal-reserve-a-classic-antisemitic-myth, accessed June 22, 2021.

In addition to these deeply hostile developments in education, politics, and the internet, recent crime sprees in May 2021 connected to the Hamas-Israeli conflict have precedents in often fatal hate crimes and acts of domestic terrorism, particularly those against the New Jersey Kosher Market and the Poway (San Diego) and Tree of Life (Pittsburgh) synagogues. In New Jersey, two assailants with ties to the Black Hebrew Israelites, who regard themselves as the true descendants of the biblical Jews and despise Ashkenazi Jews as fake, killed a police detective and three people inside the JC Kosher Supermarket.[20] In another act of domestic terrorism, a man bearing a machete and screaming "I'll get you" burst into the house of a Hasidic rabbi in Monsey, New York, and stabbed and wounded five people who had gathered to light candles for Hanukkah.[21] Yet another shooter, yelling antisemitic slurs, stormed into a synagogue in Poway, a quiet suburb north of San Diego, on the final day of Passover, killing a sixty-year-old woman and injuring three others, including the rabbi. Mayor Steve Vaus regarded the timing of the shooting, a little more than a week after leaders hosted an interfaith event aimed at building strength across the religious communities of the city, as "a bit of a twisted irony."[22] Elsewhere, a group of men punched and threw to the ground two Hasidic Jews on the same day in Crown Heights—only one of a sizeable number of violent incidents that have occurred over the past three years.

Those who are visibly Jewish feel particular anxiety and fear, especially around street violence, as Nathan J. Diamant, executive director for public policy at the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations in America, testified before Congress.[23] David Niederman, another rabbi, noted that "we thought the things that happen in Europe would never happen in the United States and definitely not in New York City … but unfortunately, we were in dreamland."[24]

---

[20] Jason Hanna and Madeline Holcombe, "Jersey City Shooters Fueled by Hatred of Jewish People and Law Enforcement, State Attorney General Says," *CNN*, December 12, 2019, https://www.cnn.com/2019/12/12/us/jersey-city-new-jersey-shooting-thursday/index.html, accessed June 22, 2021.

[21] Rebecca Liebson, Neil Vigdor, Michael Gold, and Eliza Shapiro, "5 Wounded in Stabbing at Rabbi's House in N.Y. Suburb," *New York Times*, December 28, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/28/nyregion/monsey-synagogue-stabbing-anti-semitic.html?fbclid=IwAR1MLh9qBcrhJYc890tSMOa4803jfrzXbI9aQ0PgSphSNP6UzvMLfojcvLM, accessed June 22, 2021.

[22] Jill Cowan, "What to Know about the Poway Synagogue Shooting," *New York Times*, April 29, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/29/us/synagogue-shooting.html, accessed June 22, 2021.

[23] Liam Stack, "'Most Visible Jews' Fear Being Targets as Anti-Semitism Rises," *New York Times*, February 17, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/17/nyregion/hasidic-jewish-attacks.html, accessed June 22, 2021.

[24] Ibid.

The most lethal recent episode occurred in October 2018, during Shabbat morning services at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh. A lone gunman fired multiple weapons for approximately twenty minutes, shouting "All Jews must die!"[25] He killed eleven mainly elderly Jewish congregants and wounded another seven, including two SWAT team officers, some critically. FBI special agent Bob Jones said that the crime scene was the worst he had seen in twenty-two years with the FBI.[26] It was also the deadliest antisemitic hate crime in United States history.[27]

Other public manifestations of antisemitism had preceded this watershed event, which rather than serving as an apex turned out to be merely a prelude to continuously escalating antisemitic acts. A year before, at the "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, alt-right protesters bearing flaming torches had shouted out in unison, "The Jews will not replace us!" and "Blood and soil!"[28]

When American Jews—along with their friends and allies—subsequently grieved, mourned, and held vigils across the country, when they participated in conversations about the adverse political environment and increased need for security at Jewish institutions, it wasn't just about the immediate massacre, then. It was also about the dawning realization that they were an imperiled minority that could no longer consider themselves safe in America—in *America*, long regarded as *the* safe harbor for Jews. As we believe and as this volume attests, the sobering fact is that antisemitism, often having new objects and in unfamiliar camouflage, has returned in force—on campuses, in religious doctrines and resolutions, in feminist and African-American organizations, in social theories, on the internet, in hate groups both on the right and left, and in much anti-Israel activism.

To return to the Tree of Life massacre, the police finally succeeded in wounding and capturing the gunman, who did not fit the stereotype of the lunatic lone-wolf killer whose heinous acts have little larger social or political resonance. During interrogation, he gave voice to the paranoid conspiratorial theory that he had acted because the Jews were committing genocide against

---

[25] John Altdorfer and Chriss Swaney. "Gunman Targeting Jews Kills 11 in Pittsburgh Synagogue," *Reuters*, October 27, 2018, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-pennsylvania-shooting/at-least-four-reported-dead-12-injured-in-shooting-at-pittsburgh-synagogue-idUSKCN1N10J6.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Julie Turkewitz and Kevin Roose, "Who Is Robert Bowers, the Suspect in the Pittsburgh Synagogue Shooting?," *New York Times*, October 27, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/27/us/robert-bowers-pittsburgh-synagogue-shooter.html, accessed January 12, 2019.

[28] Wikipedia, s.v. "Unite the Right rally," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unite_the_Right_rally, accessed January 12, 2019.

"his people."[29] This theory was not something of his own making, but rather widely propagated on the hate-disseminating web platforms on which he regularly socialized, such as Gab, a friendly space for neo-Nazis, white supremacists, and the alt-right, 4chan, and 8chan. Through his interactions on such sites, the killer, like others after him, gradually transitioned from staunch conservatism to strident white nationalism. There, he attacked interracial dating, joined in conspiracy theories concerning George Soros, and, along with others, decried the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS). He might have criticized Donald Trump as a globalist surrounded and manipulated by Jews, but, as documented by Ashley V. Reichelmann, Stanislav Vysotsky, and Jack Levin in Chapter 13 of this volume, he simultaneously took advantage of Trump and other mainstream politicians who spread the same kind of hate against non-white immigrants and racial minorities that ultimately promoted his brand of Jew-hatred. He targeted Jews because Jews—perhaps due to their ethical and religious convictions, the Torah's repeated reminder that "you, too, were a stranger in a strange land," together with their historical experiences—are generally disposed to protect the refugee or stranger.[30] Thus Jews sponsored National Refugee Shabbats and were supportive of the Central American caravans that, according to him—*and* to Trump—were invading white America. Thus, he averred that "there is no #MAGA as long as there is a kike infestation." On his final post on Gab before he committed the massacre, he claimed that, "HIAS likes to bring invaders in that kill our people. I can't sit by and watch my people slaughtered. Screw your optics. I'm going in."[31]

That the Tree of Life killer was in fact no lone-wolf, but rather the tip of an iceberg consisting of thousands of virtual sympathizers and supporters, is no accident. As Joel Finkelstein, Corinne E. Blackmer, and Charles Rubin explain in Chapter 4 of this volume, the websites and message boards he frequented represent the ever more frightening future of antisemitism. For there the radical fringe not only has new powerful resources through which to incubate Jew-hatred in its many forms but also the means to disseminate that hatred and "infect" mainstream spaces in an alarming fashion. Not surprisingly, the Network Contagion Research Institute (NCRI), along with more traditional organizations like the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), has documented an

---

[29] Alex Amend, "Analyzing a Terrorist's Social Media Manifesto: The Pittsburgh Synagogue Shooter's Posts on Gab," Southern Poverty Law Center, Hatewatch, October 28, 2018, https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2018/10/28/analyzing-terrorists-social-media-manifesto-pittsburgh-synagogue-shooters-posts-gab, accessed January 12, 2019.

[30] Amanda Paulson, Martin Kuz, and Noble Ingram, "For Love of Strangers: Behind the Jewish Legacy of Welcoming Refugees," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 31, 2018, https://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Society/2018/1031/For-love-of-strangers-Behind-the-Jewish-legacy-of-welcoming-refugees, accessed January 12, 2019.

[31] Altdorfer and Swaney, "Gunman Targeting Jews."

overall rise in online antisemitic hate that spiked sharply around the election of Trump and the Charlottesville "Unite the Right" rally, only to spike much further since. Indeed, the internet presents a whole host of challenges to those who wish to combat hatred, as the aforementioned chapter goes on to explore, not least the lack of distinction between high- and low-quality information and between niche and mainstream opinion. But rather than reach for the counter-productive tool of censorship, the NCRI advises direct online engagement, particularly since censorship does not capture the far more prevalent if still less deadly forms of contemporary *leftist* antisemitism.

It is common—if not accurate—to think of left-wing groups as defenders of those targeted by hatred. And to be sure, antisemitism is just one of various forms of hatred that are on the rise in America. In fact, the Tree of Life killer was not the only person who had exchanged talk for action around that same time, who had decided on "going in." That same week there were not only several mail bombing attempts targeting Democratic figures from former President Obama to Hillary Clinton, but there was also the Jeffersontown Kroger shooting, a deadly hate crime that targeted two older African Americans.[32] Nevertheless, while all forms of hatred must be combatted, one must note that the FBI recorded a significant 37% spike in antisemitic hate crimes in 2016-2017, and that Jews were, at 57.1%, the most frequently targeted religious group in the country.[33] In New York City, for example, antisemitic incidents constituted half of all hate crimes in 2018.[34] In comparison, there were four times as many crimes motivated by bias against Jews as there were against blacks, and twenty times as many as there were against transgender people. One must further note that, contrary to the common perception, hateful acts directed at Jews come not only from right-wing figures but also—and perhaps even primarily—from the left. In October 2018 the *New York Times* reported, shockingly, that over the preceding 22 months in New York City, "not one person caught or identified as the aggressor in an antisemitic hate crime [was] associated with a far right-wing group." One must not minimize the existence, pervasiveness, and threat of right-wing antisemitism, as the Tree of Life massacre demonstrates, but one must also not blind oneself to the existence,

[32] "Suspect in Deadly Shooting at Jeffersontown Kroger Appears in Federal Court," WSKY News, updated January 7, 2019, https://www.wlky.com/article/suspect-in-deadly-shooting-at-jeffersontown-kroger-appears-in-federal-court/25783811, accessed January 9, 2019.

[33] Erin Donoghue, "New FBI Data Shows Rise in Antisemitic Hate Crimes," *CBS News*, updated November 13, 2018, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/fbi-hate-crimes-up-new-data-shows-rise-in-antisemitic-hate-crimes, accessed December 31, 2018.

[34] Ginia Bellafante, "Is It Safe to Be Jewish in New York City?," *New York Times*, October 31, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/31/nyregion/jewish-bias-safety-nyc.html, accessed January 10, 2019.

pervasiveness, and threat of those versions of antisemitism emanating from the left either.

Extremist versions of right- and left-wing antisemitism converge at several points, including in the promulgation of various conspiracy theories and Holocaust denial. Unlike the right, however, the left generally camouflages its antisemitism under the guise of "progressivism" or "human rights," often going so far as to explicitly deny that it is antisemitic—even claiming that it is *opposed* to antisemitism—which typically requires recognizing as antisemitic only the right-wing Jew-hatred associated with Nazi symbols and white supremacism. Similarly, rather than openly calling for violence against Jews, the left prefers the tactics of silencing, isolating, shaming, disavowing, and professionally injuring—particularly but not exclusively—Jews who are supportive of Israel. This effort in turn typically requires distinguishing between "good Jews" and "bad Jews," where the former are "progressives" who support the marginalized and oppressed in America (i.e. *not* Jews) and the latter are conceived of as white and powerful and supportive of Israel's shortcomings in addressing the oppression of marginalized people, including persons-of-color and Palestinians. Often, though, the distinction is blurry, and leftists end up, despite protestations to the contrary, being plain antisemites.

Indeed, many of these features of leftist American antisemitism were on display in a recent controversy surrounding left-wing icon Alice Walker, author of *The Color Purple* (1982). Although Walker has long been recognized as rabidly anti-Israel (going so far as to refuse to have her famous novel translated into Hebrew), she used the once-prestigious vehicle of a fawning *New York Times* interview in December 2018 to elaborately praise the work of the British antisemitic conspiracy theorist David Icke. For just one example, Icke argues in his book *And the Truth Shall Set You Free* (2004) that the Jewish people funded the Holocaust, which probably never took place at all. Yet strikingly, both Icke and Walker deny they are antisemitic. For his part, Icke claims that his book refers to 12-foot-long lizard "people"—most of whom "happen" to be Jewish—rather than alluding to "real" Jews. For her part, Walker claims that remaining "open-minded" about the possibility that the Holocaust never occurred stands as the mark of an "impartial" and "courageous mind," willing to buck conventional views in the pursuit of "truth"—a position that she as a woman of color can particularly understand and respect.[35]

Piercing the façade of these denials does not take much work. Yair Rosenberg, for example, promptly responded to Walker's interview by documenting the impressive extent of her Jew-hatred. For just one example again, in 2017

---

[35] Constance Grady, "The Alice Walker Anti-Semitic Controversy, Explained," *Vox*, December 20, 2018, https://www.vox.com/culture/2018/12/20/18146628/alice-walker-david-icke-anti-semitic-new-york-times, accessed January 2, 2019.

Walker composed a conspiracy poem titled, "It Is Our (Frightful) Duty to Study the Talmud," in which she blames the ills of the world, from Israel to America, on the Talmud, the ancient Aramaic compendium of Jewish law and lore, and makes use of most of the traditional antisemitic tropes, from attacking Jews as Christ-killers to claiming that Jews view gentiles as "sub-human."[36] Naturally, the Talmudic Jewish project culminates (in her eyes) in the creation of the evil Jewish state as the primary vehicle for Jewish malfeasance. In a moment of harmony between the right and left, her research for the poem was quite clearly derived from various white supremacist and neo-Nazi websites that have long made these claims about the Talmud by misunderstanding, distorting, taking out of context, and sometimes outright fabricating quotations from the text.[37] But in Walker's mind she cannot be antisemitic because she has various Jewish friends—"good Jews"—who renounce the Talmud and Israel.

This leftist pattern of disavowal of antisemitic passions—sometimes taking the form of denying that one personally harbors antisemitism, sometimes denying that it still exists *tout court*—forms an important part of many of the chapters in this volume, in particular when it comes to antisemitism with respect to Israel. In particular, we believe that leftist attacks on Israel cross the line into antisemitism when they go beyond legitimate critique of particular Israeli policies and practices and instead represent that country as a unique incarnation of pure evil that one must ruthlessly castigate, isolate, and delegitimize.[38] Like the classic antisemite's Jew, leftist antisemitism sees Israel as bloodthirsty, devious, conspiratorial, ruthless, and guilty of the most outrageous crimes against humanity. The interest is not in critiquing or improving Israel, but in destroying it. Yet for many on the left who pursue this path there is nothing antisemitic about this unique hostility towards the world's only Jewish state: they don't hate Jews, they will say, only Zionists. And they don't hate

---

36 Yair Rosenberg, "The New York Times Just Published an Unqualified Recommendation for an Insanely Anti-Semitic Book," *Tablet*, December 17, 2018, https://www.tabletmag.com/scroll/277273/the-new-york-times-just-published-an-unqualified-recommendation-for-an-insanely-anti-semitic-book, accessed January 2, 2019.

37 See "The problem isn't the NYT or David Icke—it is Alice Walker herself," *Elder of Ziyon* (blog), December 20, 2018, http://elderofziyon.blogspot.com/2018/12/the-problem-isnt-nyt-or-david-icke-it.html, accessed January 10, 2019. For responses to the specific ludicrous charges against the Talmud, see "The Real Truth about the Talmud," http://www.angelfire.com/mt/talmud, accessed January 10, 2019.

38 Here we follow the US State Department and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, themselves inspired by Natan Sharansky's "3D test" to determine when criticism of Israel may be counted as antisemitism, namely when it demonizes, delegitimizes, or applies double standards to Israel. See Natan Sharansky, "3D Test of Anti-Semitism: Demonization, Double Standards, Delegitimization," *Jewish Political Studies Review* 16, nos. 3-4 (Fall 2004), https://www.jcpa.org/phas/phas-sharansky-f04.htm, accessed January 10, 2019.

Zionists because of any animosity toward Jews, they say, but only because of the terrible things those Zionists do and have done.

One phenomenon that perhaps facilitates this move is described by Andrew Pessin in Chapter 11 of this volume, which analyzes the unconscious or "epistemic" antisemitism of otherwise "decent" people, one that remains dangerous and hard to combat because it pertains not to the content of beliefs *per se* but rather to the cognitive processes that produce beliefs. Manifested as an "ethnic bias," the symptoms of this epistemic antisemitism can include, among other things, disproportionate obsession with Jews and Israel and hyper-focus on the alleged misdeeds of only the Jewish side of the Middle East conflict.

Another subtle, if pervasive, form of antisemitism is explored by Cary Nelson in Chapter 9, where personal "micro-boycotts" that violate codes of professional conduct and compromise academic freedom proliferate. In brief, pro-Israel faculty and students are prevented from pursuing their academic goals in matters such as obtaining letters of recommendation and thesis advisors, publishing, presenting at conferences, inviting speakers to campus or being invited elsewhere, to the point where many individuals now resort to self-censorship and "passing" so that their Israeli or pro-Israel views are not detected. The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement claims it targets institutions rather than individuals, but in practice these two are impossible to separate. When scholarly organizations such as the American Studies Association, among others, pass BDS resolutions, micro-boycotts gain currency and legitimacy—and largely pass under the radar of public scrutiny.

In this vein as well, Kenneth Waltzer, in Chapter 16, describes the prevalence of antisemitic anti-Israel activities on University of California (UC) campuses, which include sometimes violent interruptions of invited speakers and thus the denial of academic freedom of speech. The situation became so grave that the UC system implemented a series of principles against intolerance. These were a good beginning, but problems with definitions and implementation persist, which means that education and training have become essential, particularly around the meanings of free speech and its traditions. This chapter explicitly examines the overlap between antisemitism and anti-Zionism, which "converge and interact" to form what is often termed a "new" antisemitism, in which Israel has become to the world what "the Jew" was to the medieval era.

A particularly fascinating element of the left-wing campus antisemitism focused on Israel is the prevalence of Jews among its vocal propagators. In Chapter 1, Edward Alexander tackles the issue as it is manifest among a number of prominent Jewish American academics, whose vitriol toward Israel, often expressed as arising from their perspective "as Jews," knows few bounds. This same attitude is also front and center in Chapter 3, where Miriam Elman analyzes the leftist anti-Israel organization Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP). Founded

in 1996 but becoming particularly prominent only in recent years, JVP now serves to whitewash the overall antisemitic nature of the anti-Israel movement by showing that "even Jews" can be hostile to Israel. Like other leftists it too rejects its own antisemitism by conceiving antisemitism as only a right-wing phenomenon. Most troubling—and most dishonest—of all, JVP goes even further, by claiming that its opposition to the Jewish state itself stems from Jewish principles. Thus, while the traditional Christian form of antisemitism that dominated Europe for centuries sought to convert Jews to Christianity, JVP now engages in a form of identity theft of Jewish observances and traditions, aiming to transform Judaism itself into a radical pro-Palestinian religion.

On behalf of the Palestinians, moreover, JVP frequently joins coalitions on campuses with other marginalized or oppressed groups in order to attack not just Israel but those Jewish students on campus who may be supportive of Israel. Such attacks rely heavily on the increasingly popular notion of "intersectionality," the theory that all oppressions are intrinsically connected, thus giving rise to the idea that all such groups on campus should fight on behalf of the Palestinians and against the (Israel-supporting) Jews. In Chapter 5, Elliot Kaufman explores the history and the use of this notion, arguing that it isn't merely a theory or intellectual framework but specifically a tool for political organizing—and one that inevitably produces the antisemitic idea that Jews are powerful oppressors of the marginalized and the consequent backlash against Jews who support Jewish rights (among others).

As Charles Asher Small and David Patterson explore in Chapter 14, the activities of JVP have a campus counterpart in those of National Students for Justice in Palestine (NSJP), a campus organization founded with the help of the American Muslims for Palestine and the US Palestinian Community Network. Research into NSJP reveals that the organization supports terrorism and engages in and spreads virulent forms of antisemitism across American campuses, which constitutes its core political ideology and mission. Its annual national conference, which always takes place on the campus of a major university and is attended by over 200 local Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) chapters, promotes the spread of antisemitic discourse throughout the US and Canadian college system. In keeping with their missions, universities are intended to be places where individuals can learn and express themselves without fear of discrimination or prejudice. However, the fact that SJP members and chapters are able to convene on the campuses of highly respected universities to disseminate the organization's hateful message demonstrates that many institutions of higher education are either unaware of or actively ignoring this problem, which promises to worsen with the passage of time.

Many of the themes above come together in Melissa Landa's case study of Oberlin College in Chapter 8. Small liberal arts colleges have served as central

breeding grounds for much campus antisemitic anti-Israelism. Landa documents how her once beloved alma mater has descended, in recent years, from being a bastion of truly progressive thought to being one, instead, where Jewish students fear to stand up for themselves and for Israel.

Still within the academy but moving out of the campus "trenches," so to speak, Neil Kressel investigates in Chapter 7 how contemporary American social scientists, who once took great interest in antisemitism, have now come to see it as having been successfully historicized and thus ignore it. This despite the fact that, in its cautious if comprehensive 2014-2015 survey, the Anti-Defamation League found that there are approximately *1.09 billion* antisemites in the world! Misconceptions about the nature of antisemitism lead scholars to bypass it for reasons of academic survival and due to the effects of pervasive anti-Zionism, which in turn causes them to remain silent about the most prevalent forms of contemporary antisemitism among Muslims, ethnic minorities, the left, and religious communities. In brief, there is a misguided reluctance to pursue the study of anti-social beliefs among groups who themselves have been the victims of discrimination. Hence, this phenomenon, which informs so much contemporary international politics and could shed light on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Middle East, for instance, remains unexamined.

The rise of antisemitism in feminism and, more particularly, in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies programs, is explored by R. Amy Elman in Chapter 2. The flight from the critical reason required to end misogyny and heterosexism dovetailed with the eroticization of sado-masochism to make queers, who replaced lesbians and Jewish feminists, susceptible to antisemitism. It started in the late 1980s, when emergent S/M queers objected to the anti-porn and anti-S/M views of earlier feminists, as the former claimed an outlaw status as a persecuted minority within a minority, and thus inoculated themselves against criticism. Judith Butler, the reigning leader of queer theory, declined to embrace a lesbian identity, related intimately to S/M discourse, and also became a leading American Jewish academic proponent of anti-Israel BDS. While antisemitism has taken root in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies programs, as well as with many postmodernist feminists, it has simultaneously staged a comeback, as James Kirchick shows in Chapter 6, in African-American communities, where it has become a tool used by black political entrepreneurs such as Farrakhan in internecine battles for authority and authenticity. In this battle, Jews serve ultimately as proxies for other battles for domination.

A similar dynamic may be found in several liberal Protestant denominations as well. In Chapter 15, Dexter Van Zile describes how the steep decline in influence and numbers of liberal Protestant denominations coincided with their growing condemnation of Israel, which began in earnest in 2005. When, previously, they exercised power and cultural influence, they were staunchly

pro-Israel and decried antisemitism, but with the rise of evangelical Christianity and the liberals' subsequent loss of power, they strategically went on the attack against Jews and Israel. In essence, liberal Protestant Christianity has used Israel as a serviceable proxy in its real war against evangelical Christianity.

In Chapter 10, meanwhile, Molly Benjamin Patterson subjects Christian Zionism to the microscope, observing that Christian support of Israel may in fact be something of a two-edged sword. Christian Zionism, naturally, believes that Christian political authority is preordained by God. Christian Zionists consequently identify with the historical exile and persecution of the Jews while seeking to convert them to Christianity—all of which rings with antisemitism. For them, the people of Israel and thus the State of Israel is a central instrument of God's final judgment, and according to their dispensationalist beliefs Christianity will finally supersede Judaism, with Jews as both the apocalyptic victims and supporters of the antichrist. They support Israel, in other words, but only as part of a process that will ultimately see the eradication of Judaism—and Jews.

Finally, in Chapter 12, Eunice Pollack and Steve Norwood explore the popular myth, promulgated by some contemporary Muslims as well as Western academics and commentators, that Islamic lands were and are centers of religious, ethnic, and racial tolerance for Jews. They expose the gulf between these claims of acceptance and the actual treatment and views of Jews, both after *and* before the emergence of modern Zionism. They examine the numerous parallels between the romanticized racist image of white-black relations in the antebellum and postbellum South, on the one hand, and the myths and realities of Muslim-Jewish relations in Arab lands, on the other. They reveal that Jews were central objects of humiliation, degradation, and entrenched prejudice in Arab lands, just as blacks were in the South.

The title of this volume, *Poisoning the Wells*, refers to the medieval European antisemitic canard that Jews caused the plague by "poisoning the wells" of their Christian neighbors.[39] At first glance this might seem to have nothing to do with Jewish life—or the relationships between Jews and non-Jews—in contemporary America. However, this invidious fabrication metaphorically indicates the manner in which Jews continue to be perceived as agents or embodiments of the poisonous, through their putatively threatening, conspiratorial, disruptive, unaccountable, criminal, subhuman, treacherous, or polluted characters or actions. Within the worldviews that increasingly dominate certain sectors of American society, Jews are seen as toxic problems, resisting accommodation within the simple categories of race, religion, ethnicity, politics, or nation.

---

[39] RationalWiki, s.v. "Antisemitism," https://rationalwiki.org/wiki/Antisemitism, accessed January 12, 2019.

Amidst resurgent classic right-wing and newer left-wing antisemitism, Jews find themselves, in our polarized political climate, in an increasingly diminished moderate public square. They are perhaps most endangered in those institutions that ought to know better, namely those that are occupied with *belief, education,* and *group belonging.* On campuses and in social life, they are shunned and excluded from joining those progressive social movements to which they are most drawn, unless they disavow and condemn the sole Jewish state in the world. Caught in a pincer-like grip by antisemitism on both the left and the right, Jews occupy an anomalous space that can feel not merely lonely but also terrifying. Finally, the title also refers to the standard logical fallacy whereby one seeks to delegitimize an opponent rather than refuting their arguments—which of course describes the widespread aim of contemporary antisemites against Jews and Israel.

Antisemitism in American-Jewish Academia*

Edward Alexander

A century ago, Orthodox Jews said, mockingly, that "when a man can no longer be a Jew, he becomes a Zionist." Now it has become commonplace that when a person can no longer be a Jew, he becomes an anti-Zionist. Nowhere is this more true than in the American academy, where, when a "critic of Israel" introduces himself "as a Jew," we can expect a torrent of defamation that calls to mind medieval apostates gleefully confiding to their new Christian co-religionists that Jews make Passover matzahs out of Christian blood. As early as 1970, Irving Howe lamented that "Jewish boys and girls, children of the generation that saw Auschwitz, hate democratic Israel and celebrate as 'revolutionary'" the Arab nations arrayed against her. In 2006, Cynthia Ozick wrote that, "In the time of Goebbels, the Big Lie about the Jews was mainly confined to Germany. In our time, the Big Lie … is disseminated everywhere, not merely by the ignorant, but with malice aforethought by the intellectual classes … and by the university professors." This chapter discusses many of Howe's "Jewish boys and girls" who are now senior figures in the American academy: at Berkeley (in profusion), at Stanford, at Vassar, and elsewhere.

> Current antisemitism, accelerating throughout advanced and sophisticated Europe—albeit under the rubric of anti-Zionism, and marked by the deceptive lingo of human rights—purports to eschew such primitivism [as the medieval crusaders' massacre cry, "Hep! Hep! Hep! Hierosolyma est perdita" (Jerusalem is destroyed)]. … In the time of Goebbels, the Big Lie about the Jews was mainly confined to Germany alone; much of the rest of the world saw through it with honest clarity. In our time, the Big Lie … is disseminated everywhere, and not merely by the ignorant, but with malice aforethought by the intellectual classes, the governing elites, the most prestigious elements of the press in all the capitals of Europe, and by the university professors.
>
> —Cynthia Ozick, 2006[1]

"Antisemitism," Noam Chomsky declared in 2002, "is no longer a problem [in America], fortunately. It's raised, but it's raised because privileged people want to make sure they have total control, not just 98% control. That's why antisemitism

---

* This chapter includes some material revised from earlier publications by the author, which are reprinted with permission. Material is drawn from Edward Alexander, *Jews Against Themselves* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2015), chs. 10 and 16, and Edward Alexander and Paul Bogdanor, eds., *The Jewish Divide Over Israel* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2006), "Introduction."

[1] Cynthia Ozick, "The Modern Hep! Hep! Hep!," in *The Jewish Divide over Israel*, ed. E. Alexander and P. Bogdanor (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2006).

is becoming an issue."[2] One marvels at the rhetorical skill with which the famous linguist simultaneously denies and confirms the continued existence of anti-semitism in America. We enlightened people, he appears to say, know that anti-semitism no longer exists, but the way in which the omnipresent and omnipotent Jews control everything (including the news media) disguises this fact. Is it, one wonders, because of such delicate perceptions about Jews or because of his seething hatred of America that, according to Larissa Mac-Farquhar of the *New Yorker*, "Wherever he goes, [Chomsky] is sought after by mainstream politicians and the mainstream press, and when he speaks it is to audiences of thousands, sometimes tens of thousands."[3] Among his favorite topics are the infinite wickedness of Israel and America and his "agnostic" position with respect to the historicity of the Holocaust. (He had been allied with the late Robert Faurisson, a prominent French "denier.") As Chomsky's odious remark suggests, the line between antisemitism denial and antisemitism espousal is a fine one.

Many Jewish defamers and prosecutors of Israel resemble medieval apostates who confided to their new Christian co-religionists that Jews made Passover matzahs out of Christian blood, or desecrated the Host, or that Jewish males menstruated. They compete successfully with the late Alexander Cockburn and Gore Vidal, or with Ward Churchill and Louis Farrakhan, in the extravagance of their accusations. Writers in Michael Lerner's *Tikkun* used to warn of Jewish "conspirators" who run the American government on behalf of "Jewish inter-ests," and would allude to "the industrialized grain of truth" in *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion.* The *Protocols* have fueled antisemitic violence for well over a century; but Jewish endorsement of them is something new. So too is explicit endorsement of violence against Jews by other Jews, exemplified in the *ne plus ultra* of unabashed Jewish antisemitism, Professor Michael Neumann of Trent University in Canada. Speculating, in a 2003 interview, Neumann proposed the following:

> If an effective strategy means that some truths about the Jews don't have to come to light, I don't care. If an effective strategy means encouraging reason-able antisemitism, or reasonable hostility to Jews, I also don't care. If it means encouraging vicious, racist antisemitism, or the destruction of the state of Israel, … I also don't care. To regard any shedding of Jewish blood as a world-shattering calamity … is racism, pure and simple, the valuing of one race's blood over all others.[4]

---

2 Noam Chomsky, Speech to the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign on October 11, 2002, published as "Anti-Semitism, Zionism, and the Palestinians," in *Variant*, Winter 2002.

3 Larissa MacFarquhar, "The Devil's Accountant," *New Yorker*, March 31, 2003, 67.

4 See Jonathan Kay, "Trent University's Problem Professor," *National Post*, August 9, 2003.

Earlier, in Cockburn's *Counterpunch*, Neumann had announced that "we should almost never take antisemitism seriously, and maybe we should have some fun with it." Lower than the fun-loving Neumann in this quagmire of bloodlust it might seem impossible to sink. But wait: there is still Chomsky's acolyte Norman Finkelstein, who thinks the honorable thing now is to show solidarity with Hezbollah.[5] "In the lowest deep," as Milton's Satan observed, "a lower deep."

Nor is Chomsky the only American Jew who not only fails to see that the establishment of the State of Israel just a few years after the destruction of European Jewry was one of the greatest affirmations of the will to live made by a martyred people, but also colludes with those bent on destroying the Jewish remnant in Palestine. In 1970, Irving Howe lamented thus:

> Jewish boys and girls, children of the generation that saw Auschwitz, hate democratic Israel and celebrate as "revolutionary" the Egyptian dictatorship. Some of them pretend to be indifferent to the anti-Jewish insinuations of the Black Panthers; a few go so far as to collect money for Al Fatah, which pledges to take Tel Aviv. About this, I cannot say more; it is simply too painful.[6]

Those "Jewish boys and girls" who made Howe's heart sink in 1970 are today, a great many of them, senior (or by now emeritus) figures in the American academy, at MIT, at Berkeley, at Vassar, at NYU, and at Stanford. To Howe, who was himself a lifelong socialist but also a lifelong non-Zionist, there was something indecent, indeed treacherous, about young Jews, a mere quarter century after the Holocaust, not only acquiescing in but actively supporting a program of politicide against the Jewish state.

Three decades later, those same Jews would deride anyone who dared mention the Holocaust in relation to Israel's constant burden of peril (now in its eighth decade). Thomas Friedman's glib vulgarity about Israel as "Yad Vashem with an air force" is the best-known example. Indeed, they would cast Israel as itself the aggressor, pretending (as Friedman himself did) that it was the "occupation" that led to Arab hatred and violence and not Arab hatred and aggression that led to occupation.

An early example of this pattern was the case of Joel Beinin. In the late sixties, about the time of Howe's remarks, Beinin was an undergraduate at Princeton University, where—so he later claimed—he was "repressed" by the established professoriat, prevented from doing his senior thesis on the post-1948 Palestinian national movement, officially because it was too "modern" a topic, but really because of Beinin's passionately anti-Israel views. "Professors in

---

5 Norman Finkelstein, Letter to (Beirut) *Daily Star*, December 2001, available at: http://www.normanfinkelstein.com.

6 Irving Howe, "Political Terrorism: Hysteria on the Left," *New York Times Magazine*, April 12, 1970.

Princeton's Department of Near Eastern Studies who were critical of Israel," he alleged, "rarely expressed their views to students." In 1970, he moved to Harvard, where he completed an MA but was rejected by its doctoral program in Middle Eastern Studies—rejected, so he claims, for his expression of pro-Arab views during the Yom Kippur War. And so he moved west to Michigan. There too he was forced to write his thesis about Egypt rather than the Palestinian working class because of his "fear that those who held the then dominant views about Middle Eastern Studies would use their power to … impede the advancement of those with unorthodox views."[7] He was not exactly bashful about expressing his anti-Israel and "Marxist" view. One student of the young Beinin recalls the following scene from the early eighties: "One day at a particular forum, [Benin] gave what I can only describe as a kind of beer-hall speech. Shouting and pumping his fist, he admonished the Arabs to forget any negotiating with Israel and to stay true to pure radicalism."[8]

Twenty years later, Beinin, by now a professor of history at Stanford, would become president of the Middle East Studies Association (MESA). He took office in November 2001, a few weeks after the massacre of 9/11. But MESA's official statement about 9/11 avoided using such nasty words as "terror," "terrorism," and "terrorists." It reluctantly admitted that crimes had been committed but opposed the use of force—"misguided retaliation"—against the "criminals." The organization of 2,600 academics now presided over by the once "oppressed" Beinin had not planned a single panel on terrorism until after the World Trade Center and Pentagon massacres, which they proceeded—with the full blessing of Beinin himself—to blame on America and Israel.

In his presidential address, Beinin made the obligatory reference to his childhood study of the *Mishnah* to establish his Jewish credentials. This—or so he thought—permitted him to allege that all critics of MESA were "neoconservative true believers with links to the Israeli right" and to attack the president of Harvard University, Lawrence Summers, for posing "a grave threat to academic freedom" by describing the campaign to boycott Israel as antisemitic. He also implied that Ariel Sharon had arranged the murder of Elie Hobeika, a potential witness against him in the (aborted) show trial of Sharon planned in Belgium.[9] Journalists attending the conference at which Beinin was crowned head of the whole Middle Eastern Studies establishment observed that the professors of Middle East Studies called "terrorism" a racist term but that, if the typical MESA member were forced at gunpoint to define it, they would likely reply: "Whatever Israel does."

---

[7] Joel Beinin, MESA Presidential Address, November 24, 2001.
[8] Jay Nordlinger, "Impromptus," *National Review Online*, November 20, 2001.
[9] Beinin, MESA Presidential Address.

In December 2004, Beinin, addressing another cadre of academic leftists, declared that "[i]n my view, the State of Israel has already lost any moral justification for its existence." For his uneasiness about sharing the planet with a Jewish state, he gave two reasons of equal weight. The first was that "Israel oppresses the Palestinians." The second was that "its claim to represent all Jews throughout the world endangers Jews who totally reject Zionism or are severe critics of Israeli policies," i.e. Joel Beinin.[10]

Another of those "Jewish boys and girls" whose hostility to Israel shocked Howe in 1970 was Michael Lerner. In the fall of 1969, Lerner commenced his open battle with what he called "the Jewish establishment" of "fat cats and conformists" in an article in *Judaism Magazine*.[11] It followed the ancient pattern of blaming Jews for the violence unleashed against them. "Black antisemitism," he wrote, "is a tremendous disgrace to Jews, for this is not an antisemitism rooted in … hatred of the Christ-killers but rather one rooted in the concrete fact of oppression by Jews of blacks in the ghetto … in part an earned anti-semitism." Lest antisemites be confused about the location of their rightful targets, he added that, "[t]he synagogue as currently established will have to be smashed." As for the anti-Zionism of many young Jews, it was "irrational in its conclusions" that Israel should be destroyed but "I know it to be correct in its fundamental impulses."[12]

After a short-lived stint in the philosophy department at the University of Washington, Lerner turned to left-wing journalism and founded *Tikkun* magazine, which had two declared purposes: one was to pull down *Commentary* magazine, the other "to mend, repair, and transform the world." But what brought him to national prominence was the zeal with which he argued the Palestinian cause within the Jewish community. When the first intifada was well on its bloody course, it was hard to watch American television or read the American press for long without becoming aware that Lerner himself had become, if not quite the Jewish establishment, then the omnipresent, gentile-appointed voice of the Jewish community. Nevertheless, his anti-establishment rhetoric remained very much what it had been in 1969-70. On February 24, 1989, the *New York Times* gave him space to hold forth on the way in which the voice of progressive Jews like himself, "the silenced majority" who were "appalled by Israel's brutal repression of the Palestinian uprising," had been "stifled by the establishment leadership."

---

10 See Martin Kramer, "Terrorism? What Terrorism?," *Wall Street Journal*, November 15, 2001; Franklin Foer, "San Francisco Dispatch: Disoriented," *New Republic*, December 3, 2001; message sent December 2, 2004 by Joel Beinin list to the "alef" (academic left) list (alef@listhaifa.ac.il).

11 Michael Lerner, "Jewish New Leftism at Berkeley," *Judaism* 18 (Fall 1969): 474-476.

12 Ibid.

Rarely had a stifled voice been heard by so many millions. As he had done in 1969, but now far more absurdly, he adopted the pose of a lonely knight, a sensitive soul sallying forth to confront a mob of thick-skinned conformist louts who would eat him alive if they could. Here was a rotund beard-plucker of vaguely rabbinic appearance (in later years he would actually become a "rabbi" of sorts) who could always be relied on to blame Israel rather than the Arabs for the absence of peace, and to liken Israeli defense against Palestinian Arab violence in the intifada to "medieval Christian mobs … organizing pogroms against the whole Jewish community." The Jews were the real Crusaders, the worst pogromists. After his brief adventures in Seattle, Lerner returned to Berkeley. "I have to be here. Berkeley is the home of the world historical spirit."[13]

Berkeley is also the home of several other Jewish academics whose hatred of Israel should win them posthumous appointment to a section of the antisemites' Hall of Fame to be called "No, it's not antisemitic." Berkeley members would be: Daniel Boyarin, professor of Talmud and Rhetoric, Judith Butler, professor of Comparative Literature and Critical Theory, Martin Jay, professor of history, and Chana Kronfeld, professor of Hebrew and Comparative Literature. Boyarin has identified himself as a Jew who is "destined by fate, psychology, personal history, or whatever, to be drawn to Christianity." He warns that "my Judaism may be dying at places like Nablus, Deheisheh, Beteen" (i.e. places where the Israeli army has pursued people who are inclined to kill Jews).[14]

Judith Butler, however, outdoes them all. Hers is a mind so coarse that it sees in the establishment of Israel not one of the few redeeming events in a century of blood and shame, not one of the noblest examples of a commitment to life by a martyred people, not an expression of the yearning for human dignity symbolized by the Exodus from slavery that has characterized Jewish civilization for millennia, but an emotional quirk, a stupid prejudice, no more worthy of respect or preservation than a taste for high-cholesterol foods. "Some Jews have a heartfelt investment in corned beef sandwiches," she sneers. So what?

Butler is a latter-day descendant of what has been called the California School of Jewish Studies, to which she arrived after establishing herself as a theoretician of "Queer Theory" as well as a member of that cadre of philosophy and literature teachers who hate both for being at once the instruments and results of class and gender oppression. Like the aforementioned Boyarin, who sought to make the "feminized Jewish man" into a universal model, she belongs to the Queer Nation, and believes that sexual identity is arbitrarily constructed

---

[13] Quoted in David Horowitz, *Radical Son* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 176.
[14] Daniel Boyarin, "Interrogate My Love," in *Wrestling with Zion*, ed. Tony Kushner and Alisa Solomon (New York: Grove Press, 2003), 198, 202.

independently of biology. Not for her the old wisecrack about how "language has gender, people have sex."

The extent to which Butler attracts disciples by her heady mixture of anti-Zionism, homosexuality, and Jewish "self-hatred" is evident in a book entitled *Israel/Palestine and the Queer International*, by one Sarah Schulman.[15] This teacher of Creative Writing declares that she won't fly on El Al because just seeing Israelis in military, police, or security garb "repulses" her. But she is equally repulsed by non-Israeli "Jewishness." Once, in a restroom, a religious Jewish woman offered to help Schulman, but "in that awful Jewish way I remember from my childhood, so invasive you just can't breathe."

But what has remained most constant in Butler's movement from philosophy to anti-Zionist politics is the stupefying opacity of her prose, as epitomized in the following (award-winning) sentence:

> The move from a structuralist account in which capital is understood to structure social relations in relatively homologous ways to a view of hegemony in which power relations are subject to repetition, convergence, and rearticulation brought the question of temporality into the thinking of structure, and marked a shift from a form of Althusserian theory that takes structural totalities as theoretical objects to one in which the insights into the contingent possibility of structure inaugurate a renewed conception of hegemony as bound up with the contingent sites and strategies of the rearticulation of power.

This from the winner of the Theodor Adorno Prize, the chaired professor of Rhetoric and Comparative Literature at Berkeley, the occupant of the Hannah Arendt chair in the European Graduate School in Switzerland, the recipient of countless honorary degrees. Among the many awards lavished upon Butler, this is surely the most deserved. The sentence appeared in the journal *Diacritics* in 1997 and won the annual Bad Writing Contest conducted by the journal *Philosophy and Literature.*

Prior to autumn 2003, Butler was someone who defined her "Jewishness" in opposition to the State of Israel. She was mainly a signer of petitions harshly critical of the state. She did express misgiving about signing *one* petition (for halting American aid) because it "was not nearly strong enough … it did not call for the end of Zionism." Upon looking more deeply into the matter, she discovered that there had been "debates among Jews throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries as to whether Zionism ought to become the basis of a state." From this she swiftly concluded that demanding an end to Zionism in 2003, calling for politicide and its attendant rivers of blood, was no different from taking a debater's position against it fifty years before the state came into existence.

---

15 Sarah Schulman, *Israel/Palestine and the Queer International* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

The *annus mirabilis* of what has become her life struggle against Zion began in September 2002 when Lawrence Summers, then president of Harvard, delivered a speech deploring the upsurge of antisemitism in many parts of the globe.[16] He included synagogue bombings, physical assaults on Jews, desecration of Jewish holy places, and (this with special emphasis) denial of the right of "the Jewish state to exist." But his most immediate concern was that "at Harvard and … universities across the country" faculty-initiated petitions were calling "for the University to single out Israel among all nations as the lone country where it is inappropriate for any part of the university's endowment to be invested." Summers's speech stands to this day as a rare exception to the timidity of university administrators in facing up to the true nature of Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) activities against Israel; and it may have contributed to his being forced out of Harvard's presidency in February of 2006, ostensibly because he had alluded to, without condemning, the view that women have less natural aptitude for science than men.

Butler had herself signed such a boycott petition in Berkeley, where it circulated in February 2001. She therefore found Summers's remarks not only wrong but personally "hurtful" since they implicated Butler herself in the newly resurgent campus antisemitism as well as the violence it quickly fomented. (She could hardly have failed to notice that the Berkeley BDS petition provided the impetus for anti-Israel mob violence at her own campus on April 24, 2001, a few weeks after it had been circulated, and also for more explicitly anti-*Jewish* mobs at nearby San Francisco State University in May of the following year.) She therefore decided to write a reply to Summers in the *London Review of Books*, whose main political impulse is the unwillingness to tolerate a Jewish majority state. Her essay, entitled "No, It Isn't Anti-Semitic," published August 21, 2003, is a key document of the BDS movement and as central to "antisemitism denial" as the work of Robert Faurisson was to Holocaust denial. It operates, moreover, at the same intellectual level as the Frenchman's work.

Summers, knowing how ubiquitous in anti-Israel discourse is the straw man called "the defender of Israel who decries any criticism of Israeli policy as antisemitism," had gone out of his way to separate himself from this (entirely conjectural) figure, but to no avail. Butler has continued, with steam-engine regularity, to insist (ungrammatically) that it is "untrue, absurd and painful for anyone to argue that those who formulate a criticism of the State of Israel is [sic] antisemitic or, if Jewish, self-hating." She further accused Summers of striking a blow against academic freedom because his words were having "a chilling effect

---

[16] Summers's speech was delivered on September 20, 2002. See Karen W. Arenson, "Harvard President Sees Rise In Anti-Semitism on Campus," *New York Times*, September 21, 2002, https://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/21/us/harvard-president-sees-rise-in-anti-semitism-on-campus.html, last accessed December 11, 2018.

on academic discourse." Do Butler's words sound familiar? That is because she had performed—"performativity" is her academic hobbyhorse—at Vassar not long before 39 professors complained that criticisms of the American Studies Association had nearly frozen *their* vocal chords. No evidence is (or indeed could be) adduced for Butler's allegation. Of one thing we can be sure: the chill did not take hold at Harvard itself, which would very soon (in November) play host to Oxford's Tom Paulin, who had urged (in yet another "criticism of Israeli policy") that Jews living in Judea/Samaria "should be shot dead," or at Columbia, where Paulin continued merrily through autumn semester as a visiting professor, or at the *New York Review of Books*, which in October 2003 would publish the late Tony Judt's despicable "Israel: The Alternative," a call for an end to Israel. Neither did Summers dampen the fires of Israel-hatred at the *London Review of Books* itself, which in January 2003 published another 133 lines of Paulin doggerel called "On Being Dealt the Anti-Semitic Card," a versified rehash of Butler's "No, It's Not Anti-Semitic." If Summers's speech had a chilling effect on antisemitic clarion calls, including incitement to raw murder, one would not wish to know what the fully heated versions sound like.

Although Butler's assault on Summers is a loose, baggy monster, what it leaves out is more blatant than what it includes. It omits history altogether, distorts evidence, and omits context. Did it never occur to Butler that the divestment campaign is one prong of the endless Arab campaign to strangle the Jewish state? The "occupation" which Butler and fellow BDSers constantly bemoan did not cause Arab hatred and violence; it was Arab hatred and aggression that led to occupation. For nineteen years, from 1948 to 1967, the Arabs were entirely in control of the disputed territories, theirs to do with whatever they pleased; and somehow it never occurred to them to establish a Palestinian state there, or indeed to use those territories as anything except staging grounds for attacks on Israel.

The Harvard/MIT divestment petition that Butler championed against Summers was promoted at MIT by Chomsky, who would be rendered nearly speechless if he could not call Israelis Nazis. Butler was herself one of the "first signatories" of a July 28, 2003 petition that uses the Israeli-Nazi equation (beloved of denigrators of Zionism going back to British official circles in Cairo in 1941): it says that Israeli use of concrete, barbed wire and electronic fortifications has made "Israeli citizens themselves into a people of camp wardens." So, it would seem that, for Butler and her loyal followers in the BDS movement, "Language plays an important role in shaping and attuning our … understanding of social and political realities" except when it happens to be the antisemitic language that demonizes Israel as being black as Gehenna and the Pit of Hell.

Butler has recently (fall 2018) been elected to the presidency of the Modern Language Association, the huge professional organization of teachers of language

and literature, where she can be expected to pursue the anti-Israel vendettas of such organizations as the American Studies Association, the American Indian Studies Association, and the American Anthropological Association. But politicization of professional organizations in this country did not begin with her. In 1971, Louis Kampf was elected president of the MLA for the express purpose of imposing the values of the New Left on the profession and supplying teachers who never cared for literature in the first place a rationale for their hostility to literary studies: the classics were both a product and an instrument of class oppression. Kampf and his acolytes, instead of applying for job retraining, hoped for revolution via the English departments. The New Left, despite (or maybe because of) its heavily Jewish membership, was still seething with unabated hatred of Israel for having survived the Yom Kippur War, and would in 1998 elect Edward Said as its president. He was a veteran member of the PLO executive committee. Cynthia Ozick remarked that "if, years ago when I was in graduate school, someone had told me that it was possible to be steeped in Joseph Conrad and at the same time be a member of the 'National Council' of a worldwide terror organization, I would have doubted this with all the passion for civilization and humane letters that a naive and literature-besotted young person can evidence."[17] Still, compared with Judith Butler, Said was a Zionist.

In his *History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, Yitzhak Baer says that Abner of Burgos, the infamous medieval Jewish apostate, did not only devise a plan for terrorizing and destroying the Jews which "the enemies of Israel were to carry out in its entirety in the year 1391 … the aging fanatical apostate who wrote these diatribes … launched his holy war himself, not only in words but also in deed." Our contemporary Jewish apostates need not work so hard: they can rest content with being accessories to, rather than perpetrators of, violence. The beneficiaries of their "diatribes" are nevertheless appreciative. On October 19, 2018, for example, the *Washington Free Beacon* published a lengthy story about Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestine Authority, profusely thanking the (Jewish) J Street organization for its tireless efforts on behalf of the Palestinian cause. The BDS website lists dozens of member organizations, nearly all beginning with the word "Palestine" or "Palestinian," and Jewish Voice for Peace may be the only Jewish group that seems to be formally allied with the worldwide BDS conglomerate. BDS's chief spokesman is Omar Barghouti, who holds a degree from Tel-Aviv University, one of BDS's targets. In America, BDS usually flourishes in Near East Studies programs or departments, but has now spread to Jewish Studies programs. It draws heavily on Jewish ideological support and Jewish spear-carriers.

---

[17] Cynthia Ozick, "Carter and the Jews: An American Political Dilemma," *New Leader*, June 1980.

Take as an example a series of incidents at Vassar College in 2014. In a short time, the idyllic campus became the scene of some of the ugliest depredations by the BDS campaign to eliminate Israel.[18] The college became a witches' brew of bullying and violence carried out by Students for Justice in Palestine and its collaborators. One must remember that BDS protests go well beyond "leafleting" and slogan-chanting to breaking into lecture halls, shouting down objectionable speakers, and trapping Jewish and Israel speakers in locked rooms. The protesters described themselves as "staging an *action*" (my italics) on March 3 against the on-campus portion of an international studies class that was to include a trip to the Middle East to consider "water issues" in the region. Since, as Philip Roth once remarked, the Jew and now the Israeli are perpetually on trial, it was considered necessary by Vassar College to convene a special forum to consider the "ethics" of a course that would require setting foot in Israel. (That decision by Vassar's administration shows the extent to which colleges are now terrified by the BDS thugs even before they become violent.)

Although the trip's itinerary confirmed that its (predictably) tendentious purpose was to convince students that Israel is unfairly depriving Arabs of water, that slander was not sufficient to protect it (or its Jewish leftist instructors) from the wrath of BDSers who consider Israel to be—in the colorful lingo of Philip Weiss, a ferocious hater of Israel in attendance at the forum—"a blot on civilization."[19] Their violence (which included screaming, interruptions, and perhaps ululating) was the existential realization of a letter published on March 1 by a group of 39 Vassar faculty members (mentioned above) who condemned the college administration for daring to criticize the recently passed resolution of the American Studies Association (ASA) in favor of boycotting Israeli academic institutions.

The professors charged that critics of the ASA boycotters had had "a chilling effect [sound familiar?] on the free exchange of ideas and opinions." It is now over 68 years since Lionel Trilling remarked on the way in which modern liberals not only want the right to go their own way in all things, but to go their own way without any questions ever being asked of them. Those who carried out the "action" also had their special complaint. According to Weiss, they were largely "people of color," and therefore entitled to accuse their critics of "racism." Weiss also provided the final word on that allegation of "chilled" discourse, gloating uncontrollably: "The spirit of that young progressive space

---

[18] The episode to be described is documented in detail in Andrew Pessin and Doron Ben-Atar, eds., *Anti-Zionism on Campus: The University, Free Speech, and BDS* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2018), ch. 22.

[19] Philip Weiss, "Ululating at Vassar: The Israel/Palestine Conflict Comes to America," Mondoweiss, March 20, 2014, https://mondoweiss.net/2014/03/ululating-israelpalestine-conflict, last accessed December 11, 2019.

was that Israel is a blot on civilization, and boycott is right and necessary. If a student had gotten up and said, I love Israel, he or she would have been mocked and scorned into silence." "A blot on civilization"!—beautiful and touching words—if not quite the sort that Matthew Arnold fondly remembered from his visit to "the fair host of the Amazons" late in the nineteenth century.

Recalling (in 1883) the happier moments of his second visit to America, Arnold had expressed pleasure that "in colleges like Vassar College in the State of New York," women were now studying Greek art and Greek literature. One wonders what he would think if he visited the same place now. I believe that what would shock him most would be not the bullying, the intimidation, the thuggery—after all, to Oxford itself he had once applied Byron's aspersion: "there are our young barbarians all at play!"—but the flagrant violation of conscience in intellectual work, a violation like the following course description by Vassar's Professor Joshua Schreier, a Jewish faculty member:

> *History 214: The Roots of the Palestine-Israel Conflict*
> This course is NOT designed to present "an objective" account of a "two-sided conflict." The fact that there are supposedly two sides does not obligate us to portray each as equally right and/or equally wrong. The goal, rather, is to understand why the conflict arose, and what sorts of power inequalities have made it continue…. Why and how did economic globalization, technological development, and European imperialism foster the creation of two different national identities in Palestine? Why and how and when did these two identities develop in such a way as to preclude members of certain religious or ethnic groups from belonging?

Ruth Wisse pointed out, in *Commentary* in March 2009, the impossibility of finding a course description at any elite American college or university that operated from the opposite premise to Schreier's, namely that "the Jewish people had a connection to the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean that was greater and of longer duration than the nomadic peoples who came to be called Palestinians, and that the central place of Palestinians in world politics is due to an imbalance of power between the small Jewish state and the petroleum-drenched Arab states with which it must contend."[20]

When Schreier wrote his description, which apparently raised no eyebrows in the Vassar administration, he was an untenured toiler in the college's Jewish Studies program; he subsequently became its chairman—and also the chief campus spokesman for the academic boycott of Israel. Here is how the late Lucette Lagnado (a Vassar graduate) reported the revelation in the *Wall Street Journal*:

---

[20] Ruth Wisse, "Now, About That 'Proportionality'," *Commentary*, March 2009.

> The head of the Jewish Studies Program … had also expressed support for the boycott movement. Prof. Schreier was quoted in the campus paper ruminating that while once "instinctively against" the boycott, he had heard more "substantiated, detailed" arguments in its behalf, and as a result "I am currently leaning in favor of it," he concluded delicately, as if choosing a favorite tea.[21]

But let us now leave Schreier ruminating his cud in Poughkeepsie, and consider the wider implication of the prominence of Jewish professors like him in the worldwide campaign to expel Israel from the family of nations. It may well give us pause. Do we have professors of German history who ask whether the country that destroyed European Jewry and much of European civilization as well has "the right to exist"? Do we have teachers of Russian history who explore the question of whether the country of gulags and slave labor camps and Stalinism still has the "right to exist"? What about Syria, busily bombarding its own civilians with poison gas? Do we have Arab specialists in Arabic Studies considering its legitimacy?

But there is more, and worse. On January 11, 2016, it was reported by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that the "Open Hillel" organization (formed in 2013 to support a dissident Swarthmore chapter) was forming an "Academic Council" to oppose the policy of Hillel International which bars its chapters from sponsoring lectures about a country these Jewish professors call "Israel-Palestine" in support of the BDS movement, whose aim is (to put it very delicately) to expel Israel from the family of nations, and by any means available. Although "Open Hillel" has several chapters of its own on campuses as adversarial counterparts to Hillel, it has now decided that the cause of "inclusivity" and "diversity" requires Hillel itself to extend a hand of welcome (and of cash) to BDSers and other Israel-haters (usually Jewish) to subvert a central pillar of Hillel's own *raison d'être*. In pursuit of this end, Open Hillel's Academic Council, boasted, in its first salvo, the support of 55 American academics (more have since signed on). About a third of the academicians (Butler, Beinin, Boyarin, and Schreier, for example, and the British Jacqueline Rose) are well-known BDS supporters; obviously, none of these deep thinkers senses a contradiction between banning or physically assaulting (as their comrades have done in California and Minnesota) Israeli scholars, and their own insistence upon "inclusivity" and boundless tolerance by Hillel.

The opening manifesto of Open Hillel demands that Hillel aspire to the standards of free expression, of "diversity of experience and opinion," of the "inclusivity" and "openness" that prevail in universities generally, and especially in "our classrooms." But the Hillel foundations, let us recall, serve the same

---

[21] Lucette Lagnado, "Anti-Israel Jews and the Vassar Blues," *Wall Street Journal*, February 23, 2014.

purpose on campus for Jewish students that the Newman Foundation does for Catholic students. They are parochial institutions, not academic ones; they exist to complement universities, not imitate them.[22] One of Hillel's primary goals has long been to nourish in Jewish students a sense of shared destiny with the constantly beleaguered State of Israel. To ask them to open welcoming arms to ideologues of politicide for Israel is like asking all chapters of the Newman Centers to start inviting lecturers who endorse the old Protestant view that "the Mass is of the Devil" and "the Pope is the antichrist." Schreier, Beinin, Butler, and the rest appeal to liberal and "progressive" Jews who long ago forgot (if they ever knew) that exclusion is as much a function of intellect as inclusion. (Butler, it's worth noting, thinks that Hamas is a "progressive" organization.)

But there is worse yet. Can Jews ever take the right to live as a natural right? This very old question now appears, frequently, in new forms among Jewish academicians. Recently, in 2018, Professors Hasia Diner (NYU) and Marjorie Field (Babson College) took to the pages of *Ha'aretz* to denounce the world's only Jewish state for being racist, colonialist, reactionary, aggressive, and—this above all—Jewish. Telling what might be called unconversion tales, from Zionism to Israelophobia ("anti-Zionism" would be too weak a term), they expressed raw hatred of Israel, of its people, and—still more stridently—of Diaspora Jews who believe that securing Israel is the moral duty of this generation. Feld hints that she was awakened from her Zionist "delusions" by the stirring words of Noam Chomsky, especially his loathing of what he calls deeply totalitarian *American* Jewry. But Diner expressed views that make even Chomsky sound temperate. She blamed neither the Third Reich nor Soviet communism nor Arab dictatorships but "Zionist activity" for the "death of vast numbers of Jewish communities." Despite being a professor of Jewish history, she expressed puzzlement about whether making Israel a Jewish state meant it was a "racial" state. Apparently, she doesn't know that anybody can *become* Jewish, or that Israel is the only country in history to have sought out and brought to its shores tens of thousands of black Africans as free and equal citizens. (Neither does she seem to know, or care, that scores of other states are Christian or Muslim, and that many have laws of citizenship analogous to Israel's Law of Return.)

It may be too much to expect from "progressive" Jewish historians in flight from Israel (and Jewry) that they "learn" something from an earlier example of abandonment. Nevertheless, here is the late Ben Halpern, once the mentor of young historians at Brandeis, writing about cowardice and flight in *Jewish Frontier* (August 1943):

---

[22] See also Andrew Pessin, "An Open Letter to Open Hillel," *Times of Israel*, January 15, 2016, https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/an-open-letter-to-open-hillel, last accessed December 11, 2018.

Shame and contrition, because we have not done enough, weigh even more heavily upon the Jews of the free countries [than on the Allied powers.] Not only do we have the greater responsibility of kinsmen, but our own weaknesses may be one of the causes why so little has been done. The history of our times will one day make bitter reading, when it records that some Jews were so morally uncertain that they denied they were obligated to risk their own safety in order to save other Jews who were being done to death abroad.[23]

---

[23] Ben Halpern, "We and the European Jews," *Jewish Frontier*, August 1943.

Pinkwashing Antisemitism:
The Origins of Queer Anti-Israeli Discourse[*]

R. Amy Elman

This chapter provides a historical account of the emergence of queer politics in the late 1980s and early 1990s in the United States and Great Britain. That queer politics took flight at the height of neo-liberalism and in opposition to feminists who mobilized against sadomasochism (S/M) and the growing global sex industry is crucial to understanding its antisemitic origins and the growing convergence between the queer and BDS movements. This chapter helps reveal the sexual politics that helped facilitate Orwellian allegations of "pinkwashing"—allegations that, in fact, mask antisemitism and anti-Zionism as principled politics. Put differently, pinkwashing allegations serve as rage-bait that silences the critics of BDS while providing those who issue them the appearance of being concerned about LGBT people.

When one considers the increased appeal of queer politics for millennials, it is unsurprising that the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement is pursuing a "queer" (formerly LGBT)[1] plank across which it can burnish its progressive credentials to reach wider audiences. The growing convergence between these movements and assertions from their leaders that queers can transform BDS from a "vanguard movement" to a "popular" one requires scrutiny.[2] This chapter explores those characteristics that distinguish queers as particularly well-suited to fulfill BDS's ambitions. It thus considers the queer movement's emergence so that we may grasp those factors that might explain the enhanced vulnerability, if not acquiescence, of so many queers to BDS in its dissemination of ("pinkwashing") accusations against Israel.

According to BDS, Israel's investment in and support of LGBT rights serves to pinkwash (i.e. conceal or deflect attention away from) its oppressive treat-

---

[1] LGBT refers to lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people.

[2] Angela Davis, "What Is Queer BDS? Pinkwashing, Intersections, Struggles, Politics," YouTube video, 29 July 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4VX6z5FV4Y; Phillip Weiss, "How Sarah Schulman Managed to Get 'Pinkwashing' into the New York Times," Mondoweiss, February 6, 2012, https://mondoweiss.net/2012/02/how-sarah-schulman-managed-to-get-pinkwashing-into-the-new-york-times/. Sarah Schulman's 2012 statement to this effect was echoed by Angela Davis at an *Al Qaws* panel the same year, where she said that queers "can help radical forces from around the world to develop new ways of engaging in ideological struggle." See Davis, "What Is Queer BDS?," at 8:35.

ment of Palestinians. Moreover, BDS proponents similarly insist that condemnations of heterosexism within Palestinian (and Muslim) communities serve to defame Muslims.[3] How these accusations gained prominence within LGBT communities is the subject of this chapter.

The Queer Emergence of Queer

Discerning the queer movement's relationship to BDS can be challenging because the very notion of "queer" is broad, intentionally ambiguous, and yet distinct from the LGBT politics that many queers condemn as conservative. Queer is an umbrella term that covers increasing numbers of sexual and gender "minorities" who self-identify as non-gender-conforming and/or not heterosexual. Originally connoting "strange" or "peculiar" in the late 19th century, the expression persisted for decades and was used pejoratively against those with same-sex desires or relationships. Then, to the chagrin of those lesbians and gay men pained by the insult, activists identifying as anti-heteronormative and/or anti-homonormative "reclaimed" the term at the end of the 20th century.[4] It would not be the only time queers would disregard and even celebrate the power of pain as potentially rebellious.

Queer politics took flight in the late 1980s and early 1990s in the United States and Great Britain, at the height of neo-liberalism and in opposition to feminists who mobilized against sadomasochism (S/M) and the growing global sex industry. Many of those feminists were lesbians concerned by the increased eroticization of sexual inequality and violence within their communities.[5] The timing of the queer movement's emergence and its opposition to these women is one of the few points on which lesbian-identified academics as divergent as Sheila Jeffreys and Shane Phelan agree.[6]

If, as Phelan claims, the "feminist sex wars" exhausted many lesbians, queer politics offered some a reprieve by providing a seemingly judgment-free and all-embracing coalition. According to its early American proponents, terms like "lesbian, gay and bi-sexual" were "awkward" and antiquated while "queer says it all".[7] That "queer" encompassed nearly everyone likely accentuated its appeal.

---

[3] Sarah Schulman, *Israel/Palestine and the Queer International* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 116, Appendix.

[4] Wikipedia, s.v. "Queer", https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queer.

[5] Robin Ruth Linden, *Against Sadomasochism: A Radical Feminist Analysis* (East Palo Alto, CA: Frog in the Well, 1982).

[6] Sheila Jeffreys, *Unpacking Queer Politics: A Lesbian Feminist Perspective* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2003); Shane Phelan, *Getting Specific: Postmodern Lesbian Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

[7] Lisa Duggan, "Making It Perfectly Queer," in *Sex Wars: Sexual Dissent and Political Culture*, ed. Lisa Duggan and Nan D. Hunter (New York: Routledge, 1995), 171.

From London, "queer power" advocates insisted: "There are straight queers, bi-queers, tranny queers, lez queers, fag queers, SM queers, fisting queers in every single street in this apathetic country of ours."[8] Yet, in a rush from the apathy and social isolation that can result both from heterosexism and the critical thinking required to end it, many queer activists embraced passion over reason. This preference rendered queers—sometimes consciously, sometimes not—susceptible to antisemitism.

During this contentious period, Jeffreys cautioned that the increased acceptance of S/M made Britain's "lesbian community less able to withstand the very real burgeoning of fascist values and practice."[9] Her warning echoed Susan Sontag's insight twenty years prior, that Nazism's eroticization undermines our abilities "to detect fascist longings in our midst."[10] By 2008, Robert Wistrich insisted that the heart of European antisemitism beat from within the United Kingdom and highlighted three factors there that exacerbated antisemitism: a growing and increasingly radical Muslim population, a timid Jewish leadership unwilling to confront it, and Britain's detachment from its Christian roots.[11] Despite his wisdom, Wistrich (like many others) overlooked the sexual politics beneath antisemitism's rubble. He thus missed the aesthetics and fashion trends that epitomized the concerns of women like Jeffreys and Sontag.

Whether by wearing padlocks around their necks to indicate they were sexual slaves or in sporting fascist regalia (e.g. swastikas, whips, and black SS caps), lesbians—like gay men before them—became indistinguishable from the far-right antisemitic thugs who sowed havoc on the LGBT community. This development rendered the lesbian community less able to identify, expose, and reject the perpetrators of the harassment and violence against them,[12] while those who warned against such eroticized fascism were either ignored or scorned as moralist busybodies. By contrast, the practitioners of S/M became chic retrogrades whose preferences were regarded as so defiantly outside the mainstream that they eventually curried favor for this reason.[13]

Reflecting decades later on the emergence of queer politics in the United States, Alice Echols writes, "The feeling of inhabiting a common outlaw identity, which was undoubtedly heightened both by the accelerating right-wing surge

---

8 See Jeffreys, *Unpacking Queer Politics*, 37.

9 Sheila Jeffreys, *The Lesbian Heresy: A Feminist Perspective on the Lesbian Sexual Revolution* (London: Spinifex Press, 1994), 186.

10 Susan Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism," *New York Review of Books*, February 6, 1975, https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1975/02/06/fascinating-fascism/.

11 See Etgar Lefkovits, "UK Is Now European Center of Anti-Semitism," *Jerusalem Post*, March 31, 2008, http://jiw.blogspot.co.il/2008_03_30_archive.html.

12 Jeffreys, *The Lesbian Heresy*, 186.

13 Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism."

and the arrival of AIDS, underwrote cross-gender queer activism."[14] This desire to be outlaws also enhanced the movement's receptivity to antisemitism, the expressions of which were concealed within pretexts of ending ostensible (Jewish and feminist) domination. Indeed, queer activism advanced in the midst of conservatism and the AIDS crisis, though perhaps not entirely in the manner Echols suggests. After all, it was in that hostile conservative climate, with many gay men's lives at stake, that lesbian feminists tempered their opposition to male privilege and the relatively more conventional political priorities of prominent gay men. Rather than quibble with these men who insisted that sexuality was a matter over which they had little if no control, many lesbian feminists toned down their fervent critiques of biology as destiny. And, as more women stepped in to support the same gay men from whom, as feminists, they had earlier kept their political distance, lesbians also relinquished their critical assessments of a broad range of common practices (ranging from marriage and prostitution to epilation and drag). Within two decades, lesbians had become an "endangered species."[15]

This escalating subordination of lesbians was incremental and occurred under the seemingly militant cover of queer politics, with its ostensibly more diverse and unified community. Lesbian feminists who resisted this trend by either focusing on women's rights and/or organizing against the industrialization of sexuality and S/M (a.k.a. bondage, domination, and submission/sadism or, alternatively, "the first BDS movement") were ridiculed by countless queers as insufficiently "radical" or even reactionary. Michael Warner's juxtaposition of queer theory with a lesbian feminist manifesto epitomizes this hostility. He writes:

> Radicalesbians began their manifesto "What is a lesbian? A lesbian is the rage of all women condensed to the point of explosion." If [Judith] Butler could be persuaded to regard the question "What is a lesbian" as one worth answering, she might respond that "a lesbian is the incoherence of gender binarism and heterosexuality condensed to the point of parody."[16]

Queer castigations of lesbian feminism succeeded in silencing women's rights advocates in ways that more traditional conservatives and far-right-wingers could only envy and under circumstances that are instructive to opponents of antisemitism. That is, shortly after having achieved a modicum of independent

---

[14] Alice Echols, "Retrospective: Tangled Up in Pleasure and Danger," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 42 (2016): 17.

[15] Alix Dobkin, "Love Women or Die: Are We An Endangered Species?," *Off Our Backs*, May 1, 2000; Bonnie Morris, *The Disappearing L: Erasure of Lesbian Spaces and Culture*, SUNY Series in Queer Politics and Cultures (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016).

[16] Michael Warner, "From Queer to Eternity: An Army of Theorists Cannot Fail," *Village Voice Literary Supplement* 106 (June 1992): 19.

space and visibility in the late 1970s and early 1980s, lesbians were soon denied both.[17] Repeatedly belittled and denounced by queers, the once popular spaces that these women worked hard to establish (e.g. women's concerts, festivals, bookstores, and feminist studies) were no more. Once again, the experiences and insights of lesbians were abandoned within an ostensibly wider and significantly more male (i.e. "queer") coalition that claimed to represent them.[18]

Standing at the intersections of feminism and Judaism, Zionist feminists[19] may be uniquely positioned to thwart a comparable force unfolding against Jews who are, like lesbian feminists, being derided as a parochial people unentitled to an independent identity, self-determination, and autonomous political space (i.e. Israel).[20] And, for both Jewish men and women more generally, this inequity is promoted less by the "far right" than by those who envision them-selves as simultaneously feminist and anti-racist. This should come as no surprise given the cross-cutting political affiliations among anti-feminists (who spoke "as feminists") and BDS activists (many of whom identify proudly "as Jews" ashamed to be Jews).

Lesbianism's demise was embraced not only by queer male theorists (like Warner) but by lesbian postmodernists whose works helped foster queer theory within academic programs that became especially hostile to Israel, such as women, gender, and sexuality studies. In *The Lesbian Postmodern*, Colleen Lamos predicted "the end of lesbianism as we know it." She explains, "The commercialization and aestheticisation of lesbian sexuality, manifest in the proliferation of sex toys, pornography, butch/femme sexual styles, s/m sexual practices, and phone sex—many of which have been appropriated from gay men—attest to a queer lesbian culture that blurs distinctions between mascu-line and feminine and between gay and straight sexuality."[21] With lesbian culture its principal preoccupation, this postmodern vein hastened lesbian feminism's marginalization.[22] Still others, like Somer Brodribb, suggested that

---

[17] Morris, *The Disappearing L.*

[18] Marilyn Frye, *Willful Virgin: Essays in Feminism, 1976-1992* (Freedom, CA: Cross-ing Press, 1992); Marilyn Frye, *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory*, The Crossing Press Feminist Series (Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 1983).

[19] See, e.g., Phyllis Chesler, *The New Antisemitism* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2003); Einat Wilf, "Anti-Feminism and Anti-Zionism," *Tablet*, January 9, 2018, https://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/252810/anti-feminism-and-anti-zionism.

[20] Consider, for instance, UNESCO's efforts to invalidate the Jewish (and Christian) character of key Israeli sites by reclassifying Rachel's Tomb as a mosque (2014), the Western Wall (Kotel) as the Buraq Plaza (2015), and the Jewish Temple Mount as the Noble Sanctuary (2016).

[21] Colleen Lamos, "The Postmodern Lesbian Position: On Our Backs," in *The Lesbian Postmodern*, ed. Laura Doan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 94.

[22] Jeffreys, *Unpacking Queer Politics*, 38-39.

postmodernism's broader ambition was to deconstruct, if not obliterate, women entirely.[23]

Although not all queers embraced lesbians' declining visibility, sexuality's commercialization, and S/M's veneration, one nonetheless notes a pronounced unwillingness to fault these developments explicitly. The leading queer theorist Judith Butler embodied some of this ambivalence when, in 1989, she was asked to provide a lesbian lecture and responded that she would rather describe herself as "being" homosexual because identifying as lesbian felt "neither true nor false."[24] Yet, she demonstrates no similar reluctance to claim a Jewish identity years later. To the contrary, it is "as a Jew" that she condemns Israel and vows to develop a Jewish opposition to Zionism.[25]

A decade after Butler vacillated over being lesbian, she similarly described her nearly two-decade-long relationship to S/M discourse as "active and complicated,"[26] a position in keeping with the tenor of her fourth book, *The Psychic Life of Power*. In it, Butler speaks of her "paradoxical" embrace of "injurious" names because they "constitute" her "socially."[27] As Martha Nussbaum explains, the central thesis of *The Psychic Life of Power* is that "we all eroticize the power structures that oppress us, and can thus find sexual pleasure only within their confines."[28] If Nussbaum is correct, there may be no better explanation for the ongoing eroticization of antisemitism and the demonization of Israel.

So concerned was Nussbaum by Butler's influence on American women's studies programs in the 1990s that she concluded,

> There is despair at the heart of the cheerful Butlerian enterprise. The big hope, the hope for a world of real justice, where laws and institutions protect the equality and the dignity of all citizens, has been banished, even perhaps mocked as sexually tedious. Judith Butler's hip quietism is a comprehensible response to the difficulty of realizing justice in America. But it is a bad response. It collaborates with evil. Feminism demands more and women deserve better.[29]

---

[23] Somer Brodribb, *Nothing Mat(t)ers: A Feminist Critique of Postmodernism* (North Melbourne, Australia: Spinifex Press, 1992).

[24] Judith Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination," in *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, ed. Diana Fuss (London/New York: Routledge, 1991), 13.

[25] Judith Butler, *Parting Ways. Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism* (New York/ Chichester, UK: Columbia University Press, 2014).

[26] See Jeffreys, *Unpacking Queer Politics*, 40.

[27] Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 104.

[28] Martha Nussbaum, "The Professor of Parody," *The New Republic*, February 22, 1999.

[29] Ibid.

Yet, Butler's influence extended beyond American women's studies programs when, in 1994, a little known International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (now Outright First) appointed her as its chair through 1997.[30] According to its website, the organization was the first LGBT body to achieve consultative status at the UN, a body significantly less known for its commitments to this community than for its unrelenting criticisms of Israel.[31] After all, it was not until 2011 that the UN even recognized LGBT rights through a resolution that over a third of its member states continue to ignore. Nonetheless, Outright First reasons that it promotes LGBT people by "developing critical partnerships at the global, regional, and national levels to build capacity, document violations, and advocate for inclusion and equality, and hold leaders accountable for protecting rights of all LGBTIQ people."[32]

Outright First claims it advances LGBT rights through awards consistent with its agenda, yet the first of these was not made until 2005, fifteen years after its founding and the same year that BDS was ostensibly established.[33] That year, the organization honored Mary Robinson, who decriminalized homosexuality as Ireland's first woman president (from 1990-1997). She also served as the UN's first woman High Commissioner for Human Rights and, in this capacity, Robinson oversaw the 2001 UN World Conference against Racism, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban, South Africa. Despite the conference's noble rhetoric, the antisemitism that it manifest led Robinson to resign in disgrace. It was in Durban that "anti-racist" organizers revived the scurrilous Soviet charge from decades earlier that Zionism is a form of racism and Israel is an apartheid state.[34] Although Robinson called these allegations inappropriate and unacceptable, she did not reject the conference's final declaration that contained them. Her position likely appealed to Outright First. After all, in 2008, Desmond

---

[30] The International Gay and Lesbian Organization should not be confused with the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA), the better-known independent organization established by 30 men in 1978.

[31] In recent times, roughly a third of the resolutions passed by the UN's Human Rights Council are exclusively devoted to Israel's ostensible human rights violations. Additionally, its Commission on the Status of Women singled out Israel for criticism in 2015. See Matthew S. Cohen and Chuck D. Freilich, "War by Other Means: The Delegitimisation Campaign against Israel," *Israel Affairs* 24, no. 1 (2018): 5.

[32] Outright First, "Our Model for LGBTIQ Human Rights Change—Outright," accessed May 5, 2018, https://www.outrightinternational.org/how-we-work.

[33] "Palestinian Civil Society Calls for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Against Israel Until It Complies with International Law and Universal Principles of Human Rights," Open letter, July 9, 2005, http://www.bdsmovement.net/call. See note 84 concerning the founding of the academic boycott.

[34] UN General Assembly Resolution 3379: Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1975).

Tutu became the second recipient of the organization's "Outspoken" Award. Tutu, a Nobel prize winning anti-apartheid activist, is also an outspoken critic of Israel for "practicing apartheid" in its policies against the Palestinians. While he too condemned bigotry against gay men and lesbians, like Robinson, Tutu may be better known for his opposition to Israel than for any long-standing and deep defense of LGBT rights. Thus, one wonders whether the "critical partnerships" Outright First fostered were less those that promoted the world's LGBT communities than those that helped legitimize anti-Israel activism. This example, it seems to me, is a more appropriate illustration of "pinkwashing": that is, pinkwashing may be less about bolstering Israel's reputation than providing Israel's sworn enemies a seemingly progressive mask behind which to conceal their animus.

Let us now turn to the eroticization of that animus.

BDSM: Bondage, Boycotts or Both?

Nussbaum's analysis of Butler's detrimental influence within women's studies is important, but Echols's frank reverence for queer theory and its penchant for S/M may be more useful for understanding the historical context within which Butler became "hip" beyond the academy and in ways that helped legitimize her calls for Israel's demise.

According to Echols, the queer politics Butler represents is indebted to the "feminist sex radicals" who preceded her. These self-proclaimed "radicals" include women like Gayle Rubin, a founding member (in 1978) of the lesbian sadomasochistic group Samois, Carol Vance, who organized the first 1982 Barnard Conference ("Towards a Politics of Sexuality"), and Nan Hunter and Lisa Duggan, co-founders of the Feminist Censorship Taskforce (FACT). FACT was established soon after the Barnard Conference and, in keeping with its agenda, provided an energetic defense of pornography that targeted feminist legal efforts against it. FACT's legal brief in defense of pornography read, "A woman who enjoys pornography, even if that means enjoying a rape fantasy, is, in a sense, a rebel."[35] Yet, beyond forcefully advocating for pornography, FACT reveled in the connections between "pleasure and danger" and "pushed for a

---

[35] Nan D. Hunter and Sylvia A. Law, "Brief Amici Curiae of Feminist Anti-Censorship Taskforce, Et Al., In American Booksellers Association v. (Versus) Hudnut," *Journal of Law Reform* 21, nos. 1-2 (1988): 121. For analysis of FACT and its brief, see Dorchen Leidholdt and Janice G. Raymond, eds., *The Sexual Liberals and the Attack on Feminism*, 1st ed., The Athene Series (New York: Pergamon Press, 1990). Lisa Duggan, a principal organizer of the American Studies Association's boycott of Israel, cut her political teeth and established her academic reputation as a queer theorist and "sex radical" through FACT (see below).

reappraisal of gay male sexual practices that fell outside what … Rubin called the 'charmed circle' of sexual acts and expressions."[36]

For those new to queer jargon, "sex radicals" and "sexual minorities" are frequent synonyms for sadomasochists and celebrants of seemingly taboo practices such as "cross-generational sex" (another Rubin euphemism).[37] Yet, regarding these pervasive practices as taboo makes little sense considering the profits they generate and the fact that approximately a quarter of all women have been sexually assaulted as children, laws against sexual violence and child sexual abuse notwithstanding. As Dorchen Leidholdt explains, "It's not that there are no sexual choices that truly violate society's rules." Rather, the "deviant" sexual practices that "sex radicals" defend and promote are not socially "proscribed"; they are "prescribed" because they are conformist.[38]

Rubin, a key queer theorist from whom Butler draws, nonetheless advanced sadomasochism by transforming the eponymous admirers of the eighteenth century's Marquis de Sade into a persecuted minority. She depicted sadomasochists as "a stigmatized sexual minority, and as such subjected to street harassment, job and housing discrimination, violence and other forms of persecution."[39] Moreover, by insisting on the inextricability of S/M and gay identities and practices, Rubin and her Samois peers could characterize their political opponents as retrogrades, whose "biological determinism" and "moralism" rendered their politics "as biased and bigoted as homophobic attacks on lesbians and gay men or right-wing attacks on independent feminist women."[40]

In emphasizing their own vulnerability, sadomasochists effectively inoculated themselves against criticism and charged their political opponents with seeking to deny them rights.[41] Although few feminist critics disputed the "rights" of

---

[36] Echols, "Retrospective: Tangled Up," 17, citing Gayle Rubin, "Thinking Sex," in *Pleasure and Danger: Toward a Politics of Sexuality* (Boston, MA: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), 281.

[37] Years after having coined the term "cross-generational sex," Rubin is annoyed anyone "would imagine that I supported the rape of prepubescents." Gayle Rubin, "Blood under the Bridge: Reflections on 'Thinking Sex'," *GLQ* 17, no. 1 (2011): 39. Yet, her work reads: "The most despised sexual castes include transsexuals, transvestites, fetishists, sadomasochists, sex workers as prostitutes and porn models, and the lowliest of all, those whose *eroticism transgresses generational boundaries*." Rubin, "Thinking Sex," 278. Echols laments, "Today, younger scholars, even within the tiny orbit of gender studies, sometimes know little about feminist sex radicalism." Echols, "Retrospective: Tangled Up," 19.

[38] Dorchen Leidholdt, "When Women Defend Pornography," in Leidholdt and Raymond, *The Sexual Liberals*, 127.

[39] Rubin, "Blood under the Bridge," 32.

[40] Ibid.

[41] At the same time, and with no sense of hypocrisy, Rubin and her allies earlier charged feminists against sexual violence with making women into victims (i.e. "victim feminism").

sadomasochists to engage in their chosen practices and, instead, objected to the "ideological" propositions of S/M's proponents,[42] this distinction mattered little. With ambiguity a casualty of the "sex wars," deceptive reversals reigned. Critics of S/M noted that a whip became nothing more than "a tool to evoke *feelings* of domination and submission" and pain merely signaled a method for expanding "the limits of trust." Not least, "a swastika is not really a swastika, but a sign used to communicate a shared interest in sadomasochistic sex."[43]

Indeed, according to Pat Califia (now Patrick Califia), a self-proclaimed sadist and an original member of Samois, the sadomasochistic use of swastikas harms no one and radically transforms that Nazi symbol into an object of sexual enjoyment. He writes, "We select the most frightening, disgusting, or unacceptable activities and transmute them into pleasure. We make use of all the forbidden symbols and all the disowned emotions. S/M is a deliberate, premeditated, erotic blasphemy."[44] Two decades earlier, Califia wrote, "SM is more a parody of the hidden sexual nature of fascism than it is a worship of or acquiescence to it."[45]

Insisting that S/M and its trappings constitute parodic attacks on authority, sadomasochists and their apologists could ignore (or even relish) the distress they caused others. Ironically, this indifference (or excitement) extends to their predecessors who indulged in S/M until it was too late for them to grasp the significance of their performances. As Jeffreys explains, "The tragedy of S/M practice in 1930s Berlin was that the scenarios that gay men were enacting, complete with Nazi uniforms, for their sexual enjoyment were only an anticipation of the greater violence which was to befall them from fascist thugs when they were interned in concentration camps."[46] When, in 2013, Ari Shavit laments S/M's modest presence in Tel Aviv's gay bars, he likely overlooked this history.[47]

The sexual appeal of inequality and fascistic violence helps explain both the antipathy that many queers have toward feminism and their impassioned defense of despots and terrorists. Consider, for example, Michel Foucault whose

---

[42] Linden, *Against Sadomasochism*, 7.

[43] Susan Leigh Star, "Swastikas: The Street and the University," in *Against Sadomasochism: A Radical Feminist Analysis* (San Francisco: Frog in the Well, 1982), 133.

[44] Patrick Califia-Rice, *Public Sex: The Culture of Radical Sex*, 2nd ed. (Pittsburgh, PA: Cleis Press, 2000), 169.

[45] Pat Califia, "Feminism and Sadomasochism," *Heresies*, no. 12 (1981): 32.

