

Present-day Antisemitism and the Centrality of the Jewish Alibi

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Introduction

Since the beginning of the second Intifadah in late September 2000, Europe has experienced a dramatic increase in Antisemitic incidents.¹ These phenomena have quickly spilled over to other Western countries as well. Though in each country Antisemitism comes with its local peculiarities and its original historical baggage, across boundaries and continents much of this resurgence is clearly correlated to the ebb and flow of Middle East violence.² The strongest piece of evidence that something irrational is happening in the way Western societies react to Israel's actions, is the unparalleled unleashing of hostility and hatred towards Jews that accompanies events in the region.

The phenomenon is so well documented that it is not the purpose of this essay to recite statistics and evidence.³ There is also a wealth of literature on the nature of current Antisemitism; how it resembles and differs from past manifestations; what causes it; what role debates over Israel's actions fulfill within the context of current Antisemitism; and so on.⁴ It is not the goal here therefore to report a debate that has been largely and comprehensively covered by others.

This article will focus on a particular feature of the current Antisemitism that has been less commented on. This is the crucial role played by some Jews themselves, mostly intellectuals or academics, who have responded to the latest assault on the Jewish people by excusing it, justifying it, downplaying it and in effect joining it.⁵ The role of Jewish voices in present-day Antisemitism is one of the critical novelties in the current resurgence of anti-Jewish prejudice and one that has so far earned only scant attention in scholarly writings.⁶

Jewish and Israeli intellectuals lending their voices to the demonization of Israel and its supporters cancel out any accusations of Antisemitism which could otherwise be leveled against those who support these arguments, since it is assumed that a Jew cannot be an Antisemite. Regardless of whether this is the case, in a world where identities matter, a Jewish or Israeli background to arguments against Israel provides a powerful alibi to those

who support, endorse, and articulate the denial of Israel's right to exist and undermine the democratic right of Diaspora Jews to express support for and attachment to Israel. Israel's detractors readily seize upon such Jewish and Israeli censors of Israel both as evidence of the validity of the most extreme arguments against Israel, and as a shield against accusations of Antisemitism.

By citing these Jews, their rhetoric and writings, Israel's detractors can prove that Jews argue against Israel in much the same way as they do. And since Jews are presumed to be immune from Antisemitism, it must therefore follow that what Jews say is not Antisemitic. Given such company, and such similarity of discourse, they can hardly be accused of Antisemitism, since they rely on the specifics of such rhetoric in support of their argument, which usually appeals to unspecified 'Jewish values.' By calling Jewish testimony to their defense, Israel's detractors proceed then to label their critics as censors, intent on silencing free speech. Denunciations of Antisemitism are thereby neutralized as expressions of McCarthyism, and Jews who shield Israel's detractors from these accusations are exalted as dissidents courageously fighting a Jewish witch-hunt in the name of truth and authentic Jewish values.

This line of reasoning validates a number of further arguments – that Israel's supporters are complicit in the cover up of Israel's crimes;⁷ that Antisemitism (including the Holocaust and its memory⁸) is exploited by Jewish organizations to silence a genuine debate about Israel;⁹ that constant recourse to the accusation of Antisemitism is causing a backlash against Jews,¹⁰ since the truth cannot be forever side lined; that if Jews spoke out critically against Israel, it would advance peace (the implication being that Jewish silence, or acquiescence, is an obstacle to peace),¹¹ and combat Antisemitism;¹² and that those Jews who 'break ranks' with the 'hegemonic discourse' of the mainstream Jewish establishment are not only courageous, but are also the authentic expression of Judaism, as they follow in the footsteps of the Prophetic tradition of speaking truth unto power.¹³

This rhetoric is a discourse about saving the Jews from themselves. The salvation offered depends on ending Zionism and all its consequences.¹⁴ It is therefore, for all intents and purposes, a linguistic mandate to destroy the Jewish state, articulated or underwritten by Jews in the name of Jewish values and for the sake of the Jewish people, and an instrument aimed at validating the argument that present-day demonization of Israel and anti-Zionism is devoid of Antisemitism. In a world where Antisemitism is unacceptable in social and political discourse,

Israeli and/or Jewish intellectuals complying with the calls of Israel's detractors and demonisers, constitute an alibi for Antisemitism.

