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- International Headquarters
P.O. Box 1093
Jerusalem, Israel
Tel: (972) 2-624-5004
intl.office@bridgesforpeace.com
- Australia
P.O. Box 1785, Buderim
Queensland 4556
Tel: 07-5453-7988
adminaust@bridgesforpeace.com.au
- Canada
P.O. Box 21001, RPO Charleswood
Winnipeg, MB R3R 3R2
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4-13-2 Taihei, Sumida-Ku
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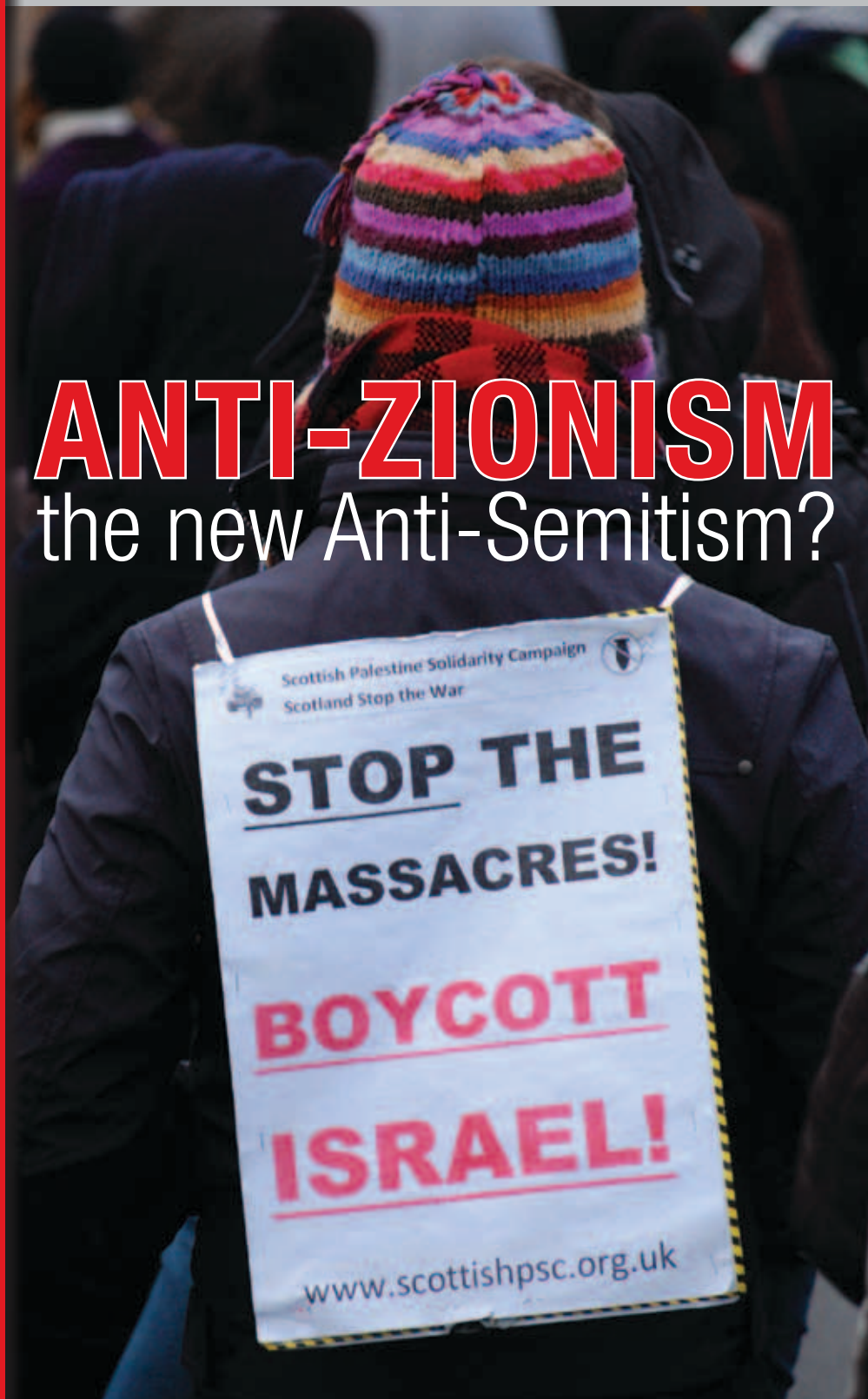
Israel Teaching Letter

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ANTI-ZIONISM

the new Anti-Semitism?