[46] Jeffreys, *The Lesbian Heresy*, 173.

[47] Ari Shavit, *My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel* (New York: Spiegel and Grau, 2013), 298-302. Shavit's enthusiasm for Friday night "Fascist uniform parties" is unambiguous (302). He notes "there isn't enough *openness*" for S/M and suggests it "is more of a Western thing" (297-98, emphasis added). Ironically, S/M's growing acceptance might explain why his chapter on "Sex, Drugs, and the Israeli Condition, 2000" elicited no criticism among the scores of reviews given to *My Promised Land*.

enthusiasm for the Ayatollah led him to dismiss feminist premonitions that Iran's revolution was headed down a dangerous path.[48] The nearly 50,000 Iranian women who marched on Tehran in 1979 for International Women's Day in defiance of Khomeini's dictatorship and his order that they veil themselves made no impression on Foucault. As Janet Afary and Kevin B. Anderson note, Foucault "was so enamored by the ability of the Islamists to galvanize tens of millions of people through such traditions that he ignored the dangers," including Hezbollah, Iran's then newly formed "Party of God." Hezbollah's response to women was nonetheless unequivocal: "You will cover yourselves or be beaten."[49]

Far from acknowledging the brutal misogyny of Islamic fundamentalists, Foucault focused on their impressive "attempt to open a spiritual dimension in politics" and suggested that feminist warnings were little more than Orientalist attacks on Islam.[50] His position was in keeping with the fundamentalists whose strategic use of "Islamophobia" rendered Islam inviolate and its secularist critics bigots. Conceived by Islamic fundamentalists in the late 1970s as analogous to xenophobia, the charge has since gained currency and is often employed to "silence all those Muslims who question the Koran, who demand equality of the sexes, who claim the right to renounce religion, and who want to practice their faith freely and without submitting to the dictates of the bearded and doctrinaire."[51]

The recent controversy involving three (and possibly more) women who accused professor Tariq Ramadan of rape is illustrative of the Sisyphean task that awaits those determined to hold such men accountable. A prominent Muslim lecturer whose Oxford chair on Islam was funded by Qatar, Ramadan is the grandson of the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood and a self-proclaimed "moderate" who refused to condemn the practice of stoning women accused of adultery as mandated by Qur'anic law. In a 2003 televised exchange with former French interior minister Sarkozy, Ramadan instead proposed a "moratorium" until a "dialogue" could generate consensus among Muslims about the practice. The next year he informed his British television interviewer that Islam "does not require a war against … homosexuals," though when speaking on Al Jazeera's Arab service he said that "sexual perverts" could be thrown off high buildings.[52]

---

48 Janet Afary and Kevin B. Anderson, "Revisiting Foucault and the Iranian Revolution," *New Politics* 10, no. 1 (2004), http://newpol.org/content/revisiting-foucault-and-iranian-revolution.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

51 Pascal Bruckner, "The Invention of Islamophobia," Signandsight.Com, January 3, 2011, http://www.signandsight.com/features/2123.html.

52 See Sabah A. Salih, "Islamism, BDS, and the West," in *The Case Against Academic Boycotts of Israel* (Chicago: MLA Members for Scholars Rights, 2015), 151; see also Caroline Fourest, *Brother Tariq: The Doublespeak of Tariq Ramadan* (New York: Encounter Books, 2008).

As Ramadan awaits trial in a French jail, his accusers face intimidation and violent threats, fomented by a press that suggests the women are Islamophobic.[53] A former editor of *Le Monde* explained, "If you thought it was challenging for women to come forward and accuse Harvey Weinstein of rape, consider accusing the Islamic theologian Tariq Ramadan."[54]

Butler's rhapsodizing about Hamas and Hezbollah as "social movements that are progressive" and "on the [global] left"[55] is both consistent with the light touch given to Ramadan by the press and reminiscent of Foucault's admiration for political Islam. And, like both Ramadan and Foucault, Butler remained obstinate when asked to clarify her position. After insisting her meaning had been inverted, she wrote, "Those political organizations define themselves as anti-imperialist, and anti-imperialism is one characteristic of the global left, so on that basis one could define them as part of the global left."[56] To this, Henryk Broder responded, "[T]he SA and SS were also so-called progressive social movements, which worked with sensational strategies for a political solution to the Jewish question."[57]

In feigned contradiction to its own slogan, "Jihad is its path and death for the sake of Allah is the loftiest of its wishes,"[58] Hamas endeavored to cultivate its image as a progressive social movement by explicitly co-opting the rhetoric and images of Gandhi, King, and Mandela. In calling upon Gazans to breach Israel's border in 2018, Hamas's political leader Ismail Haniya stood upon a platform festooned with the portraits and quotes of all three icons of non-violence and likened the Palestinian struggle to Indian independence and campaigns against racism in the United States and apartheid South Africa. Then, moments after insisting that Hamas is engaged in a "blessed protest" that is "national, peaceful, popular and civilized," he demanded the demonstrations turn into a "deadly weapon" to achieve Israel's eradication.[59]

In moments such as these Seyla Benhabib observed connections Butler refused to see, namely "that political action in the name of oppressed people can

---

[53] See, e.g., Adam Shatz, "How the Tariq Ramadan Scandal Derailed the #Balancetonporc Movement in France," *New Yorker*, November 29, 2017, https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/how-the-tariq-ramadan-scandal-derailed-the-balancetonporc-movement-in-france?reload=true.

[54] Sylvie Kauffmann, "A Toxic Mix: Sex, Religion and Hypocrisy," *New York Times*, November 13, 2017.

[55] "Judith Butler Whitewashes Hamas and Hezbollah," YouTube video, 2006, at 6:00, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amJNIcSNPco.

[56] Cited in James Kirchick, "The Professor's Shoddy History," *Tablet*, October 12, 2012.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Article 8 of the Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), August 18, 1988, available at: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp.

[59] See David M. Halbfinger, "Battle Weary, Hamas Gives Peace(Ful) Protests a Chance," *New York Times*, April 16, 2018.

also carry the seeds of oppression within it."[60] Thus she chastised Butler's polemic, *Parting Ways*, for having ignored the fact that many Palestinian Arabs would "rather become Israeli citizens in an open and gender-egalitarian society than live under the Islamist rule of a Hamas party."[61]

Tempting as it may be to dismiss Butler, her philosophical predecessors and political allies as Orwellian, misguided, and/or marginal, their influence is significant, most especially because they claim to have so little of it. A majority of LGBT folks and their allies either came of age during the 1970s and 1980s or are being schooled in academic programs where the views of "sex radicals" so predominate that opposition to S/M is, like Zionism, regarded as resistance to feminism and liberation itself. The prominence of queer-dominated women, gender, and sexuality studies in anti-Israel boycotts (which we might call, in reference to the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement, "the second BDS movement") is a case in point.[62]

Having examined the queer movement's rise, with its deep-seated connections to the first BDS movement (i.e. S/M), it is time to consider the second BDS movement's cynical use of queers in its campaigns against Israel. To accomplish this, we focus on their pinkwashing allegations, which posit that Israel's LGBT reforms and policies are ultimately part of a nefarious ploy by the state to consolidate its power against Palestinians.

How BDS transformed Israel's seemingly enlightened efforts into a political liability is our next consideration. Until now, we focused on a political trajectory that transformed the perpetrators and apologists of violence, sexual inequality, and religious fundamentalism into seemingly progressive (if not "radical") spokespersons for social justice. Might pinkwashing offer a similar reversal, though in the opposite direction—resulting in Israel's LGBT reforms to advance sexual equality now being regarded as a force for evil? Understanding how this inversion happened requires a brief history of pinkwashing.

The Queer Emergence of Pinkwashing

"Pinkwashing" is an American export, a term first used by breast cancer survivors in 2001 to condemn the corporate profiteering derived from pink-colored products and marketing campaigns whose stated goal was to raise public awareness and charitable funding for women with cancer. In response to the

---

[60] Seyla Benhabib, "Review Essay: Ethics without Normativity and Politics without Historicity," *Constellations* 20, no. 1 (2013): 157.

[61] Ibid., at 159.

[62] Tammi Rossman-Benjamin, "Interrogating the Academic Boycotters of Israel on American Campuses," in *The Case Against Academic Boycotts of Israel* (Chicago/New York: MLA Members for Scholars' Rights, 2015).

compassion fatigue, increased profits, and corporate trivialization that resulted from such marketing, women's advocates in the United States encouraged the public to ask critical questions of myriad corporations before buying pink products from them. Among these were Pink Ribbon Tic-Tacs and 3M Pink Ribbon Post-it Notes. Both exemplified the exploitation that activists endeavored to end. Notably, 3M's 2004 Annual Report acknowledged that its $300,000 donation to a cancer research center followed from a $500,000 expenditure for a "pink ribbon" campaign that boosted sales by 80%.[63]

Years before American corporate executives bolstered sales through gender-conforming pink promotionals to women, American gay male activists openly embraced pink to signify their gendered defiance after the Stonewall riots of 1969. This political reclamation manifested itself in their adoption of the pink triangle Nazis used to denote and facilitate the destruction of those men they identified as homosexual.[64] That this exclusively male Nazi symbol came to signify LGBT rights is disturbing and reveals a movement that, whether through ignorance or choice, embraced a fascist aesthetic that Califia celebrated and Jeffreys decried.

By 1987, the Nazi pink symbol gained American prominence when the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) used it for its logo, which also read "Silence Equals Death." Founded by Larry Kramer, ACT UP's mission involved combating the public's indifference to "the AIDS Holocaust." Equating the epidemic with Jewish genocide, ACT UP's gay pride float that year depicted a concentration camp within which activists posed behind barbed wire. Kramer's book, *Reports from the Holocaust: The Making of an AIDS Activist*, further popularized this agitprop and the pink triangle marked its cover.[65] As the HIV death toll mounted across the globe, ACT UP's rhetoric and the Nazi triangle became internationally ubiquitous.

With few exceptions,[66] the "softcore" Holocaust denial[67] that characterized the gay movement's more heated claims went largely unchallenged. Among these, ACT UP analogized the public's apathy and/or governmental inaction towards gay men with the willful destruction of European Jewry. Tony Kushner

---

[63] 3M, *2004 Annual Report: Innovate, Grow, Deliver* (St. Paul, MN: 3M, 2005), 14, http://www.annualreports.com/HostedData/AnnualReportArchive/3/NYSE_MMM_2004.pdf.

[64] R. Amy Elman, "Triangles and Tribulations: The Politics of Nazi Symbols," *Journal of Homosexuality* 30 (1996).

[65] Larry Kramer, *Reports from the Holocaust: The Making of an AIDS Activist*, 1st ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989).

[66] See, e.g., Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory* (New York/Toronto: Free Press, 1993); Frank Rich, "Making History Repeat, Even Against Its Will," *New York Times*, January 8, 1991.

[67] Hardcore denial negates the Holocaust's occurrence, while softcore denial does not deny the facts but minimizes them through false comparisons.

dramatized this stance in his play, *A Bright Room Called Day*. In response, *New York Times* theater critic Frank Rich asked, "Is the time ever right for a political work in which the National Socialism of the Third Reich is trivialized by being equated with the 'national senility' of the Reagan era?" He further noted that "George Bush's ultimatum to Iraq, the Iran-contra scandal and Mr. Reagan's AIDS policy [were] all frivolously lumped together as historical progeny of the Reichstag fire and Dachau."[68] Despite the occasional rebuke, neither Kramer nor Kushner nor their cohort wavered from their position that the US government's callous indifference or incrementalism regarding gay men with HIV was tantamount to genocide.

Two decades later, the second BDS would benefit from a generation of activists steeped in strained Holocaust analogies and led by one of ACT UP's original members, Sarah Schulman. Insisting she is sensitive to the political quandaries that softcore Holocaust denial earlier occasioned, she was emphatic that she had "*never* been one for comparisons."[69] Schulman wrote, "I refused to compare AIDS to the Holocaust, and I don't compare slavery or genocide to occupation or apartheid…. And yet there are associations that are almost impossible to avoid."[70] Unable to restrain herself from Holocaust inversion, she remarks that Hebrew-accented Holocaust survivors talk about "'the Germans' just as the people of Gaza are talking about 'the Jews'".[71] And, later writing from an Arab village in Israel, she "searched for the word to describe it" before settling on "apartheid."[72] Schulman's *Israel/Palestine and the Queer International* is riddled with analogies she insists she never uses.

Schulman wanted the queer community that emerged from the AIDS crisis to mobilize against Israel, an ambition she fostered in her widely cited *New York Times* opinion piece, "Israel and 'Pinkwashing'."[73] Segments of that article have since been recycled by queer BDS online outlets throughout the world. Her op-ed opens,

> "In dreams begin responsibilities," wrote Yeats in 1914. These words resonate with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people who have witnessed dramatic shifts in our relationship to power. After generations of sacrifice and organization, gay people in parts of the world have won protection from discrimination and relationship recognition. But these changes have given rise to a nefarious phenomenon: the co-opting of white gay people by anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim political forces in Western Europe and Israel.[74]

---

68 Rich, "Making History Repeat."
69 Schulman, *Israel/Palestine and the Queer International*, 44.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid., at 45.
72 Ibid., at 96.
73 Ibid., at 148.
74 Sarah Schulman, "Israel and 'Pinkwashing'," *New York Times*, November 22, 2011.

In one fell swoop, Schulman's anti-racist pretense enabled her to invisibilize Israel's racial and ethnic minorities and reduce the hard-fought gains of "gay white people" to a public relations exercise to "conceal the continuing violations of Palestinians' human rights behind an image of modernity signified by *Israeli gay life*."[75] With Israel thus the sole subject of her ire, Herzl's inspirational Zionism, with its "If you will it, it is no dream," is displaced by Yeats. Schulman invokes Yeats to advance queer interventions on behalf of Palestinians, whose deaths are often demanded from the despots who claim to represent them.

Rather than expose the deadly subterfuge of Islamists and condemn those states that criminalize LGBT people and favor legal discrimination against them, Schulman places Israeli marketing campaigns that promote LGBT rights in her crosshairs. Her 2011 op-ed states, "In 2005, with help from American marketing executives, the Israeli government began a marketing campaign, 'Brand Israel,' aimed at men ages 18 to 34. The campaign … sought to depict Israel as 'relevant and modern.' The government later expanded the marketing plan by harnessing the gay community to reposition its global image."[76]

Tel Aviv's nearly $90 million investment in 2010 to brand the city as "an international gay vacation destination," with its "depictions of young same-sex couples and financing for pro-Israeli movie screenings at lesbian and gay film festivals in the United States," certainly frustrated many Israelis who would have preferred the funding to go directly into services for the (LGBT) community. However, for Schulman and her BDS allies, pro-Israel campaigns were especially troubling because they were ostensibly made in bad faith, a position which is itself *prima facie* antisemitic.

That Israel's reputation might benefit from pro-gay and lesbian films raised another problem for BDS about whether "people of good will … mistakenly judge how advanced a country is by how it responds to homosexuality."[77] Rather than request improved standards for cross-national comparisons or risk the conclusions that could result from the marked differences between Israel and countless other states that legally discriminate against and/or criminalize LGBT, Schulman invoked Jasbir Puar's "homonationalism," pinkwashing's corollary.[78] Defined by Schulman as "the tendency of some white gay people to privilege their race and religious identity,"[79] the "homonationalism" accusation

---

[75] Ibid., emphasis added.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Jasbir K. Puar, "Citation and Censorship: The Politics of Talking About the Sexual Politics of Israel," *Feminist Legal Studies* 19, no. 2 (2011); Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, Next Wave: New Directions in Women's Studies (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

[79] Schulman, "Israel and 'Pinkwashing.'"

essentially disparages transnational human rights activism and cross-national LGBT rights monitoring altogether by suggesting such efforts are little more than a vehicle for self-satisfied Westerners to gloat.

Soon "pinkwashing" took on a different meaning from the one intended by the women who originally coined it. When applied by "pinkwatchers" whose sights are trained exclusively on Israel, the accusation became an entry point for antisemitism. According to Wikipedia, it now describes "a variety of marketing and political strategies aimed at promoting products, countries, people or entities through an appeal to gay-friendliness in order to be perceived as progressive, modern and tolerant."[80] As Cary Nelson observed, "the pink-washing accusation gives license" to condemn Israel, while discounting all of its achievements (e.g. legal protection against sexual orientation discrimination, recognition of same sex marriages, joint adoption, and open military service) without any reservation.[81]

There may be no better way to simultaneously encourage antisemitism and dismiss Israel's LGBT initiatives (whatever their shortcomings) than to insist those efforts undermine the rights of Palestinians. Were it not for BDS double-speak, Schulman could not maintain that she "never" betrayed queer people,[82] despite her having acted in "solidarity" with "presumably straight Palestinians" to oppose Israel's LGBT community.[83] Like countless other "queers" who take "pride" in being "ashamed" Jews, she received political "guidance" from "presumably straight" folks like Omar Barghouti, the purported founder of BDS.[84] Known for his explicit desire to "euthanize" the "Zionist project"[85] and his vocal opposition to the two-state solution, Barghouti insists that not even "the end of occupation" will end his struggle.[86]

---

[80] Wikipedia, s.v. "Pinkwashing (LGBT)," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pinkwashing_ (LGBT).

[81] Cary Nelson, "Pinkwashing (LGBTQ)," in *Dreams Deferred: A Concise Guide to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the Movement to Boycott Israel* (Chicago/New York: MLA Members for Scholars' Rights/Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 269.

[82] Schulman, *Israel/Palestine and the Queer International*, 29.

[83] Ibid., at 33.

[84] Far from stemming from Palestinian civil society, two British academics (i.e. Steven and Hilary Rose) initiated the academic boycott of Israel in an April 15, 2002 open letter in the *Guardian*. See David Hirsh, *Contemporary Left Antisemitism* (London/ New York: Routledge, 2018), 99-112. Moreover, the call for a boycott was a prominent part of the aforementioned 2001 World Conference against Racism.

[85] Omar Barghouti, "Relative Humanity: The Fundamental Obstacle to a One-State Solution in Historic Palestine," *Electronic Intifada*, January 6, 2004, https://electronic intifada.net/content/relative-humanity-fundamental-obstacle-one-state-solution-historic-palestine-12/4939.

[86] "Boycott Divestment Sanction Israel," YouTube video, 2010, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnpilMYsR0I, at 4:00-5:00.

Like "Islamophobia," "pinkwashing" and its corollary "homonationalism" are accusations often employed to silence critics while simultaneously providing those who issue them the appearance of being concerned about LGBT people and other minorities. Yet, this posturing offers little in return. In fact, these denunciations are in keeping with the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation's longstanding assault on homosexual conduct, gender equality, and universal human rights at myriad UN fora under the insidious cover of anti-racism and anti-imperialism.[87] That BDS similarly promotes itself through the cynical appropriation of social movements and ostensibly progressive claims that vilify the Jewish state represents a consummate act of public diplomacy in which anti-semitism itself has been pinkwashed.

---

[87] Pascal Bruckner, "Antisemitism and Islamophobia: The Inversion of the Debt," in *Deciphering the New Antisemitism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), 9-10. Well over two-thirds of those states that criminalize homosexual conduct are members of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Javaid Rehman and Eleni Poly-menopoulouy, "Is Green a Part of the Rainbow? Sharia, Homosexuality and LGBT Rights in the Muslim World," *Fordham International Law Journal* 37, no. 1 (2013): 38.

Left Antisemitism: The Rhetoric and Activism of Jewish Voice for Peace[*]

Miriam F. Elman

After operating in relative obscurity for two decades, Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) has recently catapulted into a leading role in the anti-Israel movement where it has become a sought-after partner for US Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) initiatives. According to the Anti-Defamation League, JVP is now among the top US-based anti-Israel organizations.[1] Through its national campaigns, social media engagement, and other forms of activism, JVP is a major source of anti-Israel programming on campuses, in progressive mainline churches, and in municipal politics. This chapter provides an overview of JVP's rhetoric and the role that it plays in BDS campaigning. I argue that, while JVP's platform has long advanced an antisemitic form of anti-Zionism, more recently the group has taken an even more radical turn in its messaging and activism. The organization now not only provides cover and legitimacy "as Jews" for antisemitic coalition partners but has also begun actively to traffic itself in classical antisemitic tropes. In addition to its radicalizing rhetoric, JVP's activism is also becoming more aggressive toward American Zionists and national Jewish organizations, with far-reaching negative implications for a resurgent antisemitism on the left.[2]

Origins and Presence in American Jewish Life

Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) is a US-based organization that views itself as the "Jewish wing" of the Palestinian solidarity movement. Founded in 1996 by a small group of California Bay Area Jews, JVP worked in relative obscurity for years. According to its website and recent press releases, however, it currently has over 65 member-led chapters across the country, and 200,000+ online supporters.

But looks can be deceiving, and it's difficult to pin these numbers down. According to Yitzhak Santis, former officer at the watchdog group NGO Monitor, "JVP provides no evidence" for its claim of tens of thousands of Jewish American

---

[*] The author wishes to thank Amy Elman and Andrew Pessin for helpful suggestions on earlier drafts.

[1] "Jewish Voice for Peace: Increasing Anti-Israel Radicalism," Anti-Defamation League, July 19, 2017, https://www.adl.org/blog/jewish-voice-for-peace-increasing-anti-israel-radicalism.

[2] Andrew Bennett, "The Antisemitism of the so-called Jewish Voice for Peace," *Medium*, June 29, 2017, https://medium.com/@acandidworld/the-antisemitism-of-the-so-called-jewish-voice-for-peace-12e42f595cbf.

followers, nor does it require that its members be Jewish—or even American.[3] Critics have long claimed that JVP can't brag about having a Jewish national presence.[4] Scholar David Bernstein similarly says that "JVP clearly has only hundreds of activists, not enough to fill a regional AIPAC meeting. Some of them, according to JVP itself, are non-Jews ('Jews and allies'), who like the idea of hiding their anti-Israel views behind a 'Jewish cloak'."[5]

JVP is exaggerating its appeal, and JVP supporters account, at most, for a mere 2% of all American Jews, according to some experts.[6] It also plays an even smaller leadership role in American Jewish life. Most of its two-dozen affiliated "rabbis" don't actually lead Jewish congregations. JVP doesn't make the bios of its Rabbinic Council publicly available, but its website suggests that the distribution of JVP rabbis along Jewish denominational lines is non-representative of American Jewry. The JVP Rabbinic Council appears to be top-heavy with Reconstructionists, for example, while fewer than 6% of synagogue-affiliated American Jews self-identify as Reconstructionist or as members of other small denominations.[7]

Thus, JVP is nowhere near the major force in American Jewish life that it claims to be; however, this could change. A statistical analysis by Steven M. Cohen, formerly of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, shows that JVP supporters tend to be young (under 30), unaffiliated or Reform, and have never visited Israel, or visited only once.[8] They are three times more likely to intermarry and "disproportionally profile as unattached to Israel … and think Israel is not essential for Judaism." According to recent Pew survey results, at least one in five American Jews self-describes as having "no religion." When these results are superimposed onto Cohen's analysis of the typical JVP supporter, there's an inference that JVP will have a growing pool of potential followers. And, as noted above, JVP has already rocketed forward in recent years toward becoming a central player in the anti-Israel boycott movement, and its staffing has also grown. Additionally, JVP is now utilizing a substantial amount

---

[3] Yitzhak Santis, "'Driving a Wedge': JVP Strategy to Weaken U.S. Support for Israel by Dividing the Jewish Community," *NGO Monitor*, July 8, 2013, https://www.ngo-monitor.org/data/images/File/NGO_Monitor_Report-JVP_DRIVING_A_WEDGE.pdf.

[4] Amanda Borschel-Dan, "In Wake of War, Leftist 'Self-Hating Jews' Find a Voice," *Times of Israel*, August 27, 2014, http://www.timesofisrael.com/in-wake-of-war-leftist-self-hating-jews-find-a-voice/.

[5] David Bernstein, "New York Times (?) on 'Jewish Voice for Peace'," *The Volokh Conspiracy*, February 11, 2011, http://volokh.com/2011/02/05/new-york-times-on-jewish-voice-for-peace/.

[6] Borschel-Dan, "In Wake of War."

[7] "A Portrait of Jewish Americans," Pew Research Center, October 1, 2013, http://www.pewforum.org/2013/10/01/jewish-american-beliefs-attitudes-culture-survey/.

[8] See Borschel-Dan, "In Wake of War."

of money to roll out its various campaigns and initiatives, for its professionally-produced videos, materials, and reports for community organizers to download, and for traveling workshops and training programs.

JVP is notoriously non-transparent about its funding sources, and its website carries no information about its donors. But NGO Monitor has been able to painstakingly piece together its funding network.[9] It reveals that JVP receives financial support from a wide array of private foundations, charitable trusts, and public charities, many of which also fund other anti-Israel and pro-BDS groups. Among JVP's main benefactors, for example, is the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (RBF). In June 2015, JVP received a two-year $140,000 grant from RBF. At the time, JVP's then Executive Director Rebecca Vilkomerson reportedly observed ecstatically, "It's not just RBF. The R stands for Rockefeller. It's an indicator of an increasing acceptance of our political position in the broader world. From that perspective, it was an important moment for us to have a foundation like RBF to begin to fund us."[10]

The ADL now considers JVP to be the "largest and most influential" Jewish anti-Zionist group in the United States, and lists it among the top ten organizations "fixated with delegitimizing Israel." JVP's influence is perhaps still negligible among America's Jews, but anti-Zionists gravitate to the organization because it gives them cover. Dexter Van Zile, the Christian media analyst for the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis (CAMERA), notes that "anti-Zionists will invoke their alliance with Jewish Voice for Peace and say in effect, 'We're not antisemites! Heaven forbid! Some of our best friends are Jews! And guess what? They agree with *us*!'"[11]

A Rhetoric That Promotes and Excuses Antisemitism

JVP engages in antisemitic forms of anti-Israel expression. Via online materials and publications, social media feeds, and public speaking, JVP activists treat Judaism as a set of religious and cultural practices, denying that Jews are a people

---

[9] Miriam Elman, "Anti-Israel 'Jewish Voice for Peace' Funding Network Revealed," *Legal Insurrection*, May 8, 2016, https://legalinsurrection.com/2016/05/anti-israel-jewish-voice-for-peace-funding-network-revealed/.

[10] Armin Rosen, "Rockefeller Brothers Fund President Explains BDS to His Trustees: It's about 'Justice, Dignity, and Security'," *Tablet*, June 28, 2017, http://www.tabletmag.com/scroll/239204/rockefeller-brothers-fund-president-explains-bds-to-his-trustees-its-about-justice-dignity-and-security; Armin Rosen, "The Rockefeller Brothers Fund and BDS," *Tablet*, May 24, 2017, http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/235453/rockefeller-brothers-fund-gets-behind-bds.

[11] Dexter Van Zile, "JVP an Accessory to the Spread of Antisemitism in the U.S.," *Times of Israel*, July 16, 2014, http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/jvp-an-accessory-to-the-spread-of-antisemitism-in-u-s/.

with a history and an ancestral land. Taken as a whole, JVP's single-minded effort to paint Israel as a source of racism and violence has led it well beyond legitimate criticism of Israeli policies.[12] As Jonathan S. Tobin recently put it,

> While anti-Zionists claim that they are not anti-Semitic, it's important to remember that those who would deny the Jews the right to a state or even to live in their ancient homeland—something they'd never think of denying to others—are engaging in an act of bias. And the term of art for bias against Jews is anti-Semitism.[13]

JVP maintains that Zionism has no place in America's liberal anti-racist movement because it's a "white supremacist" ideology that uses the history of Jewish persecution to justify contemporary injustices and state violence. As JVP Deputy Director Cecilie Surasky writes,

> it is important that we situate what is happening in Israel and Palestine to-day, and the work we must do in the US for justice, as part of a lengthy historical cascade of impacts rooted in European colonialism, white racism, US Empire, anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish oppression, corporate greed, and so on … what is absolutely clear is that Early Zionist leaders were simultaneously both the victims of, and willing agents of white supremacists' colonialism…. Virtually every colonized or oppressed group internalizes the eyes, in some way, of their oppressors….[14]

JVP's Vilkomerson has argued that liberals who go "out into the streets" to oppose white supremacy in the United States should consistently apply their political principles to Israel—"it's high time to get out into the streets with us to oppose similar policies in Israel."[15] Similarly, JVP's Media Manager Naomi Dann

---

[12] For a discussion of antisemitic forms of anti-Zionism and the distorted accounts of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that emerge from them, see Jamie Palmer, "The Left and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: The Path to Righteous Hatred," *Fathom* (Summer 2017), http://fathomjournal.org/the-left-and-the-israeli-palestinian-conflict-the-path-to-righteous-hatred-2/; Kenneth Waltzer, "Antisemitisms of the Left and Right (with Mark G. Yudof)," *Times of Israel*, October 21, 2017, http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/anti semitisms-of-the-left-and-right-with-mark-g-yudof/; Ruth R. Wisse, "The Functions of Anti-Semitism," *National Affairs* 35 (Fall 2017), https://www.nationalaffairs.com/publications/detail/the-functions-of-anti-semitism.

[13] Jonathan S. Tobin, "The BDS Fifth Column," *JNS*, May 7, 2018, https://www.jns.org/opinion/the-bds-fifth-column/.

[14] Cecilie Surasky, "Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy, and the 'Special Relationship' between the U.S. and Israel," Jewish Voice for Peace, March 10, 2015, https://jewish voiceforpeace.org/settler-colonialism-white-supremacy-and-the-special-relationship-between-the-u-s-and-israel/.

[15] Rebecca Vilkomerson, "Why Jews Shouldn't Be Scared of the Palestinian Right of Return," *Ha'aretz*, September 17, 2017, https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-why-jews-shouldn-t-be-scared-of-the-palestinian-right-of-return-1.5451361.

recently argued that white supremacist Richard Spencer "might be right about Israel" when he drew spurious comparisons between Zionism and his desire for a white ethno-state. Dann's offensive remarks underscore JVP's view of Zionism as a form of white supremacy, reflecting the group's profound ignorance of the role that antisemitism plays in white supremacist ideology and the ways in which Jews are in fact its primary victims.[16]

In JVP's perspective on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Zionism itself is something uniquely detestable. Zionism isn't a liberation movement for a persecuted people but a manifestation of everything the left must abhor: imperialism, racism, colonialism, and apartheid. In JVP rhetoric, Zionism is a morally indefensible project sustained by well-connected and wealthy Jews, who use their political power to bend Western governments to their will and against their own interests. Ironically, these antisemitic tropes, common in left-wing antisemitism, are presented as *anti*-racist and as evidence of JVP's bona fide devotion to justice.[17]

Berlin lawyer Andrew Mark Bennett correctly notes that while anti-Israel activism makes up the lion's share of JVP messaging, its underlying worldview is even more problematic.[18] JVP's rhetoric is "obsessed with Jewish wrongdoing" and with Jewish power. It identifies Jews with state power and accuses them of working against progressive social justice movements. JVP activists thus position themselves as the "good Jews" of the left—admitted and championed in progressive circles as the Jews who oppose other Jews.

In staking out this position, JVP's leaders and activists repeatedly insist that anti-Zionism is not antisemitism. Further, they situate themselves as victims of baseless charges of antisemitism, seeing themselves and their pro-BDS allies as "accused and targeted more than the growing far-right" in order to silence criticism of Israel and "suppress the conversation about Palestinian rights."[19] In this vein, JVP's latest book, *On Anti-Semitism* (2017),[20] includes few authors who have actual expertise in the study of anti-Jewish prejudice; instead the book aims to give voice to those who "are marginalized" by allegedly false allegations of bias in "mainstream discussions of anti-Semitism"—such as activist Linda Sarsour and BDS co-founder Omar Barghouti.

---

[16] Andrew Bennett, "JVP's Anti-Semitic Obsession with Jewish Power," *Forward*, January 9, 2018, https://forward.com/opinion/391783/jvps-anti-semitic-obsession-with-jewish-power/.

[17] Palmer, "The Left and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict."

[18] Bennett, "JVP's Anti-Semitic Obsession."

[19] Rebecca Vilkomerson, "Antisemitism and Support for Israel Are Not Incompatible: We Must Confront Both," *Truthout*, April 13, 2017, https://truthout.org/articles/antisemitism-and-support-for-israel-are-not-incompatible-we-must-confront-both/.

[20] Jewish Voice for Peace, *On Anti-Semitism: Solidarity and the Struggle for Justice* (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2017).

In fact, JVP's understanding of antisemitism amounts to justifying it whenever it is connected to Israel. Thus Emily Shire notes that, "According to the logic of JVP, Jews must denounce openly their support for Jewish sovereignty if they are to be welcomed [in progressive circles]. If they don't disavow their Zionism, then it's perfectly okay to slander, attack and exclude them without such behavior having the taint of anti-Semitism."[21]

JVP not only views antisemitism as emanating only from the right, it also tends to dismiss it as inconsequential. For example, at a controversial 2017 event at The New School, the group's Lina Morales asserted that Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan's unabashed antisemitism wasn't especially troubling because he doesn't "put Jews in danger." Morales further downplayed Farrakhan's antisemitism by suggesting that Jew-hatred expressed by minorities, themselves suffering from "structural repressions," should be discounted by "white Jews."[22]

Put altogether, JVP is a key player in the anti-Israeli movement because it serves to discredit Jewish concerns about antisemitism, casting them instead as a deceitful conspiracy to censor legitimate discourse and debate. It's not merely that Jews are mistaken when they raise the issue of antisemitism on the left or that they are oversensitive: they are simply lying.[23]

---

[21] Emily Shire, "The Absurdity of Linda Sarsour and JVP Discussing Anti-Semitism," *Forward*, November 15, 2017, https://forward.com/opinion/387684/the-absurdity-of-linda-sarsour-and-jvp-discussing-anti-semitism/.

[22] Petra Marquardt-Bigman, "Defining Anti-Semitism down with Jewish Voice for Peace and Linda Sarsour," *Times of Israel*, November 30, 2017, http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/defining-anti-semitism-down-with-jewish-voice-for-peace-and-linda-sarsour/. For more on the November 2017 New School panel on antisemitism featuring Linda Sarsour and JVP's Lina Morales and Rebecca Vilkomerson, see Miriam Elman, "Linda Sarsour Is Only the 2nd Most Inappropriate Speaker at New School Antisemitism Event," *Legal Insurrection*, November 21, 2017, https://legalinsurrection.com/2017/11/linda-sarsour-is-only-2nd-most-inappropriate-speaker-at-new-school-antisemitism-event/; John-Paul Pagano, "Defiling the Exiles: Annotated Selections from the New School Panel on Anti-Semitism with Jewish Voice for Peace and Linda Sarsour," *Medium*, November 30, 2017, https://medium.com/@johnpaulpagano/defiling-the-exiles-9feaaacda7c6; Shiri Moshe, "Amid Protests from Jewish Community, New School Hosts Panel on Antisemitism with Speakers Accused of Antisemitism," *The Algemeiner*, November 30, 2017, https://www.algemeiner.com/2017/11/30/amid-protests-from-jewish-community-new-school-hosts-panel-on-anti-semitism-with-speakers-accused-of-antisemitsm/; Susan Shapiro, "Old-School Hate at the New School," *New York Daily News*, November 26, 2017, http://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/old-school-hate-new-school-article-1.3651805.

[23] For a discussion of how the UK equivalent of JVP—Jewish Voice for Labour—plays the analogous role in Britain, see Stephen Daisley, "The British Labour Party's 'Kosher Stamp' for Anti-Semitism," *Tablet*, October 16, 2017, http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/247057/british-labour-corbyn-anti-semitism. For more

JVP's Activism

"Intersectionality"—a theory which in its crudest form emphasizes the idea that apparently distinct oppressions are related or "intersect"—is currently the trendy concept of left-wing campus groups. Elliot Kaufman helpfully suggests that intersectionality is both a conspiracy theory and a model for political organizing: anti-racists must champion *every* left-wing cause since they are all connected and "different types of bigotry combine to threaten vulnerable people at their junctions."[24] As Kaufman writes,

> To engage their diverse coalition, intersectional movements must exaggerate the unity and malevolence of its enemies. The unity helps show anti-sexual-assault activists, for example, that Israeli "apartheid" should be their issue, too, because of how it props up the same system of domination that inflicts violence on Palestinian and other women. The result is a picture of a uniquely wicked Jewish state lurking behind the world's evils.[25]

Racial and ethnic leaders can easily "deliver votes" and numbers to inter-sectional coalitions because defection is almost unthinkable, no matter how unrelated the issues. In this environment, JVP works with various marginalized groups while it "relegates Jews to the background of intersectional discourse,"[26] insofar as it conceptualizes Jews as "white" and thus as having no relevant concerns regarding systemic bias.

JVP presents itself as committed to social justice, civil liberties, and human rights, and to advancing these causes through non-violent methods. But the reality is that through its intersectional coalitions JVP promotes and uplifts killers of Jews, stands in solidarity with terrorists like the convicted PFLP supermarket bomber Rasmea Odeh[27] and the mass-murdering Palestinian

---

on the leftist strategy of deflecting accusations of antisemitism as a "dirtier trick than antisemitism itself," see David Hirsh, "How Raising the Issue of Antisemitism Puts You Outside the Community of the Progressive: The Livingstone Formulation," in *From Antisemitism to Anti-Zionism: The Past and Present of a Lethal Ideology*, ed. Eunice G. Pollack (Boston, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2017).

[24] Elliot Kaufman, "The Campus Intersectionality Craze," *Commentary*, May 14, 2018, https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/campus-intersectionality-craze/.

[25] Ibid. See also Kaufman's chapter in the present volume, where he develops these ideas further.

[26] Hen Mazzig, "JVP's Summer of Discontent: It's Time for Rebecca Vilkomerson to Step Down," *Jerusalem Post*, October 31, 2017, https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/JVPs-summer-of-discontent-Its-time-for-Rebecca-Vilkomerson-to-step-down-510972.

[27] William A. Jacobson, "Memorial Service Held for Victims of Rasmea Odeh, As Jewish Voice for Peace Celebrates Her," *Legal Insurrection*, April 2, 2017, https://legalinsurrection.com/2017/04/memorial-service-held-for-victims-of-rasmea-odeh-as-jewish-voice-for-peace-celebrates-her/.

Marwan Barghouti,[28] and frequently partners with individuals and groups that demonize Israel while propagating negative stereotypes of Jews.[29]

Reports released in 2014 by the ADL and in 2013 by NGO Monitor document JVP's willingness to collaborate with extremists. NGO Monitor shows that JVP co-sponsored fundraisers with the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), an organization whose founders have endorsed violence as a form of Palestinian resistance and whose members have collaborated with Palestinian hard-line organizations. Several JVP chapters have also supported the programming of Charles E. Carlson of Strait Gate Ministries, who writes about "Zionist control" of media, banking, and financial institutions. In 2011, JVP's Colorado chapter co-sponsored a protest with Strait Gate Ministries, and in 2013 JVP's Sacramento chapter promoted a Strait Gate Ministries protest of a concert honoring Israel.

Similarly, in 2015, JVP joined a coalition of community groups to protest a planned New York City Council trip to Israel, barging into a meeting at the exact moment that a resolution commemorating the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz was being discussed. In response, Councilman David Greenfield delivered an impassioned speech on the "overlap between hatred of Israel and hatred of Jews."[30] JVP also collaborates frequently with groups flagged by the ADL as hate groups, including CODEPINK, If Americans Knew (IAK), Sabeel/Friends of Sabeel North America (FOSNA), and the Answer Coalition.[31]

---

[28] William A. Jacobson, "Jewish Voice for Peace Internet Ad Supported Failed Palestinian Terrorist Hunger Strike," *Legal Insurrection*, May 28, 2017, https://legalinsurrection.com/2017/05/jewish-voice-for-peace-internet-ad-supported-failed-terrorist-hunger-strike/.

[29] Occam's Razor, "Jewish Voice for Peace Featured Speakers List a 'Who's Who' of Israel Haters," *Legal Insurrection*, March 28, 2017, https://legalinsurrection.com/2017/03/jewish-voice-for-peace-featured-speakers-list-a-whos-who-of-israel-haters/.

[30] Ben Cohen, "'What You Saw Here Today Was Naked, Blind Antisemitism': NYC Councilman Slams Palestine Activists Who Disrupted Auschwitz Commemoration Debate (Video)," *The Algemeiner*, January 22, 2015, http://www.algemeiner.com/2015/01/22/what-you-saw-here-today-was-naked-blind-antisemitism-nyc-councilman-slams-palestine-activists-who-disrupted-auschwitz-commemoration-debate-video/.

[31] Sabeel's founder, the Christian Palestinian Rev. Naim Ateek, claims that Jews are Christ-killers and promotes an antisemitic brand of Palestinian liberation theology, see Miriam Elman, "Sabeel—The Anti-Israel Christian Activists You Never Heard Of," *Legal Insurrection*, June 28, 2015, https://legalinsurrection.com/2015/06/sabeel-the-anti-israel-christian-activists-you-never-heard-of/. The Answer Coalition views Zionism as racism, and the ADL cites evidence that it supports terrorist organizations, including Hamas and Hezbollah. And in publications that have been disseminated worldwide, IAK's Alison Weir has modernized the medieval blood libel, accusing Israel of harvesting Palestinian organs to sell on the black market, see Miriam Elman, "Jewish Voice for Peace Can't Seem to Stay Away from Alison Weir," *Legal Insurrection*, December 1, 2015, https://legalinsurrection.com/2015/12/jewish-voice-for-peace-cant-seem-to-stay-away-from-alison-weir/.

JVP activists are a visible presence in many campus anti-Israel BDS campaigns, at mainline Protestant church general assemblies and conventions where anti-Israel resolutions are in play, and in progressive activist circles where Jews who connect and identify with Israel are ostracized and even bullied, harassed, and defamed. In these forums, they deflect allegations of antisemitism, as noted earlier, by standing up "as Jews" in support of their racist allies. In effect they "Jew-wash" away racist stains from their antisemitic partners.[32]

In 2017, for example, the Chicago chapter of JVP rushed in to excuse the bigotry of the city's Dyke March activists who forced a group of queer Jewish women out of its parade because they were carrying rainbow pride flags adorned with the Jewish Star of David.[33] JVP also took the side of a Black Lives Matter group in St. Louis which slandered a highly-regarded progressive rabbi there because she had visited Israel on an AIPAC-sponsored tour.[34] On campuses, JVP students defended Oberlin College professor Joy Karega after her virulently antisemitic social media posts were exposed. JVP's Advisory Academic Council also urged followers to reject "false accusations" of antisemitism directed toward Rutgers University professor Jasbir Puar, who has peddled the newest blood libel about Jews mining Palestinian corpses for organs.[35]

JVP is dedicated to producing the next generation of anti-Israel activists. It places considerable attention on youth outreach, especially on campuses. It sponsors anti-Israel conferences and pro-BDS events on campuses nationwide, establishes campus chapters, and assists the Open Hillel campus initiative which advocates for Hillel's partnering with pro-BDS groups and speakers. Recently, JVP launched a "Summer BDS Institute" co-sponsored with the anti-Israel Quaker organization, American Friends Service Committee, to train student anti-Israel activists in BDS.

---

[32] Miriam Elman, "Jewish Voice for Peace—'Jew Washing' the Anti-Israel Movement," *Legal Insurrection*, July 12, 2015, https://legalinsurrection.com/2015/07/jewish-voice-for-peace-jew-wash-the-anti-israel-movement/. For a detailed analysis of Jew-washing, see Andrew Pessin, "The Indelible Stain of Antisemitism: The Failed Practice of 'Jew-Washing'," *Times of Israel*, June 24, 2017, https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/the-indelible-stain-of-antisemitism-the-failed-practice-of-jew-washing/.

[33] William A. Jacobson, "Jewish Voice for Peace-Chicago Sides With 'Dyke March' Anti-Semites," *Legal Insurrection*, June 26, 2017, https://legalinsurrection.com/2017/06/jewish-voice-for-peace-chicago-sides-with-dyke-march-anti-semites/.

[34] Miriam Elman, "Anti-Israel Activists Attack Progressive St. Louis Rabbi Who Supports #BlackLivesMatter," *Legal Insurrection*, December 8, 2015, https://legalinsurrection.com/2015/12/anti-israel-activists-attack-progressive-st-louis-rabbi-who-supports-blacklivesmatter/.

[35] Petra Marquardt-Bigman, "Jewish Voice for Peace Defends Anti-Semitism," *Times of Israel*, March 16, 2016, http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/jewish-voice-for-peace-defends-anti-semitism/.

JVP presents itself as a hip alternative to the American Jewish establishment, which it denigrates as out-of-touch with the progressive views of young Jewish millennials. In recent years, this has proved a successful marketing strategy. A study released by the Israel Campus Coalition shows that JVP is increasing its prominence on campus—it established 23 campus chapters in the 2015-2016 academic year alone. One reason for this growth is that JVP is increasingly providing the only possible gateway for Jewish college students eager to take part in campus social justice initiatives. While the right of a people to exist and to enjoy self-determination is the most anti-racist and liberal concept imaginable, Jewish Zionists are regularly excluded from campus progressive movements (e.g. women's rights, criminal justice reform, LGBT rights, income inequality, Black Lives Matter) because they are viewed as part of the white, privileged "oppressor class" responsible for the evils of imperialism and colonialism.[36] In this environment, a regressive, so-called Jewish group like JVP that aims to excise Zionism from Jewish identity and unashamedly calls for dismantling the world's only Jewish state is now, ironically, becoming the go-to place for young Jews who want to fight bigotry and discrimination.

JVP's Activism in US Mainline Churches[37]

JVP has promoted the BDS agenda in America's progressive Protestant churches for over a decade.[38] For example, its activism at the general assemblies and synods of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and at the United Church of Christ (UCC) have demonstrated the "outsize role that JVP plays in these fora as contingents of seasoned staffers make themselves available to delegates in advance of the plenary session."[39]

At the UCC conference in 2015, Rev. Mitri Raheb, a Christian Palestinian and Pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, sanitized

---

[36] Benjamin Gladstone, "Anti-semitism at My University: Hidden in Plain Sight," *New York Times*, October 1, 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/02/opinion/sunday/anti-semitism-at-my-university-hidden-in-plain-sight.html?_r=0; Alan Dershowitz, "Dershowitz: Are Jews Who Refuse to Renounce Israel Being Excluded from 'Progressive Groups'?," *The Algemeiner*, August 24, 2016, https://www.algemeiner.com/2016/08/24/dershowitz-are-jews-who-refuse-to-renounce-israel-being-excluded-from-progressive-groups/.

[37] For more information on the promotion of anti-Zionism and antisemitism in US mainline churches, see Dexter Van Zile's chapter in the present volume.

[38] Miriam Elman, "ALERT: Three U.S. Churches to Vote on Anti-Israel Resolutions This Spring," *Legal Insurrection*, February 21, 2016, https://legalinsurrection.com/2016/02/alert-three-u-s-churches-to-vote-on-anti-israel-resolutions-this-spring/.

[39] Dexter Van Zile, "An Exodus of Members Doesn't Stop the UCC from Attacking Israel," *Philos Project*, June 25, 2015, https://philosproject.org/an-exodus-of-members-doesnt-stop-the-ucc-from-attacking-israel/.

his keynote speech by acknowledging JVP. In his keynote address, Raheb received a standing ovation for attacking the legitimacy of the Jewish people, denying Jews' biblical history, erasing the Jewish roots of Christianity, and portraying modern-day Israel as the source of all Palestinian suffering. He also referenced the thoroughly debunked racist claim that modern-day Jews are descended not from the ancient Hebrews of the Middle East but from the East European Khazar tribe.[40] Plenary speakers continually referenced JVP support for the resolutions. One even said that the General Synod should pass the divestment resolution "in order to stand with Jewish Voice for Peace." Rev. Graylan S. Hagler, Senior Minister of the Plymouth Congregational UCC of Washington DC, who recently opened his pulpit to the notorious antisemite Gilad Atzmon, noted with satisfaction how "instrumental" JVP was for the plenary vote.

JVP has become an important ally in US church anti-Israel activity, because it's one of the few Jewish lobbies that anti-Israel Christian activists will embrace. Over the past decade, as noted above, JVP has established a strong alliance with Sabeel/Friends of Sabeel North America (FOSNA), with which it has co-sponsored over two dozen events. JVP's Rabbinical Council issued a statement of support for Sabeel/FOSNA that declared: "As rabbis and people of faith, we stand in solidarity with the work of FOSNA." JVP and Sabeel/FOSNA also co-sponsored the "National Rasmea Defense Committee," which lobbied the US government to discontinue its proceedings against Rasmea Odeh, who was found guilty of immigration fraud after concealing her role in two terrorist bombing deaths in Israel.[41]

Leaders in JVP are also top FOSNA activists. David Glick, a prominent JVP member, is a member of the NorCal Friends of Sabeel chapter and has written for Sabeel publications. For the Spring 2012 edition of Sabeel's quarterly publication, *Cornerstone*, Glick authored a poem titled "Hear O Israel" that claims Israel is inherently racist and compares Israeli policies to those of Nazi Germany. The Ithaca-based anti-Israel activist Ariel Gold was also a leader in JVP and a professional organizer for FOSNA for some years before moving on to CODEPINK. She also was a leader for the NY Committee for Justice in Palestine, which once posted on its website a grotesque photoshopped image of Jewish concentration camp victims holding signs to "Free Gaza."[42] Several years

---

[40] Dexter Van Zile, "A Word about Mitri Raheb's Sermon at the UCC's General Synod," *CAMERA Snapshots Blog*, July 2, 2015, http://blog.camera.org/archives/2015/07/a_word_about_mitri_rahebs_serm.html.

[41] For more on the antisemitism of Sabeel/FOSNA, see Elman, "Sabeel—The Anti-Israel Christian Activists."

[42] William A. Jacobson, "Sick: BDS Groups Spread Photoshop of Concentration Camp Inmates Holding Anti-Israel Signs," *Legal Insurrection*, November 28, 2014, https://legalinsurrection.com/2014/11/sick-bds-groups-spreads-photoshop-of-concentration-camp-inmates-holding-anti-israel-signs/.

ago, JVP's Shelley Cohen Fudge spoke at the Sixth Presbyterian Church in Washington DC for a spring program hosted by Sabeel/FOSNA's DC Metro affiliate. There, according to Shiri Moshe, Fudge sat on a panel where one speaker after another depicted Jews as "genocidal racists, foreigners, and oppressors who are engaged in a colonialist project and control the American government."[43] According to Moshe, JVP's representative made no objections to these attacks.

JVP's Hijacking of Jewish Holidays
and Faith-Based Traditions

JVP activists operate in multiple arenas to exploit Jewish culture and traditions, including celebrations and life-cycle events, in anti-Zionist and pro-BDS propaganda campaigns. In doing this it claims that its anti-Israel positions are not merely consistent with Jewish values but actually *based* on them. Toward this end, it usurps Jewish religious holidays by incorporating anti-Israel themes into them. For example, JVP's High Holiday resources replace the primary themes of the Days of Awe—God's sovereignty and mercy, and the longing for the day when His mastery will be acknowledged by all human beings—with a narrative that both denigrates the centrality of Zion to Judaism and subverts one of the key themes of the High Holidays: God's plan for the Jewish people's freedom, nationhood, and acceptance of the Torah in the Land of Israel.[44]

JVP's materials for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur attack the very core of the Jewish High Holidays and the basic concepts of Judaism. In 2016, JVP released a 14-page guidebook to be used at the holiday dinner that ushers in the Jewish New Year. Users are encouraged to fight for Palestinian liberation via the BDS strategy, which is also presented as consistent with Jewish values. In various holiday blessings and traditions, participants are repeatedly reminded of the many alleged crimes that Israel perpetrates against the defenseless Palestinians and are invited to celebrate BDS victories.[45]

The "Table Blessing Ritual" also reinforces the anti-Israel message in the recent manifesto of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, which it also aims to connect to Jewish values. Users of the guide are supposed to view Israel as complicit in America's racial tensions and the policing problems within its inner cities. A "special reading for 2016" links "Ferguson to Palestine" in an intersecting

---

[43] Shiri Moshe, "A Sermon of Hate in the District of Columbia," *The Tower* 27 (June 2015), http://www.thetower.org/article/a-sermon-of-hate-in-the-district-of-columbia/.

[44] Miriam Elman, "Jewish Voice for Peace Hijacks High Holidays for Anti-Israel Messaging," *Legal Insurrection*, October 5, 2016, https://legalinsurrection.com/2016/10/jewish-voice-for-peace-hijacks-high-holidays-for-anti-israel-messaging/.

[45] Ibid.

system of oppression. One passage notes the "ever-increasing profits" of arms manufacturers which "display their products on the streets in Black neighborhoods and the skies above Gaza." Another passage conjoins the "sounds of the shofar [ram's horn]" to the "BLM cry: I Can't Breathe." Thus, the guide seeks to legitimize JVP's position as a central ally of the anti-Israel activists who infiltrate the BLM movement—like the Dream Defenders.[46]

JVP's identity theft of Jewish heritage has been particularly visible during Passover, when it distributes its annually released pro-BDS Haggadah and stages "liberation seders" appropriating the holiday's rituals and texts for an anti-Israel narrative.[47] JVP's Haggadah twists the Jewish text used during the Passover seder—for example, by dedicating the third cup of wine to the BDS movement and featuring a section on the "Ten Plagues of the Israeli Occupation" (including the "plague" of the "denial of the right of return").

JVP has also usurped Chanukah for anti-Israel messaging. In 2017, it organized "actions" in 25 cities across the country to coincide with the holiday.[48] The community events mainly involved people coming together in outdoor vigils to protest Islamophobia and racism and were highly politicized anti-Trump rallies. Many participants spoke of the vigils sending a "message of togetherness" and unity in the wake of the presidential election. That's not surprising given how JVP rolled out this Chanukah campaign, specifically conveying a sense of urgency to "Shine a Light" on President-elect Trump and the "Netanyahu-Trump alliance" forged following the elections.

Based on the many images of these "Chanukah actions" shared online, in media reports, and in several videos, there appeared to be very little actual telling of the holiday story going on at them. Participants waxed eloquently for a "return of the light" in American politics and society but failed to impart that the Festival of Lights is about the Jewish people vanquishing their enemies, emerging victorious as a people, and regaining control of their faith, land, and holy Temple. There was no effort to sing any traditional songs. When blessings on the candles were included, they were doctored to reflect various social justice issues. Basically, the underlying message at these JVP Chanukah vigils was that, according to Jewish values themselves, to be a true anti-racist progressive you

---

[46] Occam's Razor, "Dream Defenders: Defending the Dream of Anti-Israel Activism," *Legal Insurrection*, October 1, 2016, https://legalinsurrection.com/2016/10/dream-defenders-defending-the-dream-of-anti-israel-activism/.

[47] Miriam Elman, "Jewish Voice for Peace Passover Haggadah: 'Next Year in al-Quds!'," *Legal Insurrection*, April 9, 2017, https://legalinsurrection.com/2017/04/jewish-voice-for-peace-passover-haggadah-next-year-in-al-quds/.

[48] Miriam Elman, "'Jewish Voice for Peace' Hijacks Chanukah for Anti-Israel Messaging," *Legal Insurrection*, January 1, 2017, https://legalinsurrection.com/2017/01/jewish-voice-for-peace-hijacks-chanukah-for-anti-israel-messaging/.

must treat Israel as a malevolent oppressor and see its policies as driven by false accusations of Muslim and Arab threats. The idea that these threats may in fact be very real, or that the policies may not be "repressive" but necessary counter-terror measures, was dismissed out of hand.[49]

Traditional antisemites, over the centuries, sought to convert Jews. JVP anti-semitism, to the contrary, seeks to convert *Judaism*—to a pro-Palestinian religion of anti-Israelism.

JVP's "Deadly Exchange" Campaign

In the summer of 2017, JVP rolled out a new campaign alleging that five of the leading organizations of American Jewish life—the Anti-Defamation league (ADL), the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), the American Jewish Committee (AJC), and Taglit-Birthright Israel—were deliberately conspiring to harm innocent Americans by helping to organize and fund training programs between US and Israeli law enforcement.

According to JVP, these trainings are "deadly exchanges" where American and Israeli security officials and experts "trade tips" and "share worst practices" that "extend discriminatory and repressive policing in both countries," including fatal police shootings of African-Americans and the "extrajudicial killings" of Palestinians in the West Bank. Initially, the campaign focused primarily on blaming Israel and its alleged mistreatment of Palestinians for the oppression of American minorities. The campaign highlighted the "Ferguson to Palestine" meme, positing a fictitious "intersectional equivalence" between the situation facing the Palestinians and the problems of policing in America's inner cities.[50] For years anti-Israel activists have been blaming Israel for US police shootings. But the notion that Israeli counterterror trainings are responsible for a complex and multifaceted phenomenon like militarized policing in the United States is an absurd accusation for which there isn't a shred of evidence.[51]

---

49 Ibid.

50 Yoav Fromer, "How Israel Is Being Framed: Why Palestine Is Not Ferguson," *Tablet*, December 3, 2015, http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/195487/how-israel-is-being-framed.

51 William A. Jacobson, "Exposed: Years-Long Effort to Blame Israel for U.S. Police Shootings of Blacks," *Legal Insurrection*, July 18, 2016, https://legalinsurrection.com/2016/07/exposed-years-long-effort-to-blame-israel-for-u-s-police-shootings-of-blacks/; Alan Dershowitz, "Alan Dershowitz: Whom Do Bigots Blame for Police Shootings in the U.S.? Israel, Of Course!," *The Algemeiner*, July 13, 2016, http://www.algemeiner.com/2016/07/13/alan-dershowitz-whom-do-bigots-blame-for-police-shootings-in-america-israel-of-course/.

"Deadly Exchange" conceives of Israel as a malevolent part of a wider Jewish conspiracy. The Jewish state thus serves the role that the Jews historically have served in international conspiracy theories.[52] JVP's more recent campaign materials double down on this foundational antisemitic trope by alleging that mainstay organizations of American Jewry are co-conspirators in a nefarious mission to oppress their fellow citizens, including people of color, as well as immigrant groups. That is, Jewish American organizations are cast as a "hidden and moneyed force" behind the degradation of societies and the manipulation of governments[53]—a claim right out of the infamous antisemitic forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion.*

JVP is thus at the forefront of an effort to stoke racial tension and hatred of Jews, by portraying Israel and its American supporters as oppressors (and even murderers) of minorities.[54] JVP here is no longer merely condoning or excusing anti-Jewish hatred but is in fact producing and disseminating it. As one astute observer of the campaign recently put it, JVP has now itself become "nothing other than an antisemitic organization."[55]

It's important to note that the "Deadly Exchange" campaign has been widely condemned within the North American Jewish community. The ADL released a blistering statement, charging JVP with "taking increasingly radical positions and … questionable tactics in pursuit of its mission to diminish support for Israel."[56] The criticism has come from the Jewish left too, by some who are often otherwise sympathetic to JVP and even to BDS. For example, Rabbi Jill Jacobs slammed the campaign for veering uncomfortably close to antisemitism. Commenting in *Ha'aretz*, another prominent left-leaning (i.e. Israel-criticizing) Canadian scholar also condemned JVP for its unsubstantiated insinuation of a Jewish cabal out to harm America's minority communities:[57] "Saying that Jewish groups are the primary drivers of US aid to Israel and for the scourge of institutionalized racism in America makes me queasy in that the causal logic is so deeply implied but so empirically thin as to imply a secret conspiracy." JVP's Vilkomerson promised to take this critical "feedback" into account,[58] but in fact

---

52 Jacobson, "Exposed: Years-Long Effort."
53 Bennett, "Antisemitism of the so-called Jewish Voice for Peace."
54 Jacobson, "Exposed: Years-Long Effort."
55 Bennett, "Antisemitism of the so-called Jewish Voice for Peace."
56 ADL, "Jewish Voice for Peace."
57 Mira Sucharov, "Jews Drive U.S. Police Brutality against People of Color? JVP Crosses Over into Antisemitism," *Ha'aretz*, July 10, 2017, https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/has-jewish-voice-for-peace-crossed-the-line-into-anti-semitism-1.5492843.
58 Rebecca Vilkomerson, "Own It to Fight It: Yes, We Jews Are Complicit in Violence against Palestinians and People of Color," *Ha'aretz*, July 19, 2017, https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/u-s-jews-complicit-in-violence-against-palestinians-people-of-color-1.5431275.

the group has only doubled down. In reaction to the ADL statement, JVP took pride in the campaign having "hit a nerve" and questioned the civil rights organization's liberal credentials. It then opened an online petition which calls on the ADL to end its funding of the US-Israel training programs.

As of this writing, JVP's "Deadly Exchange" campaign continues to resonate in progressive circles. Recently, Tamika Mallory, one of the co-organizers of the Women's March and a defender of the notorious antisemite Louis Farrakhan, specifically referred to the campaign's central claims in castigating Starbucks for hiring the ADL to conduct anti-bias training for its employees, claiming that the "ADL is CONSTANTLY attacking black and brown people."[59] By the end of 2018, JVP could proudly proclaim its campaign's first successes, as several local government entities—Durham, NC, Northampton, MA, and the Vermont State Police—announced their disengagement from US-Israel police exchange programs.[60]

JVP's Campaign Targeting Birthright

JVP's most recent initiative takes aim at Taglit-Birthright Israel, by far the most successful and largest Jewish educational endeavor in the world, which since 1999 has sponsored free ten-day trips to Israel for young diaspora Jews (between the ages of 18 and 26) aimed at strengthening their Jewish identity and connection to Israel, its people, and Jewish heritage. Political viewpoints aren't reviewed for eligibility purposes, and Jews from all recognized denominations are welcome. In nearly 20 years, it has brought over 600,000 Jewish young adults to Israel, from 67 countries (including 50 US states) and from nearly 1,000 colleges. While they are in Israel, 80,000 Israeli peers have connected with them during the visits.

Birthright is funded through a public-private partnership between the Israeli government, Jewish Federations, and American donors. Original funders included Michael Steinhardt and Charles Bronfman; in recent years Sheldon

---

[59] Ben Sales, "How a Jewish Civil Rights Group Became a Villain on the Far Left," *JTA*, April 19, 2018, https://www.jta.org/2018/04/19/news-opinion/jewish-civil-rights-group-became-villain-far-left-2. Starbucks subsequently complied and demoted the ADL.

[60] Miriam Elman, "Anti-Semitic 'Deadly Exchange' Campaign Can Be Defeated When Local Pro-Israel Groups Respond Quickly," *Legal Insurrection*, December 9, 2018, https://legalinsurrection.com/2018/12/anti-semitic-deadly-exchange-campaign-can-be-defeated-when-local-pro-israel-groups-respond-quickly/; Miriam Elman, "Demonization: Durham NC City Council Bans Police Exchanges with Israel," *Legal Insurrection*, April 22, 2018, https://legalinsurrection.com/2018/04/demonization-durham-nc-city-council-bans-police-exchanges-with-israel/; Tobin, "The BDS Fifth Column"; Carolyn Glick, "Column One: Time to Cut JVP Down to Size," *Jerusalem Post*, April 20, 2018, https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Column-One-Time-to-cut-JVP-down-to-size-551291.

Adelson—the casino billionaire, GOP mega-donor, and Netanyahu supporter—has become its largest benefactor. To hear JVP tell it, young people who go on Birthright come out of it with the "politics of Adelson." But scholarly studies disprove this.[61] Research conducted by the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University shows that Birthright does positively alter the future trajectory that participants have with regard to engagement in Jewish life and their connection to Israel, and their support for Israel rises across the board. But Birthright participants don't come away with right-wing political viewpoints about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For example, the trips have no effect on participant attitudes regarding West Bank settlement: participants are no more likely to oppose dismantling settlements than are applicants to the program who ultimately did not participate. Birthright, for its part, views itself as an apolitical Zionist program that's neither on the right or left, that aims merely to foster homeland attachment without promoting any narrowly-construed political narrative.[62]

In its "Return the Birthright" national campaign, JVP proudly states that "Israel is not our birthright" and calls on young Jews to reject the "tempting offer" to participate in the "racist Birthright tour of Israel." According to Ben Lorber, JVP's campus coordinator, the campaign grew out of several anti-Birthright initiatives on individual campuses which "inspired" JVP's leadership to take the initiative to "campuses across the country."[63] Separate pages on its website invite people to hold workshops and teach-ins challenging Birthright on campuses and offer "templates and resources." JVP has also produced a list of dozens of "alternative tours" to Israel and the West Bank. They include outfits with innocuous sounding names, like the International Solidarity Movement and Green Olive Tours, but which deliver anti-Israel propaganda while encouraging tourists to clash with Israel's police and security forces at checkpoints and at Palestinian protests.

In this campaign, JVP and its allies, such as the left-wing group IfNotNow, aim to stop American Jewish students from participating in a rewarding educational opportunity that enables them to engage with students and their peers overseas. But in trying to undermine this program they are not merely opposing certain policies that they may legitimately disagree with: they are opposing the very idea of young American Jews developing an attachment to the Jewish people, to Jewish history, and to Jewish rights. They are opposing, in a word, the

---

[61] Theodore Sasson et al., "Does Taglit-Birthright Israel Foster Long Distance Nationalism?," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 20, no. 4 (November 2014).

[62] Of course, for some anti-Israel activists this simply *is* a right-wing position.

[63] Allison Kaplan Sommer, "Jewish Voice for Peace Urges Young Jews to Boycott Birthright Israel," *Ha'aretz*, September 2, 2017, https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/jewish-voice-for-peace-urges-young-jews-to-boycott-birthright-1.5447614.

growth of Jewish identity. And that, in another word, is a clear expression of antisemitism.[64]

Conclusion

Jewish Voice for Peace is an extremist hate group that enables, legitimizes, and mainstreams antisemitism by providing a façade and veneer of Jewish legitimacy for the anti-Israel BDS movement.[65] JVP isn't a Jewish group. Rather, it's a far-left-wing group that purports to be inspired by the Jewish tradition of social activism. Appropriating the language of human rights and social justice, JVP presents itself as committed merely to ending Israel's "occupation" and to advancing civil liberties and democracy through non-violent means. But its tactics and affiliations tell a very different story. The reality is that JVP promotes and uplifts killers of Jews and stands proudly with terrorists; partners with

[64] Founded in 2014 to protest Israel's counter-terror operations against Hamas, IfNotNow (INN) is similar to JVP in that it also attempts to appeal to young American Jews. Branding itself as an organization merely opposed to Israel's occupation and "neutral" regarding BDS, Zionism, and the two-state-solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, INN has sought in recent years to position itself within the leftist mainstream and has had some measure of success in doing so (see Abraham Riesman, "The Jewish Revolt," *New York Magazine*, July 12, 2018, http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2018/07/ifnotnow-birthright-ramah-bds-israel.html). But while some still consider INN to be a legitimate voice, its recent collaborative work with JVP and the fact that most of its leading activists are today also members of JVP underscore INN's radical turn and the growing relationship between the two groups. For example, in tandem with JVP, it has appropriated Passover themes and holiday rituals to promote anti-Israel "liberation" seders on college campuses (see Aiden Pink and Helen Chernikoff, "Harvard Students Walk a Careful Line to Host Anti-Occupation 'Liberation' Seder," *Forward*, March 30, 2018, https://forward.com/news/national/397771/harvard-students-walk-a-careful-line-to-host-an-occupation-liberation/). INN has also joined JVP's campaign against Birthright, most notably by orchestrating a number of "walk-outs" from its trips while participants were already in Israel (see Jeremy Sharon, "IfNotNow Gatecrash New Birthright Group, Go on East Jerusalem Tour," *Jerusalem Post*, July 15, 2018, https://www.jpost.com/Diaspora/IfNotNow-gatecrash-new-Birthright-group-go-on-east-Jerusalem-tour-562567), and is also now actively promoting its "Deadly Exchange" initiative. Perhaps most indicative of INN's increasing radicalization was its recent anti-Israel "street actions" that involved reciting Kaddish, the Jewish mourners' prayer, for Hamas militants who were killed in the course of attempted terrorist infiltrations at the Israel-Gaza border (see Tzvi Lev, "'Kaddish' for Dead Gazans?," *Israel National News*, April 12, 2018, http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/244319). For an in-depth analysis of JVP's collaboration with IfNotNow, see the report by the antisemitism watchdog group Canary Mission ("JVP's Collaboration with IfNotNow," Canary Mission, November 8, 2018, https://canarymission.org/blog/post/JVP_and_INN).

[65] Jonathan S. Tobin, "Call Out Jewish Voice for Peace for What They Are: Anti-Peace Extremists," *Ha'aretz*, September 6, 2017, https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-call-out-jewish-voice-for-peace-for-what-they-are-anti-peace-extremists-1.5448695.

extremist individuals and groups who demonize and delegitimize Israel while propagating negative stereotypes of Jews; usurps Jewish holidays and faith-based traditions in order to vilify Israel; bullies, harasses, and ostracizes Jews who connect and identify with Israel; works to deflect allegations of antisemitism by standing "as Jews" in support of their racist allies; and disseminates anti-Jewish propaganda and traffics in traditional antisemitic canards and tropes about Jewish money and power.

Indeed, JVP undermines the fight against antisemitism by mainstreaming anti-Jewish discrimination and hatred. It normalizes the anti-Israel movement's assault on Jewish identity by shielding anti-Israel activists and the global BDS movement from accusations of antisemitism. More worrisome, JVP is *itself* now trafficking in antisemitism. Its increasingly radical rhetoric and activism not only demonstrate a callous disregard for Jewish identity but have also opened up a dangerous space for antisemitism among progressives.[66] There's now an astonishing amount of evidence to suggest that JVP isn't just another liberal Jewish activist organization but is in fact a radical and reactionary movement that directly puts Jews at risk.

---

[66] Mazzig, "JVP's Summer of Discontent"; Jarrod Tanny, "Jewish Voice for Peace Is Spreading Hate on Campus: It's Time for Jewish Academics to Speak Up," *Tablet*, July 5, 2017, http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/239913/jewish-voice-for-peace-campus; John-Paul Pagano, "How Anti-Semitism's True Origin Makes It Invisible to the Left," *Forward*, January 29, 2018, https://forward.com/opinion/393107/how-anti-semitisms-true-origin-makes-it-invisible-to-the-left/.

Holocaust Denial on the Web:
Confronting the Future of Antisemitism

Joel Finkelstein, Corinne E. Blackmer,
and Charles Rubin

Expressions of public hostility to Jews and Jewish life presage cycles of violence in the history of antisemitism. As public life becomes digitized in online social networks, reports from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and other groups suggest that public hostility, especially in the form of online hate speech, increasingly targets Jews. As this new, digital antisemitism infects electronic public life, extremist hate groups, such as the alt-right, simultaneously exhibit increasingly antisemitic tropes in real world events. Several questions now face the Jewish community about the nature and power of this digital antisemitism as it breaches the surface of daily life. Can we capture how hostile groups infect networks with antisemitic hostility? Does network antisemitism spread between social networks, and, if so, can we gain a better vantage on how it spreads? How can networks deal with the increasing innovation that hate groups use to avoid detection to spread hate between and within networks? The denial of the Holocaust serves as a perfect and pertinent example of how antisemitic propaganda is mutating online. Its plausibility as misinformed historical criticism allows it to act as a "dog whistle" that spreads hatred towards Jews, on the one hand, and obscures the historical consequences of doing so, on the other. Focusing on digital Holocaust denial, we explore new methods to better describe and expose the true intentions behind these dog whistles with machine learning tools. We discuss the ramifications of these new methods and conclude by calling for a new framework for combating the world's oldest hatred on its newest technological frontier.

Introduction

After his July 2018 remarks about permitting Holocaust deniers on Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg incited an impassioned series of op-eds,[1] fiery responses,[2] and oblique apologies.[3] Confronted about the contradictory standards of censorship on his network during an interview with Kara Swisher, Zuckerberg volunteered that,

---

[1] Deborah Lipstadt, "Zuckerberg's Comments Give Holocaust Deniers an Opening," *CNN*, July 18, 2018.

[2] Alex Hern, "Mark Zuckerberg's Comments on Holocaust Denial Irresponsible," *Guardian*, July 19, 2018.

[3] Heather Kelly, "Mark Zuckerberg Clarifies His Holocaust Comments," *CNN*, July 18, 2018.

I'm Jewish, and there's a set of people who deny that the Holocaust happened. I find that deeply offensive. But at the end of the day, I don't believe that our platform should take that down because I think there are things that different people get wrong. I don't think that they're intentionally getting it wrong, but I think it's hard to impugn intent and to understand the intent.[4]

His confusing statement—did he mean "impugn" or "impute" intent?—engages an issue that increasing numbers of web platforms and communities confront: namely, whether and how to referee political tribalism. Holocaust denial figures prominently within this broader context. Zuckerberg's troublingly diffident response constitutes a common trope that mixes a focus on personal offense with an absence of concern over the gross lies that constitute Holocaust denial. This *laissez-faire* attitude testifies to what the internet does obsessively: obscure the difference between high and low-quality information and between niche and mainstream ideas and opinions. Everyone on the internet has his or her own truth. As broadcasting these "truths" becomes easier and easier, web platforms now struggle to recreate and justify, often against their libertarian inclinations, the filtering functions once performed by information choke-point institutions such as print publishers and libraries.

What Zuckerberg finds hard to do—to both impugn and understand the intent of Holocaust deniers—could serve as a rationale for Facebook, or other web platforms, to decide against complicity in the spread of false, malicious, and potentially dangerous ideas. Historians have documented abundantly that Holocaust denial has nothing to do with historical fact. However, defending Zuckerberg's caution with respect to the *intent* of the deniers might conceivably still be possible. But knowing the intentions of others can be tricky, and before impugning the intentions of Holocaust deniers, having reasonable confidence in imputing the correct intentions to them is necessary. Certainly, the standard of historical knowledge in 21st-century America does not stand very high. Could it be that the deniers on Facebook and the web generally are innocently ignorant, and their error subject to correction by properly vetted Holocaust "units" in K-12 history courses or by campaigns of public education to which Mark Zuckerberg might lend financial support?

But the situation is not quite so simple as this sounds. Using big data techniques of semantic analysis enables an examination of where Holocaust denial emerges on the web and provides tools to understand the intentions that inform it. These techniques reveal that, far from being unique to Facebook, a wave of Holocaust denial is now taking shape in dark corners of the internet, especially in alt-right communities. The intention informing such denial is nothing other than rabid antisemitism.

---

[4] Ibid.

The research on this phenomenon addresses four critical questions:

1. What does Holocaust denial look like in fringe web communities?
2. Can the rise of Holocaust denial in fringe web communities be quantitatively charted over time?
3. Can the contexts and narratives associated with these contexts enable the determination of intent?
4. Can illuminating the taxonomy of language around Holocaust denial show how it is weaponized and help examine its spread?

A Plague of Frogs:
Online Antisemitism in Fringe Web Communities

Figure 1: Representative Holocaust images taken from 4chan's /pol/, an influential alt-right message board, and Gab, a "free speech" Twitter clone that attracts banned Twitter users with alt-right ideologies. On the left stands the "kekistani" flag, the official flag of /pol/ that pays obvious homage to the Nazi flag, while "Pepe the Frog" engages in conspicuously antisemitic genocide against Jewish figures (right) and mainstream social networks (left) that stand in the place of the Jew.

The Network Contagion Research Institute (NCRI) monitors some of the largest and most notorious alt-right and fringe communities on the web and charts the spread of hate among them. The collected and analyzed data from its research reveals an eruption of new adjectives and images that targets the Holocaust from within the alt-right. This phenomenon is especially true of 4chan, on its notorious Politically Incorrect message board /pol/, which is one of the most influential alt-right propaganda hubs. Users on /pol/ infamously weaponize putatively humorous images and racial slurs (see Figure 1). While /pol/ users often defend their behavior by pointing to the humor and claiming their actions are only "for the lulz," /pol/ actually attracts neo-Nazi users and propaganda.[5] Pepe, the frog meme that regularly serves as the mascot for the alt-right's propaganda, wears an innocent smile while committing genocidal acts. The goal of such trolling

---

5 "For the lulz" is internet slang for "for the laughs."

imagery includes inducing moral outrage in outsiders as a way to cement identity among insiders, all under the guise of images that can make racial attacks look like jokes.

Hostility disguised as naiveté and humor is not accidental in this context. The amphibian nature of Pepe the Frog, according to /pol/ ideology itself,[6] reflects worship of amphibian-like ambiguity or double speak. As part of its *Welt-anschauung*, or "cult of Kek," /pol/ uses this cartoonish, bumptious ambiguity to "red pill" (i.e. reveal the underlying but otherwise hidden truth about the world). With a high volume of hate-filled posts, the goal involves sowing chaos by exposing the supposed lies upon which the mainstream operates, thus changing normative concepts of what constitutes acceptable speech. Given that many white nationalists are running for office, they appear to be succeeding.[7]

Not coincidentally, much of this "red pilling" falls into the category of anti-semitism—here understood as the organization of politics against the Jews—that now finds firm footing in alt-right fringe web communities. Holocaust denial plays a pivotal role in this political attack. Because Jews, who are presented as powerful conspirators who oppress the nations in which they reside, cannot simultaneously be the victims of the most systematic genocide ever historically documented, Holocaust denial becomes not only necessary but also inevitable.

Holocaust Denial on Fringe Web
Communities over Time

Figure 2 represents temporal trends in the usage of the word Holocaust in fringe web communities. The NCRI has tracked a rise in online hate during watershed political events, such as the election of Donald Trump in 2016 and the Char-lottesville "Unite the Right" rally in 2018. Such findings come as no shock. Compared to the day of the 2016 election (see red dotted line), the proportion of posts using the word Holocaust on /pol/ has nearly doubled, at times accounting for close to a 1,300 comments (see chart on left), and comprising nearly 200,000 total comments since the beginning of the investigation. Newer fringe networks like Gab, a Twitter clone with a large alt-right user-base, further demonstrate this trend (see chart on right), with a clear growth of Holocaust fixation that once again seems to soar after the 2016 election and comprises another 50,000 posts. Traces of the raw number of these comments show similar trends over time.

---

6 "The Truth about Pepe the Frog and the Cult of Keke," https://pepethefrogfaith. wordpress.com, last accessed September 29, 2018.

7 Juliana Kaplan and Alyssa Fisher, "Record Number of Neo-Nazis and White Nation-alists Running for Office in the U.S.," *Ha'aretz*, July 15, 2018, https://www.haaretz.com/ us-news/record-breaking-number-of-white-nationalists-run-for-office-in-u-s-1.6272263.
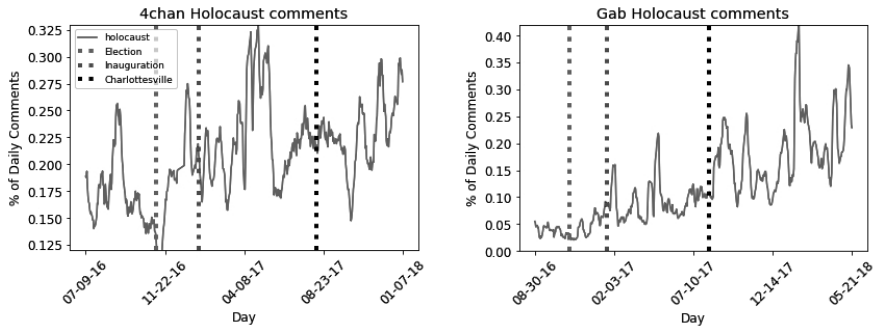
Figure 2: A trace of the total number of comments per day in /pol/ (left) and Gab (right) that contain the word Holocaust. The Y-axis represents the percentage of total comments per day, and the X axis represents consecutive days of recorded data. Our data show an overall and sustained increase in the use of the word Holocaust, with a notable shift in popularity after the election.

How might intent and motivation be determined on these platforms? After all, according to Mark Zuckerberg, this escalating fixation on the Holocaust might simply constitute a misunderstanding on the part of the users who promulgate it. Perhaps these networks are engaged in a trendy new interest in academic historical speculation concerning the Second World War. One means to commonly judge intent involves looking at or listening to what people have to say about their own intentions. Given the possibility of deliberate deception or deficits of self-knowledge, this method cannot of course claim perfection. But at the same time, as an initial foray into this question, this method cannot be avoided. In principle, a sufficiently large team of researchers could read through all this material and in some disciplined fashion draw at least preliminary conclusions about the intentions behind its authors. But today there are machine-learning tools that can to a significant degree automate this tedious, labor-intensive process.

Machine Learning Dissects the Taxonomy of Holocaust Denial on the Alt-Right

As an advanced word association algorithm, the program word2vec[8] can be employed to understand how any given community uses words. Word2vec learns exactly which words are used in context with each other and maps their associations, making it possible to quantify how semantically close two or more words stand in relation to each other. After having collected all the posts on

---

8 Tomas Mikolov et al., "Efficient estimation of word representations in vector space," arXiv:1301.3781v3 [cs.CL], last revised September 7, 2013.

/pol/ for the past two years, researchers could determine the uses of the word Holocaust. Accomplishing this end involved creating a graph with nodes representing words obtained from the word2vec model and connecting arcs representing the distances between words as measured by their cosine similarity, itself a measure of the associative strength between the words as obtained from the trained word2vec model.[9] In other words, we created a map of "meaning communities" with clusters that represent different ways that /pol/ uses the word Holocaust, thus yielding a clear picture of intention.[10] Figure 3 represents the results of this mapping.
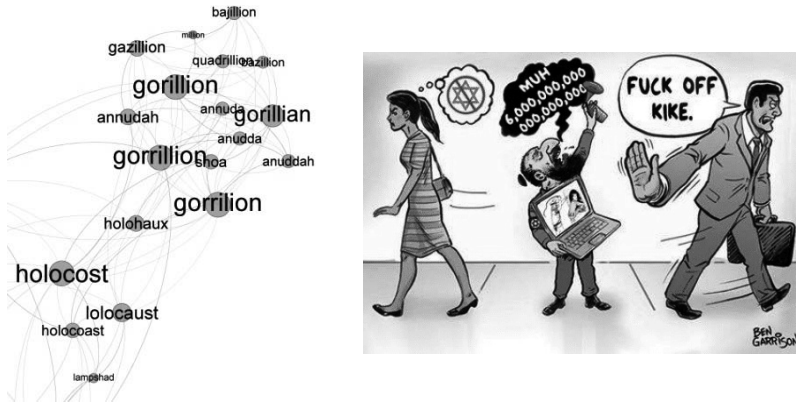
Figure 3: The "lolocaust" cluster (left) shows a series of poisonous jokes about the Holocaust as a hoax, as well as an eruption of new terms that caricature its human toll as overstated propaganda. This hostile rhetoric is also weaponized in the form of comic images or memes (right) by the community in /pol/.

The first group examined is the "lolocaust," "holohoax," and "gorrillion" cluster (left). These terms represent the kind of weaponized rhetoric that appears regularly on /pol/. Furthermore, such terms show high levels of variation, indicating the mutation pressure that occurs as posters seek to develop memes that others will widely adopt. For instance, the words "gorrillion," "bajillion," "gazillion," and so forth connote that Jews have purposefully inflated the numbers

---

9 Specifically, we built a graph that includes the two-hop ego network from the word "holocaust" for all the cosine distances that are less or equal to a pre-defined threshold (we select it to 0.4 to get the most relevant words and for readability purposes, see Joel Finkelstein et al., "A Quantitative Approach to Understanding Online Antisemitism," arXiv:1809.01644v2 [cs.CY], last revised November 24, 2019, for methods). Each community of words is comprised of the most similar terms for the seed term Holocaust, and then their most cosine-similar terms populating each community. The size of the word represents relative degree of the terms within the community.

10 Finkelstein, "A Quantitative Approach."

murdered during the Holocaust for propaganda purposes. The term "holohoax," associated with this cluster, inflates this claim by questioning the reality of the Holocaust itself. "Lolocaust" either implies that there is something laughable about the benighted people who have bought into the Holocaust myth or simply laughs in the face of the unspeakably brutal reality of the event.[11] Perhaps the most reprehensible of these inventive labels is the "holocoaster," a term that accompanies depictions of Auschwitz as a recreational thrill ride as represented in Figure 4. Memes collected from /pol/ reveal the weaponization of several other words in images (see image on right). Finally, there is the term "annudah." Any doubt that might still be entertained about conscious antisemitic intent suggested by the clustering of these words is eliminated by the mocking presence of this word in the cluster. "Annudah" denotes a cartoonish, New York-accented way of saying "another." In context, it constitutes naked propaganda to organize another episode of political hate against Jews, either in the form of mocking supposedly baseless fears about another Holocaust or else by threatening to perform another, more effective one.

Figure 4: The "Holocoaster"

(((History))) and Holodomor

In two other clusters, which are shown in Figure 5, Holocaust denial (left) and victim competition (right) serve as central themes to the conversations about the Holocaust. In the denial cluster, the so-called echo symbol, represented by triple parentheses (((triple parentheses))), stands for the effort to expose the Jewish historical conspiracy of the Holocaust. Triple parentheses surround the word (((history))), which appears in the cluster alongside denial and revision. These clusters imply that for /pol/ users, Jews control—and falsify—the historical narrative.

---

[11] Technically, the term "lolocaust" does not convey Holocaust denial. In this case, it means that the Holocaust happened and that it is hilarious or that the Jews deserved what they had coming to them.

Figure 5: Visualization of the "denier/revision" cluster (left) and the "Holodomor" cluster (right). Middle: Image showing victim competition with Jews as perpetrators on /pol/.