None of the people engaged in this kind of rhetoric sees themselves as Antisemites – they are proud to define themselves as anti-Zionists and vigorously reject the charge that they are Antisemitic or 'self-hating.'¹⁵ This essay will show how their writings and public pronouncements, nevertheless, fulfill the role of a powerful alibi against accusations of Antisemitism.

This argument is developed through five steps:

1. What is the process by which Jews embrace the discourse of anti-Zionism? I will rely on Sander Gilman's¹⁶ analysis of Jewish self-hatred and argue that this process is at work with Jewish anti-Zionists.
2. What proof is there that Antisemitism and anti-Zionism are coterminous? I will make the case that anti-Zionism, distinct from some criticism of specific Israeli actions, is a form of Antisemitism and that therefore those Jews who proclaim their Jewishness through their hatred of Israel are indeed adopting an Antisemitic discourse and are therefore self-hating.
3. What is the evidence that Jewish and Israeli intellectuals are indeed offering this kind of discourse? I will show that their discourse stems from a desire to redefine Jewish identity according to an anti-Zionist view of Jewish history;
4. How is anti-Zionist discourse received by Israel's detractors and how is it turned into an alibi for Antisemitism? I will show how Jewish anti-Zionist writings and utterances are used by others as the alibi I described for descriptions of Israel that coincide with old Antisemitic tropes.
5. What is the nature of the language of salvation engendered in this dialogue between Jewish anti-Zionists and Antisemites? I will demonstrate that it is a dialogue essentially advocating a modern, secular variant of conversion for Jews as an answer to the problem of Antisemitism.

Step One: understanding self-hatred

The label 'self-hating Jew' has accompanied the debate over Jewish support and criticism of Israel ever since the establishment of the State of Israel. In recent years, however, it has been

revived, with defenders of Israel sometimes throwing the epithet against anti-Zionist Jews and their targets responding in tone. Before using the label, it is important therefore to understand that it is not just a term of abuse, but the object of considerable scholarship based on an impressive body of historical evidence.

The psychological and discursive component of Jewish self-hatred was addressed chiefly in two studies. The first, published in 1935, is a peculiar pamphlet published by an Italian exiled anarchist, Camillo Berneri, who wrote, in Paris, the book *Le Juif Antisemite*.¹⁷ The second, more recent and academic study is Sander Gilman's *Jewish Self-Hatred*.

Beneri sought to explain self-hating Jews by documenting the historical recurrence of this phenomenon and then explaining it as a typical act of neophyte zeal and a burning desire to burnish their credentials as new Christians. He mentioned Jewish converts, like Pablo Cristiani, who led the medieval trials against the Talmud, and Alfonso de Valladolid, who wrote ferocious anti-Jewish polemics in the 14th century. These converted Jews not only became Catholics but also anti-Jewish and put their knowledge of Judaism at the service of anti-Jewish causes. The Catholic Church, noted Berneri, used them as proof of the fallacy of the Jewish faith. Were they Antisemites? According to Berneri,

The Jewish convert and supporter of the Inquisition should not be considered fundamentally Antisemitic. To the contrary, if one accepts that the Inquisition was, in its most profound spiritual manifestation, an act of love (eternal punishment being avoided thanks to the temporary suffering of a painful death) then the converted Jew is, in a certain sense, showing a sense of attachment to his old coreligionists by causing their persecution.¹⁸

That love should bequeath such violence may appear strange. Yet, Berneri's sarcasm offers an insight: the self-hater wishes to bring his erstwhile coreligionists to embrace the new truth he has found and resents them for failing to see it. This conflicted sentiment of love (I want you to see the truth!) and hate (how can you not see the truth?) informs the relation of the neophyte with his former community but also with the novel group of reference – because it is through the zeal he displays in the pursuit of the new truth that the sincerity of his conversion is proven.