ANTI-ZIONISM

the new Anti-Semitism?



**“You declare, my friend, that you do not hate the Jews,
you are merely ‘anti-Zionist.’**

**And I say, let the truth ring forth from the high mountain tops,
let it echo through the valleys of God’s green earth:
When people criticize Zionism, they mean Jews—this is God’s own truth.”**

Martin Luther King Jr, “Letter to an Anti-Zionist Friend” (August 1967)

“In every generation, they rise up against us to destroy us.”

Read by Jewish people worldwide
in their annual Passover *Haggadah* (from Psalm 83:4)

When I was a theological student in South Australia, our college hosted a leading German theologian and preacher of that time called Helmut Thielicke. I can’t say that I was in agreement with all of his theological positions, but on many issues, he was penetratingly insightful. A pastor at heart, Thielicke once wrote: “Tell me how much you know of the sufferings of your fellow men, and I will tell you how much you have loved them.” I have never forgotten those words, and they go right to the heart of any discussion of anti-Semitism and of its mutation into anti-Zionism, the denial of Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state.

Anti-Semitism—or Jew-hatred—has been described by Irwin Cotler, former attorney general of Canada, as “the discrimination against, denial of or assault upon the rights of Jews to live as equal members of whatever host society they inhabit.” Jewish authors Dennis Prager and Joseph Telushkin start their classic study *Why the Jews?* with the statement, “Hatred of the Jew has been humanity’s greatest hatred. While hatred of other groups has always existed, no hatred has been as universal, as deep, or as permanent as antisemitism.”

This deep-rooted hatred of Jewish people—what has been called by many “the longest hatred”—has now morphed into a “new anti-Semitism” that was perhaps not expected after the Second World War. It was widely thought—and hoped—that after the Holocaust, important lessons had been learned. Following the revelation of the horrors of Nazism, it was hardly appropriate to talk about hating Jewish people. As Rabbi Benjamin Blech puts it succinctly, “It’s no longer ‘in’ to attack Jews as Jews or to revile any other religion.” But tragically nothing really changed.

“Hatred of the Jew has been humanity’s greatest hatred. While hatred of other groups has always existed, no hatred has been as universal, as deep, or as permanent as antisemitism.”

Dennis Prager
and Joseph Telushkin

The Spiritual Big Picture

The depth, extent, and ugliness of anti-Semitism in its various expressions cannot be easily explained. Prager and Telushkin conclude that “Anti-semites have hated Jews because Jews are Jewish.” Specifically, they identify four components in Judaism that offer many people a persuasive explanation of anti-Semitism: ethical monotheism, the system of Jewish law, the peoplehood of the Jews, and the chosenness of the Jews. Rabbi Ken Spiro similarly concludes that the real cause of anti-Semitism is humanity’s eternal revolt against the values that Judaism seeks to bring into the world.