The second cluster adds elements of Jewish conspiracy and victim competition fantasies into the mix. The word Holodomor looms largest in this cluster. Factions in the alt-right romanticize themselves as an ethnic military and intelligence vanguard acting to protect civilization against Jews seeking to commit so-called White Genocide. The fake history that alt-right groups marshal for this historical phantasm involves the putative Jewish genocide against four million ethnic Ukrainians in the preposterous Holodomor conspiracy.[12] Although ordered by Stalin, the alt-right promotes the lie of Jewish genocide against gentiles on the basis of the idea that Jews figured prominently among the (((Bolsheviks))) who perpetrated this atrocity. "Katyn conspiracies" constitute yet another such example in this cluster, as neo-Nazi conspiracy theorists accuse Jews of perpetrating gentile massacres in the Katyn forests of Ukraine. Finally, numerous right-wing conspiracy theorists posit that Lavrentiy Beria, the head of Stalin's secret police and the perpetrator of Holodomor, was Jewish.[13] This particular cluster shows how discussion of the Holocaust presents Jews as bloodthirsty and genocidal perpetrators and the gentiles as their hapless victims. This is what is meant by victim competition, a theme also weaponized in memes on /pol/ (see Figure 5, middle).

Gab and Signs of Rhetorical Contagion

Although /pol/ serves as an example of how users propagandize Holocaust rhetoric, agitprop, by its nature, is meant to be shared and disseminated. In the age of social media, platforms can infect one another with both memes and rhetoric. As the language and modes of Holocaust denial evolve, the question whether or not this infection spreads among these web communities becomes

---

[12] "Holodomor Info," https://holodomorinfo.com, last accessed September 29, 2018.
[13] "Death of Communism," https://www.deathofcommunism.com, last accessed September 29, 2018.

critical. Examining this issue involves using the word2vec model for visualization analysis of the use of the word Holocaust on Gab.
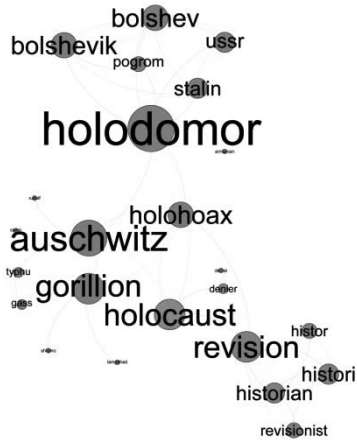
Figure 6: A 2-hop ego network visualization of the use of the word Holocaust on Gab.

The resulting visualization (Figure 6) reveals undeniable signs of inter-community contagion of rhetoric surrounding the Holocaust. The graph demonstrates two interesting features, beginning with the redundancy of the word communities. The Holodomor and victim competition cluster, the "holohoax" and "gorrillion" exaggeration cluster, and the revision cluster show a strong overlap with the visualization from /pol/. The second interesting feature is the relative concentration or compression of the communities. Gab contains fewer word variants for each theme. For example, where /pol/ has "gazillion," "gabillion," "quadrillion," "gorrillion" and "bajillion," Gab only utilizes "gorrillion." The same trend holds true for use of the term "holohaux" on Gab, whereas "lolocaust," "holohoax," "holocoast" and "holohaux" together evince greater diversity on /pol/. While not constituting definitive proof, this trend toward selectivity implies directionality for Holocaust denial spread. The evidence suggests that /pol/ *incubates* neologisms and rhetorical mutations, while GAB *selects* among these terms and *converges* on the use of particular ones.

From these insights, it is possible to decode the meaning of Holocaust fixation on both /pol/ and Gab. Victim competition,[14] conspiratorial resentment, and organized hate towards Jewish life are ubiquitous in conversations about the Holocaust in alt-right web communities. This finding is consistent with other research that examines the various psychological components of antisemitism

---

[14] For an extended discussion of the concept of victim competition, see Michal Bilewicz et al., "Harmful Ideas: The Structure and Consequences of Anti-Semitic Beliefs in Poland," *Political Psychology* 34, no. 6 (2013): 821-839.

and shows that Holocaust disregard and denial comprise a core component of modern antisemitism internationally.[15] These studies show that victim competition—or the notion that "our" in-group is the one that really suffers—strongly predicts for this form of antisemitism and correlates with the belief that Jews conspire to control world events.[16] Victim competition and resentment motivate Holocaust deniers. Holocaust denial correlates strongly with a cluster of otherwise undeniably antisemitic beliefs and behaviors. It flows directly from antisemitism. They are rabid antisemites. It is not just an innocent mistake.

If Mark Zuckerberg were reading this chapter, he would probably ask what this has to do with him and Facebook? The problem for Zuckerberg is that while he may not be willing to impugn or impute intent to the people who deny the Holocaust, *they definitely seem willing to impugn his intent*. Those who deny the Holocaust share none of Zuckerberg's ambivalence, least of all about his network. In analyses, it turns out that the term Facebook is associated with a conspiratorial Jewish enterprise that reflects all the basic tactics which animate Holocaust denial. From "kikebook" and "jewbook" to "goybook" and "faceberg," a slew of derivative and conspiratorial antisemitic fantasies emerge as the closest terms to "Facebook" on /pol/ (see Table 1). Whatever else is true, this suggests that the same motivation that actively propagandizes Holocaust denial in the alt-right has turned its resentful gaze on Facebook itself.

Term	Cosine similarity
"fb"	0.93
"kikebook"	0.92
"faceberg"	0.89
"jewbook"	0.88
"goybook"	0.83

Table 1: A list of the top five similar words to Facebook on /pol/
(in terms of cosine similarity).

What Might Be Done?

This research suggests that neither ignorance nor misunderstanding are at the root of Holocaust denial on fringe networks. Rather, Holocaust denial is an

---

[15] Ibid.

[16] Julia C. Becker, Ulrich Wagner, and Oliver Christ, "Consequences of the 2008 Financial Crisis for Intergroup Relations: The Role of Perceived Threat and Causal Attributions," *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations* 14, no. 6 (2011): 871-885.

expression of antisemitic resentment and victim competition. Furthermore, the posts of users on /pol/ and Gab show evidence of collaboration, specialization, and division of labor. The most chilling implication of these findings is therefore not merely that Holocaust denial is "on the rise" on the internet but that an autonomous and self-organized propaganda machine has begun to take shape on the internet and across platforms formed consciously and manifestly for political organization against Jewish life. As such machinery is responsive, it can opportunistically adapt to world events, capture changes in resentment, and recruit. It can thus become a conduit for the populist waves of global antisemitism and a means of organizing them more effectively.

As the most ancient hatred in the world equips itself with the most modern technological tools, the capacity to monitor and illuminate its spread will prove crucial, we believe, in combating it. What's required is a systematic and organized effort that, like a successful immune system, is better organized and informed than the pathogens it is fighting. This in turn will require the kinds of quantitative tools, technology, and research outlined above, as well as real-time capacities to monitor and ultimately respond to critical surges of hate.

But what exactly should be *done* with such information remains a vexing question.

A Chinese-scale effort at censorship could help prevent American users from readily accessing this Holocaust denial material, but such a course of action would come with grave material, political, moral, and social costs of its own. Similarly, otherwise responsible measures instituted by individual platforms to monitor and perhaps suppress what appears on their sites will only feed the resentment of those who are censored. Indeed, active censorship might well encourage their conspiratorial views of the world. Perhaps such efforts could confine antisemitic material to the web equivalent of red-light districts, thus assigning such sourced material the moral opprobrium of the normative culture. Then again, as mentioned earlier, such red-light districts actually become "red-zones" of contagion that infect one another as well as mainstream web communities. Thus, the very censorship aimed at ostracizing these communities for their antisocial behavior places selection pressure on the evolving, complex, and transgressive character of the self-organized machinery that propagates antisocial politically driven hatreds.

Indeed, among the first things that Jews have done to counter online antisemitism has been to turn to mainstream networks like Twitter and Facebook and demand their protection as digital citizens. The result has been a slew of censorship of racist and antisemitic content as judged by each network. This tactic has been problematic on a number of levels. To begin with, mainstream web censorship itself carries ideological baggage. For instance, it often leaves left-wing antisemitic content, such as from Linda Sarsour or Jeremy Corbyn,

intentionally unmolested.[17] The left famously disguises its antisemitism as anti-Zionism. This makes it harder to detect and harder to disrupt because of the obfuscation. There are no clear limits or patently abusive terms employed in left-wing anti-Zionism, even though studies show that left-wing anti-Zionism correlates highly with antisemitism.[18] One task of the system involves improved delineation of such limits and provoking civic discussion around threshold cases, such as Linda Sarsour saying "nothing is creepier than Zionism." It does not have to be a red flag to coordinate such a response. Yellow flags work well too—maybe even better—because they preserve nuance and demand clarification. This is how the network could potentially disrupt left-wing antisemitism.

But on the extreme right, the forces of censorship are pursued far more religiously. Censorship leads right-wing extremist networks to adapt and mutate, like any good pathogen does in the face of an immune response, into a variety of cryptic language, rhetoric, and images that serve as dog whistles and double entendres for their ideology. Indeed, individuals on the extreme right, who themselves are censored or banned from mainstream communities, increasingly find themselves marginalized to the very alt-right extremist networks that generate racist content. This means that biased, blanket censorship could be exacerbating the very problem it seeks to solve. Even as it ignores chilling examples of left-wing extremism that alienate Jewish life on mainstream networks, it further radicalizes and energizes the very right-wing extremism it so vociferously bans.

In fact, network antisemitism should not be conceived as a problem with a once-and-for-all or definitive solution. If scholars such as Ruth Wisse are correct, the intractability of antisemitism is consistent with its nature as well as its social and political functions.[19] Wisse argues that antisemitism represents an organizing tool for political activity, one that the left and the right can use with equal facility. Ambitious, disaffected people will inevitably manipulate this particular tool to satisfy their own needs and ends. In the contemporary information environment of our culture, unfortunately, the costs of indulging in anti-

---

[17] For a large quantitative analysis documenting how large Facebook groups fly under the platform's censorship radar and fail to police left-wing antisemitism, see Daniel Allington, "'Hitler Had a Valid Argument against *Some* Jews': Repertoires for the Denial of Antisemitism in Facebook Discussion of a Survey of Attitudes to Jews and Israel," *Discourse, Context and Media* 24 (2018).

[18] See, e.g., Daniel Staetsky, "Antisemitism in Contemporary Great Britain: A Study of Attitudes towards Jews and Israel," Institute for Jewish Policy Research Report, September 12, 2017, https://www.jpr.org.uk/publication?id=9993, last accessed December 31, 2018.

[19] Ruth R. Wisse, "The Functions of Anti-Semitism," *National Affairs*, no. 33 (Fall 2017), https://nationalaffairs.com/publications/detail/the-functions-of-anti-semitism, last accessed December 31, 2018.

semitism remain quite low. The question becomes not so much how to *prevent* such antisemitic activity but rather how to *organize* politics and society to make antisemitism both less inviting and less likely to be effective.

Finding ways to prevent toxic majorities from persecuting or oppressing vulnerable minorities is hardly a new problem. Indeed, it is inherent in any system that allows for self-government. As James Madison explains in *The Federalist* #10, the American constitutional system embodies a political logic whereby a somewhat inefficient representative government, coupled with encouragement of economic and social diversity, helps make the formation of politically effective and passionately dangerous majorities difficult. Fortunately, as vile as network antisemitism is, those behind it *so far* remain a small fraction of the American electorate. However, history teaches the prudence of not assuming that this will remain the case. Preventing toxic minorities from becoming toxic majorities will require a great deal of self-conscious organizational effort. Many organizations take the fight against antisemitism to be at least part of their civic duty in the post-Holocaust world. But when the Republican Party cannot organize well enough to keep self-professed Nazis from running under its banner, and when the left wing of the Democratic Party increasingly organizes around an anti-Zionism that is often openly antisemitic, it becomes difficult not to conclude that the political channels of self-government that might effectively oppose these tendencies are insufficient. These contemporary realities also call into question the efficacy of the traditional organizations mandated to protect against antisemitism. They use tools to deal with a problem that, with the advent of the web, has demonstrably moved beyond their control.

The question how to counter the dynamics of hate that social media have catalyzed thus does not lend itself to easy answers—most particularly the traditional answer of censorship. However, it is worth exploring whether the best and most civic American inclinations can be empowered by social media in the same way that the worst inclinations have been. Our research thus ends with a modest proposal. As social media changes norms towards hate in dialogue, perhaps experts can innovate tools and methods to counter this hate in ways that push back and defend the norms of non-fringe society. People of good will need mechanisms to see with their own eyes and hear with their own ears when our collective social norms come under attack. The tools outlined in this chapter can detect when those norms are violated. Imagine, now, if we could detect violations in real time. Imagine reporting outbreaks when and where they occur. Imagine recruiting human beings to demand greater humanization and understanding from one another, whenever dehumanization takes place.

The machine-learning tools and capabilities of the Network Contagion Research Institute showcased in this chapter could provide the basis for such a

response. The approaches deployed can decode and anticipate the cryptic languages on extremist networks. Like a good digital epidemiologist, these tools show how to track the severity of extremism and map its spread and influence within social media. Mapping the problem is of course only the beginning of the process, but it is an indispensable first step.

However, in order for this mapping to work, the global nature of the new hate calls for more cooperative solutions and policies. Simply suggesting that platforms self-censure or self-report, as in the case of Facebook, Twitter, and others, imposes severe limitations on efforts to deal with a global problem. To begin with, many of the hostile trends that appear in mainstream networks may arise from tendencies that can't be understood without global data capture outside the local community. How can local, individual platforms establish contextual understandings of hate nested in the data and language of other communities? Are platforms responsible for gathering data on all other communities and examining hateful trends there to make those determinations?

As part of a more global effort to create transparency around hate, an organization is therefore needed to gather anonymized data from web platforms to provide crucial insight on the state of hateful trends in social media. Such an organization can help dissect how hateful trends spread within and between platforms. However, this capacity for insight cannot be used as a punitive tool for selective political agendas. It must therefore be coupled with a capacity for real-time public dialogue with representative experts and ordinary people with conservative or liberal sympathies. As it converges on definitions and recommendations on combating hate, it must do so through publicly scrutinized dialogue. A middleman organization, acting as a public trust, could also help monitor web platforms and securely audit them with a view to creating transparency around hate and building actionable, cooperative efforts to combat it.

To merit this position, this trust should implement exacting standards of objectivity, political neutrality, and accountability. It must seek ideological—and even partisan—diversity in its leadership that reflects this. It must innovate ways to create transparency about how it handles private data even as it keeps the data private. It will be obligated to establish better epidemiological and theoretical approaches to measuring the spread of hate and its influence on networks with the best methods that computational social science has to offer. Working with government and acting with watchdog groups, such an organization must possess the social credibility to be entrusted with the special task of providing a global and cross-platform framework for understanding hate. It should use that trust for the purpose of creating transparency and self-reflection within the communities it monitors. The time to forge such a middleman network may be limited, however, as the normalization of antisemitism and hate already has a clear head start in mass culture. Addressing the current challenges thus requires that socially

responsible individuals undertake an historic effort to organize into a dedicated network to prevent "annudah" moral failure of historical proportions.

We believe that turning to the power of networks can thus change the nature of the conflict. Instead of permitting networks to alienate Jewish life as they currently do, properly equipped digital Jewish citizens can exercise the power of free speech to challenge antisemitism at the speed of electrons and across the globe. But this can happen *only* if responsible citizens organize as a network themselves. Coupling algorithms to human consideration, it is possible to deploy what might be called a civic immune response to incidences of anti-semitism and hate as they occur, when they occur, and in real time. In other words, a self-organized network can create transparency on other web networks by creating the capacity for feedback as it would exist in an actual public square.

We envision a collaborative system in which algorithms can flag content when it bears clear indicators of hate. In such a system, everyday users determine and/or vote on the levels of "hatefulness" when such comments are flagged and can also report hate in cases where the algorithms fail. Over time, the system can be trained by a select, democratic, and politically representative community of human users to enhance its overall accuracy. This cycle mirrors the adaptive response of immune systems, which are able to identify pathogens in the same way that our proposed algorithms can help detect predetermined and clear-cut cases of hate. In addition, the system can "learn" to detect new cases of pathogenic hate by updating its word2vec models to score new terms and by interacting with everyday human users who can report and deliberate on what they perceive to be hateful. This system is especially powerful because such a self-organized network can create the capacity for users to democratically monitor social media platforms rather than relying on platforms to monitor themselves. This system places the onus on actual humans to assume personal responsibility and work cooperatively with algorithms to determine what constitutes hate. It should be managed and designed to respect human rights even as it enhances the ability of people to hold criminals, networks, and abusers to account. It should work with web platforms, governments, and watchdog groups.

In an actual public square, individuals do not aggregate into anonymous echo chambers but rather face embodied, real-life consequences for violating norms and ethics around expressions of hate and antisemitism. When detecting such hate, our system aims to mirror this experience by deploying a coordinated response along real human lines to show that there are real human beings on the other side of the screen. Researchers have already shown that such interactions are effective, though not universally so, in changing antisocial behavior on digital social networks. As noted above, however, the time to forge such a coor-dinated network may be limited, as the normalization of antisemitism already has a clear head start in mass culture.

Intersectionality and the Jews[*]

Elliot Kaufman

Intersectionality is best understood not as a theory or intellectual framework but as a model of political organizing. It uses the concepts and language of social justice to bring together disparate groups in political coalitions. Notably, these rainbow coalitions reject the application of intersectional analysis of identity to groups that they consider powerful, such as whites and Jews. They countermand the theory and insist on understanding whites and Jews in highly reductive ways—not for a principled theoretical reason but because it could detract from the political goal of dismantling the power structure. Understanding Jews only as part of this power structure allows conspiracies to fester and leaves intersectional coalitions insensitive to antisemitism that presents as minority opposition to Jewish power.

Everyone understands why Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) wants to boycott Israel. SJP is explicitly pro-Palestine and aggressively anti-Israel; divestment campaigns seem to fulfill its essential purpose. It is not as clear why other campus groups join them. When a black student union or a Latinos Unidos chapter publicly embraces the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, a neutral observer might well think, "They don't have a dog in this fight."

Yet on many university campuses, the groups themselves dispute that premise. Invoking "intersectionality," racial, ethnic, gender, and sexuality-based student groups not only support radical action against Israel but also claim the cause as their own. Investigating intersectional ideas will help explain this phenomenon. Yet treating intersectionality as a set of arguments or a way of seeing the world gives it too little—or perhaps too much—credit. Intersectionality needs to be understood first as a model of political organizing, second as a conspiracy, and only third as a theory.

Let's begin with some examples.

At the end of 2014, peculiar posters were plastered all across the campus of Stanford University. The posters featured five bullet points. The first squarely connected Israel to American police violence. "Israel trains US police to deal with black people the way its occupation forces deal with Palestinians," it read. The second bullet point explained that Israeli airstrikes deliberately target Palestinian women and children. The third accused Israel of systematically sterilizing African immigrants to reduce its black population. The fourth laid out religious

---

discrimination against gays in Israel. The fifth linked the technology behind the Israeli "apartheid fence" to US efforts to "hunt down undocumented migrants."

The posters were the work of Stanford Out of Occupied Palestine, a rainbow coalition of nineteen student organizations, including the Black Student Union, MEChA (a large, radical Latino student group), the NAACP, Stanford Students for Queer Liberation, Stanford American Indian Association, the First Generation and/or Low-Income Partnership, and so on.[1] They joined together to pressure Stanford to divest from corporations that in any way supported the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. Their opposition on campus was the Coalition for Peace. This was an odd kind of coalition, consisting of only one group: the Jewish Student Association.

Stanford Out of Occupied Palestine was a well-oiled machine. Its leaders were able to whip their constituent groups into action and frame the issue as the weak versus the strong, the weak versus Israel. But it was not unique. The BDS coalition, led by committed anti-Israel groups such as SJP but supported by other identity-based organizations, is familiar across the United States.

On May 23, 2018, the University of Oregon's student senate passed a BDS resolution by a vote of 12-6. More than 30 student groups supported the resolution, from the Muslim Student Association to the Intersectional Feminists Alliance.[2] Exactly one month earlier, George Washington University's student council approved a BDS measure by a secret-ballot vote of 18-6. The resolution cited South African activists, and was endorsed by Queer Radicals and Students for Indigenous and Native American Rights, among other groups.[3] On April 9, 2018, a coalition of more than 50 student groups at New York University pledged to support an expansive form of BDS that included boycotting pro-Israel students on their campus. The groups included the Black Student Union and Latinos Unidos.[4]

As Max Samarov, executive director of research and campus strategy at StandWithUs, a pro-Israel group, tells me, "Most of the divestment campaigns at [University of California] schools in the last six years featured diverse coalitions

---

[1] "The Case for Divestment presented by Stanford Out of Occupied Palestine," January 27, 2015, https://stanfordreview.org/content/images/DivestmentBinderFinal.docx.pdf.

[2] Braedon Kwiecien, "ASUO Senate Passes Controversial Pro-Palestinian Resolution," *Daily Emerald*, May 23, 2018; and "Statement from Students United for Palestinian Equal Rights—UO," May 24, 2018, https://www.facebook.com/superatuo/posts/1781891091982286.

[3] "George Washington U Student Senate Passes Israel Divestment Resolution," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, April 24, 2018.

[4] NYU Students for Justice in Palestine, "50+ NYU Student Groups Endorse Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement for Palestinian Human Rights," *Medium*, April 9, 2018.

supporting the resolution." MEChA, he says, was one of the most frequent partners, along with black student unions. In fact, MEChA endorsed BDS at its national conference in 2012. The group drew parallels between Israeli treatment of Palestinians and the "invasion, dispossession, occupation, exploitation and discrimination" Mexicans experienced at the hands of the United States, as one leading activist put it.[5]

These intersectional coalitions have formed on campuses across the country to campaign against Israel. In the process, they collide with Jewish students and, to some extent, Jewish power.

Intersectionality theory was initially formalized in an academic paper. The critical race theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw wrote in 1989 that a rigid separation of racism and sexism blinded US antidiscrimination law to the experiences of black women who had faced something different than the sum of each bigotry.[6] Crenshaw called for a focus on groups at the intersections of different marginalized identities.

Intersectionality is used to tear down an older model of political organizing, what Crenshaw calls the "trickle-down approach to social justice."[7] The trickle-down model rallied around feminism in general, promising that its achievements would eventually also empower black women. It rallied around opposition to exploitation in general, assuming its victories would eventually reach, say, poor people of color. The left that Crenshaw helped build considers these promises hopelessly broken. It rejects the false choice of focusing on race or sex or class in exclusion from each other and fights all of them together. Opposing prejudices separately misses the true intersectional experience: the racism and sexism that afflict black women are suffered simultaneously. In this crucial but ineffable sense, racism and sexism can be said to merge into one.

As the *International Socialist Review* helpfully notes, this insight "has enormous significance at the very practical level of movement building."[8] Since "oppressions work together in producing injustice," per leading black feminist scholar Patricia Hill Collins,[9] intersectionality has the effect of making solidarity

---

[5] Ali Abunimah, *The Battle for Justice in Palestine* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2014), 213.

[6] Kimblerlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, no. 1 (1989), Article 8.

[7] Kimberlé Crenshaw, "The Urgency of Intersectionality," speech at TedWomen, October 27, 2016, https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality/up-next?language=en.

[8] Sharon Smith, "Black Feminism and Intersectionalism," *International Socialist Review*, no. 91 (Winter 2013-14).

[9] Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2000).

a prerequisite of social consciousness. In other words, one cannot be a full participant in the effort to secure social justice if one is merely a feminist or an anti-racist. In fact, the anti-racist who fails to consider the special suffering of people of color who are also gay or Palestinian is hardly an anti-racist at all. Or worse: by *excluding* their stories, he *erases their suffering*, no doubt revealing a hidden homophobia or Islamophobia. "When one discourse fails to acknowledge the significance of the other," Crenshaw writes, "the power relations each attempts to challenge are strengthened."[10] Intersectionality in principle requires activists to champion *every* left-wing cause, as they all overlap.

Indeed, the causes overlap because marginalized identities themselves overlap. Each form of identity, it is argued, cannot be understood separately from one another; they are "mutually constituted," not "discrete entities," scholars Charmaine L. Wijeyesinghe and Susan R. Jones explain.[11] Here, solidarity becomes not merely political but downright metaphysical.

"The shift in perspective opens up intellectual and political possibilities," note Collins and a co-author, Sirma Bilge.[12] Lynn Weber, author of the seminal book, *Understanding Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality*, explains that an "awareness" of those interlocking systems "can be key in working together across different groups."[13] The theory they champion is *critical*, in the social-justice sense of the term; it is in service of a political campaign against a power structure. Collins and many other leaders in the field reject any hard divide between scholars and activists. Their "critical inquiry" is developed for "critical praxis." Even the conceptual framing of "people of color" or "women of color" is instrumental, "one of the inventions of solidarity, an alliance … a choice about how to resist and with whom."[14] Feminist scholar Kathy Davis adds that "paradoxically, it is precisely the vagueness and open-endedness of 'intersectionality' that may be the very secret of its success."[15] The theory's least consistent points, we will find, tend not to be weaknesses at all. That is because their intended use is not conceptual but political: forging and sustaining coalitions.

---

[10] Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43 (1991): 1282.

[11] Charmaine L. Wijeyesinghe and Susan R. Jones, "Intersectionality, Identity and Systems of Power and Inequality," in *Intersectionality and Higher Education: Theory, Research, and Praxis*, ed. Donald Mitchell Jr. (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2014), 15.

[12] Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge, *Intersectionality* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2016), 27.

[13] Lynn Weber, "A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality," *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 22 (1998): 25.

[14] Aurora Levins Morales, "My Name Is This Story," in *Telling to Live: Latina Feminist Testimonios*, ed. Latina Feminist Group (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 100.

[15] Kathy Davis, "Intersectionality As Buzzword: A Sociology of Science Perspective on What Makes a Feminist Theory Successful," *Feminist Theory* 9 (2008): 69.

If the treatment of one identity group is shaped by the same forces that affect all other oppressed groups—and indeed, if that one group cannot be understood apart from the others—then black activists had better make common cause with women, Muslims, Latinos, and everyone in between. Ultimately, the theory of intersectionality demands the formation of a rainbow coalition.

Finding connections between apparently disparate causes is the characteristic intersectional move. In 1990, leading critical-race theorist Mari Matsuda suggested a technique that intersectional movements today have eagerly adopted: "When I see something that looks racist, I ask, 'Where is the patriarchy in this?' When I see something that looks sexist, I ask, 'Where is the heterosexism in this?'"[16] Denying such connections, for instance by arguing that police violence against African-Americans should be tackled without reference to the Israeli treatment of Palestinians, runs counter to the entire thrust of the ideology. Taking on one issue at a time is simply antithetical to intersectionality. It misses the whole point theoretically, but more importantly *it undermines the coalition*. Perhaps that is why pro-Israel students seldom succeed at debating away the intersectional enemies they do not want, because the ultimate issue is not intellectual but practical and political. Perhaps they should spend less time debating and more time forging coalitions of their own.

Intersectionality, with its ultimate stress on shared history, interests, and experiences, typically begins with an emphasis on *distinct* identity. Practitioners of intersectionality use ethnic and racial student social groups, community centers, courses, majors, events, freshmen orientations, mentorship programs, and even themed dormitories to initially sort incoming freshmen into their distinct identity groups. Many of the students understandably feel quite vulnerable. Eighteen years old, they have just arrived in a completely new social setting. They are often grateful for soft social landing spots with peers from similar backgrounds.

But this is only the first step. For once students are so sorted, each group becomes a cog in a political machine. Shaped into a cohesive unit, an identity group can be organized and led credibly from above by its own leader, who is committed to the larger intersectional movement. On a campus where the social networks are organized along the lines of identity, opposing one's group's position is easily framed as betraying the group itself. In service of social justice, Collins and Bilge justify this kind of group discipline, in which being authentically black or Hispanic, for instance, is said to require holding a particular view. They call it "strategic essentialism."[17] All of these academics and activists would

---

[16] Mari Matsuda, "Beside My Sister, Facing the Enemy: Legal Theory out of Coalition," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1189.

[17] Collins and Bilge, *Intersectionality*, 133.

abhor racial essentialism, a retrograde belief, from anyone else. But for a good cause exceptions can be made.

Essentialist rhetoric from leaders of influential social networks makes defection from the group's political positions nearly unthinkable, no matter how tenuous those positions might otherwise seem (black queers for Palestine?). Intersectional political organizing creates a context in which the question is inescapable: Are you really going to abandon your friends and your people and all marginalized people to stand up for a faraway regime supported not just by the wealthy Jewish students on your campus but by the Republican Party? The choices intersectional movements offer are stark.

In that way, what begins as a marginal or fringe anti-Israel perspective—the opinions of a few radical campus leaders—quickly becomes a real group consensus. Students intuit the costs of dissent. What they hear from trusted sources gives them little reason to support Israel in the first place. So they fall in line as their racial and ethnic student leaders deliver votes and numbers to the coalition. Sometimes the coalition wins the argument, but that is almost beside the point. Machine politics do not work that way.

Stanford's Native American, black, Latino, Muslim, and Asian student groups are part of the Students of Color Coalition, or SOCC. This is Stanford's dominant political machine. Every year, SOCC endorses a dozen candidates for student council and, in exchange, requires them to campaign as a slate. The effect is to stop candidates from building independent political profiles, making them entirely dependent on the larger machine. It's worth it for both sides: every year since 2009, SOCC candidates have won a majority of the student council, and often a supermajority. Even in 2015, when it was dogged by allegations of antisemitism that made it into the *New York Times*,[18] SOCC still won nine of fifteen possible council races. Year after year, its member groups out-organize the opposition and corral the votes of their racial and ethnic compatriots and their left-wing supporters in sufficient numbers to overwhelm a generally apathetic student body. These wins translate into more diversity administrators, sexual-assault trainings, money for community centers, and calls for a diverse faculty.

Remarkably, in 2014 the Stanford student council fell one vote short of the two-thirds majority it needed to pass a resolution calling for divestment from Israel, a resolution SOCC had assembled an even larger anti-Israel coalition to advance. Two student-council members, one leftist Latina and one leftist Jew, had abstained and voted against the resolution, respectively. In short order, the activist communities of which they were part made clear that the offending members had only one path to avoid social ostracism. A week later, a re-vote

---

[18] Jennifer Medina, "Student Coalition at Stanford Confronts Allegations of Anti-Semitism," *New York Times*, April 14, 2015.

was called, and both students flipped their votes to help divestment pass.[19] Defection from the intersectional coalition was too costly for them to bear.

Intersectionality does not by itself explain the campus left's hatred for Israel. Soviet and Arab anti-Zionist propaganda were popular on the left decades ago. But today's intersectional coalitions almost always include Students for Justice in Palestine or a Muslim or Arab student group, all of which are likely to push the coalition to undertake anti-Israel action. SJP is also an extremely well-organized national group that can make the rest of the coalition's job easy by supplying its prepackaged divestment campaign.

SJP claims to have roughly 200 chapters in the United States. The group is ubiquitous, especially on elite American campuses. The campus antisemitism watchdog AMCHA Initiative lists at least 125 active SJP chapters across the country, and around five dozen more pro-divestment campus groups, many of which receive assistance from SJP.[20] Since Palestinians are considered "people of color," SJP faces none of the difficulties with intersectional coalitions that Jewish or pro-Israel organizations do. Besides, SJP organizers often employ the language of intersectionality, finding it more effective on campus than nationalist rhetoric.

August 2014 was a particularly powerful moment of Palestinian inter-sectional solidarity. Israel's Operation Protective Edge was ongoing, and the resulting carnage in Gaza dominated American news. SJP was fully mobilized on US campuses, attracting plenty of support from left-wing campus groups, some of which were important parts of intersectional coalitions. Then, on August 9, 2014, Michael Brown was shot and killed in a confrontation with US police in Ferguson, Missouri. Immediately, Ferguson was side-by-side with Gaza in the American campus discourse. Intersectional activists of all kinds were galvanized by Black Lives Matter protests. SJP and its allies also rose in support of Black Lives Matter, but with a uniquely powerful message: Your struggle is our struggle.

It worked—tearing down the Jewish state seems to be remarkable unifier. "From Palestine to Ferguson" became a rallying cry. Tara Thompson, who co-founded the St. Louis area-based Hands Up United in the wake of Brown's death, told the website Electronic Intifada, "Palestinians were the first to reach out, sharing ways to protect Ferguson protesters from tear gas."[21]

---

[19] Alexis Garduno, "Senate Reverses Divestment Vote, Passes Resolution," *Stanford Daily*, February 17, 2015.

[20] "About Us," National Students for Justice in Palestine, https://www.nationalsjp.org/about-nsjp.html, accessed December 1, 2018; and "Anti-Zionist Campus Groups," AMCHA Initiative, August 22, 2018, https://amchainitiative.org/sjp-chapters.

[21] Rania Khalek, "Watch: Ferguson Activists Bring Message of 'Love and Struggle' to Palestine," *Electronic Intifada*, January 16, 2015, https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/rania-khalek/watch-ferguson-activists-bring-message-love-and-struggle-palestine.

SJP took advantage of intersectional coalition's big tent and never looked back. From then on, no matter what a given campus coalition was protesting, SJP could insinuate the Palestinian cause into that protest. The posters at Stanford are a perfect example: US police violence is blamed in part on Israel, which runs a few anti-terrorism training sessions for US police officers. Now, a wall with Mexico is compared to Israel's "apartheid fence"; stop-and-frisk becomes West Bank checkpoints; Native-American land claims equal a Palestinian right of return. Everything is conflated in the simple narrative of collective resistance.

The intersectional coalition defines itself as the representative of all marginalized groups. This leaves only two roles for non-member groups, the alleged marginalizers, such as whites and Jews: allies of the marginalized or committed members of the power structure. For Jews, the latter is assumed, and for very simple reasons: most Jews on elite US campuses are white, and whites are a suspect class; many Jews are wealthy, and the wealthy are a suspect class; and the vast majority are Zionists, and to the movement's radicals Zionists are also a suspect class. If Jews want be allies, they have to earn it—for example by advocating against Israel. Otherwise they are to be ostracized. The alleged marginalizers, in other words, become themselves marginalized in campus social-justice settings.

Even those Jews who choose to become "allies" remain in a fragile position. Mia McKenzie, the writer behind the popular intersectional website "Black Girl Dangerous," explains that the key to being an ally is to "shut up and listen."[22] Articles about how to be an ally invariably begin here. Airing disagreement would crowd out the voices of people of color, so it is not tolerated. The problem with allies is that they remain privileged, able to defect to the power structure at any time, and their non-white partners know it. To borrow Carol Gilligan's phrase, all white allies have "choices not to speak" about injustice.[23] They lack skin in the game.

This lingering suspicion requires white allies to humble themselves publicly and repeatedly before people of color. Accordingly, whites confess their privilege, how they benefit from it, and how it is so baked into American society that they are irredeemably tainted and poisoned by it, despite their best efforts. The ally must show he subordinates his identity and interests and must pledge loyalty to the movement, its identities, and its interests. In the end, the intersectional movement has little to tell these students other than to confess their sins. But for the guilt-drenched modern conscience, that is more than enough.

---

[22] As cited in Jamie Utt, "So You Call Yourself an Ally: 10 Things All 'Allies' Need to Know," *Everyday Feminism*, November 8, 2013, https://everydayfeminism.com/2013/11/things-allies-need-to-know/

[23] See Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982).

White students line up for these coveted roles, eager to profess their disgust with their identity.

Jewish students have it even tougher. To subordinate themselves, it is not enough to condemn whiteness. They must also take on the "mainstream Jewish community" and Israel itself. In what other way can a Jew demonstrate her allegiance? For if she refuses to forsake Israel, she shows she is just another hypocritical white liberal, fighting for social justice until it threatens her own privilege. In this way, many otherwise progressive Jews reveal themselves to be bad allies. By supporting Israel, they abandon the coalition. They show that they cling to their place in the power structure, after all.

The intersectional movement can interpret Jewish intransigence, from organized Jewish groups to the Judases in their midst, in the same way it understands all opposition: as backlash from the power structure. Who else would oppose the oppressed but the oppressors? So when Jewish students organize against the intersectional coalition, they confirm that they do not fit in among the marginalized, an impression aided by their observable or presumed whiteness and wealth.

Treating intellectual opposition as aggression from the power structure makes its suppression urgent. Surely universities should not allow vulnerable minorities to be targeted, bullied, and attacked—which is how the coalition understands the power structure's political mobilization against it. This framing then justifies everything from classroom callouts to speech codes to shouting down speakers, behavior that has escalated on the left and collapsed on the right since 2013.[24] That behavior can be criticized, but the campus left only claims to be exercising its right to self-defense, responding to the aggression of others.

If the marginalized are conceived as basically united, the temptation is strong to see the marginalizers as similarly united. Patricia Hill Collins writes, "Regardless of the particular intersections involved, structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal domains of power reappear across quite different forms of oppression."[25] What the marginalized are really fighting, in this view, is power, and power is fairly homogenous, even when it goes under different names. The oppressors of the Palestinians and the oppressors of black Americans, therefore, can be joined in the same system of power relations.

Their systems of oppression are not just considered similar. As Wijeyesinghe and Jones put it, "Not only are the experience of social groups complex and mutually constituted, so are the systems of power and privilege, such as classism, ageism, Christian hegemony, and racism, that so strongly shape personal and

---

[24] Sean Stevens and Jonathan Haidt, "The Skeptics Are Wrong Part 2: Speech Culture on Campus is Changing," *Heterodox Academy*, April 11, 2018, https://heterodox academy.org/the-skeptics-are-wrong-part-2/

[25] Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 18.

group experience."[26] That is, these and many other hegemonic systems define each other and rely on each other.

But in mass movements, talk of systems of oppression and structural forces inevitably falls away. Unfortunately, the theory can be vulgarized quite readily into a conspiracy. One need only conceive the power structure as a unit, undertaking coordinated action. It then appears to have many tentacles striking all over the world, to be exceedingly powerful and organized. But this power structure is also secretive and denies it has any diabolical plans. In other words, it starts to resemble the House of Rothschild, Henry Ford's International Jew, or the Elders of Zion of the antisemitic imagination.

It is sadly axiomatic that those who think evil resides in a single enemy or matrix will eventually blunder into antisemitism. At least some will conflate that enemy with the Jews and fill in that matrix with their supposed lackeys. This is how remarkably diverse conspiracy theories converge—always to the detriment of the Jews, who become synonymous with a power elite.[27]

The intersectional coalition is vulnerable to this sort of conspiracy theorizing for three reasons. The first is tactical. To engage their diverse coalition, intersectional movements must exaggerate the unity and malevolence of its enemies, creating a picture of a uniquely wicked Jewish state lurking behind the world's evils. The unity helps show feminists, for example, that Israeli "apartheid" should be their issue, too, because of how Israel treats Palestinian women. Or because the occupation is part of same system of domination by which men inflict violence on women. These sorts of appeals are boilerplate: not particularly convincing, but enough to make clear that supporting the cause is an intersectional imperative. Ignoring such an imperative risks expulsion from the social-justice left, so they are not ignored, as the size and diversity of campus anti-Israel coalitions attests.

Second, on campus after campus, the intersectional coalition's main opposition is composed of Jewish students. And when Jews are already the proximate tactical enemy, and the movement already sees itself as engaged in an epic struggle against the powerful, it is all too easy to conflate the Jews not only with Israel but also with the entire power structure, and blame them for all sorts of other things. Just ask the Palestinians.

Third, there is the uncomfortable fact that antisemitism in America is more common among racial minorities than among whites. The most recent data of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) on antisemitic attitudes confirm the long-standing trend. Twenty-three percent of African Americans were found to hold antisemitic attitudes, compared with only 14 percent of the general population

---

[26] Wijeyesinghe and Jones, "Intersectionality, Identity and Systems," 11.
[27] See the writings of John Paul Pagano.

and 10 percent of whites. US-born Hispanics clock in at 19 percent, but the number for foreign-born Hispanics, not an insignificant group in America, is 31 percent. Even worse, the ADL Global 100 found that 34 percent of Muslim Americans hold antisemitic views.[28]

All these challenges mean that intersectional movements should be extra vigilant in detecting the development of antisemitic conspiracy theory within their ranks. Unfortunately, intersectionality is endemically blind to antisemitism.

Consider Gabriel Knight, a Palestinian-American former member of Stanford's student council. In 2016, he publicly defended talk of "Jews controlling the media, economy, government, and other societal institutions" as mere "questioning [of] potential power dynamics."[29] It is notable that, despite intense pressure, Stanford's Students of Color Coalition refused to rescind its endorsement of Knight for re-election, even after other organizations had done so, and even after Knight pulled out of the election. Since Knight technically remained on the ballot, the powerful endorsement brought him comically close to getting elected, even though he was no longer running.

Strict classification by identity assigns Gabriel Knight to the coalition of the marginalized by virtue of his identity. The Jews calling for him to step down, on the other hand, are considered members of the out-group, the coalition of the dominant. This completely reverses the dynamics of the situation. Knight becomes the plucky underdog, daring to punch up and challenge the power, which immediately reacts by destroying him. By default, punching up appears to be resistance to domination; punching down is seen as dangerous oppression and bigotry. Actions by Jews, who are considered to have power, can be interpreted as threatening, but most actions against them cannot. Consequently, when non-white antisemites punch up at Jews, whether those in Israel or America, many on the left will not see it as punching at all.

Jewish students often perceive themselves as defending Israel from libel. But mediated by intersectional ideology, whereby white and Jewish equals the power structure, Jewish organizing on campus looks like kicking down at marginalized people. Israel gets that same skewed treatment. White, wealthy, and Jewish— Israel is capitalism, colonialism, racism, nationalism, and Americanism all rolled into one. And that is before one even examines what Israel has or hasn't done to

---

[28] ADL, "In First, New ADL Poll Finds Majority of Americans Concerned about Violence against Jews and Other Minorities, Want Administration to Act," press release, April 6, 2017, https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/in-first-new-adl-poll-finds-majority-of-americans-concerned-about-violence; ADL, "A Survey about Attitudes towards Jews in America," survey conducted by Marttila Strategies on behalf of the ADL on October 18-29, 2016, https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/ADL_MS_Survey_Pres_1_25_17.pdf.

[29] Winston Shi, "On Gabriel Knight and What Antisemitism Really Means," *Stanford Daily*, April 7, 2016.

the Palestinians. Just as the antisemite has already convicted the Jew long before the Jew has done anything, so too has the intersectional coalition convicted the Jewish state.

This reduction of complexity, in which Jews are white, powerful, and nothing more, is no accident. Intersectionality does not extend to the privileged. Scholars Allison Daniel Anders and James M. Devita give voice to the majority opinion: "As White folks, using intersectionality to theorize about our own lives would mean altering [intersectional pioneer Kimberlé] Crenshaw's arguments about multiple subordination in order to fit our own needs."[30] Wijeyesinghe and Jones agree that intersectionality must remain focused on the marginalized. They worry that using it for others could cause it to be "co-opted to reinforce and re-center the experience of those people and groups with privileged identities."[31] Tough luck for whites and Jews. Even though there does not seem to be a principled reason to deny them the same analysis of their intersecting identities that applies for blacks and Muslims, the theorists do not seem to care. They know what the output of their theory must be, so they rig the inputs.

Intersectionality is supposed to be sensitive to bigotry. But it only looks right before crossing the road. Jews who want intersectional coalitions to fight antisemitism of the left can be accused of trying to make the movement all about them. Even worse, activists often claim that accusations of antisemitism are just cynical projections of Jewish power to silence critics of Israel. The truth is, the intersectional coalition sees itself as fighting Jewish power. Since that is also how antisemites see themselves, they can easily embed their hatred within intersectional movements.

The UN's World Conference against Racism, held in Durban, South Africa, in 2001, is an example of intersectionality in action. In their seminal introduction to intersectionality, Collins and Bilge declare, "the importance of Durban for intersectionality's global reach cannot be overstated." They continue,

> Imagine some 10,000 delegates from all around the world, with women in the majority, learning about each other's struggles. Representatives from the South African landless movement, the Dalit struggle in India for the rights of lower-caste groups, indigenous movements, and the Intifada, the Palestinian uprising against the Israeli occupation, all attended. These representatives brought multi-issue frameworks that reflected the complexity of their lived experiences and political struggles.[32]

---

[30] Allison Daniel Anders and James M. Devita, "Intersectionality: A Legacy from Critical Legal Studies and Critical Race Theory," in *Intersectionality and Higher Education: Theory, Research, and Praxis*, ed. Donald Mitchell Jr. (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2014), 32.

[31] Wijeyesinghe and Jones, "Intersectionality, Identity and Systems," 17.

[32] Collins and Bilge, *Intersectionality*, 90.

The two scholars go on to call the Durban conference a "watershed moment" for the practice and global intellectual currency of intersectionality.[33] But most people have heard of the Durban Conference for a different reason. Zvika Krieger, correspondent from the *New Republic*, described an account of the conference from Jewish students in attendance as follows,

> Jewish activists were harassed, abused, physically intimidated, taunted, and followed throughout the week. Anyone who tried to object to the Israel hate-fest was booed off the stage with shouts of "Jew, Jew, Jew." The conference hall was overflowing with copies of "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" and pamphlets featuring pictures of Jews with long hooked noses and evil smiles, their serpent fangs soaked in blood and their military uniforms decorated with swastikas. At the conference's only panel devoted to anti-Semitism, dozens of protesters stormed the tent, screaming, "You are all murderers! You have Palestinian blood on your hands!" Israeli flags were burned in front of the European Union of Jewish Students table, and Jewish activists were accosted by members of Hamas.[34]

This coincided without incident, apparently, with the "watershed moment" of an anti-racist movement. Intersectionality, which claims to see so far and explain so much, has from the start been blind to the antisemitism right in front of its nose. It should not be surprising, then, that intersectional coalitions have become safe havens for antisemitism on campus, if not purveyors of the ancient hatred themselves.

---

[33] Ibid., at 92.

[34] Zvika Krieger, "Durban II Dispatch: Should I Be Scared?," *New Republic*, April 17, 2009, https://newrepublic.com/article/49096/durban-ii-dispatch-should-i-be-scared; see also Anne Bayefsky, "The UN World Conference against Racism: A Racist Anti-Racism Conference," *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting (American Society of International Law)* 96 (2002).

The Rise of Black Antisemitism:
An All-Too-Familiar Tension Returns*

James Kirchick

The year 2018 was a particularly toxic one for black-Jewish relations, but perhaps understandable in light of their history. This chapter documents the scandal generated around the national "Women's March" movement by its founders' associations with the prominent antisemite, Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, as well as other similar cases. It examines the recent history of black antisemitism, distinguishing its "neighborhood" and "conspiratorial" forms, and explores similarities between the current nadir in black-Jewish relations and the late 1960s, which saw the rise of black separatist movements adopting Third Worldist ideologies. Today's black antisemitism reflects trends in the broader progressive community, which increasingly downplays antisemitism since it supposedly affects people who are "white" and therefore in possession of "power." On this view racism equals "prejudice plus power," so powerless people are by definition incapable of being racist. Ultimately the recent tensions are an indication of two competing visions for America: an increasingly fatalistic progressivism willing to make common cause with all manner of illiberal and regressive forces, versus the postwar American liberal tradition of pluralistic patriotism. As such, all Americans, not just blacks and Jews, have an interest in the outcome of this conflict.

The year 2018 has thus far been toxic for black-Jewish relations. In February, Women's March co-president Tamika Mallory attended the Nation of Islam's annual "Saviours' Day" gathering, where sect leader Louis Farrakhan delivered a characteristic antisemitic tirade. "When you want something in this world, the Jew holds the door," Farrakhan declared. "White folks are going down, and Satan is going down, and Farrakhan by God's grace has pulled the cover off of that Satanic Jew—and I'm here to say, your time is up." For good measure, Farrakhan also claimed that Jews control the FBI as well as Mexico, and he repeated a relatively new conspiracy theory, the "Pot Plot," alleging that Jews promote homosexuality among black men through the distribution of a special form of marijuana.

When it was revealed that Mallory had sat in the audience for this rant, she not only refused to distance herself from the antisemitic cult but boasted of her three-decade long relationship with it. "I was raised in activism and believe that as historically oppressed people, blacks, Jews, Muslims and all people must

---

stand together to fight racism, antisemitism, and Islamophobia," she said in a statement. Declaring that she is "guided by the loving principles of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.," who dedicated his entire career to opposing the very sort of racial separatism, hatred, and conspiracy promoted by the likes of Farrakhan and others of his ilk, Mallory made clear that she had no intention of ever disassociating herself from the Nation of Islam.

While some black leaders and writers criticized Mallory, her stubbornness found support in high places. "Now you work with people all the time with whom you disagree," said Valerie Jarrett, former senior adviser to President Barack Obama, to the ladies of [the television talk show] "The View." Jarrett spoke as if America's foremost antisemite were just some recalcitrant House Republican in need of a stern, Oval Office arm-twist. To this day, Mallory (along with her Women's March sisters-in-arms Linda Sarsour and Carmen Perez) proudly considers Farrakhan an ally, and there is no indication that she or the organization she leads has suffered serious reputational damage because of her association with him.

On the contrary, Mallory has successfully exacted revenge on at least one prominent Jewish organization that criticized her for associating with the Nation of Islam. In April, following national outrage sparked by the arrest of two black men at a Philadelphia Starbucks, the coffee giant announced that the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) would be one of four civil rights organizations to participate in diversity-training exercises for its employees across the country. Mallory loudly objected, accusing the ADL of "constantly attacking black and brown people," by which she seems to have meant Tamika Mallory and Louis Farrakhan. Joining her in protest was Jewish Voice for Peace—a fringe group advocating the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel—and other leftist groups that oppose the ADL over its engagement with police departments for racial-sensitivity training. A little over a week after Mallory launched her social-media campaign demanding that Starbucks drop the ADL, the company caved.

This was not the only instance of prominent black political figures associating with Farrakhan to emerge in the early months of 2018. In January, a long-hidden photograph was published showing Barack Obama smiling with Farrakhan at a 2005 Congressional Black Caucus reception. A member of the Caucus, Andre Carson, later admitted to holding a meeting with the Nation of Islam leader in 2015. Farrakhan claimed that Keith Ellison—current deputy chairman of the Democratic National Committee—was also present at the meeting, a claim Ellison denies. But given Ellison's record of misleading statements on his relationship with Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam, there is no reason to trust him on this question.

It's hard to imagine that left-wing activists or Democratic politicians would keep their careers after associating with a figure who spouts hatred against any

other minority group the way Farrakhan does with Jews. Having attained a certain level of political power or social capital, however, Mallory, Jarret, Obama, and the Congressional Black Caucus have apparently insulated themselves from criticism on this point, at least among their fellow progressives and much of the elite media.

Such invulnerability to public condemnation has not been the experience of Trayon White, a Washington, DC, city councilor representing the capitol's poorest neighborhood of Anacostia. During a brief snow flurry in March, White published a video on his official Facebook page blaming the adverse weather on the Rothschild family. "Man, it just started snowing out of nowhere this morning, man. Y'all better pay attention to this climate control, man, this climate manipulation," the 34-year-old, college-educated, elected official told his constituents. "And DC keep talking about, 'We a resilient city.' And that's a model based off the Rothschilds controlling the climate to create natural disasters they can pay for to own the cities, man. Be careful."

White seemed genuinely perplexed when it was explained to him that assertions about a European Jewish banking family manipulating the weather had antisemitic undertones. And those inclined to give White the benefit of the doubt, presuming his words came more from ignorance than malice, were forced to reconsider when it emerged that he had donated $500 to the very same "Saviours' Day" event attended by Mallory. Nor did White do himself any favors when, invited by local Jewish leaders to the United States Holocaust Memorial and Museum, he abruptly left in the middle of a personally guided tour. At a rally called to defend White, organized by a mayoral appointee, a Nation of Islam representative blasted one of White's Jewish fellow council members as a "fake Jew" and referred to Jews as "termites."

Finally, in April, New York Assemblywoman Diana Richardson publicly accused Jews of gentrifying her Brooklyn district, a strange accusation considering that it includes Flatbush and Crown Heights, neighborhoods that have long had sizeable Jewish populations. Responding to a member of a local community board who complained of people ringing her doorbell to ask if she was interested in selling her house, Richardson replied, "It must be Jewish people." Earlier in the same meeting, she gratuitously referred to a Brooklyn legislator as "the Jewish senator from southern Brooklyn."

All these episodes follow the familiar pattern for black-Jewish controversies, which have erupted periodically since the late 1960s: a black figure of some (often negligible) prominence will make a statement offending Jews, Jewish leaders will respond with both self-flagellating concern and righteous outrage, and both communities will leave the fracas feeling resentful toward the other. In a 1992 essay for the *New York Times*, Harvard scholar Henry Louis Gates Jr. described antisemitism among African Americans as "a weapon in the raging battle of who will speak for black America: those who have sought common

cause with others, or those who preach a barricaded withdrawal into racial authenticity." Antisemitism, in other words, is a tool used by political entrepreneurs in a continuation of the internecine fight for black authority. This fight initially pitted mainstream, philosemitic, consensus-seeking leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Bayard Rustin against radical, separatist, black-nationalist figures of varying ideological (and religious) stripes. While it may be accurate to blame individual opportunists or would-be leaders for these controversies, it is nonetheless a dispiriting commentary on the political potency of antisemitism within black communities that such tactics often work (just witness the career of Al Sharpton).[1] Attitudinal surveys conducted by the ADL consistently show that African Americans harbor "antisemitic proclivities" at a rate significantly higher than the general population (23 percent and 14 percent respectively in 2016).

Black antisemitism typically takes one of two forms: "neighborhood" or conspiratorial. The former developed in the 1950s and 1960s after the postwar migration of southern blacks to northern cities put Jews and African Americans in close proximity to one another, most prominently in New York. Gates described this variety of antisemitism as "a familiar pattern of clientelistic hostility toward the neighborhood vendor or landlord." With Irish dominating the police, and Italians largely controlling the city's trade unions, Jews were usually the people with whom blacks came into contact at school, the store, in the courtroom, the welfare office, to rent an apartment, or to get credit. "If the walls the Irish and Italians had put up around themselves were largely unbroken, that only made Jewish liberals the most accessible apologists and beneficiaries of an oppressive system, the closest of strangers, the easiest targets," former *Newsday* columnist Jim Sleeper wrote in his 1990 history of New York race relations, *The Closest of Strangers*.

There is nothing particularly unique or special about this type of antisemitism, the sort of petty bigotry that afflicts any group living in close quarters with another, whether the communities are Irish-Italian, black-Irish, or Hindu-Muslim. In the American context, this bigotry can be expected to dissipate with time as populations intermarry, crime decreases, living standards rise, and neighborhoods diversify. "Negroes are antisemitic because they're anti-white," James Baldwin put it simply in a 1967 piece for the *Times*. If there's an added layer of resentment to black-Jewish relations that doesn't afflict black-Irish or black-Italian relations, it's that Jews are perceived as being a minority population that, having advanced economically, has abandoned the trappings of the ghetto and today successfully "passes" as white.

---

[1] The same, of course, can and must be said of the white Americans who, if not motivated by racism or xenophobia in voting for Donald Trump, nonetheless had a very high tolerance for it.

This "neighborhood" antisemitism is a necessary predicate for the second type, the conspiratorial. This is embodied by Farrakhan and either endorsed or echoed by the likes of Mallory and White. It's what Gates referred to as "antisemitism from the top-down, engineered and promoted by leaders who affect to be speaking for a larger resentment." Included among the Nation of Islam's outlandish repertoire are narratives of Jewish slave owners and tales about how African Americans are the true ancient Hebrews of the Old Testament, the latter being the origin of today's claims of "fake Jews." Facilitating the spread of antisemitism within black communities is a penchant for conspiracy theory, not hard to understand given the historical experience of black people in America. Kidnapped, shipped to this country in slave ships, tortured, experimented on, and subject to legal discrimination, black people have more reason to be skeptical of America, its institutions, and promises than any other population. If one already believes that the CIA invented the crack-cocaine epidemic, or that the government blew up the levees of New Orleans so that Hurricane Katrina would destroy poor black neighborhoods, then how far of a leap is it to believe that Jews control the banks, never mind the weather?

Tensions between African Americans and Jewish Americans have not been this bad since 1991. In that single, fateful year, the Crown Heights riot resulted in the death of an Australian Jewish student, the Nation of Islam released a libelous tract ("The Secret Relationship between Blacks and Jews") alleging an exceptionally invidious Jewish role in the slave trade, and City University of New York black studies professor Leonard Jeffries made national headlines with his denunciations of "a conspiracy, planned and plotted and programmed out of Hollywood" by "people called Greenberg and Weisberg and Trigliani."

Disturbing as they were, the black-Jewish quarrels of the early 1990s seemed to follow a peculiar logic. The exodus of Jews into the suburbs and their subsequent assimilation into "white" America, along with the rise of a Jewishly inflected neoconservative movement opposed to affirmative action, inevitably contributed to a weakening of the black-Jewish civil rights coalition of yore. Moreover, the racial dramas of 1980s New York (Bernie Goetz, the Tawana Brawley case, the Howard Beach attacks, the Central Park Five), along with a stridently Jewish mayor (Ed Koch) who often found himself at odds with equally strident black activists (Al Sharpton et al.), contributed to a worsening of black-white relations more generally. This in turn had an adverse effect on black-Jewish relations specifically.

By contrast, today's contretemps come at a peculiar time. The great political questions of the day all revolve around Donald Trump and the nationalist platform on which he was elected. And no two ethnic groups were more opposed to Trump's presidential campaign than the blacks and the Jews. Even among those conservatives and Republicans opposed to Trump, Jewish writers, intellectuals, and philanthropists are vastly overrepresented, a point that has not

gone unnoticed by the president's white-supremacist backers.[2] Prior to the rise of Trump, Jewish voters overwhelmingly gave their money and support to Barack Obama, the nation's first black president, in both of his campaigns. While his administration's policies toward Israel and his Iranian nuclear agreement may have divided the Jewish community internally, opposition to the latter waged by much of organized Jewry did not result in serious conflict with American blacks. (The only friction in this regard surfaced in the spring of 2015 when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accepted an invitation from Capitol Hill Republicans to criticize the pending Iran deal before a joint session of Congress. Some Congressional Black Caucus leaders portrayed this move as a racial slight.)

While African Americans have overwhelmingly voted against every Republican presidential nominee since Barry Goldwater, there are considerable and entirely valid reasons why they would harbor special animosity toward President Trump. That a white man who is so extravagantly flawed would immediately follow a black man who carried himself with the dignity and comportment appropriate to the presidency—and that the white man's campaign was jump-started with racially charged innuendo about the location of his black predecessor's birth—has convinced many blacks that the election of Donald Trump was ultimately the result of racial backlash, or "white-lash," against the nation's first African-American president. African Americans daily witness a white man saying and doing things that a black man would never get away with (covering up an affair with a porn star, likening the nation's intelligence services to Nazi Germany, etc.) and reasonably ask whether the election of an African-American president was a bizarre one-off owing to the unique charisma, eloquence, and biracial background of Barack Obama.

Of course, there are many reasons that Donald Trump is president, and the extent to which racial animus played a role is debatable. But such a question is beyond the scope of this chapter. Needless to say, blacks have reason to feel embittered and disappointed by the election of Donald Trump. And these feelings have led to a heightened racial consciousness among many black writers, politicians, and activists. What's significant in this respect is that these black Americans are ardently joined in this sentiment by the overwhelming majority of their fellow Jewish citizens, who also see in the 2016 election not just a racially tinged repudiation of the country's first black president but a recrudescence of the nativism and xenophobia that, wherever and whenever they rear their ugly heads, have never been good for the Jews.

In this way, the current nadir in black-Jewish relations resembles the initial eruption of black-Jewish conflict in the late 1960s, which similarly followed a

---

[2] See James Kirchick, "Trump's Terrifying Online Brigades," *Commentary* (June 2016), https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/trumps-terrifying-online-brigades/.

period of political collaboration and therefore struck Jews as a tragic blow. Almost from the beginning of their mass settlement in the United States, Jews played an important role in advancing the civil rights of and furthering opportunities for African Americans, whose fate Jews considered intertwined with their own as fellow minorities in a WASP-dominated country. Jews were instrumental in founding the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1909 and in the civil rights movement decades later. Nearly two-thirds of the white participants in the 1964 Freedom Summer were Jews, including Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner, who were both murdered, alongside African American James Chaney, by white supremacists in Mississippi.

Later in that decade, the rise of black separatist movements such as the Nation of Islam and the Black Panthers, each of which adopted a Third Worldist ideology and espoused anti-Israel (and often antisemitic) rhetoric, thus came as a shock to Jews. What likewise makes this current political moment so perplexing and painful is that most Jews, many conservatives and Republicans included, are right there with blacks in opposing this president and the type of American politics he embodies. The persistence of antisemitism in the black community worries Jews who feel that their interests have not been so clearly aligned with those of black Americans since the high-water mark of black-Jewish collaboration in the 1960s.

The prevalence of, and insouciance toward, antisemitism in the African-American community mirrors a trend within the broader progressive community. On the left, antisemitism is increasingly downplayed because it supposedly afflicts people who are "white" and therefore in possession of "power." Writing in *The Atlantic*, John Paul-Pagano recently identified the formula by which the progressive left analyzes bigotry: "Racism equals prejudice plus power." Because blacks lack power, they cannot be racist, and because Jews possess power, they cannot be victims of racism. Noam Chomsky elaborated on this theme in 2002:

> By now Jews in the US are the most privileged and influential part of the population. You find occasional instances of antisemitism but they are marginal. There's plenty of racism, but it's directed against blacks, Latinos, [and] Arabs are targets of enormous racism, and those problems are real. Antisemitism is no longer a problem, fortunately. It's raised, but it's raised because privileged people want to make sure they have total control, not just 98 percent control. That's why antisemitism is becoming an issue. Not because of the threat of antisemitism; they want to make sure there's no critical look at the policies the US (and they themselves) support in the Middle East.[3]

---

[3] Noam Chomsky, "Anti-Semitism, Zionism, and the Palestinians," *Variant* 2, no. 16 (Winter 2002), http://www.variant.org.uk/16texts/Chomsky.html.

Operating under the equation that "racism equals prejudice plus power," some on the left choose to ignore, rationalize, or entirely excuse black anti-semitism as a function of unfair power dynamics in a capitalist society. Accord-ing to this analysis, because blacks supposedly lack political power, or have less of it than Jews, it is either not possible for them to be antisemitic, or their anti-semitism is not worth worrying about compared with that of traditional, right-wing antisemites. "But of course, he did not say that Jews controlled the weather," a board member of Jews for Racial and Economic Justice wrote in the *Forward* regarding Trayon White. "He said that the Rothschilds did." There's a word for this kind of condescension, which progressives would never display if the person in question were white: racist.

Though Farrakhan regularly fills arenas for his harangues and earns audi-ences with congressmen, liberals have been at pains to minimize his influence. When progressive Jewish female activists asked Tamika Mallory to distance herself from Farrakhan, Jordan Weissmann, a Jewish writer for *Slate*, rhetorically asked, "Is there a single Jew in America who is actually worried about Louis Farrakhan or the Nation of Islam?" He explained further with a *non sequitur*: "I'm not worried about antisemitism from the black left because I see zero evidence that it is significantly motivated by antisemitism (I seem to recall a lot of young black progressives supporting a guy named Sanders)." Weissmann later retracted his tweet, but only when it was made apparent to him that Farrakhan posed a "very clear threat to LGBTQ people of color." Jews, presum-ably, will just have to get used to hearing Louis Farrakhan call Adolf Hitler "a very great man."

At a panel organized by Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) that convened at The New School in December 2017, JVP activist Lina Morales readily conceded: "Louis Farrakhan—I think he's an antisemite—but materially, how has he put Jews in danger? Not really, because he only really affects the black community. But people in Chicago, white Jews, love to talk about him and love to paint him as the ultimate antisemite. Why is that?" The history of the twentieth century should dispel any notion that antisemitic maniacs with followings in the tens of thousands are harmless oddities to be ignored. But even if we were to validate Morales's assumptions—that Farrakhan "only really affects the black community"—it would consign his followers to a sort of unofficial second-class citizenship, as if people who adopt the Nation of Islam's view of the world are condemning themselves to wallow in ignorance. For all the talk about how the Nation of Islam helps poor black communities, one will not make it very far in this world if he believes that crafty Jews are trying to keep the black man down with gay weed. (And lest Morales truly believe that Farrakhan's praise of Hitler doesn't affect the physical security of Jews, in April 2018 a Jewish man in Crown Heights was attacked by an African-American assailant screaming, "You fake Jews, who are you saying hello to? You're fake Jews, and you stole

all my money and robbed me, and stole my mortgage and my house. I want to kill you!"[4])

Asked about the Mallory controversy by Yahoo News, Melissa Harris-Perry went so far as to impugn Jews for even raising the issue of Farrakhan. "The most dangerous antisemite in the country currently lives at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue," the former MSNBC host said. "And to have any concern about Louis Farrakhan's antisemitism is weird." She continued,

> Like, Louis f—ing Farrakhan? Are you serious? Because Louis Farrakhan is empowered to do what? He runs an organization that controls what resources? And creates what policy? And owns property where? I mean, it's weird. The president of the United States has questioned the humanity—like are they human—of Jewish people. The president of the United States. So I'm super-duper focused on that. And that various people walking around the planet are racist, sexist, antisemitic, is, like, shrug-my-shoulders true.

For all his many faults, Donald Trump has never "questioned the humanity," either metaphysically or biologically, "of Jewish people." But the purpose of Harris-Perry's interjection was not judicious analysis of antisemitism. It was to redraw the boundaries of the left's new political coalition, which is set to include ever-more-extreme voices opposed to the president and his agenda.

Writing nearly 30 years ago, Shelby Steele recognized the "fundamental irony" of "black-Jewish bickering" that guarantees these periodic outbursts will always generate headlines: "the irony of there being conflict where we presume there should be harmony." Most blacks seek no conflict with Jews, and vice versa. Which is why it is all the more important for responsible black leaders to draw a line in the sand when it comes to toxic figures such as Farrakhan and to reject the excuses of their enablers. A political coalition that makes room for the likes of such individuals is one that will inherently be unwelcoming to Jews, and one that all decent people should reject.

The recent controversies are reflective not so much of a major, growing rift between blacks and Jews as they are indications of two competing visions for America. On one side stands an increasingly fatalistic progressivism, which maintains a "no enemies to the left" strategy in fighting a twilight struggle against what it considers to be an incipient fascist dictatorship. It is willing to make common cause with all manner of illiberal and regressive political forces provided they hew to the party line. And on the other side sits the postwar

---

4 Similarly, in December 2019, members of a "Black Hebrew Israelite" sect shot up a kosher supermarket in New Jersey, murdering several people. See Sarah Maslin Nir, "Black Hebrew Israelites: What We Know About the Fringe Group," *New York Times*, December 11, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/11/nyregion/black-hebrew-israelites-jersey-city-suspects.html.—Ed.

American liberal tradition of pluralistic patriotism to which Jews of all political stripes have so faithfully pledged allegiance. All Americans, not just blacks and Jews, have an interest in the outcome of this conflict.

Why So Many Social Scientists Misunderstand Contemporary Antisemitism*

Neil J. Kressel

Social scientists have devoted great effort to understanding the Holocaust. In contrast, social scientists have understudied and underestimated contemporary global antisemitism, despite convincing evidence that such bigotry is widespread and dangerous. Its most perilous form, that emanating from the Muslim world, has been almost entirely ignored. It is particularly disturbing that this oversight may appear most prominently in works by those social scientists whom one would most expect to be paying attention, namely experts on racism and prejudice, who typically declare their objective to study and fight bigotry in all its forms. Studies of university syllabi and textbooks on racism and prejudice indicate that antisemitism rarely receives much attention and, when it does, is explained as originating almost exclusively in the radical right; it is also seen as a phenomenon that largely ended by about 1990. As scholar David Hirsh puts it: "raising the issue of antisemitism puts you outside the community of the progressive." This chapter probes in detail why this is so, and how the situation came to be. To this end, it will consider explanations based on lack of accurate information, poor information processing, professional socialization, political contingencies, radical ideology, the link to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and practical barriers to research.

During the mid-twentieth century, many psychologists, sociologists, and political scientists were driven by a powerful desire to understand then recent manifestations of antisemitism in Europe, America, and across the globe. Their efforts resulted in influential works like Nathan Ackerman and Marie Jahoda's *Anti-Semitism and Emotional Disorder* (1950), Bruno Bettleheim and Morris Janowitz's *Dynamics of Prejudice* (1950), Melvin Tumin's *An Inventory and Appraisal of Research on American Anti-Semitism* (1961), Charles Herbert Stember's *Jews in the Mind of America* (1964), Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark's *Christian Beliefs and Antisemitism* (1966), Gertrude Selznick and Stephen Steinberg's *The Tenacity of Prejudice* (1969), Harold Quinley and Charles Y. Glock's *Antisemitism in America* (1979), Gary Tobin and Sharon

Sassler's *Jewish Perceptions of Anti-Semitism* (1988), and other works.[1] The hope
to shed light on past and present Jew-hatred also provided much of the motiva-
tion behind several classic works in the social sciences with an enduring
intellectual impact far beyond antisemitism studies. Thus, interest in anti-
semitism led, in part, to Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951)
and *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963), Theodor Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswick,
Daniel Levinson, and R. Nevitt Sanford's *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950),
Gordon Allport's *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954), Stanley Milgram's *Obedience
to Authority* (1974), Erich Fromm's *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*
(1973), Robert Jay Lifton's *The Nazi Doctors* (1986), and Ervin Staub's *The Roots
of Evil* (1989).[2]

Despite this illustrious history of concern and productivity, in recent years
the social sciences have been shedding much less light on antisemitism than
they once did. Indeed, in my view and that of several others, many mainstream
psychologists, sociologists, and political scientists have been largely missing the
boat with regard to the analysis of present-day Jew-hatred. More specifically,
social scientists in their teaching, research, media appearances, and antiracism
interventions have been underestimating and—in some instances—deliberately
downplaying the extent, virulence, and potential danger of contemporary anti-
semitism. Nowhere has the tendency to minimize antisemitism been more
pronounced than with regard to manifestations of Jew-hatred in the Muslim
world.[3] However, one can also detect signs of antisemitism blindness—or

---

[1] Nathan Ward Ackerman and Marie Jahoda, *Anti-Semitism and Emotional Disorder*
(New York: Harper, 1950); Bruno Bettelheim and Morris Janowitz, *Dynamics of
Prejudice* (New York: Harper, 1950); Melvin Marvin Tumin, *An Inventory and Appraisal
of Research on American Anti-Semitism* (New York: Freedom Books, 1961); Charles Y.
Glock and Rodney Stark, *Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism* (New York: Harper &
Row, 1966); Harold E. Quinley and Charles Y. Glock, *Anti-Semitism in America* (New
York: Free Press, 1979); Gary A. Tobin and Sharon L. Sassler, *Jewish Perceptions of Anti-
semitism* (New York: Plenum Press, 1988).

[2] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jova-
novich, 1973); Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, paperback ed. (New York:
Penguin Books, 1964); T.W. Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York:
Harper, 1950); Stanley Milgram, *Obedience to Authority* (New York: Harper & Row,
1974); Erich Fromm, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (New York: Fawcett Crest,
1973); Robert Jay Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors* (New York: Basic Books, 1986); Ervin Staub,
The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence (New York:
Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[3] Neil J. Kressel, *"The Sons of Pigs and Apes": Muslim Antisemitism and the Conspiracy
of Silence* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2012); Neil J. Kressel, "The Great Failure of
the Anti-Racist Community," in *From Antisemitism to Anti-Zionism*, ed. Eunice G.
Pollack (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2017); David Hirsh, "How Raising the Issue of
Antisemitism Puts You Outside the Community of the Progressive," in Pollack, *From
Antisemitism to Anti-Zionism.*

denial—with regard to recent (and very diverse) developments in Eastern, Western, Central, and Southern Europe, Asia, Latin America, and elsewhere.[4]

It is, at first, a bit incongruous that the neglect and misreading of anti-Jewish bigotry should take place in an era where, by many measures, the social scientific study of racism, prejudice, and bigotry has been flourishing like never before.[5] Indeed, it is particularly disturbing that the misunderstanding of contemporary Jew-hatred may appear *most prominently* in works by those social scientists—racism and prejudice experts—whom one would most expect to be paying closest attention, especially if we take at face value their declared objective to study and fight bigotry "in all its forms." Two left-leaning prejudice scholars have recently taken a microscope to this problem, charging, "The disconnection of racism and antisemitism today is suggested by the alacrity with which some antiracists respond to racism and Islamophobia, or conversely by the suspicion they show to 'charges' of antisemitism that they do not show to other forms of racism."[6] One manifestation of this suspicion is the Middle East Studies Association's recent opposition to the Anti-Semitism Awareness Act.[7]

It is perhaps even more unsettling that the downplaying of contemporary Jew-hatred shows up not only among social scientists but also in the work of many mainstream policymakers, journalists, and human rights activists.[8] Leftist political groups have throughout modern history had a complex relationship with anti-semitism, but during most of the post-World War II period they generally could

---

[4] Anthony Julius, *Trials of the Diaspora: A History of Anti-Semitism in England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Lesley Klaff, "Political and Legal Judgment: Misuses of the Holocaust in the UK," *Journal for the Study of Antisemitism* 5, no. 1 (2013); Werner Bergmann, "Antisemitism in Europe Today" (conference, Jewish Museum Berlin, November 8-9, 2013); Ben Cohen, *Some of My Best Friends: A Journey through Twenty-First Century Antisemitism* (Berlin: Edition Critic, 2014); Rafał Pankowski, "The Resurgence of Antisemitic Discourse in Poland," *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 12, no. 1 (2018).

[5] See, for example, Joseph F. Healey and Eileen O'Brien, *Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Class*, 7th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2015); Bernard E. Whitley and Mary E. Kite, *The Psychology of Prejudice and Discrimination*, 2nd ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage, 2010).

[6] Robert Fine and Philip Spencer, *Antisemitism and the Left: On the Return of the Jewish Question* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 7.

[7] A.J. Caschetta, "No Surprise that MESA Opposes the 'Anti-Semitism Awareness Act,'" *The Algemeiner*, June 12, 2018, https://www.algemeiner.com.

[8] Phyllis Chesler, *The New Anti-Semitism: The Current Crisis and What We Must Do About It* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003); Gabriel Schoenfeld, *The Return of Anti-Semitism* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2004); Pierre-André Taguieff, *Rising from the Muck: The New Anti-Semitism in Europe*, trans. Patrick Camiller (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2004); Bernard Harrison, *The Resurgence of Anti-Semitism: Jews, Israel, and Liberal Opinion* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006); Nick Cohen, *What's Left?* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2007); Robert S. Wistrich, *A Lethal Obsession: Anti-Semitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad* (New York: Random House, 2010).

be counted on to oppose antisemites most of the time. This is no longer the case.[9] In the United Kingdom, for example, Jewish groups have expressed great concern recently about antisemitism in the Labour Party.[10] In the United States, numerous writers have charged that the Black Lives Matter movement has promoted anti-semitism.[11] And, as we shall see, the reluctance to oppose overt Jew-hatred shows up very often among those who are not themselves antisemitic.

Even among well-intentioned students of Nazism, genocide, and the Holo-caust, there are those who fail to grasp basic lessons about Jew-hatred. To be sure, there are important *general* lessons for humanity to be extracted from the Holocaust and there is value in the development of *general* theory regarding prejudice, racism, and bigotry. But antisemitism has occupied and continues to occupy a particular and complex position in Western and Islamic civilization; its murderous potential and its resistance to eradication have been proven again and again. Social scientists neglect the specific aspects of the topic only at great risk not only to Jews but to civilization itself. The logic of world affairs and the lessons of history, after all, leave little doubt that the growth of Jew-hatred always means trouble for those who genuinely care about human rights, freedom, equality, democracy, constitutional government, modernity, science, civility, diversity, and world peace. Anti-Jewish regimes and individuals are never otherwise reasonable and progressive.[12]

The purpose of this chapter is to examine some of the ways in which the con-temporary social scientific study of antisemitism may be falling short, and why. To do this, we will first briefly review empirical evidence establishing that antisemitism has indeed reemerged as a serious sociopolitical problem in many parts of the world, and, next, consider empirical studies exploring how the social sciences have addressed antisemitism. Then, we will consider in a bit more detail the reasons for the downplaying of contemporary antisemitism by many social scientists.

Evidence Establishing the Prevalence and Intensity of Contemporary Global Antisemitism

While most social scientific experts on racism and prejudice believe that contem-porary antisemitism, in principle, still falls under their purview, some suggest that other forms of prejudice are, indeed, far more heavily studied these days

---

9 Robert S. Wistrich, *From Ambivalence to Betrayal: The Left, the Jews, and Israel* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012).

10 Stephen Castle, "3 Jewish Papers in U.K. Denounce Labour Party," *New York Times*, July 27, 2018, available at: https://search.proquest.com/docview/2076668996.

11 Earl Bowen and Asaf Romirowsky, "Black Lives Matter: Promoting Antisemitism," *Ynet*, March 5, 2018, http://www.meforum.org/7303/black-lives-matter-promoting-anti-semitism.

12 Kressel, *"The Sons of Pigs and Apes,"* 10.

because Jew-hatred is largely a "spent force," a vestige that occasionally emerges on the fringes of civilization but that no longer possesses the potency to do much damage. Contemporary antisemitism is not heavily studied, in short, because it is not seen to be much of a problem, relatively speaking. The alarmists, we sometimes hear, are wearing the blinders of traumatized Jews still smarting from admittedly intense past injustices. They exhibit collectively an irrational cognitive frame—possibly even a bit of PTSD—or, at the very least, they are inclined to make mountains out of molehills.[13] Alternatively, we hear that—while real in some instances—antisemitism is deliberately blown out of proportion by Zionists who see it as a weapon to be wielded on behalf of the State of Israel; indeed, we are also told frequently that those who see antisemitism as a big problem are defining the term in a way that mostly aims to demonize legitimate criticism of Israeli policies.[14]

Thus, one should probably start all discussions of antisemitism denial and neglect by establishing that contemporary antisemitism is, in fact, still a significant problem.

Journalistic and scholarly works suggest that virulent anti-Jewish bigotry is now most prevalent in several Muslim-majority countries, but the trend toward more and nastier antisemitism is nearly global and even affects some liberal democracies in important ways.[15] Some of the antisemitism described is the old-

---

[13] Even the well-regarded historian of American antisemitism, Leonard Dinnerstein, to some extent shares in this outlook, at least with regard to antisemitism as it currently manifests in the United States. See, for example, Leonard Dinnerstein, "My Assessment of American Anti-Semitism Today," in *Antisemitism in North America*, ed. Steven K. Baum et al. (Boston: Brill, 2016); Jeffrey E. Cohen, "Generalized Discrimination Perceptions and American Jewish Perception of Antisemitism," *Contemporary Jewry* 38, no. 3 (2018), available at: https://search.proquest.com/docview/2030042610.

[14] Judith Butler, "The Charge of Anti-Semitism," in *Those Who Forget the Past*, ed. Ron Rosenbaum (New York: Random House, 2004); John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008); James Cohen, "The Accusation of Anti-Semitism as Moral Blackmail: Conservative Jews in France and the Israel-Palestinian Conflict," *Human Architecture* 7, no. 2 (2009); Jewish Voice for Peace, *On Antisemitism: Solidarity and the Struggle for Justice* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2017).

[15] Chesler, *The New Anti-Semitism*; Taguieff, *Rising from the Muck*; Harrison, *The Resurgence of Anti-Semitism*; Michael Fineberg, Shimon Samuels and Mark Weitzman, eds., *Antisemitism: The Generic Hatred* (Portland, OR: Vallentine Mitchell, 2007); Michael Berenbaum, *Not Your Father's Antisemitism: Hatred of the Jews in the Twenty-First Century* (St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 2008); Tarek Fatah, *The Jew Is Not My Enemy: Unveiling the Myths That Fuel Muslim Anti-Semitism* (Plattsburgh, NY: McClelland & Stewart, 2011); Charles Asher Small, ed., *Global Antisemitism: A Crisis of Modernity*, 5 vols. (New York: ISGAP, 2013); Abraham H. Foxman and Christopher Wolf, *Viral Hate: Containing Its Spread on the Internet* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Mitchell G. Bard, *Death to the Infidels: Radical Islam's War Against the Jews* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

fashioned kind that, more or less, speaks its name and leaves little doubt about its essence. Yet, much of today's antisemitism, especially in the democratic West, is, as sociologist David Hirsh writes,

> difficult to recognize because it does not come dressed in a Nazi uniform and it does not openly proclaim its hatred or fear of Jews. In fact it says it has learnt the lessons of Jew-hatred *better* than most Jews have, and it says that, unlike them, it stands in the antiracist tradition. It is an antisemitism which positions Jews themselves as "oppressors," and it positions those who develop hostile narratives about Jews as "oppressed."[16]

To perceive this second, hidden form of antisemitism sometimes—though not always—requires a careful, politically-aware reading and thoughtful interpretation of just what is being uttered and why. So journalists and philosophically and politically oriented scholars have an important role to play.

Yet in the social sciences, data-based studies are the coin of the realm. What psychologists and sociologists generally value above all else is quantitative evidence. For a variety of reasons, social scientists have not been doing all that is required to gather the needed data.[17] But, for those willing to look, existing quantitative research irrefutably establishes that anti-Jewish attitudes are widespread.

A good place to start is with the 2014-2015 global survey conducted by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). The ADL study was one of the best designed and most ambitious ever to address the topic of antisemitism, based as it was on more than 50,000 respondents in more than 100 countries. Interviews were conducted in 96 languages. Random sampling was impossible, but researchers strived to obtain close-to-random samples whenever possible. The questionnaire assessed agreement with eleven components of traditional antisemitic stereotypes, including items such as "Jews have too much power in international financial markets," "People hate Jews because of the way Jews behave," and "Jews have too much control over the global media." The researchers bent over backward to be conservative in their classification system; harboring a few anti-Jewish sentiments did not make one an antisemite. The ADL classified a person as an antisemite if he or she indicated that at least six of the eleven negative stereotypical items were "probably true." Nobody was counted as an antisemite on the basis of a negative attitude toward Israel.

Using this methodology, the ADL counted *1.09 billion* antisemites in the world.

There is certainly room to quibble—in both directions—over this precise number; reasonable people could also disagree about specific research design

---

[16] David Hirsh, *Contemporary Left Antisemitism* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 5.

[17] Neil J. Kressel, "The Urgent Need to Study Islamic Anti-Semitism," *Chronicle of Higher Education* 50, no. 27 (2004).

decisions made by the ADL researchers.[18] For example, a few critics reasonably call attention to the survey's measurement of prejudiced attitudes as opposed to bigoted behaviors.[19] But the numbers and the breakdown of results by country robustly confirm the thrust of journalistic and scholarly works cited above.

One piece of good news is that the United States isn't the crux of the problem.[20] As I explained to New York newspaper readers when the study first appeared, "Americans (along with Australians, British and a few others) typically score among the most tolerant in the world. Indeed, many Americans have very positive attitudes toward Jews."[21]

Globally, 70% of the antisemites have never met a Jew. They come disproportionately from the Middle East and North Africa, where nearly three out of four people endorse quite a few anti-Jewish beliefs. Ninety-two percent of Iraqis, for example, could be classified as antisemites, and 69% of Turks. Still, roughly 880 million antisemites do not live in the Middle East or North Africa.

The disease is, in fact, global. Among Poles, for example, at least 45% qualified as antisemites—and one might speculate that this number has grown in light of very recent developments.[22] Greeks came in at 69%, Malaysians 61%, Russians 30%, Spaniards 29%, Germans 27%, and so on. About half of all Muslims were antisemites, according to the survey, but the ADL emphasized that region mattered more than religion. For one thing, Muslims in Western nations were less likely to meet the antisemitism criteria than those in the Middle East and North Africa. Also, Christians from the Middle East and North Africa were generally more hostile to Jews than were other Christians.

The study also brought some discouraging news about Holocaust awareness. Among those around the world who have heard of the Holocaust (54%), about one in three believes it is either a myth or has been greatly exaggerated. And in

---

[18] J. Singal, "The ADL's Flawed Antisemitism Survey," *New York Magazine*, May 14, 2014; Neil J. Kressel and Samuel W. Kressel, "Trends in the Psychological Study of Contemporary Antisemitism: Conceptual Issues and Empirical Evidence," *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 38, no. 2 (2016), http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01973533.2016.1164704.

[19] E.S. Shapiro, "Global Antisemitism?," *First Things* 250 (February 2015): 19-21.

[20] The "good" news about the United States and some Western countries requires some qualification. Antisemitism, as defined in most of the empirical research, excludes—or greatly deemphasizes—hostility toward Israel, the Jewish state. Yet, for many recent analysts of antisemitism, this is precisely the realm wherein contemporary Western antisemitism is most likely to be found. So, if one accepts the broader definition of antisemitism to include some forms of extreme anti-Zionism, one would probably need to modify substantially the conclusions regarding say, Britain, France, and—to a lesser extent—even the US left. But the present argument rests on a narrower definition of antisemitism.

[21] Neil J. Kressel, "No Ignoring a Billion Anti-Semites," *New York Post*, May 16, 2014.

[22] Pankowski, "The Resurgence of Antisemitic Discourse in Poland."

the Middle East and North Africa nearly two in three question the Holocaust in one way or another. Youth was a predictor of lower knowledge about the Holocaust and a greater tendency to doubt historical accounts.

Numerous other studies confirm the ADL findings.[23] It is beyond our scope here to review all the empirical evidence supporting the resurgence argument, but it should be noted that the case generally emerges not from attitudinal poll data alone but rather from an examination of antisemitic incidents and an analysis of the frequency and virulence with which powerful leaders in the worlds of politics, religion, academia, and journalism have voiced sentiments that most reasonable people would deem bigoted.