Sander Gilman concurs: there is nothing novel or unique about Jews joining anti-Jewish hostility:

To be accepted in society means acquiring the reference group's discourse. This problem did not suddenly appear with the emancipation of the Jews in the eighteenth century. It is a problem inherent in the existence of the Jews in the Diaspora, a problem of exile...¹⁹

History is rich with precedent in this sense. But while before Jewish emancipation, Jews who joined their own enemies sought to aid and abet the efforts to destroy the Jewish people, since emancipation this phenomenon has become more complex. As discussed below, in section three, it usually manifests itself as an attempt by defectors to redefine Jewishness, rather than convert to Christianity, in a way that makes it acceptable to the reference group.

Gilman explains Jewish self-hatred as a Jewish preoccupation with self-image – a preoccupation shared by other minorities. This preoccupation is made particularly pressing for a minority living in the midst of a community that negatively depicts it and blames it for some, if not all the social ills.²⁰ Gilman contends that at some point, the minority's perception of self is conditioned by the way the majority perceives the minority. Jews, in other words, come to see themselves as they are viewed by the majority amidst which they live. The more negative the image of the Jew is, and the more that view negatively affects the existence of the Jew, the more pressure the Jew feels to accept that view as a reflection of the truth.

Eventually, some Jews conclude that the stereotyped view of the Jew is an accurate reflection of reality – and they embrace it. The consequence is an effort to distance oneself from it in order to regain acceptability within society. This metamorphosis comes with a price. It produces, in Gilman's words, a 'fragmentation of identity', or 'a double bind' that leaves the Jew, who breaks away with the Jewish people and joins the dominant group by embracing its stereotyping of the Jews, caught in no-man's land.

The outcome of this double bind, according to Gilman, is the constant effort to recreate a positive image of the 'Other' that is acceptable to the stereotype and that can be distinguished from the negative stereotype:

[I]n discovering what the Jew is supposed *not* to be, some sense of the constantly changing definition of the "true" Jew can be evolved. As Jews react to the world by altering their sense of identity, what they wish themselves to be, so they become what the group labeling them as Other has determined them to be. The group labeling the Other is able successfully to elude their stereotype and the reality

to which it is supposed to relate, since the Other reacts to the stereotyping as if it were a valid set of prescriptive categories of its identity.²¹

To recap in simpler words: the Antisemite creates an image of the Jew. This image has negative consequences for the Jew's existence: lost opportunities, social ostracism, marginalization, discrimination, a precarious existence, persecution, annihilation, and so on. Eventually, some Jews conclude that Antisemites are right in depicting the Jews the way they do. The stereotype becomes a reality – and those Jews who reach this conclusion must also conclude they only have themselves to blame for their suffering. To extricate themselves from this position, they abandon Judaism – or those aspects of Judaism that the dominant stereotype considers negative. By doing so, they hope to gain the respectability and the privileges they were previously denied on account of being Jewish. Having projected upon themselves the negative image of prejudice, they now free themselves from it by dumping it onto other Jews who have not undertaken the process of abjuration yet. They also develop an alternative definition of Jewish identity that is at home with the discourse of the dominant group and that separates them from the 'bad' Jews, namely the ones who haven't discarded yet their old identity.

In the current circumstances, the reference group views Israel as the proverbial and perennial villain of the piece at best, and as a modern-day incarnation of a Nazi state or of an apartheid regime at worst. Given such characterization, Jewish intellectuals seek acceptance in the wider circles of Western opinion-formers by ingratiating themselves through the adoption of a language about Israel that is disproportionately and unfairly critical at best, and demonizing at worst. It is my contention that this thought process occurs among many prominent Jewish anti-Zionist intellectuals who accept the demonization of Israel as truth, not prejudice. They therefore discard Israel from modern Jewish identity and proceed to build a new identity that is at home with anti-Israel discourse. Having transformed Jewish identity, they thunder against those Jews who refuse to join them, as the traitors of authentic Judaism – one that is devoid of any connection to the land and the State of Israel.