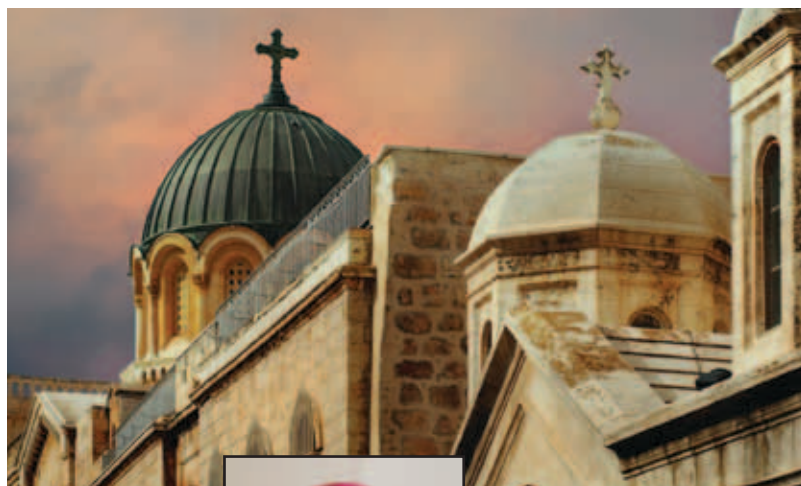
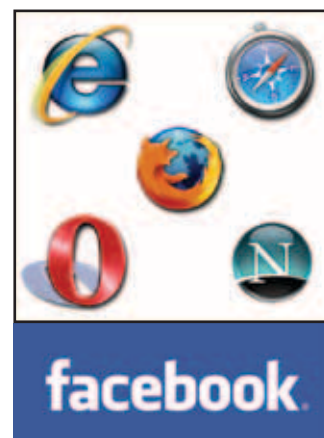
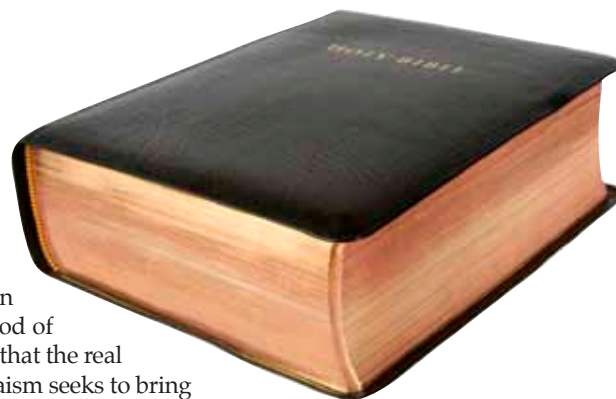
In an interview in April 2010, Abraham Foxman of the Anti-Defamation League said that a major ingredient in the increase in anti-Semitism, especially since Operation Cast Lead in Gaza in the winter of 2008–9, is the Internet. In May, four months after the 23-day incursion, the Jewish Web site Aish.com launched an online petition, “Stop Hatred of Israel on Facebook.” Clearly relentless Islamic propaganda has been very effective in the cyberworld. According to Foxman, “Our polling has shown that nearly one out of five Americans blames the Jewish community for the recent economic crisis. In Europe, it’s one out of three.”

All this demands an explanation that takes us directly to Yeshua’s (Jesus’) description of the deceiver Satan in John 8:44: “...there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.” The fact is that those chosen by God are instantly faced with satanic opposition. Satan hates God and therefore hates His chosen people, and so he directs his venom against the Jewish people.

But we need to go deeper than this. In Genesis 17:7–8, we read God’s words to Abraham: “*And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God*” (emphases added). These pivotal statements, echoed in many places in the Scriptures, speak unequivocally of the chosenness of the Jewish people (not to be equated with superiority) and affirm their biblical—let alone historical and moral—right to the land that God has given to them.

Michael Brown reminds us that Satan’s desire is to frustrate the purposes of God and, if that were possible, to discredit Him as a covenant-keeping God who is ever faithful to His Word. Satan is doing all he can, through human agencies from the time of Pharaoh to radical Islamists today, to annihilate the Jewish people and to disprove their connection to the land of Israel. If God were to be proved a liar or lacking in power in any way, then He most certainly would not be worthy of our worship.

Tragically, the Christian Church down through the centuries has contributed to the profoundly painful history of anti-Semitism that continues to this day to haunt the Jewish people, resulting in understandable anguish on their part as they face many who, in rejecting their Zionist beliefs, are clearly rejecting them. The virulently anti-Israel “Kairos Palestine” document, launched in Bethlehem in December 2009 by a panel chaired by former Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem Michel Sabbah, sought to mobilize Christian churches worldwide in a range of boycotts, divestment, and delegitimization, deliberately comparing Israel with the regime of apartheid.



Latin Patriarch of
Jerusalem Michel Sabbah

The Christian Church down through the centuries has contributed to the profoundly painful history of anti-Semitism that continues to this day to haunt the Jewish people.



Declaration of the State of Israel

Israel Hated for Existing

Zionism is accepted by Jews worldwide as an integral part of Judaism. According to the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs: "The establishment of the State of Israel [in 1948] marked the realization of the Zionist goal of attaining an internationally recognized, legally secured home for the Jewish people in its historic homeland, where Jews would be free from persecution and able to develop their own lives and identity." As a movement founded in 1897 by a secular Jew from Vienna, Theodore Herzl, Zionism is essentially, and simply, about the return of the Jewish people to their homeland.

Natan Kellermann, a clinical psychologist from Israel, wrote in 2005: "Now we are hated, not despite the fact that we have a homeland, but **because** we have it and **because** of what we do in order to live in it and defend it... This hate of Israel is profoundly anti-Semitic" [emphasis added]. This hatred is accurately described as anti-Zionism—the denial of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state. Cotler quotes Per Ahlmark, Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden, who said, "In the past, the most dangerous anti-Semites were those who wanted to make the world Judenrein, 'free of Jews.' Today, the most dangerous anti-Semites might be those who want to make the world Judenstaatrein, 'free of a Jewish state.'"

Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state is affirmed consistently by Israel's leaders in the light of relentless denials of that right by its enemies. There are some who argue that anti-Zionism does not amount to anti-Semitism, stating that because Jews are neither a nation nor a people, they have no right to the land of Israel. Anti-Zionists who hold this view claim that they are not motivated by hatred of the Jews. Dennis Prager and Joseph Telushkin respond by stating that "the consequences of anti-Zionism and antisemitism for the Jewish people are the same."

It is abundantly clear that anti-Zionism, in advocating the elimination of the state of Israel, is inherently anti-Semitic.

Pierre-André Taguieff wrote in *Rising from the Muck*, "Much of what purports to be criticism of Israel and Zionism is demonization, and has led to an international resurgence of attacks on Jews and Jewish symbols and an increased acceptance of anti-semitic beliefs in public discourse."

Is Criticism of Israel Anti-Semitic?

Does all this mean that there is no place for criticism of Israel and the policies of the Israeli government? Marvin Wilson in *Our Father Abraham* answers by asserting, "People are not necessarily anti-Semitic or anti-Zionist if they oppose certain Israeli political policies or military actions. At times, we may need to express our strongest disapproval of the one whom we care about most deeply and love the most." Alan Dershowitz, a distinguished lawyer and passionate defender of Israel, quotes approvingly Thomas Friedman, who wrote in the *New York Times* that criticizing Israel is not to be equated with anti-Semitism: "But singling out Israel for opprobrium [contempt] and international sanction—out of proportion to any other party in the Middle East—is anti-Semitic, and not saying so is dishonest."

It has become "politically correct" for so-called intellectuals to hold Israel to an impossibly high standard, while setting a much lower standard for every other nation, including those countries whose record of tyranny, torture, honor killings, genocide, and many other human rights abuses is continually ignored. Incredibly, some of these nations have been invited to sit on the United Nations Human Rights Council. Holocaust-denial, even blaming the Holocaust on the Jews themselves, and attempted sanctions against Israel alone, such as divestiture or boycotts, are all illustrations of an unceasing anti-Semitic singling out of Israel.



This is Jew-hatred disguised as anti-Zionism, and examples of such anti-Semitism are increasingly evident in recent years. The Jewish Agency has reported that there were more anti-Semitic incidents in 2009 than in any year since the Second World War, including many demonstrations with anti-Israel banners and slogans alleging odious comparisons to the Holocaust and Nazis. As a democracy, Israel has always welcomed critics, but criticism of this kind is unqualified anti-Semitism.

Examples of Hatred and Bigotry

In January 2010, the tiny nation of Haiti was devastated by an earthquake that took the lives of an estimated 230,000 people. An Israel Defense Forces (IDF) rescue team established a major field hospital with specialized facilities to treat children, the elderly, and women in labor. But even then, in a shocking modern variation of old blood libels, there were those who accused Israel of using the Haiti catastrophe as a new source for harvesting organs. The Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* reported the comments of a reader on a pro-Palestinian Web site that revealed what can only be described as instinctive hatred and bigotry: "I guess giving Israel credit for good deeds in Haiti is like watching a serial killer or other sociopathic type mow an old woman's lawn (or some other charitable thing)." In other words, Israel is utterly incapable of doing good for its own sake.

The Arab and Islamic world is in the forefront in using the media to disseminate lies and misinformation about the "Zionist Jews." The Palestinian Authority uses children's TV programs to communicate to the most impressionable that Israel is "stolen" land; TV studios display a large map of "Palestine" that includes all of Israel, thereby denying Israel's very existence.

The even greater threat to Israel of the genocidal Iranian regime is well recognized, as Robert Wistrich, a leading scholar of the history of anti-Semitism, says: "Islamist anti-Semitism is tied in to *jihad* [holy war], international terrorist networks and global ambitions. Petro-dollars, the cult of death and martyrdom and messianic fanatical fervour give it an especially dangerous edge... In Iran, radical Islamism is linked to preparing the next planned genocide (with Israel as a prime target)." Natan Sharansky, a former Soviet *refusenik* and Israeli politician and now head of the Jewish Agency for Israel, was responsible for the publication of a study of the government-controlled press in Arab Middle East countries and Iran. "We found that vicious anti-Semitism which expressly calls for massive terrorism and genocide against Jews, Zionists, and the State of Israel is becoming more and more commonplace across the Arab Middle East."