When we note the connectedness of antisemitism to world affairs and terrorism, its proven historical potential, its link to the Arab-Israeli conflict, its association with perceptions of the United States around the world, and its ability to adapt and thrive in so many forms in so many diverse societies, one might guess that the topic would be a major preoccupation of social scientists. But that, it turns out, is far from the case.

How Social Scientists Study Antisemitism: Some Data

A few empirical studies have begun to look at how social scientists actually study contemporary antisemitism. A 2016 publication systematically examined writings dealing with antisemitism in four important social science research databases: *PSYCHINFO*, *Sociological Abstracts (SA)*, *ProQuest Social Science Journals (PSSJ)*, and *Worldwide Political Science Abstracts (WPSA)*. The databases—which list and describe huge numbers of social scientific journal articles and books—were searched through the end of 2014. The starting dates varied because the databases had different coverage: *PSYCHINFO* (1940), *SA* (1950), *PSSJ* (1990), and *WPSA* (1970).[24]

In short, the database searches revealed—perhaps not surprisingly—that for the past few decades studies dealing with the Holocaust overwhelmingly outnumbered studies dealing with all other instances of antisemitism. This tendency to focus on the Holocaust has been increasing as we get further from the event. Results also suggest that many studies of the Holocaust do not seem to have focused specifically on its antisemitic aspects. The database searches additionally show that—until the first decade of the 21st century, there was virtually no social scientific interest at all in antisemitism in the Muslim and Arab world. Indeed, another preliminary study carried out in 2003 had been unable to locate a single study in listed in PSYCHINFO since 1940 that dealt

---

[23] Kressel and Kressel, "Trends in the Psychological Study."
[24] Ibid.

specifically with antisemitism in the Muslim or Arab world.[25] Since the early 2000s, there has been a clear—but very small—increase in the number of studies on the topic. Still, the total number of studies on Muslim antisemitism amounts to a handful.

Moreover, analysis of items returned in the initial searches shows that several studies did not really deal with contemporary Muslim antisemitism. One, for example, covered ancient Egyptian attitudes toward Jews. Some studies argued that there was *no* problem of Muslim antisemitism—but they were included in the account. Two special issues of journals with good insight but relatively low impact on the field (as measured by standard impact scores) accounted for a large chunk of the existing research. All in all, "the most influential journals in virtually every field have ignored the topic…. Thus, the minuscule number of entries that the study located on Muslim antisemitism actually overstates, rather than understates, interest in the topic."[26]

A related content analytic study examined in more detail abstracts from all psychological studies in PSYCHINFO from 1990-2014 which mentioned antisemitism in the subject field; this selection procedure yielded a total of about 278 usable items for analysis (from an initial sample of 314). When the word "Holocaust" was added to the search, the number of items increased to 1,808, again confirming the extent to which the Holocaust dominates research in the area. Analysis of 278 abstracts (identified by the subject "antisemitism") showed that 21% dealt with antisemitism in the United States, now or in the past; 24% dealt with Southern or Western Europe, 28% with Austria or Germany, and 13% with the Communist world or with countries that were formerly Communist. About 30 items mentioned some aspect of antisemitism in the Arab or Muslim world, and—again—not all of these were on target.

The content analysis of psychological studies also suggested relatively little attention paid to antisemitism when it emerged from the left or from minority communities, despite journalistic and empirical arguments that some antisemitism has found some support in these places. A large percentage of works addressed antisemitism in literary or intellectual life. Relatively few of the studies made any reference to the religious roots of antisemitism.

Of course, in scholarship, one good study can be far more useful in understanding a phenomenon than a hundred not-so-good ones. What we are really interested in, here, is not so much the state of our knowledge about antisemitism (which may be pretty good) but rather the state of the collective understanding of antisemitism by the community of social scientists.

---

[25] Neil J. Kressel, "Antisemitism, Social Science, and the Muslim and Arab World," *Judaism* 52, no. 3-4 (2003).

[26] Kressel, "The Great Failure of the Anti-Racist Community," 45.

To this end, textbook content may tell more than research trends about what concerns scholars and social scientists. The justification for studies of textbook coverage is that

> a few researchers may produce studies that are largely ignored except by a few like-minded scholars. Moreover, textbooks may, through the selection of case material and examples, reflect interests and judgments of social scientists about what matters—even when research is—for a variety of reasons—unavailable. In any case, it is mainly through textbooks that a field conveys its knowledge, values, and concerns to the outside world and to the next generation of experts.[27]

Unfortunately, we do not possess a comprehensive study of social scientific textbook coverage of Jews, the Arab-Israeli conflict, or antisemitism.

A pilot study of a small sampling of college-level textbooks on racism and sexism offers a few preliminary insights. Overall, compared to many other forms of prejudice, antisemitism is not much discussed and—when it is—it is generally mentioned as a problem of the past, rather than the present. Reference lists tend to be huge in these books but they do not typically include any citation of the post-2000 literature on antisemitism alluded to above. Even references to the Holocaust and past antisemitism are scarce. Differences between antisemitism and other forms of prejudice are rarely covered. There is virtually no coverage of Jew-hatred in the Muslim world. There are also no references to antisemitism coming from the political left. All in all, when antisemitism is mentioned, it is treated in passing and not as a major concern. It should be emphasized, however, that the textbook study was far from definitive and that a more complete investigation needs to be conducted. An equally preliminary study of course syllabi found some evidence for similar tendencies in university classes dealing with prejudice and discrimination.

So we might conclude that although quite a few books and journalistic works have addressed the origins, extent, and consequences of contemporary antisemitism, this literature has not attracted much attention from mainstream social scientists—even those who have declared the investigation of prejudice to be their primary task. The question is why. Why won't they look at the data?

Explanations of Antisemitism Minimization

Social scientists are a diverse group, and in order to understand why they neglect, downplay, and misunderstand contemporary antisemitism we need to look in several places. Antisemitism minimization can, at times, grow out of: (1) intellectual misconceptions about the nature of antisemitism; (2) the methodological

---

[27] Ibid.

requirements of social scientific research; (3) the survival demands of academic life; and/or (4) the deleterious effects of anti-Zionist activism on campus. Of course, some of these explanations will apply to some social scientists and be completely irrelevant for others. Moreover, politics, values, biases, career demands, and intellectual positions interact in ways that are not always upfront and apparent. When, for example, one avoids studying or speaking about a topic because of its perceived impact on one's career, this judgment is not often broadcast openly to colleagues, and it may not even be understood or acknowledged in private.

There is also the preliminary matter of how much coverage of contemporary antisemitism would be enough? A quantitative answer is of course impossible without making major conceptual assumptions. But my own short answer would be that social scientists need to pay much more attention to Jew-hatred than they currently do. Empirically, research on antisemitism amounts to a tiny share of overall research on prejudice and discrimination.[28] According to one estimate, for example, about two to five out of every thousand articles on prejudice in recent decades have dealt with antisemitism; this number grows to two to three out of every hundred when we add in Holocaust-related research. Almost no research has dealt with antisemitism in the Muslim and Arab world, despite the fact that there is much evidence establishing its pervasiveness and intensity. Importantly, there is also some empirical evidence that textbooks on racism and prejudice devote only trivial lip service to contemporary antisemitism in any form. Existing coverage essentially ignores Islamic Jew-hatred, leftist antisemitism, and Israel-related antisemitism. Right-wing antisemitism, antisemitism in the past, and the Holocaust receive only a bit more coverage in textbooks.

As I have argued elsewhere, it's a fool's game—or a scoundrel's—to compare instances of great suffering.[29] Questions like "was the Holocaust worse than slavery?" don't make much sense. Is there any meaning in trying to weigh, for example, the costs of millennia of sexism against the horrors of bloodshed in the early nineties in Rwanda?

Yet one argument against studying contemporary Jew-hatred is that the body count has not been very high recently. An assessment of this argument depends partly on what one means by *recently*. But it also depends on whether you believe, as I do, that antisemitism has figured very prominently in both the genesis of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its inability to be resolved.[30] If this view is correct, antisemitism has indeed played an important part in generating many needless deaths—Jewish and Arab. Moreover, some of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century Muslim extremist movement has drawn strength from

---

28 Kressel and Kressel, "Trends in the Psychological Study."
29 Ibid.
30 Kressel, "*The Sons of Pigs and Apes*," 164.

the engine of antisemitic conspiracy theories. Beyond this, there have of course been numerous terrorist attacks against Jewish targets and large numbers of lesser antisemitic incidents, documented well in the United States and some other Western countries; needless to say, they also occur against Jews in the Muslim world and other places where they are not as likely to be documented.

At least as much as any other currently existing form of hatred, antisemitism has established its long-lasting potential to fuel human destructiveness; it can be murderous, resilient, mutable, and embedded in a broad range of ideological, economic, and geopolitical outlooks. Survey research shows antisemitism as a form of stereotyping, but to those with a modicum of historical sensibility, it is far more than that. At the very least, the failure of social scientific courses and texts to address the many forms of contemporary Jew-hatred (e.g. Muslim, Christian, Eastern European, Western European, Greek, Hungarian, Malaysian, Korean, Israel-related, right-wing, left-wing, etc.) seems intellectually unjustifiable and wrongheaded. Whether research will produce useful information about the diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment of this social disease is a reasonable question, and one about which I don't want to be unduly optimistic. But certainly the questions are worth asking far more often than they are at present.

Another issue concerns how much of the problem stems from mere lack of information. Do most social scientists know the evidence about contemporary antisemitism, and would it matter if they did? Just who knows what about global Jew-hatred is an empirical question about which we have very little reliable information. I think improving the information flow might be a useful first step. My impression is that the facts about Islamic antisemitism, in particular, seem largely unknown among non-experts. Data such as that produced by the ADL's global survey project deserve to be disseminated as widely as possible. New textbooks in relevant areas and peer-reviewed journal articles need to be written that present the truth about antisemitism to mainstream audiences. While some social scientists are hopelessly blinded by ideologies and geopolitical perspectives, most are not and I think many might respond appropriately to data, especially if presented through their usual information channels.

For some well-intentioned social scientists, the core issues may be conceptual. Many may underestimate the virulence and potency of antisemitism because they fail to grasp some fundamentals about this form of bigotry. For example:

– Jew-hatred often comes most intensely from people who have themselves been the targets of bigotry or injustice, possibly because of classic scapegoating.
– Jew-hatred has hard-to-eradicate roots in the sacred foundational stories of Islam and Christianity, and these inspirations for hatred have been reinforced by many centuries of interpretive theology.
– Jew-hatred draws continuing strength from its long history; each new movement sees past antisemitism as confirmatory in the sense that so many people from such diverse backgrounds could not possibly have been wrong.

- Jew-hatred cannot be well-understood by simplistic extrapolations from studies of other forms of prejudice and discrimination; it is, in many ways, *sui generis*.
- Jew-hatred cannot be well-understood by overgeneralizing from the American context; most social scientific writing originates in the United States where Jews are currently—and have historically been—treated uniquely well.
- The Holocaust cannot be understood without reference to the long history of Jew-hatred that predates modern political and racial antisemitism; it is ahistorical to teach about the Holocaust, solely, as an example of man's inhumanity to man.

One may, of course, debate each of these contentions. Here, my goal is simply to suggest that the tendency to reject the above points—for intellectual or other reasons—may be associated with the minimization of contemporary antisemitism. As Robert Fine and Philip Spencer have written, "The positioning of antisemitism as a creature of the past—for instance, of a now superseded age of nationalism, late modernization, or organized modernity—serves to close our eyes to new forms it may assume in the present."[31]

Even when social scientists do wish to conduct serious studies of contemporary antisemitism, there are often practical and methodological barriers to doing so, especially if the target antisemitism is outside of the United States and the West. First, there is the problem of access. Nondemocratic and antisemitic countries are not likely to welcome foreign scholars whose research agendas involve pesky questions designed to expose pandemic Jew-hatred. Although Jews may be permitted to teach and conduct research in some of these countries, an interest in antisemitism and sympathy for Israel are likely to be disqualifying factors for research appointments, Fulbright scholarships, and the like. Even if one can get financial support and access to populations for study, few social scientists (and very few with a background in antisemitism studies) have the requisite linguistic skills to conduct research in places where Jew-hatred is most severe.

Putting all of this aside, there remains what I have called "the Daniel Pearl effect." Jewish reporters—like *Wall Street Journal* writer Daniel Pearl—who ask the wrong people probing questions can end up putting a target on their backs, and one murder can scare off many researchers. Professor Warren Weinstein— who was working on economic development in Pakistan—was kidnapped in 2011 and held until his death. Imagine the predicament of an openly pro-Israel scholar who sought to study Jew-hatred in, say, Pakistan, Iran, Lebanon, or even 2018 Poland. Western or indigenous social scientists, especially Jewish ones,

---

31 Fine and Spencer, *Antisemitism and the Left*, 8.

might need more than a little bravery to conduct serious, lengthy, and probing empirical studies of antisemitism in some locations; the Western scholars who are welcome in such places are often welcome precisely because they share local perspectives or are unlikely to address unwelcome topics.

Most empirically-oriented antisemitism scholars have therefore opted to focus on less intense Jew-hatred in the United States or other Western nations, or to attempt studies at a distance (sometimes with clever methodologies).[32] One related issue is the tendency in some parts of the social sciences, such as my own field of social psychology, to favor research topics which can be addressed through laboratory experimentation and quantitatively rigorous designs. Thus, even when antisemitism is addressed empirically and competently, the data may describe in great detail and depth the beliefs and behaviors of accessible American college students while neglecting more dangerous antisemites who are harder to study.

Some of the biggest barriers to understanding contemporary Jew-hatred come from the composition, culture, and norms of academic social science. It is no surprise, of course, that social scientists have—for a long time—fallen overwhelmingly on the left side of the political spectrum. One study found, for example, that in the presidential election of 2004, 88% of American professors in the social sciences voted for Kerry while only 6% voted for Bush, the winner.[33] Studies have also shown that elite, research-producing institutions tend to be furthest to the left.[34] Moreover, some research has also documented that many left-leaning social scientists openly admit that they would discriminate against conservative colleagues in reviews of papers submitted for publication and also in hiring decisions.[35] Whether such findings constitute a general problem for the social sciences is beyond the scope of this paper. It is also not completely clear how the left orientation influences receptivity to research on antisemitism. As noted, left-leaning social scientists historically have often been leaders in studying and fighting bigotry, including antisemitism. In recent decades, however, some tendencies on the left have pushed in the opposite direction.

---

[32] See, for example, Rusi Jaspal, *Antisemitism and Anti-Zionism: Representation, Cognition, and Everyday Talk* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014); Florette Cohen et al., "Modern Anti-Semitism and Anti-Israeli Attitudes," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 97, no. 2 (2009).

[33] Neil Gross and Solon Simmons, "The Social and Political Views of American Professors" (working paper, September 24, 2007), available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228380360_The_Social_and_Political_Views_of_American_Professors.

[34] Scott Jaschik, "Survey Finds That Professors, Already Liberal, Have Moved Further to the Left," *Inside Higher Ed*, October 24, 2012, http://www.insidehighered.com.

[35] Yoel Inbar and Joris Lammers, "Political Diversity in Social and Personality Psychology," *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 7, no. 5 (2012), available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/44280797.

Some of the resistance to the frank and effective study of antisemitism has been based on norms that may exist more less independently of political orientation. One barrier is an understandable, but ultimately misguided, reluctance to focus on antisocial beliefs in groups who have themselves been frequent victims of discrimination. Thus, scholars have not systematically addressed data showing that—to some extent—Muslims, African Americans, and Hispanics display higher levels of Jew-hatred than the general populations in many countries.[36] Additionally, even though social scientists are less religious on average than the general public, many have been reluctant to focus on the roots of Jew-hatred in religious belief, especially when these roots can be found in sacred texts. In part, criticizing the religious beliefs of others is seen as impolite.

Some of the reluctance to perceive antisemitism as a significant problem have to do with the left's perceptions about the Arab-Israeli conflict and its connections—real and imagined—to contemporary Jew-hatred. Many on the far left have grown increasingly hostile to Israel in recent decades, and they have been successful in changing the climate of campus debates concerning the Middle East. Many left-leaning people, including intellectuals, remain sympathetic to Israel, but the left wing of the Democratic Party has become less sympathetic in recent years, as have younger Democrats. Nonetheless, even among those Democrats who are less supportive of Israel, it is possible that many, even most, remain steadfastly opposed to antisemitism when they perceive it.

It is primarily among the deeply and obsessively anti-Zionist intelligentsia that we detect the worst problems; this group is relatively small in size but has disproportionate influence in the humanities and social sciences—especially at elite institutions. As Andrew Pessin and Doron Ben-Atar have written, their virulent hostility to Israel

> corrodes scholarship, limiting the kinds of questions scholars can ask and leading scholars to violate the most basic academic norms. It corrodes teaching and the classroom, turning what should be learning spaces welcoming diverse points of view into political advocacy forums for the reigning orthodoxy that intimidate and silence divergent voices. It corrodes entire departments and disciplines, diverting them from their academic missions and subject matters.[37]

---

36 Neil J. Kressel, "How to Interpret American Poll Data on Jews, Israel and Antisemitism," in *Antisemitism in North America: New World, Old Hate*, ed. Steven K. Baum et al. (Boston: Brill, 2016).

37 Andrew Pessin and Doron Ben-Atar, "Introduction and Overview: The Silencing," in *Anti-Zionism on Campus*, ed. Andrew Pessin and Doron Ben-Atar (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018), 5.

This, unfortunately, is the context which might also lead well-intentioned young scholars to conclude that the study of antisemitism, especially Muslim antisemitism, may not be an altogether smart career move.

It is also the context that might lead some racism and sexism scholars, who often are found among the anti-Zionists, to conclude that antisemitism is either unreal or ideologically inconvenient. After all, the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement that lies at the core of present-day anti-Zionism rests on a program that ultimately would destroy Israel and involve the expulsion and death of many Jews—goals that seem, inarguably, antisemitic. The war that the obsessive anti-Zionists wage against the Jewish state cannot conveniently coexist with acknowledgement of persistent Jew-hatred, which seems to lend credibility to its *raison d'être*, and part of this war involves discrediting those who raise the matter of antisemitism. Consider, for example, the recent volume by the so-called "Jewish Voice for Peace" scholars, with a foreword by the well-known scholar Judith Butler.[38] The volume purports to be on the topic of antisemitism, yet it discusses not a shred of empirical evidence that has been collected on its topic. The entire volume is devoted only to the "uses" of antisemitism accusations. Oddly, for a book claiming to present a "Jewish" voice on antisemitism, several of the contributors are not Jewish and none are known scholars of antisemitism; they are only required to share a radical political vision and starting point of commitment to Palestinian rights. An essay by Linda Sarsour, for example, is really about Islamophobia and makes only one comment on antisemitism, namely the unreferenced and unsubstantiated non-starter that "most often the same groups who are anti-Muslim/anti-Islam are also antisemitic." Another essay by Palestinian BDS-leader Omar Barghouti argues—in the face of so much evidence that antisemitism has been neglected by (often Jewish) authors who deal with anti-racism—that Zionists have "privileged" antisemitism over other forms of racism, namely those directed against Blacks, Arabs, and Muslims. A student or scholar reading this book, allegedly written by luminaries with major academic appointments, would learn absolutely nothing about the empirical state of antisemitism in the contemporary world.

And if so many so-called experts on the Middle East, racism, and sexism don't see Jew-hatred as much of a problem, perhaps other social scientists feel unqualified to disagree. Cary Nelson, former president of the American Association of University Professors, has charged that "Antisemitism has found a home in the humanities and social sciences, taking over entire departments and disciplines. The classroom is turning into a space not for exploring the complexities of the Middle East but for indoctrinating students to view Israel

---

[38] Jewish Voice for Peace, *On Antisemitism*.

and Zionism as the embodiment of modern evil."[39] If he is even close to being correct, and I think he is, it is hard to imagine how social science departments nowadays could approach questions about contemporary antisemitism with objectivity and fairness. The community of hard-core anti-Zionists is relatively small but strategically located to derail the honest understanding of present-day antisemitism. The success of their agenda requires the acquiescence of other scholars on university campuses—an acquiescence that arises partly because of lack of interest, lack of information, and lack of clarity. Lack of courage by those who know better may also play a role. But, at their core, I think most social scientists remain sickened by antisemitism when it is clearly uncovered. David Hirsh speaks insightfully about what he has dubbed "the Livingstone formulation" (after former London Mayor Ken Livingstone); it is

> a refusal to regard antisemitism as an objective social phenomenon, and it is a refusal to enter into reasoned discussion about what constitutes antisemitism. It is a counter-accusation of bad faith. While concern about racism in general is regarded with a presumption of seriousness, concern about antisemitism has to clear the hurdle of a presumption of Zionist bad faith.[40]

Too many so-called scholars exhibit the attitude described by Hirsh, including, for example, the authors in the "Jewish Voice for Peace" anthology mentioned above. Still, we can hope that enough integrity remains in the academy so that the grips of ideology will not ultimately overpower the dictates of evidence, reason, and conscience.

For a very long time, many sociologists, psychologists, and other social scientists have seen themselves as participants in a great battle against bigotry and intergroup hatred. The parallel goals of their efforts have been, one, to increase the sophistication with which people think about prejudice and discrimination, and, two, to suggest interventions useful in building a kinder and more tolerant world. These goals remain relevant in the study of contemporary Jew-hatred.

---

[39] Cary Nelson, "Conspiracy Pedagogy on Campus," in Pessin and Ben-Atar, *Anti-Zionism on Campus*, 190.

[40] David Hirsh, *Contemporary Left Antisemitism* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 36.

Falling Down a Rabbit Hole: Antisemitism Becomes the New Normal at Oberlin College

Melissa Landa

The antisemitic Facebook posts of Oberlin professor Joy Karega caused a national stir in early 2016, but the inside story of the affair was even more disturbing. The story began earlier, when one of Karega's former students shared the posts with an Oberlin alumna, who was as shocked by the student's moral uncertainty about them as she was by Karega's open antisemitism. Because the posts had been public for over a year without an outcry, the former student found herself questioning her own judgment about their offensiveness. A group of Oberlin alumni began to interview Jewish Oberlin students and discovered the new variety of antisemitism being homegrown on the campus. Several traveled to Oberlin to meet with then Oberlin President Marvin Krislov and other administrators to address their concerns. They also met with Jewish students who turned out in significant numbers to express their struggles, and their sense of intimidation leading them to surrender elements of their Jewish identity. Though it became clear that anti-Israel campus vitriol fueled the anti-Jewish environment and was largely guided by faculty members who lived and worked in that same "pluralistic," "tolerant" liberal arts environment, the Jewish professionals on campus preferred not to make waves. The alumni on their own successfully organized an off-campus symposium on civil discourse that was attended by 70 students and faculty members. They continue to monitor the campus environment on behalf of Jewish students, hoping to salvage their alma mater's former legacy of equality for all people—Jews and Zionists included.

A Proud Legacy

Oberlin students frequently refer to themselves as Obies, proud of their membership in a creative community that is both academically rigorous and a beacon of political and social consciousness. When students walk past Oberlin's prestigious music conservatory, they see a railroad track seeming to emerge diagonally from the ground, a monument to the Underground Railroad and the safe haven that Oberlin College provided to the enslaved running north toward freedom. Most Oberlin students are also aware that Oberlin was the first coeducational college in the nation.

Historically, students have chosen Oberlin for all of these reasons, and because, in concert, they create an environment in which individuals are honored for the ways they identify themselves and for how they choose to express their identities. In the 1980s, I was one of those students. As an immigrant from South Africa, the

daughter of activist anti-apartheid parents, a Jew who loved Israel, and a musician, once I learned about and then visited Oberlin, no other college ranked even a close second. I spent much of my time at Oberlin openly manifesting my Jewish identity. On one memorable Yom Ha'atzmaut (Israel Independence Day), we hung an Israeli flag outside Wilder Student Union, blasted Israeli music through speakers, and danced Israeli folkdances, welcoming and teaching all who wished to join. For many years after, I proudly wore my status as an Oberlin graduate like a badge of honor.

In November 2015, however, everything I knew about Oberlin changed. As a Clinical Professor at the University of Maryland, I designed and led a program about Ethiopian Jews in Israel. When I left a message about my program on the Oberlin alumni Facebook page, I looked forward to alumni showing interest in the unique program. Instead, I was accosted with shocking and devastating character assassination from people I had never met. According to my fellow Obies, I was "a … Jew who … lets others do the dirty work of killing Palestinians for you," and was informed, "Zionism is absolutely a destructive cult." When I challenged the assertions of those attacking me, they increased in intensity with comments such as, "I'm being kind by assuming you are uninformed or brain-washed. Worse would be that you are knowingly accomplice to murder of 100,000 people and dispossession of 6 million for your personal gain."

The unbridled hostility being hurled at me from my once-beloved and peace-loving Obie community represented a depravity that I had never experi-enced. Their words directly attacked me (instead of challenging my views) and reduced Israel—a country I knew intimately—to a sinister caricature devoid of complexity and stripped of its history. I quickly learned that these aggressive tactics represented an integral aspect of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which was thriving at Oberlin and elsewhere. There, on a secluded campus among the cornfields of Ohio, the BDS movement, after successfully obtaining passage of a student government BDS resolution in 2013, had become a hegemonic ideology whose numerous followers labeled, judged, and ostracized those who did not adhere to their manifesto against the world's one Jewish state.

With a small group of other alumni, who had become my allies during the online discussions, I formed a new Facebook group called Oberlin Alumni Against Antisemitism (OAAA), where we discussed our concerns about the hateful rhetoric we had encountered. Our numbers grew rapidly, and soon nearly two hundred Oberlin alumni, representing a wide range of political views and several religious identities, began to discuss a plan of action to alert the administration to our concerns. Several current students and some very recent alumni joined our discussion and offered us poignant testimonials of their struggles as Jewish Zionists at Oberlin.

On December 11, 2015, we agreed that I would draft an Open Letter to President Marvin Krislov and the Oberlin College Trustees. With feedback from Marta Braiterman Tanenbaum, a retired educator and tireless advocate for civil rights, and in consultation with other alumni with backgrounds in education, law, and social policy, I ensured that each claim we made was substantiated by evidence.[1]

The letter stated: "We … abhor the tactics of Oberlin's pro-BDS student organizations that intimidate, threaten, and coerce Jewish students, which we have seen and heard in numerous written and spoken reports." We included several examples of such hostility, including (among others) a student quote from an article in the *Oberlin Review*, the student newspaper: "I quickly learned that at Oberlin, love for my own nation (Israel) was not something I could freely express"; another quote by a student who explained that she transferred out of Oberlin due to its "toxic climate … around Israel"; an exhibition of black flags symbolizing the Palestinians killed in Gaza during Operation Protective Edge displayed on Rosh Hashanah, one of Judaism's holiest days; and a rock thrown through a dorm window that displayed an Israeli flag.

Additionally, we made three requests of the administration: we called for an investigation of all acts of antisemitism, a forum for students and alumni who had experienced antisemitism to share the impact of those experiences on their psychological well-being and academic performance, and a task force comprised of President Krislov, Jewish professionals on campus, students, staff, faculty, and alumni "to put into place an appropriate, clear and immediate plan of action to address this current crisis." We concluded by noting that while we intended to publish the letter, we had shared it with the administration first in an effort to include them as a partner in our efforts.

Before finalizing the letter, however, we posted it on our internal Facebook page asking people to leave a comment if they were interested in signing it. In addition, we contacted alumni who had already expressed concern about BDS activity at Oberlin from an email list provided to us by a recent graduate for their opinion. Immediately, responses poured in with requests that we add their names. Ironically, the impassioned messages we received reminded me of how much I loved and admired the intelligence and openness of Oberlin students as I remembered them. Below are some that I found most poignant:

> My daughter is a current student and would add her name but is hesitant to do so because of the social stigma. She has been … exceedingly uncomfortable on campus and can't wait to graduate…. I teach at a Jewish high school. Because of the toxic environment, I no longer feel I can recommend Oberlin to my students.

---

[1] The letter may be found at https://www.newswire.com/news/anti-semitism-at-oberlin-an-open-letter-of-concern-from-alumni-and-7201443, last accessed May 7, 2020.

You can add my name to the list. I am class of 1964. Not only is there injustice here, but this is injurious to Oberlin's reputation. Also, there is a risk that Oberlin get on the press's radar as a place where such events happen.

Quite frankly, the Oberlin of today in no way resembles the Oberlin from my year, class of 1971…. I actively discourage attendance at Oberlin—other than the Conservatory, which incredibly seems to stay above all the craziness.

I am a Christian … and have lived the past 53 years as a permanent resident of Israel … a country of immigrants, multilingual—a true democracy. This country … has many internal problems, as do all democracies. But it is the only one I know that faces destruction on a daily basis.

Thank you for doing this. I've been so depressed about the news from Oberlin, I stopped donating.

On January 3, 2016, after almost two months of preparation, I emailed President Krislov and attached the letter, which was signed by twenty current students, five former and current faculty members, five parents, and over 200 alumni spanning seven decades in age, living in several countries across the globe, and representing a wide range of political, ethnic, and religious identities. While we felt confident that the twenty current students represented a significant number, we remained troubled by the many others who shared with us their fear of challenging the hegemonic hate of Israel on campus, like the alumna's daughter mentioned above who was "hesitant to do so because of the social stigma." We quickly learned that if you wanted to be with the cool kids and be included in the numerous social and political events at Oberlin, calling out the BDS bullies was not a wise choice.

A New Normal

With the letter completed, we turned to organizing the many quotes, pictures, and anecdotes that we had collected into a portfolio thoroughly documenting the antisemitism problem at Oberlin, a project that left me feeling that the only things that remained of the school I loved so dearly were my memories.

My dismay only increased when a recent graduate sent me the now infamous Facebook posts by Oberlin professor of rhetoric and composition Joy Karega. I looked at the image of Jacob Rothschild with a sinister and conniving expression, accompanied by a description of the picture that claimed the Rothschilds owned "your banks." I read claims that Israel was responsible for 9/11, the Charlie Hebdo massacre, and for shooting a Malaysian jet out of the sky, and I was incredulous. It was not only the images that shocked me; Karega's former student wanted validation that the images were offensive, because, while she told me she found them troubling, she questioned her judgment given that they had been publicly displayed for *over a year* without anyone expressing any objection.

As I gazed at the antisemitic vitriol, I felt that I was bearing witness to the destruction of Oberlin's proud legacy. I began to understand that the attacks I had endured online just two months prior were merely part of the new norms for what was socially and morally acceptable at Oberlin College. A campus that once embraced me was now a place that encouraged attacking anyone and anything with associations to Israel and that singled out Jews with blame for society's various ills.

With guidance from Kenneth L. Marcus of the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights under Law, and with the ongoing help of Marta and other alumni, I sent President Krislov our working document now chronicling two decades of antisemitic incidents on campus, many of them, including Karega's deluded bigotry, having occurred during his tenure. After much debate within our group, we included two of Karega's posts, redacting her name but explaining that a member of the Oberlin faculty had posted them.

For the next several weeks, we waited. I made two unsuccessful attempts to engage President Krislov in a conversation about the letter and the document. Eventually Krislov's assistant agreed to arrange a phone conversation with myself and fellow OAAA member Norman Birnbach once we agreed to several stipulations. He wanted our assurance that we would not audiotape the call and informed us that the interim Hillel director, Gregg Levine, would be joining the call. My subsequent request that Kenneth L. Marcus be included in the conversation was rejected.

While we waited for the phone call with Krislov, the subject of antisemitism at Oberlin began to appear on several news outlets. The conservative blog *Legal Insurrection* went with the headline, "Oberlin College Alums: Anti-Israel Fanaticism Creating Hostile Environment for Jews," while the *Jewish Press* ran an article, "At 'Liberal' Oberlin No Speech Rights for Non-Haters of Israel," including some powerful quotes by current students confirming the hostility and silencing they experienced. Other articles followed, including one in the *Washington Post* headlined, "College Activists Spark Alarm Over Alleged Anti-Semitic Attacks," with other related pieces appearing in the *Forward* and the *College Fix*. As Krislov's public silence continued, and after much debate, we decided to compile all of Karega's antisemitic and Israel-hating posts into a seventeen-page document, with her name, and sent it to Krislov, informing him that "for now" he and I were the only ones in possession of the document. Surely, he would recognize the validity of our concern and do something.

Our phone call eventually took place on January 28. I was surprised to learn that Gregg Levine, also on the line, had read the document we sent to Krislov, since lawyer Kenneth Marcus had marked it as confidential information for Krislov's eyes only. Aiming for goodwill, however, I did not pursue the issue, instead proceeding with our request to visit Oberlin in the next few weeks to

meet with the Oberlin administration and with Jewish students. My request was received favorably, and the planning began for a meeting at the end of February.

It was around the same time that three alumni of Vassar College, dealing with similar problems on their own campus, invited our group to join their newly created organization, Alums for Campus Fairness, which we did. Oberlin was clearly not alone in confronting a hostile campus environment for Jewish students, and we decided that strength in numbers and a national presence would be a wise step.

An Impending Storm

As our visit to Oberlin approached I experienced increasing trepidation. Just days before our arrival an article appeared in the *Cleveland Jewish News* by three Jewish Oberlin students. The article attacked us as alumni who were misrepresenting a peaceful campus that posed no discomfort for them, and positioned us as outsiders infringing on their territory and creating conflict where there had been none. As Oberlin's first public response to the Open Letter, the three students implied that the twenty students who signed the letter were willfully misrepresenting the campus situation to uninformed alumni. This did not suggest we would be receiving a warm welcome when we arrived three days later, or have an easy time mitigating the rampant and obvious hostility on campus.

The following day the storm did indeed strike, as David Gerstman exposed the vicious words and images of Joy Karega in *The Tower*.[2] Reporters began calling, another 100 alumni signed the Open Letter, and from that day forward I referred to my interactions at and about Oberlin as falling down a rabbit hole. Between Krislov's mild public response to Karega, in which he stated that the college "respects the right of its faculty, students, staff, and alumni to express their personal views," to the state of life for Jewish students at Oberlin at the time of this writing, I have found myself waiting for Oberlin to be liberated from the forces that have been violating its proud and historic legacy.

Falling Down a Rabbit Hole

Our meeting with Krislov, Diversity Officer Meredith Raimondo, and Dean Eric Estes began with Krislov handing each of us the students' article as evidence of our misguided perceptions. He continued to contradict and criticize several of the individuals who had contributed to our document in an apparent effort to delegitimize their statements.

---

[2] David Gerstman, "Oberlin Professor Claims Israel Was Behind 9/11, ISIS, Charlie Hebdo Attack," *The Tower*, February 25, 2018, http://www.thetower.org/3012-oberlin-professor-claims-israel-was-behind-911-isis-charlie-hebdo-attack, last accessed December 12, 2018.

Nonetheless, we carried on with our prepared points.

One member of our entourage, a recent graduate, told Raimondo that it was unfair and inappropriate to expect Jewish students to report their experiences with harassment to her, given Raimondo's ties to the BDS movement. Marta raised the issue of the covert budgets of pro-BDS groups, which allowed so many anti-Israel speakers to be brought to campus. I expressed concern about course syllabi containing one-sided, and often inflammatory perspectives of Israel; professors sharing their own anti-Israel political views in class; Jewish students being targeted as racists and oppressors for supporting Israel; and an overall environment that had replaced academic rigor with political rhetoric. As an example, I mentioned the talk by UCLA Professor Robin Kelley scheduled for two nights later, which (one could see) would be comprised of his own political views rather than any scholarly research. I suggested that the college should invite someone to debate Kelley, thus transforming yet another Israel-bashing session into an academically rigorous and analytically complex event worthy of Oberlin College. I was told that there was no time to arrange such a debate, in spite of the fact that I offered to find someone to attend.

As Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz had warned me would happen during one of our conversations preparing me for the meeting, Krislov accused us of trying to suppress free speech. I responded as Dershowitz suggested, by saying that free speech allows someone to stand on the street corner and say whatever he chooses. It does not mean that Oberlin College should pay for that privilege and provide a platform for someone to use their academic credentials to promote their own inflammatory views.

Several other meetings followed that day. These included some positive inter-actions with some remarkable Oberlin students of various faiths who wanted to learn more about the concerns expressed in our Open Letter. We also met with the director of the alumni office, to discuss the many alumni informing us they would not make any further donations until the campus situation improved. She confirmed that the volume of messages had increased dramatically since Karega's Facebook images were revealed.

That evening we met with a group of Jewish Oberlin students. Despite being told that twenty students were expected, approximately 35 students attended and shared their struggles as Jewish students who felt unwelcome on their campus. As a college instructor myself and as a mother of two college-age students, I was looking forward to giving a brief talk to these students and to fielding their questions. However, Gregg Levine maintained tight control of the proceedings, and those opportunities never arose. When Levine ended the meeting by holding up his palm toward our group saying, "We've GOT this," the message to us and to the students was clear. We alumni, who were eager to offer our resources and our ability to advocate on students' behalf, were not welcome.

In another disturbing surprise, one of the three students who had penned the *Cleveland Jewish News* article spent time with us after the meeting, expressing her appreciation for our concern and support. The following day, the same student confided in me that she had been pressured to sign her name to the article, and the following year she transferred out of Oberlin.

The most memorable and most difficult parts of my visit were still to come. The following morning, Marta and I drove to Cleveland to meet with the Executive Director of Cleveland Hillel and with somebody from the Jewish Federation of Cleveland. That afternoon and the following day, I met with individual Oberlin students to hear their perspectives and to find out how alumni could help. Students told me about professors assigning course readings that portrayed Israel as an evil and oppressive regime, without also providing readings that portrayed Israel as a progressive and democratic state. Students were given articles on "pinkwashing" but not articles about the LGBTQ communities who live freely in Israel, or articles that describe the violent oppression of LGBTQ communities across the Muslim world. They reported that instead of nuanced dialogue or genuine debate about Israel, classrooms had become sites where members of Students for a Free Palestine loudly and aggressively espouse their inflammatory views with the tacit support of their professors. They described the obsessive attention to Israel as a source of fear and anger, and an impediment to their ability to learn. Jewish students were informed that if they supported Israel, then they were racist and were not welcome in campus progressive movements, such as the Black Lives Matter movement or any other human rights efforts. According to another student, Jewish students were being labeled, identified, and ostracized as "oppressors" if they did not comply with the expectation of "Israel-bashing." They also explained that they did not challenge the disturbing views for fear of retaliation. For example, one student explained that she needed a letter of recommendation and, therefore, remained silent and angry.

A lack of nuance; lack of deep thought; a lack of critical analysis in discussions about Israel: academic rigor was simply being replaced with political rhetoric. Students are not being taught how to think, I heard, they are being taught *what* to think. Most distressing for me, however, was to hear that Oberlin is now a divided group of people rather than a caring community, where Jewish students live, work, and study within an overall atmosphere of tension and fear, where they worry about being marked and labeled as "the bad guys."

That evening, I returned to Oberlin's campus to attend the lecture mentioned above, by Professor Robin Kelley, a distinguished scholar of American history. The talk was called, "Fighting Apartheid Since 1948: Key Moments in Palestinian and Black Solidarity." Nearly every one of the students' complaints about the decline of academic rigor at Oberlin was manifest in this lecture.

Despite his UCLA webpage containing not one mention of South Africa, Palestinians, or Israel, the Oberlin Africana Studies Department and the Comparative American Studies Department had determined that Professor Kelley possessed the expertise to educate their students on events in South Africa and Israel since 1948.

The colorful, printed posters advertising his talk that decorated the Oberlin campus displayed a map of South Africa marked with small and detached shapes. Given that I was born and lived in apartheid South Africa, I immediately recognized 1948 as the year that the Nationalist government took control of South Africa and enforced its comprehensive and racist body of apartheid laws. I also knew that the marks on the map indicated the apartheid government's creation of fragmented and powerless independent "Homelands," or "Bantu-stans," which the apartheid regime created to try to convince the world that Black South Africans were, indeed, free. None of this information, however, was marked on the poster, and I wondered if Professor Kelley would discuss their historic significance or how much he knew about actual apartheid.

Professor Kelley began his talk by thanking Joy Karega, the Oberlin professor who accused Israel of 9/11 and the Rothschild family of controlling world finances, referring to her as "a brilliant scholar" who "does great work" and "a genius." In response, the audience cheered. He then proposed a challenge to "all of the people who read stuff … write stuff in the media to actually become scholars" and elaborated by saying, "that means you have to like not look for sounds bites, you actually have to read and study and *examine*," and I was momentarily encouraged. Ironically, however, as he continued to speak, he seemed to enchant the crowd of cheering and finger-snapping Oberlin College students in a classroom auditorium that felt more like a spiritual revival meeting than a place of academic learning.

"Listen to my words, don't invent me," Kelley demanded; "I'm supportive of student struggles that have been going on since the 1960s." Seconds later, he declared, "I'm supportive of a free Palestine, an end to apartheid and injustice everywhere … and this is why I'm active in BDS, especially as a board member of the US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel." He mentioned black liberation and freeing Palestine in a single breath, and I realized that I was not hearing a historian presenting a historical analysis but instead a man with a personal and political agenda, who was there to call students to action, to join the BDS campaign. And how could the students not follow his lead without feeling like racists? "Solidarity (with Palestinians) is a political stance," he insisted, while dismissing, *rather than exploring*, the concerns of black Americans who may not support the Palestinian cause. Attributing their position to the fact that the Palestinians offer no support to African Americans in return, Kelley insisted, "It doesn't matter! Injustice is injustice! You still fight for them! That's just a fact!"

Throughout his talk, Professor Kelley demonstrated his lack of expertise on the alleged topics of his talk. He omitted the most basic historical facts, including that in 1948, the day after Israel declared its independence, five Arab armies attacked it. He misrepresented the history of modern Israel and the Zionist mandate, which was an expression of the national self-determination of the Jewish people in their ancestral homeland, describing it as an attempt "to bring modernization to a so-called backward Arab world" and as "a colonial project," and the Holocaust as "a manifestation of colonial violence." His references to Israeli "apartheid" suggested he knew nothing about what actual apartheid is or was. For over an hour, Professor Kelley presented his political opinions as facts, aiming to spread the political platform of the BDS campaign. In so doing, he mocked genuine scholarship and academic rigor, the hallmarks of American higher education.

And Oberlin College served as his enabler and promoter.

Epilogue

Nine months after the hateful messages of the "genius, brilliant scholar" Joy Karega were exposed, on November 15, 2016, she was dismissed from Oberlin College. This occurred only *after* we alumni had appealed to the Oberlin Trustees and reported to the media that she was actually scheduled to teach classes that same semester, indicating that Oberlin was attempting to sneak her back in.

Two months earlier, on September 6, Marvin Krislov announced his resignation effective at the end of the academic year.

In the months beforehand, a war of words had raged in the *Oberlin Review* and on the Oberlin Alumni Facebook Page. Some called us racists given that Joy Karega identified as a black woman, others called us right-wing fanatics who were pushing their political agenda. Some faculty members defended Karega's freedom of speech, while others denied that her posts were problematic at all. In the rabbit hole, it seemed that even the most vicious display of bigotry could be excused as long as the ones under attack are Jews.

There were fortunately exceptions. Some faculty, such as Jewish Studies Professor Abe Socher, expressed disgust at Karega's antisemitism in op-eds, and 147 people signed a letter penned by Professor Jeffrey Blecher addressing concern about antisemitism at Oberlin.

Beneath all the noise, some fundamental questions lingered in my mind. How was Karega hired in the first place given her thin CV and bigoted views? Were our concerns being dismissed by the administration because we were being portrayed as Rothschild-like lying manipulators? Was the administration refusing to engage with us in a concerted effort to address antisemitism because they did not wish to associate themselves with a group of alumni that they perceived as a Jewish "lobby"?

Their reasons didn't really matter. Their actions were what mattered, and their actions were clear. We have become *persona non grata* and are regarded as troublemakers and pariahs. If we had any doubts about our status before September 2016, no doubts remained thereafter. Upon learning that a workshop for incoming first-year students the following year would be addressing racism and various other forms of bigotry, but not antisemitism, we attempted to work with the administration to incorporate antisemitism into the agenda. They showed no interest and eventually ceased responding to emails. When I shared that information with our group, an older alumna among us offered me the $1,000 he gave to Oberlin annually to hold a symposium of our own. When I approached the administration, however, they informed us that they could not offer us a room on campus to hold our event. Determined to proceed, the members of our group began to donate to our cause, and an Oberlin faculty member applied for and received a micro-grant from the Academic Engagement Network. I booked the conference room at the Oberlin Hotel, an off-campus site, confirmed our three impressive speakers—Kenneth L. Marcus, Stacey Aviva Flint, and Chloe Valdary—hired an Oberlin student to create posters, hired a photographer and videographer, and two undercover Oberlin police officers. When it comes to Israel and opposing BDS at Oberlin, we were warned, we needed to be prepared for protests. Sure enough, an hour before the event, the Oberlin police department informed us that a large crowd was gathering and preparing to march toward the hotel. If we set up the video crew on the roof, they advised, the students would likely cease and desist as they did not wish to appear on camera.

Today, Oberlin has no Hebrew language instructor or Zionist student organization. Oberlin students who tried to form a group called Oberlin Zionists were told by Jewish professionals that if they wanted to discuss Israel they should join J Street and not fragment the campus, despite numerous student accounts that at Oberlin it is difficult to distinguish between J Street and pro-BDS meetings.[3] During Fall 2017, as determined by Marta's tireless efforts to track events on campus, there were eight times more anti-Israel events on campus than events portraying Israel in a neutral light. During spring 2018, Oberlin Hillel held no Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration.

It is clearly not my Oberlin anymore.

Today, Oberlin has a new president, Carmen Ambar, who within a few months announced that she would not publicly share antisemitic incidents in the future, and who has refused to meet with our group. During our first and only phone call, President Ambar informed me that if students wanted to change

---

3   See Eliana Kohn, "On Being Pro-Israel, and Jewish, at Oberlin College," in *Anti-Zionism on Campus: The University, Free Speech, and BDS*, ed. Andrew Pessin and Doron Ben-Atar (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018).

the campus climate, they were free to do so, that they could invite speakers and hold events of their choosing. If the rabbit hole was a real place, perhaps students could, indeed, achieve such feats. But Oberlin College is a real place where it takes more than words and wishes for things to happen. It is a place fast becoming devoid of diversity in thought, and a place where some influential administrators and faculty members teach students that hate and bigotry are relativized.

Oberlin College is also a place that, at least one time, produced graduates who remain committed to the ideals of human dignity and academic rigor. It is, therefore, because we are Oberlin alumni with a commitment to our collective past and concern for the future of our alma mater, not in spite of those ideals, that we will continue to observe life for Jewish students at Oberlin College. It is because our Oberlin education prepared us to recognize injustice and voice our concerns when noted that we will continue to remind the Oberlin administration of its sacred task to preserve Oberlin's precious legacy.

Micro-Boycotts:
Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism in the Personal Boycott Movement

Cary Nelson

For over a decade, both individual BDS advocates and spokespeople for the movement have been unanimous in declaring that boycotts of Israel target "institutions, not individuals." For all this time and longer that has been entirely untrue. Indeed, an official BDS set of guidelines, issued in July 2014, bizarrely repeated the "no individuals" mantra while actually listing all the ways individuals should be targeted, like refusing to write letters of recommendation for students wanting to study in Israel, closing down study abroad programs, and blocking funding for joint American-Israeli faculty research projects. Ever since 2002, both successful and failed organizational boycott initiatives have driven anti-Zionist faculty members to launch their own private boycott actions against students and colleagues. This chapter calls these individual and small group actions "micro-boycotts"; it analyzes examples in multiple countries and describes the damage they do to both individual rights and academic freedom.

Introduction

In 2015, when I met in Tel Aviv with Bar Ilan University administrators to discuss the impact of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, the rector reported that the university was experiencing increased difficulty getting US faculty to review its tenure and promotion cases. Following the pattern that obtains elsewhere, US faculty offer the usual reasons for refusing: "I'm overcommitted" or "This isn't really my area of expertise." But when Bar Ilan repeatedly had to go further down the list of potential referees than it had in the past, the university began to suspect that anti-Zionist sentiment, antagonism promoted by BDS activism on campus and in professional associations, was sometimes at issue. There was no direct proof, but there was enough of a trend to suggest likely causes.

This chapter reviews representative examples of personally initiated boycott actions—what I am calling "micro-boycotts"—as an increasing feature of academic life. I use the term "micro-boycotts" to signal the intimate, individual character of the decision to implement them and to differentiate them from the mass boycott movement that inspires them. Micro-boycotts include individual and small group actions, with some initiated by one person and joined by others. I will look at select examples that have received public comment, along with others I have found through personal contacts. My aim is to gather in one

place a variety of different kinds of BDS-inspired personal assaults so that the overall phenomenon is revealed and clarified. They range from antisemitic assaults on individuals to actions that violate codes for professional behavior and compromise academic freedom. Such micro-boycotts have a destructive impact both on campus culture generally and on the ability of pro-Israeli students and faculty to pursue their academic goals.

There are several reasons why it is important to document this phenomenon. First, because the boycott movement continues falsely to insist that it targets institutions, not individuals. Where universities are concerned, that is simply impossible. People study, teach, and do research within and between academic institutions; they are the inevitable collateral damage when institutions or their programs are boycotted. Second, as this chapter will show, because the history of local BDS initiatives—contrary to the international movement's claims—is precisely a record of attacks on individuals. Third, because analysis of events on only one campus disguises the existence of a national and international trend and ignores the pattern of copycat micro-boycotts. Administrators and faculty may be more likely to speak out and consider appropriate sanctions when they realize micro-boycotts are an international phenomenon.

It is important to make clear at the outset that many personal boycott actions are protected by academic freedom and/or free speech rights. That includes advocacy for some actions, like academic boycotts, that official university policy and many major academic organizations would condemn. Individuals also are free to refuse to travel to conferences or any other events at home or abroad; they can decline opportunities to establish research relationships with universities in their own country or elsewhere. They can boycott any domestic or foreign products they wish. In other cases, while individuals or groups are free to advocate for controversial policies, such as economic divestment or the cancellation of joint degree or study abroad programs, the campus should forthrightly reject such recommendations and proceed to foster the relevant programs. After a spring 2018 student divestment resolution was debated at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, for example, the administration announced it would work to strengthen and increase collaborations with Israeli universities. My concern here is with political actions that undermine the rights of others, either students or faculty. Some of these actions merit due process review and appropriate penalties.

Some micro-boycotts can be serious and devastating to people, whereas others are important mainly as indications that long-term norms for academic conduct are under assault. Some people have allowed me to use their names; others are wary of personal damage if they mark themselves as "troublemakers" and requested confidentiality. One accomplished scholar changed her mind about confidentiality after spending several unsuccessful years on the job market and finally deciding she had nothing to lose in going public.

Individual or small group anti-Zionist actions by their nature are wildly variable. Some follow the recommendations posted by the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic & Cultural Boycott of Israel in July 2014 that were promoted as a joint PACBI/BDS agenda.[1] Others are more impulsive, initiated when circumstances turn pro-Israeli students and faculty into targets of opportunity for aggressive action. But all are fueled by the hostility promoted by the BDS movement's public statements and organizing activities. Sometimes individual BDS-inspired personal aggressions pile on to form a serial chorus of assaults. As University of Chicago student Matthew Foldi recounted,

> The first time that I spoke up for Israel in college I was greeted almost instantaneously by a barrage of hatred from my fellow students that escalated into anonymous online death threats; it was so specific to the day that I was supposed to die that I felt unsafe living in my own dorm and had to leave and stay over at a friend's house.[2]

While antisemitic intent cannot be read into all micro-boycotts, it would be foolish to assume it is absent from personal slander or attacks occurring on social media. Lawrence Summers's widely quoted 2002 comment about divestment resolutions—that they are "antisemitic in effect if not intent"—is broadly applicable to the actions detailed here. Certainly when students or faculty are motivated to fabricate events or lie about someone else's actions one may suspect that antisemitism played a part.

Representative Boycott Practices

Foldi's personal experience combined private and public hostility, but the most widespread and repeated violation of academic norms has been a decade's worth of public interruptions of Israeli speakers, beginning most pointedly with former ambassador Michael Oren's 2010 lecture at the University of California (UC) Irvine, continuing through the shout-down of professor Moshe Habertal's 2015 lecture at the University of Minnesota to today. The number of disruptions of speakers varies, according to statistics maintained by the Israel on Campus Coalition (ICC), but two recent academic years, 2015-16 and 2017-18, have seen spikes in their number, with 22 events in the former and 24 events in the latter. The number dropped to seven in the intervening academic year, 2016-17, perhaps because beleaguered programs at UC campuses and others with a history

---

[1] See PACBI Guidelines for the International Academic Boycott of Israel, July 31, 2014, http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1108.

[2] Foldi's comment is quoted from a May 2018 interview recorded for a video documenting the impact of anti-Israel passions on individuals (organized on behalf of the Alliance for Academic Freedom). The video is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82O6cDTvDdQ&t.

of disrupted events decided not to invite Israeli speakers. That year, notably, the disrupted speakers were at least able to complete their presentations. In comparison, the figures for earlier academic years are: 2010-11 (6), 2011-12 (13), 2012-13 (4), 2013-14 (7), and 2014-15 (11). Between 2010 and 2015, only two events were actually prevented from being completed. Between 2015 and 2018, however, the heckler's veto actually closed down 22. Of the 94 disruptions documented by the ICC, 80 were of Israeli speakers—including numerous Israeli soldiers, diplomats, and politicians, among them speakers at Independence Day celebrations. Academic conduct mandates that speakers invited by a recognized campus group be able to give a public lecture uninterrupted. Repeatedly interrupting a lecture or trying to prevent a lecture from taking place must be a punishable offense.

Apart from the visible disruptions of Israeli or pro-Israeli talks, we will never know how many such speaking events have been cancelled or never scheduled at all because of fear of disruption, amounting to what Miriam Elman describes as "stealth boycotts."[3] In 2016 University of Haifa neuroscientist Gerry Leisman, who is also director of the National Institute for Brain and Rehabilitation Sciences and the author of hundreds of scientific papers, shared with me the story of his Oxford University lecture being cancelled with an email stating that his government's policies did not make it easy to bring Israelis to campus. That same year an alumni group working with Vassar faculty wanted to bring me to campus to offer some practical peacemaking alternatives to anti-Israel Rutgers professor Jasbir Puar's lecture there, but not one faculty member had the courage to reserve a campus room, so toxic had the Vassar atmosphere become. In 2018, the same scenario unfolded at the University of Hawaii, where the argument that the Palestinians are the only true indigenous people in the Land of Israel holds sway and limits campus events addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to anti-Zionist speakers.

Most such stories are never publicized and remain invisible. What happened to Leisman remained invisible until now. But a comparable 2016 action did gain publicity after New York University Israeli filmmaker Shimon Dotan was disinvited from a Syracuse University conference on "The Place of Religion in Film." Dotan was to screen his film *The Settlers* there, a film critical of the settler movement. Syracuse University Religion professor M. Gail Hamner disinvited him out of concern that his presence would cause a backlash from activist BDS colleagues, writing to him, "I now am embarrassed to share that my SU colleagues, on hearing about my attempt to secure your presentation, have warned me that the BDS faction on campus will make matters very unpleasant for you

---

[3] Miriam F. Elman, "The Pressure on American Academics to Conform to BDS," *Ha'aretz*, September 7, 2018, https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/the-pressure-on-american-academics-to-conform-to-bds-1.5438296.

and for me if you come." Conor Friedersdorf, writing about the incident in *The Atlantic*, notes that "Syracuse faculty succumbed to speculation that other members of their community would persecute them *merely for inviting a film-maker to show his work*…. Fear of ideologically motivated retaliation is affecting the content of the academic enterprise."[4]

When political orthodoxy truly dominates a campus it can generate a seriously destructive hostile consensus. An emerging campus trend provides a particularly troubling example. Last year, Steven Salaita published an essay arguing that it was time to begin excluding Zionists from all progressive groups and collective projects.[5] It is not a coincidence that many Zionists are Jews and that this vicious agenda thus has antisemitic implications. Within months this discriminatory call began to spread to American campuses. There, according to Kenneth Waltzer, it acquired a racial component: "Jews were now automatically to be excluded from campaigning work with other progressive groups in popular causes; they were thought of as 'privileged' or 'white' and therefore as ineligible for membership in such coalitions."[6] At New York University, 51 progressive student groups pledged to boycott Jewish progressive groups on campus.[7] At Cal Polytech a student group urged that funding for all campus organizations be increased except for Zionist ones.[8]

An interesting boycott incident evolved starting in May 2018 after North-eastern University's Dov Waxman invited me to participate on an International Studies Association (ISA) panel that he and Carleton University's Mira Sucharov were organizing. The topic was to be "Israel-Palestine Scholarship, Activism, and the Threat to Academic Freedom." Yael Aronoff (Michigan State), Miriam Elman (Syracuse), and I agreed to participate, along with Sa'ed Atshan (Swarthmore), Noura Erakat (George Mason), and Amahl Bishara (Tufts). Erakat soon withdrew, citing difficulty getting travel funds, followed by

---

[4] Conor Friedersdorf, "How Political Correctness Chills Speech on Campus," *The Atlantic*, September 1, 2016, https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/09/what-it-looks-like-when-political-correctness-chills-speech-on-campus/497387/.

[5] Steven Salaita, "Zionists Should Be Excluded from Left-Oriented Protests," *Mondoweiss*, January 30, 2018, https://mondoweiss.net/2018/01/zionists-excluded-oriented/.

[6] Kenneth Waltzer, "From 'Intersectionality' to the Exclusion of Jewish Students: BDS Makes a Worrying Turn on US Campuses," *Fathom* (July 2018), https://fathomjournal.org/from-intersectionality-to-the-exclusion-of-jewish-students-bds-makes-a-worrying-turn-on-us-campuses/.

[7] Josefin Dolsten, "51 NYU Student Groups Pledge to Boycott Israel and Its Backers," *Times of Israel*, April 13, 2018, https://www.timesofisrael.com/51-nyu-student-groups-pledge-to-boycott-israel-and-its-backers/.

[8] "Student Groups at California Polytechnic State Call for Increase in Funding for All Clubs But 'Zionist' Ones," *JTA*, May 6, 2018, https://www.jta.org/2018/05/06/united-states/student-groups-california-polytechnic-state-university-call-increase-funding-clubs-zionist-ones.

Atshan and Bishara. Sucharov informed the rest of us, all in various ways pro-Zionist, that plans to submit the proposed panel would not go forward, since she and Waxman would not proceed without Palestinian voices. We were surprised, not only because the three of us were effectively being punished for the actions of the anti-Zionist participants but also because there were two alternative options: either propose the panel be held just with the three of us or use the many months remaining before the conference to locate other Palestinians willing to participate. The conference was to take place in March 2019. When one of us complained about being "disinvited," Sucharov somewhat oddly asserted that we hadn't been disinvited because we were still free to submit our own proposals to ISA.

Those of us willing to remain on the panel felt we were owed an explanation. It turned out that the three people who chose to boycott the panel were doing so as a version of BDS's "anti-normalization" agenda. As Sucharov wrote succinctly, "It's Cary." Though both Atshan and Bishara are experienced in anti-Zionist polemic and could hold their own, neither would participate on a panel that included me. An email from Waxman suggested that Erakat objected to my presence as well; Erakat, both a lawyer and a faculty member, is a more active polemicist than I am. According to the organizers, the assistant professors felt their careers would be endangered if they appeared with me.

Ironically, in the very same weeks we were negotiating about the panel, I was contacted by community members with Swarthmore connections asking whether they should intervene in opposition to Atshan's tenure case. I urged them not to do so, and they agreed. I explained that tenure decisions need to be made by the campus faculty and administrators based on an official tenure file that the department assembles—and that file would not and should not include unsolicited outside communications. I added that, especially for a young faculty member like Atshan with very few things in print, no one would be qualified to evaluate his scholarship without a vita. I also warned them that outside interventions, at least at research institutions, most often backfire and in fact increase internal support for a candidate.

According to Sucharov, Bishara attempted a more principled rationale: "Amahl said she won't sit on a panel with Cary because, in her view, he has attacked people and undermined movements in a way that she understands to be against principles of academic freedom." I have more than once written detailed scholarly essays criticizing the publications of anti-Zionist faculty, but I have always chosen faculty who have written multiple books and essays. Neither Atshan nor Bishara have so far published enough even to establish what their views are, let alone address them in detail. More importantly, it is not a violation of academic freedom to engage in intellectual and political debate; it is a fundamental principle of academic freedom. As one of my co-participants asked,

"We have to cancel a panel on academic freedom because those who oppose it won't participate with those who are for it?" She pointedly addressed the underlying logic, "Who exactly would be threatening someone's career? Cary would threaten their careers if they were on the panel? But would not threaten them if they boycotted him? Or, is it BDS people who would threaten their careers for being on a panel with Cary?" For some BDS advocates, appearing on a panel with me would amount to "normalizing" my status and collaborating with the enemy. Appearing with an Israeli would be equally bad.

Both Sucharov and Waxman took the position that it was not their responsibility as panel organizers to contest Atshan's or Bishara's views, but that surely was exactly their job. Sucharov actually made it clear repeatedly that she was in fact sympathetic to them. Among her arguments addressed to me but sent to all of us remaining, "You are more than a scholar. You are a scholar activist. With that comes reputational risk." When I suggested she consult my 2010 book *No University Is an Island* for my record of supporting anti-Zionist faculty who were facing tenure decisions or reviews—among them Ward Churchill and Norman Finkelstein—along with my condemnation of organized external interventions in the tenure decisions for Palestinian faculty, she dismissed it as out-of-date. The only exception has been my support after the fact for the Illinois Board of Trustee's decision not to sign Steven Salaita's contract in the notorious 2014-15 case, but that was a hiring decision on my own campus for a faculty member who had been proposed for a joint appointment in my own department. Sucharov inaccurately seemed to imply that I was involved in the actual decision; the federally mandated disclosure of all relevant campus communications proved otherwise. Indeed it has been several decades since the central administration has consulted me about anything, other than consistently turning down proposals with my name on them. What is most important, however, is that the proposed session was a test of anti-Zionist willingness to participate in discussion and debate, and the three faculty members who withdrew from the panel failed the test.

As this story makes clear, micro-boycotts embody personal commitments and represent personal decisions and actions by individual faculty members, but they do not take place in a vacuum. They constitute BDS victories in the struggle to win the hearts and minds of faculty members who witness or participate in debates over Israeli character and policy and over whether to recommend academic or economic boycott action. When a boycott or divestment resolution is defeated, some who supported it will conclude that personal action is the only recourse available to them, the only outlet for their moral, political, or professional convictions. Instituting a personal boycott can relieve frustration, restore a sense of agency, and strengthen self-respect. Micro-boycotts can be small but satisfying skirmishes in the larger war of delegitimization.

When a BDS resolution is endorsed, the sense of righteous entitlement to act aggressively toward students or colleagues may grow stronger. For faculty the kind of resolution that most empowers and encourages individual anti-Zionist warfare is one that passes in one's own disciplinary association. In the wake of your own academic discipline concluding that Israel is a racist and colonial state, it will seem, if not required, at least reasonable to say so yourself in public debates, and also—perhaps more consequentially—to teach from that perspective without qualification. Such effects came rapidly after the American Studies Association (ASA) boycott resolution passed in December 2013. The very one-sided pro-boycott resolution votes in Asian-American Studies, Native American Studies, and the National Women's Studies Association all gave faculty members in those fields the same encouragement to act individually.

Both overt and covert politically motivated personal aggression can become appealing when it has strong social support. But if a faculty member believes the codes that govern the academic profession run counter to the actions BDS advocacy inspires, then he or she will likely opt for covert action. More often than not, as the opening example suggests, that is the route of choice.

But sometimes people are so persuaded of the justice of the BDS cause that they declare their real motivation. Such actions began in 2002-2003 before the BDS movement was formally inaugurated. That was the year after the infamous 2001 United Nations conference in Durban, South Africa, when the proclamation that "Zionism is Racism" was effectively endorsed by those countries that had not already walked out of the meeting in protest. Academic boycott resolutions were debated in Britain, and divestment resolutions were debated in American universities—including Harvard, the University of California Berkeley, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 2002. The debates led some faculty members to feel empowered and encouraged to act individually.

Several British cases were widely discussed, because the faculty members who acted made their reasons clear. In May 2002, University of Manchester professor Mona Baker removed two Israeli academics, Miriam Shlesinger and Gideon Toury, respectively, from the editorial boards of her journals *The Translator* and *Translation Studies Abstracts*, because of their institutional affiliations with Israeli universities. In another case, Oxford University pathology professor Andrew Wilkie made news in June 2003 when he rejected an Israeli student who had written to explore the possibility of applying to work in Wilkie's lab because, like most young Israelis, the student, Amit Duvshani, had served in the Israeli army. Wilkie's letter to Duvshani made his motivations clear:[9]

---

[9] Andrew Wilkie, letter to Amit Duvshani, June 23, 2003, quoted in K.K Brattman, "Dr. Andrew Wilkie's Lab: Israeli Jews Need Not Apply," Holocaust Survivors and Remembrance Project, October 28, 2003, http://isurvived.org/2Queries/Q1-DrWilkies Lab-NoJews.html.

> Thank you for contacting me, but I don't think this would work. I have a huge problem with the way that the Israelis take the moral high ground from their appalling treatment in the Holocaust, and then inflict gross human rights abuses on the Palestinians because they (the Palestinians) wish to live in their own country.
>
> I am sure that you are perfectly nice at a personal level, but no way would I take on somebody who had served in the Israeli army. As you may be aware, I am not the only UK scientist with these views but I'm sure you will find another suitable lab if you look around.

In a subsequent effort to explain his action, Wilkie put Israeli army service on a plane with terrorist activity, "My stance was based on his service in the Israeli army and the violence that potentially entails. I would feel uncomfortable working closely with someone who had been through that…. The same would apply (to a greater extent, actually) for a Palestinian terrorist." In May 2006, Richard Seaford of Exeter University refused to review a book for the Israeli journal *Scripta Classica Israelica*, saying, "I have, along with many other British academics, signed the academic boycott of Israel, in the face of the brutal and illegal expansionism and the slow-motion ethnic cleansing being practiced by your government."

Such earlier examples show that personally initiated academic boycotts have a history and follow a pattern. Fast forward to May 15, 2018, when a Yale religious studies professor sent a recent Israeli PhD inquiring about a postdoc an email that included the following (I withhold both names on request):

> I should say right away that there are two things that trouble me: First, your research project might not exactly be matching to my research profile. Keep in mind that I am an intellectual historian and my prime interest lies in the history of ideas. Second, your ties with the IDF [Israel Defense Forces]. I generally think that research and war should be two things kept apart from each other (by miles!). There is a particular concern with the IDF given its role in an ongoing military occupation that breaks international law.
>
> Feel free to reach out to other professors at Yale if you don't wish to go through this process.

The young woman has made the choice not to file a complaint with Yale, no doubt reasoning, as the history of the academy demonstrates, that personal consequences can follow from being labeled a troublemaker. Oxford subsequently sanctioned Wilkie, and he resigned as a fellow. Whether Yale would similarly sanction its faculty member we will likely never know.

Whether either the Yale or the Oxford case constitutes antisemitism is open to debate, though both single out nationality-based army service for retaliatory action and are thus clearly discriminatory. I do not know of British or American faculty members who have taken a similar stand against admitting veterans from their own countries into their university, even though there was hostility toward

Vietnam vets during the war. The passions that ignite actions against individual Jewish students and faculty, however, can lead people to cross a line into antisemitism. Sometimes such actions are solitary, but they can also be carried out by small groups. It is worth quoting in detail the opening of a 2015 *New York Times* story by Adam Nagourney:[10]

> It seemed like routine business for the student council at the University of California, Los Angeles: confirming the nomination of Rachel Beyda, a second-year economics major who wants to be a lawyer someday, to the council's Judicial Board.
>
>   Until it came time for questions.
>
>   "Given that you are a Jewish student and very active in the Jewish community," Fabienne Roth, a member of the Undergraduate Students Association Council, began, looking at Ms. Beyda at the other end of the room, "how do you see yourself being able to maintain an unbiased view?"
>
>   For the next 40 minutes, after Ms. Beyda was dispatched from the room, the council tangled in a debate about whether her faith and affiliation with Jewish organizations, including her sorority and Hillel, a popular student group, meant she would be biased in dealing with sensitive governance questions that come before the board, which is the campus equivalent of the Supreme Court.
>
>   The discussion, recorded in written minutes and captured on video, seemed to echo the kind of questions, prejudices and tropes—particularly about divided loyalties—that have plagued Jews across the globe for centuries, students and Jewish leaders said.

The video of Beyda's interrogation and the subsequent debate, with student BDS activists eagerly leading the charge against her, was both incontrovertible and chilling. The case against her, clearly antisemitic in character, produced a vote against her—until a faculty member later argued that "belonging to Jewish organizations was not a conflict of interest." Under pressure, students met again and approved her appointment to the board. Caught on video, then driven to reverse themselves, the UCLA students had, in effect, been publicly shamed, and a public warning against comparable actions had been delivered. Or so one might have thought. But in the way that many stories are transformed in circulation, this one apparently arrived in some quarters as an inspiration to copycat. Two years after the events at UCLA, a Jewish undergraduate at my own campus who was an active supporter of Israel and opponent of the BDS movement faced an almost identical antisemitic grilling.[11]

---

[10] Adam Nagourney, "In U.C.L.A. Debate Over Jewish Student, echoes on Campus of Old Biases," *New York Times*, March 5, 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/06/us/debate-on-a-jewish-student-at-ucla.html.

[11] For similar stories, see the essays by Molly Horwitz and Milan Chatterjee in *Anti-Zionism on Campus: The University, Free Speech, and BDS*, ed. Andrew Pessin and Doron S. Ben-Atar (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018).

With the campus meeting governed by the Illinois Open Meetings Law, the events once again played out in public. As a member of the Campus Student Election Commission during a time when a divestment resolution was being debated on campus, she was confronted with the accusation from fellow members that she would be unable to make objective decisions about any issues that arose. They decided to remove her from the commission email list to guarantee she would have no input on any of their deliberations about the election. She reported meeting several times with the campus Chancellor and a Vice-Chancellor, neither of whom would acknowledge that this represented a violation of her rights, despite the fact that the Commission's charter prohibits it from engaging "in discrimination or harassment against any person because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, order of protection, marital status, genetic information, political affiliation, disability, pregnancy, sexual orientation including gender identity, unfavorable discharge from the military or status as a protected veteran."[12] They did nothing. Pending further action, I am again withholding the student's name at her request. Part of what is notable here is that Jewish identity was a comprehensive disqualification from participation in all the committee's interactions and decision-making, not just votes related to Israel. Free speech rights should have assured her the ability to have a voice even in the divestment vote when it was discussed. But anti-semitism seems the likely explanation for her global disenfranchisement.

More blatantly antisemitic was what happened to University of Texas at Dallas adjunct faculty member Shellie McCullough in 2016, after she published a book analyzing the work of Israel poet and Holocaust survivor Dan Pagis.[13] Pagis is the author, among many other works, of the poem "Written in Pencil in the Sealed Railway-Car," here translated from the Hebrew by Stephen Mitchell:

> here in this carload
> i am eve
> with abel my son
> if you see my other son
> cain son of man
> tell him that i

The application of the Biblical story of humanity's original murder to the Holocaust, combined with the aborted last line that cuts off the speaker's voice in a rail car, has made this brief, exceptionally harrowing text perhaps the single

---

[12] Campus Student Election Commission, "Guide to Student Elections: Student Election Code and Regulations," last amended January 25, 2019, https://studentelections.illinois.edu/docs/guide-to-student-elections.pdf.

[13] Shellie McCullough, *Engaging the Shoah through the Poetry of Dan Pagis* (New York: Lexington, 2016).

most famous and indicative poem of the Shoah. One of McCullough's former colleagues, responding to her description of the book and accounts of the experience of researching and writing it, wrote her a series of Facebook exchanges, which I have read, breaking off relations with her. He faulted her posts about the book as an effort to "parrot the most imperial nations on earth." Several other faculty members announced that they would not only boycott the book personally, but also encourage others to do so, because it was about an Israeli poet. In response, I read her book and reviewed it in the *Journal of Jewish Identity*. Notably, none of those who wrote to McCullough took issue with a colleague who posted a picture captioned "having fun at the Dallas Nazi Cocktail Party."

Most personal boycott initiatives, reflecting the principles articulated in the July 2014 PACBI/BDS guidelines for academic boycotts,[14] seem to involve the anti-Zionist politicization of ordinary academic tasks, whether refusing to write a letter of recommendation for a student who wants to study in Israel (an action BDS recommends) or disinviting an Israeli faculty member to campus to give a lecture. These garden variety assaults on the professional opportunities of Israeli students and faculty are usually disguised as innocently motivated. But once again the standard neutral frame is regularly violated.

Shortly after the American Studies Association (ASA) passed its resolution urging the boycott of Israeli universities, a Palestinian Israeli doctoral candidate in Tel Aviv found it very difficult to locate an American faculty member willing to serve as an external examiner for his American studies dissertation. Several faculty members explicitly cited the boycott as a reason for their refusal. Sorry, but we have to honor the standard to which our professional association is committed was the basic response. The irony that the student was Palestinian may or may not have been lost on the faculty members refusing, but they were informed of his ethnicity, and it carried no weight. The student is unwilling to reveal his name, but both he and his academic adviser Hana Wirth-Nesher, a professor at Tel Aviv University, have permitted me to go public with the story in this form.

Some faculty members honoring the ASA vote would presumably decide not to harm a Palestinian student and restrict their boycotts only to Jews. In any case, as these are individually designed actions, it is a matter of choice. Some BDS members as well could decide that a Palestinian attending an Israeli university was violating the anti-normalization protocol. Nonetheless, this presents a challenge, since fair treatment of Arab citizens of Israel is one of BDS's three stated goals. The problem is parallel to what University of Illinois faculty member and boycott supporter Susan Koshy complained about in observing

---

[14] PACBI Guidelines for the International Academic Boycott of Israel, July 31, 2014, http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1108.

that the boycott of the University of Illinois proved to be a blunt instrument; it targeted the innocent and the guilty alike.[15]

Most of those who have endorsed a boycott of Israeli universities are no doubt uninformed about the ethnic makeup of the student body and assume they are boycotting Jews, and a majority of the students indeed are Jewish. But 40% of undergraduates at the University of Haifa and 20% of the student body overall at Technion University are Israeli Arabs. The boycott remains fundamentally antisemitic because it targets the Jewish state. And virtually all the targets of micro-boycotts are Jewish. But it also has consequences for others both in Israel and elsewhere.

This case of the University of Tel Aviv student brings us full circle to the Mona Baker case of 2002, because it once again demonstrates how the normal functioning of day-to-day academic activities can be disrupted by individually initiated micro-boycotts. From 2012 to 2014, a Sydney University faculty member from the local BDS chapter organized a successful drive to block Hebrew University political scientist Dan Avnon from spending part of his sabbatical at the Sydney Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, a status ordinarily considered nothing more than a routine professional courtesy. Avnon had also hoped to apply for a fellowship to support his stay at Sydney, but the Sydney faculty member refused to cooperate as part of his boycott commitment.[16]

On the other hand, there is one positive lesson to be applied from some cases. Whatever damage to student and faculty rights and academic freedom that can be done at the local level can sometimes be undone with local activism as well. When the odds are overwhelmingly against you, as they were with Janet Freedman, professor at the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth and her few allies in the National Women's Studies Association who wished they could change the association's anti-Israel stance, it was still possible to regroup and act in concert with like-minded colleagues. Finding herself "at a crossroads," as she put it in her video interview,[17] divided between resigning and staying on to wage a lonely battle, she and others worked to sustain "a strong Jewish presence" in the organization. Some NWSA and ASA members made similar decisions to stay and fight, but many others made their position clear by leaving the organizations.

But sometimes fighting back can produce decisive results. After she graduated from Tel Aviv, Israeli student Bertha Linker tried to sign up with a web-based

---

[15] Susan Koshy, "When You're the Target of a Boycott You Support," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 23, 2015, https://www.chronicle.com/article/When-Youre-the-Target-of-a/190145.

[16] See Dan Avnon, "BDS and Self-Righteous Moralists," in Pessin and Ben-Atar, *Anti-Zionism on Campus*, 43-57.

[17] The interview was conducted in May 2018 as part of a video that is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82O6cDTvDdQ&t.

service in Spain to improve her Spanish. They rejected her because they were boycotting Israelis. But friends put her in touch with the Spanish embassy. As a result of its intervention, the business in question backed down and reversed their decision. So too, of course, with the Rachel Beyda decision. But a great many individual boycott initiatives remain under the radar, often because there is no smoking email as evidence and sometimes because the victims understandably do not want to suffer the professional consequences of pressing charges against the perpetrators or publicizing their cases.

Still others self-censor and adapt to avoid paying a price for being a Jewish or Israeli academic. As Ya'arit Bokek-Cohen of Israel's Academic College of Management Studies wrote to me,

> After learning that colleagues have been summarily turned down for professional opportunities like giving a scholarly presentation or publishing a paper because they are both Jewish and Israeli, many of us have had to adapt to this highly stressful working environment. I sometimes omit "Cohen" from my hyphenated name or refrain from giving the name of my country. That is what the BDS movement has driven us to do if we want to sustain our careers.

For others, the BDS movement turns a whole discipline into alien territory. As Janet Freedman agreed in her 2018 interview, "It has been extraordinarily alienating to have my long-time academic professional association, the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA), completely overtaken by the BDS movement and its anti-Israel political agenda. It's hard to feel I still have a place in my discipline."

Some BDS aggression toward individuals represents harassment designed to intimidate both them and others. While all the motivations in these cases may never fully be known, that may partly explain the false and aggressive accusations directed against Israeli and pro-Israeli faculty members recounted in a recent book on campus anti-Zionism edited by Andrew Pessin and Doron S. Ben-Atar.[18] Here are a few examples, each of which receives essay-length treatment in the book:

– After a 2012 student government BDS debate at the University of California San Diego, professor Shlomo Dubnov was falsely charged with "verbally attacking and assaulting" a student who happened to be the president of the Arab Student Union. A page attacking Dubnov was established on the University website; a number of faculty members added personal letters demanding punitive action. Videotape evidence eventually surfaced revealing the accusation to be a fabrication. Dubnov was cleared, but no action was ever

---

18 Andrew Pessin and Doron S. Ben-Atar, eds., *Anti-Zionism on Campus: The University, Free Speech, and BDS* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018).

taken against those who had lied. Meanwhile, as he put it in our video interview, he had learned how much "hidden, latent animosity there is in the faculty" regarding their pro-Israeli colleagues and how willing they are as a result "to tell lies and defame people."[19]

– In March 2014, Jill S. Schneiderman, a Vassar College geologist, led a class trip to Israel and Palestine to study water issues related to the Jordan River watershed. After a September 2013 informational meeting about the course, campus protests about the course began simply because the trip would include a visit to Israel. In February 2014, members of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) picketed the course, thrusting fliers in the hands of students struggling to make their way into class: "Your participation in this class financially and symbolically supports apartheid and the degradation of Palestinians.… The indigenous people of Palestine do NOT want you to come!" Protests culminated in a mass meeting organized by the faculty Committee on Inclusion and Excellence (CIE), where the CIE chair announced that "cardboard notions of civility" would not guide the session. And indeed they did not: "belligerence, vilification, intimidation, and rage against Israel" dominated the meeting. Despite the remorseless aggression, the trip took place as planned, but the protest produced a partial BDS victory: a planned public display of student posters documenting the experience was cancelled to avoid further public conflict.[20]

– Doron S. Ben-Atar, a historian at Fordham University, endured a protracted, Kafkaesque assault in 2014 in the wake of the American Studies Association 2013 resolution urging a boycott of Israeli universities. After announcing his opposition to the ASA boycott at a Fordham faculty meeting and arguing that the Fordham American Studies Department should reject it, he was notified by the director of Fordham's Institutional Equity and Compliance/ Title IX coordinator that a complaint had been filed against him, but not told what it was. Indeed, he did not learn the incomprehensible nature of the charge against him—religious discrimination, based on his opposition to the ASA boycott—until he received a letter months later actually exonerating him. In the end, Ben-Atar was not sanctioned—after all he had done nothing other than express his opinion, per his academic freedom—but the process took its toll.[21]

---

[19] See Shlomo Dubnov, "On Radio Silence and the Video That Saved the Day: The Attack against Professor Dubnov at the University of California San Diego, 2012," in Pessin and Ben-Atar, *Anti-Zionism on Campus*, 91-104.

[20] See Jill S. Schneiderman, "A Field Geologist in Politicized Terrain," in Pessin and Ben-Atar, *Anti-Zionism on Campus*, 317-332.

[21] See Doron S. Ben-Atar, "Bullies at the Pulpit," in Pessin and Ben-Atar, *Anti-Zionism on Campus*, 66-74.

The book's documentation of ad hoc personal brutality directed against pro-Israeli students and faculty includes some incidents especially notable for their crude malice. In one such case, Southern Connecticut State University professor Corinne E. Blackmer was not a notable pro-Israeli activist, but she did have items on her office door proclaiming her lesbian identity and Zionist convictions. While Israel was militarily engaged in Gaza in 2008 that was enough to lead one or more people to deface her office door with "profane, hateful language that was anti-LGBTQ, antisemitic, and anti-Zionist." Then a swastika was painted in mud on the door of her car in a campus parking lot and vulgar, threatening messages were recorded on her phone.[22]

Lessons from the Micro-Boycott Trend

There are a number of lessons to be learned from these and other examples of local boycott actions:

1. Universities too often have only the most rudimentary and flawed procedures for due process.
2. The individuals responsible for managing the campus investigative process too often have no clear understanding of academic freedom.
3. Cases that should be promptly dismissed will instead drag on for months and are themselves *de facto* forms of punishment for pro-Israeli faculty members and their families.
4. The unbridled passions that fuel anti-Israel politics on campus mean that people will readily lie to support charges against their Zionist colleagues, while others automatically assume pro-Israeli faculty are guilty of any charges leveled against them.
5. Exploiting unwarranted charges of racism are now a standard tactic to be used against pro-Israeli students and faculty; they need to be confronted.
6. A climate of fear and intimidation will prevent sympathetic faculty from publicly supporting pro-Israeli faculty under attack; many as a result will be afraid even to offer private support.
7. A discredited smear campaign will nonetheless have a profound and sustained chilling effect on student and faculty speech.
8. Organized social support for anti-Zionist faculty meanwhile rewards those who join the accusing chorus of voices.
9. In this as in most other matters, administrators are not often sources of support for pro-Israeli faculty.

---

[22] See Corinne E Blackmer, "A Traumatic Professorial Education: Anti-Zionism and Homophobia in a Serial Campus Hate Crime," in Pessin and Ben-Atar, *Anti-Zionism on Campus*, 75-82.

10. Sanctions against anti-Zionist students and faculty who lie in public or give false testimony in campus proceedings are unlikely.
11. Even a campus faculty association may not honor the principle of "innocent until proven guilty" when the campus climate is hostile to Israel and accusations are made against a Zionist faculty member.
12. A sometimes frightening mob mentality will drive anti-Zionist students when they are galvanized into protest or *ad hominem* attacks.
13. Administrators will often decide whether to investigate an accusation not on the basis of the evidence available, but on the basis of the prevailing political climate on campus.
14. A pattern has emerged of local anti-Zionist groups creating an incident, then inventing an accusation that the real offense was by the Jews in attendance.
15. Videotape evidence has been the only way that a number of pro-Israeli students and faculty have been able to get justice; people should routinely videotape public events, and those videotapes should begin before the event starts and continue until the audience has dispersed.
16. Some individual boycott actions clearly contradict existing university opposition to academic boycotts; administrators need to condemn such actions as violations of principle.
17. As virtually all the individually selected targets of these micro-boycotts are Jewish, they send a threatening message of antisemitism to the campus as a whole.

A Preliminary Agenda to Address the Problem

In her contribution to the 2015 collection *Who's Afraid of Academic Freedom*, Judith Butler claimed that the BDS movement displays "a certain studied indifference to whether or not individuals have particular political points of view, since individuals are not the focus of the boycott."[23] That observation was inaccurate then. A few years later it seems completely detached from reality. When Butler tried to have me removed from a public meeting about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at New York University in January 2018, her efforts did not embody a "studied indifference" to my political views.[24] Indeed, she announced that she had hoped to use the meeting to advance plans for boycott action during her forthcoming MLA presidency, but could not do so with me in the room.

---

[23] Judith Butler, "Exercising Rights: Academic Freedom and Boycott Politics," in *Who's Afraid of Academic Freedom*, ed. Akeel Bilgrami and Jonathan R. Cole (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 202.

[24] Liel Leibovitz, "This is How the BDS Sausage is Made," *Tablet*, January 8, 2018, https://www.tabletmag.com/scroll/252729/this-is-how-the-bds-sausage-is-made.

Seeking redress in more of the cases described in this chapter might have a deterrent effect on others tempted to carry out aggressions against individual students and colleagues, but that will not suffice. Certainly students or faculty who testify falsely in university proceedings should face penalties. But the possibility that the Rachel Beyda incident had a copycat effect in Illinois, the clear evidence that efforts to shut down pro-Israel speakers feed on one another, and the fall 2018 chorus of support for denying letters of recommendation to students wanting to study in Israel suggest additional steps are necessary. Some of these actions merit disciplinary proceedings, but many others can only be dealt with by calling attention to and condemning unacceptable behavior.

We have to conclude that awareness of and respect for the rights and practices that should govern academic conduct is weak both nationally and internationally. That means education about professional values at all levels needs to be supplemented both locally and throughout the West. The benefits of an academic environment that promotes dialogue and mutual respect will need to be taught.