No doubt, such individuals routinely reject the accusation of self-hatred. As Gilman explains, "One of the most successful ways to distance the alienation produced by self-doubt was negative projection. By creating the image of a Jew existing somewhere in the world who embodied all the negative qualities feared within oneself, one could distance the specter of

self-hatred, at least for the moment.”²² Gilman, here, is referring to the ‘invention of the Eastern Jew’ among 19th Century assimilating Jews. The good Jew who assimilated into good German society was keen to show himself different from the *Ost Juden* everyone – Jews included! – disliked.

The phenomenon of negative projection is similarly at work today with anti-Zionist Jews – they view themselves as ‘good’ Jews who have broken away from their Zionist brethren and created an alternative – more authentic! – form of Jewish identity. This version of being Jewish in the world is at peace with the dominant views of society and enables them to loath the ‘bad’ Jews who have so far failed to see the truth of the evil of Zionism in the world. Having established themselves as real and good Jews, they can also claim that their stance against Israel, in the name of Jewish values, helps fight Antisemitism at the same time, by convincing non-Jews that not all Jews support Israel.

Step Two: Antisemitism and anti-Zionism

This phenomenon of dissociation and acceptance of prejudice as reality manifests today mostly under the rubric of anti-Zionism. But is anti-Zionism synonymous with Antisemitism? Even the most fervent and virulent critics of Israel reject accusations of Antisemitism; they argue that their animus is directed at Zionism, not Jews as a whole – and frequently offer a list of Jewish names who support their views as evidence that, so to speak, some of their best friends are Jewish!²³ More seriously, the argument for separating Antisemitism from anti-Zionism goes along these lines:

1. Israel is a betrayal of Judaism and is therefore un-Jewish;
2. A growing numbers of Jews have come to recognize this;
3. Championing the demise of Israel is therefore a cause that all Jews should embrace in the name of the authentic values of Judaism; and that therefore
4. Anti-Zionism is not Antisemitism.

It might be far-fetched to argue that anti-Zionism expresses affection for Judaism as a set of values and for the Jews as a social group; still there can be little doubt that anti-Zionism is a mainstream opinion in today’s Europe, and many people who do not hesitate to call themselves anti-Zionists express outrage at the notion that they therefore are Antisemites.

Anti-Zionism is a term that is liberally thrown around these days, and, when used inaccurately, it may be mistaken to include mere criticism of Israel. It is perhaps helpful to define what it means – what is it that anti-Zionists oppose? To criticize Israel for specific policies is not anti-Zionism. Anti-Zionism is the rejection of Zionism, which therefore needs definition. Zionism consists of four crucial claims:

- (1) Jews are a collective bestowed with the distinct features of a *nation* in the modern, secular sense;
- (2) The Diaspora condition—living as a minority in exile—is defective;
- (3) A national project leading to at least national autonomy and at best national sovereignty is therefore desirable; and
- (4) This project has a worldly goal, namely the achievement of ‘extensive social results and continuous social development.’²⁴

As an essentially secular national movement Zionism advocated the creation of an independent society, the revival of the Hebrew language, the growth of a distinctive national culture and national life, and through the development of an independent Jewish society, the return of the Jewish people to a condition of normalcy, i.e. the return of the Jews to history as ‘a people like all peoples’. Accordingly, anti-Zionism does not merely consist of criticism of Israeli policies. It does not even consist of disagreement on the whereabouts of the Zionist project – after all, for much of its early history, Zionism included advocates of Jewish nationalism who did not insist on Palestine as the exclusive and non-negotiable locus of Jewish self-determination.