"The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" is the most notorious and widely distributed anti-Semitic publication of modern times. Its lies about Jews, which have been repeatedly discredited, continue to circulate today, especially on the Internet, with the intent to spread hatred of Jews as well as to incite opposition to the Jewish state. More broadly, there is ample evidence that media spin and Internet propaganda are blinding many to the true facts in the Middle East. The "Protocols" has been proved conclusively to be a fraud, yet many school textbooks throughout the Arab and Islamic world today teach the century-old tract as fact. Political speeches, newspaper editorials, and even



Top and bottom:

Anti-Israel protests in
Place du Chatelet Paris,
France on March 28, 2009

The bottom poster displays a
map of "Palestine" that includes
all of Israel, thereby denying
Israel's very existence.
The bottom line says,
"WHO ARE THE TERRORISTS?"



Top: Students protest Operation Cast Lead on January 15, 2009, at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

Bottom: Poster advertising the 2010 Israeli Apartheid Week

children's cartoons are based on the "Protocols." In 2002, Egypt's government-sponsored television ran a miniseries based on the "Protocols," and Hamas refers to it to justify its terrorist activity against Israeli civilians. Books based on this publication are still available all over the world.

European Anti-Zionism Burgeoning

Across Europe (notably in the UK and France, but also in countries such as Spain, Norway, and Sweden), anti-Semitism in the form of anti-Zionism has burgeoned. In the minds of Western academics and journalists, Palestinian suffering (for which the Palestinian leadership itself—more committed to Israel's destruction than they are to the notion of Palestinian statehood—is clearly responsible) is poisonously combined with Arab Muslim anti-Zionism and historical revisionism (arbitrarily altering the historical record to gain a political advantage). Together with the political left's anti-imperialist obsession with the West's "oppression of the Palestinians," these elements have contributed to the development of an anti-Israel narrative that has spread like a virus across Western university campuses.

Jewish students face real danger as Muslim extremist organizations grow in campus influence. For example, college professors not infrequently join students on campus in asserting (ironically very aggressively) that Israel's Nazi-like aggression is denying Palestinians hope for the future. Yet, they ignore ongoing human rights abuses by nations such as Saudi Arabia, where women are severely discriminated against and no religion apart from Islam can be practiced publicly. They also ignore Jordan, where no Jew may own property.

Manfred Gerstenfeld, director of the Institute for Global Jewish Affairs, points out that European politicians and media have gone way overboard in their moral condemnation of Israel. He refers to the "strong anti-Israel metamorphosis" in anti-Semitism in Europe and to Europe's "exploding bias against Israel." In Europe and also America, academics are being joined by church groups in leading deceitful and often anti-Semitic boycott campaigns demonizing what they call the Jewish "apartheid" state. In June 2010, Unite, Britain's largest trade union with two million members, voted unanimously for a complete boycott of Israeli goods and services, describing Israel as a "terror state way beyond apartheid," with "a policy of ethnic cleansing."

The year 2009 closed with a Gaza Freedom March that received worldwide media attention. The march's organizers compared Nazi treatment of Jews to Israeli treatment of Palestinians. The event was a classic example of hate speech demonizing both Israelis and Jews, and comparing Israel to a Nazi state. And behind Israeli Apartheid Week in March 2010 was a clear anti-Zionist agenda—that of the total elimination of the Jewish state.

Israel Singled Out

The 2001 Durban World Conference on Racism convened by the United Nations became, in effect, a racist conference against Jewish people, singling out only Israel from 192 UN member states and saying that Palestinians are victims of Israeli racism. In December 2001, Anne Bayefsky, senior editor of *Eye on the UN*, wrote concerning the objectives of the Durban conference and the six-day NGO Forum where venom against Israel and familiar vile caricatures of Jews were especially virulent: “The vestiges of Jewish victimhood were to be systematically removed by deleting the references to anti-Semitism and the Holocaust, to be displaced by the Palestinian victim living under racist, Nazi-like, oppression.”

The UN Durban Review Conference, held in Geneva in April 2009, was opened by Holocaust denier Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who said, “The word Zionism personifies racism that falsely resorts to religion and abuses religious sentiments to hide their hatred and ugly faces.” Furthermore, according to a report by *Eye on the UN*, “the Durban II outcome document ‘reaffirms’ the 2001 Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA), which mentions only the state of Israel and claims Palestinians are victims of Israeli racism.”