The academic boycott of Israel, coordinated by the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic & Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) conversely calls on its endorsers to implement the boycott on their own campuses by working to curtail collaborative efforts with Israeli universities and scholars, shut down events featuring Israeli leaders or scholars organized by faculty or students, boycott their university's educational programs in Israel, and, in the case of faculty, even refuse to write letters of recommendation for students who want to study in Israel. Although we recognize the right of all university community members to endorse and advocate for an academic boycott of Israel, they should not act to implement those PACBI guidelines that undermine student and faculty academic freedom. Those include:

- undermining a faculty member's collaborative research or teaching projects with Israeli universities and scholars;
- interfering with the equal non-discriminatory treatment of all applicants for admissions to graduate programs;
- disrupting and shutting down events featuring Israeli leaders or scholars organized by their colleagues or students;
- working toward the closure of their own university's study abroad programs in Israel;[25] and
- refusing to write letters of recommendation for their students who want to pursue studies in Israel.

---

[25] In November, 2018, for example, the Pitzer College faculty voted to end the school's program at the University of Haifa. See Benjamin Kerstein, "Pitzer College Condemned over Faculty's Vote to End Study Abroad Program in Israel," *The Algemeiner*, November 27, 2018, https://www.algemeiner.com/2018/11/27/pitzer-college-condemned-over-facultys-vote-to-end-study-abroad-program-in-israel/.

All these actions to implement academic boycotts of Israel subvert the scholarly and educational opportunities or curtail the academic freedom of colleagues and students who are members of our own campus communities. The guidelines object to "institutional cooperation agreements with Israeli universities or research institutes" and describe them as "schemes." Yet the freedom to negotiate such interinstitutional agreements and research relationships and participate in them is fundamental to academic freedom. One may complain about them, but not seek to obstruct them. Some of the actions above, along with other forms of personal assault, are carried out by students as well. Treating one's own students or one's student or faculty colleagues as collateral damage to a political agenda is wrong and violates the principles of collegiality and academic integrity central to our institutions. We must condemn such behavior in the strongest terms.

Until September 2018, we did not know whether any faculty member had acted on the 2014 BDS guideline that "international faculty should not accept to write recommendations for students hoping to pursue studies in Israel" or whether that simply remained a dormant, hypothetical tactic. But that month tenured University of Michigan American Culture faculty member John Cheney-Lippold emailed undergraduate student Abigail Ingber to say he just realized she was applying to study abroad at an Israeli university, Tel Aviv University. In compliance with the boycott movement, he was thus withdrawing his offer to write a recommendation on her behalf to that school but was happy to write her a recommendation for institutions outside Israel. He thus confirmed in writing that he had no doubts about her academic record, which would be a valid justification for refusing to write a recommendation. Indeed, he was specific,

> I am very sorry, but I only scanned your first email a couple of weeks ago and missed out on a key detail:
>
> As you know, many university departments have pledged an academic boycott against Israel in support of Palestinians living in Palestine. This boycott includes writing letters of recommendation for students planning to study there.
>
> I should have let you know earlier, and for that I apologize. But for reasons of these politics, I must rescind my offer to write your letter.
>
> Let me know if you need me to write other letters for you as I'd be happy.[26]

Faculty members are free to decline requests to write recommendation letters for many reasons, one being not knowing the student well enough. The basic standard should be the student's accomplishments and capabilities, not a

26 Shiri Moshe, "University of Michigan 'Disappointed' after Professor Refuses to Write Recommendation Letter for Student Studying Abroad in Israel," *The Algemeiner*, September 17, 2018, https://www.algemeiner.com/2018/09/17/university-of-michigan-professor-refuses-to-write-recommendation-letter-for-student-studying-abroad-in-israel/.

faculty member's political opposition to the country where a student wishes to study. To impose a political litmus test on recommendations and refuse to write to a university in a particular country violates a student's right to apply for admission to his or her program of choice. Cheney-Lippold told *Inside Higher Education*, "I have extraordinary political and ethical conflict lending my name to helping that student go to that place." Yet Cheney-Lippold confessed to the *Detroit News* that he had written those letters until his tenure was approved. The argument, as put forward in other BDS contexts, is that opposition to Israel has a moral status that trumps lesser principles like academic freedom. After initially offering a weak expression of regret at Cheney-Lippold's action, Michigan imposed reasonable sanctions: canceling his scheduled merit pay increase and delaying his sabbatical. Meanwhile, multiple petitions and letters supporting Cheney-Lippold appeared online.

Many students applying to study in Israel are Jewish and Israel is a Jewish state. Thus there is arguably an element of discrimination based on peoplehood, religion, and national status in this BDS strategy. That adds significantly to the need for clear university policies barring actions against students like those promoted by BDS advocates. There is urgent need for campus action developing such policies, as the publicity surrounding this incident may well encourage copycat actions.

We need to build on the evidence people are assembling—from Pessin and Ben-Atar's *Anti-Zionism on Campus* to the AAF video to essays like this one—not only to alert people to the phenomenon and condemn it but also to rebuild an affirmative academic culture based on civility and dialogue. That can only happen if the national pattern of unacceptable consequences of the BDS movement is recognized and incidents of destructive behavior toward students and faculty are understood. The individual cases here are very much part of a national trend. That is part of why responsible campus leaders need to confront and address them.

By promoting three widespread, intertwined convictions: (1) that Israel is an unreservedly demonic nation; (2) that the Palestinians are innocent victims without meaningful agency; and (3) that anti-Zionist agitators consequently occupy a position of unqualified moral superiority, the BDS movement has encouraged an ends-justify-any-and-all-means political philosophy. Hence the repeated local willingness by anti-Zionist students to invent stories and lie to the press, the public, and the university community. The corrosive effect on university culture as a whole is so far barely being recognized. None of this will be reversed any time soon. The struggle to win back the campus as a place for reasoned discussion and analysis will be long and difficult. There is no assurance of success. The overall polarization of American political life, moreover, means that the polarization of engagement with Israel and Palestine has a ready-made structure to occupy. Our one option is to persist in advocating for justice for both peoples whatever the odds.

Crusaders for Armageddon: Christian Zionism and Antisemitism in the United States

Molly Benjamin Patterson

This chapter focuses on the historical link between Christian Zionism and anti-semitism in the United States. Ignited by both Cold War power politics and the subsequent rise of political Islam, dispensationalist Christian Zionism has become a powerful lobbying movement, influencing US foreign policy abroad. This chapter explains how Christian Zionists use the religious rhetoric of the end times in order to shape their political agenda. Beginning with a discussion of the early antisemitic rhetoric of Christian Zionism in Western Europe and the United States, this chapter goes on to examine the impact of Christian Zionist ideas on American foreign policy in Israel. Primary sources include the work of the Anglo-Irish founder of dispensationalist Christianity, John Nelson Darby, as well as that of more recent members of the US "Armageddon Lobby" (inspired by preachers such as R.J. Rushdoony and Jerry Falwell). This chapter also looks at popular dispensationalist media Christian Zionists blogs and evangelical novels, delving into the deeper question of whether dispensationalist Christianity is, in itself, contributing to the popularization of antisemitism in the United States.

Christian Zionism, the notion that Christians should help restore Jews to Jerusalem, began in Western Europe in the nineteenth century and quickly spread to North America. Ignited in the twentieth century by both Cold War power politics and the subsequent rise of political Islam, Christian Zionism remains a popular idea among certain groups of American evangelical Protestants. By placing Jewish people, and by extension the modern State of Israel, at the heart of a potent apocalyptic narrative, Christian Zionism has the support of over fifty thousand evangelical Christian pastors and their congregations in the United States alone.[1]

Modern Christian Zionism gained many new adherents in the United States by moving away from its biblical foundations and toward a distinctively modern American cultural idiom. Several idiosyncratic theological constructs in Christian Zionism are specifically entwined with the Jewish community's role in American society. The most important of these constructs is the view that Christian political authority (dominion) is pre-ordained by God. Dominion theology, while occasionally found at the margins of other forms of Christianity, is at the forefront of American Christian Zionism. This chapter explores the historical

---

[1] Bill Moyers, "Bill Moyers Journal: Transcript, October 5, 2007," *PBS*, http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/10052007/transcript2.html, accessed April 1, 2018.

origins and development of Christian Zionism and its impact on regional anti-semitism. It asks whether Christian Zionist interpretations of biblical prophecy have contributed to the institutionalization of a distinctively American form of Christian antisemitism.

The European Roots of American Christian Zionism

Following the Protestant Reformation, the idea of Christian Zionism gained popularity among certain Western European Protestants. Steeped in Calvinist theology, these early European Christian Zionists, many of whom were from religiously marginalized communities, personally identified with the Jewish historical experiences of exile and religious persecution.[2] Paradoxically, many of these same Christian Zionists supported both the conversion of Jewish people to Christianity and the deportation of Jewish populations, thus injecting anti-semitic ideas of Christian supremacy into the nascent doctrine of Christian Zionism.

One such early European Christian Zionist organization was the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews (LSPCJ), founded in 1809. In 1814, the LSPCJ took out a lease on an old French Protestant Chapel in Spitalfields, renaming it the "Jew's Chapel." In addition, the LSPCJ established an evangelical school for the purpose of converting Jewish children to Christianity, a periodical called *The Instructor*, as well as several self-published histories detailing their missionary activities.[3] One of these missionary histories, written by LSPCJ president Sir John Kennaway, described a lecture series which encouraged British Jews to accept Jesus as their messiah: "Quarterly 'Demonstration Lectures' were also given—i.e., demonstrating our Lord Jesus Christ to be the true messiah—the first being delivered by the Rev. Andrew Fuller, of Kettering, on November 19th, 1809. It is an excellent exposition of Messianic prophecies…."[4] The LSPCJ mined both the Old and New Testaments for passages that could potentially relate to the role of Jewish people in Christian eschatology. Their goal was to use biblical prophecy to both convert European Jewish communities to Christianity and then repatriate these new converts to the holy lands.

In the wake of rising nineteenth century European antisemitism, theological controversies arose among LSPCJ members. For example, if the Jews were

---

[2] Gijsbert van den Brink and Harro Höpfl, *Calvinism and the Making of the European Mind: Studies in Reformed Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 215.

[3] Michael R. Darby, *The Emergence of the Hebrew Christian Movement in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 57.

[4] Sir John Kennaway, *The History of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews, from 1809-1908* (self-published, 1908), 39.

indeed God's chosen people, how could they be of lesser status than Western Europeans? The LSPCJ concluded that Jesus's apocalyptic judgement, and the ultimate punishment of Jewish people who refuse to convert, was proof of Christian superiority.[5] What differentiated the actions of the LSPCJ from simple Christian missionary activity was their emphasis on Jewish conversion and end-times theology, both later subsumed under the aegis of American Christian Zionism.

Christian Zionist theology was soon adopted and refined by other Protestants in England, most notably by the charismatic Anglo-Irish preacher John Nelson Darby (1800-1882). Christian Zionist apologist Paul Richard Wilkinson credits Darby with the widespread dissemination of Christian Zionism in both Europe and the United States.[6] Breaking away from main-stream Protestant Orthodoxy, Darby described, in vivid detail, Christ's rapturous return to earth and his subsequent thousand-year kingdom. Darby created a new and wholly apocalyptic vision for the new millennium, using his own interpretations of scripture from books of the Bible, such as Ezekiel, Zachariah, Isaiah, and Daniel.

Darby argued that Jewish people would be subject to persecution from the other nations of the world during the internecine age of "tribulation."[7] In his sermons, Darby claimed that Satan led the Jewish people to reject Christ, and thus they would receive their punishment in the end times,

> Thus, the unity of the Godhead is a truth we all hold, but it was held by the Jews for the upset of Christianity. They held "Jehovah our God is one Jehovah," but they did not hold the Father and the Son. Thus, they strove to upset the special testimony by which God was then acting—the revelation of the Father and the Son. If God is presenting truth to set His saints in a place of testimony, Satan will also seek to perplex their minds about that very truth, so that they should not be able to give any testimony concerning it.[8]

Darby's main conceptual contribution to Christian Zionism was the idea that "born-again Christians" (including converted Jews) would instantly be removed from apocalyptic tribulation and subsumed directly into heaven in an event called "the rapture." In addition, he claimed that the Jewish nation would become

---

[5] Darby, *Emergence of the Hebrew Christian Movement*, 234.

[6] Paul Richard Wilkinson, *For Zion's Sake: Christian Zionism and the Role of John Nelson Darby* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Sock Publishers, 2008), 57.

[7] Ian A. Markham, *The Student's Companion to the Theologians* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2003), 263.

[8] John Nelson Darby, "The Public Ruin of the Church," in *The Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Miscellaneous I*, available at: https://bibletruthpublishers.com/the-public-ruin-of-the-church/john-nelson-darby-jnd/collected-writings-of-j-n-darby-miscellaneous-1/la63146.

the central instrument of God's final judgement.[9] Darby's message resonated especially with the Irish Protestant poor, who, disenfranchised by their Catholic brethren, made their way to the New World and spread Darby's teachings.[10]

Early Christian Zionism in the United States

Early Christian Zionism in the United States often took the form of biblical revisionism, wherein Christian doctrine was intentionally divorced from its Abrahamic roots. In American Christian Zionism, for example, the figure of Jesus was often aryanized, Americanized, and stripped of his Jewish heritage. In his 2013 monograph *Zealot*, religious scholar Reza Aslan demonstrated that the Romans similarly had intentionally downplayed Christ's Jewishness in order to make him less of a threat to the Empire. Throughout his monograph, Aslan argues that Orthodox Christian scholars deliberately transformed the historical figure of Jesus from a Jewish revolutionary to a spiritual pacifist who was not interested in interfering in earthly politics.[11] Thus, the early American Christian Zionist ahistorical dislocation of Jesus from his Middle Eastern Jewish origins was not unprecedented.

One of the first formal Christian Zionist meetings in the United States was the Niagara Conference of 1875. The Niagara Conference quickly became a prototype for later Christian Zionist gatherings and tent revivals. This conference attracted premillennialists, Christians who believed that a physical manifestation of Christ would return to earth before undertaking his thousand-year reign of peace. Following in the footsteps of the aforementioned John Nelson Darby, Niagara Conference premillennialists such as the Presbyterians Nathaniel West, James H. Brooke, William J. Erdman, Henry Parsons, and the Baptist A.J. Gordon all supported the idea that Jewish conversion preceding Christ's Second Coming should be a central tenet of American evangelical Christianity.[12]

Among other core principles, early American Christian Zionists interpreted certain passages in both the Old and New Testaments to mean that the Abrahamic holy lands belonged under temporal American Christian dominion. Drawing from Genesis 1:28, American evangelical dominion theologists argued that God intended Christians to have, "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the

---

9 Don Wagner, "For Zion's Sake," *Middle East Report*, no. 223 (Summer 2002): 53.

10 Rankin Sherling, *The Invisible Irish: Finding Protestants in the Nineteenth-Century Migrations to America* (Montreal: McGill-Queens Press, 2015), 30.

11 Reza Aslan, *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth* (New York: Random House, 2013).

12 Gary J. Dorrien, *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 15.

earth."[13] Thus, for a true Christian Zionist, Christian political control over Jewish communities was elevated to the level of spiritual providence.

American dominion theology was inspired, in part, by the early Puritan concept of Christian imperialism over native lands. One such inspiration is the English puritan and Massachusetts Bay colonist John Winthrop, who, in his famous 1630 "City upon a Hill" sermon, admonished,

> [W]ee are Commaunded this day to love the Lord our God, and to love one another to walke in his wayes and to keepe his Commaundements and his Ordinance, and his lawes, and the Articles of our Covenant with him that wee may live and be multiplyed, and that the Lord our God may blesse us in the land whether wee goe to possesse it.[14]

Winthrop used his interpretation of scripture in order to justify colonial domination over non-Christian people, an idea later subsumed in the American doctrines of manifest destiny and American exceptionalism. Later American dominion theologians, such as R.J. Rushdoony (1916-2001), echoed Winthrop's self-proclaimed project of fulfilling God's covenant through the establishment of a "New Jerusalem" within the borders of the United States itself.[15]

The most famous—although by no means first—twentieth-century American Christian Zionist dominion theologist was the aforementioned R.J. Rushdoony. Rushdoony argued that America was never intended to become a multicultural democracy but rather a theocratic Christian commonwealth. According to Rushdoony, "As King," every American Christian male is called "to exercise dominion in the name of God over all creation; as prophet, he is to interpret all things in terms of his sovereign God; as priest he is to dedicate all things to his sovereign God."[16] In Rushdoony's worldview, it is incumbent on Christian men to become stewards not only of their own lives but also the lives of their families and social institutions, until the sovereignty of Christ is recognized by the entire world.[17]

Referencing the books of Isaiah and Revelation, Rushdoony portrayed dominion theology as a "New World Order" in which both God and man dwell together in a "New Jerusalem":

---

[13] Genesis 1:28, *Holy Bible: The 21st Century King James Version* (Gary, SD: KJ21 Bible Publishers, 1994).

[14] From the Papers of John Winthrop, II (Massachusetts Historical Society, 1931), 282, cited in Rosemary Radford Ruether, *America, Amerikkka: Elect Nation and Imperial Violence* (London: Routledge, 2014), 29.

[15] Zubeda Jalalzai, "Race and the Puritan Body Politic," *MELUS* 29, no. 3-4 (2004): 261.

[16] Rushdoony cited in Michael J. McVicar, *Christian Reconstruction: R.J. Rushdoony and American Religious Conservatism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 126.

[17] McVicar, *Christian Reconstruction*, 139.

> It is not an earthly paradise in itself which is the goal of history as Scripture depicts it, but rather the restoration of communion with God, of which an earthly paradise, as depicted by Isaiah and Revelation, is a by-product. Man is keenly aware of the loss of paradise, but not conscious of the broken communion with God. This communion and its new world order, Isaiah depicted as the consequence of the atonement. Moreover, it is not a return to Eden, not the recreation of the Garden, but paradise in terms of community with God and man, in the New Jerusalem.[18]

This idea conveniently keeps America at the center of its own, highly individualistic, eschatological narrative. Rushdoony believed that, by building its own "New Jerusalem," America could become a Christian utopia.

What is novel about dominion theology is not the idea of Christ's thousand-year reign on earth, which comes directly from the Book of Revelation.[19] Rather, it's that it mirrored American colonial concepts such as manifest destiny, the idea that American political and economic expansion is somehow justified by Anglo-Saxon racial "superiority."[20] The idea of manifest destiny drew on the earlier racist pseudo-science of Social Darwinism. One such Social Darwinist was Scottish physician Robert Knox, whose controversial polemic, *Races of Man* (1850), enjoyed popularity in both Europe and the United States well into the twentieth century. In *Races of Man*, Knox argued that Jewish people posed a danger to European society through both assimilation and intermarriage with the "European Races."[21] According to Knox, a "Hebrew person described himself … as an Englishman of the Jewish belief; and a son of Teutonia, having been born in Hamburg. This defies all reasoning."[22] Knox and other nineteenth and twentieth century racial theorists contended that Jewish communities were not ethnically European and thus did not belong in western society. Knox's strain of pseudoscientific racism created a strong undercurrent of antisemitism in the bourgeoning Christian Zionist movement in the United States.

The Popularization of Christian Zionism in the United States

Because Christian Zionism is a theological idea rather than a specific sect of Christianity, it is difficult, if not impossible, to quantify the exact number of American

---

[18] Rousas John Rushdoony, *Thy Kingdom Come: Studies in Daniel and Revelation* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2001), 19.

[19] Revelation 20:4-6, *Holy Bible: The 21st Century King James Version*.

[20] Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 189.

[21] G.N. Cantor, *Jewish Tradition and the Challenge of Darwinism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 90.

[22] Robert Knox, *The Races of Men: A Fragment* (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1850), 102.

adherents. There is no accurate demographic information detailing which evangelical congregations observe the precepts of Christian Zionism and which do not. However, there is evidence that Christian Zionism has grown in the United States in recent years. Evangelical leaders reveal their Christian Zionism when they argue for ideas such as dominion theology and Christian-led Jewish repatriation to Israel. The tremendous popularity of "Armageddon Lobby" preachers, such as D. James Kennedy (1930-2007) and Jerry Falwell (1933-2007), demonstrates the widespread acceptance of Christian Zionist ideas in American evangelical circles. Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkin's massively popular *Left Behind* series of novels, which articulate a distinctively American Christian Zionist apocalyptic narrative, sold over 80 million copies according to *Publisher's Weekly*.[23]

In modern American Christian Zionist theology, America's "New Jerusalem" is connected to the sacred city of Jerusalem itself. One of the signs that directly impacts the real-world relationship between American Christian Zionists and the Jewish community is the aforementioned return of the Jewish people to Jerusalem and the conversion of one-third of the Jewish population to Christianity. Much of this comes from a Christian Zionist interpretation of Zechariah 13:7-9. Tim LaHaye offered the following exegesis, "Prior to Israel's conversion, Zechariah predicts that two-thirds ('two parts') of the Jewish people in the land will perish during the tribulation period. Only one-third of the Jewish population will survive until Christ comes to establish his kingdom on earth."[24] American Christian Zionists tend to place the United States at the center of their own specific eschatological narrative.

Many American Christian Zionists believe that it is incumbent on American Christians to not only exercise dominion over their own community but also create a "New Jerusalem" for believers worldwide, echoing the Christian utopianism of Rushdoony above. In 2005, popular televangelist D. James Kennedy, pastor at the Coral Ridge Presbyterian megachurch in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, made the following address at the Reclaiming America for Christ Conference:

> Our job is to reclaim America for Christ, whatever the cost. As the vice regents of God, we are to exercise godly dominion and influence over our neighborhoods, our schools, our government, our literature and arts, our sports arenas, our entertainment media, our news media, our scientific endeavors—in short, over every aspect and institution of human society.[25]

---

23 Ann Byle, "LaHay, Co-Author of Left Behind Series, Leaves Lasting Impact," *Publisher's Weekly*, July 27, 2016, https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/religion/article/71026-lahaye-co-author-of-left-behind-series-leaves-a-lasting-impact.html.

24 Tim LaHaye, *Prophesy Study Bible* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000), 991.

25 D. James Kennedy, quoted in Abraham H. Foxman, "Religion in America's Public Square: Are We Crossing the Line?" (address to the Anti-Defamation League National Commission Meeting, November 3, 2005).

While Kennedy's speech demonstrates an underlying certainty of Christian dominion, the Jewish Anti-Defamation League accused Kennedy of antisemitism in the aftermath of this speech. It argued that Kennedy's call for Christian authority over every aspect of human society deprives Jewish people of sovereignty over their own communities and institutions.[26]

The vision of Christian Zionist political and cultural dominance spread quickly in the United States. Its ideas appealed not only to evangelical Protestants: some common threads were also picked up by messianic Jewish converts. In 2018, Monte Judah, the leader of "The Lion and the Lamb Ministries," preached that the Jewish community is simply waiting for Christ's return to earth. Many of the biblical prophecies articulated by Monte Judah have become core texts in Christian Zionism. According to the Lion and the Lamb Ministries, humanity is currently living in an age heavily influenced by biblical prophecies relating to the Jewish people and the State of Israel. Among prophecies currently fulfilled or being fulfilled are these:

1. The Jewish people will be regathered in unbelief from the four corners of the earth (Isaiah 11:11-12). Fulfillment: 20th Century and continuing.
2. The State of Israel will be re-established (Isaiah 66:6-8) & (Ezekiel 37:21-22). Fulfillment: May 14, 1948.
3. The Jews will once again re-occupy the city of Jerusalem (Zechariah 8: 4-48). Fulfillment: June 7, 1967.
4. The land of Israel will be reclaimed from its desolation, becoming once again a land of agricultural abundance (Ezekiel 36:34-35). Fulfillment: 20th Century and continuing.
5. The Hebrew language will be revived from the dead (Zephaniah 3:9). Fulfillment: 19th & 20th Centuries.
6. All the nations of the world will come together against Israel over the issue of the control of Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:1-3). Fulfillment: Currently occurring.[27]

The Lion and the Lamb Ministries believes that there are additional signs in the Bible that have yet to be fulfilled. Most notably, the figure of the Antichrist plays a pivotal role in both Christian and messianic Jewish apocalyptic prophecy. They believe that the Antichrist will help the Jewish people rebuild the temple of King Solomon in Jerusalem. Then, the Jewish community will reject the Antichrist and he will retaliate by killing two-thirds of the Jewish people. Lastly, at the end of the period of tribulation, the remaining members of the Jewish community will accept Christ, and God will receive them into his kingdom.

---

[26] Ibid.

[27] David R. Reagan, "A Summary of the Jews in the End Time Bible Prophecy," *Lamplighter* 29, no. 5 (September-October 2008): 13, https://christinprophecy.org/articles/the-jews-in-end-time-bible-prophecy/.

Christian Zionism and Antisemitism in the United States

American Christian Zionism's approach toward modern Judaism, and by extension the State of Israel, is rife with apparent contradictions. Despite their widespread support for the state, influential Christian Zionist leaders, including the late Jerry Falwell, have made highly controversial statements concerning the apocalyptic role of the Jewish people in Christian dogma. The American Christian Zionist doctrine of "dispensationalism" encompasses a system of religious periodization or successive epochs (dispensations), beginning with the creation of Adam and ending with Christ's millennial kingdom wherein Judaism is superseded (replaced) by Christian dominion. Modern American dispensationalists focus primarily on the last three dispensations, believing that humanity is currently about to face the last two dispensations.[28] Many Christian Zionists believe that during the impending apocalypse the Antichrist will spread evil in the world but will ultimately be vanquished by the second coming of the messiah. Jesus's final battle with the Antichrist will take place during the second-to-last phase of human history (the penultimate dispensation), directly preceding Christ's earthly kingdom. While the idea of tribulation may seem esoteric to non-believers, it is very real to believers.

Christian Zionism gained wide-spread popularity in modern American culture as a direct result of the sixteen-volume *Left Behind* series mentioned earlier. Published between 1997 and 2007, this series has inspired several movies and even a video game. The *Left Behind* series does not have the same spiritual status as scripture among American Christian Zionists. However, it provides evangelical American Christian audiences with a highly accessible description of both dispensationalism and dominion theologies. It is written in a sensationalized and easy-to-understand American English vernacular. Several volumes from the series ended up on the *New York Times* bestseller list. The *Left Behind* series is perhaps the pinnacle of the American Christian Zionist worldview, wherein religious imagination takes precedence over scriptural testimony. America is placed front-and-center as the end times unfold in the novels.

In *Left Behind*, imagery from the Book of Revelation (specifically Revelation 17:16-17) creates an allegorical framework for modern American audiences. LaHaye and Jenkins describe a fictional worldwide religious movement called *Enigma Babylon One World Faith*, which is led by the Antichrist. The three main characters in the novels are all American: airline pilot Rayford Steele, his college-age daughter Chloe, and journalist Buck Williams. The three are lapsed Christians who are "left behind" during the dispensation of the rapture but quickly revert to Christianity and become the "Tribulation Force" fighting

---

28 Matt Slick, "What is Dispensationalism," *Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry*, https://carm.org/dispensationalism, accessed February 22, 2018.

against the armies of the Antichrist. Pious, born-again Christians, including Chloe's mother, have disappeared from the earth during the rapture so that they don't have to face the final battle of Armageddon.[29]

There are Jewish characters in the *Left Behind* series, many of whom eventually convert to Christianity. For example, the background character, Tsion Ben Judah, a Jewish religious scholar and specialist in Semitic languages, converts to Christianity once it becomes apparent that humanity is facing the end times. In the third book of the series (1997), Ben Judah criticizes the State of Israel on CNN for signing a peace treaty with Nikolae Carpathia (the Antichrist in the series). Although he is criticized by the Jewish state, he convinces thousands of Jews to convert to Christianity. The *Left Behind* books laud Ben Judah's decision to sacrifice his Jewish heritage and identity in order to set the stage for America's "Tribulation Force" to establish Christ's kingdom on earth.

The topic of the Holocaust is a consistent undercurrent in the novels as well. However, according to the series, the Holocaust only foreshadowed the destruction of the Jewish community during the impending apocalypse. "These novels imply that the Antichrist is the new Hitler, and that in the face of this coming annihilation the Jews have new saviors: believing Christians."[30] The *Left Behind* novels are simply reinforcing centuries-old antisemitic tropes by painting the Jewish people as both apocalyptic victims and Machiavellian supporters of the Antichrist's "One World Government."[31]

Jewish support of the "One World Government" is a not-so-subtle allusion to *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, the infamous forgery published in Russia in 1903 alleging to be the secret minutes of a meeting of Jewish elders. Among other antisemitic conspiracy theories, *The Protocols* accused Jewish people of secretly manipulating the world economy through the vehicle of a secret government: "Our government will resemble the Hindu god Vishnu. Each of our hundred hands will hold one spring of the social machinery of State."[32] Despite clear evidence that *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was pure fiction, it became an important tool of antisemitic propaganda throughout Europe and the United States.

In the *Left Behind* series, the Antichrist Nicholas Carpathia first takes control of the United Nations and ultimately brings the world under the tyranny of a corrupt political system called "Carpathianism." The series makes it clear that

---

[29] Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, *The Left Behind Series: Complete Set* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale Publishing Company, 2008).

[30] Lisa Lampert-Weissig, "Left Behind, the Holocaust, and that Old Time Anti-semitism," *Journal of Popular Culture* 45, no. 3 (2012): 498.

[31] Ibid.

[32] *The Jewish Peril: Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* (London: Eyre and Spottis-woode, 1920), 65.

Carpathia was the combined product of genetic engineering and a Romanian mother who is tricked by Satanists into giving birth to the Antichrist. Like much of the subtext in *Left Behind*, there are snippets of biblical prophecy in Carpathia's birth narrative. However, the series is such an extreme form of apocalyptic revisionism that many modern biblical scholars, including some Christian Zionists themselves, have difficulty interpreting the *Left Behind* series in the light of Christian scripture. The nationality and religious identity of the Antichrist has been the subject of ongoing debate within the American Christian Zionist community in recent years.

Some dispensationalist Christian Zionist leaders claim that the Antichrist himself will be Jewish. The religious identity of the Antichrist came to the forefront of American political dialogue in recent years. In his 1999 speech at a conference on evangelism in Kingsport, Tennessee, the Reverend Jerry Falwell made the following statement:

> Who will the Antichrist be? I don't know. Nobody else knows. Is he alive and here today? Probably. Because when he appears during the tribulation period he will be a full-grown counterfeit of Christ. Of course he'll be Jewish. Of course he'll pretend to be Christ. And if in fact the Lord is coming soon, and he'll be an adult at the presentation of himself, he must be alive somewhere today.[33]

Despite Falwell's supportive lip-service to Jewish Zionism, antisemitic statements such as the one above came under the scrutiny of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL).

During his later life, Falwell simultaneously supported the modern State of Israel and sparred with Abraham Foxman, director of the ADL from 1987-2015, over the issue of antisemitism:

> Falwell embraced the Jews of Israel (who appreciated his friendship) just as he embraced American Jews (who, by and large, spurned it). He could be acerbic about Jewish leaders—he called Abraham Foxman of the Anti-Defamation League a "damn fool" … but he never let Jewish hostility shake his philosemitism. American Jews who now take evangelical friendship for granted need to know that it is, to a large extent, a grant from Jerry Falwell.[34]

Some although certainly not all members of the American Jewish community welcomed evangelical support of the State of Israel. Others, such as Foxman, remained suspicious of Christian Zionist motivations.

---

[33] Falwell, quoted in Associated Press, "The Antichrist Is Alive and a Male Jew," *New York Times*, January 16, 1999, https://www.nytimes.com/1999/01/16/us/antichrist-is-alive-and-a-male-jew-falwell-contends.html.

[34] Zev Chafets, "A Holy Warrior, Wholly Committed," *LA Times*, May 16, 2007, http://www.latimes.com/la-oe-chafets16may16-story.html.

Today's Christian Zionists believe that the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 and subsequent regional conflicts were prophesied in both the Old and New Testaments. Christian Zionist theology is based on the idea that Christianity must replace Judaism, and by extension Islam, in order for the Kingdom of Heaven to become manifest. This doctrine, known as supersessionalism, describes a worldview wherein the Christian Church appropriates the role of God's chosen people from among members of the Abrahamic community. Former Anglican Minister William Nicholls explains that "[a]lready in the writers of the New Testament we have met (at least by implication) the claim that the Church is the new Israel, the renewed Israel of the end times."[35] Much of the geographic focus of modern American Christian Zionism continues to center around the State of Israel, and specifically the city of Jerusalem itself.

During the Six-Day War of 1967, Christian and Jewish fundamentalists came to the realization that they had something in common. These commonalities centered around the sacred space that is shared by the Jewish Western Wall and the Islamic Dome of the Rock in the city of Jerusalem. From a fundamentalist Jewish perspective, it is the destiny of the Jewish people to rebuild the Temple and reclaim its sacred space for Israel. American Christian Zionists also support the rebuilding of the Temple, because they believe its revival was predicted in the Book of Revelation. For this reason, Christian Zionists not only support the rebuilding of the Temple but in fact raise funds for this very purpose.

While American Jewish organizations such as the ADL have criticized Christian Zionist leaders for making antisemitic remarks, other Jewish organizations are more accepting of Christian Zionism. Former Israel Defense Forces officer and Orthodox Jewish founder of the 1967 Temple Mount and Eretz Yisrael Faithful Movement, Gershon Salomon, has turned to American Christian Zionists for financial support. As Professor of Religious Studies James Tabor notes,

> Gershon Salomon, who is one of the most vocal advocates of rebuilding the Temple, does much of his speaking not at synagogues, when he comes to the United States, but in Christian churches. He draws thousands of people that want to hear the latest news about the potential rebuilding of the Temple on the Temple Mount.[36]

In recent years, the governments of both the United States and Israel have faced increasing pressure to appease the growing Christian Zionist lobby.

In a December 6, 2017 speech, US President Donald Trump made the controversial statement that: "I have determined that it is time to officially recognize

---

[35] William Nicholls, *Christian Antisemitism: A History of Hate* (Lanham, MD: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1995), 172.

[36] James Tabor, "Apocalypticism Explained: Jerusalem," *PBS Frontline*, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/apocalypse/explanation/jerusalem.html, accessed July 13, 2018.

Jerusalem as the capital of Israel."[37] In response to Trump's "dangerous" and "unilateral" statement, fifty Muslim leaders, including long-time US ally King Abdullah II of Jordan, named East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine.[38] While some members of the Jewish community supported Trump's decision, others were less optimistic. In particular, American Reform Jewish leaders questioned the prudence of Trump's stance on Jerusalem. Rabbi Mark Winer, president of the Florida Democratic Party Caucus of American Jews said:

> Jerusalem is and always has been the capital city of the Jewish people and the State of Israel. But American recognition of Jerusalem's unique status for Israel and the Jewish people undermines realistic efforts at securing long-term peace between Israel and the Palestinians. Long term, the only sensible solution is two states for two peoples, Israel and Palestine. Just as Jerusalem has to be the capital of Israel, Jerusalem has to be the capital of Palestine.[39]

In contrast, most Conservative evangelical Christians voiced support for Trump's Jerusalem policy. "This decision will be met by political praise and theological conviction," said Johnnie Moore, an informal spokesman for Trump's evangelical advisory group. "Evangelicals in every corner of the United States will be ecstatic."[40] The special relationship between the American evangelical movement and its support for a Jewish Jerusalem is rooted in the complex historical phenomenon of Christian Zionism.

Christian Zionism, at one time the shadowy jurisdiction of religious outsiders such as Darby, is now at the forefront of American foreign policy in the Near East. American Christian Zionism is, at its core, a profound expression of American religious nationalism.[41] In one breath, Christian Zionism co-opts the Jewish spiritual connection with the city of Jerusalem and subverts the idea of Jewish return to the Promised Land by turning it into a Christian apocalyptic event. Christian Zionist theology has thus contributed to the institutionalization of a distinctively American form of Christian antisemitism.

---

[37] Donald Trump, "Statement by President Trump on Jerusalem," December 6, 2017, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-trump-jerusalem/.

[38] Carlotta Gall, "Muslim Leaders Declare East Jerusalem the Palestinian Capital," *New York Times*, December 13, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/13/world/middleeast/muslims-jerusalem-palestinians.html.

[39] Serjio Carmona, "South Florida Jewish Leaders React to Trump's Jerusalem Recognition," *Sun Sentinel*, December 8, 2017, http://www.sun-sentinel.com/florida-jewish-journal/news/palm/fl-jjps-jerusalem-react-1213-20171208-story.html.

[40] Tom Gjelten, "Religious Leaders Divided over Trump's Jerusalem Decision," *NPR*, December 7, 2017, https://www.npr.org/2017/12/07/569011845/trumps-jerusalem-decision-engenders-breadth-of-reaction-from-religious-leaders.

[41] Tristan Sturm, "Christian Zionism as Religious Nationalism Par Excellence," *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 24, no. 1 (Fall-Winter 2017): 11.

Epistemic Antisemitism, or "Good People Gone Wild": How Decent People Can Be Antisemites and Not Even Know It*

Andrew Pessin

This chapter examines a subtler but no less pernicious kind of antisemitism, one that is a matter not of the contents of beliefs but of the very cognitive processes that produce them. Such cognitive processes (akin to the many "cognitive biases" well studied by psychology) are largely invisible to the agent, so the beliefs formed by these processes may seem from within to be well-founded and reasonable, even when they aren't. An "epistemic antisemite," then, is someone whose negative beliefs about Jews are produced via cognitive processes/biases such as those sketched in this chapter. So while the typical antisemite believes that her hostility toward Jews is the well-grounded consequence of her reasonable beliefs about Jewish misbehavior, in fact the truth is the other way around: it is because she is hostile to Jews that she believes so many terrible things about them in the first place. Her negative attitude toward Jews isn't the effect of her beliefs about them but rather their cause. To apply this point to campus anti-Israelism, simply substitute the word "Israel" for "Jews" and make the corresponding changes.

Introduction

Antisemitism manifests itself in many forms and degrees. The more blatant and explicit, or the more it results in physical behaviors including graffiti, verbal intimidation, and violence, the more likely it is to receive media and other forms of attention. This chapter aims to call attention to a quieter form of anti-semitism—a more subtle kind that is no less pernicious than the louder form into which it can occasionally erupt.

Being subtle it can seep through the foundations, into the hearts and minds of otherwise decent, well-meaning people. It particularly flourishes at places like liberal arts institutions precisely because it readily disguises itself, camouflaging itself in wonderful language ("human rights," "social justice," "anti-racism," etc.). It is so subtle that it can generate views and actions that seem reasonable and objectively grounded in facts rather than derived from subjective hatred or bias. It is so subtle that otherwise good people are unaware of it in themselves, and will deny it sincerely and vehemently when charged with it.

But, in fact, you can be a serious antisemite and not even know it.

That is why epistemic antisemitism is so dangerous.

Classic, non-controversially antisemitic beliefs (such as blood libels or claims that "Jews control the economy, the media, etc.") are unfortunately making a comeback on campuses.[1] But the epistemic antisemitism that makes such blatant cases possible is stealthier and broader than those cases suggest. That's because epistemic antisemitism is a matter not of the contents of beliefs but of the very cognitive processes that produce them. And because the processes that produce our beliefs are largely invisible to us, the beliefs thus produced may seem, from within, to be perfectly well-founded and reasonable.

An epistemic antisemite, then, is (roughly) one whose relevant beliefs are produced by antisemitic epistemic processes such as those I'll sketch below. When those beliefs cross the line into blatantly antisemitic content, it is only easier to detect them. That doesn't make those beliefs that *don't* cross the line any less antisemitic—just less blatant.

That various subjective biases can corrode our belief-forming processes is already well appreciated. The key now is to recognize that even the kind of bias that is antisemitism—which for rhetorical simplicity I shall characterize as an "ethnic bias"[2]—can corrode them as well.

I. Initial Observations and Caveats

The term "antisemitism" generally implies something like an irrational or ill-founded animus or hostility toward the Jewish people. But as David Hirsh has

---

[1] Consider recent events, such as: (1) Rutgers professor Jasbir Puar's blood libels in February 2016 at Vassar College (Ziva Dahl, "Vassar Sponsors the Demonization of Israel … Again," *The Algemeiner*, February 10, 2016, http://www.algemeiner.com/2016/02/10/vassar-sponsors-the-demonization-of-israelagain/) and her book, *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017); (2) Oberlin professor Joy Karega's Facebook tirades, which were also exposed in February 2016 (David Gerstman, "Oberlin Professor Claims Israel Was Behind 9/11, ISIS, Charlie Hebdo Attack," *The Tower*, February 25, 2016, http://www.thetower.org/3012-oberlin-professor-claims-israel-was-behind-911-isis-charlie-hebdo-attack/); and (3) Stanford student senator Gabriel Knight casually suggesting in April 2016 that it is "valid" to discuss whether "Jews control the media, economy, government…" (Winston Shi, "On Gabriel Knight and What Anti-Semitism Really Means," *Stanford Daily*, April 7, 2016, http://www.stanforddaily.com/2016/04/07/on-gabriel-knight-and-what-anti-semitism-really-means/).

[2] There are many complications here. The Jewish people in fact comprise a multiplicity of ethnicities, and "Jewishness" is also connected non-ethnically to the Jewish religion. But the simpler rhetoric should be adequate, because (a) "peoplehood," while not identifiable with any single ethnicity, is closely related to ethnicity in general; (b) many antisemites (wrongly) conceive of the Jewish people as a single ethnicity; and (c) the kind of antisemitism this chapter will focus on is directed not at the Jewish religion but at the Jewish people.

put it in describing what he calls the "antisemitism of the *mensch*,"[3] we are now well aware that racism in general does not have to be overt or felt as a hatred: there can be institutional racism, racist outcomes, and racist patterns of thinking even in the absence of overtly hostile feelings.[4] Epistemic antisemitism falls into this latter category.

I shall apply the terms "antisemitism" and its cognates, then, wherever there is consistent, irrational, or ill-founded discrimination against the Jewish people, regardless of whether there is overt hostility or hatred.

Although epistemic antisemitism is a general phenomenon, this chapter will focus on its manifestation on liberal arts campuses across the United States with respect specifically to the Israeli-Palestinian-Jewish-Arab-Muslim conflict (IPJAMC). My claim will be that epistemic antisemitism is often in play in campus discussions of the IPJAMC and that it is thus a significant driving force of campus anti-Israelism.[5] To say it is often in play, note, is not to say it is *always* in play: the conclusion is *not* that "every critic of Israel is *ipso facto* antisemitic." Each case would have to be analyzed individually before reaching any determination.

Much of what I say could also be applied to supporters of Israel, who surely suffer from similar biases in the other direction. Nevertheless, I'll suggest that if all were to attempt to correct for their epistemic biases, to seek more "neutral" epistemic perspectives and to apply exactly the same epistemic standards to the IPJAMC that are applied to most or all other academic subjects, then campuses would move into less Israel-hostile territory overall.

Finally, the point of this chapter is not to "defend Israel," either in general or from any particular accusation. Indeed, this chapter is consistent with the possibility that many specific accusations against Israel are true and important. The point is rather to make explicit the kinds of biases in play in campus hostility

---

[3] *Mensch* is a Yiddish word for "a good person," or "a person of integrity and honor."

[4] Remarks at the Academic Engagement Network conference, Washington, DC, May 2016.

[5] I attempt to document the methods and policies of the campus anti-Israel movement in Andrew Pessin and Doron Ben-Atar, eds., *Anti-Zionism on Campus: The University, Free Speech, and BDS* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018). My own diagnosis of campus anti-Israelism in this chapter will complement other modes of diagnosis. Joshua Muravchik, for example, analyzes the material pressures and intellectual fashions that have turned much of the liberal, progressive world against Israel in *Making David into Goliath: How the World Turned against Israel* (New York: Encounter Books, 2014), while Richard Landes's work does the same on a more theoretical level (see, e.g., Richard Landes, "Antisemitism: Medieval, Modern, Postmodern: One Guide to the Perplexed at the Dawn of the Global Era," *Augean Stables* (blog), May 20, 2002, http://www.theaugeanstables.com/essays-on-judeophobia/anti-semitism-post-modern/). Epistemic antisemitism is discernible in both analyses, even if not identified as such.

toward Israel in general. In so doing, we will shift our application of the label "antisemitic" away from particular individual beliefs or accusations or criticisms toward *patterns* of belief, accusation, and criticism.[6]

II. Cognitive Biases

Antisemitic epistemic processes may be understood as forms of cognitive bias.

According to the *Encyclopedia of Human Behavior*,[7] "In the early 1970s, Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman introduced the term 'cognitive bias' to describe people's systematic but purportedly flawed patterns of responses to judgment and decision problems."[8] Though the term has evolved, the basic idea is that a cognitive bias is a systematic deviation from relevant rational norms, such that the individuals susceptible to it may regularly draw inferences and make judgments that, in broader contexts, seem significantly flawed and perhaps even irrational. Having been extensively studied over the past decades, cognitive biases (it's now clear) come in many varieties and are perfectly normal in the sense that perhaps all of us display them.

Let's first briefly sketch some standard examples.

1. Examples of common cognitive biases[9]

There is *confirmation bias*,[10] which is "the tendency to search for, interpret, favor, and recall information in a way that confirms one's preexisting beliefs or hypotheses, while giving disproportionately less consideration to alternative possibilities." Thus, we tend to gather information selectively and to notice phenomena that confirm our beliefs more readily than we do those that disconfirm them; we tend to start with our conclusions already in mind and then look for supporting data and overlook the data that undermines them. Similarly, we are prone to *selective recall*,[11] to remember incidents that fit our beliefs or expectations more readily

---

6 David Hirsh also noted (at the conference mentioned in note 4) that criticisms of Israel that might individually be legitimate get "swirled together" via a constant focus on Israeli misdeeds—and that the antisemitism might be not in the elements themselves but in their "agglomeration."

7 V.S. Ramachandran, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Human Behavior*, vol. 1 (London, UK: Elsevier/Academic Press, 2012).

8 A. Wilke and R. Mata, "Cognitive Bias," in Ramachandram, *Encyclopedia of Human Behavior*, 531-535.

9 I provide Wikipedia links for the examples simply because the links are very useful. But all of the examples are well known and you can pursue more scholarly resources on them by following the many references in the Wikipedia articles.

10 Wikipedia, s.v. "Confirmation bias," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confirmation_ bias.

11 Ibid., section 1.3: Biased memory.

than those that don't. We are also subject to *belief perseverance*,[12] whereby we tend to hold onto our beliefs even in the face of disconfirming evidence. All of these leave us prone to believe certain propositions more confidently than the actual objective, empirical evidence might dictate.

There are also many *availability heuristics*,[13] whereby certain kinds of examples come more readily to mind than others, on the basis of which we then draw (often faulty) conclusions. Classic applications include our tendency to grossly overestimate the frequency of events such as child abductions, airplane crashes, or violent crimes: since the media highlight the abductions and crashes and obviously don't highlight all the non-abductions and non-crashes, the former are readily "available" to our minds. In general, we mistake the subjective "availability" of the phenomenon as evidence of its objective frequency.

The *anchoring effect*[14] refers to our tendency to rely too heavily on certain fixed pieces of information (the "anchor") when making decisions. For example, the first price offered when negotiating for a car gets fixed in our minds and offers a kind of arbitrary standard against which other prices are compared. Combining this with availability heuristics, we may make judgments about whole categories of things based on the examples that first come to mind when thinking about them.

In addition, we are subject to *in-group biases*,[15] whereby we tend to think more highly of, favor, trust, and believe we share beliefs and values with people who belong to our "group" compared to people who don't. There is also the *bandwagon effect*,[16] which describes the fact that, despite our sense that we form our beliefs and our tastes independently, as individuals, we actually tend to adopt the opinions and even tastes of our surrounding community.

Finally, there are various forms of *post hoc rationalization*.[17] For example, *choice-supportive bias*[18] is our tendency "to retroactively ascribe positive attributes to an option one has [already] selected." We often don't realize we are doing this retroactively but will falsely believe that those attributes were part of our decision process prior to choosing that option. More generally, we have a tendency to

---

12 Ibid., section 7.2: Persistence of discredited beliefs.

13 Wikipedia, s.v. "Availability heuristic," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Availability_heuristic.

14 Wikipedia, s.v. "Anchoring," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anchoring.

15 Wikipedia, s.v. "In-group favoritism," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/In-group_favoritism.

16 Wikipedia, s.v. "Bandwagon effect," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bandwagon_effect.

17 Jonathan M.S. Pearce, "Post Hoc Rationalisation—Reasoning Our Intuition and Changing Our Minds," *A Tippling Philosopher* (blog), November 14, 2013, http://www.skepticink.com/tippling/2013/11/14/post-hoc-rationalisation-reasoning-our-intuition-and-changing-our-minds/.

18 Wikipedia, s.v. "Choice-supportive bias," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Choice-supportive_bias.

reach our decisions and opinions first and only subsequently provide reasons, or rationalizations, for them.

2. Some key points about cognitive biases

Though cognitive biases are "normal" in the sense that we are all susceptible to them, they are nearly invisible to us from "inside," as it were, which means they are difficult to self-detect via purely reflective means. We tend to be aware of the products of our cognitive processes—our beliefs, our intuitions, our perceptions—but less so of the processes themselves that produce them.[19]

In nearly every example we make the same kind of basic error: we mistake something subjective, some feature of the way our own minds work, for something objective or for reasonable evidence for something objective. With confirmation bias we tend to believe a certain proposition is (objectively) true because our mind is (subjectively) inclined to stress the information that supports it. With availability heuristics we reach conclusions about the (objective) frequency of events because our mind (subjectively) picks out specific examples for us to work with, and so on.

Cognitive biases are also recalcitrant: simply knowing we are susceptible to them does not make them go away. We need to work explicitly to correct for them if we seek to make better, more "objective" judgments and decisions.

3. Cognitive biases and blatant antisemitism

It's easy to see how common cognitive biases such as those described above may play some role in the cognitive processing of what I'll call the "blatant antisemite," i.e. the person who holds classic and non-controversially antisemitic beliefs.

Her confirmation bias, for example, might lead her to look for and fasten on (then long remember) any stories about Jews' misdeeds, while overlooking, or quickly forgetting, any stories about Jews' good deeds or about non-Jews' misdeeds. Similarly, she'll probably be drawn to antisemitic media and literature, only reinforcing her beliefs. Meanwhile her belief perseverance would keep her belief (say) that Jews are greedy strong even despite reading about or encountering many non-greedy Jews. Since her paradigm Jews will be the evil

---

[19] Compare the "Dunning-Kruger effect," the cognitive bias as a result of which people poorly assess their own ineptitudes. Key papers in this area include: Justin Kruger and David Dunning, "Unskilled and Unaware of It: How Difficulties in Recognizing One's Own Incompetence Lead to Inflated Self-Assessments," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 77 no. 6 (1999): 1121-1134 and David Dunning et al., "Why People Fail to Recognize Their Own Incompetence," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 12, no. 3 (2003): 83-87. A more general discussion may be found at Wikipedia, s.v. "Dunning-Kruger effect," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dunning–Kruger_effect.

ones, her availability heuristics and anchors will help her to generalize her beliefs to many or all Jews. In-group bias surely helps fuel some non-Jewish antisemites, and may even play some role in Jewish antisemitism.[20]

Finally, post hoc rationalization may allow all of the above to pass muster for her, in some sense. She finds herself believing very nasty things about Jews, then finds herself stocked, post hoc, with plenty of reasonable-sounding justifications for those beliefs. So, it perhaps seems, at least to her, that those beliefs are the perfectly reasonable products of perfectly reasonable cognitive processes.

According to the blatant antisemite, her hostility toward Jews is the well-grounded consequence of her reasonable beliefs. What she fails to see—as she would fail to see if her beliefs were generated by cognitive biases—is that the truth is the other way around.

Her negative attitude toward Jews isn't the *effect* of her beliefs about them, but it may very well be the *cause* of those beliefs.[21]

III. Epistemic Antisemitism

1. Preliminaries

As mentioned above, the term "antisemitism" refers to something like an irrational or ill-founded discrimination against the Jewish people. Those adjectives obviously make "antisemitism" pejorative: if the discrimination were rational or well-founded—if there are legitimate reasons to possess it and/or to act on it—then antisemitism would perhaps be morally justified.[22]

The crucial question of course will be what counts as well- or ill-founded.

Like the blatant antisemite, the epistemic antisemite in general will likely believe that his discrimination is well-founded. He manifests his hostility and his negative beliefs toward Jews—for our concerns, now, toward the Jewish collective, the lone Jewish state, Israel—because he sees many legitimate reasons to.

---

[20] "Groups" are fluid, multi-variable constructs, as are "identities," so it's worth exploring whether the "in-group bias" a campus Jew may manifest in solidarity with fellow progressives, say, contributes to her own antisemitism (or more broadly anti-Israelism). There is also a bias known as *in-group derogation* (Wikipedia, s.v. "In-group favoritism," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/In-group_favoritism, section 7: In-group derogation) that may apply to "Jewish self-hatred" as well, which is another general label for this phenomenon—understanding of which no doubt goes beyond mere cognitive biases.

[21] Strictly speaking, this chapter is neutral on whether the "negative attitude" (as a felt hatred or something less overt) precedes and *causes* the epistemic corruption or is merely to be identified with it. I'm inclined to support the former, but won't argue for that here.

[22] The controversial former academic Steven Salaita apparently believed that it is, tweeting notoriously in 2014: "Zionists: transforming 'antisemitism' from something horrible into something honorable since 1948," Twitter, July 20, 2014, https://twitter.com/stevesalaita/status/490651053101441025.

Those calling him an epistemic antisemite will obviously disagree about how well-founded his beliefs are. We, as above, will see his antisemitism as built into the very processes that produce his discriminatory beliefs and will see his alleged "reasons" to oppose Israel as a product of his discriminatory attitude rather than its cause or ground.

We see his antisemitism, his anti-Israelism, in other words, as a form of cognitive bias.

2. Objective criteria vs. subjective cognitive processes

Although the common cognitive biases (above) are also in play for the epistemic antisemite with respect to Israel, I'll focus here on the kinds of cognitive bias most directly related to what I'm calling an ethnic bias.

All of these would also be found among criteria for "epistemic objectivity" or something like that. For anyone who cares about reaching careful conclusions concerning complicated matters, they will all seem painfully obvious. What is far less obvious is that they also refer to the nearly invisible subjective cognitive processes that generate our beliefs.

So, for example, the most general indicator of an ethnic bias is perhaps the application of "double standards." If you blatantly apply double standards to Israel, then you are blatantly failing to be objective—obviously. That is why "double standards" are one of the criteria for antisemitism with respect to Israel endorsed by the US State Department, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, and other groups.[23] But nearly invisible (again) are the many subjective forms of this bias, the many interrelated ways that double standards seep into and corrode our belief-forming mechanisms.

3. "Double standard" cognitive biases

i. Credibility assumptions

Richard Landes colorfully describes what he calls "the epistemological priority of the 'other' in post-colonial activism[:] To atone for our colonial past we must embrace the rage of the wretched of the earth."[24] He continues,

---

[23] "Defining Anti-Semitism" (fact sheet, Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, US Department of State, Washington, DC, June 8, 2010), https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/drl/rls/fs/2010/122352.htm. See also Natan Sharansky, "3D Test of Anti-Semitism," *Jewish Political Studies Review* 16, nos. 3-4 (Fall 2004), http://www.jcpa.org/phas/phas-sharansky-f04.htm.

[24] Richard Landes, "From Useful Idiot to Useful Infidel: Meditations on the Folly of 21st-Century 'Intellectuals,'" *Terrorism and Political Violence* 25, no. 4 (2013): 627, http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09546553.2013.814504.

> Perhaps the most eloquent expression of this last meme was uttered by one of [the members of] the United Nations Human Rights Council-appointed Goldstone Commission. Asked about the reliability of Palestinian testimony accusing Israel of war crimes, Hina Jilani, the Pakistani Supreme Court Judge … commented: "It would be cruel not to give their testimony credence." The fact that it is cruel to believe vicious slander does not occur to her….

Think about how problematic that is from an epistemological perspective, as Landes sharply points out. What would be cruel, perhaps, is simply ignoring the testimony of those who are suffering. But it is not cruel to take what they say and then process it, examine it, critique it, verify it, particularly when there is a conflict going on, they are a party to that conflict, and the stakes are high.[25]

For that is just what it is to be objective.

A bias in credibility assumptions can take many forms. You might, as an instinctual default value, treat the claims of one side of the dispute as credible while treating the claims of the other side as debatable.[26] You might readily accept media reports saying bad things or making harsh accusations about one party while being slow to accept reports that dispute those reports or reports that make harsh accusations against the other party.[27] More generally, you

---

[25] There is an ongoing technical debate among philosophers about the conditions under which it is legitimate to accept what another person says, including whether the absence of specific reasons to think the person is unreliable is sufficient for accepting their testimony or whether you are required to seek positive reasons confirming their reliability. For more on this issue, see Jonathan Adler, "Epistemological Problems of Testimony," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Winter 2017 Edition), http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/testimony-episprob/.

[26] For example, consider the credibility assumptions at play regarding the casualty counts (including the civilian-militant ratios) from the 2014 Israel-Hamas war, where all the figures ultimately derived from one party to the conflict. For details, see Oren Kessler, "Hamas Lies: And the Media Believed It," *US News*, August 12, 2014, http://www.usnews.com/opinion/articles/2014/08/12/hamas-lies-about-the-gaza-civilian-death-toll-and-the-media-bought-it and "Additional Findings in the Examination of the Names of Palestinians Killed in Operation Protective Edge—Part Eight," *ITIC Information Bulletin*, December 29, 2014, http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/Data/articles/Art_20753/E_200_14_172393803.pdf.

[27] For example, a popular anti-Israel meme is that Israel, in its racism, forcibly sterilized Ethiopian immigrant women, a meme based on an article that was later retracted for being mistaken. That hasn't stopped the false claim from continuing to be widely spread, even though it takes perhaps just one or two clicks to find the true story (Tamar Sternthal, "Let's Get the Facts Straight about Ethiopian Jews and Contraception," *The Algemeiner*, February 7, 2013, http://www.algemeiner.com/2013/02/07/lets-get-the-facts-straight-about-ethiopian-jews-and-contraception/). Similarly, NGO Monitor reports on the problematic credibility assumptions used by the media itself in reporting on the IPJAMC (Gerald M. Steinberg et al., "NGOs and the Political-Legal Theater in Operation Protective Edge," *Strategic Assessment* 19, no. 1 (2016), http://www.inss.org.il/upload Images/systemFiles/adkan19-1ENG_3_Steinberg%20et%20al.pdf).

might implicitly or explicitly apply a burden of proof asymmetry, under which one side's claims are accepted as true unless clearly proven otherwise while the other side's claims are taken to be false unless clearly proven to be true. You might simply like one side more, spend more time with them, read more of their materials, building up a kind of relationship and trust that you do not have with the other side. And so on.

We need of course to distinguish cases where asymmetric credibility assumptions are biased from others where they may be perfectly legitimate. We'll look at that below, but the point now is to realize that double standards— cognitive bias—might be occurring at the very entry point of much of our information about the IPJAMC.

ii. Speed of judgment

We normally recognize that it takes a certain amount of time to reach appropriately well-founded conclusions. The more complex an issue is, the more we take time in reaching a judgment, as there is more to learn, to find out, more competing testimonies between which one must judge, and so forth.

We must be particularly alert to this norm when evaluating photographic or video data, since such material is not just nearly omnipresent but can also easily entice us into premature judgments. We must remind ourselves that appearances can be deceiving, especially in complex situations. Photographs can be tampered with, staged, misidentified, or even entirely fabricated.[28] Even where the images are real and accurate, the story conveyed by a photograph or video isn't necessarily an accurate or comprehensive story, at least not until you take into account all sorts of context: who produced it, what was her agenda, what is not being shown, what happened right before the scene(s) photographed, what happened right after, etc. Moreover, a photograph or video cannot provide a conclusive analysis of the deeper issues, such as who is ultimately responsible for the current situation.

---

[28] For example, as the media watchdog group CAMERA reports, the Palestinian Health Ministry submitted a report to the World Health Organization in May 2016 accusing Israel of various misdeeds and documenting it with falsified photos ("Palestinian Health Ministry Passes Off Fauxtography to WHO," *Snapshots: A CAMERA Blog*, May 29, 2016, http://blog.camera.org/archives/2016/05/post_161.html). There are also many staged photographs circulating on the internet "demonstrating" Israeli brutality in various ways (see, e.g., Shraga Simmons, "Staged Palestinian Photos," *Aish.com*, June 9, 2015, http://www.aish.com/jw/mo/Staged-Palestinian-Photos.html and ll-israel, "Staged Palestinian Photo Shoot" (photo), no date, Flickr, https://www.flickr.com/photos/95286197@N00/214132236). More generally, the term "Pallywood" has been coined to refer to the Palestinians' penchant for manipulating images for public relations purposes (Wikipedia, s.v. "Pallywood," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pallywood).

All that is obvious. But what is obvious in general—that we should not be quick to judge when it's a complex situation—is simply ignored by many when it comes to the IPJAMC.

Double standards may occur in the speed in which we reach our conclusions.

iii. Benefit of the doubt

From a neutral position, we typically recognize the importance of giving those accused of bad deeds some benefit of the doubt.[29] If there's an accusation, you evaluate its credibility; if there's a photograph, you evaluate the context; if a person is quoted a certain way, you investigate whether the quote is accurate.[30] In all cases you wait to hear the "other side of the story," allow the person to speak for himself. The American legal system is premised on the idea that you are innocent until proven guilty, and most of us think that is a pretty good idea.

Indeed, for most of the many complicated conflicts around the world, we are aware not only that they have long and complicated histories but also that we must be cautious about our credibility assumptions, that we must not rush to judgment, and that we must give the various actors the benefit of the doubt. Consider how most of us on American campuses respond to reports about the Russia-Chechnya or Russia-Crimea conflicts, the conflict between India and Pakistan with respect to Kashmir, the Kurds' demand to carve out a state for themselves in parts of Iraq and Turkey, or China's disputes with its neighbors over various islands. One party may sling accusations at the other, but we know better than to simply accept them at face value.

And yet, again, when it comes to the IPJAMC, many people fail to apply the same benefit of the doubt they would readily give to all other cases.

iv. Simplification

Most of us know better than to weigh in too seriously on the complicated conflicts mentioned above, just as we are cautious (as non-experts) about having firm opinions about, say, the Sunni-Shia division in the Middle East, the relationship between Islamist terror and Islam proper, precisely whom to support in the mess that is Syria, or any one of dozens of other global matters.

---

[29] Another current campus (and non-campus!) controversy concerns sexual harassment and assault and precisely how much "benefit of the doubt" should be given to alleged perpetrators and alleged victims. It would be interesting to examine more thoroughly how "benefit of the doubt" considerations play out there compared to the IPJAMC.

[30] Misquoting and taking quotes out of context are frighteningly common practices among activists concerning the IPJAMC. My concern here, though, isn't in the misleading presentations of such quotes by the activists but the overly quick acceptance of them at face value by their academic audiences.

The truth, we know, is complicated. The IPJAMC is in fact very complicated, as its acronym suggests.

But so many people see it as shockingly simple.

This may partly be the product of media coverage and social media, perhaps conjoined with the other biases. The media and social media generally have to present a simplified story. We would hope for better within the academic community, but then again faculty members and students are people, too, and few have the time for anything more than a simple story, particularly where the topic is not their area of expertise.

Compounding the problem is that the (over)simplified story here—ignoring most of the history and all sorts of context and analysis—generally favors one side of the narrative, the Palestinian side. It's easy to show photographs of the damage in Gaza from the 2014 war, for example. What is much harder to show, in a simplified text or a photograph, is nearly everything that actually matters.

You see a photo of a destroyed building in Gaza and your heart is naturally filled with empathy and compassion for Palestinian suffering.[31] But was the building destroyed by Israel or by a Hamas missile that fell short? Was it actually destroyed in the previous war but never rebuilt, because Hamas stole all the resources to rebuild its war machine rather than rebuild Gaza? Was it a legitimate military target? Were there high-ranking military officials in it when it was bombed? Was it used to fire rockets or store weapons? Why was Israel even bombing there in the first place—could it have been due to years of rocket fire targeting its civilians, the discovery of cross-border tunnels, or other hostile actions? And why wasn't Gaza flourishing after Israel completely withdrew from the territory in 2005, without imposing any sort of blockade at the time?

Simplification can take hold in many different ways. In recent years, campus hostility to Israel has partly been fueled by the otherwise perfectly legitimate progressive campaign against global racism, for example. But addressing the IPJAMC in the context of this campaign relies on the oversimplified assumption that Israeli Jews are "white" while Palestinian Arabs are people "of color," which may itself be a product of standard cognitive biases.[32] Anti-Israelism is also

---

[31] Or even more poignantly—assuming of course that these photos are real and not staged—a photo of a father giving his children a bath in the rubble of his Gaza home (Art Against, "A father bathing his daughter…," Facebook, February 25, 2016, https://www.facebook.com/artagainstproject/photos/a.639651369417634.1073741828.639605726088865/975300122519422/?type=3&theater) or other similar pictures ("UNRWA Celebrates the Opening of the EU-Funded 2015 Photo Competition Exhibition and Awards Ceremony in Gaza," press release, February 15, 2016, http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/unrwa-celebrates-opening-eu-funded-2015-photo-competition-exhibition-and).

[32] It may also be a product of simple ignorance, since most American Jews look "white" and most Americans are simply unaware of the racial and ethnic diversity of

fueled by legitimate progressive campaigns against global oppression and colonialism, but seeing these campaigns as relevant to the IPJAMC also relies on oversimplified assumptions, such as that Jews are not indigenous to the region and that Israeli Jewish actions are never justifiably motivated by the actions of Palestinian and other Arabs. Once these oversimplified (and thus biased) assumptions are introduced, the rest of the reasoning process can be as objective as you like and it will still produce a biased outcome.

I'm not insisting that these assumptions are false, I should add. I'm merely insisting that it's a form of bias to accept these assumptions at face value, without doing serious due diligence in evaluating them—the kind of due diligence most people would readily do in most other contexts.

The truth is complicated here, as it is everywhere. But when it comes to the IPJAMC, many people seem satisfied with simplifications.

v. Social pressures, solidarity

This bias is sometimes masked because there are also plenty of exceptions. But, then again, the exceptions perhaps reinforce the general rule.

The exceptions are the courageous individuals who openly defend unpopular beliefs on college campuses. But what the past several years have repeatedly shown is that there is great social pressure to adopt certain mainstream positions. Most campuses have a strong liberal or progressive bent, faculty members are overwhelmingly liberal or progressive,[33] and there is great social pressure to toe the line.

What's odd about this is that it's often suggested that a primary purpose of a liberal arts education is to train students to think critically. At the same time, a dominant thought within liberalism is that we should maximize diversity, including the tolerance of diversity. Put these two points together and you'd imagine that we'd have campuses that are collections of diverse individuals with diverse experiences, perspectives, and opinions, engaged in robust debate about their many differences.

Israeli Jewry. Of course, that Americans make this false assumption about Israeli Jewry without it occurring to them to check the facts is part of the problem. It is also interesting to note that the fact that American Jews are construed as "white" is a more recent phenomenon than most appreciate, as argued by Karen Brodkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says about Race in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998).

[33] For some recent surveys, see Scott Jaschik, "Moving Further to the Left," *Inside Higher Ed*, October 24, 2012, https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2012/10/24/survey-finds-professors-already-liberal-have-moved-further-left, and Bradford Richardson, "Liberal Professors Outnumber Conservatives Nearly 12 to 1, Study Finds," *Washington Times*, October 6, 2016, https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/oct/6/liberal-professors-outnumber-conservatives-12-1/.

But in fact what seems to be the norm is something else: a liberal progressive homogeneity (with exceptions), where there is significant social pressure for individuals to toe a nearly universal line. Somewhere in there what you imagine would be the primary role of critical thinking—namely to critique any line that is widely being toed—seems to disappear.

It's also no secret that campuses are increasingly anti-Israel, and that incidents of blatant antisemitism are making the news, from swastikas to vandalism to epithets to threatening behavior.[34]

The line that is increasingly being toed is also the anti-Israel line.

Insofar as we are susceptible to social pressures in the formation of our beliefs, there is growing pressure on many campuses to adopt the perspective of one side rather than the other—or than even a relatively neutral perspective. And, regrettably, when significant social pressure is put on people to affirm specific propositions—think the Inquisition, witch hunts, McCarthyism—epistemology is not likely to be the driving concern.

vi. Disproportionate focus

In some ways this may be the most subtle cognitive bias of all.

The preceding biases all more or less directly skew the belief-forming process. But the idea that you are disproportionately focusing—either on the IPJAMC in general or on, say, Israeli Jews' misbehavior in particular—seems largely external to that process. After all, as anti-Israel advocates easily and correctly object, Israeli misdeeds are objectionable in their own right, and the fact that we focus on exposing them in no way exculpates those misdeeds.

Moreover, there is clearly no general formula available for a proportionate focus. Different people with different interests legitimately vary in how much to focus on different things. We typically recognize that where you have a personal stake in something you are justified in focusing on it, and that where you are committed to certain general principles you are justified in focusing on instances where those principles are in play. Moreover, you may just have a personal interest in some subject: no one objects to a scholar who devotes her life to studying classics, for example, just because she isn't Greek or Roman!

Nevertheless, there are problems with the "disproportionate focus" on the IPJAMC applied by many, and we can recognize those problems even if we cannot precisely define proportionality.

---

[34] These phenomena are documented in a 2016 study by the AMCHA Initiative that also documents the correlations between campus anti-Israelism and antisemitic activity (Leila Beckwith and Tammi Rossman-Benjamin, *Report on Antisemitic Activity in 2015 at U.S. Colleges and Universities with the Largest Jewish Undergraduate Populations* (Santa Cruz, CA: AMCHA Initiative, 2016), http://www.amchainitiative.org/antisemitic-activity-schools-large-Jewish-report-2015).

First, disproportionate focus can skew the belief-forming process. When you focus all your energies on finding misdeeds by only one party, when you are actively looking for those misdeeds, and when you are subject to all the above-mentioned biases (including confirmation bias and social pressure) you also greatly increase the risk of false positives.

More importantly, a deeper problem is revealed in the famous response by Curtis Marez, then president of the American Studies Association (ASA), to justify the organization's 2013 boycott of Israel. When it was pointed out that the ASA had never before boycotted any nation and that many nations, including Israel's enemies, are generally judged to have comparable or worse human rights records, Marez answered, "One has to start somewhere."[35]

Suppose there was a group of ten men who were all involved in some similar form of misbehavior, nine of whom were white and one was black. Now suppose you choose to focus exclusively on the black man in the group, monitoring his actions alone and condemning him when he misbehaves. When asked to justify your disproportionate focus on him, you simply reply, "We have to start somewhere."

No one would accept that response for a second, for its veneer of arbitrariness is clearly a cover for something more sinister. And it would only be even more damning were it to turn out that the nine white men were doing significantly worse things than the one black man who garnered all your attention and condemnation.

This "disproportionate focus" is straightforward racism. That you start with the black man in that way is racism; that you never move beyond the black man is racism. And the fact that the black man may well be guilty of that misbehavior would not exculpate *you* of the racism exemplified by your disproportionate focus on him.

The relentless campus-wide focus on the IPJAMC to the near total exclusion of all other conflicts in the world, along with the particular focus on the alleged misdeeds not of Israelis in general but specifically of Israeli Jews, does appear to reflect a deep-seated desire, in Tuvia Tenenbom's memorable phrase, to "Catch the Jew!"[36] That there is a near-total lack of campus effort to "catch the Palestinian!"—whose alleged misdeeds are also very serious—is just a straightforward ethnic bias. Not to mention the fact that some of those alleged Palestinian misdeeds may well serve to provide the appropriate context for, and perhaps even justify, those actions by Israeli Jews that are alleged to be misdeeds.

---

35 Richard Pérez-Peña, "Scholars' Group to Disclose Result of Vote on an Academic Boycott of Israel," *New York Times*, December 15, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/16/us/scholars-group-to-disclose-result-of-vote-on-an-academic-boycott-of-israel.html?_r=1.

36 Tuvia Tenenbom, *Catch the Jew!* (Jerusalem: Gefen Publishing House, 2015).

The disproportionate focus on the alleged misdeeds of Israeli Jews alone thus stacks the deck—and the jury—against them.

And even where you do discover genuine misdeeds by Israeli Jews, this disproportionate focus has another harmful consequence: it magnifies the misdeeds and produces a kind of demonization that only fuels further bias. When the media, or certain non-governmental organizations (NGOs)—or you—choose to focus only or primarily on Jewish misdeeds, it makes Israeli Jews look like they are not only purely evil but among the worst people in the world.[37] That in turn feeds a vicious cycle, for as more people believe that Israeli Jews are the most evil people in the world, then they will start disproportionately focusing on Israeli Jewish misdeeds, applying all the above-mentioned cognitive biases.

So, we don't need a precise definition of proportionality to recognize the double standard in play with respect to the IPJAMC.

That isn't to say there aren't cases to be made that might justify one's otherwise disproportionate focus on Israeli Jewish misdeeds. Some Jews, for example, argue that, "as Jews," they have a particular stake in the behavior of the Jewish state. Jews and non-Jews alike argue that Israel should be held to higher (i.e. "Western") standards in a way that Palestinians shouldn't, that the United States supports Israel and therefore we should focus on where our money goes, and that since Israel is the oppressor and Palestinians the oppressed we are justified in focusing on righting certain wrongs.

But while I've yet to find an argument of this nature that I find persuasive—some strike me as outright racist in their condescension toward Palestinians or guilty of flaws such as oversimplification—here I merely point out that they simply aren't relevant. The point I'm making here is that a "disproportionate focus" is a kind of cognitive bias that quietly skews the beliefs of many individuals. If, after having your attention called to it, you then find ways that aren't merely post hoc rationalizations to justify your disproportionate focus on the IPJAMC or on Israeli Jewish misdeeds—ways that aren't themselves further derived from cognitive biases—then we simply disagree, albeit profoundly.

4. Three key points about these biases

First, note that these "double standard" biases can operate in different ways. Some involve the application of double standards to the way people approach the IPJAMC compared to the way they approach all other conflicts. Others involve double standards applied within the analysis of the IPJAMC itself. Some might involve both.

---

[37] The website "Bad News from the Netherlands" makes this point deliberately and vividly by presenting only the worst news about the Netherlands (http://badnewsfrom thenetherlands.blogspot.com).

Second, as we noted earlier, it takes only one point of bias in order to infect the entire cognitive system. If your biases input bad data, the beliefs produced will reflect that.

Finally, at the start of this chapter I suggested that an epistemic antisemite is one whose relevant beliefs are produced by antisemitic epistemic processes. As should be clear, this is not, could not, and need not be an absolute or precise definition. There are too many possible relevant biases, each can be a matter of degree, and there are too many other relevant variables and qualifications to generate such a definition. Nevertheless, it is a first step toward identifying certain patterns of cognitive processing which, when occurring consistently, ought to qualify as antisemitic.

IV. Good People Gone Wild: Blatant Antisemitism and Israel Derangement Syndrome

Left unchecked, I believe, epistemic antisemitism can morph into its more blatant and threatening forms, even in the genteel environment of the liberal arts institution. As mentioned earlier, we see this in the growing campus permissibility to entertain blatantly antisemitic propositions[38] and in the correlation between campus anti-Israelism and antisemitic speech and behavior recently documented by the AMCHA Initiative.[39]

Left unchecked, I believe, epistemic antisemitism also corrodes the intellectual norms that ordinarily operate both inside and outside the academy. We see this in the way that even good people seem to lose their minds, or at least their ability to think clearly, when it comes to Israel and Jews. In very extreme cases—colorfully labeled "Israel Derangement Syndrome"[40]—the hatred of Israel

---

[38] See the examples in note 1. Although each instance generated significant backlash, each offending individual also garnered copious support. In fact, the problem is simply that these individuals could seriously *entertain* these propositions in the first place, much less express them publicly.

[39] Beckwith and Rossman-Benjamin, *Report on Antisemitic Activity in 2015.*

[40] A few examples: Melanie Phillips, "Cameron's Dismissal of Israel," *Jewish Chronicle*, September 9, 2011, https://www.thejc.com/comment/columnists/cameron-s-dismissal-of-israel-1.27558?highlight=melanie+phillips; David Bernstein, "Israel Derangement Syndrome Envelops the Far Left: Six Examples," *The Volokh Conspiracy* (blog), *Washington Post*, January 26, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2016/01/26/israel-derangement-syndrome-envelops-the-far-left-six-examples/; Noah Pollak, "Israel Derangement Syndrome," *Commentary*, June 3, 2008, https://www.commentarymagazine.com/noah-pollak/israel-derangement-syndrome/; "Today's Examples of Israel Derangement Syndrome," *Elder of Ziyon* (blog), January 5, 2016, http://elderofziyon.blogspot.com/2016/01/todays-examples-of-israel-derangement.html; "The Boars Are Back in Town! Official PA News Agency Blames Israel for Wild Pigs," *Elder of Ziyon* (blog), January 3, 2016, http://elderofziyon.blogspot.com/2016/01/the-boars-are-back-in-town-official-pa.html.

becomes so strong that the afflicted individuals arguably lose touch with reality. Utterly fictional claims are readily entertained, endorsed, and propagated, such as blaming Gazan floods on Israelis opening non-existent dams or accusing Israel of unleashing nefarious wild animals against its enemies (e.g. wild boars, dolphins, or birds), not to mention a whole gamut of conspiracy theories that would not look out of place in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

Though it's not quite as obvious, I think something similar is occurring on campuses with respect to the standard blatantly antisemitic tropes that are again returning. We return to the Stanford student senator who, in discussing a proposed resolution against antisemitism, said,

> [The resolution] says, "Jews controlling the media, economy, government, and other societal institutions," and it cites this as a fixture of antisemitism that we theoretically shouldn't challenge. I think that that's kind of irresponsibly foraying into another politically contentious conversation. Questioning these potential power dynamics, I think, is not antisemitism. I think it's a very valid discussion.[41]

Jews constitute perhaps 2% of the US population. This ratio is about 0.7% in North, Central, and South America, 0.32% in Oceania, 0.17% in Europe, 0.14% in Asia, and 0.01% in Africa.[42] Even assuming—incorrectly—that Jews are some unified group with unified goals and a unified plan, the idea that this vanishingly small percentage of the world population could "control" almost everything within a single country, much less the world at large, defies belief. In order to even remotely establish that claim a person would need such overwhelming, unambiguous evidence that you can only suspect that anyone who even entertains it as plausible, as "valid," in the absence of such evidence must have something very dark in his heart guiding his thinking.

The fact that such a claim isn't instantly recognized as absurd indicates the corrosion in our intellectual norms.

We can now see that Israel Derangement Syndrome is also manifest in the many claims about Israel and Israeli Jews that are treated as plausible, as "valid," as worthy of exploring in the academy today, yet which in fact are equally absurd. I'll mention several examples without defending them, since my goal (again) is not to defend Israel but merely to illustrate the near-total inversion of reality maintained by some academic anti-Israel activists, an inversion sustainable only (I believe) by relinquishing the standard intellectual norms of the academy.

---

[41] Yair Rosenberg, "Stanford Student Senator: Saying 'Jews Control the Media, Economy, Government' is 'Not Anti-Semitism,'" *Tablet*, April 7, 2016, http://www.tabletmag.com/scroll/199362/stanford-student-senator-saying-jews-control-the-media-economy-government-is-not-anti-semitism.

[42] "Vital Statistics: Jewish Population of the World (1882-Present)," *Jewish Virtual Library*, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/jewpop.html.

1. "Israeli Jews are perpetrating 'genocide' against the Palestinians."

Truth: The Arab population both inside Israel and in the West Bank and Gaza has grown dramatically since Israeli independence. According to one source, the Arab population within the State of Israel has grown from 156,000 in 1948 to 1.8 million in 2016;[43] according to another source, the Arab population of the West Bank and Gaza has grown from 545,000 in 1948 to 3.7 million in 2005.[44]

2. "Israeli Jews are guilty of ethnic cleansing."

Truth: As stated above, the Palestinian Arab population both inside and outside Israel has grown dramatically while *genuine* ethnic cleansing has occurred elsewhere, as most Arab countries long ago expelled most of their Jews. Even in the West Bank, where charges of "ethnic cleansing" are regularly made against Jews, the Arab population is now in the region of 2.4 million while the Jewish population is around 400,000; and in Jerusalem, another contested spot, the Arab population is actually growing faster than the Jewish population.[45]

3. "Israel is a colonialist state that conquered the indigenous population."

Truth: Jews are indigenous to the region, with a well-documented 3,000-year-long history and continuous presence in the land, and in fact they are perhaps the only example in modern history of an indigenous people reclaiming sovereignty of its ancestral homeland from those who had colonized it. Nor did they "conquer" anyone—until they were attacked by forces seeking to annihilate them.

4. "Israel is a racist, apartheid state."

Truth: Israel is a liberal democracy that works harder to protect the equal rights of its minorities than any of its neighbors or enemies and does so under security conditions faced by perhaps no other nation on Earth. Meanwhile, its Arab citizens enjoy more rights and freedoms than the Arab citizens of any Arab

---

[43] "Jewish and Non-Jewish Population of Israel/Palestine (1517-Present)," *Jewish Virtual Library*, http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Society_&_Culture/israel_palestine_pop.html and "Vital Statistics: Latest Population Statistics for Israel," *Jewish Virtual Library*, http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Society_&_Culture/new pop.html.

[44] "Population Statistics: VI. West Bank and Gaza Strip: Arab Population (1948-2005)," *ProCon.org*, http://israelipalestinian.procon.org/view.resource.php?resourceID=000636, last updated September 17, 2010.

[45] Paul Gherkin, "Arabs in Jerusalem—The Fastest Growing Population," *Jewish Press*, March 7, 2016, http://www.jewishpress.com/indepth/columns/firstonethrough/arabs-in-jerusalem/2016/03/07/.

country and serve in the country's parliament, supreme court, institutions of higher education, and so on.[46]

None of these remarks preclude the possibility that Israel is guilty of various misdeeds, including serious ones, nor that Arabs have rights in the region that must be respected as well. The point is simply that these claims are so extreme, so far removed from the actual facts, so outlandish, that even in entertaining them something more is going on than the intellectual norms of the academy might ordinarily allow. Overall, in fact, there is little to distinguish the anti-semitism that permits blatant antisemitic beliefs from the epistemic antisemitism that permits these outlandish anti-Israel beliefs.

V. Campus BDS as a Manifestation
of Epistemic Antisemitism

If you look at the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement and the BDS resolutions being entertained (and often adopted) by academic communities around the United States, one cannot but be struck by how many of the above-mentioned cognitive biases are in play, despite efforts to disguise them.

The resolutions present a wealth of "information," with lots of footnotes, apparently heavily researched.[47] They have all the trappings of an academically acceptable document. As a result, the propositions they assert all appear as reasonable, well-founded beliefs that are soundly based on empirical evidence, in the same way that an epistemic antisemite's beliefs might appear to the person who holds them.

It's only when you step back a little that you realize how clearly both the production of these documents and the activities of their advocates involve all the aforementioned biases. They provide one-sided and oversimplified accounts

---

[46] The situation is more complicated in the West Bank, where there are indeed competing legal systems in force. These, however, are not divided "racially" (as under South African apartheid) along Jewish and Arab lines but rather in the way that *all* nations divide people: by "citizen" vs. "non-citizen." Moreover, even if you believe that the West Bank is "occupied" (rather than "disputed"), international law requires that the occupier respect the laws in force in the country rather than apply its own laws. See Convention (IV) respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land, The Hague, October 18, 1907, Article 43: "The authority of the legitimate power having in fact passed into the hands of the occupant, the latter shall take all the measures in his power to restore, and ensure, as far as possible, public order and safety, while respecting, unless absolutely prevented, the laws in force in the country." Available at https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl. Finally, the vast majority of Palestinian Arabs live under the legal sovereignty of the Palestinian Authority, not Israel.

[47] For just one example, see the divestment resolution that the student government of the University of Chicago passed in April 2016 at https://uofcdivest.com/resolution/.

of the conflict, offering Palestinian testimony and evidence without qualification while ignoring Israeli testimony and evidence. In addition, they do not merely ask people to make a quick judgment in their favor but often exert tremendous social pressure on them to do so, all while manifesting a stunningly disproportionate focus on this one conflict out of all the other conflicts currently taking place around the world.

They could not violate more intellectual norms if they tried.

Nor are the broader activities of these advocates any less problematic.

In addition to promoting economic, academic, and cultural boycotts, they are also running a coordinated movement against "normalization" on campuses, against any participation in events or dialogue with Israeli Jews or with any groups or institutions that might be connected to Israeli Jews or even shed any kind of positive light on Israel.[48] There is a widespread movement to disrupt Israeli or pro-Israel speakers.[49] There is a growing movement to attack the "Birthright" trips that bring young Jews on a free visit to Israel.[50] And there is an ongoing movement to condemn Israel's "pinkwashing," that is to say, the country's supposed practice of promoting its progressive LGBTQ norms in order to distract attention from its alleged human rights abuses.[51]

Think about what all these BDS advocates are doing. They aim to isolate Israeli Jews and prevent people from speaking to Israeli Jews, from going to Israel, and from treating anything positive that Israeli Jews might do as part of a more complex picture of who or what Israeli Jews and Israeli society represent. They aim not merely to communicate the simplistic idea that all Israeli Jews are evil but to discourage anyone from undertaking any effort to investigate, evaluate, or challenge their claims.