Anti-Zionism goes further than criticism of policies. It denies either the right of the Jewish people to define themselves as a nation, with all the attendant social and political consequences, or the desirability of such a collective endeavor on the part of the Jews. Anti-Zionism not only opposes the creation and continued existence of the Jewish state but also rejects the idea that the Jews are a people and as such are, at least in principle, entitled to self-determination.²⁵ Even when it recognizes that Jews may be a distinct collective, it still postulates that it is in the Jews’ best interest to remain a Diaspora community, extolling the myth of Jewish powerlessness in history as a moral quality and a trait that Jews should do well to keep, rather than compromising it through the pitfalls of statehood.²⁶

Anti-Zionism attacks the expression of Jewish identity through identification with Israel, by denying that authentic Jewish identity has any linkage to Israel,²⁷ by denying that the Jews are a nation, by denying that as a nation they enjoy the rights of other nations, or by assuming that the implementation of that right will invariably yield an immoral outcome, and only in the last instance by criticizing Israel's actions on merits. Israel's conduct, even of the worst kind, is, for anti-Zionists, a symptom of the evil they fight, not its essence.²⁸ Therefore anti-Zionists expect Jews to join them in their fight against Zionism, for their own interest.²⁹ Jewish presence in their ranks acts as a shield against accusations of Antisemitism and as an alibi for it.³⁰

Thus, the crucial ingredient that makes Anti-Zionism a cover for Antisemitism is the postulate according to which Zionism is a betrayal of Jewish values *and* inherently evil, while Anti-Zionism is a Jewish moral obligation to save Jews from themselves.³¹ Israel is perceived as evil,³² both for its conduct and for its essence as a nation-state based on an ethno-religious identity that Jews, because of their history and their traditions should reject. Anti-Zionism explains Israel's policies as a product of its essence as a Jewish state. What follows is not that Israel should act differently: it should cease to exist *as a Jewish state*.³³

Herein therefore lies the nexus between anti-Zionism and present-day Antisemitism. In so far as Jews consider Israel as part of their identity, the assumption according to which Israel should cease to exist *as a Jewish state* because its existence is not just bad for its neighbors, but also for the Jewish people, engenders hostility towards those Jews who reject it and a pressure to conform on Jews which, if unheeded, may have negative consequences for their career, their self-esteem or even for their physical well-being.

Step three: Jewish Confessions and the Kaparah Syndrome

A rich literature flourished since the Palestinian Intifadah began in October 2000: books with such titles as *Prophets' Outcast*,³⁴ *Wrestling with Zion*³⁵ and *The Other Israel*³⁶ abound, which offer a collection of Jewish voices ready to 'break ranks' and denounce Israel. Some are more honest than others in offering a range of views. Some, like Michael Neumann's *The Case Against Israel*,³⁷ or Patrick Cockburn's and Jeffrey St. Claire's *The Politics of Anti-Semitism*³⁸ are radical polemics which sometimes dangerously border on anti-Semitism. Despite the vast differences, many Jewish contributors to their pages have one thing in common: they denounce Israel as evil; they accuse Israel and Zionism of having betrayed

Judaism's authentic voice; they embrace a narrative of victimization, where the authors present themselves as victims of a Jewish establishment that tries to silence them; and in describing Israel and its policies, they frequently use vocabulary, imagery and stereotypes that are dangerously close to the old repertoire of classical Antisemitism.

Although exponents of these views freely roam the world to spread them, though they are hosted in the most influential newspapers and magazines, get their books published by the most prestigious publishing houses, while many of them enjoy tenure and stature in their own Israel, they cast themselves as dissidents, following in the footsteps of Judaism's prophetic tradition. For example, the English internet site and organization, 'Jews for Justice for Palestinians' is peppered with statements of this kind from the Talmud and local religious leaders, who insist that supporting the Palestinian cause is a *Jewish* moral imperative.³⁹ Before them, many other Jewish activists explained their decision to side with the Palestinians in the name of their Jewish identity, clarifying how the outcome of the conflict affected their own self-image as Jews and indicating therefore that their primary concern was less the Palestinians, and more their understanding of their own identity.