UN Watch, a non-governmental organization whose mandate is to monitor the performance of the United Nations by the yardstick of its own charter, states succinctly: “An alien observing the United Nations’ debates, reading its resolutions, and walking its halls could well conclude that a principal purpose of the world body is to censure a tiny country called Israel”—and to “do so unfairly, selectively, massively, sometimes exclusively, and always obsessively.”

Such demonization of Israel as a state was evident in the near-universal criticism of Israel during and after two actions taken by Israel to defend her people. One action was Operation Cast Lead in December 2008–January 2009, launched to stop the barrage of rockets and missiles being fired from Gaza into Israel. The second was the deadly Gaza flotilla incident in May 2010, after which Israel, accusing its critics of “incitement” against the Jewish state, launched a massive public relations campaign clearly showing that the IDF soldiers who boarded the boat were victims of premeditated violence. To deny a state the right to self-defense is *ipso facto* a denial of its right to exist.

Mention should also be made of the appallingly one-sided and historically inaccurate academic paper (later a book), “The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy,” written by John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt in 2006, purportedly exposing the Jewish lobby’s control of American foreign policy. It is described as “a wretched piece of scholarship” by Eliot Cohen in *The Washington Post*. “Inept, even kooky academic work, then, but is it anti-Semitic? If by anti-Semitism one means obsessive and irrationally hostile beliefs about Jews; if one accuses them of disloyalty, subversion or treachery, of having occult powers and of participating in secret combinations that manipulate institutions and governments; if one systematically selects everything unfair, ugly or wrong about Jews as individuals or a group and equally systematically suppresses any exculpatory information—why, yes, this paper is anti-Semitic.”

Writing in the *New York Post*, Ralph Peters, a leading strategic analyst, traces calls for the abandonment of Israel (the latest “bout of moral cancer”) back to Mearsheimer and Walt’s paper. His conclusion is: “The recent [May 2010] attacks on Israel [that is, anti-Zionism] that masquerade as sober analysis boil down to the age-old anti-Semitic query: ‘Wouldn’t we be better off without those Jews?’” To which, he unequivocally declares “no.”

All this really does defy belief. Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East, committed to civil rights and Arab involvement in the nation’s government. Yet, Israel is singled out as a genocidal apartheid regime whose policies are likened to those of the Nazi regime. All this only makes some sort of sense when you factor in the overriding spiritual perspective discussed earlier.



Pro-Palestinian and Gaza Strip demonstration, June 6, 2010, in Brighton, UK

The End Result



Natan Sharansky's "3D" test helps distinguish legitimate criticism of Israel from anti-Semitism. Anti-Zionism fails the test on all three counts:

demonization,

when Israel's actions are blown out of all sensible proportion;

double standards,

when Israel is singled out for criticism;

and delegitimization,

when Israel's fundamental right to exist is denied.

Natan Sharansky, writing of the resurgence of anti-Semitic activity in the democratic world, gives us his classic "3D" test to help us distinguish legitimate criticism of Israel from anti-Semitism. Anti-Zionism, in its current expressions right across the world, sadly and tragically fails the test on all three counts: **demonization**, when Israel's actions are blown out of all sensible proportion; **double standards**, when Israel is singled out for criticism; and **delegitimization**, when Israel's fundamental right to exist is denied.

Wistrich writes: "Anti-Zionism has become the most dangerous and effective form of anti-Semitism in our time, through its systematic delegitimization, defamation, and demonization of Israel... The common denominator of the new anti-Zionism has been the systematic effort to criminalize Israeli and Jewish behavior, so as to place it beyond the pale of civilized and acceptable conduct." Prager and Telushkin reduce the debate to its essentials when stating: "Anti-Zionism and antisemitism both would cause Jews to be homeless, suffer, and die. And that is all Jews need to know about them." They state that those who believe they can deny Jewish nationhood and advocate the elimination of the Jewish state without being anti-Semitic can only do so out of a willful ignorance.

To this, I would add that the vital spiritual dimension of the deceptive work of Satan must be factored into the equation. The level of evil inherent in contemporary anti-Zionism ultimately demands a supernatural explanation. Without question, anti-Zionism is indeed a virulent form of anti-Semitism.

By Keith Buxton
National Director, Australia

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