In short, what the anti-Israel advocates are trying to get across is (a) that with respect to the IPJAMC there is no other side to the story and (b) that you should not undertake any of the normal epistemic activities that you ordinarily would to "see for yourself" how true their anti-Israeli-Jew claims are.

---

[48] For example, here is one anti-normalization essay recently published by a student: Kerry Dugandzic, "What Is Normalization, and Why Do We Need to Talk About It?," *College Voice*, May 3, 2016, http://thecollegevoice.org/2016/05/03/what-is-normalization-and-why-do-we-need-to-talk-about-it/.

[49] The many Israeli speakers disrupted or shouted down in the past few years include Michael Oren, Moshe Halbertal, George Deek, Ami Pedazhur, and Nir Barkat.

[50] Phyllis Chesler, "Welcome to Hamas West, aka Connecticut College," *Frontpage Mag*, December 16, 2015, http://www.frontpagemag.com/fpm/261143/welcome-hamas-west-aka-connecticut-college-phyllis-chesler. In 2018, anti-Israel groups also began a systematic "Return the Birthright" campaign.

[51] One particularly troubling incident involving the charge of "pinkwashing" occurred at Brown University in March 2016. See Scott Jaschik, "2 Events Unsettle Jewish Students at Brown," *Inside Higher Ed*, March 21, 2016, https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/03/21/two-events-unsettle-jewish-students-brown-university.

This isn't in the least about the free exchange of ideas or attempts to debate and persuade by rational means, which are the hallmarks of the liberal university.

But what's astonishing isn't that the people promoting these campaigns act in this way. They are activists, and as such they are perhaps justified in promoting one side and suppressing the other. What's astonishing is that *academic environments*—which presumably care about intellectual norms and getting things right and also have the time, leisure, and talent to study complicated matters and master the nuance—have become susceptible to them. What's astonishing is that communities of scholars, who qua scholars ought to recognize that there are at least two sides to any conflict, have become susceptible to them. These campaigns are a direct assault on the basic intellectual norms that are meant to govern liberal arts institutions—yet the members of these institutions are the very ones increasingly embracing them.[52]

My own institution, for example, has a much-vaunted honor code that dictates that community members behave with "integrity, civility, and respect for the dignity of all human beings," and, further, that we exemplify "honesty, honor, and respect for the truth" in all our conduct. Our Dean of Faculty wrote to the entire faculty several years back affirming our "shared commitment to the principles of a liberal arts education: inquiry, analysis, and respectful discourse." Many other liberal arts institutions have similar codes of conduct and similar intellectual and moral norms.

When campus calls are made to isolate and boycott Israeli Jews, when calls are made against "normalization" with Israeli Jews (or anyone who advocates for Israeli Jews), when calls are made against inviting Israeli Jewish speakers and against American Jews traveling to Israel, when outrage is expressed whenever Israeli Jews proclaim the very same progressive values that the liberal arts community itself holds—the response from any community of scholars actually governed by the norms just described should be something like this:

How dare you assault the very intellectual values that define this liberal arts community. Your attack on these values is an attack on all of us.

That this is not the response on most campuses is profoundly disturbing. For when we are confronted with any sort of bias—not merely ethnic bias in general

---

[52] Students at McGill University recently acknowledged this point, as the Judicial Board of its student government determined that BDS resolutions violated the student government constitution, as reported here: Ruthie Blum, "McGill U Professor Calls Student Judicial Ban on BDS 'Huge;' Says It Recognizes 'Jewish Concerns Deserve Respect Like All Others,'" *The Algemeiner*, June 2, 2016, http://www.algemeiner.com/2016/06/02/mcgill-u-professor-calls-student-judicial-ban-on-bds-huge-says-it-recognizes-jewish-concerns-deserve-respect-like-all-others/. I offer my own take on that decision in my essay, "Inconclusive, Unscientific Postscript: On the Purpose of a University, and a Ray of Hope," in *Anti-Zionism on Campus: The University, Free Speech, and BDS*, ed. Andrew Pessin and Doron Ben-Atar (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018).

but here, now, the cognitive biases constituting epistemic antisemitism—the appropriate response is not to say "amen," but to work all the harder to correct for the bias.

VI. Pushing Back Against Epistemic Antisemitism

Cognitive biases may be recalcitrant, but once you are aware of them you can take steps to correct for them. With regard to minimizing most of the biases of epistemic antisemitism, it's clear what you should do: slow down, take information with a grain of salt, always ask after context, do more research, get the other side of the story, avoid simplistic conclusions, and ignore social pressure.

All of these actions should be obvious. Without claiming that there is any purely objective or neutral perspective, these are bare minima for moving yourself toward a more neutral or objective perspective. Nor does this mean you can't "take sides" in your considered opinions about the IPJAMC. It just means you have to reach your opinions about what side to take by obeying the same intellectual norms you obey in all other situations.

To illustrate this, let's examine in a bit more detail how you might aim toward making your "credibility assumptions" appropriately neutral or objective.

Perhaps start by treating both sides exactly equally. Claims and assertions by either side's media, government, civic or religious leaders, or average members should initially have exactly the same degree of credibility.

But then you might start to ask the following sorts of questions. Which is likely to be a more credible source of information, the government in a relatively free society where there is an independent media, an independent judicial system, and an open culture of political dissent, or an autocratic government in a society where there are none of these? Which is likely to be more credible in general, the independent media in a relatively free society or the government-controlled media in an autocratic society? Which eyewitness testimony is likely to be more credible, that in a relatively free society or that in an autocracy? If one side has sometimes (or often) been caught manufacturing news, including staging photographs and videos, does that affect its overall credibility? Here, too, is one domain where going to "see for yourself," by visiting both Israel and Gaza and the West Bank, including the Jewish communities in the West Bank, might be imperative—although even then you must recognize that any limited visit offers only a limited perspective. Nevertheless, it seems neither morally nor epistemically unreasonable to hold that anyone inclined to offer continuous and severe criticism of Israeli society should have at least visited the place.

You may well end up reasonably believing one side's sources more often or readily than the other's, and ultimately adopting that side's "narrative"—as long as you reach that place by asking the appropriate reasonably objective questions.

In a similar vein, let's consider in a bit more detail, too, how you might correct for a "disproportionate focus" bias. If you find your microscope relentlessly focused on Israel, then—obviously—try focusing it elsewhere. If your alleged motivation is human rights, then spend some time learning what's going on with respect to human rights elsewhere: Russia, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey (with regard to the Kurds), China (with regard to Tibet and its own Muslim minority), and of course Syria. And then last, but certainly not least, examine the human rights records of the governing Palestinian organizations.[53] If you care about progressive values, then investigate the records of Hamas and the Palestinian Authority on these values. How are things for women, gays, and minorities under their authority? How do they do with respect to freedom of speech, assembly, and religion? How do they cope with political dissent? How do you feel about Hamas's Charter,[54] which endorses antisemitic conspiracies and calls for the murder of all Jews, from a human rights perspective? How do you feel about official Palestinian Authority documents replacing Israel with the State of Palestine? In general, what is the evidence that the Palestinian Authority is genuinely in favor of peace with the Jewish state as opposed to its destruction?

If your alleged motivation is human rights, in a word, then what about the human rights of the Jews, too?

Again, there's nothing fancy here. These are just the obvious questions to ask for anyone aiming for objectivity with respect to the IPJAMC, as well as for the correct sense of scale. It's wonderful to be concerned about global human rights. But it's much less wonderful to be concerned only with alleged violations of human rights by Israeli Jews, particularly while ignoring both the context of those alleged violations and much worse violations elsewhere, including by the enemies of those same Israeli Jews.

The questions I've sketched are the obvious questions to ask in order to be sure that what is really a biased desire to expose only Israeli Jewish misdeeds is not masquerading as a laudable quest for universal human rights—which makes it all the more troubling (again) that these questions are not being asked on so many campuses.

And finally, let me reiterate that cognitive biases occur on both sides of this issue. But what we often see on campuses is that the oversimplified perspective

---

[53] See Bassem Eid, *Confronting Human Rights Abuses in the Palestinian Authority: An Essential Step for Progress in the Region* (London: Henry Jackson Society, 2016), http://henryjacksonsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Palestinian-Human-Rights _online.pdf. See also *Two Authorities, One Way, Zero Dissent: Arbitrary Arrest and Torture under the Palestinian Authority and Hamas* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2018), https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/10/23/two-authorities-one-way-zero-dissent/ arbitrary-arrest-and-torture-under.

[54] Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), August 18, 1988, available at http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp.

tends to favor the Palestinian narrative, or, more accurately, the anti-Israel narrative. By and large, it is when we insist on our normal intellectual standards, the ones that we apply to every situation other than the IPJAMC—when we insist on open and free inquiry, on inquiry and analysis, on respect for the dignity of all parties, on respect for the interests and perspectives of both sides and for both sides of the story, on respect for the truth—it is when we seek not the simple picture but the more complex picture, the nuanced picture, that a very different picture starts to emerge.

It is when we aim to be more objective that we generally end up, I believe, being less anti-Israel. In that light, it is no surprise that the dominant methods of anti-Israel critics on campuses include the suppression of our intellectual norms rather than their application.

As such, these methods should have no place on our campuses.

"Happy Dhimmis, Happy Darkeys":
Myths Past and Present

Eunice G. Pollack and Stephen H. Norwood

This chapter elaborates on and challenges the contemporary myths about the status of Jews in Arab/Muslim lands. It traces the origins and development of these myths, which Arabs and Muslims, as well as Western academics and commentators, have propagated. We expose the gulf between their claims and the actual views and treatment of Jews. A major focus is on the widespread depiction of Muslim lands as centers of religious, ethnic, and racial tolerance. We explore the many parallels between the romanticized image of white-black relations in the antebellum and postbellum American South and the myths and realities of Muslim-Jewish relations in Arab lands. Like blacks in the South, Jews were central objects of humiliation, degradation, and discrimination.

When we were asked to write about Islamic antisemitism in contemporary America, as historians we knew that we had to address the well-entrenched myths that shape the charges that Muslims and their allies on American campuses and in political venues are currently leveling at Jews, Zionists, and the Jewish state. Whether they were born in or emigrated to the United States, Muslims have absorbed these pernicious myths about Jews and Judaism at mosques, at home, and in Arab and Islamic organizations, as well as from numerous Islamic texts, websites, and print and broadcast media. Although these hoary myths have their origins in Muhammad's initial encounters with Jews, they were elaborated over the centuries in which Jews lived in Muslim lands and have now come to saturate the campus, where they underlie the enmity expressed toward Jews and the movements that relentlessly demonize and delegitimize the Jewish state. In addition, we recognized that we could more fully illuminate the nature and dangers of the form of antisemitism promoted by Muslims in America by examining the numerous parallels we perceived with the myths about African Americans long embraced by white Southerners and their apologists.

Indeed, from the time of the Balfour Declaration (1917), gaining momentum with the passage of the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine (1947) and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948—and becoming more shrill with the victories of the Jewish state in the Six Day War (1967) and the Yom Kippur War (1973)—Arab political and religious leaders and commentators wove a web of myths about the conditions of Jews in the Muslim lands of North Africa and the Middle East over the last fourteen centuries. All were insistent that over the "countless generations, the Arabs … lived in perfect harmony with those born in the Jewish faith." As one "leaps through the pages of Middle East history and

surveys many eras of civilizations," they maintained, one finds only "the same story of mutual respect between Arabs and Jews." It was there—only there—that the Jews "could pursue their daily lives in perfect freedom and equality." And virtually all attributed the "peaceful coexistence" to "Islam … a most tolerant faith." As the Mufti of Lebanon elaborated, it is "a religion tolerant, but stern and noble, [which] includes all principles of perfection." As a result, followers of Islam had "no quarrel with persons of the Jewish faith as such."[1]

This paradise was lost, many Arab/Muslim leaders proclaimed, only upon the invasion of the foreign ideology of "political Zionism," with its "wrongheaded notions" about Judaism. The concept of Jewish nationhood, they claimed, was only fashioned at the end of the nineteenth century in response to the travails of European Jews, and had no relevance—and was allegedly of no interest—to Jewish people who dwelled in Muslim lands. Having always "lived in amity and side-by-side" with Muslims, who "treated [them] kindly and graciously … and kept their covenants," they saw no need for a Jewish state. They contended that "the fact that a Jew is a Jew has never prejudiced the Arab against him" and mocked that "the people of the Jewish religion … are now called the Jews." As early as 1921, some insisted that it was only "England who created" the idea of a "National Home" for them, England "who … put life into it, and carried it into execution," and they found it absurd that "England [could] conclude a treaty with a religion and register it in the League of Nations." Others denounced the "Zionist chauvinists," "who conceive themselves as a nationality" and "use their well-placed influence" to promote their ideas "throughout the world," and warned that they were "spreading the Jewish problem to … Muslim countries, where it had never existed before." They called for all Jewish people who had left—or, more accurately, had fled from—Arab lands to return, where "the Muslims will then treat them generously and tolerantly—as it [sic] has always done."[2]

---

[1] Institute of Arab American Affairs, "Advertisement: Arabs Want Peace in Palestine! So Do the Jews, But the Political Zionists are Bent on Violence," *New York Times*, February 19, 1946; Sami Hadawi, *Bitter Harvest: A Modern History of Palestine*, 4th ed. (New York: Olive Branch Press, 1991), 8-9; Eunice G. Pollack, "Foundation Myths of Anti-Zionism," in *From Antisemitism to Anti-Zionism: The Past & Present of a Lethal Ideology*, ed. Eunice G. Pollack (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2017), 243; Shaikh Hassan Khalid, Mufti of the Lebanon, "Speech on behalf of the Delegations to the Conference," *Arab Theologians on Jews and Israel: The Fourth Conference of the Academy of Islamic Research*, 4th ed. (Rajab, Egypt: Al Azhar Academy of Islamic Research, 1968), 18.

[2] Charles Bridgeman, "When Solomon Nodded: Reflections on the Partition of Palestine," *The Living Church*, January 4, 1948, 15; Charles R. Watson, "The Partition of Palestine," American Jewish Committee Archives, New York, January 10, 1948; Muhammad Azzah Darwaza, "The Attitude of the Jews towards Islam, Muslims and the Prophet of Islam—P.B.U.H. at the Time of His Honourable Prophethood," in *Arab*

Many Arabs stressed that even before "Zionist pretensions" threatened the "happy relationship" between Muslims and Jews, it had been disrupted by the imposition of European colonial rule. They informed their Western audiences that Arabs had always ensured "justice and equality for all citizens regardless of their … creed," that Jews had "enjoyed all the privileges and rights of citizenship" before colonialism introduced distrust and an "artificial divide" between Muslim and Jew. In 1959, Morocco's premier assured American journalists that discrimination against Jews "would be a denial of its historic tradition." Another Moroccan political leader agreed, insisting that for this reason the Jews had "welcomed" the overthrow of colonial rule and the return of "Arabization" and the establishment of the independent Muslim nation. Contrary to the Arabs' contentions, however, it was the colonial powers that had extended citizenship (e.g. Algeria in 1870), equality or near-equality (e.g. the French Protectorate in Morocco, 1912-1956) to the Jews, liberating them at last from their status as subjugated, humiliated dhimmis, and ending the oppressive *jizya*, the tribute always exacted by the Muslims. Thus Jews had strongly endorsed the colonial presence, generally embracing modern European education and culture. It was under British occupation (1882-1922) that Jews in Egypt felt safest. Notably, under Islamic rule, it was only the Ottoman Empire that, in an effort to secure European support—and modern weapons—issued an Imperial Edict (1856) that, in theory, extended equal rights to all its subjects. In practice, however, Ottoman governors (*pashas*) confined themselves to collecting taxes, while local rulers and the populace—for example, the Mamluks in Egypt—continued to persecute, pillage, and impose additional "heavy levies" on the Jews. In short, as the historian James Parkes put it in 1949, the Ottomans "exhibited the toleration of indifference when suitably paid to do so." Thus most Jews not only supported European colonial rule but feared the independence movements, with the threat of return to their earlier subordinate "social, political and economic" positions.[3]

Theologians on Jews and Israel, 46; Arab Executive Committee of the Haifa Congress, "Statement," *Jewish Chronicle* (London), May 27, 1921; Talrseen [Taseen] Basheer, "The Dilemmas of Arab/Jewish Understanding: A Guide for the Perplexed," in *Proceedings: Palestine Day Conference* (London: General Union of Arab Students in UK and Ireland, 1966), 27; Institute of Arab American Affairs, "Arabs Want Peace in Palestine!"; Kamal Ahmed Own, "The Jews Are the Enemies of Human Life As Evidenced by Their Holy Book," in *Arab Theologians on Jews and Israel*, 38.

   [3] Institute of Arab American Affairs, "Arabs Want Peace in Palestine!"; Michael M. Laskier, "Zionism and the Jewish Communities of Morocco," *Studies in Zionism* 6, no. 1 (1985): 119-20, 128-30; Pollack, "Foundation Myths of Anti-Zionism," 243; Jacob M. Landau, "Cairo," in *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, ed. Norman A. Stillman, consulted online at: http://referenceworks.brillonline.com; James Parkes, *A History of Palestine from 135AD to Modern Times* (London: Gollancz, 1949), 253, quoted in Maurice M. Roumani, *The Case of the Jews from Arab Countries: A Neglected Issue* (Tel-Aviv: World Organization of Jews from Arab Countries, 1978), 23.

Arab commentators readily dismissed over two centuries of travelers' accounts and investigative reports that belied their claims about the conditions and contentment of Jews under Islamic rule. They simply turned to another hoary myth in order to protect their current fable. The Arabs discarded all the testimony that contradicted their narrative, explaining that it had been derived largely from Jews, whom the Qur'an characterized as congenitally "deceitful, never to be trusted." It taught that the wily Jews even "falsified Allah's message," converting the Hebrew Bible into a "counterfeited work." A leading theologian added that even "though the Jews wrote the Book with their own hand, they say 'This is from God.'" The Palestinian-Arab leader Yasser Arafat drew on the Qur'anic allegations about Jews' inherent traits in 2000, when he informed President Clinton that he was certain the Jews dissembled, and there had never been a First or Second Temple in Jerusalem at which they had worshipped. So deeply entrenched were the beliefs about insidiously clever Jews that the Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak secured a degree of acceptance of the 1978 treaty with Israel by boasting that Egypt had "outwitted" the Jews: "We received all our land back … and what have we given them in return? A piece of paper! … We were shrewder than the shrewdest people on earth!" Apparently, the (innocent) Arabs were not always able to recognize—much less counter—the Jews' treachery. Still, Allah's depiction of the Jews' traits proved highly useful, providing, for example, an honorable explanation for Arab men's flight from Palestine during the 1948 war. They were allegedly terrorized not only by threats of "massacre" if they did not abandon their lands, but by vans blaring fabricated "horror sounds" of the "screaming of Arab women, the wailing of their children, the clanging of fire-engines"—an insidious form of "Zionist … warfare." In short, no one should ever believe the testimony of the devious Jews.[4]

At times, political and religious leaders conceded that the Jews in Muslim lands had been relentlessly subjugated, relying on another large cache of myths, drawn or extrapolated from the Qur'an, to sanctify their abasement of those they now identified as "the dogs of humanity," "the disease that plagued our lands." Indeed, from the earliest years of Islam, Muslims had understood that "their deadliest enemies were the Jews." They were the only people cursed in the Qur'an, whom Allah had promised "degradation in this world and a mighty

---

[4] Pollack, "Foundation Myths of Anti-Zionism," 240, 247; Robert S. Wistrich, *A Lethal Obsession* (New York: Random House, 2010), 788-89; David G. Littman, "Introduction," *Arab Theologians on Jews and Israel*, 8; Darwaza, "The Attitude of the Jews towards Islam," 32-33; Robert S. Wistrich, *Parallel Lines: Anti-Zionism and Anti-semitism in the 21st Century* (Jerusalem: Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, 2013), 12, 16; Ephraim Karsh, *Islamic Imperialism: A History*, updated ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 188; Erskine Childers, untitled speech, *Proceedings: Palestine Day Conference*, 50.

chastisement in the next world." They were "laden with Allah's anger" because they had "disbelieved the signs of Allah." Muslim theologians recognized that the Jews were "like germs of a malignant disease where one germ is sufficient to eliminate an entire nation." They had accepted that Jews were "a pest which humanity had to tolerate and live with like other calamities of life and other diseases." But, they taught, "We are fortunate enough to have an available document that ... reveals ... the inherent poison they carry as well as the remedy for such poison. This document is ... the Holy Qur'an, which ... constitutes the microscope through which we can see the pests and poison that reside in their minds and hearts." "In a bid to extinguish the light of Allah," the Jews had been determined to infest and infect "the Arab nation," because it was "the only area ... that remained steadfast before atheism and heathenism." Thanks to Qur'anic lessons on how to subdue the Jews, however, the Muslims were "the only people on earth to tolerate them" in their midst.[5]

Citing the Qur'an, prominent Muslim educators portrayed the Jews as driven throughout their history to bring "blind sedition ... and intrigue in any land or community where they happened to live." They "sow the seeds of enmity ... breaking the bonds of brotherhood between peoples." It was, they taught, because the Jews were "the carriers and instigators of sedition at any time and everywhere" that the caliph Omar "purified Arabia from them." Some suggested that this was likely "why the Israelites ... were so detested by all surrounding tribes." Others explained that "the Jews themselves have not changed" because, "according to those heavenly commands" "of their false Torah," they "are required to stir war with their neighbors once they have the opportunity to do so." Some added that the Jews often preferred to deploy "conspiracies, plots, intrigues [and] sedition" because they were inherently "cowards and could not openly face their enemy, especially when he was strong."[6]

Not acknowledging a contradiction, many spokesmen insisted that "the Jews have always been criminal aggressors." Jews claim that they are victims, subjected "throughout their history" to "oppression and persecution" and "mass massacres ... for no other reason than their being followers of Moses." In truth, "the hatred felt by various peoples ... for Jews was not due to their belief, but

---

5 Littman, "Introduction," 8; Sheikh Abdul-Hamid 'Attiyah al-Dibani, "The Jewish Attitude towards Islam and Muslims in Early Islam," in *Arab Theologians on Jews and Israel*, 40; Pollack, "Foundation Myths of Anti-Zionism," 247; Abdul Sattar El Sayed, Mufti of Tursos, Syria, "The Jews in the Qur'an," in *Arab Theologians on Jews and Israel*, 42-45; Shaikh Hassan Khalid, Mufti of the Lebanon, "The Jews' Holy Book and Morality," in *Arab Theologians on Jews and Israel*, 24.

6 Abdul Sattar El Sayed, "The Jews in the Qur'an," 41, 43; Sheikh Abd Allah Al Meshad, "Jews' Attitude towards Islam and Muslims in the First Islamic Era," in *Arab Theologians on Jews and Israel*, 28; Arab Executive Committee of the Haifa Congress, "Statement."

their … unchangeable behavior, always based on exploitation, ingratitude and evil-doing in return for kindness." That is, the "criminal aggressors" only deceptively identify as innocent victims. Educators taught that the Jews are "avaricious, ruthless, cruel, hypocritical and revengeful. These traits govern their lives. They never change nor are they inclined to change. They [will] seize any opportunity to take revenge on Islam and Muslims." They point out that the Qur'an warned that, if permitted, the Jews would "become great tyrants." They conclude that the Jews' "wickedness is incurable unless they are subdued by force. No good is expected of them unless they live under the aegis of Islam as loyal and obedient subjects." Then the Muslims "will treat them … tolerantly." "Islamic tolerance is," after all, in complete contrast to "Jewish intolerance and cruelty."[7]

Western Supporters of the Muslim Myths

The Arabs' narrative that held that Jews fleeing from barbaric treatment in Europe had always found refuge and a warm welcome in Muslim lands found considerable support in the works of nineteenth-century Jewish intellectuals, who had grown profoundly disillusioned by the results of and reactions to Jewish Emancipation in Christian countries. Heinrich Graetz contrasted "Jewish life under Christianity," which he characterized as "an unremitting … tale of tribulation," with that under Islamic rule, where, he presumed, "the sons of Judah did not need to look out with fear and humiliation." There, "unhindered, they were allowed to develop their powers in the midst of a free, simple, and talented people." Unlike Islam, which allowed Jews, who shared "Semitic descent" with the Arabs, to flourish, Christianity, from its inception "betrayed its hostile attitude toward the Jews, and gave rise to those malignant decrees of Constantine and his successors, which laid the foundations of the bloody persecutions of subsequent centuries." Similarly, it was Ignaz Goldziher's blinding rage at Christianity, "the most abominable of all religions," that can explain his idealized view of Islam, which "had not discriminated against the Jews living in its orbit as Christianity had done." After all, he confided to his diary, "The forehead of a whore—that is the forehead of Christianity."[8]

---

[7] Dr. Said Abdel Fattah Ashour, "Jews in the Middle Ages: Comparative Study of East and West," in *Arab Theologians on Jews and Israel*, 46; Moh. Taha Yahia, "The Attitude of the Jews towards Islam and Muslims in the Early Days of Islam," in *Arab Theologians on Jews and Israel*, 25; Qur'an 17:417; Own, "The Jews are the Enemies of Human Life," 19.

[8] John M. Efron, "Orientalism and the Jewish Historical Gaze," in *Orientalism and the Jews*, ed. Ivan Davidson Kalman and Derek Penslar (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2005), 85-86, 91-92; Marc Cohen, "Islam and the Jews: Myth, Countermyth, History," in *Jews among Muslims: Communities in the Precolonial Middle East*, ed.

Arabs could also draw on the romanticized image fashioned by writers in the nineteenth century of the lives of Sephardim in the so-called "golden age of Muslim Spain," circa 800-1250. To a young Benjamin Disraeli, who had been born a Jew (and who would twice become prime minister of England), these were "halcyon centuries" in which the "children of Ishmael rewarded the children of Israel with equal rights and privileges with themselves." In the vision of his cousin, Elias Haim Lindo, dramatized in his *History of Jews in Spain and Portugal* (1846), "Jews had flourished under Muslim Spain, had been driven from Christian Spain, and had found refuge in Muslim Turkey." But as the historian Bernard Lewis flatly observed, "The golden age of equal rights was a myth." Moreover, there had been "times of persecution under the Muslims and times of prosperity under Christian rule in Spain"—and both Christian and Muslim lands had provided refuge of sorts to the Inquisition's Jewish refugees. More important, these were the years of a flourishing mercantile economy, in which pre-Islamic traditions still remained strong, and Hellenistic humanism and "remnants of the ancient heritage of the Near East" persisted, and it was this, not the supposed munificence of Islam, which accounted for the relative tolerance toward Jews.[9]

The myth of Arab-Jewish comity and parity in Islamic lands found more advocates beginning in the mid-1950s, as scholars and activists in the West embraced what Bernard Lewis dubbed the "mystique of Third Worldism … a new variant of the old golden-age myth," now relocated to formerly colonized lands. In the current paradigm, the cultures and belief systems of the colonized were celebrated, with the now discredited Western powers held responsible for the societies' conflicts and travails. It was with the Suez War that this intellectual model came increasingly to be applied to the Middle East and North Africa, as England and France were widely seen as attempting to reassert their control in the region. Although Israel joined the affray in large part to quell the persistent attacks on its population by *fedayeen* in the Sinai—indeed, Israel referred to its engagement as the Sinai campaign—it was now cast as the junior partner in the imperialist drive. The discourse became even more politicized, more strident, in the 1960s, with Zionism now starring as the last imperialist villain of the drama, when over the course of the Six Day War against the fourteen nations of the

Shlomo Deshen and Walter P. Zenner (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 50; Littman, "Introduction," 9; Norman A. Stillman, "The Moroccan Jewish Experience: A Revisionist View," in *The Legacy of Islamic Anti-Semitism: From Sacred Texts to Solemn History*, ed. Andrew G. Bostom (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2008), 549.

9 Bernard Lewis, "The Pro-Islamic Jews," *Judaism* 17, no. 4 (1968): 401-2; "Exploding a Myth: Arabs Had Never Discriminated against Jews in the Past, President Sadat Said Last Week," *Jewish Chronicle* (London), November 7, 1975; Norman A. Stillman, "Myth, Countermyth, and Distortion," *Tikkun* (May/June 1991): 61; Stillman, "Moroccan Jewish Experience," 550; Pollack, "Foundation Myths of Anti-Zionism," 251.

Arab League Israel captured East Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Golan Heights, the Gaza strip, and the Sinai. Now scholars and commentators, especially those on the left, who contended the conflict was not intractable, redoubled their efforts to portray the "interfaith—and interracial—utopia" that had allegedly prevailed in Arab lands before the imperialist invasions, when a tolerant Islam ensured civil rights, security, equality, and religious freedom to Jewish minorities. Ignoring centuries of travelers' accounts and investigative reports by Jewish organizations, they turned reality on its head.

When the Jewish essayist Albert Memmi, who was born in Tunisia in 1920 and educated in Algeria, moved to France, he was startled to come "face-to-face with a fable that was very popular among the left-wingers in Paris … that the Jews had always lived in perfect harmony with the Arabs." He was "almost congratulated on having been born in one of those countries where race discrimination and xenophobia were unknown." Memmi understood this was "nonsense"—"countertruth"—and after Israel's "1967 victory," he recognized that "it is time to denounce this fraud." Memmi was also distressed that Jules Isaac, the French Jewish intellectual whom he generally admired, had identified "true antisemitism" only as "the result of Christianity." Memmi explained, "I am sorry to say that by making antisemitism a Christian creation, Isaac minimized the tragedy of the Jews in the Arab countries and helped to create a false understanding of the question."[10]

Anti-dhimmitism: Islam and the Degradation of the Jews in Arab Lands

Jules Isaac and others prefer to attach the label of antisemitism only to malignant forms of Jew-hatred derived from Christian teachings. In deference to them, one can call the Islamic version anti-dhimmitism. Drawn from Qur'anic mandates, and first codified in the eighth-century Pact of 'Umar, Jews (and Christians)—"People of the Book"—would be allowed to "remain alive" only as subjugated dhimmis, debased, persecuted—their existence "based on sufferance, not rights"—all acknowledging "the privileged superiority of the true believer" and "the true faith." The conclusions of Arminius Vámbéry, a Hungarian Jewish scholar writing in 1904, were unequivocal: "I do not know any more miserable, helpless, and pitiful individual on God's earth than the *Jahudi* in those [i.e. Islamic] countries…. Despised, belabored and tortured … he is the poorest of the poor…." Although the stipulations of "the Pact" varied over time and place,

---

10 Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage," *Atlantic Monthly* (September 1990): 52; Cohen, "Islam and the Jews," 50; Pollack, "Foundation Myths of Anti-Zionism," 246; "Exploding a Myth"; Albert Memmi, "What Is an Arab Jew?," *Jews and Arabs*, trans. Eleanor Levieux (Chicago: J.P. O'Hara, 1975).

they originated in Muhammad's violent conflict with the Jewish tribes of the Medina oasis, which was the first time he commanded his followers to initiate *jihad*. It was only after the Jews had rejected his identification as the last prophet, the successor to Moses, that his followers would pray facing Mecca instead of Jerusalem; that they would learn that it was Ishmael whom Abraham had brought to be sacrificed—in Mecca. Henceforth, Muslims would express and experience their superiority and the supremacy of their religion through the abasement, above all, of the Jews, who had been too "puffed up with pride" to recognize the "final revelation" granted to Muhammad. It was the Jews whom the Qur'an animalized as the "descendants of apes and pigs." From the middle of the twelfth century, Jews were the only dhimmis left in the Maghreb, and in the Middle East—where dhimmis included both Christians and Jews—the Jews remained vulnerable while Christians could secure the protection of European ecclesiastical and political authorities or flee to Christian states. Thus an observer in Morocco at the beginning of the nineteenth century found that "[d]espite all the services the Jews render the Moors, they are treated by them with more disdain than they treat their animals." An Englishman who lived in Cairo at the same time commented that the Jews of Egypt were "held in the utmost contempt and abhorrence by Muslims in general." A hundred years later, at the beginning of the twentieth century, a British official in Iraq concluded flatly that Muslims treated Jews "as a master might treat a slave."[11]

In some Islamic lands, most pervasively in those under Shi'a rule, the abasement reflected the perception of the Jew as "both ritually polluted and polluting." A Jew who entered a Muslim's house had to "sit on a separate rug," and he would not be offered the water pipe, tea, or food. Any object the Jew touched had been contaminated, and could no longer be used by a Muslim. If, while shopping, a Jew happened to touch an item, he or she had to buy "the entire lot"—at a price determined by the Muslim merchant. And Jews were prohibited from using the public baths or even walking in the rain, lest the water "splash off a Jew onto a Muslim." Expressing their dominance and contempt, Muslims would enter a Jew's house at will, "seize any household object to their liking"— and the Jewish owner dared not protest. Nor would he complain to a court, where "a Jew could never win a case … against a Muslim." Indeed, even the

---

[11] Roumani, *Case of the Jews from Arab Countries*, 23-24; Bernard Lewis, *Islam in History: Ideas, People, and Events in the Middle East*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 2001), 148; Lewis, "Pro-Islamic Jews," 402; Jane S. Gerber, "The Pact of 'Umar in Morocco: A Reappraisal of Muslim-Jewish Relations," in Bostom, *Legacy of Islamic Anti-Semitism*, 520-21, 523 n. 3; Jane S. Gerber, "Discussion," in *Proceedings of the Seminar on Muslim-Jewish Relations in North Africa* (New York: World Jewish Congress, 1975), 69; Pollack, "Foundation Myths of Anti-Zionism," 243-49; Norman A. Stillman, "Muslims and Jews in Morocco: Perceptions, Images, Stereotypes," in *Proceedings of the Seminar on Muslim-Jewish Relations*, 15; "Exploding a Myth."

murder of a Jew—if "witnesses could be found"—was generally punished by a fine, or "at worst, a beating."[12]

Determined to sustain the myth of Islamic tolerance, some commentators alleged that the Muslims only attacked the Jews when they perceived they had "overstepped their bounds." This, in effect, blames the Jews for any ensuant massacres. For the most part, however, Jews "trod a very cautious path" and cleaved to the stipulations that defined the dhimmi role. An Englishman visiting Marrakesh in 1795 observed, "If a Moor enters a Jew's house, disturbs his family and insults his wife, the Jew dares not murmur. A Moor may beat a Jew as long as he pleases," with the Jew simply forced to absorb the blows. As required, Jews took care that the heights of their houses were lower than those of Muslims, that they stepped off a path or yielded the center of the road when a Muslim passed by, that they never mounted a horse, prohibited because it was seen to have "martial qualities," and never bore arms. In order to convey their inferiority to Muslims, Jews in Yemen "dressed like beggars" and made sure their houses appeared "not just modest … but decrepit." In many towns Jews were forced to walk barefoot outside the Jewish quarter, although in some places they were allowed to wear sandals made of straw, though never leather shoes. As compelled, they wore the yellow Jew badge of shame or a red cloth on their chest, telegraphing their identity. In the twelfth century, instead of a turban, Jews were required to wear a "skullcap of the ugliest possible form, which could have been mistaken for a packsaddle and which came down below the ears." They avoided the cities and vast regions that were off-limits to them and were sure to leave other cities by nightfall, as required. In the early twentieth century, Jews had to agree to their humiliation, when they were "made to jump and dance, thus provoking the mirth of the Muslims and satisfying their scorn for the Jews." Elsewhere in the same years, Muslims animalized the Jews, "making us eat the dirt."[13]

Yet no matter how closely Jews adhered to the exigencies of the dhimmi contract, they could not always avoid the Muslims' wrath, as they perceived nonexistent affronts. Having been taught by Allah, as recorded in the Qur'an, that "Thou wilt find the most vehement of mankind in hostility to those who believe to be the Jews and the idolaters," with clergy pointing out that the Jews

---

[12] Laurence Loeb, "'Outcaste': Shi'a Intolerance," in Bostom, *Legacy of Islamic Anti-Semitism*, 564-66.

[13] Bernard Lewis, *Semites and Anti-Semites: An Inquiry into Conflict and Prejudice* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 124; Gerber, "Pact of 'Umar in Morocco," 520, 522; "Exploding a Myth"; Stillman, "Moroccan Jewish Experience," 552; Pollack, "Foundation Myths of Anti-Zionism," 249-50; Loeb, "'Outcaste,'" 564; Edmond Fagnan, "The Distinctive Sign of the Jews in Maghreb," in Bostom, *Legacy of Islamic Anti-Semitism*, 491-92, 493, n. 14; David Littman, "Jews under Muslim Rule—II: Morocco, 1903-1912," *Wiener Library Bulletin* 29 (1976): 12.

appeared "prior to the latter," many readily accused the Jews of blaspheming Islam. Muslims knew they had to be vigilant and defend "the true faith" against all "insult and abuse." Thus whenever a group of Arabs chose to assault a Jew, they justified their attack by claiming he had insulted the prophet or blasphemed Islam, certain they would be considered heroes of the faith. In a 1903 case in Rabat, the group simply "concocted a document, false in every respect," alleging that their victim had dared to "blaspheme the Muslim religion," whereupon he was arrested, his family forbidden to see him. For the next "several days" Muslim crowds "gave free rein to their hatred [of Jews], striking them in the street … inflicting on them the most glaring injustices." When a Jew "raised a voice to protest against these abuses," the crowd "was always prepared and ready" to defend the attacks as the legitimate response to the (imagined) affront to Islam. The observer, reporting on the events, concluded resignedly, "The fact that Arab justice does not accept evidence by a Jew only made the situation more intolerable."[14]

Similarly, Muslims perceived any violation of the Pact, real or imagined, as an occasion for a pogrom, targeting the Jewish quarter. Here, too, commentators attempting to narrow the enmity, claimed that "angry Muslims would invade the Jewish quarters" only "once in a while," or only "in moments of upheaval and disruption." Some tried to minimize the impact of the invaders by asserting that "they rarely killed people." Or, as an American anthropologist contended, the "attacks were … invariably directed against the property of the Jews rather than against their persons." In an effort to evade the importance of anti-dhimmitism, others stressed that the Jewish ghettos were not the only quarters besieged. Their caveats, however, missed the mark. The historian Jane Gerber, for example, found that the incursions into the *mellahs* (Jewish ghettos of Morocco) did not reflect "extraordinary situations" and were not confined to times of social disintegration. And, as the historian Norman Stillman concluded, "Jewish sources make clear" that there was "frequent loss of life in addition to the standard pillage and rape." He added that although Jews "shared in general suffering, … it was abundantly clear to all that Jews were at the very bottom of the ladder. Theirs was without question the most vulnerable position. The *mellah* was usually looted before any other quarter of the city."[15]

---

14 'Attiyah al-Dibani, "Jewish Attitude towards Islam and Muslims in Early Islam," 39; Littman, "Jews under Muslim Rule," 5-6; Lewis, "Roots of Muslim Rage," 53-54; Georges Vajda, "'Adversos-Judaeus': A Treatise from Maghrib—'Ahkamahl al-Dhimma' by Sayh Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Karim al-Magili," in Bostom, *Legacy of Islamic Anti-Semitism*, 345-46.

15 Stuart Schaar, "Discussion," in *Proceedings of the Seminar on Muslim-Jewish Relations*, 30; Lewis, "Roots of Muslim Rage," 59; Stillman, "Muslims and Jews in Morocco," 17, 17 n. 11; Gerber, "Pact of 'Umar in Morocco," 522.

Critically, it was Muhammad who legitimized the pogroms. His first raids targeted the Jewish tribes of the Medina oasis, not only because they rejected his "revelations," but, as the historian Ephraim Karsh has shown, because their "affluence made them a natural target for plunder." Seizing their land and belongings and presenting them as spoils to his followers, Muhammad also had 600 to 800 men of the Quraiza tribe beheaded, the women and children sold into slavery, "the money they fetched … divided among the Muslims." Thirteen centuries later, contemporary accounts of pogroms targeting *mellahs* all across Morocco in the decade before the establishment of the French Protectorate are harrowing, providing vivid descriptions of "the robbing, looting, raping, killing and burning," and the "cunning" attackers who "closed any escape route." In the Casablanca ghetto, "not a house, not a family, not a person was spared … only five to six Jewish houses … remained intact." All furniture was smashed or stolen; all clothing taken; Jews were left naked, even nightshirts gone. Thirty Jews were murdered; sixty wounded, "more than two hundred fifty young women, girls, children abducted." "All the young girls were raped," with one correspondent adding, "You know the daughter of Israel … who is pretty, all the Arabs had her." A few Jews managed to escape, "hiding themselves in caves." The *mellah* of Settat, sacked in 1903, was rebuilt by the Jews only to be attacked again four years later, 300 to 400 families once more "without shelter and without food," the men looking "like ghosts," the women, emaciated and almost "nude." Although the Jews of Wazzan had earlier paid the governor of the town to protect them, he now informed them that he was "powerless before the fury of the populace." In numberless Jewish quarters in these years—and over the centuries in which Jews lived under Muslim rule—synagogues were "pillaged and sacked," sacred objects "profaned," Torah scrolls "lacerated" and thrown into the street. At other times synagogues were torched or turned into mosques—although occasionally the Jews' bribes saved the scrolls—the oft-repeated claim that Islam protected the "right [of People of the Book] to practice their own religion" proven hollow again and again. And, because the pogromists were drawn from all ranks of Muslims and included political officials and religious leaders, few attackers were ever punished.[16]

<div align="center">***</div>

In 1918, Ulrich B. Phillips, a leading historian of the American South, endorsed English journalist William H. Russell's comparison of the planter to "a deno-

---

[16] Karsh, *Islamic Imperialism*, 14-15; Littman, "Jews under Muslim Rule," 8-10, 12-13; S. Landshut, *Jewish Communities in the Muslim Countries of the Middle East: A Survey* (Westport, CN: Hyperion Press, 1976), 12; Daniel Pipes, "The Politics of Muslim Anti-Semitism," *Commentary* (August 1981): 40; Eliezer Bashan, "New Documents on Attacks on Jewish Religious Observance in Morocco in the Late Nineteenth Century," in Bostom, *Legacy of Islamic Anti-Semitism*, 526-30.

madized Arab." Russell, who had traveled through the South during the Civil War, claimed that, like the Arab, the Southern planter had "fixed himself with horses and slaves in a fertile spot, where he guards his women with Oriental care, exercises patriarchal sway, and is at once fierce, tender, and hospitable."[17] The long-standing myth of a tranquil Southern plantation society, where loyal slaves lived in harmony with paternal masters, bears a striking resemblance to the even longer lasting image of the happy Jewish dhimmi in the Islamic world. This "teary-eyed vision" of an antebellum Southern "Happy-Happy Land," as cultural critic W.J. Cash termed it in 1941, took full form in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[18] Not only Southerners, but a sizeable proportion of Northerners embraced it as well.

W.J. Cash found that Southerners viewed their social system—based on white supremacy and the heritage of slavery—as the "summit of human achievement."[19] This notion led the Southern planter elite to aggressively promote slavery's expansion into new territories that the United States absorbed. Many planters also pressed for US annexation of Cuba and large portions of Mexico, in order to transform them into slave states.[20] This impulse resembled that of Muslims who were determined to conquer and impose Islam, the "perfect religion," over vast territories inhabited by Jews and Christians. Just as Middle Eastern and North African Muslims resented European colonialists for improving the status of Jews, Southerners considered Northerners dangerous intruders incapable of understanding the necessity of relegating blacks to inferior status.

Like the Muslims who considered Islamic culture and belief superior to that of "decadent" Europe, white Southerners identified their "high civilization" with Christian beliefs and principles, while characterizing the North as barbaric, immoral, and inferior. Vanderbilt professor Frank Lawrence Owsley claimed that Union generals Ulysses S. Grant, William Tecumseh Sherman, and Philip Sheridan had their armies desecrate Southern churches by turning them into stables for their horses. The North had enlisted and armed "half-savage blacks" to help subjugate and humiliate the white South, and then enforced a "cruel peace" during Reconstruction. Owsley even invoked the antisemitic deicide accusation in his effort to underscore the North's alleged immorality, claiming in 1930 that it "still sits in Pharisaical judgment upon the South."[21]

---

[17] Ulrich B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969 [1918]), 327.

[18] W.J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: Vintage, 1969 [1941]), 127, 130.

[19] Ibid., at 128-29.

[20] Eugene Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery* (New York: Vintage, 1965 [1961]), 243, 257-58.

[21] Frank Lawrence Owsley, "The Irrepressible Conflict," in Twelve Southerners, *I'll Take My Stand* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006 [1930]), 61-62, 67-68.

In the decades immediately preceding the Civil War, the Southern slaveholding elite backed its claim that the South boasted the finest civilization by insisting that it was devoid of the class conflict that plagued the Northern states and European nations. It also argued that the planters provided their slaves with security and comforts unavailable to free Northern laborers. George Fitzhugh, a leading pro-slavery propagandist, maintained in 1850 that "[in] the slaveholding South all is peace, quiet, plenty, and contentment" for both whites and slaves. Indeed, the slave was "far happier" than his or her master, but if the plantation failed, the slave was "always sure of a support; he is only transferred to another master." Unlike the master, if the male slave married he was not burdened with having to provide for his own family.[22]

After the Civil War, white Southerners made a determined effort to control how the American public viewed the South's peculiar institution, and until the mid-twentieth century they largely succeeded in convincing the authors of school history textbooks and the mass media to emphasize what they claimed were slavery's benevolent features.[23] In order to reach the Southern market, Northern publishing houses made sure that their textbooks did not contain passages that might offend Dixie's whites. Like the Al Fatah guerilla who in 1968 claimed that Arabs and Jews had lived together in peace until Israel's emergence, a large proportion of American historians and political scientists before the 1950s described master-slave relations in the antebellum South as largely amicable.[24] Columbia University professor John W. Burgess (1844-1931), a prominent political scientist and pioneer in developing the modern research university, maintained in a work posthumously published in 1933 that after the mid-nineteenth century the North had regarded slavery "too much in the nature of a crime." Burgess insisted that the antebellum plantation aristocrats were "generally men of great courtesy and kind hearts, and in most cases, regarded their relations to their slaves as a grave trust to be faithfully discharged, rather than an opportunity for exploitation." The slaves "worked short hours and never knew what a strenuous effort meant."[25] W.J. Cash in 1941 declared that the South "shut away" its record of "hate of and brutality toward the black man: 'The lash? A lie, sir; it had never existed. The only bonds were those of tender understanding, trust, and loyalty.'"[26]

---

[22] George Fitzhugh, "Sociology for the South," [1850] in *Slavery Defended: The Views of the Old South*, ed. Eric L. McKitrick (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1963), 44-47.

[23] David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 283-84.

[24] Al Fatah guerilla quoted in Stephen H. Norwood, *Antisemitism and the American Far Left* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 6.

[25] John W. Burgess, *Reminiscences of an American Scholar: The Founding of Columbia University* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933), 3-4.

[26] Cash, *Mind of the South*, 131.

Ulrich B. Phillips, considered the nation's leading historian of Southern slavery in academia from the 1910s until about 1950, stressed planters' concern for their slaves "well-being" and slaves' "courteous acceptance of subordination." He described planters as "solicitous" in caring for slaves when they became sick. Phillips claimed that they often provided slaves with housing superior to that available to African Americans after emancipation.[27]

For a century after the Civil War, the "happy darkey" myth provided Southerners with a foundation to justify their Lost Cause, just as Arabs use the "happy dhimmi" to challenge Israel's legitimacy. Confederate Memorial Day speeches invariably highlighted slaves' loyalty to their owners during the "War Between the States." The United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), established in 1894 to celebrate the Lost Cause, sponsored essay competitions on the topic of the "Faithful Slave" and called for the building of memorials to honor slave "mammies" for their alleged deep devotion to their owners' children.[28]

White Southerners, during and after slavery, considered blacks innately cowardly and obsequious, and thus unqualified for military service. They feared, moreover, that black soldiers bearing weapons could project power and intimidate whites, threatening a racial caste system based on African American subordination. Middle Eastern and North African Muslims held similar views about Jews, whom they consigned to humiliation and degradation. Islamic countries generally barred Jews from bearing arms. Confederate troops in the Civil War who encountered black Union Army soldiers tended to view them with intense hatred and disgust, resulting in some horrific atrocities, most notably the infamous Fort Pillow Massacre in 1864. The Confederacy would not officially accord prisoner-of-war status to captured black soldiers, and on many occasions its troops murdered them.[29] Arab armies likewise often refused to consider Jewish soldiers they captured in the Arab-Israeli wars to be prisoners-of-war (POWs).

When Confederate troops commanded by General Nathan Bedford Forrest captured Union-held Fort Pillow, Tennessee, in April 1864, where about half the soldiers were black, his troops slaughtered most of the African Americans after the garrison had surrendered, in particularly grisly ways. In its report on the massacre, issued in May 1864 after a careful investigation, the US Congress Committee on the Conduct of the War called it "cruelty and murder without parallel in civilized warfare." Confederate officers and enlisted men "seemed to

---

[27] Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, 261, 263, 291, 298.

[28] Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 260, 283, 286-89.

[29] In early 1863, shortly after the Union began enlisting African American troops, the Confederate Congress made it clear that black soldiers would be executed or enslaved if taken prisoner. James M. McPherson, *Embattled Rebel: Jefferson Davis and the Confederate Civil War* (New York: Penguin, 2014), 170-71.

vie with each other in the devilish work." Black soldiers, having thrown down their arms, were "collected together in lines or groups, and deliberately shot." The Committee stated that "All around were heard calls of 'no quarter,' 'kill the damned niggers,' 'shoot them down.'" It stated that "all who asked for mercy were answered with the most cruel taunts and sneers." The Confederates burned to death wounded black soldiers, setting fire to their tents. The Committee emphasized that "the atrocities committed at Fort Pillow were not the result of passions excited by the heat of conflict." They were, rather, "the results of a policy deliberately decided upon and unhesitatingly announced." It was the Confederate authorities' intention "not to recognize the officers and men of our colored regiments as entitled to the treatment accorded by all civilized nations to prisoners of war."[30]

During the first half of the twentieth century, white Southerners, perceiving African American soldiers as a potential threat to the racial order, now based on legal segregation and black disfranchisement, insisted that they acknowledge their racial inferiority by publicly displaying the required deference when encountering whites. White officers of the Twenty-Fifth Infantry, one of only four African American regiments in the US Army prior to World War I, strenuously objected when the Army transferred it from Nebraska to Browns-ville, Texas, in 1906. After the regiment arrived in Brownsville, townspeople complained that the African American soldiers, many of whom had served in combat in the Indian and Spanish-American wars, were not stepping aside when they encountered white people on the sidewalks. The white Brownsville residents claimed that this was a clear sign of disrespect. Major Charles Penrose, one of the Twenty-Fifth regiment's white officers, told an official of the courts of the southern district of Texas, where Brownsville was located, that his black troops "had as much right upon the streets and sidewalks of Brownsville as any white man." The court official then informed Major Penrose that "as long as he was in the South they would find that as a matter of practice that when a negro [sic] and white man met on the sidewalk the negro [sic] would have to step aside."[31]

After World War I, Southern whites feared that African Americans return-ing from military service in France, a less color-conscious society than the United States, might press for a greater degree of freedom. This could include attempting "familiarities" with white women, a violation of one of the South's most deeply-entrenched taboos. There were at least ten lynchings of African

---

[30] "The Fort Pillow Horror—The Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War," *Chicago Tribune*, May 6, 1864.

[31] Stephen H. Norwood, *Strikebreaking and Intimidation: Mercenaries and Masculinity in Twentieth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 84-85, 265 n. 26.

American soldiers or veterans in the Deep South during and immediately after World War I.[32]

White Southerners and North African and Middle Eastern Muslim Arabs both used lynching to violently intimidate, terrify, and degrade African Americans and Jews, respectively. Lynching was a spectacle that involved the public torture and killing of a person, most often by hanging but sometimes by burning, shooting, or skinning alive. It commanded support from many public officials in the regions where it took place. There was usually no trial; if there was one it was perfunctory and often held in secret. Lynching was designed to impress upon the African American and Jewish victims their powerlessness, and to deter these minorities from considering themselves equal to the dominant white Southerners or Muslims. In the South, advance notice of the lynching was often given so that large numbers of people could come and watch. Railroad companies arranged for special trains to bring spectators to the site of the lynching, and there were occasions when crowds numbered in the thousands. The corpse of the lynched person was left on display, in full public view, for hours or even days, and was usually mutilated. It was often photographed as well. Lynching became an important phenomenon of Southern life from 1890 through the early days of World War II, during the period that the happy darkey myth took full form. It persisted into the early postwar period. In the Muslim Middle East, lynchings persisted even longer.[33]

As was the case with African Americans in the South, Jews in Muslim lands were often lynched for insufficiently subservient behavior. In 1926, for example, Jacques Belais, in an article on antisemitism in Tunis, reported that Muslims repeatedly insulted Jews in the streets, calling out "Jew dog!" or "Curses on the religion of the Jews." Belais stated that if the Jew "stood up against the insulter," a hostile crowd would form, "stones flew right and left and he was lucky if he escaped lynching."[34]

Jews who were lynched in Muslim lands from the 1940s onward were often falsely accused of being agents of Zionism. The lynching in Basra of one of Iraq's wealthiest Jews, Shafiq Ades, on September 22, 1948, provided the occasion for

---

[32] The US Department of Justice noted that in wartime France African American soldiers learned that blacks served in the Chamber of Deputies and that, unlike in the United States, black officers commanded both white and black troops. Stephen H. Norwood, "Bogalusa Burning: The War against Biracial Unionism in the Deep South, 1919," *Journal of Southern History* 63 (August 1997): 611; Neil R. McMillen, *Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 306.

[33] On lynching in the American South, see Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 184-88.

[34] Jacques Belais, "Anti-Semitism in Tunis," *The Sentinel*, June 11, 1926.

masses of Iraqi Muslims to display the intensity of their antisemitism. An Iraqi military court after a quick trial "behind closed doors" sentenced Ades, a non-Zionist, to death on the charge of purchasing surplus British army weapons and shipping them to Palestine for use by the Jews, and for "organizing Zionism" in Iraq. It also fined him $20 million, an enormous sum in 1948. Ades insisted he was innocent. The Baghdad newspaper *Al Yaqthah* estimated that more than 15,000 people assembled to witness Ades being put to death, a crowd that did not contain a single Jew.[35]

Al Yaqthah's coverage was suffused with bizarre anti-Zionist conspiracy theories that circulated widely in Muslim lands. It stated that the hanging took place at 4:35 a.m. in a "great square … near the palace which belongs to the criminal and which was intended by him to be the future consulate of the imaginary state of Israel." *Al Yaqthah* claimed that Ades had built the so-called palace "on the pattern of a military fortress, the sketches of which were made in Tel Aviv."

Al Yaqthah demonized Ades and associated him with filth, noting that "his dirty body hanged in the air amidst the victorious cheers of the crowd." It reported that at 5:00 a.m. the doctor examined his corpse and testified that "his devilish soul had parted his defiled body." Ades's body was left hanging for two hours, "during which time a great number of photographs were taken." In a final humiliation, the crowd "heap[ed] excrement on the dead body."[36]

The public hangings in Baghdad in 1969 of eleven "accused Israeli spies," most of them Iraqi Jews, provided another example of the numerous lynchings of Jews in Muslim lands. The *New York Times* described a festive atmosphere in Baghdad's Independence Square, with spectators "shouting and dancing around the square" as the bodies were hanging. The litter that the "big, lively crowd" left at the site resembled "what remains after a band concert in [New York's] Central Park." Non-Jewish informants told the *Times* that the public hangings had "spread terror" in an Iraqi Jewish community that had shrunk to only 3,000 people. It noted that more than 100,000 Jews had fled Iraq since 1948. Those who remained "were forbidden to leave or to sell their property." The brother of one of the murdered Jews, a refugee in the United States, told the *Times* that "Jewish men, women, and children [Iraq] are picked up at random and are brutally given over for public hangings." The *Los Angeles Times* pointed out the absurdity of the charges linking Jews to an Israeli spy ring, noting that the

---

[35] Lawrence Resner, *Eternal Stranger: The Plight of the Modern Jew From Baghdad to Casablanca* (New York: Doubleday, 1951), 139-41; "Iraq Merchant to Die for Aid to Palestine," *New York Times*, September 14, 1948; "Wealthy Jew Hanged for Treason in Iraq," *Washington Post*, September 25, 1948.

[36] Resner *Eternal Stranger*, 141, 143.

hanged Iraqi Jews were "largely ghettoized … denied basic rights and kept under close watch by the secret police."[37]

For North African Muslims in the early decades of the twentieth century, for whom the Jew was a humbled and powerless dhimmi, the Jewish soldier in French uniform was a direct affront. The Jewish soldier thus elicited from Muslims a rage similar to that which white Southerners felt toward African American slaves who joined the Union army. In 1934, Muslims precipitated a large-scale pogrom in Constantine, Algeria's third-largest city, by spreading a false rumor that a Jewish *Zouave*, a decorated member of a French army infantry unit, had committed sacrilege in a mosque. Jews made up about ten percent of Constantine's population. The Jewish death toll in Constantine may have surpassed that in the Kishinev pogrom in Bessarabia in 1903, which had been 49. Estimates of Jews murdered in the Constantine pogrom range from 23 to more than 60. The killing and maiming of Jews in Constantine was as grisly as in Kishinev or in the pogroms Arabs launched against Jews in Palestine in 1929.[38]

Intense anger at a Jew who rejected the submission required of a dhimmi, allegedly disrespected Islam, and imbibed alcohol, forbidden in Islam, drove some 2,000 frenzied Muslims to invade Constantine's Jewish quarter and massacre large numbers of Jews. Muslims at Constantine's Sidi-Lakhda mosque alleged that on Friday, August 3, 1934, Eliahou Kalifa, a Jew serving in a Zouave regiment of the French army, had barged drunk into the mosque during evening prayers, made insulting remarks about Islam, and urinated on the mosque wall. The muezzin presented this accusation to Constantine's judicial authorities, who accepted it without interviewing Kalifa. To enter his home Kalifa had to walk through a passageway past the mosque, whose ablutions room un-customarily had two windows open, very close to and facing the Zouave's home. Kalifa stated that he had asked the worshippers to close the windows so that his wife and five children would not have to witness religious ablutions. The washing required that the men participating remove part or all of their clothing.[39]

---

[37] "Festivities Give Way to Murmurs in Iraq in Wake of Hangings," *New York Times*, February 2, 1969; "A Victim's Brother, Here, Laments for Iraqi Jews," *New York Times*, January 28, 1969; "Iraq: Instability and Barbarism," *Los Angeles Times*, February 5, 1969.

[38] Richard Ayoun, "À propos du pogrom de Constantine (août 1934)," *Revue des Études juives* 144 (January-September 1985), 182-86. The Jewish Telegraphic Agency's correspondent who toured Constantine immediately after the pogrom described "a scene of utter desolation and horror," and commented: "the only comparison I can think of is the Palestine riots of 1929." "Algeria Riots Checked," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, August 8, 1934. For Kishinev, see Edward H. Judge, *Easter in Kishinev: Anatomy of a Pogrom* (New York: New York University Press, 1992).

[39] "The Constantine Pogrom," *Palestine Post*, September 5, 1934; Ayoun, "À propos du pogrom," 182. Kalifa had been awarded a military medal. "Le 'Populaire' en Algérie," *Le Populaire*, August 31, 1934 and September 1, 1934.

During the pogrom, Muslims methodically attacked Jewish homes and shops, killing and looting. According to the *New York Times*, bands of them poured into the Jewish quarter "from every direction … even from the suburbs." The *London Times* reported that the Muslims dragged Jews from their dwellings into the street and proceeded to butcher them "like sheep." The *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* stated that Muslims locked Jews into their homes and set them on fire, burning to death entire Jewish families. They murdered Jews without regard to age or sex. The pogromists slashed Jewish children to death with knives, almost beheading some of them. They cut off some of the Jewish girls' breasts. Other Jews were stoned or clubbed to death.[40]

The *London Jewish Chronicle* reported a week and a half after the pogrom ended that photographs arriving in Paris "showed the Jewish quarter in a state of indescribable havoc." Jews rendered homeless were wandering through streets "littered with smashed furniture and goods dropped by the looters." Soldiers continued to dig out from the debris the corpses of Jews slain in the pogrom. The pogromists had destroyed most of the Jewish shops. They did not damage shops that posted signs stating that they were Christian-owned.[41]

The French socialist party newspaper *Le Populaire* undermined the Muslim claim that Kalifa's alleged "one-man invasion" of a mosque had caused the pogrom to break out spontaneously. It demonstrated that Muslim massacres of Jews and pillaging of Jewish stores had begun two days before in Sétif, Algeria, 75 miles away, and had then spread to Constantine. *Le Populaire* pointed out that if Kalifa, a Jew, had entered the mosque, much less "profaned [its] sacred soil," he likely would have required "transport to a hospital." Kalifa had a wife and children who were exposed to "a spectacle [of male nudity or semi-nudity] he wan[ted] to suppress." *Le Populaire* suggested that when Kalifa told the Muslims to close the windows, they shouted "Dirty Jew!" and he responded by cursing Islam. Rumors then spread "with lightning speed" among the Muslim population that a Jewish soldier had urinated on a mosque wall—the "supreme defilement"—and "struck the worshippers at prayer!"[42]

Confederate and Muslim Arab troops dehumanized their African American and Jewish adversaries, facilitating extremely brutal and often murderous treatment toward prisoners. The head of the Confederate Bureau of War declared

---

[40] "100 Slain, 300 Hurt as Arabs and Jews Clash in Algeria," *New York Times*, August 7, 1934; "The Algerian Riots," *Times* (London), August 8, 1934; "Arabs Slash Girls' Throats," *Washington Post*, August 9, 1934; "Algeria Riots Checked"; "Arabs Massacre Jews in Algeria," *Philadelphia Jewish Exponent*, August 10, 1934; "Les sanglants événements de Constantine," *Le Populaire*, August 9, 1934.

[41] "Order Restored in Constantine: A Picture of Utter Devastation," *Jewish Chronicle* (London), August 17, 1934; "Arabs Massacre Jews in Algeria"; "Deaths Rise as Arab-Jew Riots Spread," *Washington Post*, August 8, 1934.

[42] "Le 'Populaire' en Algérie: Pogrom 1934," *Le Populaire*, August 30 and 31, 1934.

that "No people … could tolerate … [an enemy's] use of savages [against them]." Confederates regarded most black Union soldiers they took prisoner as "property recaptured."[43] Egyptian cameraman Mohammed Gohar, assigned to film Israel POWs captured on the east bank of the Suez Canal in the first days after the Egyptian army's surprise invasion on Yom Kippur, 1973, recalled his shock upon encountering them. He had never seen Israelis before: "All he knew of them were the grotesque cartoons in Cairo newspapers" of Israeli leaders, depicted as rodents, snakes, or horned demons. Gohar was "surprised to see that the [Israeli] soldiers looked perfectly normal … many of them—Sephardi Jews—had olive skin like his…. All he had heard about Israelis, all he had learned about them in school, had not prepared him for this."[44]

During the Arab-Israeli wars, Arab armies systematically tortured and degraded Israeli POWs and committed horrific atrocities, meting out treatment they considered appropriate for contemptible dhimmis. Many of the POWs were Jews from North Africa and the Middle East, especially after the sizeable Sephardi/Mizrahi immigration from the 1950s onward. During Israel's 1948 War of Independence, Arab forces decapitated 29 Haganah soldiers killed in the attack on the Arab fortress of Nebi Yusha, an act no doubt modeled on Muhammad's beheading of 700 Jewish men of the Quraiza tribe following their surrender to his forces in the seventh century CE.[45] In the same war, after Arab forces numbering more than 3,000 men surrounded and overwhelmed 200 Haganah soldiers in a 36 hour battle at Nebi Daniel, they stripped, mutilated, and photographed the bodies of the Jewish dead. Correspondent John Roy Carlson reported that such "naked shots hit the 'Holy' City markets afresh after every battle and sold rapidly." Arab purchasers carried the photographs "in their wallets and displayed them frequently."[46]

Arabs committed similar atrocities against Israeli soldiers in subsequent wars. The only Israeli taken prisoner during the 1956 Sinai Campaign against Egypt, air force pilot Jonathan Eites, was released with a black eye he sustained when an Egyptian kicked him in the face with a hobnailed boot. An Israeli soldier whom the Egyptians captured during a border clash the previous year, Arieh Annikster, was returned with his teeth kicked out. The physical damage Eites and Annikster suffered was like that which storm troopers inflicted on Jews in Nazi "Brown House" torture cellars.[47] The Egyptians murdered Moshe

---

[43] James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 792.

[44] Abraham Rabinovich, *The Yom Kippur War: The Epic Encounter That Transformed the Middle East* (New York: Schocken, 2004), 277-78.

[45] Norwood, *Antisemitism and the American Far Left*, 133.

[46] John Roy Carlson, *Cairo to Damascus* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), 171-72.

[47] "Egypt Turns Over Israeli POWs—All Four," *Chicago Tribune*, January 28, 1957.

Goldwasser, an Israeli pilot shot down over Egypt during the 1970 War of Attrition, two days after his capture. A day after he was taken prisoner, a photograph published in Cairo newspapers showed him in apparent good health. When the Egyptians returned his body to the Israelis four weeks later, he was missing a testicle and the skin had been removed from his wrists to conceal marks of torture.[48]

During the Yom Kippur War in 1973, Israeli troops discovered a booklet that the Egyptian army "issued in [the] thousands" to its troops instructing them to kill Israeli soldiers they captured. Its foreword, written by the Egyptian army chief of staff, General Saad el-Shazly, invoked the longstanding Muslim stereotype of the deceitful Jew, "This is a nation of cheats who will behave as if they were surrendering in order to bluff you and then kill you. Kill them and don't show them any pity or mercy." The most senior Israeli officer whom the Egyptians captured during the Yom Kippur War, Lieutenant Colonel Assaf Yaguri, reported after his release that he and other Israeli POWs had been publicly humiliated and tortured. Taken prisoner east of the Suez Canal, his captors had brought him to Egypt through populated areas. Lt. Col. Yaguri stated that "Whenever their troop carrier passed through a crowded district the prisoners were pulled up by the hair and exhibited. The civilians beat them with sticks and agricultural implements." Lt. Col. Yaguri "said he was covered in blood when he reached the prison camp. All of the prisoners had been hit throughout their journey."[49]

Israeli Defense Minister Shimon Peres maintained that in the Yom Kippur War Syria had "not only flouted Geneva Convention rules but also sank beneath any human standard practiced in war or peace." The Syrians had tortured Israeli POWs with "electric shocks, tearing out of fingernails and toenails, whipping, and blows on open wounds."[50] They had "fired at point blank range at [Israeli] pilots bailing out" and, as at Fort Pillow, "at soldiers who had thrown down their arms." Israel also formally accused the Syrians of murdering at least 42 Israeli POWs, and the Egyptians of murdering at least 28. It reported that "one Moroccan soldier had a sack filled with parts of bodies" of slain Israeli soldiers, "including arms and tongues, which he intended sending home as souvenirs."[51]

<div align="center">***</div>

---

[48] "Cairo Torture Alleged," *Guardian* (London), October 6, 1970.

[49] "Israel Claims Egyptians Killed POWs," *Guardian* (London), December 10, 1973.

[50] "Israel Charges POW Tortures," *Chicago Tribune*, June 13, 1974; "Israel MPs Told of Torturing of Prisoners by Syrians," *Times* (London), June 13, 1974.

[51] "Israel Accuses Egypt of Killing 28 Prisoners," *Times* (London), December 10, 1973; Israel reported that all of the 68 Israeli POWs repatriated from Syria had been tortured. "Israel Claims Torture of all its POWs," *Guardian* (London), June 8, 1974.

Both the American South and the Arab/Muslim lands were hierarchical, martial societies, convinced that they had achieved the highest level of civilization through their culture, belief system, and way of life. Their deeply held ideologies of white supremacy and Islamic superiority demanded the subjugation of blacks in the case of the former and Jews in the latter. Domination involved not just expropriation but relentless humiliation and degradation, which was evident to, and condemned by, many travelers from outside the Muslim and Southern orbits. Arabs and white Southerners maintained that because of their innate traits, Jews and blacks required the superordinate group's controls. They used their respective religions to justify their societal arrangements, certain that they were endorsed by God. In each case, improvement in the status and conditions of the blacks and dhimmi Jews came only as a result of invasions from outside— Northern armies and occupation and European political and cultural penetration. In both societies, the granting of equal or near-equal rights evoked massive resistance and violence by the erstwhile dominant groups, as their worlds were turned upside down.

White Southerners and Arab Muslims fashioned layers of myths that obscured the brutality and dehumanization of the subjugated peoples. Few, if any, within the dominant group questioned the myths or social arrangements. The white South and the Muslims of the Middle East and the Maghreb were wholly unprepared for a world in which those whom they had for centuries perceived as their inferiors and confined to the bottom of the social system now bore arms and refused even to pretend to be submissive. Those who had long abased Jews as dhimmis could not comprehend how Israel won decisive military victories over combined Arab armies and established a flourishing Jewish state.

The Perpetual Scapegoat: Antisemitism in the Ideology and Activities of Hate Groups in the United States pre- and post-Trump's Election

Ashley V. Reichelmann, Stanislav Vysotsky,
and Jack Levin*

This chapter explores the antisemitic undertone in the ideology and activities of White supremacist hate groups in the United States before, during, and after the 2016 US presidential election. After examining the historical movement, we highlight the strategies of the contemporary movement and how hate groups have capitalized on President Trump's rhetoric. We demonstrate how an interchange between the political, virtual, and social spheres has allowed hate groups to alter their tactics in order to attract a wider base. In doing so, we explain how antisemitism became a major theme during the 2017 "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, when the manifest purpose of the organized protest was to stop the removal of a Confederate statue. Lastly, we conclude by offering tactics and strategies to combat the growing influence of the White supremacy movement and hate groups.

Introduction

August 11, 2017, at 10:00 p.m., Charlottesville, Virginia:

> Amidst the University of Virginia's prestigious campus, a protest is under way. Composed of (largely) White men dressed in khakis and button-up shirts, protesters march by the hundreds waving lit tiki torches and an array of flags. The chants begin: "You will not replace us." Just as quickly, they turn to "Jews will not replace us!" "Blood and Soil!" "Whose streets? Our streets!" The marchers, uncovered and unashamed, look directly into the camera, proudly chanting these accusatory phrases deeply rooted in the rhetoric of the Nazi regime. The protest culminates in "White Lives Matter" chants, before disbanding at the footsteps of the Thomas Jefferson statue on UVA's campus—approximately one and a half miles from the next day's point of contention, the General Robert E. Lee statue in Lee park.

This narrative details the images of "Race and Terror," a VICE news documentary that was replayed on mainstream news channels during primetime broadcasts for weeks following the rally. To the average viewer, the protest appeared spontaneous, made up of White Americans from all walks of life—from California to Washington, DC to Florida—and that all marchers were

---

* The three authors contributed equally to this work.

there for the same reason: to protest what they perceived to be the dismantling of (White) history.[1]

You are likely thinking: why would people protesting the removal of a symbol of racial oppression be chanting antisemitic slogans? How does a protest against the removal of a Confederate statue result in antisemitic and neo-Nazi rhetoric? Although the rhetorical transition seems counterintuitive, a deeper sociological inquiry into the current underlying antisemitic and general xenophobic perspectives within the United States provides a framework to understand this modern day event: antisemitism continues to underline extremist and discrete White supremacist views on Black and other non-White groups, because prejudice against Jews is racial at its core.

This chapter explores how and why antisemitism informs White supremacist views, and more generally racism and bigotry, in the United States. That is, specifically, the chapter demonstrates how the presence of extremist bigoted views in the political sphere is directly associated with an increased presence of such views in the virtual and social spheres of society. In particular, when antisemitism is overtly present on a political platform, hate groups re-emerge: Ku Klux Klan (KKK) members take off their hoods and dress in suits, appearing socially acceptable to conventional Americans. Neo-Nazis use academic jargon, offering the perception that their views are factually rooted. In short, White supremacist hate groups take advantage of the mainstream publicity of politicians who spout general hate. This allows such hate groups to spread their message that "Whites are threatened" to empathetic ears. The wider exposure of these views online and on the ground is coupled with an increase in intolerant behavior and indiscriminate hate in the social sphere, such as the violent and destructive actions which occurred in Charlottesville.

Not in the Average US History Book: The Role of Stereotyping in the History of Antisemitism

Broadly, stereotyping is defined as treating members of a group as possessing the same "well-deserved" reason for their mistreatment. For most victimized groups, there is a single set of stereotyped attributes that perpetrators select to

---

[1] It is the theoretical preference of the authors to capitalize White and Black as racial identities. This preference is grounded in the main author's training in symbolic interactionism, which is broadly rooted in the assumption that the self is social and derives from interaction with others. According to this interpretation, Whiteness and Blackness, or our common orientations of race in the United States, are deeply rooted in historical and current interactions between in-groups and out-groups. Therefore, the authors have opted to capitalize racial identities, since research, both before and after Trump's election, has found that racial identity, including Whiteness, is a guiding social force of thought and behavior.

justify their prejudice and discrimination. Members of a despised group are viewed as some sort of "other," such as terrorists, unintelligent thugs and drug dealers, rapists, or job stealers. Although the stereotyped images differ, each group is regarded as a threat to the majority's well-being. When the perceived threat passes, so does the worst discriminatory behavior,[2] as we have seen throughout US history.

Group threat theory, developed by Herbert Blumer, provides a basic framework to understand the current racial tension in the United States. Whites have historically been at the top of the racial hierarchy with respect to power, status, and wealth. When "others" (i.e. non-Whites) seek to gain rights, Whites feel that their superior position is in jeopardy. Therefore, the White majority responds with prejudice to prevent a change in the status quo. Such a response is not uniquely American: arguably, it also underlies the German and Hungarian populist movements against Syrian refugees and the Brexit push in England, to name a few examples.

Nor is antisemitism—here, a negative bias toward individuals who are religiously, ancestrally, or culturally Jewish—exclusively an American quality. Historically, Jews have been targeted as the cause of almost everything: the Black Plague, disappearing Christian children, bad economies, political radicalism, racial conflicts, harmful globalization, and media domination. At the personality level, Jews have been considered pushy, ostentatious, loud, devious, stingy, entitled, and without ethics. Yet, the most damaging stereotype is that Jews possess almost supernatural powers in order to maintain control and dominance over political and economic affairs across the globe.

This antisemitic image is perhaps rooted in the Christ-killer accusation that has circulated for nearly 2,000 years. Collectively, all Jews were regarded as responsible for Jesus Christ's crucifixion, whereby they were stereotypically viewed as possessing demonic powers which could impact societal leadership and its major institutions. In some quarters, Jews have been characterized as the "children of Satan." In this view, they were seen as "puppeteers" who manipulated and controlled the thinking and behavior of others, causing them to become radicalized and problematic to the majority. Even Black Americans' efforts to achieve equality (e.g. the civil rights movement and Black Lives Matter) have been shadowed by claims that Jews are simply seeking to foster racial conflict.[3]

The widespread accusation that Jews are incredibly powerful and deceitful individuals who seek world domination, combined with their historically-rooted

---

[2] Jack Levin and Ashley Reichelmann, "From Thrill to Defensive Motivation: The Role of Group Threat in the Changing Nature of Hate-Motivated Assaults," *American Behavioral Scientist* 5, no. 12 (2015): 1546-1561.

[3] Phyllis B. Gerstenfeld, *Hate Crimes: Causes, Controls, and Controversies*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2018).

stereotype, has allowed antisemitism to persist across time and space, in culturally diffuse forms throughout the globe,[4] reaching an eliminationist racialist peak with the Nazis.[5]

Setting the Context: What is White Supremacy?

White supremacy is both a simple and complex concept. Its simplicity lies in the philosophy that White people are inherently superior—biologically, culturally, economically, politically, and socially. White supremacy becomes complicated in its sociological conception because there are two ways in which it is understood: structurally and socially.

From a structural standpoint, White supremacy is understood as a system of racial hierarchy that organizes social life and concurrently develops numerous processes for maintaining that system. Both the historical and current racialized right-wing social system in the United States could be identified as White supremacist because it has regularly placed and maintained Whiteness at the top of a racial hierarchy that ideologically, culturally, and structurally benefits people identified as White.[6] Historical practices (e.g. redlining) and policies (e.g. the GI Bill and "urban renewal") demonstrate how the distribution of benefits unevenly by race has reinforced the economic, political, and social dominance of White people.[7] Many of these practices were employed against non-Whites, including Jewish people, demonstrating that they were not considered White, racially speaking. Although this conception of White supremacy does not require any individuals to personally hold prejudice, the system often revises and reconstructs prejudice in the form of ideological statements that are accepted by individuals.[8]

The more common and accepted form of White supremacy is a populist social movement. It presents itself as a challenge to illegitimate elites and parasitic racialized underclasses in an effort to maintain White, male, heterosexual dominance.[9] The "ultra-right" sector of White supremacy peddles antisemitic

---

[4] Jack Levin and Jim Nolan, *The Violence of Hate*, 4th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017).

[5] Daniel J. Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996).

[6] Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, "Rethinking Racism: Toward a Structural Interpretation," *American Sociological Review* 62, no. 3 (1997): 465-480.

[7] George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2006).

[8] Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017).

[9] Chip Berlet and Mathew N. Lyons, *Right-Wing Populism in America: Too Close for Comfort* (New York: Guilford Press, 2000).

conspiracies that are heavily reliant on stereotypes. These conspiracies frame a unique White victimhood,[10] where Jewish people are responsible for both capitalist excess and communist oppression. This movement attributes almost all social problems to central planning by Jews who control a "Zionist Occupied Government" (ZOG). People of color, LGBTQ people, feminists, and leftists are all seen as puppets of the Jewish people, who—as the White supremacist narrative goes—seek to penalize White people for their inherent superiority.

Here, we focus on the impact of the populist movement—in maintaining the structural status quo and spreading bigotry into popular discourse[11]—and the unique role of the political sector in elevating, destigmatizing, and normalizing the movement's bigoted views.

Organized Antisemitism: The History of White Supremacist Hate Groups

The ebb and flow of White supremacist movements in the United States demonstrates how these hate groups have developed and become active at key moments when Blacks and other non-White Americans were at the cusp of advancement. Beginning during Reconstruction and declining in the 1970s with the legal success of the civil rights movement, the historical White supremacist movement operated in a climate of mainstream acceptance.

For most Americans, organized White supremacy is synonymous with the KKK. This hate group has actually operated in three distinct historical eras. The original KKK was founded by former Confederate officers as a fraternal organization during Reconstruction. It was intended to serve as a White insurgency against the integration of freed slaves into the economic, political, and social life of the postbellum South. However, the group quickly began violently intimidating freed Blacks and their White allies, such as Franklin J. Moses Jr., a Jewish secessionist convert who championed racial justice.[12]

The Klan experienced a major revival in 1915 with the founding of the "second" KKK in Atlanta, Georgia. This renewal was driven by a desire to maintain the racial order as well as White Protestant concerns over increasing immigration from Europe, since over two million Eastern European Jews had come to

---

[10] Chip Berlet and Stanislav Vysotsky, "Overview of US White Supremacist Groups," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 34, no. 1 (2006): 11-48.

[11] Berlet and Lyons, *Right-Wing Populism in America*; Stanislav Vysotsky and Eric Madfis, "White Supremacist Stigma Management and Legitimation via Anti-Immigration Policy: The Case of the Keystone State Skinheads," in *The Criminalization of Immigration: Contexts and Consequences*, ed. Alissa R. Ackerman and Rich Furman, 129-144 (Durham, NC: Carolina Academy Press, 2014).

[12] Benjamin Ginsberg, *Moses of South Carolina: A Jewish Scalawag during Radical Reconstruction* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).

America's shores between 1881 and 1924.[13] The second wave of the Klan was often more virulently antisemitic and anti-Catholic than anti-Black in its organizing campaigns,[14] thus solidifying the interchange and overlap between White supremacy hate groups and antisemitic ideology.

The third wave of the Klan arose in opposition to the civil rights movement. Jewish civil rights activists were disproportionately represented in the civil rights movement in comparison to their White colleagues,[15] and some actively worked beside Martin Luther King Jr.[16] While most Klan presence took the form of political jostling, some of the most notorious acts of violence against civil rights activists were committed by Klan members and their supporters, such as the murders of Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner, Jewish activists who were working with James Chaney, a Black activist.[17] This wave of the Klan was short-lived as the legal success of the civil rights movement led to federal resources that secured desegregation and prosecuted vigilante violence. Also, people began to sympathize with civil rights activists and social norms shifted away from *de jure* discrimination and overt expressions of bigotry. This wave solidified the current stereotypes of White supremacists: stubborn and ignorant reactionaries desperately holding on to a historically-rooted racial domination which could only be sustained through White purity, despite a lack of economic or social standing. As the Klan's domination in the White supremacist movement declined, new hate groups came to prominence in the contemporary era, ebbing and flowing in popularity and influence as threats to the status quo were identified.

Hatred in the Present:
White Supremacy, Pre-Trump

The modern White supremacist movement is generally identified as emerging in the 1970s and 1980s. The contemporary era is defined by a lack of public support

---

[13] Paula E. Hyman, "Eastern European Immigrants in the United States," in *Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia*, last modified February 27, 2009. Jewish Women's Archive. https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/eastern-european-immigrants-in-united-states.

[14] Linda Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK: The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s and the American Political Tradition* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2017); Rory McVeigh, *The Rise of the Ku Klux Klan: Right-Wing Movements and National Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

[15] Cheryl Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters: Black-Jewish Relations in the American Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).

[16] Marc Schneier, *Shared Dreams: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Jewish Community* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Light Publishing, 1999).

[17] Martin Luther King Jr., *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1986).

for and comfort with White supremacy, thus forcing the movement to innovate in structure and form. Due to the stigma attached to the White supremacist stereotype and to legal repression, the days of large, centralized White supremacist organizations had ended; the movement transitioned to a strategy of "leaderless resistance," composed of numerous hate groups and individuals loosely affiliated by ideology.[18] It is, therefore, best to understand the contemporary movement as consisting of overlapping sectors rather than organizations. The five key sectors—political, religious, intellectual, subcultural, and criminal—are defined by their ideological orientation toward White supremacy and action repertoire.[19]

The political sector of the White supremacist movement derives its ideology from fascism and Nazism, engaging most directly with their political platforms and philosophies. Aside from similarities with their predecessors—such as a veneration of violence, a sense of mission, and a disdain for modern and liberal values[20]—this sector also presents a critique of capitalism and globalization, advocates for direct (racial) democracy, and opposes centralized state intervention.[21] Many of the groups within the current political sector are direct or indirect descendants of George Lincoln Rockwell's American Nazi Party. The landscape of the political sector now consists of numerous groups and well-known individuals. The National Socialist Movement is likely the most prominent and overtly Nazi organization, branding themselves as "America's premier White civil rights organization." Their website states that they demand land where they can create a nation of "White blood" and where "no Jew or homosexual may be a member." Patriot Front and Identity Evropa use a more covert approach to their White supremacist politics, presenting themselves as patriotic warriors of European identity (code: Whiteness) who are answering the call to rescue America from attack. Although dire references to Hitler and the Nazi party are still prevalent, some members prefer more esoteric and radical fascist ideologues, allowing for an identity-based platform to attract prospective members.[22]

---

[18] Berlet and Vysotsky, "Overview of US White Supremacist Groups"; George Michael, *Lone Wolf Terror and the Rise of Leaderless Resistance* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2012).

[19] Berlet and Vysotsky, "Overview of US White Supremacist Groups"; Stanislav Vysotsky and Adrienne L. McCarthy, "Beyond Gangs and Terrorists: An Updated Typology of the White Supremacist Movement" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Society for Criminology, Atlanta, GA, November 2018).

[20] Chip Berlet, "Fascism!," *Political Research Associates*, September 28, 1992, https://www.politicalresearch.org/1992/09/28/fascism-1992/.

[21] Alexander Reid Ross, *Against the Fascist Creep* (Chico, CA: AK Press, 2017).

[22] Ibid.; Stanislav Vysotsky and Adrienne L. McCarthy, "Normalizing Cyberracism: A Neutralization Theory Analysis," *Journal of Crime and Justice* 40, no. 4 (2016): 446-461.

The religious sector derives its White supremacist dogma from translating Nazi ideology into a spiritual belief system. Betty Dobratz identified three distinct religious tendencies within the White supremacist movement: Christian Identity, Creativity, and neo-paganism.[23] Christian Identity's core beliefs identify White Christians as the true children of Israel, whereas Jewish people are believed to be children of Satan and people of color are not fully human. Creativity, formerly known as the World Church of the Creator, rejects Christianity as a "Jewish" religion and instead elevates the biological superiority of White people as a spiritual mission. Christian Identity and Creativity have lost much of their influence within the movement due to leadership casualties and loss of resources. While both these tendencies have some adherents, they are a faint shadow of their former glory. In the wake of their collapse, there has been a surge of White supremacist involvement in neo-paganism: Ásatrú, Satanism, and New Atheism. Supremacists are attracted to neo-pagan practices associated with Ásatrú, a worship of the Norse Gods, because they see it as the true religion of White people that rejects normative religious practices in Christianity and opposes Middle Eastern (i.e. non-White) religions. At present, this is arguably the dominant religious tendency within the movement. Satanism appeals to contemporary White supremacists because it identifies Satan as an allegory for resistance to normative order, venerates individualism and hedonism, and preaches themes of social Darwinism that align with the neo-Nazi ideology. The New Atheist movement extols the virtue of rational thought and scientific positivism, coupled with essentialist notions about race and gender that align with alt-right ideological positions.[24] The religious sector also has significant overlaps with the intellectual sector, because prominent New Atheists regularly provide a public platform to supremacist intellectuals under the guise of free speech and expression.