As Jerome Segal writes in the introduction to his book, *Creating a Palestinian State*,

Because the Jews are representative of all human suffering, the story of the Jews is allegorically the story of the Palestinians. And in the end, the encounter of the Jews and the Palestinians is the encounter of each people with itself at another point in time. For the Jews of Israel, the Palestinians of today and especially the Palestinian victims of tomorrow's expulsion are all the Jewish victims of history. And for the Palestinians, the Jews of Israel are what a suffering people becomes when it becomes a state. They are in potential Palestinians of a possible future.⁴⁰

The call for Jews to break ranks and frame their dissociation from Israel in a discourse that reclaims Jewish authenticity to anti-Zionism and blemishes Israel as a morally bankrupt fraud has been frequently heard in recent years.

The Italian columnist Barbara Spinelli, spelled out this charge in late 2001. Today's ultra-nationalist Israel, she wrote, constitutes nothing less than a 'scandal.' And it is a scandal, above all, for Jews themselves – since, as everyone knows, Jews are the quintessential victims of modern nationalism (nationalism being, for Spinelli as other likeminded

intellectuals, virtually coterminous with Nazism). It follows, then, that Jews everywhere have a special duty to speak out against Israel, to apologize to its victims, and to do so publicly.

‘If one thing is missing in Judaism,’ Spinelli wrote, “this is precisely it: a *mea culpa* vis-à-vis the peoples and individuals who had to pay the price of blood and exile to allow Israel to exist.” She called upon world Jewry to undertake such an act of contrition forthwith:

If the initiative does not come from Jerusalem it should at least begin in the Diaspora, where many Jews experience a double and contradictory loyalty: towards Israel and the state to which they belong and where they vote. A solemn *mea culpa*, proclaimed by Jewish communities in the West, to stand by the West, to protect its ramparts, to invite Israeli leaders to end their illegal occupation, to rebuild a faith not identified anymore in the exaltation of a colonial state and the superiority of a people: all this would be an important beginning, and beneficial as well for the nation of Israel.⁴¹

No one can accuse Jewish intellectuals of being deaf to these calls. For the most part, those answering them have been not the long-term, all-out, rabid haters of Israel, who need no excuse and waste no pieties in reviling the Jewish state. Our heroes are of a somewhat different complexion. Not only do they tend to speak more circumspectly but, with whatever degree of disingenuousness, they cloak their hostility to Jewish nationalism (i.e., Israel) in the mantle of solicitude for, precisely, the good name of Jews and Judaism. Echoing Spinelli’s sentiments in a collection of essays meant to deny the existence of a new anti-Semitism in Europe after 2000, Michael Neumann claimed that, “The case for Jewish complicity [in Israel’s crimes] seems much stronger than the case for German complicity [in the Holocaust]. If many Jews spoke out, it would have an enormous effect.”⁴² If they don’t, Neumann appeared to suggest, they are worse than those Germans who, under Nazi rule, said nothing against the Final Solution. Neumann’s view is echoed by Norman Finkelstein, who, in his book, *the Israel-Palestine Conflict: Image and Reality*, wrote that “The Germans could point in extenuation to the severity of the penalties for speaking out against the crimes of state. What excuse do *we* have?”⁴³

Making sure that they would stand up and ‘be counted’, on August 8, 2002, 45 Jewish intellectuals signed an open letter in the London’s *Guardian*, in a widely hailed act of public abjuration, repudiated their right of return to the Jewish state on account of its allegedly racist policies.⁴⁴ Since the statement’s original publication, over 80 more individuals from around the world joined their ranks. One of the organizers subsequently explained that what

motivated him to act was the ‘pitiless violence’ of his ‘blood relatives,’ i.e., the Israeli people—the “violence,” as he put it, of the “traumatized former victim, clinging to past wounds from generation unto generation.” His goal was to save his fellow Jews from themselves.