The intellectual sector serves as the incubator for White supremacist ideology and framing strategies.[25] Its activities often mirror those of academia, including hosting conferences, publishing research reports, and critiquing existing scholarship in pursuit of conducting "scholarly research and creative activity." Many individuals in this sector hold legitimate scholarly credentials and/or

---

[23] Betty A. Dobratz, "The Role of Religion in the Collective Identity of the White Racialist Movement," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 40, no. 2 (2002): 287-302.

[24] Phil Torres, "From the Enlightenment to the Dark Ages: How 'New Atheism' Slid into the Alt-Right," *Salon*, July 29, 2017, https://www.salon.com/2017/07/29/from-the-enlightenment-to-the-dark-ages-how-new-atheism-slid-into-the-alt-right/.

[25] Mitch Berbrier, "Impression Management for the Thinking Racist: A Case Study of Intellectualization as Stigma Transformation in Contemporary White Supremacist Discourse," *The Sociological Quarterly* 40 (1999): 411-433; Vysotsky and McCarthy, "Normalizing Cyberracism."

established roles in academic institutions[26] or in distinctly White supremacist think tanks like the National Policy Institute. These individuals are often the public face of the White supremacist movement, because their affiliations make them accessible to journalists and because they present the most respectable version of the movement's racist and antisemitic ideologies.

The subcultural sector is the most diverse and decentralized element of the movement. White supremacists generally and actively seek out participation in subcultures because such outlets provide access to individuals experiencing strain and isolation.[27] Members of this sector often express their White supremacist beliefs through cultural production of personal style, music, fanzines, and websites.[28] It is crucial to note that the subcultures discussed are generally constructed as inclusive spaces with progressive values; therefore, White supremacist participation is often contested by many subculture enthusiasts.[29] The earliest and most common subcultural affiliation for White supremacists is the skinhead subculture. Racist skinheads began to participate in the British punk music scene because of its use of the swastika and its general climate of nihilism.[30] Since racist skinheads were actively resisted in many punk spaces, they built their own punk and skinhead subculture which exists in parallel with the dominant scenes. They also sought refuge in other subcultural genres that were less overtly leftist, such as National Socialist Black Metal, Goth, and Neo-Folk, many of which express neo-Nazi and fascist views.

Recently, a phenomenon of White supremacist hipsters, known as nipsters (i.e. Nazi hipsters), has flourished. Using hipster irony, appropriation, and aesthetics, they have spread fascist and neo-Nazi ideas.[31] Similarly, an online

---

26 Shane Burley, "How White Nationalists Hide in Academia," *Truthout*, January 4, 2018, http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/43117-how-White-nationalists-hide-in-academia.

27 Randy Blazak, "White Boys to Terrorist Men: Target Recruitment of Nazi Skinheads," *American Behavioral Scientist* 44, no. 6 (2001): 982-1000.

28 Berlet and Vysotsky, "Overview of US White Supremacist Groups."

29 Daniel Sarabia and Thomas E. Shriver, "Maintaining Collective Identity in a Hostile Environment: Confronting Negative Public Perception and Factional Divisions within the Skinhead Subculture," *Sociological Spectrum* 24, no. 3 (2004): 267-294; Stanislav Vysotsky, "The Influence of Threat on Tactical Choices of Militant Anti-Fascist Activists," *Interface: A Journal for and about Social Movements* 5, no. 2 (2013): 263-294; Robert T. Wood, "The Indigenous, Nonracist Origins of the American Skinhead Subculture," *Youth & Society* 31, no. 2 (1999): 131-151.

30 Mark S. Hamm, *American Skinheads: The Criminology and Control of Hate Crime* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993).

31 Thomas Rogers, "Heil Hipster: The German Neo-Nazis Trying to Put a Stylish Face on Hate," *Rolling Stone*, June 23, 2014, https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/news/heil-hipster-the-young-neo-nazis-trying-to-put-a-stylish-face-on-hate-20140623; Jack Smith IV, "This Is Fashwave, the Suicidal Retro-Futurist Art of the Alt-Right," *Mic*, January 12, 2018, https://mic.com/articles/187379/this-is-fashwave-the-suicidal-retro-futurist-art-of-the-alt-right#.VIpHlKt84.

culture of trolls and gamers engage in overt White supremacy under the guise of irony and "lulz," a process of pranking designed to attack viewer/player sensitivity. Websites such as 4chan and 8chan are bulletin boards for racist, antisemitic, and misogynist memes and images, purportedly for humor. The deployment of irony by White supremacist hipsters and trolls is designed to simultaneously allow them to express bigotry and deny its impacts.

The final sector of the White supremacist movement is the criminal sector. It consists of groups and individuals who are primarily oriented toward "profit-oriented criminal activity,"[32] such as racist prison gangs like the Aryan Brotherhood, biker gangs, and street gangs. While these members hold racist beliefs, they may be modified to achieve short- and long-term criminal goals. Historically, the criminal sector was essential to the political and religious sectors of the movement because it provided financial and material resources to the movement, often in the form of illegal weapons. Its importance and strength have waned as subcultural commodities have generated larger profits than criminal activity.

"White Nationalist" as a Household Name: How White Supremacy Came into Our Living Rooms

Since overt expressions of racism and antisemitism are generally stigmatized in normative American culture,[33] the White supremacist movement utilizes a series of mainstream strategies to appear palatable to average Americans. Many of these strategies involve methods to covertly reframe the stereotypes of White supremacists. Macro-strategies generally fall into two categories: ethnic claims-making and intellectualization.[34]

Ethnic claims-making involves the framing of historically marginalized groups into a discourse that asserts a White identity politics. White supremacists claim they are representing the interests of White people in a pluralist American society that is no different from advocates for other ethno-racial groups (i.e. the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Council on American-Islamic Relations, and the Anti-Defamation League). The most recent attempt at ethnic claims-making can be seen in the term "White nationalist." This framing is a form of stigma management intended to present the current movement as

---

[32] Pete Simi, Lowell Smith, and Ann M.S. Reeser, "From Punk Kids to Public Enemy Number One," *Deviant Behavior* 29, no. 8 (2008): 753-774.

[33] Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists.*

[34] Mitch Berbrier, "'Half the Battle': Cultural Resonance, Framing Process, and Ethnic Affectations Contemporary White Separatist Rhetoric," *Social Problems* 45, no. 4 (1998): 431-447; ibid, "White Supremacists and the (Pan-)Ethnic Imperative: On 'European Americans' and 'White Student Unions,'" *Sociological Inquiry* 68, no. 4 (1998): 498-516; ibid., "Impression Management for the Thinking Racist."

comprised of average, everyday people who are simply trying to protect their group's interests. The simplicity of the term "nationalism" suggests that it is an extension of patriotism and that these views are widely accepted. However, few members directly acknowledge that the views associated with the White nationalist movement are simply a rebranding of White supremacy.

The second macro-strategy, intellectualization, presents White supremacist beliefs as products of rigorous scholarly debate and research. This strategy typically portrays White supremacist assertions as legitimate counterpoints to established academic viewpoints. Deeply impacted by the intellectual sector, these framers often depict themselves as seekers of knowledge and presenters of taboo information. Both strategies have been successful in allowing White supremacists to enter public discourse, especially in university settings where they exploit abstract commitments to pluralism and free speech to legitimize their movement's activity and discourse.

White supremacists also use a variety of micro-level strategies for minimizing stigma during daily interactions. Pete Simi and Robert Futrell identify five key strategies:[35] (1) distancing; (2) silencing, avoidance, or hiding; (3) civility or avoiding conflict; (4) mainstreaming; and (5) passive expression. Distancing involves separating movement activities from other aspects of life through engagement in "free spaces," such as music and camping events, parties, and internet forums. Silencing, avoidance, or hiding occurs when proponents refrain from overt displays of their movement's ideology in front of family and friends. This strategy works in tandem with civility or avoiding conflict, when supremacists actively steer clear of political discussions with non-members of the movement. Mainstreaming and passive expression involve more outward-oriented behavior: mainstreaming normalizes supremacist views as conservative discourse, and passive expression uses coded symbols only known to other group members. White supremacists deploy these numeric, linguistic, and symbolic codes to identify one another and express movement membership and ideology. Combined, the macro- and micro-strategies of stigma management create a series of ideological frames and arguments that can be introduced into mainstream political debate and culture and are slowly finding their way into our living rooms.

Trickle-down Hatred: Antisemitism in Politics and Its Effect on the Everyday

What is the relationship between politics, hate groups, and everyday life? We believe the political and the virtual spheres are structural elements that affect the

---

35 Pete Simi and Robert Futrell, "Negotiating White Power Activist Stigma," *Social Problems* 56 (2009): 89-110.

micro-social sphere (see flowchart 1); however, the political sphere also affects and strengthens the virtual sphere's impact on the social sphere. Specifically, when a political figure overtly and publicly uses hate-filled language and bigotry, these actions provide validation for the views of the White supremacist hate groups that had previously existed in the margins. Upon feeling accepted by political representatives, these groups begin to increase their public presence in both the virtual sphere and the social sphere. Their increased presence, coupled with validation from the political sphere, attracts non-members who are empathetic to the surface views expressed.

Flowchart 1: Relationship among spheres
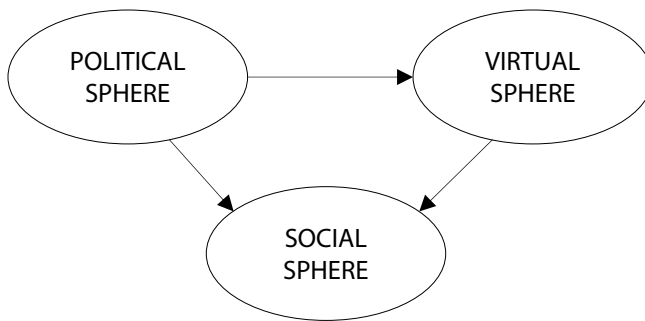
We believe that this theory is exemplified by the relationship between Trump, hate groups, and hate crime levels. Although antisemitism in the United States has always been present, it was generally situated in the margins of society. However, in 2015, the arrival of Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump allowed dormant antisemitism to become more pronounced in the everyday social arena. Through his well-publicized actions and words, Trump publicly validated and normalized the beliefs and worldviews of White supremacist groups, thus emboldening them to mobilize online and on the ground. This virtual and social groundswell of supremacist ideology sent messages to White Americans that they should feel threatened about their status. In this particular case, the concurrent actions of Trump and White supremacist hate groups played on the fears of average Americans. Both the political and virtual sphere assisted in identifying groups who could be scape-goated for causing the woes of White Americans. In seeking an answer to stagnant wages, higher living costs, poor education, and the presence of diversity, Whites latched onto the Trump's framing and felt threatened by "the other," resulting in an increase in racism and bigotry toward non-Whites.

The Political Sphere

From his rise to Republican presidential nominee in 2016 to the present, President Trump has provided a steady stream of stereotyped remarks and biased behavior. To name a few, he mocked a reporter with a disability, berated a Muslim Gold Star family, questioned the objectivity of an American judge with Mexican heritage, and characterized the violence at Charlottesville as coming from "both sides." In our opinion, this variety of bigoted sentiments is indicative of a career hatemonger who expresses hostility toward outgroups of various sorts. This display of hate—seen in administrative moves as well as individual actions—laid the foundation for daily expressions of hate already occurring in the virtual sphere and condoned that expression at the micro-social level.

In particular, Trump's bigoted rhetoric gave a boost to the status of the White nationalist hate groups that organized the "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville in August 2017. Former KKK leader David Duke called that rally a "turning point" for the resurgence of the White supremacist movement. Although there has not been a census of such groups since the rally, the data support his claim. In 2014, there were 784 hate groups in the United States, an all-time low in nearly a decade.[36] In the years since Trump's arrival on the political landscape, however, the number has steadily increased. In 2015, when Trump entered the Republican primary, there were 892 hate groups. In 2016, when he was elected, there were 917, and in 2017, when he was inaugurated, there were 954.

The clearest signals to White supremacists have come from the Trump administration's actions and policy announcements. While many of these decisions may be attributed to a strong concern with Islamic terrorism, they have been interpreted by White supremacists as signs of support for their ideologies. The first signals came with the hiring of key staff who represented alt-right political interests, including chief strategist Steve Bannon, deputy assistant Sebastian Gorka, and political advisor Stephen Miller. However, the primary administrative actions that continue to send signals of support are budgetary in nature. The administration has consistently announced budget proposals that cut funding to domestic terrorism law enforcement programs, the majority of which involve identifying far-right and White supremacist plots of violence.[37] The

---

[36] Southern Poverty Law Center, "Hate Map," accessed June 26, 2018, https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map.

[37] Tal Kopan, "Domestic Terrorism Programs Would Be Cut under Trump," *CNN Politics*, last modified November 1, 2017, https://www.cnn.com/2017/10/02/politics/trump-administration-cuts-domestic-terrorism/index.html; David Neiwert, "Trump's White House Is Turning a Blind Eye to White-Supremacist Terrorism," *The Nation*, August 18, 2017, https://www.thenation.com/article/trumps-White-house-is-turning-a-blind-eye-to-White-supremacist-terrorism/.

administration also announced a revamping of the Department of Homeland Security's "Countering Violent Extremism" program, changing its title to "Countering Islamic Extremism." As part of this decision, it cut funds to "Life after Hate," a program that supports withdrawal from White supremacist activism, and a University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill program designed to counter White supremacist and "jihadist" recruitment.[38] Such actions sent a clear message to White supremacists, which is best encapsulated by Andrew Anglin, editor of the neo-Nazi website *The Daily Stormer*: "It's fair to say that if the Trump team is not listening to us directly (I assume they are), they are thinking along very similar lines."[39]

In modern times, the clearest signs of an emboldened White supremacist movement are public mobilizations that attract average people who empathize with their views. The Trump candidacy and presidency saw a pattern of increasing numbers of White supremacists at campaign rallies. One of the first appearances came at a primary campaign rally in Kentucky, where an African-American protester was assaulted by three attendees, including Matthew Heimbach, a fixture in the supremacist movement.[40] Overt displays of White supremacy, such as Confederate flags, became commonplace at Trump campaign rallies.[41] Yet, it was Trump's ascension to the presidency that truly mobilized the White supremacist movement, culminating with an inauguration party dubbed "the DeploraBall," which featured high profile far-right agitators and media celebrities.[42] Trump's presence, language, and actions continue to serve as a rallying cry to the movement, indicating that they have an empathetic ear in the Oval Office.

The Virtual Sphere

While the ideological elements of the movement were emboldened by Trump, the membership was enhanced by its use of public and private virtual spaces to organize. After the events at Charlottesville, several web hosts like GoDaddy

---

[38] Melanie Zanona, "Trump Cuts Funds to Fight Anti-Right Wing Violence," *The Hill*, August 14, 2017, http://thehill.com/policy/national-security/346552-trump-cut-funds-to-fight-anti-right-wing-violence.

[39] Neiwert, "Trump's White House."

[40] Ryan Lenz, "White Nationalist Filmed Shoving Protesters at Trump Rally Faces Charges," *Hatewatch* (blog), Southern Poverty Law Center, July 21, 2016, https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2016/07/21/White-nationalist-filmed-shoving-protesters-trump-rally-faces-charges.

[41] Jared Y. Sexton, *The People Are Going to Rise Like the Waters upon Your Shore: A Story of American Rage* (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2017).

[42] Andrew Marantz, "Trump Supporters at the DeploraBall," *New Yorker*, February 6, 2017, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/02/06/trump-supporters-at-the-deploraball.

severed ties with any White supremacist websites, claiming terms of service violations. As pressure on service providers increased, White supremacist accounts on social media and crowdfunding sites were also dropped. Exclusively White supremacist forums, such as *Stormfront* and *The Daily Stormer*, quickly drew notoriety as spaces for alt-right organizing. Currently, they function as meeting grounds for individuals to share racist and antisemitic beliefs and memes without fear of challenge or need for justification. In the wake of Charlottesville, users flocked to these sites to make light of the violence, denigrate victim Heather Heyer, and generally reinforce the aggressive position of alt-right mobilizations. Such sites move individuals further to the right ideologically, because they reinforce the legitimacy of White supremacist beliefs.[43]

White supremacists also use anonymous posting sites such as 4chan and 8chan to share memes that reflect their bigotry and violent intent. These sites are storehouses of memes that glorify the most aggressive protesters at public mobilizations, including James Alex Fields and the Dodge Challenger he used to maim protesters. Beyond these largely public forums, White supremacists organize using Discord, a chat application popular among gamers where users log on to private servers. Banned White supremacist users switched to the Gab app for their social media needs and created their own crowdfunding site Hatreon, named to troll the crowdfunding site Patreon. Despite public opposition, the movement has no shortage of online spaces and platforms to maintain its activities.

The influence of hate group presence in the virtual sphere cannot be understated. Many individuals who have been ostracized by peers and disconnected from their parents spend their days in front of computers, visiting hate-filled websites where racist and antisemitic propaganda is easily available. More influential than offline propaganda, hate websites often also include chat rooms and discussion boards where people discover the important fact that they are no longer alone. These spaces ultimately provide a feeling of community, and suddenly these individuals recognize that there are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Americans who hate Jews, Blacks, and gays. They now have plenty of like-minded company, a necessity in order to maintain marginalized movements.

A Diffuse Hate of the Perpetual Scapegoat: Concluding Thoughts

The interplay between the political sphere and the virtual sphere shows how rhetoric in the social sphere can slip between racism and antisemitism in the blink

---

[43] Elissa Lee and Laura Leets, "Persuasive Storytelling by Hate Groups Online," *American Behavioral Scientist* 45 (2002): 927-957; Vysotsky and McCarthy, "Normalizing Cyberracism."

of an eye. The political and virtual spheres are made up of identifiable groups spearheading the macro-development and distribution of ideologies, while the social sphere is comprised of individuals who often identify with communities of "like-minded individuals" who offer acceptance. While the political sphere shifts regularly, hate has always been a constant on the internet. Although the spheres used to serve as checks on one another, since 2016 they now regularly reinforce one another. As a result, individuals within the social sphere, who are largely independent of political groups or virtual hate groups, are now bombarded with the same damning message: White people are at risk and must, as David Duke has said, "fulfill the promises of Donald Trump" to "take our country back."[44]

Now back to Charlottesville. One day after the antisemitic march on the University of Virginia campus, James Alex Fields drove his car into a crowd of people, killing Heather Heyer and injuring dozens.[45] Fields was affiliated with Vanguard America, a hate group he marched with and whose symbols he wore. However, his hate crime—like the vast majority of hate crimes—was more likely a product of his exposure to general hatred and bigotry present in both the political and the virtual sphere. In this microcosm, one can see how racism quickly becomes antisemitism, particularly when influenced by the current political and virtual climate, both of which are deeply impacted by White supremacist beliefs and values.

The narrative throughout this chapter attempts to present the underlying reasons why such slippage is even possible. Historically, White supremacist movements rose at times when Whites felt threatened by the gains of non-Whites. In its recent formation, the movement is heavily driven by smaller, decentralized hate groups that employ tactics successful in leftist social movements. For example, hate groups utilize identity politics, offering an argument that is palatable to an economically wounded public. Seeing their values mirrored in Trump's language and administrative decisions, the hate groups were comfortable entering public discourse. Upon observing Trump's popularity with the public, these groups began playing the "White threat" card. This is how White supremacy entered our living rooms: Trump and the White supremacist movement emboldened average American citizens by playing on their vulnerabilities and fears of displacement. As previous research has shown, feelings of status displacement result in an increase in hate crimes against those groups that represent a threat to the majority group or the status quo.[46] According to FBI

---

44 Sheryl G. Stolberg and Brian M. Rosenthal, "Man Charged after White Nationalist Rally in Charlottesville Ends in Deadly Violence," *New York Times*, August 12, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/12/us/charlottesville-protest-white-nationalist.html.

45 In December, 2018, Fields was sentenced to life in prison for the crime.

46 Levin and Reichelmann, "From Thrill to Defensive Motivation."

statistics, there was an overall 5% increase in hate crimes nationally in 2016. The Center for Hate Studies and Extremism divulged in their "Hate Crime Analysis and Forecast for 2016/2017" that in five of the twelve largest US cities, non-White or Jewish groups were two of the three most frequent hate crime targets, while at least one of these groups topped the list in the other seven cities.[47] The Anti-Defamation League found increases in antisemitic hate crimes between 2015 and 2016 in all four states with the highest number of Jews.[48]

In this way, we see that antisemitism and racism share underlying elements. Neither can be discussed in a strict "presence/absence" way but only as a prejudice that appears dormant because it is so diffuse in society. Antisemitism, like racism in this country, is historically and culturally rooted, and therefore never absent, but rather simply awaiting the right moment when it is condoned and allowed to reappear. These prejudices are about denigration of the "other," the outsider. They yield someone to scapegoat, an "other" to blame for the misfortunes of globalization and other changes. Today, we battle knowing who it is that is hated. In fact, both the ADL and the FBI have altered their protocol for determining when a swastika represents antisemitism specifically versus racism or hate in general.[49] Today, White supremacy is no longer just hatred of Jews. The movement has now shifted to a protection of Whiteness, even though antisemitism lies at its core and Jews still represent the primary enemy.

Looking to the Future: Reducing the Influence of Antisemitic Hate Groups

White supremacy thrives on economic decay, problematic socialization, and racial separatism. Even if we cannot eliminate such groups, certain strategies and tactics exist for reducing their influence on the next generation.

Utilizing former White supremacists

Most young people who join White supremacist groups seek feelings of familial belonging, since they lack the intellectual, educational, or economic resources to

---

[47] Brian Levin and Kevin E. Grisham, "Final U.S. Status Report: Hate Crime Analysis and Forecast for 2016/2017" (Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University, San Bernandino, 2017), 9, https://csbs.csusb.edu/sites/csusb_csbs/files/Final%20Hate%20Crime%2017%20Status%20Report%20pdf.pdf.

[48] Ibid., at 18.

[49] Laura Goodstein, "Swastika Is Deemed 'Universal' Hate Symbol," *New York Times*, July 28, 2010; Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, *Hate Crime Data Collection Guidelines and Training Manuals, Version 2.0.* (Clarksburg, WV: FBI Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Division, 2015), 6, https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime-data-collection-guidelines-and-training-manual.pdf.

assume a societal position that would give them a sense of importance and power. Some of the more resourceful White supremacists have been able to eliminate antisemitic and racist activities from their lives, opting instead to join anti-racist movements. One example is T.J. Leyden, who spent fifteen years as a racist skinhead before renouncing racism and antisemitism. The impetus for Leyden's transformation was twofold: First, he overheard his three-year-old son verbalizing racial slurs and became concerned about the boy's future. Second, he was anxious about his mother possibly being marked for death by his neo-Nazi colleagues, because she had a physical disability. Leyden has since worked at the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles and given anti-racism speeches at over 100 high-schools and to law enforcement agencies around the country. Another important example is provided by the transformation of Frank Meeink, the inspiration for the film *American History X*. He transformed from an influential skinhead recruiter of teenagers to an anti-racist ADL activist and an organizer of the youth program *Harmony through Hockey*. The triggering event responsible for Meeink's conversion was the kindness of a Jewish employer who failed to fit any of the antisemitic stereotypes that Meeink had uncritically accepted.

Rewarding students for their efforts to reduce prejudice

The United States is very good at punishing bad behavior (e.g. mass incarceration) but far less willing to reward good behavior. Educational institutions across the county need to recognize students who go out of their way to promote positive intergroup relations and to reduce hate and prejudice. On two occasions, the Brudnick Center on Violence and Conflict at Northeastern University co-sponsored a national student conference on combating prejudice and hate on campus. The main purpose of the conference was to recognize students from across the United States and Canada who had been nominated by a faculty member for promoting inter-group cooperation and reducing hate on or off their campus. Hundreds of students participated in formal sessions about hate on campuses, met other student activists, and received awards for their inspirational work.

Forming student coalitions

Given that campus life is normally dominated by identity-based groups focused on serving members of marginalized constituencies, we must capitalize on coalition-building and cooperation between groups. Some examples include: the Jewish-Latino coalition at the University of Texas, the Jewish-Muslim coalition at UCLA, the University of Delaware coalition against domestic violence, the Rowan University gay-straight alliance, the student sustainability council at Portland State, and—on many campuses—the ADL Interfaith seder.

Will the White supremacist movement last? The reality is that it depends on ordinary people. We cannot control the political or the virtual spheres, but we can lessen the effectiveness of hate and antisemitism in the social sphere. Preventing the spread requires us to not become complacent. These White supremacist ideologies are accepted because they are presented in palatable ways, packaged into a wider narrative about protecting free speech. The "Unite the Right" rally has boxed conservative Americans into a corner, telling them they can either stand with "Whiteness" or against it. But that is a false dichotomy, one which always involves a perpetual scapegoat. No matter how you identify, we simply ask that you stand and speak out against bigotry, hatred, and stereotyping and in favor of the right to speak. At the same time, it is important for an honorable government to take ownership of its mistakes, respect difference, and accept the challenges of a changing society—for the perpetual scapegoat, for you, and for us!

Antisemitism, Soft Jihad, and Extremism in US and Canadian Universities: The Contextualization of National Students for Justice in Palestine (NSJP)*

Charles Asher Small and David Patterson

Adopting the Working Definition of Antisemitism formulated by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), this chapter analyzes the history, expansion, and influence of National Students for Justice in Palestine (NSJP) in academic institutions throughout the United States and Canada. In addition to explaining the ideological influences and origins of the NSJP, it draws upon evidence from social media and studies conducted by the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (JCPA), the Amcha Initiative, the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), and others to explore NSJP's network across college campuses and the vicious antisemitism and anti-Zionism that it foments there. Research findings demonstrate the organization's links with the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement and various Palestinian student organizations, as well as its endorsement of known terrorist groups and its financial connections with them. In terms of addressing the problem identified and analyzed, the chapter concludes with the following recommendations: follow the money, elevate awareness, and pursue opportunities for online interaction.

Introduction

The rise in antisemitism throughout the world has been documented extensively by organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the US Civil Rights Commission, the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), and the Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department of the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), as well as community organizations such as the Community Security Trust in the United Kingdom, the Foundation for Political Innovation (Fondapol) in France, and others.

---

* This chapter is based on research conducted by the authors for a 96-page study, with a foreword by Natan Sharansky, that was published on the website of the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP) in October 2019. For the full report, see Charles A. Small, David Patterson, and Glen Feder, *Special Report: National Students for Justice in Palestine: Antisemitism, Violent Extremism, and the Threat to North American Universities* (New York: ISGAP, 2019), https://isgap.org/post/2019/10/special-isgap-report-the-threat-to-academic-freedom-from-national-students-for-justice-in-palestine.

Contemporary antisemitism in the age of neo-liberal globalization includes an increase in political and physical attacks from the radical left (including intellectuals, academics, and mainstream journalists), the radical right (nationalists and white supremacists), and political Islamists operating in the international arena as state actors, non-state terror organisations, or as proponents of softer forms of jihad or jihad support, as examined in this chapter. Antisemitism is a complex and at times perplexing form of hatred. Some observers refer to it as the "longest hatred." It spans centuries of history, infecting different societies, religious, philosophical and political movements, and even civilizations. In the aftermath of the Holocaust, some have even argued that antisemitism illustrates the limitations of the Enlightenment and modernity itself. Manifestations of antisemitism occur in numerous ideologically-based narratives and constructed identities of belonging and Otherness, such as race and ethnicity, as well as nationalist and anti-nationalist movements. In the contemporary context of globalized relations, it appears that antisemitism has taken on new complex and changing forms that need to be decoded, mapped, and exposed. The study of antisemitism within academia, like prejudice more generally, has a long and impressive intellectual and research history, though the study of contemporary antisemitism and associated socioeconomic, political, and cultural processes, unlike that of prejudice and discrimination directed at other social groups, is almost always studied outside an organized academic framework.[1]

In the United States, extreme antisemitic rhetoric and violence have traditionally originated within white supremacist organizations such as Aryan Nations, National Vanguard, the European-American Unity and Rights Organization (EURO), the Ku Klux Klan, and others. The fact that such organizations remain largely on the fringes of US society does not mean that they should be underestimated. Nevertheless, in its most recent audit of antisemitic incidents, the ADL reports that, although 2019 saw a record number of antisemitic incidents, no more that 13 percent of those incidents were perpetrated by white supremacist groups. At the same time, the ADL's audit makes almost no mention of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), the Boycott, Divest and Sanctions (BDS) movement, or political Islam within the United States. Indeed, rather than examining political Islam (Islamism) as a potential source of antisemitism, it puts "Islamophobia" in the same category as antisemitism.[2] This is despite the fact that antisemitic discourse clothed in the rhetoric of anti-Zionism, which is especially prevalent in sectors of the US Muslim community and on the far left, is much more widespread than white supremacist propaganda. One of the most dangerous exponents of this contemporary form of antisemitism has recently found its

---

[1] Charles A. Small, ed., *Global Antisemitism: A Crisis of Modernity* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

[2] "Audit of Antisemitic Incidents: 2019 Year in Review," ADL, https://www.adl.org/audit2019, accessed May 2000.

way into the halls of higher learning. We are of course referring to National Students for Justice in Palestine (NSJP) and its campus chapters and affiliates, which form the subject of this chapter.

Since 2011, leading American universities, including Columbia University, the University of Michigan, Stanford University, UCLA, and the University of Minnesota, have hosted national conferences organized by NSJP, which has thus been granted a platform to spread its antisemitism among the most highly educated members of society. The acceptance that NSJP has found on more than 200 college and university campuses raises serious questions. This chapter examines the ideology of NSJP and its affiliate, Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), in order to expose their antisemitism, as defined by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA).

IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism

On 26 May 2016, the IHRA Plenary in Bucharest adopted the following non-legally binding Working Definition of Antisemitism:

> "Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."

To guide IHRA in its work, the following examples may serve as illustrations:

Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for 'why things go wrong.' It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective—such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.

- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the State of Israel.

Antisemitic acts are criminal when they are so defined by law (for example, denial of the Holocaust or distribution of antisemitic materials in some countries).

Criminal acts are antisemitic when the targets of attacks, whether they are people or property—such as buildings, schools, places of worship and cemeteries—are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Jewish or linked to Jews.

Antisemitic discrimination is the denial to Jews of opportunities or services available to others and is illegal in many countries.[3]

Universities in Western Europe and North America have become a front line in the struggle against antisemitism, as campus politics and academic discourse become increasingly charged with hatred. It is in these vital institutions, which form the intellectual backbone of democratic societies, that an ideological and political alliance is being forged. Once bastions of liberal thought, universities are now being infiltrated and challenged by a radicalism that presents itself as "progressive." Political Islam has adopted the rhetoric of progressivism on Western university campuses and is meeting with success in creating a "red-green alliance." Few students and faculty that espouse sympathy for this alliance and its phony rhetoric of human rights are well read in the agenda of political Islam, and few of them understand the true goals and mission of the organizations that espouse the delegitimization of Israel, Zionism, and Jewish peoplehood. As the ideological warfare heats up, there is a growing pressure to silence

---

[3] IHRA, Working Definition of Antisemitism, https://www.holocaustremembrance. com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism?focus= antisemitismandholocaustdenial, accessed August 2019.

students and faculty, both Jewish and non-Jewish, who identify openly as supporters of the Jewish state. Blatant antisemitism is rapidly becoming normalized at universities across the United States and Canada. Those who conduct research into or speak out against antisemitism are often faced with a campaign to marginalize and silence them.[4]

An example of this phenomenon is the 2011 closure of the Yale Initiative for the Interdisciplinary Study of Antisemitism (YIISA), the first university-based research center on the study of antisemitism to be established in North America. The closure of a vibrant, cutting-edge research center is an odd development. In practice, it may have been linked to a seven-year research project carried out by the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP)—the organization behind YIISA—that examined undocumented funding from Islamists to top American universities, including Yale University. The findings of this research project, which discovered more than three billion dollars in unreported Islamist funding, were presented to a top representative of the US government in Washington DC in July 2019. Subsequently, a major federal investigation into illegal funding of US universities was launched in November 2019. The official findings of this investigation were due to be presented to Congress in September 2020. These discoveries have uncovered an important source of antisemitism in American and other western universities.

On April 4, 2019, New York University announced its selection of the NYU chapter of SJP to receive the President's Service Award. NYU student Lachlan Hyatt explains:

> The President's Service Award is an annual award given out to recognize students and student organizations that have positively impacted the NYU community through significant contributions to either community service and civic engagement or student leadership and campus programming…. "By giving of your time, energy and talents, you have positively impacted the culture of this institution and members of our community," NYU said in an email to SJP.[5]

How, exactly, did the NYU SJP achieve this distinction? By staging an annual Israel Apartheid Week? By repeatedly denouncing the "Zionist entity" and its supporters—namely Jewish students and faculty—as racist, colonialist, imperialist, and illegitimate? A week later, Omar Barghouti, co-founder of the BDS movement, which has the full endorsement of NSJP, was barred from entering

---

4 Batya Ungar-Sargon, "I Was Protested at Bard College for Being a Jew," *Forward*, October 12, 2019, https://forward.com/opinion/433082/i-was-protested-at-bard-college-for-being-a-jew.

5 Lachlan Hyatt, "NYU Students for Justice in Palestine Receives Service Award from President Hamilton," *Washington Square News*, April 10, 2019, https://nyunews.com/news/2019/04/10/president-service-award-palestine-israel-divest.

the United States. This was not because he advocates Israel's destruction but because BDS includes five US-designated terrorist organizations in its membership.[6] Barghouti was on his way to speak at several venues, including NYU, as a guest of SJP.

Similarly, in April 2020, the SJP chapter at Tufts University won the so-called Collaboration Award at that year's student organization awards ceremony.[7] This was in acknowledgment of its #EndTheDeadlyExchange campaign, which attacked programs in which US police received counter-terrorism training in Israel by falsely alleging that Israeli Jews, with the support of American Jews, were training US police officers to mistreat, assault, and murder African Americans. The chapter won the award because of its success in getting many other student groups to share in and propagate this modern blood libel, a lie that was propagated by the Nation of Islam along with the SJP.

In this chapter, we will show that SJP, despite being steeped in an ideology that has its roots in Nazi antisemitism and Jihadist extremism, has in recent years not merely been tolerated but has in some cases been welcomed and celebrated by university administrations across the United States and Canada. As reported by Shiri Moshe,

> The Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs published a report asserting that SJP seeks "to isolate, demonize, and ultimately destroy" Israel with the help of terror-linked financial and ideological supporters. The report also listed multiple instances of American Jewish students being targeted for "anti-Semitic vandalism, verbal attacks, and outright violence" by SJP members, and pointed to studies conducted by Brandeis University and the monitoring group AMCHA Initiative, which "found a correlation between the presence of SJP and a rise in campus anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism."[8]

Even as antisemitism has recently found violent and fatal expression at synagogues in Pittsburgh and San Diego, as well as in assaults in the streets of Brooklyn and attacks in upstate New York and at a kosher market in New Jersey, it has simultaneously become respectable on university campuses. As this "soft" Jihadist brand of antisemitism becomes increasingly fashionable—or even

---

[6] Noah Pollak, "Support for Terrorism, Not Ideas, Kept Omar Barghouti Out of the U.S.," *Mosaic*, April 18, 2019, https://mosaicmagazine.com/picks/israel-zionism/2019/04/support-for-terrorism-not-ideas-kept-omar-barghouti-out-of-the-u-s.

[7] Jackson Richman, "Student Collaboration Award at Tufts Goes to SJP Chapter," *Jewish News Syndicate*, April 24, 2020, https://www.jns.org/student-collaboration-award-at-tufts-goes-to-sjp-chapter/.

[8] Shiri Moshe, "New Report Shows National SJP Leaders Advocating Violence, Expressing Support for Palestinian Terrorism," *Algemeiner*, January 4, 2018, https://www.algemeiner.com/2018/01/04/watchdog-national-sjp-leaders-advocate-violence-express-support-for-palestinian-terrorism.

morally mandatory—we become increasingly blind to its evil roots. The growing acceptance of the antisemitic positions adopted by popular figures on the left, such as Ilhan Omar, Rashida Tlaib, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Keith Ellison, Tamika Mallory, Linda Sarsour, and others, only makes the situation more alarming.

Historical Background and Emergence of NSJP

To better understand the nature of NSJP, we must first examine its origins and the fundamental principles underlying its ideological worldview. For instance, NSJP claims to seek "justice" for the Palestinian people. But what does that mean? The Palestinian national movement was first institutionalized by Yasser Arafat with the formation of the terror organization Fatah in 1959, followed by the creation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964. In the following decades, the PLO sought to advance its goals by perpetrating countless terrorist atrocities in Israel and around the globe. With the outbreak of the Second Intifada in 2000, PLO leaders Yasser Arafat and Marwan Barghouti founded the Palestinian National and Islamic Forces (PNIF), a consortium of five Jihadist terrorist organizations: Hamas, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Popular Front–General Command (PFLP-GC), the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF), and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ).[9] The PNIF has the endorsement of NSJP,[10] with the implication that they endorse its terrorist aims, which include the destruction of the Jewish state, as stipulated in the preamble of the Hamas Charter.[11] In its April 2017 newsletter, NSJP published an appeal from the Transnational Mobilization of Palestinian Youth in the Diaspora to the PLO to take a much harder line against the Jewish state,

---

[9] Jerusalem Media and Communications Centre, "Statement issued by the National and Islamic Forces February 10, 2001," https://web.archive.org/web/20060403190602/http://www.jmcc.org/banner/banner1/bayan/aqsbayan14.htm, accessed May 2018; International Solidarity Movement, "Statement by the Palestinian National and Islamic Forces in Hebron on the CPT Hostages in Iraq," December 6, 2005, https://palsolidarity.org/2005/12/statement-by-the-palestinian-national-and-islamic-forces-in-hebron-on-the-cpt-hostages-in-iraq.

[10] *Terrorists in Suits: The Ties between NGOs Promoting BDS and Terrorist Organizations* (Jerusalem: Ministry of Strategic Affairs and Public Diplomacy, 2019), p. 16.

[11] See "Hamas: Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement (August 18, 1988)," https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp. See also Dimitry A. Kapustyan and Matt Nelson, *The Soul of Terror: The Worldwide Conflict between Islamic Terrorism and the Modern World* (Washington, DC: International Affairs Press, 2007), pp. 122-151; Yonah Alexander, *Palestinian Religious Terrorism: Hamas and Islamic Jihad* (Ardsley, NY: Transnational Publishers, 2002), pp. 47-69.

declaring that "our cause has always been defined by its [the PLO's] collective structure and philosophies."[12]

Both Hamas and the PLO trace their origins to the Muslim Brotherhood, as do most of the Jihadist movements in the world.[13] In its charter, Hamas identifies itself as a branch of the Brotherhood, while Yasser Arafat joined the Brotherhood in 1946, receiving his ideological indoctrination under the tutelage of Nazi war criminal Haj Amin el-Husseini. In 1953, Arafat became Chairman of the Brotherhood's General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS) at the University of Cairo.[14] GUPS was a precursor of NSJP, which declared its solidarity with GUPS in 2016.[15] In 1995, a graduate student at the University of California, Berkeley, Hatem Bazian, headed the local chapter of the long-established Muslim Students Association (MSA), an organization that openly identified with the Muslim Brotherhood for decades. Over the years, Bazian came to realize that the organization's open identification with the Muslim Brotherhood impeded its recruitment and development. In 2001, Bazian renamed the San Francisco chapter of GUPS as "Students for Justice in Palestine."

While MSA advocates an Islamist agenda in keeping with that of the Muslim Brotherhood,[16] SJP appeals to a larger network of "leftist" individuals and organizations to push its political agenda under the guise of progressivism and human rights. Both organizations use the classic Brotherhood method of forming temporary alliances. Expressly tied to the Muslim Brotherhood and its offshoot Hamas, SJP's goal is the same as theirs, namely the destruction of the Jewish state. Their defining mission is "the annihilation of the Zionist entity in all of its economic, political, military, and cultural manifestations."[17] According to this view, the very presence of the Jewish people threatens the existence of the Palestinians. Therefore the "justice" sought by NSJP demands the removal, and perhaps ultimately the extermination, of the Jewish people of "Palestine."

---

[12] Transnational Mobilization of Palestinian Youth in the Diaspora, "A Call to Immediately Suspend Security Coordination," *NSJP Newsletter*, no. 2 (April 2017), https://mailchi.mp/9b01b98ff05d/5fasm6lezr-2011041#palestinianvoices.

[13] This point is explored in David Patterson, *A Genealogy of Evil: Anti-Semitism from Nazism to Islamic Jihad* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[14] Said K. Aburish, *Arafat: From Defender to Dictator* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999), pp. 23-24.

[15] See "National Students for Justice in Palestine Stand in Solidarity with GUPS SFSU," *National Students for Justice in Palestine*, https://www.nationalsjp.org/support-gups-sfsu.html, accessed June 2020.

[16] For a thorough account of the origins and essence of the Muslim Brotherhood, see Patterson, *Genealogy of Evil*, ch. 4.

[17] Barry Rubin, *Revolution Until Victory?: The Politics and History of the PLO* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 22.

In 1974, the United Nations recognized the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. In 1977, PLO deputy chief Abu Iyad asserted: "An independent state on the West Bank and Gaza is the beginning of the final solution."[18] When the Oslo Agreement, which was meant to pave the way for a two-state solution, was signed in 1993, Sakhr Habash, a PLO ideologue, similarly commented that, once the Palestinians had control of Gaza and the West Bank, they would proceed to the "final solution,"[19] employing the same language as the Nazis. Inasmuch as NSJP is an open supporter of the PLO and Fatah, it supports this ultimate aim.

In order to understand the nature of NSJP's campus activities across the United States and Canada, it is important to understand the roots of its efforts to intimidate and attack Jewish students and suppress speech and programming in support of Israel, both inside and outside the classroom, in the pursuit of "justice" in Palestine. Acccording to the aforementioned report by Shiri Moshe, for example, Mohammed Nabulsi, an organizer of NSJP's 2017 National Conference, "wrote in August 2015 that activists with the boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement should 'support Palestinian resistance groups … such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Hamas and Palestine Islamic Jihad.'"[20] In an article posted on the website *Campus Unmasked*, Rob Shishock writes: "Samer Alhato, a Saint Xavier University student and workshop leader at the 2017 NSJP, tweeted 'Barack Obama, shut up about gay marriage and go kill all the Jews.' He also made no secret that he's a fan of terrorist group Hamas, saying, 'YES I SUPPORT HAMAS! and 'Hamas promotes peace.'"[21]

Hamas emerged as the militant Palestinian wing of the Muslim Brotherhood on December 9, 1987, immediately after the outbreak of the First Intifada. It was founded by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and his comrades Dr Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi and Mahmoud al-Zahar.[22] In a Palestinian television broadcast in 2000, Yassin stated: "None of the Jews refrain from committing any possible evil…. They are the ones who must be butchered and killed, as Allah the Almighty said."[23]

---

[18] Ibid., at p. 47.

[19] Efraim Karsh, *Arafat's War: The Man and His Battle for Israeli Conquest* (New York: Grove Press, 2003), p. 62.

[20] Moshe, "New Report Shows National SJP Leaders."

[21] Rob Shimshock, "Pro-Palestinian Students Support Hamas," *Campus Unmasked*, January 12, 2018, https://campusunmasked.com/2018/01/12/pro-palestinian-students-support-terrorism. The website Canary Mission, which tracks antisemitic and anti-Zionist activity on campuses, provides dozens of similar examples of SJP members and leadership openly supporting Palestinian terrorist groups (https://canarymission.org).

[22] Zaki Chehab, *Inside Hamas: The Untold Story of the Militant Islamic Movement* (New York: Nation Books, 2007), p. 25.

[23] "PA TV Broadcasts Call for Killing Jews and Americans," MEMRI, October 13, 2000, http://www.memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Area=sd&ID=SP13800.

Moreover, he makes "no distinctions between Jews, Zionists, and Israelis."[24] Article 15 of the Hamas Charter states: "It is necessary that scientists, educators and teachers, information and media people, as well as the educated masses, especially the youth and sheikhs of the Islamic movements, should take part in the operation of awakening (the masses)." As if on cue, NSJP has followed this dictate in its spread of virulent antisemitism and anti-Zionism, as demonstrated, for example, during its national conference at the University of Houston in 2017.[25] NSJP members engage in propaganda campaigns calculated to incite hatred against Jewish people in general and Jewish students in particular, just as Hamas commands. This antisemitism runs like a red line through all NSJP's materials and social media, including YouTube videos posted by SJP chapters. Here lies a key to NSJP's successful activity on college campuses, which focuses on students and faculty members in order to spread its influence. It follows that NSJP's antisemitic activism is promoted not by under-educated white supremacists but by some of society's most educated individuals.

Founding of NSJP

In June 2010, the US Palestinian Community Network (USPCN) organized the Palestine Program at the US Social Forum.[26] Founded in 2006, the USPCN is a grassroots organization that appears to have been created to promote the demonization and delegitimization of the Jewish state. The Forum grew out of the BDS movement's National Committee (BNC). The BNC has ties to multiple US-designated terrorist organizations, including members of the PNIF. Under the auspices of the USPCN, the Forum provided the venue for the founding of NSJP,[27] with the support of American Muslims for Palestine (AMP),[28] a "national education and grassroots-based organization" founded in 2006 and "dedicated to educating the American public about Palestine."[29] The US Social Forum Palestine Program included an AMP call to establish National SJP. The

---

[24] Ziad Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza: Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Jihad* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 26.

[25] Sara Dogan, "The University of Houston: Promoting Genocide and Praising Hitler," *Stop University Support for Terrorists*, October 25, 2017, https://stopuniversity supportforterrorists.org/news/university-houston-promoting-genocide-and-praising-hitler.

[26] "Welcome to Palestine at the US Social Forum!," US Social Forum, October 10, 2011, https://www.ussocialforum.net, accessed July 2019.

[27] "SJP National Convention," US Social Forum, December 21, 2011, https://www.ussocialforum.net, accessed June 2019.

[28] See "American Muslims for Palestine," ADL, https://www.adl.org/resources/profiles/american-muslims-for-palestine, accessed October 2019.

[29] "About AMP," AMP, https://www.ampalestine.org, accessed July 2019.

AMP continues to have ties with Hamas terrorists.[30] The antisemitism that characterizes these entities is a tacit part of NSJP's discourse and propaganda and it is rapidly spreading across the United States via college campuses. In addition, Hatem Bazian, AMP's Chairman,[31] was the main speaker at the Forum, along with AMP's marketing director Julia Salameh.[32] Awad Hamdan, AMP's National Programs Director at the time,[33] was the organizer and contact person.

At the 2010 US Social Forum, Jamal Juma, a co-founder of the BNC, accused Israel of being an "apartheid state."[34] Speaking live via video from Ramallah,[35] he stated: "The broadest Palestinian civil society coalition works to lead and support the BDS movement."[36] BDS founder Omar Barghouti, in a lecture at the University of California, Riverside, in 2014, incited hatred of Jews by engaging in what the IHRA definition refers to as rhetorical manifestations of antisemitism directed toward Jewish individuals. Invoking two perennial antisemitic tropes, Barghouti reiterated the blood libel by asserting that Israeli soldiers were "hunting children" and also echoed the world Jewish conspiracy canard by accusing "Israel and its lobby groups" of controlling Congress and the media. Official course credits were offered to Riverside students for attending the Social Forum in eight different university courses.[37]

NSJP's Continued Association with Terrorism

NSJP's connection to terrorism continued after the 2010 Social Forum. At its 2012 national conference, a session was devoted to the We Divest campaign, a boycott effort endorsed by the BNC. Another session at the 2012 conference included a speech from Khader Adnan, via live video. Adnan is a known leader

---

30 See *Terrorists in Suits*, pp. 68-71.

31 "American Muslims for Palestine," NGO Monitor, February 15, 2021, https://www.ngo-monitor.org/ngos/american-muslims-for-palestine-amp/, accessed July 2021.

32 "AMP Holds First High School Training of 2012," AMP, February 13, 2012, https://www.ampalestine.org, accessed July 2019.

33 "SJP National Convention."

34 Ibid.

35 "Jamal Juma' at the Thursday Evening Plenary," US Social Forum, June 25, 2010, https://web.archive.org/web/20120119075751/http://ussf.palestineconference.org/2010/06/jamal-juma-at-thursday-evening-plenary, accessed July 2018 (see also http://original.livestream.com/freespeechtv/video?clipId=flv_707ed134-f6d1-4a30-8782-b4595d0f31c0).

36 "Palestinian BDS National Committee," BDS, https://bdsmovement.net/bnc, accessed April 2018.

37 "Three University of California Schools Violate University Policy and State Law to Sponsor Antisemitic Events Promoting Boycott of Israel," Amcha Initiative, https://amchainitiative.org/three-uc-schools-sponsor-boycott-event/, accessed May 2020.

of PIJ,[38] which traces its origins to 1979, when it arose from Egyptian Islamic Jihad as an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood.[39] PIJ views Israel as "the main enemy of [all] Muslims" and is therefore dedicated to "the destruction of the State of Israel [and the extermination of the Jews]."[40] The movement's slogans include: "Jihad is the way of liberation" and "Victory or martyrdom are the way of jihad."[41] The ultimate objective of PIJ is to rid not merely Palestine but the entire world of the "Jewish cancer" that plagues humanity. This is the mission that Khader Adnan has set himself, with the clear support of NSJP. NSJP has also shown support for Adnan on social media, even publishing a solidarity statement.[42]

At its 2013 national conference, during a session on mass incarceration, NSJP made clear its intention to work with Addameer, a support organization for political prisoners based in the Palestinian Territories founded by PFLP leaders[43] and run by at least eight PFLP members:[44] Abdullatif Ghaith (co-founder),[45] Khalida Jarrar (co-founder, imprisoned for ties to the PFLP),[46] Yaqoub Odeh,[47]

---

[38] Ed Payne and Kareem Khadder, "Israel Releases Islamic Jihad Member Famous for Hunger Strikes," *CNN*, July 12, 2015, https://edition.cnn.com/2015/07/11/world/israel-palestinian-detainee-released/index.html; Isabel Kershner, "Palestinian on Hunger Strike to Be Freed Without Court Ruling," *New York Times*, February 21, 2012, https://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/22/world/middleeast/palestinian-on-hunger-strike-to-be-freed-without-court-ruling.html?action=click&contentCollection=Opinion&module=RelatedCoverage&region=Marginalia&pgtype=article.

[39] For a thorough examination of the genealogy of the links between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Nazis and between the Brotherhood and PIJ, Hamas, and other terrorist organizations, see Patterson, *A Genealogy of Evil*, ch. 5.

[40] Alexander, *Palestinian Religious Terrorism*, p. 29.

[41] Meir Hatina, *Islam and Salvation in Palestine: The Islamic Jihad Movement* (Tel Aviv: The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 2001), p. 163.

[42] National SJP, Facebook, February 22, 2012, accessed July 2018.

[43] Addameer, *Annual Report 2003*, April 7, 2004, https://web.archive.org/web/20050304101119/http://www.addameer.org:80/2004/annual04.html, accessed July 2018.

[44] Addameer, "Board and General Assembly 2018," https://web.archive.org/web/20050304101119/http://www.addameer.org:80/2004/annual04.html, accessed July 2018; Addameer, "Board and General Assembly 2015," https://web.archive.org/web/20151001221155/http://www.addameer.org/about/board-general-assembly, accessed July 2018.

[45] "PFLP marks the 8th anniversary of the death of Abu-Ali Mustafa," *Al-Maan News* (Arabic), August 2009, http://www.maannews.net/Content.aspx?id=221904, accessed July 2018.

[46] "Ordering the Leader Comrade Khalida Jarrar to Administrative Detention Will Not Suppress the Resistance," PFLP, July 2017, https://english.pflp.ps/2017/07/15/pflp-ordering-the-leader-comrade-khalida-jarrar-to-administrative-detention-will-not-suppress-the-resistance, accessed July 2018.

[47] "A PFLP Celebration of Its Veteran Activists," PFLP (Arabic), February 2014, https://pflp.ps/post/7488/الله-برام-خاص-حفل-في-القدامى-مناضليها-من-كوكبة-تكرم-الشعبية, accessed July 2018.

Mahmoud Jeddah,[48] Rinad Zoarob, Bashir Al-Khairy,[49] Ayman Nasser (imprisoned for ties to the PFLP),[50] and Salah Hamouri (imprisoned for ties to the PFLP).[51] At its 2014 national conference, NSJP once again hosted a member of the terrorist-affiliated BNC. The closing plenary featured Hind Awwad, the national coordinator of the BNC in Ramallah.[52] NSJP's support for terrorism continued at its 2015 national conference, where Rasmea Odeh was the keynote speaker. Odeh was convicted for her participation in two terrorist bombings and for having been a member of the PFLP.[53] At the organization's 2018 national conference, NSJP leader Mohammad Nabulsi led hundreds of student attendees in a chant promoting violence, which included the words: "Intifada, Intifada, long live the Intifada." The video has since been removed from social media.

NSJP has also shown support for Palestinians convicted of terrorism who are being held in Israeli prisons, including PFLP terrorist Bilal Kayed.[54] In addition, NSJP retweeted a message from Jewish Voice for Peace in support of Marwan Barghouti. Barghouti was a leader of Fatah's armed wing known as the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade during the Second Intifada. In 2004, he was convicted by an Israeli court of five counts of murder, as well as membership of a terrorist organization.[55] In July 2018, NSJP wrote a Facebook post honoring the memory

---

[48] "Stories about the Social Solidity and the Bitter Separation," *Al-Araby Al-Jadeed* (Arabic), April 2017, https://www.alaraby.co.uk/society/2017/4/20/-إضراب-الكرامة-قصص مقدسية-عن-الصمود-ومرارة-الفراق, accessed July 2018.

[49] "PFLP Commemorated the 13th Anniversary to the Martyrdom of the Shahid Leader Abu-Ali Mustafa and Revived Its Loyalty to Him," PFLP (Arabic), August 2014, accessed July 2018.

[50] "Decision on Case #2715/12," Psakdin (Hebrew), January 2013, https://www.psakdin.co.il/Court/#2715-12-מ'ע-בתיק-החלטה.XQdmXPZuKmH, accessed July 2018.

[51] "Why Did Salah Hamouri Choose to Be in Israeli Prison over Being Free in France?," *Palinfo* (Arabic), August 2017, https://www.palinfo.com/news/2017/8/23/-لماذا اختار-صلاح-الحموري-السجن-على-الابعاد-لفرنسا؟, accessed July 2018.

[52] Adri Nieuwhof, "Palestinian Boycott Coordinator: 'The Movement Has a Huge Impact,'" *Electronic Intifada*, June 14, 2010, https://electronicintifada.net/content/palestinian-boycott-coordinator-movement-has-huge-impact/8874; Kim Bullimore, "Palestinians Speak on Growing Boycott of Israel," February 5, 2011, BDS, https://bdsmovement.net/news/palestinians-speak-growing-boycott-israel.

[53] US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, "Convicted Terrorist Stripped of Citizenship, Ordered Deported for Failing to Disclose Ties to Deadly Bombing," Department of Homeland Security, August 18, 2017, https://www.ice.gov/news/releases/convicted-terrorist-stripped-citizenship-ordered-deported-failing-disclose-ties-deadly.

[54] "Palestinian Prisoners' Leader Bilal Kayed Released Today in Victory Secured in 71-Day Hunger Strike," Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network, December 12, 2016, https://samidoun.net/2016/12/palestinian-prisoners-leader-bilal-kayed-released-today-in-victory-secured-in-71-day-hunger-strike.

[55] "Profile: Marwan Barghouti," BBC, June 2, 2011, https://web.archive.org/web/20170726151927/https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-13628771, accessed July 2018.

of Ghassan Kanafani, a leading member of the PFLP. In the post, NSJP praised "his voice" as "one of the Palestinian revolution and the Palestinian people."[56] The original NSJP post included a direct link to the PFLP's website. It was shared by 25 entities, including the SJP's branch at UCLA. After nine hours, the post was edited and the link to the PFLP website was removed.

On November 2, 2017, several days after NSJP's annual national conference ended, Irene Lucia, then a member of NSJP's steering committee, uploaded a photo of herself along with other committee members and organizers of the conference. Sixteen people were tagged in the photo, including Raphael Mina Eissa, Mohammad Abd Al-Aziz (organizer), Ayesha Khan, Parsa Nowruzi (Hosseini), and Omar Jadallah-Karraa. All five have demonstrated public support for terrorists on their social media accounts and have promoted BDS campaigns through their local SJP chapters. Eissa, for example, glorified Rasmea Odeh on Twitter, calling her a "Palestinian hero."

NSJP and Palestinian Student Organizations on Campus

NSJP serves as a unifying umbrella for numerous Palestinian student organizations across the United States, most prominently Students for Justice in Palestine.[57] While individual chapters are autonomous, with some groups even choosing their own names—such as Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA), Students for Peace and Justice in Palestine (SPJP), Students for Palestine (SFP), Students United for Palestinian Equal Rights (SUPER), Students Allied for Freedom and Equality (SAFE), Palestine Solidarity Alliance (PSA), Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC), Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR)—they all support the so-called "Points of Unity," which were adapted from the original 2005 BDS call. NSJP adopted these points at its first national conference at Columbia University in 2011.[58] They read as follows:

1. Ending Israel's occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall;
2. Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; and
3. Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of the Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN Resolution 194.[59]

---

56 NSJP also posted it on Twitter. See National SJP, Twitter, July 8, 2018.

57 "About Us," NSJP, https://www.nationalsjp.org/about-NSJP.html, accessed August 2019.

58 "Points of Unity," NSJP, https://www.nationalsjp.org/points-of-unity.html, accessed August 2019.

59 Ibid.

The NSJP's reference to Arab lands is a clear Jihadist invocation of the *waqf*, which refers to lands historically occupied by invading Muslim armies, while the effect of dismantling the Wall would be to remove a barrier that has made it significantly more difficult for Jihadists to carry out terror attacks and suicide bombings. Inasmuch as the word *colonization* is laden with connotations of evil, point 1 is an example of a rhetorical manifestation of antisemitism, as defined by the IHRA. With regard to point 2, Arab-Palestinian *citizens* of Israel already enjoy full equal rights under the law. As for UN Resolution 194 of December 11, 1948, scholars have demonstrated that the resolution does not, in fact, call for an *unconditional* right of return.[60]

NSJP steers the agendas of student groups by coordinating inter-campus events, organizing national campaigns such as the "Right to Education Tour," publishing a national newsletter, assisting chapters with BDS resolutions, coordinating media and press coverage, connecting chapters and individuals with legal aid, and, most importantly, planning the annual NSJP conference.[61] The national conference not only enables student organizers to attend highly sophisticated skill-building and political development workshops and meet with fellow organizers but also provides a platform through which the leaders of NSJP and prominent pro-Palestinian activists can direct students in the United States from coast to coast. By providing a space for the dissemination of anti-semitic tropes, the conference allows NSJP's steering committee and founders, in particular AMP, to radicalize the antisemitic discourse on college campuses. In addition to being compared to Nazi Germany, the Jewish state is typically accused of every kind evil, from colonialism to racism, and from apartheid to human rights violations. Whereas under the Nazis the existence of the Jew was objectionable and illegitimate, under the ideology that drives the NSJP it is the existence of the Jewish state that has become objectionable and illegitimate. This too is a straightforward illustration of the IHRA definition of antisemitism, insofar as antisemitic Jewish tropes are applied to the Jewish state.

SJP chapters across the country consistently incite antisemitism, as defined by the IHRA, via social media, protests, violence, and hate speech. This incitement has been endorsed by SJP's university chapters, thus ultimately implicating each university as a whole, since official campus clubs require approval by the relevant university administration. The following sections provide a geographical overview of some of the antisemitic rhetoric that NSJP has spread throughout the country—rhetoric that does not necessarily stop where the campus ends.

---

[60] See Eli E. Hertz, "UN Resolution 194: Arab Leaders Point to Resolution 194 as Proof That Arab Refugees Have a 'Right to Return'—False," *Myth and Facts*, August 13, 2009, http://www.mythsandfacts.org/Conflict/10/Resolution-194.pdf.

[61] "About Us," NSJP, https://www.nationalsjp.org/about-nsjp.html, accessed August 2019.

This is not an issue of a few bad apples that support antisemitism: it is a systematic problem that is being nurtured at NSJP conferences by individuals and chapters spreading the roots of Jew-hatred.[62]

East Coast

Among the most prevalent of the antisemitic canards that SJP spreads around the country is the idea that Zionism is racism, in keeping with UN Resolution 3379 of 1975. Never mind that this resolution was actually revoked by UN Resolution 4686 in 1991. Statements to this effect are manifestations of the seventh example of the Working Definition of Antisemitism, which clarifies that antisemitism includes denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination by claiming that the very existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor. In 2012, for example, the Palestine Solidarity Committee of Harvard College published a statement on Israeli society's alleged racist treatment of Ethiopian Jews as evidence that Zionism is racism. The SJP chapter at Columbia University issued a similar statement in 2012, with the moral demand that the existence of the Jewish state must come to an end. The SJP chapter at Brooklyn College also published a statement to this effect on September 2, 2013, and again on October 11, 2014. On January 7, 2016, the SJP chapter at Penn State issued a statement to the effect that racism is the foundation of Zionism, which implies that all Zionists are *necessarily* racists and must be dealt with accordingly. Just over a year later, on March 10, 2017, the SJP chapter at Georgetown University declared that Zionism is the equivalent of Islamophobia, thereby implying that it is both racist and Islamophobic to oppose Jihadism.

Adopting another antisemitic trope, SJP chapters frequently equate Zionism with Nazism and Israelis with Nazis. In a tweet posted on April 9, 2003, the SJP chapter at Rutgers University declared: "The world has stopped Nazism. It has stopped Apartheid. Now it must stop Zionism." Since stopping Nazism required the total defeat of Nazi Germany, this statement appears to imply that Israel and its supporters should also be vanquished. This comes close to "calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews," which is mentioned in the first example of the Working Definition. Similarly on May 12, 2017, Students Supporting Israel at City College in New York reported that an event featuring New York Israeli Consul General Dani Davin was invaded by SJP students, who

---

[62] Images of all the examples discussed below can be found in Charles Asher Small, David Patterson, and Glen Feder, *Special Report: National Students for Justice in Palestine: Antisemitism, Violent Extremism, and the Threat to North American Universities* (New York: ISGAP, 2019), https://isgap.org/post/2019/10/special-isgap-report-the-threat-to-academic-freedom-from-national-students-for-justice-in-palestine. For further examples of SJP's use of antisemitic tropes, see https://canarymission.org.

shouted him down with slogans comparing Israelis to Nazis. Matthias Küntzel describes such statements, which fall under the tenth example of the Working Definition, as "a specific form of Holocaust denial,"[63] which in turn falls under the Working Definition's fourth example of antisemitism. Furthermore, by suggesting that the policies of the Nazis were no worse than Israel's current policies, such statements also fall within the scope of the Working Definition's fifth example of antisemitism, namely accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.

Some of the oldest attempts to demonize the Jewish people include the accusation of Jewish deicide and blood libels.[64] Many such accusations can be found throughout SJP's propaganda, for example in an image showing a Palestinian child crucified by Israelis. Such messaging falls under the Working Definition's ninth example of antisemitism: "using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g. claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis." In addition, it falls within the scope of the seventh example, denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, by undermining their historical and religious ties to the Land of Israel by suggesting that Jesus was a Palestinian rather than a Jew. Other manifestations of classic antisemitism include SJP tweets to the effect that the "Zionazi media" have hypnotized the world. This kind of antisemitic slur is consistent with the Working Definition's second example of antisemitism, which includes making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews and their hidden power, such as the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government, or other societal institutions.

Midwest

On September 24, 2011, the University of Minnesota's SJP chapter shared a post on social media that reads, in part, as follows: "I am Israel. I have the power to control American policy. … All the forces of the world are powerless against me, including the UN…. I influence the American mainstream media too, and you will always find the news tailored to my favor." Such allegations regarding the existence of a Jewish conspiracy fall squarely within the scope of the Working Definition's second example of antisemitism, as discussed above.

As regards other examples of antisemitism, the recurring equation of Zionism with racism appears in a social media post by a member of the SJP chapter

---

[63] Matthias Küntzel, *Jihad and Jew-Hatred: Islamism, Nazism and the Roots of 9/11*, trans. Colin Meade (New York: Telos Press, 2007), p. 118.

[64] "Antisemitism," Yad Vashem, https://www.yadvashem.org, accessed July 2019; Peter M. Marendy, "Anti-Semitism, Christianity, and the Catholic Church: Origins, Consequences, and Responses," *Journal of Church and State* 47, no. 2 (2005).

at the University of Nebraska at Omaha from December 20, 2012. On December 3, 2014, the University of Minnesota's SJP chapter posted statements on social media comparing contemporary Israeli policies to those of the Nazis. Similarly, on January 2, 2017, in a variation on the "Zionism is racism" theme, the SJP chapter at the University of Illinois equated Zionism with white supremacism. This calumny also falls within the scope of the Working Definition's seventh example of antisemitism, since it would deny the Jewish people their right to self-determination by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor that would exclude all non-white people.

West Coast

The antisemitic axiom that Zionism equals racism can be found not only throughout the University of California system but also at other universities up and down the West Coast. As mentioned above in the context of the Midwest, we have already seen a shift from "Zionism is racism" to "Zionism is white supremacism" in SJP posts. On May 12, 2017, Students United for Palestinian Equal Rights at the University of Washington similarly made the jump from "Zionism is racism" to "Zionism is settler colonialism." While avoiding the word "racism," the latter statement still falls squarely within the scope of the Working Definition's seventh example of antisemitism, since it denies the Jewish people their right to self-determination by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a colonialist endeavor. It is abundantly clear that Israel and the right of the Jewish people to self-determination are not accepted in any form by the SJP and their associates.

On May 26, 2014, the SJP chapter at the University of Southern California posted an image of the Pope at the "Apartheid Wall," stating its desire that he might speak out for the sake of "justice" in Bethlehem, which "looks like [the] Warsaw Ghetto." In a similar vein, on October 22, 2015, the SJP chapter at UC Riverside spread messages comparing Netanyahu to Hitler, thus implying that Israeli policies resemble Nazi policies. Both these posts are clear manifestations of the Working Definition's tenth example of antisemitism.

A member of the SJP chapter at UC Santa Barbara posted a photo on Instagram[65] in which she tagged Sarah Zeidat, a member of the NSJP's steering committee, and thanked her for a t-shirt with "Jesus is Palestinian" written across it. This slogan falls within the scope of the Working Definition's seventh example of antisemitism, denying Jewish historical ties to the Land of Israel, as well as the ninth example, namely using symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism, such as claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel, to

---

[65] Clarissa Bitar, Instagram, November 6, 2018, accessed August 2019.

characterize Israel or Israelis. On October 23, 2012, a member of Coloradans for Justice in Palestine posted the following on social media: "I threw a water bottle at a Jew yesterday. It felt so good." Such justifications of violence against Jews are sadly not uncommon. In another example, a member of the San Diego State University chapter of SJP posted: "I hope you all have sweet dreams of slaughtering Jews." This clearly falls within the scope of the Working Definition's first example of antisemitism, namely calling for, aiding or justifying the killing or harming of Jews.

While some SJP members applaud the Holocaust, others compare Israeli actions to the Holocaust. One example of this appears in a social media post by an SJP member from Portland State University from July 27, 2014. Previously, on December 16, 2012, the same student had tweeted that the lowest tier of hell is reserved for Jews and rapists. What, then, should be done with Jews? What should be done with rapists? Such posts fall under the Working Definition's tenth example of antisemitism, namely drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis. They also fall within the scope of the first example, which includes calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews.

South

On August 1, 2014, the SJP chapter at the University of North Florida (UNF) posted a message equating Zionism with Nazism. On the same day, the SJP chapter at Florida International University put up the same post, suggesting a coordinated effort. On February 24, 2015, the SJP chapter at UNF posted the following statement: "Israel: the next Nazi Germany," a post repeated on the same day by the SJP chapter at Florida Atlantic University, again indicating a coordinated strategy. On June 8, 2017, the same group equated Zionism with fascism. Not long afterward, on August 30, 2017, the SJP chapter at UNF put up a post equating Zionism with white supremacism. The SJP chapter at the University of South Florida similarly posted on July 20, 2014, that the Jewish claim to being the "chosen people" is the same as the Nazi claim to being the "master race." On August 31, 2018, the SJP chapter at Georgia State University followed suit with the following statement: "It is not an accident Israel's fascism invokes the language of Hitler. Netanyahu is the direct ideological heir of the early architects of Zionist fascism, who openly collaborated with the Nazis." According to these posts, all Zionist Jews are Nazis, fascists, and white supremacists. Such statements obviously fall within the scope of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism.

Canada

So far, we have cited several examples of the antisemitism that typifies NSJP and its affiliates across the United States. However, this phenomenon is also wide-

spread in Canada. On March 11, 2012, for example, the University of Windsor Palestinian Solidarity Group posted a YouTube video entitled "Palestine— An Israeli Holocaust." In a Facebook post that appeared around the same time, former SJP Ryerson Vice President Omar Said, when asked why there should not be a Holocaust Education Week on campus, stated: "This week should include the Palestinian Holocaust and shouldn't just be toward the Jewish Holocaust." Such statements fall under the Working Definition's tenth example of antisemitism, which includes drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis. In addition, as noted above, such comparisons are a form of Holocaust denial. When antisemites in NSJP-affiliated organizations are not comparing Israelis to Nazis, they are calling for genuine Nazis to repeat the Holocaust. On May 4, 2014, for example, a member of SPHR at Concordia University tweeted as follows: "Israel attacks Syria, it's times like this I wish Hitler would rise from the dead." This, of course, is a manifestation of the Working Definition's first example of antisemitism, namely calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology.

On June 10, 2012, the SJP chapter at the University of Scarborough circulated a photo of a young white man and a young man black with the following caption: "Imported White Israeli-Zionists angrily harassing a Black man just because of the color of his skin." The implication of this statement, which falls under the Working Definition's seventh example of antisemitism, is that the Zionist effort to establish and sustain a Jewish State is not only a racist endeavor but a *white* racist endeavor, as if all "Israeli-Zionists" were white. On October 8, 2013, a member of SPHR at Calgary University put up a similar post with the familiar "Zionism is racism" slogan. Time after time, finally, we see the antisemites who portray Jews and Zionists as racists calling on Hitler and the Nazis to exterminate the Jews. Manifestations of such examples of antisemitism can be found in posts from members of SPHR at McMaster University from May 22, 2014, June 22, 2014, and July 11, 2015. The latter approvingly depicts Hitler declaring: "The only religion I respect is Islam. The only prophet I admire is the Prophet Mohammad."

Other Incidents Involving
SJP Members

SJP's attacks on Jews go beyond its postings on social media and statements by its featured speakers. In 2010, Husam Zakharia, the head of UC Berkeley's Students for Justice in Palestine, allegedly rammed Jessica Felber, a Jewish former student, with a shopping cart filled with toys. At the time, she was holding a sign stating: "Israel Wants Peace," as part of Israel Peace Week. The event was meant to counteract rallies that were taking place in the context of

Israel Apartheid Week. Zakharia was arrested on suspicion of battery, and Felber was granted a restraining order against him.[66]

In 2008, a fight broke out at UC Berkeley after Palestinian flags were hung off a balcony overlooking a pro-Israel concert. Gabe Weiner and Yehuda De Sa, both members of the Zionist Freedom Alliance, went to the balcony to ask that the flags be removed. When they reached the second floor of the building a fight broke out between them and the three Palestinian students who had displayed the flags. Two of the Palestinian students, Dina Omar and Husam Zakharia, who were members of SJP, were cited for one count of battery, and Weiner was cited for three.[67] The fact that this incident turned violent may not be unconnected to the fact that SJP frequently endorses statements calling for, aiding or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion. As previously noted, such statements fall within the scope of the Working Definition's first example of antisemitism.

In 2014, SJP members at Loyola University, Chicago, verbally assaulted their Jewish peers by hurling insults at them such as "How does it feel to be an occupier?" and "How does it feel to be guilty of ethnic cleansing?"[68] before creating a human wall to block their attempt to advertise trips to Israel. Nashiha Alam, an executive board member of the Loyola chapter of SJP, posted footage of the incident on Instagram with the caption: "What happens when you try to table for a racist manifest destiny trip to Israel at my school."[69] This falls within the scope of the Working Definition's third example of antisemitism, namely accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even acts committed by non-Jews. It is also a manifestation of the Working Definition's eleventh example of antisemitism, namely holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the State of Israel.

Also in 2014, at Temple University, a Jewish student named Daniel Vessal was physically assaulted and called a "kike," "baby killer," "stupid Jew," and "Zionist pig" SJP member Aziz Jalil.[70] Vessal approached the SJP table during "Temple

---

66 Frances Dinkelspiel, "Jewish Student Sues UC Berkeley over Assault by Palestine Supporter," *Berkeleyside*, March 7, 2011, https://www.berkeleyside.com/2011/03/07/jewish-student-sues-uc-berkeley-over-assault-by-palestine-supporter.

67 Will Kane and Valerie Woolard, "Thursday Night's Altercation May Be Classified As Hate Crime by Police Pending Investigation," *The Daily Californian*, November 17, 2008, https://archive.dailycal.org/article.php?id=103587.

68 Matt Lamb, "SJP Students Hurl Insults at Jewish Peers, Protest Their Israel Display (VIDEO)," *The College Fix*, September 16, 2014, https://www.thecollegefix.com/sjp-students-hurl-insults-at-jewish-peers-protest-their-israel-display-video.

69 Ibid.

70 "Temple Univ. Jewish Student Punched in Face and Called 'Kike' in Antisemitic Attack," *Truth Revolt*, August 20, 2014, https://www.truthrevolt.org/news/temple-univ-jewish-student-punched-face-and-called-kike-anti-semitic-attack, accessed August 2019.

Fest," the university's information event for campus clubs and activities. A conversation ensued, and Jalil punched Vessal in the face. While SJP denies that Jalil is a member of SJP and claims that he is merely an "acquaintance" of the group,[71] he was one of the students sitting at the SJP table.[72] Jalil was later charged with simple assault and recklessly endangering another person.[73] As stated above in connection with the incident at UC Berkeley, this assault may not be unconnected to the fact that SJP frequently issues statements justifying violence against Jews within the meaning of the Working Definition's first example of antisemitism. In addition, it may be linked to the Working Definition's third example of antisemitism, namely accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group.

Financial Support

Like any organization, NSJP needs to raise money in order to pursue its agenda. It is assisted in this task by the WESPAC Foundation. SJP websites accordingly contain the following appeal: "Please consider making a donation—large or small, every dollar goes a long way—to SJP National through our PayPal or send a check to our fiscal sponsor, the WESPAC Foundation, 52 North Broadway, White Plains, NY 10603."[74] The headline of NSJP's page on causes.com (a crowdfunding website) states: "Please support the National SJP Conference! We need your help!" The body of the page contains the following instruction: "DONATE TO WESPAC Foundation Inc."[75]

In other words, NSJP is not collecting donations on its own: it is being assisted by the WESPAC Foundation, which oversees NSJP funds, manages donations, and is legally responsible for the organization. The WESPAC Foundation, which was established in 1974 in upstate New York, is a leading force for progressive social change in Westchester County.[76] To permit the raising of funds on

---

71 Ibid.

72 "Temple University Statement on Reported Attack Against Student," Temple University, August 20, 2014, https://news.temple.edu/announcements/2014-08-20/temple-university-statement-reported-assault-student.

73 "Temple Fest Incident Settled with Numerous Penalties," *Broad and Cecil*, October 1, 2014, httpa://broadandcecil.temple-news.com, accessed August 2019.

74 "Send a Student to the SJP National Conference This Year!," SJP East, September 25, 2014, http://sjpeast.weebly.com/home/send-a-student-to-the-sjp-national-conference-this-year, accessed August 2019; SJP Stanford, "Send a Student to the SJP National Conference This Year!," https://sjp.stanford.edu/2013/09/send-a-student-to-the-sjp-national-conference-this-year, accessed August 2019.

75 "Donate to National Students for Justice in Palestine," https://www.nationalsjp.org/donate.html, accessed July 2021.

76 "About WESPAC," WESPAC Foundation, https://wespac.org/category/s5-static-info/c37-about, accessed August 2019.

university campuses for the purpose of fostering hatred against an identifiable group on campus, namely Jewish students and faculty, is especially egregious and violates the basic purpose of the university environment and the principle of academic freedom.

Conclusion

As shown in this chapter, National Students for Justice in Palestine (NSJP), which was founded with the support of American Muslims for Palestine and the US Palestinian Community Network, supports terrorism and engages in blatant antisemitism, which forms a key part of its political ideology and mission. Its annual national conference, which always takes place on the campus of a major university and is attended by over 200 local SJP chapters, promotes the spread of antisemitic discourse throughout the US and Canadian college system. Universities are meant to be places where individuals can learn and express themselves without fear of discrimination or prejudice. However, the fact that SJP members and chapters are able to convene on the campuses of highly respected universities to disseminate the organization's hateful message demonstrates that many institutions of higher education are either unaware of the problem or are actively ignoring it.

Israel as the Repugnant Other:
Anti-Zionism in Liberal Protestant Denominations

Dexter Van Zile

In the past several decades, several mainline Protestant Churches in the United States have gone from priding themselves on their respect for the Jewish people to being major purveyors and consumers of rhetoric demonizing the Jewish State. They have also depicted American Jews who are supportive of Israel as enemies of democracy and human rights. To explain how this sea change took place, this chapter argues that the mainline assault on Israel is a response to a humiliating loss of status endured by these churches since the mid-1960s. By assailing Israel, these churches are differentiating themselves from pro-Israel Evangelical Protestants who have supplanted them as the dominant force within American Protestantism. This argument suggests that, while the roots of antisemitism are present within Christianity, its ultimate expression is instrumental: hostility toward the Jewish people and their institutions is not an end of itself but rather a means to an end. In this case, it is a tool deployed in response to intra-Protestant rivalry.

> How could the Christians succeed? Only by destroying the prestige of their adversary, by a campaign to discredit him.[1]

Introduction

In the early 2000s, the national assemblies of five liberal Protestant churches began to scrutinize the Jewish state and found it singularly worthy of condemnation.[2] The national assemblies of these churches—the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Church of Christ (UCC), the United Methodist Church, the Episcopal Church, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—expressed their contempt for Israel by affirming numerous resolutions condemning the Jewish state for its alleged mistreatment of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and of non-Jews in Israel.

This was an important phenomenon, particularly for American Jews, because the churches in question were leading denominations in the Protestant establishment, or the American "mainline." These churches, more liberal than their Evangelical counterparts, had played an outsized role in American history and

---

[1] Jules Isaac, *The Teaching of Contempt: Christian Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), 33.

[2] Dexter Van Zile, "Mainline American Christian 'Peacemakers' against Israel," Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, November 5, 2009, http://jcpa.org/article/mainline-american-christian-peacemakers-against-israel/, last accessed September 6, 2018.

had been on the winning side of several hugely divisive debates in American cultural history. These churches or their antecedents had formed the backbone of American civil society and religion. Members of the antecedent churches that formed these modern denominations had written and signed the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution, as well as many state constitutions. They founded the abolitionist movement and helped end slavery by being on the winning side of the Civil War. Church members played leading roles in governing the country during two world wars and set the national agenda without any real challenge during the Cold War. In the eyes of non-religious secularists in the United States, these churches were a bulwark against the Christian right, a movement that seemingly came out of nowhere in the 1980s. So for these churches—which had previously condemned antisemitism vocally—to now attack Israel so vocally was a big deal. A previously loyal ally and friend of American Jews had turned on them in a public act of denunciation of their homeland.

To enact their displeasure, some church assemblies approved resolutions that called on churches to boycott or divest from companies that did business with Israel[3] and called on the US government to make foreign aid to Israel contingent on abiding by international law regarding the rights of children.[4] Sometimes their pronouncements affirmed Israel's right to exist,[5] but they were never clear as to why they needed to affirm Israel's legitimacy decades after it was founded. In these

---

[3] Bethany Daily, "By Slim Margin, Assembly Approves Divestment from Three Companies Doing Business in Israel/Palestine," Presbyterian Church (USA), June 21, 2014, https://www.pcusa.org/news/2014/6/21/slim-margin-assembly-approves-divestment-three/, last accessed September 6, 2018. See also "A Call for the United Church of Christ to Take Actions Toward a Just Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," passed by the UCC's 2015 General Synod, which includes a call for divestment from companies that do business with Israel's defense establishment—Hewlett-Packard, Motorola, and Caterpillar. This resolution can be seen at https://www.globalministries.org/resolutions_on_israel_palestine, last accessed September 6, 2018.

[4] See "A Call for the United Church of Christ to Advocate for the Rights of Children Living Under Israeli Military Occupation," passed by the UCC's 2017 General Synod, available at https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/globalministries/pages/7857/attachments/original/1510667205/Resolution-The_Rights_of_Children_Living_Under_Israeli_Military_Occupation.pdf?1510667205, last accessed September 6, 2018; "Safeguard the Rights of Palestinian Children," passed at the Episcopal Church's General Convention in 2018, available at https://www.vbinder.net/resolutions/C038?house=hd&lang=en, last accessed September 6, 2018.

[5] For example, a quasi-divestment resolution passed by the UCC's 2005 General Synod affirmed the denomination's "commitment to Israel's safe and secure existence within internationally-recognized borders, neighboring an independent Palestinian state." See United Church of Christ, Minutes, Twenty-Fifth General Synod, Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta, Georgia, July 1-5, 2005, 43-45, http://uccfiles.com/pdf/gs25minutes.pdf, last accessed August 22, 2018. This language has appeared in multiple UCC resolutions regarding the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

statements, Arab and Muslim hostility and violence toward Jews and their homeland was downplayed or ignored, while Israel's efforts to defend the lives of its citizens—most of them Jews—were portrayed as the singular cause of suffering in the Holy Land and, in some instances, the wider Middle East.

The overall narrative offered in these overtures and resolutions was that Israel could unilaterally bring an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict through withdrawals and peace offers but was unable or unwilling to make these concessions because Israeli Jews were too obsessed with territory and the horrors of the Holocaust to be able to exchange land for peace.[6]

Yasser Arafat's refusal of a peace offer at Camp David in 2000 and his rejection of the Clinton Parameters a few months later in Taba—which would have accorded the Palestinians a state—were ignored or downplayed, as was the use of antisemitism as a unifying political agenda in Palestinian society by elites in both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Hamas's takeover of the Gaza Strip and rocket attacks into Israel after Ariel Sharon's government forcibly evacuated 8,000 Jews from this territory in 2005 did not undermine mainline commitment to this narrative, nor did Mahmoud Abbas's rejection of a peace offer from Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in 2007.

One underlying message implicit in these resolutions is that efforts to defend Jewish life, liberty, and sovereignty were blameworthy, while Palestinian efforts to deprive Israeli Jews of their lives, safety, and sovereignty were lamentable but understandable. Israel was targeted with loaded theological and moral condemnation, while Palestinian actions were accorded a forgiving sociological context devoid of moral agency.

Defenders argued that these resolutions were not motivated by anti-Jewish animus but were reasonable responses to morally repugnant Israeli policies in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.[7] Ominously enough, the churches in question had a singular obsession with bad acts and suffering that could be laid at the feet of the Jewish state. Church-wide assemblies that condemned Israel vociferously remained virtually silent about mass killings of Christians and other religious minorities in Iraq, Syria, and Nigeria. The murder of Yazidis in Iraq and the mistreatment of adherents of the Bahai faith in Iran were largely ignored by these churches as well.

Much of the narrative used to justify the passage of these resolutions came from Palestinian Christian leaders living in East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, and

---

[6] For an egregious example of this strategy, see Dexter Van Zile, "Methodist Manual Maligns Israel, Stereotypes Jews," Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis (CAMERA), February 13, 2008, https://www.camera.org/article/methodist-manual-maligns-israel-stereotypes-jews/, last accessed September 6, 2018.

[7] Duncan L. Clarke, "Mainline Protestants Begin to Divest from Israel: A Moral Imperative or 'Effective' Anti-Semitism," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 35, no. 1 (Autumn 2005): 55.

the West Bank. These leaders, such as Naim Ateek, Mitri Raheb, and the Awad family in Bethlehem, portrayed Israel as the worst human rights abuser and a singular threat to peace in the Middle East. Often, they falsely depicted Christian-Muslim relations in the region as good. In those instances when they were willing to acknowledge that there was a problem between Christians and Muslims, they blamed these difficulties on Israel. In so doing, they focused the attention of mainline peace activists on the alleged sins of the Jewish state and rendered the impact of Islam and Islamism on Christians in the region taboo for discussion.[8]

Because of their status as subalterns, victimized by Western colonialism, Palestinian Christians were afforded the license to invoke anti-Judaic tropes to demonize Israel the way Jews were demonized in the Middle Ages. The most prolific practitioner of this tactic was Episcopal Priest Naim Ateek, founder of the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center. In his 2000 Christmas message, Ateek portrayed Israeli officials as Herod, who according to the Christian gospel murdered all the infants of Bethlehem in an attempt to kill the infant Jesus. In his 2001 Easter message, he wrote that "the Israeli government crucifixion system is operating daily" and that "Palestine has become the place of the skull." And in February 2001, Ateek compared the Israeli occupation to the stone blocking Christ's tomb.[9] With these three images, Ateek figuratively blamed Israel for the attempted murder of the infant Jesus, the crucifixion of Jesus the prophet, and for blocking the resurrection of Christ the Savior. Amy-Jill Levine described these passages a "recycled anti-Judaism that depicts Israel as a country of Christ killers."[10]

There was some pushback against Ateek's imagery, but for the most part it was ignored or even rejected by church officials. Instead of correcting Ateek for using language that had clear echoes of the deicide charge used to incite violence against Jews for centuries, Lydia Veliko, the ecumenical officer for the UCC, defended him, saying that he was merely using "imagery of the cross" to describe the suffering of Palestinians in the Holy Land. Veliko declared that "as Christians we cannot be asked to relinquish our theology of suffering."[11]

---

[8] Dexter Van Zile, "Palestinian Christian Abuse of Christian Organizations in the West," in *Palestinian Manipulation of the International Community*, ed. Alan Baker (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 2014), 127-135. This article is also available at http://jcpa.org/palestinian_christian_abuse/, last accessed September 6, 2018.

[9] Dexter Van Zile, "Updating the Ancient Infrastructure of Contempt: Sabeel," *Jewish Political Studies Review* 23, no. 1-2 (2011).

[10] Amy-Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 184.

[11] Lydia Veliko, "Reports from Israel-Palestine: Lydia Veliko," United Church of Christ, December 8, 2005, https://www.globalministries.org/reports_from_israelpalestine_l_10_10_2014_1059, last accessed September 5, 2018.

This intemperate language opened the floodgates for more ugly invective. In 2012, a delegate to the United Methodist Church's General Convention testified in favor of a divestment resolution by comparing Israeli businesses in the West Bank to "the very successful manufacturing firms in Germany that bid and received the bids to manufacture the ovens for the concentration camps," before asking, "how much evidence would we ask for before it was time to stop the wholesale destruction of people?"[12]

Sometimes the defamation was more prosaic. In 2015, Lutheran Pastor Mitri Raheb spoke at the UCC's General Synod in support of divestment and simply wrote Jews out of Israel's history. At every juncture when he referred to events that took place in both the Old and New Testaments, he referred to the people involved as "Palestinians," not Israelites, Hebrews, or Jews. The one time Raheb used the word "Israel" was in reference to the "suffocating occupation."[13] By telling the story he did, which predictably made no reference to Palestinian violence, Raheb removed Jews from the Land of Israel, deprived them of their history, then portrayed the modern Jewish state as the singular source of suffering endured by the Christ-like Palestinian people. In two instances, speakers at national assemblies trafficked in blood libels against Israel. In 2017, a youth delegate at the UCC's General Synod testified in favor of a resolution that condemned Israel's alleged mistreatment of Palestinian children by describing the Jewish state that "values the torturous interrogation of children."[14] And in July 2018, Episcopal Bishop Gayle falsely accused Israeli soldiers of shooting a teenager ten times in the back, describing the event as if she had witnessed it. Later, the bishop apologized for passing on unsubstantiated stories she had heard from some other unnamed source and for framing the story as if she had witnessed it firsthand.[15] In her apology, Bishop Harris suggested that she got caught up in the emotional heat of the moment when she bore false witness. "I was speaking from my passion for justice for all people, but I was repeating what I received secondhand," she wrote.[16]

---

[12] Dexter Van Zile, "Anti-Semitic Rant Passes Without Challenge at Methodist Convention," *Snapshots* (blog), CAMERA, May 3, 2012, http://blog.camera.org/archives/2012/05/antisemitic_rant_passes_withou.html, last accessed September 6, 2018.

[13] Dexter Van Zile, "A Word about Mitri Raheb's Sermon at the UCC's General Synod," *Snapshots* (blog), CAMERA, July 2, 2015, http://blog.camera.org/archives/2015/07/a_word_about_mitri_rahebs_serm.html, last accessed September 6, 2018.

[14] Dexter Van Zile, "Five Things You Should Know about the UCC's Recent Vote on Israel," CAMERA, July 5, 2017, https://www.camera.org/article/five-things-you-should-know-about-the-ucc-s-recent-vote-on-israel/, last accessed September 6, 2018.

[15] Dexter Van Zile, "Episcopal Bishops Apologize for Anti-Israel Charges," CAMERA, https://www.camera.org/article/episcopal-bishops-in-massachusetts-apologize-for-anti-israel-charges/, last accessed September 6, 2018.

[16] Gayle E. Harris, "Statement from Bishop Gayle E. Harris," Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, https://www.diomass.org/news/diocesan-news/bishops-issue-statement-apology, last accessed September 7, 2018.

Apart from their national gatherings, mainline churches also became purveyors of anti-Zionist propaganda to the general public, and this propaganda descended into outright antisemitic messaging. These churches produced and distributed books, pamphlets, and propaganda on the internet that portray Israel as a singularly evil country.[17] Every church was guilty of producing anti-Zionist propaganda, but far and away the worst offender was the Presbyterian Church (USA) (PCUSA), whose Israel-Palestine Mission Network (IPMN) produced numerous texts that demonized Israel and its supporters, both Christian and Jewish.

The most notorious of these texts was *Zionism Unsettled*, published in 2014, which boldly declared that "Zionism is the problem."[18] This text was so egregiously dishonest that the PCUSA stopped selling it on its website and Heath Rada, the denomination's stated clerk, was forced to undergo a humiliating interview on CNN about the hostility of the text.[19] In 2008, PCUSA published *The Cradle of Our Faith*, a text that falsely stated that Arabs living in Israel "cannot serve in the military" when in fact they can but are not required to. These and other falsehoods were offered to support an underlying message that Israel mistreats Christians in the 21st century, just as Jews mistreated followers of Jesus in first-century Jerusalem. "Today, Christians in Jerusalem are a powerless minority, as were new believers in the time of Jesus," the text declared, despite the fact that Israel is the one country in the region where the population of Christians has increased since 1948.[20]

As documented by the Jewish Council for Public Affairs[21] and NGO Monitor,[22]

---

[17] The examples that follow are only a small sample of the anti-Zionist propaganda produced by these churches in the years during and after the Second Intifada.

[18] Naim Ateek, "A Palestinian Christian Postscript," in *Zionism Unsettled: A Congregational Study Guide*, Israel/Palestine Mission Network of the Presbyterian Church (USA), January 2014, 56.

[19] Dexter Van Zile, "PCUSA's New Moderator Unsettled by CNN Scrutiny," *Snapshots* (blog), CAMERA, June 22, 2014, http://blog.camera.org/archives/2014/06/pcusas_new_moderator_unsettled_1.html, last accessed September 6, 2018.

[20] *The Cradle of Our Faith: The Enduring Witness of the Christians of the Middle East*, 2nd ed. (Louisville, KY: Presbyterian Church (USA), 2008), 12.

[21] "JCPA Calls on Presbyterian Church to Confront Anti-Semitic Rhetoric," press release, Jewish Council for Public Affairs, February 6, 2012, http://engage.jewishpublicaffairs.org/blog/comments.jsp?blog_entry_KEY=6129, last accessed September 6, 2018. One excerpt from the JCPA press release: "The IPMN-PCUSA Facebook page includes a cartoon of President Obama wearing weighty Jewish star earrings to suggest Jewish control of the American leaders, a common theme on the site. The IPMN-PCUSA has posted articles that accuse Jews of controlling Hollywood, the media, and American politics—and blaming Israel for the American housing and economic crisis."

[22] "The Role of Antisemitism in the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s Decision to Support Divestment," NGO Monitor Briefing Paper, June 2014, https://ngo-monitor.org/data/images/File/NGOM_IPMN_June_2014.pdf, last accessed September 6, 2018.

the PCUSA IPMN's Facebook page became a clearing house for anti-Zionist invective that at times veered into naked antisemitism with complaints of Jewish influence on American politics and descriptions of Israeli soldiers as "sub-human" and of settlers in the West Bank as "predators." Under one link to a hostile article, a Presbyterian pastor declared, "I do not understand how my Jewish friends can support Israel."

The virulence and penetration of anti-Jewish messaging varied from one denomination to another, but overall hostility toward Israel and its defenders—both Jewish and Christian—became a prevalent and unifying agenda in main-line Protestant churches. Expressions of anti-Israel and, in some instances, anti-Jewish invective became part of the substance of national church gatherings, which as stated above failed to offer a churchly word in response to human rights catastrophes elsewhere in the region.

Jewish groups tried to work with pro-Israel forces within the denominations to counter this messaging, but by 2018 it became increasingly evident that these efforts were largely fruitless. A few weeks before the Presbyterian Church USA passed a flood of anti-Israel resolutions at its 2018 General Assembly (GA),[23] Rabbi Noam Marans, director of interreligious and intergroup relations for the American Jewish Committee (AJC), declared that his organization would not attend the proceedings. "The AJC, whose decades-long record in interfaith relations is second to none, will not engage with the GA farce anymore," Marans said, adding that, "no longer can we participate in a GA drama whose best-case scenario is exaggerated Jewish relief that anti-Israel resolutions are marginally toned down before passage."[24]

It was a harsh statement coming from the AJC, which had been dealing with the issue since the PCUSA's 2004 General Assembly affirmed a divestment overture that declared that the "occupation" was at the root of violence against people on both sides of the conflict.[25] This overture effectively blamed Israel for terror attacks perpetrated against its citizens by Hamas and Hezbollah, two groups that make it perfectly clear that they hate Jews because they are Jews and will do everything they can to deprive the Jewish people of their sovereign state.

The passage of this overture even brought a rebuke from the pro-Palestinian organization Rabbis for Human Rights, which declared in a letter that singling

---

[23] Dexter Van Zile, "The U.S. Presbyterian Church's Renewed Attack on Israel," *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*, June 1, 2010, http://jcpa.org/article/the-u-s-pres byterian-churchs-renewed-attack-on-israel/, last accessed September 6, 2018.

[24] Noam E. Marans, "The Presbyterian Church Has Been Hijacked by Anti-Israel Activists," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, May 24, 2018, https://www.jta.org/2018/05/24/ news-opinion/opinion/presbyterian-church-hijacked-anti-israel-activists, last accessed September 6, 2018.

[25] Van Zile, "U.S. Presbyterian Church's Renewed Attack."

Israel out for divestment promoted anti-Jewish discrimination. They also stated that by affirming that the "occupation" was at the "root" of violence against both sides in the conflict, the General Assembly had offered a "restatement of the paradigmatic allegation that Jewish sins are somehow especially significant 'at the root of evil.'" The group also warned that "the singling out, magnifying and sanctifying of Jewish sins has always been at the core of the terrible evil that we know as anti-Semitism."[26]

This and other warnings from mainstream American Jewish organizations were ignored as the PCUSA and other mainline churches embarked on a process of problematizing or "othering" Jewish life in Israel and the United States, which continues to this day. This othering was achieved by regularly emphasizing the alleged sins of the Jewish state while downplaying Arab and Muslim violence against Jews. In so doing, these churches became part of a larger campaign that promoted the notion that there was something wrong with Jews who claimed such a flawed state as their homeland. This campaign is having a real effect on Jews attending college in the United States.[27]

What made this campaign of othering particularly disorienting and disquieting was that mainline churches were violating the spirit and letter of statements condemning antisemitism they had passed in previous decades. Following the same theological path established by the Second Vatican Council with the affirmation of *Nostra Aetate* in 1965, mainline churches issued statements lamenting the role Christian antisemitism played in laying the groundwork for the Holocaust in Europe.[28]

In these statements, church leaders and intellectuals warned against the evils of supersessionism, or the notion that Christianity had replaced Judaism as an expression of God's concern and hope for humanity. These texts called on Christians to show greater respect for Judaism and the Jewish people and to remain on guard against anti-Jewish bigotry. They also expressed remorse for the anti-Jewish violence perpetrated and tolerated by Christians through the centuries, culminating in the Holocaust. For example, in 1994, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) issued a state-

---

[26] Rabbis for Human Rights, "Bad Waters: An Open Letter to the Presbyterian Church (USA)," http://jat-action.org/PCUSA_RabbisHumanRights.htm, last accessed September 7, 2018. The original link to this letter was http://www.rhr.israel.net/pdf/pres byterian_26_07_04.pdf, but it is now a dead link and is not available on the Wayback Machine at archive.org.

[27] Tammi Rossman-Benjamin, "The Real Facts about Campus Anti-Semitism," *Times of Israel*, May 2, 2017, https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/the-real-facts-about-campus-anti-semitism/, last accessed September 6, 2018.

[28] These texts have been collected and published by the Council of Centers on Christian-Jewish Relations and are available at https://www.ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/documents-and-statements/protestant-churches/na, last accessed September 7, 2018.

ment that condemned the anti-Jewish invective offered by Martin Luther in the sixteenth century and expressed its "deep and abiding sorrow over its tragic effects on subsequent generations."[29]

Cackles of Contempt

Yet despite these affirmations, mainline churches embarked on their campaign of othering of the Jewish state and its citizens. This process was particularly manifest in 2005, when the UCC's General Synod passed a "Tear Down the Wall" resolution.[30] The resolution called on Israel to dismantle the security barrier constructed in the West Bank after a Palestinian campaign of suicide bombings and other terror attacks had killed hundreds of Israeli civilians during the Second Intifada. The resolution, which did not ask the Palestinians to stop the attacks that provoked the barrier's construction, also called on Israel to pay reparations to Palestinians whose livelihoods had been damaged by the construction of the barrier. The text highlighted the suffering caused by the security barrier but made no mention of the suffering endured by Israelis from Palestinian violence. The theological rationale of the resolution invoked Paul's letter to the Ephesians, which declared that Jesus Christ "is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us."

By combining a one-sided and distorted narrative of the Israel-Palestinian conflict with a biblical passage that expressed a millennial hope for the elimination of distinctions between peoples, the authors, movers, and approvers of the resolution implicitly portrayed the Jewish state—and the liberation and safety it afforded to Jews who live there—as an obstacle to the Christian hopes for peace in the Middle East.

One profoundly illuminating hiccup took place during the passage of this resolution. After a delegate from Ohio said she would support the resolution "if there was a suggestion to move to Israel borders, so they could still protect themselves," another delegate from New Hampshire put forth an amendment (which was seconded) that would have given the Israelis the option to move the barrier to "internationally recognized borders." This phrase was a misnomer because absent a final status agreement between Israel and the Palestinians no such border exists. Nevertheless, the intention was clear—to give Israel a chance

---

[29] "Declaration of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the Jewish Community," http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Declaration_Of_The_ELCA_To_The_Jewish_Community.pdf, last accessed September 7, 2018.

[30] United Church of Christ, Resolution: Tear Down the Wall, Twenty-Fifth General Synod, Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta, Georgia, July 1-5, 2005, https://www.globalministries.org/israel_palestine_resolutions#2005b, last accessed August 22, 2018.

to legitimize its defensive barrier by moving it to the "Green Line," i.e. the 1949 Armistice Line that separated the Jewish state from Jordanian-controlled territory prior to the Six-Day War in 1967. The minutes for the General Synod state that one delegate "expressed that this body should not say how Israel should secure its borders."[31]

Not included in the minutes is the fact that as the delegate spoke in favor of this amendment and as it was voted down, derisive cackles of contempt (witnessed by this author) could be heard from the synod floor. The mind of the assembly had clearly expressed itself. Israel had no right whatsoever to build a defensive barrier *anywhere*, even in the face of murderous terror attacks. The cackles, the defeat of the amendment, and the ultimate passage of the "Tear Down the Wall" resolution—by a wide margin—demonstrated that Israel had been rendered unworthy of any consideration from the gathered assembly.

By way of comparison, when just two days later suicide bombers killed 52 people in a series of coordinated attacks in London on July 7, 2005, the leaders of the UCC and its sister denomination, the Disciples of Christ, issued a statement expressing relief that staff members of the United Reform Church, which has offices close to the scene of one of the attacks perpetrated by Muslim extremists, were safe and unharmed.[32] Israelis had been subjected to dozens of attacks similar to what Londoners endured in that bombing, yet the UCC made no mention of them in the "Tear Down the Wall" resolution.

To further discern the process of othering that took place at the UCC's General Synod, it is useful to know that that the same body also approved a resolution that affirmed the right of same-sex couples to marry. This resolution declared that legislation seeking to ban gay marriage encouraged "increasing hostility against gays and lesbians."[33] By passing this historic resolution by a wide margin, the UCC's General Synod was making it clear that same-sex couples were no longer to be regarded by Christians as outside the pale of God's love and mercy and should be accorded the same rights and protections as everyone else in American civil society—despite what the Bible says about homosexual behavior. Thus the UCC offered a face of love and compassion to

---

31 United Church of Christ, Minutes, Twenty-Fifth General Synod, Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta, Georgia, July 1-5, 2005, http://uccfiles.com/pdf/gs25minutes.pdf, last accessed Aug. 22, 2018, pp. 64-65.

32 Dexter Van Zile, "Walls of Indifference, Walls of Contempt," Judeo-Christian Alliance Report, September 2005, available at https://web.archive.org/web/20060708 152134/http://www.judeo-christianalliance.org/materials/WallOfIndifferenceWallOf Contempt.pdf, last accessed September 7, 2018.

33 United Church of Christ, Resolution: Equal Marriage Rights for All, Twenty-Fifth General Synod, Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta, Georgia, July 1-5, 2015, http://uccfiles.com/pdf/2005-EQUAL-MARRIAGE-RIGHTS-FOR-ALL.pdf, last accessed August 22, 2018.

gays and lesbians while only offering contempt and disdain to Israeli Jews targeted by suicide bombings.

Interestingly enough, the drama that played out at the UCC's General Synod in 2005 has manifested itself on the larger American scene as antisemitic attacks surged 57 percent between 2016 and 2017,[34] while support for LGBTQ rights is at record levels.[35] Hostility toward Jews is increasingly evident and acceptable in larger society, while hostility toward the LGBTQ community is anathema.[36]

In sum, by assisting in this campaign of othering, mainline churches did not promote peace but instead became parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Causes

What is going on here? Why did mainline churches that had previously condemned antisemitism embark on this campaign of othering the Jewish state and its supporters, many of whom are Jewish? Why have mainline Protestants assigned to Israel and its American supporters the role of the "repugnant other" that Jews have historically played in the Christian imagination?

A number of factors help explain why this transformation took place, but cosmological or theological hostility toward Jews was not one of them—at least not at the beginning. The process by which leaders and peace activists began using antisemitism as an explanatory lens through which to view events in the Middle East was an *ad hoc* and *instrumental* process. Assailing Israel provided mainline churches with a number of goods that have nothing to do with making life better for people in the Holy Land. The primary effect of their so-called peacemaking resolutions was not peace between Arab and Jew but the mainte-nance of mainline identity and status in American civil society.

In particular, anti-Israel resolutions help the elites generate media coverage for the churches they lead. Engaging in open conflict with American Jews over Israel generates publicity and a feeling of importance that these churches would not otherwise enjoy. Despite their historical legacy, mainline churches have largely fallen off the radar of the national media.[37] The anguish mainline elites have

---

[34] Maggie Astor, "Anti-Semitic Incidents Surged 57 Percent in 2017, Report Finds," *New York Times*, February 27, 2018.

[35] Aamer Madhani, "Poll: Approval of Same-Sex Marriage Reaches New High," *USA Today*, May 23, 2018, https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2018/05/23/same-sex-marriage-poll-americans/638587002/, last accessed August 22, 2018.

[36] It seems obligatory to remind readers here that gays and lesbians are safer and enjoy more rights in Israel than any other country in the Middle East, but even this has been turned into a liability by anti-Israel activists who accuse Israel and its advocates of "pinkwashing."

[37] Dexter Van Zile, "A Shipwreck of Their Faith," *New English Review* (April 2010), https://www.newenglishreview.org/Dexter_Van_Zile/A_Shipwreck_of_their_Faith/, last accessed September 7, 2018.

suffered as a result of this decline is clearly evident in "Amplifying the Mainline," an article published in the UCC's denominational newspaper in July 2006.[38]

One focus of the article was the absence of mainline leaders on Sunday morning talk shows. For example, when "Meet the Press" invited seven religious leaders to speak about religious life in the United States on Easter Sunday in 2006, there was "not a mainline Protestant leader among them." While the decline is largely due to a decrease in members, mainline elites appear to blame their relative media absence on their Evangelical adversaries, with one source asserting that the "silencing" endured by mainline churches is "the direct result of a coordinated, decades-old strategy by so-called 'neo-con' organizations, most notably the Washington, D.C.-based Institute for Religion and Democracy (IRD), to disrupt mainline churches, discredit their national agencies, and 'decapitate' mainline leaders."[39]

To be sure, theological and ideological commitments played a role in encouraging the mainline response to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Ideologically speaking, the churches' embrace of the Palestinian cause was rooted in their commitment to stand with the weak and downtrodden against the oppressor, an idea that has its roots in the social gospel promoted by Walter Rauschenbusch in the 1920s. These concerns, which also prompted mainline churches to condemn racism in the American south, promote gay rights, and condemn antisemitism encouraged church elites to embrace the Palestinian cause, particularly after the First Intifada.

Advocating for the Palestinians need not mean demonizing Israel, but in this case that is precisely what happened, because this ethic of care for the poor and oppressed prompted mainline peace activists to remain silent about problems in Arab and Muslim countries throughout the region. Would-be peacemakers simply did not want to say critical things about Arabs and Muslims, who were largely perceived as victims of Western imperialism. This left them to speak almost exclusively about the alleged sins and misdeeds of the Jewish state, which in turn promoted a *Judeocentric* narrative about the conflict, which is ultimately indistinguishable from a *Judeophobic* view of the conflict.

By themselves, however, these two factors—a desire for publicity and concern for the downtrodden—do not seem to explain the full animus with which mainline churches have assailed the Jewish state.

Decline, Rivalry, and the Search for a Repugnant Other

To fully understand these developments, it is necessary to understand that mainline liberal Protestant churches have experienced a humiliating loss of status

---

[38] J. Bennett Guess, "Amplifying the Mainline," *United Church News* 22, no. 3 (June-July 2006), http://www.uccfiles.com/ucnews/jul06.pdf, last accessed September 7, 2018.

[39] Ibid., at A8.

since the mid-1960s. They have shrunk in size and no longer have the hegemonic cultural and ideological influence they once enjoyed in American society. Mainline elites have been worrying about this decline for some time.

In 1991, Max Stackhouse, a prominent UCC theologian, reported that mainline churches have been unable "to make a convincing case that their convictions are sufficiently rooted in what is basically true and just that they ought to be used as the plumb line and guide to the dominant culture." This failure to convince, Stackhouse suggests, is rooted in the mainline's inability to synthesize a credible response to the issues faced by the American people. "Neither scholars nor ordinary people believe what the mainline is saying about these things or even pay much attention to it."[40]

Mainline churches have been on the winning side of a number of debates in American society, but this does not translate into being able to bring American progressives who agree with them on social issues—such as gay rights and abortion—into their pews. This indicates that mainline churches are not a driving force for the progressive movement, but tag-alongs riding the coattails of American progressivism.

The numbers are stunning.[41] In 1960, the UCC had 12.4 members for every 1,000 people living in the United States; in 2010, that number had dropped to 3.2 members for every 1,000 people. PCUSA had 23 members for every 1,000 people in 1960; in 2010, this was down to 8.7 members. The Episcopal Church, finally, had 18.1 members for every 1,000 people in 1960; in 2010, this had declined to 6.1 members. By way of comparison, more conservative religious groups have seen their presence in American society increase substantially. For example, the Assemblies of God had 2.8 members for every 1,000 people in 1960. By 2010, this number had increased to 9.7.[42]

The trauma associated with this decline was exacerbated by the growth and increasing influence of the Christian right in the 1980s. Followers of Jerry Falwell, whose fundamentalist forebears had been effectively sidelined by the Scopes Monkey Trial in the mid-1920s, came roaring out of exile in time to help Ronald Reagan win the 1980 presidential election. Susan Harding writes that under Falwell's leadership "two things that had been kept apart for much of America's mid-twentieth century—routine public activism and aggressive Bible-believing Protestantism—were once again being re-fused." The result was "the formation

---

[40] William R. Hutchinson et al., "Forum: The Decline of American Religion in American Culture," *Religion and American Culture* 1, no. 2 (Summer 1991): 145.

[41] Data compiled from the Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches by Rodney Stark, *The Triumph of Faith: Why the World Is More Religious Than Ever* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2015).

[42] Stark, *Triumph of Faith*, 194-194.

of New Christian Right organizations [that] shocked many non-born-again Christian Americans. It was a modern nightmare come true."[43]

On this score, it is also important to note that, as the anti-Israel onslaught began in earnest in the early 2000s, mainline churches issued a number of resolutions condemning Christian Zionists, or more specifically pre-millennial dispensationalists, who believed that the modern State of Israel in 1948 and Israel's capture of Jerusalem in the Six-Day War were preludes to the return of Jesus Christ. While mainline theologies varied somewhat, they were mostly rooted in amillennialism, i.e. the belief that while Jesus Christ is, in the words of the Nicene Creed, seated at the right hand of God, where he reigns on a spiritual level, Jesus will not return and govern over humanity in a physical sense, as many Evangelical Protestants believe.

These resolutions portrayed Evangelical Protestants—with whom mainliners had been in rivalry for a century—as accomplices in Israeli crimes against the Palestinians. After these anti-Christian-Zionist resolutions were passed, the churches then began to direct their ire solely at Israel in the campaign of othering that continues to this day. This chronology suggests that the mainline's beef with Israel did not begin with Jews or Judaism but with Evangelicals.

Deploying the Scopes Victory

In the beginning it was not Israel's Jewishness that elicited mainline ire, then, but the support Israel enjoyed from their adversaries in American Protestantism. Susan Harding reports that in the early 1920s conservative and liberal Protestants had "fought for control over doctrinal statements, seminaries, missions, and, effectively as it turned out, the prevailing definition of Protestant Christianity."[44] The struggle was about who would get "to determine which view of Christianity would be hegemonic within American Protestantism." In this fight, the conservatives (or Fundamentalists, or later Evangelicals) regarded the Bible as inerrant, while the liberals (who later became the dominant force in mainline churches), promoted a more modern view which took scripture "seriously, but not literally."

The Scopes Monkey Trial of 1925, which centered on the teaching of evolution in public schools, resulted in a court victory for the forces of conservatism. However, it ultimately gave the liberals—mainliners—a huge cultural victory, due in part to how the case was framed in the press by commentators such as H.L. Mencken, who characterized the Fundamentalists as ignorant yokels who

---

[43] Susan Friend Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 23.

[44] Susan Harding, "Representing Fundamentalism: The Problem of the Repugnant Other," *Social Research* 58, no. 2 (Summer 1991): 377.

were unable to adapt to modernity. Summarizing Harding's analysis, Frances Fitzgerald writes that in the aftermath of the Scopes Monkey Trial, "the authorial voice of the country now seemed to belong to secularists and liberal Christians, and by its terms fundamentalists were cultural outsiders—people without a legitimate voice."[45]

In short, Harding reports, Fundamentalists were "othered" by the Scopes Monkey Trial. They "were present and participated in the event which stigmatized them, cast them out of public life, marked them as a category of inferior persons whose very existence required an explanation." Fundamentalists (later called Evangelicals) served as what Harding calls the "repugnant other" against which their adversaries oriented themselves. "The modern point of view in America emerged in part from its caricature of conservative Protestants as Fundamentalists. They were the 'them' who enabled the modern 'us,'" she writes,[46] stating elsewhere that Fundamentalists were "in kind of a self-imposed exile from American public life. As long as they remained in exile, accepting their pariah status as outsiders, as inferior, backward 'others,' they enabled other Americans to see themselves as modern, superior, and progressive."[47]

The mainline churches were quintessential beneficiaries of the victory accorded to progressives as a result of the Scopes Monkey Trial. Until the rise of the Christian right in the early 1980s, which was regarded as a "nightmare" for progressives, both religious and non-religious in the United States, mainliners, had become synonymous with the "Protestant establishment," enjoying unchallenged cultural power in American society. Roof and McKinney describe this cultural power as the "authority to set norms" and enunciate an "'ordering faith' which helps constitute civil, social, and political life from a theological point of view." To be part of the American mainline is to relate to the "core aspect of American experience, to evoke its symbols and meanings in the collective experience of the people."[48]

As much as mainliners condemned conservative Protestants, they ultimately owed their cultural ascendancy to their presence in American society. Mainliners needed them as a foil against which they could formulate and affirm their own identities. By passing resolutions condemning Christian Zionism and then directing their ire at Israel, mainline church assemblies were sending a clear message to the folks at home, their cultural allies, and their detractors that they were on the correct (or "right") side of history. They were telling the world that

---

[45] Frances FitzGerald, *The Evangelicals: The Struggle to Shape America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2017), 140.

[46] Harding, *Book of Jerry Falwell*, 62.

[47] Ibid., at 21.

[48] Wade Clark Roof and William McKinney, *American Mainline Religion: Its Changing Shape and Future* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 74-75.

they had made peace with modernity and stood in opposition to Fundamental-ists in American society with whom progressive mainline Protestants had been feuding for decades.

In short, they were deploying the cultural assets that had been accorded to progressive liberal Protestants in the aftermath of the Scopes Monkey Trial of 1925. Depending on the political circumstances faced by mainline Protestants, demonstrating that they are on the correct, progressive side of history can mean condemning antisemitism or facilitating it. A peacemaking journey that began, in part, with an innocent ideological impulse to stand with the weak and power-less—and a not-so-innocent desire to use Israel as a proxy for the Christian right—brought mainline churches to a place where Israel, and Jews, could be vilified in good conscience, in the pursuit of peace and justice and in the name of God.

As dispiriting as this is, this is not new behavior. It is also not unique to mainline Protestants. In his book *The Fatal Embrace: Jews and the State*,[49] Ben-jamin Ginsberg details how, at various times in history, groups within American society have attacked Jews in an effort to assail, delegitimize, or supplant rival political and economic movements. For example, white property owners in the post-Civil-War South used antisemitism as a method of regional defense against industrial capitalism.[50] Antisemitism was also a mainstay of the backlash against liberalism, progressive reform, and the labor movement during the Red Scare of 1919-1920.[51]

The patrician class in the Northeast used antisemitism to reassert their dom-inance in the face of a changing economy way back in the late 1800s! They barred Jews from social clubs they had helped found and limited their admission to colleges and medical schools not only out of contempt for Jews but also to protect their status and reestablish their dominance in American society.[52] Ginsberg writes that "by assailing Jews, [New England Brahmins] attacked the industrialists, financiers, and railroad barons who were displacing them in the nation's political and economic life. This fear was expressed in a stream of anti-Semitic writings and speeches on the part of New England's leading public figures and intellectuals during the late nineteenth century."[53]

And, in the 1960s, young black nationalists used antisemitism to assail the leaders of the civil rights movement who relied on Jewish financial support and activism for the success of their campaigns. By intimidating Jewish voting rights

---

[49] Benjamin Ginsburg, *The Fatal Embrace: Jews and the State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

[50] Ibid., at 86-91.

[51] Ibid., at 93-96.

[52] Ibid., at 78.

[53] Ibid., at 78-79.

activists in the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee's field offices, these nationalists were not only targeting Jews but their black co-workers as well.[54] Black activists also used antisemitic intimidation to drive white teachers and administrators (most of whom were Jewish) out of their jobs in the New York City school system. They did this with the acquiescence of non-Jewish white politicians who realized they could mollify the black activists by allowing the intimidation to proceed and giving these jobs to blacks and Hispanics.[55] In all these instances, there was both an instrumental and an emotive component to antisemitism. Clearly, mainline Protestants are not the only Christian community that engages in anti-Israel polemics in a manner that poisons the well of sympathy for Jews in the United States. Palestinian Christians who played a significant role in convincing mainline churches to promote anti-Zionism and tolerate antisemitism have targeted Evangelical Protestants with similar messaging and with similar success. The center of this activism is Bethlehem Bible College, which hosts a biennial "Christ at the Checkpoint" (CATC) conference at its campus in Beit Jala.

Two messages offered at these conferences are that Israel is unworthy of Christian support, because it is the homeland of the people who have rejected Jesus Christ, and that American Christian support for Israel undermines the ability of Christians to live in peace with their Muslim neighbors in the Middle East. These messages have been directed at young American Evangelicals who want to distance themselves from the caricature of Fundamentalists that took root after the Scopes Monkey Trial. It remains to be seen how much traction this narrative achieves among young Evangelicals, but some Evangelicals are more than willing to use CATC propaganda to serve some ugly ideological purposes.

In particular, TruNews, a far-right internet TV station, filmed the proceedings of the 2018 CATC conference and subsequently produced a video entitled "30 Pieces of Silver: Will Israel Reward Christian Zionists With Stolen Palestinian Homes?"[56] TruNews is a small player in religious broadcasting, but it appears that, like the mainline Protestants described above, the station is using hostility toward Israel, and a concomitant contempt for Jews, to differentiate itself from other larger media players (such as the Christian Broadcasting Network), providing another example of how anti-Zionist and antisemitic narratives are used to achieve goals that have nothing to do with peace in the Middle East.

---

54 Ibid., at 167-169.
55 Ibid., at 153-158.
56 "30 Pieces of Silver: Will Israel Reward Christian Zionists with Stolen Palestinian Homes?," video, *TruNews*, August 2, 2018, https://www.trunews.com/podcast/30-pieces-of-silver-will-israel-reward-christian-zionists-with-stolen-palestinian-homes, last accessed September 7, 2018.

The fact that Christians and others have used the Jewish people and their institutions as a negative foil against which to buttress their status in American society does not make mainline Protestantism's use of this strategy any less troublesome. Mainliners were supposed to be different. They were the reformers, the folks who were getting Christianity "right" in a post-Holocaust modernity. And yet they have fallen into the same trap that the church fathers did centuries ago. Instead of choosing the love of God as the central aspect of their faith, they looked for—and found—a repugnant other to demonize.

First they came for the Christian right, and then it was the Jews and their homeland.

The University of California
Principles Against Intolerance:
Efforts to Integrate Them into
Campus Policy and Practice*

Kenneth Waltzer

In March 2016, the University of California (UC) Regents approved a Working Report and Principles Against Intolerance forthrightly condemning "antisemitism, antisemitic forms of Zionism, and other forms of discrimination." The Report and Principles emerged out of several years of turmoil on UC public campuses that included vandalism against Jewish property, Jewish student government candidates being accused of "dual loyalty," outright antisemitic claims about alleged Jewish privilege and power, and aggressive demonization and mystification of the Jewish state and its supporters. It also emerged out of several years of divisive BDS-related student-led campaigns, often involving tactics of disruption. While the Report and Principles are largely aspirational, this is also the first time that an American public university has gone on record about the need to respond openly to various forms of antisemitism on campus. The balanced and thoughtful way in which the Regents acted, simultaneously affirming the primacy of academic freedom and freedom of expression while addressing antisemitism and "antisemitic forms of anti-Zionism," makes it a potential standard for universities elsewhere. This chapter, which is informed by a substantial review of recent campus BDS campaigns and responses by university leaders, of university policies, codes of conduct, and protocols, and of relevant documents and cases, explores the strengths and weaknesses of the UC Regents' approach to the problem of antisemitism on campus, probes the willingness and also unwillingness of university leaders to respond to and act against antisemitic actions and physical disruption of Israel-related events and speakers, and investigates the readiness of universities to respond actively to campus antisemitism.

> All of us bear responsibility for preserving and strengthening the University of California's bedrock values of respect, inclusion and civility. Doing so requires the constant attention and the enduring commitment of every member of our community, every day, everywhere.
>
> President Janet Napolitano, March 13, 2015

---

* An earlier version of this chapter, "The University of California Principles Against Intolerance: A Standard for Other Universities?," was presented at the 48th Association of Jewish Studies meeting in San Diego, California, on December 9, 2016.

In late March 2016, the University of California (UC) Board of Regents approved a Working Report and set of Principles Against Intolerance which forthrightly condemned "anti-Semitism, anti-Semitic forms of anti-Zionism, and other forms of discrimination." The document also referenced "harassment threats" and stated that "actions that interfere with the ability of an individual or group to assemble, speak and share or hear the opinions of others … will not be tolerated."[1]

The Report and Principles emerged out of several years of turmoil on UC public campuses. The tumult involved acts of malicious vandalism aimed against Jewish-owned property, challenges to Jewish students seeking student government office on the grounds of an alleged inability to be "objective," outright antisemitic narratives and claims about alleged Jewish privilege and power, and aggressive demonization of the Jewish state and its supporters. It also emerged out of several years of student campaigns in support of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement which have divided campuses and since 2010 have also included aggressive efforts at speaker disruption.

The Principles adopted unanimously by the Regents immediately became applicable to students and faculty at all UC campuses. Frankly aspirational rather than prohibitory in nature, the Principles lacked clear enforcement tools and omitted any recommended disciplinary punishments or guidelines. The document was premised on a common law understanding under which each campus was to define these concepts in light of local experience and context. From an historical perspective, however, this was the first time that an American public university had gone on record about the public need to respond openly to antisemitism, as well as other forms of hatred and discrimination, and condemn related outward actions diminishing the rights of others.

In addition, the balanced and thoughtful way in which the UC Regents acted, guided by interaction with the Academic Council of the UC Academic Senate, made it a potential standard for other universities. They achieved this by affirming the primacy of academic freedom and freedom of expression while also addressing antisemitism and what they called "antisemitic forms of anti-Zionism." The Principles called upon university leaders to confront intolerance by speaking out against bias and hatred, that is to say, by responding to antisemitism in the same way they are expected to respond to racism or other forms of hatred expressed on campus. Contrary to the fears of some faculty spokespersons, the Principles do not appear to have dampened free speech or interfered with teaching and research but instead have called on campus authorities to use their free speech to counter bad speech when it appears.

---

[1] "Final Report of the Regents Working Group on Principles of Intolerance," March 24, 2016, http://ucioie.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/principles.pdf. The document gives the date as January 22, 2016. It was formally adopted by the Committee on Education Policy on March 24, 2016.

This chapter, which is informed by a substantial review[2] of recent campus BDS campaigns and responses by university leaders, of university policies, codes of conduct, and protocols, and of relevant documents and cases, including interviews with campus administrative leaders, explores the strengths and weaknesses of the UC Regents' approach to the problem of antisemitism on campus, probes the willingness and also unwillingness of university leaders to respond to and act against antisemitic speech and actions, and investigates the readiness of universities to respond to antisemitism in similar ways as to other forms of hate and discrimination. More than two years later, what follow-up has there been to the initial announcement of the Principles, and where does the situation stand on several UC campuses, including Irvine, Davis, Riverside, and UCLA? What progress has been achieved, and what challenges and difficulties have been encountered?

I.

As the authors of the Working Report acknowledged, members of the UC community expressed widely divergent views about how the university should respond to incidents of overt antisemitism and other forms of intolerance and discrimination. There was great disagreement over how to define antisemitism, including whether to employ the State Department's definition (which classified some types of anti-Zionism as antisemitism), and whether a specific definition of any kind would sweep in speech protected by academic freedom and the First Amendment. There was also explicit concern by faculty that the Principles would have a cramping effect on teaching, campus debate, and scholarship. Nonetheless, the Regents acted unanimously, calling on university leaders to apply the Principles Against Intolerance and other University anti-discrimination policies to the full extent permissible under law. Coordinating orders went out from the Office of the President to campus chancellors: "University leaders should assure that they have processes in place to respond promptly, and at the highest levels of the University, when appropriate, when intolerant and/or discriminatory acts occur."[3]

Leaders like former UC president Mark G. Yudof, a First Amendment scholar, openly lauded the initiative, noting that the Regents "have called foul after multiple incidents of anti-Semitism and violations of free speech at several UC campuses." He said, "I applaud the path-breaking resolution on Principles Against

_____

[2] See *Academic Freedom, Freedom of Expression, and the BDS Challenge: A Guide and Resource Book for University Leaders* (Academic Engagement Network, November 2016). Information has also been gathered on site visits to four UC campuses: UC Irvine, UC Riverside, UCLA, and UC Davis.

[3] *Regents Policy: Principles Against Intolerance*, available at https://aisc.uci.edu/policies/pacaos/principles-against-intolerance.php.

Intolerance unanimously adopted by the regents on March 24."[4] Yudof argued that administrators at many universities may be less sensitive to antisemitism than to other seemingly more pressing "isms," like racism and sexism. They may lack understanding of the newest forms of antisemitism. They may be pressured by many things or be indifferent: Jews are perceived as doing well and able to take care of themselves. Perhaps some leaders even lack knowledge of the historic pariah treatment of Jews or have limited awareness of the hurt such language and actions inflict on Jewish students. Yudof thought the Principles were a creative way to address the situation, calling attention to antisemitism to educate campus communities and putting the key burden on university leaders. "The document … takes the high ground of insisting that university leaders exert moral leadership and eschew either coercion or censorship. It honors freedom of expression even when such expression is abhorrent, prejudiced or distasteful."

The linchpin of the Regents' action was the following statement: "Anti-Semitism, anti-Semitic forms of anti-Zionism and other forms of discrimination have no place at the University of California."[5] It distinguished antisemitic forms of anti-Zionism from anti-Zionism, not conflating the two but presuming an area of overlap, and said nothing to interfere with freedom of speech. Indeed, the statement proclaimed: "First Amendment principles and academic freedom principles must be *paramount* [my italics] in guiding the university's response to instances of bias, prejudice and intolerance." But while making the distinction between anti-Zionism and antisemitic forms of anti-Zionism it offered no definition of what were antisemitic forms of anti-Zionism. This was left for others to explore or, since this distinction was not copied from the Working Report into the Principles document, perhaps to ignore altogether.

J. Daniel Hare, the chair of the Academic Council of the UC Academic Senate, who had cautioned the Working Group to distinguish between anti-Zionism and antisemitic forms of anti-Zionism,[6] fearing that an overly broad interpretation of antisemitism might chill reasonable discourse, said after the Report and Principles were adopted that he thought the new formulation worked and the statement avoided "the mistakes of other universities that attempted to define

---

[4] Mark G. Yudof, "U.C. Principles Give Needed Protection to Jewish Students," *Jewish News of Northern California*, April 1, 2016, http://www.jweekly.com/article/full/77233/opinions-u.c.-principles-give-needed-protection-to-jewish-students/.

[5] Note that the part of the quotation that reads "anti-Semitic forms of anti-Zionism" does not appear in the version available online (see source in note 1).

[6] J. Daniel Hare, letter to the Regents Working Group, March 21, 2016. The suggestion came originally from the University Committee on Academic Freedom (UCAF). See Kathleen Montgomery, letter to Dan Hare, March 17, 2016. Both letters are available at https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/_files/reports/documents/faculty-concerns-regents-work-group-principles-against-intolerance.pdf.

hate speech or devise speech codes."[7] He also stated that the "clear separation of protected speech from unprotected acts [in the statement] is a fundamental and extremely important distinction that the faculty appreciate."[8]

UC President Janet Napolitano communicated in late March and April 2016 with all the UC chancellors about the expected enforcement of the Principles Against Intolerance.

II.

After these events, during late spring 2016, it appeared—save for the memoranda about the Principles shared with various administrators—that many observers expected little additional follow-up at the local level. That is, it was still unclear if the Statement of Principles was going anywhere. Then a student disruption occurred at UC Irvine on May 18, 2016, and the UCI police received emergency calls from Jewish students saying they feared for their safety. Amid chants of "Long live the Intifada," some 50 anti-Israel student protesters from Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) and other groups purposefully disrupted the viewing by some dozen Jewish students of the film "Beneath the Helmet" about young Israeli soldiers, leading campus police to intervene and escort the Jewish students from the scene. The next day UCI Chancellor Howard Gillman responded with a campus-wide message characterizing the incident as having "crossed the line of civility." He wrote: "While this university will protect freedom of speech, that right is not absolute…. [T]hreats, harassment, incitement and defamatory speech are not protected. We must shelter *everyone's* right to speak freely—without fear or intimidation—and allow events to proceed without disruption and potential danger."[9]

Leaders and members of the Jewish community responded to this latest incident at UCI, a campus with a history of such incidents, with rising anger and concern. Significant pressure rose to review the event and to discipline the activists.

Observers also quickly saw this as a first test case for the university's recent statement condemning antisemitism. After all, as the statement clearly said, "Harassment, threats, assaults, vandalism and destruction of property, as defined by University policy, will not be tolerated within the University com-

---

[7] Jodut Baswari, "University Community Responds to Statement of Principles Against Intolerance," *Daily Bruin*, March 29, 2016, http://dailybruin.com/2016/03/29/uc-community-responds-to-statement-of-principles-against-intolerance/.

[8] "Regents Adopt Principles Against Intolerance with Council Amendment," *The Senate Source* 14, no. 1 (April 2016), http://senate.ucr.edu/misc/senatesource.april.2016.pdf.

[9] Howard Gillman, "Respecting the Lines of Civility," UCI Office of the Chancellor, May 19, 2016, http://chancellor.uci.edu/engagement/campus-communications/2016/160519-ssi-incident.php.

munity."[10] Indeed, some Jewish community activists now consciously sought to use the event to press UCI to create a plan to implement the Regents' statement. Thirty-six advocacy groups directly addressed Chancellor Gillman, asking him how he intended to implement the Principles Against Intolerance. As one advocate noted, "this incident is part of the pattern and that pattern needs to be addressed in a proactive way."[11]

While the statement by the Regents had not spelled out punishments or a standard protocol, UC Regent Norman Pattiz, who was very active in the development of the statement, offered, "We would like this thing to get resolved at the campus level. [But] if it is in fact behavior that goes beyond protected speech, then something probably ought to be done about it. We didn't craft and unanimously adopt a principles statement to simply make a statement and do nothing about it."[12]

Opinion on conditions at UC Irvine was varied. Some claimed that it was one of the worst campuses for antisemitism, while others held that the situation was complicated and was improving. "UCI is very misinterpreted," said Lisa Armony, executive director of the Hillel of Orange County. "In the last few years, we've seen a change for the better. Largely because the administration has taken this issue very seriously and has taken steps to promote a more civil climate."[13] But patience wore increasingly thin as the post-incident investigation dragged on into the summer. "At minimum, the university has a responsibility to take prophylactic measures which include educational measures to ensure there's a non-toxic environment on campus, and if violations are found, to punish any and all wrongdoers," said Aron Hier, campus outreach director for the Simon Wiesenthal Center.[14]

When, after three months of investigation at UC Irvine, SJP merely received a written warning, members of the Jewish community were very disappointed. Investigators had found that the SJP had violated student conduct policies regarding disruption, having crowded the area outside the screening room, chanted, and blocked the participants from leaving. SJP received a formal warning through March 29, 2017 and was required to host an educational program.[15] The

---

[10] Roxana Kopetman, "After Anti-Israel Protest at UCI, Both Sides Frustrated, Demand Action," *Orange County Register*, July 18, 2016, http://www.ocregister.com/articles/uci-722729-anti-jewish.html.

[11] Tammi Rossman-Benjamin, quoted in article.

[12] Norman Pattiz, quoted in article.

[13] Lisa Armony, quoted in article.

[14] Aron Hier, quoted in article.

[15] Thomas Parham, Office of Student Conduct, Sanction Letter, August 18, 2016, quoted in Jordan Zaitchik, "Anti-Israel Hate Group Sanctioned from University of California Irvine Campus," B'nai B'rith Canada, August 25, 2016, https://www.bnaibrith.ca/anti_israel_hate_group_sanctioned_from_university_of_california_irvine_campus.

campus investigators sidestepped consideration of whether the incident involved antisemitic bigotry and whether there had been additional individual harassment. Early reports said protesters had blockaded attendees, shouting "Long live the Intifada," "fuck the police," "displacing people since '48, there's nothing here to celebrate," and "all white people need to die." A female student was chased and forced to take refuge in a nearby building, but the student group claimed its members were seeking another entrance to the screening room, not harassing the fleeing Jewish student. Many Jewish students said they felt threatened by the protestors who tried to enter the screening room forcefully, then blocked the area so students could not leave.

In this context, Chancellor Gillman, in another message to campus issued in August, announced that "UCI fully and openly supports these principles" approved the previous March and that, "to ensure alignment with the Regents' statement," he and Provost Enrique Lavernia had asked historian Douglas E. Haynes, Vice Provost for Academic Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, to lead a comprehensive assessment of UCI's related policies, procedures, and practices. Haynes would consult with long-standing community partners, as well as with students, the Advisory Council on Campus Climate, Culture, and Inclusion, the Academic Senate, and other groups, to provide an overview of existing support and educational programs and make recommendations on additional steps to ensure full implementation of the Regents' statement.[16] In this way, a specific campus readied itself to integrate the Principles into its practice for the first time.

<div align="center">III.</div>

After seeking advice from community partners and others, Vice Provost Haynes issued his report, entitled *Higher Ground: The Alignment of UCI's Policies, Principles, and Programs with the UC Regents' Principles Against Intolerance*, in October.[17] The report was pre-reviewed by the UCI Chancellor's cabinet, which accepted all its recommendations. It included nineteen recommendations about integrating the Principles into UCI practice and improving the climate for Jewish students as part of the university's devotion to "inclusive excellence." It acknowledged the importance of doing more and better for Jewish students, who reported high levels of satisfaction with their careers at UCI but forthrightly stated they experienced "implicit and explicit bias, and perhaps more disturbing, fear." They reported being subjected to demeaning stereotypes, heckling and disruptive actions at sponsored events, and antisemitic graffiti. Much of this

---

16 Howard Gillman, untitled message, UCI Office of Inclusive Excellence, http://inclusion.uci.edu/2016/08/05/principles/.

17 Available at http://ucioie.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Higher_Ground.pdf.

arose out of political disagreements regarding Israel and was also stirred by invited speakers or sponsored exhibitions that made outrageous comparisons between Israeli policies and actions toward Palestinians and those of Nazi Germany during the liquidation of European Jewry. The report also acknowledged "a sense of situational social isolation" owing to the reluctance of non-Jewish students or student organizations to partner on social justice projects with students or organizations that support Israel.

UCI now committed to undertake numerous steps to combat antisemitism directly. One was to offer regular annual programming on the serious challenge of antisemitism in the United States and globally, including "the circumstances under which legitimate anti-Zionism protesting crosses the line of acceptability and becomes a form of anti-Semitism." Another was to create programming aimed to educate student government leaders about the concerns of Jewish students. Yet another initiative involved work with social justice student groups to influence them to include Jewish students. Other steps included commitments to disseminate the Principles on campus, develop an Inclusive Excellence Index aligned with the Principles, clarify UCI's free speech policy, and integrate the topic of antisemitism into campus anti-discrimination information and reporting. UCI committed to publicly and specifically name acts of bias and bigotry, including antisemitism, and to engage in campus police training on hate crimes, hate speech, and extremism. The university would also engage in extensive education and training initiatives, including new freshman seminars, General Education courses, and capstone projects, and explore adding faculty resources dedicated to Israel Studies, understanding hate, and the study of religious tolerance. Finally, under the heading of responsive engagement, the report called for the creation of an advisory board on campus climate for Jewish students to advise the Vice Provost for Academic Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and the hosting of an annual event to recognize best practices under the Principles.

This seemed like the very kind of steps that needed to be undertaken on UC campuses. By means of speech and action, university leaders would make it clear that antisemitic expression would not go unanswered and antisemitic conduct would not be tolerated. In matters of speech, administrators would speak out swiftly. In matters of conduct, they would openly condemn acts of antisemitism violating the rights of others to free speech and assembly, institute investigations and judicial proceedings to ensure both fairness and due process, and, at the same time, implement enforcement of student codes of conduct with appropriate follow-through. Finally, university leaders would also take up the important tasks of periodically training campus administrators and staff to identify antisemitism and antisemitic forms of anti-Zionism and developing protocols for responding to such bigotry or discrimination in real time. Education programs, it was thought, ought to target freshman orientation, student

government, student organization leaders, and annual residential advisor training in university housing.[18]

At an event in Washington, DC, on November 4 sponsored by Hillel International and attended by representatives of numerous organizations, including the Academic Engagement Network, the Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee, the Brandeis Center for Human Rights under Law, and others,[19] Vice Provost Haynes further elaborated on UCI's commitment and next steps in implementation. He was to meet shortly with the Deans' Council at UCI to develop an implementation report. Key matters remained, such as clarifying when speech is actionable and defining what constitutes antisemitic forms of anti-Zionism. Much would remain in progress for a time, and he hoped that more would be completed by March 2017. Haynes talked about a possible symposium in spring 2017 at UCI, while Hillel International spoke about helping sponsor a scholarly panel or working paper on the task of definition. Some in the room were less than optimistic about UCI's response to incidents given its existing record. But, overall, there was much satisfaction that something was now being done and much eagerness to assist in assuring that Jewish students at UCI were treated like others.

As at the event in Washington, DC, responses by Jewish groups to the first effort to integrate the Principles into campus life were positive, but criticism arose elsewhere. The Foundation for Individual Rights in Higher Education (FIRE) criticized the Principles and the UCI's *Higher Ground* report on the grounds that they were unclear on what speech might stir what response and seemed open to abuse. FIRE claimed that the Principles failed to make clear whether administrators could take punitive action against students for certain types of expression or at what exact point speech crossed the line between political commentary and unacceptable bias. FIRE insisted that all policies implicating freedom of speech had to be clear to ensure that protected speech was not chilled and that policies were not applied to punish disfavored expression.[20] Marc Stern of the American Jewish Committee also expressed reservations regarding the *Higher Ground* report at the aforementioned event, calling for greater clarity about what constituted free speech (protected) and what constituted disruptive protest (unprotected).

---

[18] This is based on a flyer containing suggestions for the implementation of the Principles Against Intolerance prepared by the Academic Engagement Network, a national faculty organization committed to opposing the BDS movement, working to help preserve academic freedom and freedom of expression, and stirring robust conversation about Israel on American campuses.

[19] Meeting at Hillel International, Washington, DC, November 4, 2016, notes by Michael Atkins for the Academic Engagement Network.

[20] Susan Kruth, "UC Irvine Report Suggests Unconstitutional Implementation of 'Principles Against Intolerance,'" FIRE, November 29, 2016, https://www.thefire.org/uc-irvine-report-suggests-unconstitutional-implementation-of-principles-against-intolerance/.

Palestine Legal, the National Lawyers' Guild, and other groups on the hard left were (unsurprisingly) even more critical, expressing concerns about the infringement of First Amendment rights and academic freedom. Such groups had written to President Napolitano on November 21, 2016, claiming that the Principles had "already resulted in suppression of speech and academic freedom across the University of California."[21] They insisted that the Principles conflated criticism of Israeli policy with antisemitism and that the improved distinction between antisemitism and antisemitic forms of anti-Zionism was "never defined." Palestine Legal felt similarly about the UCI *Higher Ground* report, fearing that UCI might make adherence to the Principles count in decisions about student groups' access to reserved campus spaces—a crucial incentive to generate appropriate conduct but possibly a form of viewpoint discrimination under the First Amendment.

IV.

By the end of 2018, actions to develop initiatives integrating the Principles into policy and practice had also begun on several other UC campuses, including UCLA, UC Davis, and UC Riverside. Additionally, a Brandeis University study based on a spring 2016 survey of Jewish undergraduate students on 50 campuses suggested that many schools in the UC system were "hotspots" where a majority of Jewish students perceived a hostile environment toward Israel, while over one quarter perceived a general environment of hostility toward Jews.[22] This was not true uniformly, as in some places anti-Israel and anti-Jewish sentiment went together and in others they did not. But on the California campuses studied (Irvine was not among them), the instances of anti-Israel and anti-Jewish sentiment were both high, and many students reported hearing remarks such as "Jews have too much power in America," "Israelis behave like Nazis," "Jews exploit the Holocaust," and "Jews are more loyal to Israel."[23]

---

[21] "CCR, Palestine Legal, and Other Civil Rights Organizations Send Letter to University of California President and Board of Regents," Center for Constitutional Rights, November 21, 2016, https://ccrjustice.org/ccr-palestine-legal-and-other-civil-rights-organizations-send-letter-university-california-president.

[22] Leonard Saxe et al., "Hotspots of Antisemitism and Anti-Israel Sentiment on US Campuses" (report, Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, October 2016), https://www.brandeis.edu/ssri/pdfs/campusstudies/AntisemitismCampuses102016.pdf.

[23] For a counter-view, see Ari Y. Kelman et al., "Safe and on the Sidelines: Jewish Students and the Israel-Palestine Conflict on Campus" (report, Research Group of the Concentration in Education and Jewish Studies, Stanford University, September 2017). See also Yair Rosenberg, "A New Stanford Study Asks Students If There is Antisemitism on Campus: Here's What They Found," *Tablet*, September 6, 2017; Sarah Asch, "Stanford Professor Explains Why Jewish Students Don't Fear Campus," *New Voices*, September 14, 2017. Kelman et al.'s interesting but flawed study draws on data from only

Like those who wrote the Brandeis report, this writer favors education and training on campus and other suasion efforts to external interventions by state legislatures. The UC Regents Principles held out a general orientation and approach to bigotry resting first and foremost on local university leadership, privileging free speech and exchange, and opening the door to a more flexible consideration of antisemitism, including new forms of antisemitism. To help move the process along, it appeared administrators needed to begin to work with scholars to clarify the line between free speech and bigotry, to commit to speaking out volubly, and to clarify lines of administrative responsibility concerning who would do what and when. Progress was also needed in exploring and defining what constituted "antisemitic forms of anti-Zionism." Contrary to those who insist that there is a clear distinction between anti-Zionism and antisemitism, there is a growing consensus among serious scholars of antisemitism that there is currently a convergence, overlap, or interaction between these two phenomena.

Antisemitism exists within history and changes throughout history, and new conditions in the present have contributed to the evolution of a new anti-semitism and new antisemitic forms of anti-Zionism. Some of this antisemitic anti-Zionism is a legacy of the Soviet bloc's anti-Zionism during the Cold War, while some of it derives from radical Islam and its manipulation of Koranic sources. Anti-Zionism as a political stance has its roots in universalistic, anti-nationalist forms of thinking mostly within the Jewish tradition, but the new antisemitic forms of anti-Zionism stand outside and against the Jewish tradition, linking up with radical forms of anti-imperialism that mythologize and delegitimize the Jewish state. In this new antisemitism—or antisemitic form of anti-Zionism—such thinking about the Jewish collective becomes a receptacle for all the old themes and symbols of classic antisemitism regarding Jewish power, conspiracy, deceit, and offensiveness, and the Jewish state becomes a uniquely malevolent force in a conflict-filled world, like the pariah Jew of old. The writer Alan Johnson has expressed it as follows,

> Antisemitic anti-Zionism bends the meaning of Israel and Zionism out of shape until both become fit receptacles for the tropes, images and ideas of classical anti-semitism. In short, that which the demonological Jew once was, demonological Israel now is: uniquely malevolent, full of blood lust, all-controlling, the hidden hand, tricksy, always acting in bad faith, the obstacle to a better, purer, more spiritual world, uniquely deserving of punishment, and so on.[24]

---

a few campuses and relies on a non-representative sample of participants that excludes Jews openly identified as Jews and active in Hillel. While suggestive of the variety of experiences on campuses, it is not persuasive overall.

[24] Alan Johnson, "The Left and the Jews: Time for a Rethink," *Fathom* (Autumn 2015), http://fathomjournal.org/the-left-and-the-jews-time-for-a-rethink/. See also Alan Johnson, "The UK Adopts a Modern Definition of Antisemitism," *World Affairs* (Spring 2016).

The new antisemitism thus displaces the racial Jew for a racist Jewish state and places Israel at the center of an obsessive worldview similar to the way classical antisemitism put the Jew at the center of world events. It speaks in the discourse of human rights but carries inside itself the erasure of actual Jewish experience and history and the grand mystification of Jewish power along lines believed by the classic enemies of the Jews. The slippage between Israel, supporters of Israel, and "the Jews" is palpable. And then, at other times, this radical outlook dons a mask claiming it is simply about criticizing Israeli policy, not invidiously considering the sovereign fate of the Jews. It even seeks at times to mind its manners so it may inhabit the university seminar room.[25]

The task in the wake of the creation of the Principles was to make this view more accessible and better understood by those charged with overseeing and maintaining inclusive campus environments.

V.

To date, UC Irvine has moved more quickly and effectively than the other campuses to develop a coherent, enriched response to the challenge of integrating the Principles. Led by Chancellor Gillman and Vice Provost Haynes, the ambition has been to make UCI no less than a national and global leader in "inclusive excellence." The effort has built on top of the *Higher Ground* recommendations and has extended its reach notably to sponsoring significant academic change on campus, including the development of a new Center for Jewish Studies with courses on antisemitism and on Israel. It has also led to the creation of a UCI Academy for Inclusion that organizes courses, research opportunities, and co-curricular and public affairs programming to promote dialogue and engagement on important issues. Most recently, in 2017-2018, it ran a year-long program called "Confronting Extremism,"[26] during which UCI hosted Reverend Jesse Jackson and Rabbi Hillel Cohen on the subject of "Charlottesville as a Defining Moment in American History," funded large-enrollment faculty projects and small seminar courses on key issues of the day, including "Civic Education in Polarized Times," and sponsored special talks on subjects like "Racial Bias in America: How Did We Get Here and Why Are We Stuck?" The UCI approach has been richly academic and broad in scope, focused on multiple minority group experiences and multiple "isms," and ambitious, even seeking to reach out via an Inclusion and Diversity Ambassador Program to high schools in Orange County.

---

[25] See Michael Gove, "Left's Hatred of Israel Is Racism in Disguise," *Times* (London), December 16, 2016.

[26] Douglas M. Haynes, email message to Mark Yudof and Kenneth Waltzer on Confronting Extremism initiative, December 17, 2017; Douglas M. Haynes, email message to Kenneth Waltzer on Updating *Higher Ground*, July 16, 2018.

Douglas Haynes has communicated some highlights,[27] which include the new Confronting Extremism initiative, which focuses on racism, white supremacy, and antisemitism, a university-wide research initiative, a campus-based Academy of Inclusion, and the Ambassador program. Also included is further implementation of the *Higher Ground* report, including the creation of a new integrated freshman seminar series on bias, prejudice, and bigotry, which has included seminars on antisemitism and Islamophobia, the new Center for Jewish Studies, which sponsors research on Jewish history, Judaism, Israel, the Shoah, and antisemitism, and an Inclusive Excellence Grant Program for related projects.

Such advances aside, nothing has yet effectively stemmed the commitment of SJP and pro-Palestinian students at UCI to mount an annual anti-Zionism week coinciding with Holocaust commemoration, or to soften SJP's anti-normalization policy of continuing to disrupt Jewish student-sponsored events. On March 10, 2017, SJP students repeated the disruption carried out the year before, for which SJP had been formally warned, shouting down an IDF Reservists panel, and forcing program organizers to lead attendees out the side of the building accompanied by police.[28] Jewish organizations expressed frustration that UCI could not curb such activity, even while strong evidence existed in SJP statements that its members planned the disruption and intended to harass and deny the rights of Jewish students. A letter organized by campus antisemitism watchdog AMCHA queried,

> We … ask you to tell us how UCI's current plan for implementing the Regents Principles Against Intolerance will adequately address the current incident and ensure that Jewish students, and all students, are protected now and in the future from intolerant behavior which denies them freedom of expression and the right to fully participate in campus life.[29]

In August 2017, following a substantial investigation, UCI did place SJP on academic probation for two years, through 2019.

At UCLA, the creation of an Office for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity (EDI) predated the creation of the Principles Against Intolerance. We visited UCLA in November 2016 to assess initial progress on integrating the Principles. We

---

[27] Douglas M. Haynes, email message to Kenneth Waltzer on Updating *Higher Ground*, July 16, 2018.

[28] "Letter to UC Irvine Chancellor Gillman: 53 Groups Urge Immediate Response to SJP Disruption in Framework of Principles Against Intolerance," June 14, 2017, available at https://amchainitiative.org/letter-to-uc-irvine-chancellor-gillman-June-2017-2; Rachel Frommer, "Pro-Israel Groups Claim Criminal Action at UC-Irvine Protest, Call on School to Hold Perpetrators Accountable," *The Algemeiner*, July 10, 2017; Jacob May, "Students Supporting Israel Vindicated at Irvine," blog post, February 22, 2018, Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights under Law, http://brandeiscenter.com/students-supporting-israel-vindicated-irvine/.

[29] "Letter to UC Irvine Chancellor Gillman."

discovered that a great deal was underway but also got the impression that much was without coherence or direct responsiveness to the Principles. UCLA Vice President for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Jerry Kang and the EDI were committed to creating an inventory of overlap between UCLA initiatives and the Principles, but no coherent plan with multiple recommendations as had been created at UCI existed, nor, to our knowledge, was one anticipated.[30]

In 2017-2018, the EDI at UCLA listed ten themes extracted from the Principles and the initiatives at UCLA that were promoting each theme. One such theme, for example, was "discrimination is prohibited." Among the initiatives identified in this context was UCLA Policy 240: Investigating Allegations of Student Conduct that Negatively Impact Campus Climate. Another theme was "leaders should challenge bias, antisemitism especially." Among the initiatives identified in this context were several speeches by Jerry Kang and the maintenance of an archive of public statements affirming UCLA's commitment to nondiscrimination and opposition to antisemitism.

The initiatives at UCLA in 2017-2018 also included "Free Speech 101: A UCLA Week on Free Speech and Hate Speech," including a primer entitled "Free Speech on Campus: The Basics, the Myths, the Challenges." UCLA leaders thought there was a dearth of student knowledge about free speech and its importance. Unfortunately, as at UC Irvine, activist students remained interested in disrupting Israel-related events at UCLA. Most recently, on May 17, 2018, SJP disrupted an SSI-sponsored event called "Indigenous Peoples Unite," which brought speakers of Kurdish, Armenian, and Jewish backgrounds together. The pro-Palestinian protestors physically tore down banners and openly baited and physically threatened some of the presenters. In line with the Principles, Vice Chancellor Kang together with Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Monroe Gorden firmly stated that such behavior would not be tolerated.[31] But the Office of the President has thus far failed to issue a statement, and parallel initiatives involving existing or new academic programs have failed to support statements and educational initiatives. At UCLA, integrating the Principles appears to be a specialized set of activities carried out exclusively by the EDI.

The University of California at Davis, which for a time threatened to become the "UC Irvine of the North" as regards incidents on campus, has also worked on integrating the Principles. Unlike elsewhere, UC Davis had to do so amidst a significant change in university leadership and an administrative reorganization

---

[30] Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (UCLA), "Principles Against Intolerance," last updated March 12, 2018, https://equity.ucla.edu/programs-resources/principles-against-intolerance/.

[31] Jerry Kang and Monroe Gorden, "Submission: UCLA Does Not Endorse Violent Disruptions to Respectful Discussions," *Daily Bruin*, May 24, 2018, http://dailybruin.com/2018/05/24/submission-ucla-does-not-endorse-violent-disruptions-to-respectful-discussions/.

that initially led to a lack of clarity on delegated lines of responsibility. Chancellor Gary S. May, who is personally strongly committed to the Principles, became chancellor only in August 2017. Full clarity on lines of responsibility will only emerge after the reorganization of the Division of Student Affairs. A new Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion position was created in March 2018, but as yet that position is unfilled. Associate Chancellor Karl Engelbrach, Chancellor May's senior staff advisor, provided a frank description of the challenges at UC Davis amidst leadership and bureaucratic change.[32]

Engelbrach discussed the difficulty of finding the right balance in terms of how much and how often—and how fast—to speak out against intolerance on campus. Despite the Principles, administrators learned to resist expectations that responses should come quickly and also learned that there are diminishing returns to frequent statements. Davis administrators also experienced activist interest by other groups on campus—particularly Chicano and Latino groups—in using the Principles for their own purposes. When this writer visited UC Davis in May 2018, Engelbrach noted that the new Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion would have clear leadership responsibility and that conversations about enforcing the Principles would then develop. There was also some anticipation of new related academic appointments at Davis and of a relevant speaker series similar to the one at Irvine.

In March 2016, the same month in which the Regents approved the Principles, members of SJP at Davis had disrupted the campus appearance of Israeli Arab diplomat George Deek. The student organization Aggies for Israel and the Davis Faculty for Israel demanded that administrators initiate an investigation to sanction the disrupters and asked that they speak out.[33] Little happened. A year later, another set of incidents in summer 2017 brought additional complaints that Davis was still failing to address hate speech aimed at Jewish students. Then, in July 2017, Imam Ammar Shahin from the Islamic Center of Davis near the campus offered antisemitic sermons praying for the annihilation of the Jews, "Oh Allah, count them one by one and destroy them down to the very last one. Do not spare any of them." The fact that these words met with continued silence from administrators resulted in a loss of good will in the community.[34]

---

[32] Interview with Associate Chancellor Karl Engelbrach, University of California at Davis, May 10, 2018.

[33] Dan Pine, "UC Davis Urged to Sanction Anti-Israel Protestors," *Jewish News of Northern California*, April 1, 2016, https://www.jweekly.com/2016/04/01/u-c-davis-urged-to-sanction-anti-israel-disrupters/.

[34] Charline Delkah, "Guest: UC Davis Remains Silent in Wake of Anti-Semitic Sermon," *California Aggie*, November 2, 2017, https://theaggie.org/2017/11/02/guest-uc-davis-remains-silent-in-wake-of-anti-semitic-sermon/. See also Esmeralda Bermudez, "Davis Imam Sparks Dismay with 'Filth of the Jews' Remark," *Los Angeles Times*, July 28, 2017, https://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-davis-imam-20170726-story.html.

Davis thus lags behind other campuses in integrating the Principles, partly as a result of leadership change, and continues to encounter difficulties in figuring out how much and when to speak out in specific instances. Nonetheless, Associate Chancellor Engelbrach insisted that Davis is in "a better place" today than it was four years before. He attributes this to Gary May's leadership, but the jury is still out on this issue as it concerns individuals at UC Davis Hillel and active faculty and students.

Finally, at the University of California at Riverside, Chancellor Kim Wilcox and Associate Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion Mariam Lam have worked to integrate the Principles into policy and practice, tying it closely to the university's Principles of Community. The latter emphasizes the right of all members to "live, study, teach, and work free from harassment or denigration on the basis of race/ethnicity, age, religious or political preference, gender, transgender, sexual orientation, nation of origin, or physical abilities." Policy at Riverside promises that "any violation of this right by verbal or written abuse, threats, harassment, intimidation, or violence against person or property will be considered a violation of the principles of community … (and [will be] subject to sanction according to University policies and procedures)."[35]

VI.

In late June 2018, the California State Legislature allocated $1.2 million for "anti-bias training" in the University of California and California State systems, prompting the UC Office of the President to call campus administrators together to inventory progress on the Principles and explore what should be done in providing common training and identifying appropriate outcomes in the future. Hate speech of all kinds is rising, Yvette Gullatt, Vice Provost for Diversity and Engagement, affirmed in a phone call,[36] students remain inadequately informed about free speech and its traditions, and there is continuing antisemitism as well as rising Islamophobia and xenophobia. Campuses will be asked for reports providing more transparency about what they have done with respect to the Principles and, particularly, how they have coped with non-criminal hate acts.

Vice Provost Gullatt affirmed the diversity of approaches and differences in accomplishments to date and, from a system perspective, especially lauded UC Irvine, particularly its Combating Extremism initiative, which focuses on education and learning. Gullatt also pointed out that different campuses had different demographic mixes, each with distinctive issues, which explained some of the

---

[35] "UCR Principles of Community," University of California, Riverside, available at https://chancellor.ucr.edu/documents/community.pdf.

[36] Vice Provost Yvette Gullatt, telephone call with Kenneth Waltzer, July 27, 2018.

variation in implementation, as did comparative support for integration matters at the highest administrative levels. In developing criteria and standards for anti-bias training, the Vice Provost expressed a hope that, over a two-year process extending to 2020, greater central direction would reduce some of the variation and highlight the importance of more education and learning approaches.

Vice Provost Gullatt confirmed there were ongoing disruptions on some campuses that often involved members of marginalized communities and that enforcing similar standards for different student groups was an important goal that remained to be achieved. A system-wide meeting, in which leaders will discuss policies and identify best practices, will be the first effort of the Office of the President to press for further work on implementation and integration. It is anticipated that central intervention of this kind will spur further attention to preventing and punishing those whose actions, as the Principles note, "interfere with the ability of an individual or group to assemble, speak, and hear the opinions of others." However, more must be done to deal effectively with the disruption of Jewish events and address the isolation felt by many Jewish students.

Contributors

Edward Alexander received his BA from Columbia and his MA and PhD from the University of Minnesota. He taught at the University of Washington from 1960 to 2004, as well as at Tel-Aviv University, Tufts University, the Hebrew University, and Memphis State University. His publications include *The Resonance of Dust: Holocaust Literature and Jewish Fate* (1979); *Isaac Bashevis Singer* (1980); *The Jewish Idea and Its Enemies* (1988); *The Holocaust: History and the War of Ideas* (1994); *The Jewish Divide over Israel: Accusers and Defenders* (2006); *The Jewish Wars: Reflections by One of the Belligerents* (2011); *The State of the Jews: A Critical Appraisal* (2012); and *Jews Against Themselves* (2015).

Corinne E. Blackmer is Professor of English and Judaic Studies at Southern Connecticut State University. She has written extensively on modernism, opera, African-American literature, Jewish literature and ethics, modern Israeli literature and LGBTQ rights, graphic novels, and the Hebrew Bible. She was a visiting professor of Sexuality and Judaic Studies at the University of Kyiv and a recipient of a Schusterman Fellowship in Israel Studies. She co-edited (with Patricia Juliana Smith) a volume on women in opera called *En Travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera* (1995), a book on Israeli literature, *Remembrance and Forgetting in Contemporary Israeli Literature* (2016), and another on BDS, *Queering Anti-Zionism: LGBTQ Intellectuals, Israel/Palestine Campus Activism, and Academic Freedom* (forthcoming).

Amy Elman is Professor of Political Science and the William Weber Chair of Social Science at Kalamazoo College in Michigan. She has received numerous awards for her scholarship, including two Fulbrights, a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and a grant from the Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism at the Hebrew University. She has worked on behalf of women's rights and against antisemitism in the United States and Europe for over three decades. Her most recent book, *The European Union, Antisemitism and the Politics of Denial* (2014), explores the conditions that precipitated the EU's efforts to stem antisemitism and analyzes the unfortunate consequences of those efforts.

Miriam F. Elman is Associate Professor of Political Science and the Inaugural Robert D. McClure Professor of Teaching Excellence at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University, where she serves as Research Director in the Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration (PARCC). Elman received her PhD in political science from Columbia University and her BA in International Relations from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. An award-winning scholar and teacher, she is the

author and co-author of over 65 journal articles and book chapters and the editor and co-editor of five books, including *Democracy and Conflict Resolution: The Dilemmas of Israel's Peacemaking* (2014) and *Jerusalem: Conflict and Cooperation in a Contested City* (2014). She also co-edited (with Donna Robinson Divine and Asaf Romirowsky) a special issue of the journal *Israel Studies*, entitled "Word Crimes; Reclaiming the Language of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict" (2019). In recognition of her work, Elman was listed by *The Algemeiner* newspaper as among the top 100 people positively influencing Jewish life in 2018.

Joel Finkelstein is the Director of the Network Contagion Research Institute, which deploys machine learning tools to expose the growing tide of hate and extremism on social media. A research fellow at the Anti-Defamation League Center on Extremism, Joel is an award-winning graduate of Princeton University, where his doctoral work focused on cognitive psychology and neuroscience. He speaks to media, policy makers, advocacy groups, and investigators to help turn tools for social science into tools for social integrity. His work on hate in social media has appeared in the *Washington Post* and the *Wall Street Journal* and has been featured by NPR and other media outlets.

Elliot Kaufman is the inaugural Joseph Rago Memorial Fellow on the *Wall Street Journal*'s editorial pages. In addition to the *WSJ*, his writing has appeared in *Commentary*, *First Things* and the *National Review*. He is a graduate of Stanford University, as well as fellowship programs at the Tikvah Fund and the Hertog Foundation. Elliot hails from Toronto, Canada, and writes from New York City.

James Kirchick is a Visiting Fellow at the Center on the United States and Europe and the Project on International Order and Strategy at the Brookings Institution. A widely published journalist, he is the author of *The End of Europe: Dictators, Demagogues and the Coming Dark Age* (2017), a correspondent for the *Daily Beast*, a columnist for *Tablet Magazine*, and a frequent contributor to a wide array of publications, including the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Politico*, *Foreign Policy*, the *Weekly Standard*, and *Commentary*, among others.

Neil Kressel is Professor of Psychology and directs the Honors Program in the Social Sciences at William Paterson University. He was Visiting Associate Professor at the Yale Initiative for the Interdisciplinary Study of Antisemitism (YIISA) at Yale University. Kressel's books include *"The Sons of Pigs and Apes"*: *Muslim Antisemitism and the Conspiracy of Silence* (2012); *Bad Faith: The Danger of Religious Extremism* (2007); and *Mass Hate: The Global Rise of Genocide and Terror* (2002).

Melissa Landa is the Senior Associate for Membership and Diversity at the Academic Engagement Network (AEN), a national faculty organization that opposes the BDS campaign against Israel. Prior to joining AEN, Melissa was an award-winning faculty member in the College of Education at the University of Maryland for ten years. Her teaching and research interests include preparing teachers to be culturally competent, successful literacy instruction for children in low-income immigrant communities, and the immigration and acculturation experiences of Ethiopian-Israelis. Her publications include *Early Childhood Literacy Teachers in High Poverty Schools: A Study of Courage and Caring* (2017).

Jack Levin is Professor Emeritus of Sociology and Criminology and Co-Director of the Brudnick Center on Violence and Conflict at Northeastern University. He has authored or co-authored 31 books, including *Hate Crimes: The Rising Tide of Bigotry and Bloodshed* (1993); *Hate Crimes Revisited* (2002); *Why We Hate* (2004); *The Violence of Hate: Understanding Harmful Forms of Bias and Bigotry* (4th ed., 2017); and *Hate Crime: A Global Perspective* (2015), as well as more than 250 articles and columns in professional journals, books, and major newspapers. Levin has spoken to a variety of community, academic, and professional groups, including the White House Conference on Hate Crimes, the Department of Justice, OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Royal College of Psychiatry in London, Oregon's Human Rights Commission of the Attorney General's office, and the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

Cary Nelson is the Jubilee Professor of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and an Affiliated Professor at the University of Haifa. He was national president of the American Association of University Professors from 2006 to 2012. He is the author or editor of 33 books, including, most recently, *The Case Against Academic Boycotts of Israel* (2015); *Dreams Deferred: A Concise Guide to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the Movement to Boycott Israel* (2016); and *Israel Denial: Anti-Zionism, Anti-Semitism, and the Faculty Campaign Against the Jewish State* (2019).

Stephen H. Norwood is Professor of History and Judaic Studies at the University of Oklahoma. He is the author of five books, most recently *Antisemitism and the American Far Left* (2013) and *The Third Reich in the Ivory Tower* (2009), which was a finalist for the National Jewish Book Award for Holocaust Studies. His articles have appeared in numerous anthologies and journals, including American Jewish History, Modern Judaism, and the Journal for the Study of Antisemitism.

David Patterson holds the Hillel A. Feinberg Distinguished Chair in Holocaust Studies at the Ackerman Center for Holocaust Studies, University of Texas at Dallas. He is also a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP). David is a member of the Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission and a member of the Executive Board of the

Annual Scholars' Conference on the Holocaust and the Churches. He has lectured at universities on six continents and throughout the United States. A winner of the National Jewish Book Award, the Koret Jewish Book Award, and the Holocaust Scholars' Conference Eternal Flame Award, he has published 40 books and over 240 articles, essays, and book chapters on antisemitism, the Holocaust, and Jewish studies. His most recent books include *Judaism, Antisemitism, Holocaust: Making the Connections* (forthcoming); *Shoah and Torah* (forthcoming); *Portraits: Elie Wiesel's Hasidic Legacy* (2021); *The Holocaust and the Non-Representable* (2018); and *Anti-Semitism and Its Metaphysical Origins* (2015).

Molly Benjamin Patterson is Associate Professor of Middle Eastern History at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and the Director of their Middle East Studies Program. Her recent contributions to academic journals focus on the history of Abrahamic religions, specifically that of marginalized communities. She is currently writing a monograph on the eschatology of Jerusalem.

Andrew Pessin is Professor of Philosophy at Connecticut College and Campus Bureau Editor of *The Algemeiner*. In the latter capacity he has kept a close eye on campus activities concerning Israel and the Jews and has written widely on the subject. Author of a number of academic books and articles, he has also published three novels, including *The Irrationalist* (2017), an historical murder mystery based closely on the life and mysterious death of the famous philosopher René Descartes, and *Nevergreen* (2021), an academic satire targeting cancel culture and the ideology that generates it. His book *Anti-Zionism on Campus: The University, Free Speech, and BDS*, co-edited with Doron Ben-Atar, was published in 2018 by Indiana University Press. More information about him and his work may be found at http://www.andrewpessin.com.

Eunice Pollack is Professor of History and Jewish Studies at the University of North Texas. Her most recent publications include *Racializing Antisemitism: Black Militants, Jews, and Israel, 1950-Present* (2013); *Antisemitism on the Campus: Past and Present* (2010); *From Antisemitism to Anti-Zionism: The Past and Present of a Lethal Ideology* (2017); and the prize-winning two-volume *Encyclopedia of American Jewish History* (co-edited with Stephen H. Norwood, 2008).

Ashley Reichelmann is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Virginia Tech. She received her PhD from Northeastern University, her MSc from the University of Bristol (United Kingdom), and her BA from The College of New Jersey. Her research focuses on collective memory and past violence as a cause and consequence of contemporary violence and prejudice. Her most recent work explores how collective threat influences White Americans' reactions to representations of slavery, including how such reactions impact intergroup relations vis-à-vis racial prejudice, social distance, and policy preferences. Ranging from hate crimes and school shootings to prejudice and genocide, her work sits at the

crossroads of social psychology, race studies, and criminology, attempting to better understand how past violence impacts modern identity and intergroup relations. Her work has been published in the *Journal for Homicide Studies, American Behavioral Scientist*, and *Social Psychology Quarterly*.

Charles Rubin teaches political philosophy at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh. His recent publications focus on converging technologies and those who believe they should be used to redesign humanity, a topic he discusses in *Eclipse of Man: Human Extinction and the Meaning of Progress* (2014). Dr. Rubin is also author of *The Green Crusade: Rethinking the Roots of Environmentalism* (1994) and editor of *Conservation Reconsidered: Nature, Virtue and American Liberal Democracy* (2000). In 2017-2018, he was a Visiting Fellow in the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions at Princeton University, where he worked on a book exploring what classic stories about human-created monsters tell us about the coming age of biotechnology. His other work in the field of literature and politics includes studies of Henry Adams, Flannery O'Connor (with Leslie G. Rubin), H.G. Wells, and contemporary author Neal Stephenson.

Charles Asher Small is the Founder and Executive Director of the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP) and a Visitor Research Fellow at St Antony's College, Oxford. He specializes in the fields of contemporary antisemitism, including the delegitimization of Israel, social and cultural theory, globalization and national identity, social movements, political Islam, and racism. Charles has established a groundbreaking academic seminar series in the emerging field of critical contemporary antisemitism studies that has been hosted at top US and European universities, as well as an annual curriculum development program in critical antisemitism studies at Oxford University. His publications include *Social Theory: A Historical Analysis of Canadian Socio-Cultural Policies, "Race" and the "Other"* (2013); *Global Antisemitism: A Crisis of Modernity* (2013); *The Yale Papers: Antisemitism in Comparative Perspective* (2015); and *The ISGAP Papers: Antisemitism in Comparative Perspective: Volume Two* (2016) and *Volume Three* (2018).

Stanislav Vysotsky is Assistant Professor of Sociology and Criminology at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. His research on the militant antifascist movement and the relationship between threat, space, subculture, and social movement activism has been published in various journals, including *Interface: A Journal for and about Social Movements and Critical Criminology*, and in his book *American Antifa: The Tactics, Culture, and Practice of Militant Antifascism* (2020). He has also published research on fascist and supremacist movements in the *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, the *Journal of Crime and Justice*, and the *Journal of Hate Studies*, as well as several edited volumes. His current research focuses on analyzing the dynamics between protesters, counter-protesters, and police at fascist rallies.

Dexter Van Zile has served as the Christian Media Analyst for the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA) since 2006. In his work at CAMERA, Van Zile has written extensively on the response of Christian churches and para-church organizations to the Arab-Israeli conflict. His writings have been featured by various publications and outlets, including *The Boston Globe*, the *Jerusalem Post*, *The Algemeiner*, *PJMedia* and the *Jewish Political Studies Review*, which is published by the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. Van Zile, a former Peace Corps volunteer, received a BA in politics and government from the University of Puget Sound and an MA in political science and environmental studies from Western Washington University.

Kenneth Waltzer is Professor Emeritus of History at Michigan State University (MSU) and a former Director of its Jewish Studies program. He earned his PhD in history from Harvard University and came to Michigan to help build James Madison College, MSU's highly regarded residential college for public affairs. He served as associate dean and dean of James Madison College and as director of MSU's general education program in the arts and humanities. Trained initially as an immigration and social historian, he shifted to Holocaust history, focusing first on the rescue and second on the social history of prisoners under conditions of extremity in the camps. His work on Buchenwald and the rescue of children is well known (a manuscript is in process) and has led to several important discoveries, including the outing of a Holocaust memoir fraud (*Angel at the Fence*), two "Righteous Among the Nations" awards at Yad Vashem, and a feature-length documentary movie, *Kinderblock 66: Return to Buchenwald*. His recent publications include "Moving Together, Moving Alone: The Story of Boys on a Transport from Auschwitz to Buchenwald," in *Microhistories of the Holocaust* (ed. Claire Zalc and Tal Bruttmann, 2016). From 2015 to 2018, he served as the executive director of the Academic Engagement Network, a national faculty organization devoted to countering BDS, promoting freedom of speech on campus, and responding to antisemitism.