The publicity attending this and similar initiatives by European Jews, abetted in some cases by their Israeli counterparts, has been extensive. There was tremendous excitement in Europe, in 2002, over the declaration by a hundred Israeli academics that their government was planning an imminent ‘full-fledged ethnic cleansing’ of the Palestinian people (a charge that was not withdrawn when the alleged atrocity failed to occur): “We are deeply worried” explained the signatories “by indications that the ‘fog of war’ could be exploited by the Israeli government to commit further crimes against the Palestinian people, up to FULL FLEDGED ETHNIC CLEANSING.”⁴⁵

As the number of Israeli signatories mounted to a final 187, an additional group of 800 American scholars, including *The Israel Lobby*’s co-author John Mearsheimer, signed a supporting petition in December 2002.⁴⁶ Despite the fact that no Palestinians were ethnically cleansed, no soul searching occurred among the solicitous Jewish intellectuals who had initiated the appeal. Instead, they moved to happier pastures, to celebrate the refusal of a few hundred Israeli army reservists to serve in the territories.⁴⁷ There was even greater excitement when several European Jewish academics turned up among the instigators of a movement to boycott Israeli academic institutions.⁴⁸ When critics of the boycott dared suggest that the boycott may be Antisemitic, the disproportionate amount of Jewish supporters of the boycott was always at hand as evidence to the contrary:

Lurking behind the thinking of even well-meaning opponents of the boycott is that it is in some way anti-Semitic. This ignores the fact that the boycott is of Israeli institutions, not individuals (so it would affect the tiny number of Palestinian academics in Israeli institutions, but not a Jewish Israeli working in the UK or US). Second, it ignores the fact that the British Jewish community is itself intensely divided over Israel, between those who will defend Israel at all costs, and the increasingly vocal critics who insist “not in our name”. Even a cursory look at the signatories of the various boycott calls will show the large number of prominent Jewish figures among them. It really isn’t good enough to attack the messenger as anti-Semitic or a self-hating Jew rather than deal with the message itself, that Israel’s conduct is unacceptable.⁴⁹

Jewish politicians also felt the need to join the choir: British MP's Gerald Kaufman⁵⁰ and Oona King⁵¹ and South African Minister, Ronnie Kasrils, all called for the boycott of Israeli commercial products. All three used similar rhetoric: they were duty-bound, 'as Jews' to denounce Israel. Kasrils, for example, asked about his opposition to Israel in an interview, said: "As a person who was born Jewish, I am morally obliged to speak out against what is being done by the Zionist State of Israel to the Palestinian people"⁵² thus suggesting that those Jews who failed to speak out against Israel were betraying their moral obligations as Jews. This is a commonplace argument. Shamaï Leibowitz, an Israeli former tank commander, explained his support for Israel divestment by saying that "The call for divestment reflects true loyalty both to Israel's peaceful existence and to the highest Jewish values."⁵³

Many others have likewise seen it as their specifically Jewish duty to denounce Israel.

To mark Holocaust Memorial Day in January 2005, Anthony Lippman issued just such a *mea culpa* as Spinelli called for. Lippman is the son of a Holocaust survivor, albeit a convert to Christianity and an active member of the Church of England. The somber occasion may have moved Lippman temporarily to reclaim his patrimony and feel entitled to speak on behalf of the Jewish people. Writing in Great Britain weekly conservative magazine, *The Spectator*, under the title, 'How I Became a Jew,' he averred that the 'little band' of Holocaust survivors in Europe,

[H]as a terrible responsibility—to live well in the name of those who did not live and to discourage the building of walls and bulldozing of villages. Even more than this, they—and all Jews—need to be the voice of conscience that will prevent Israel from adopting the mantle of oppressor, and to reject the label "anti-Semite" for those who speak out against Israel's policies in the occupied territories.⁵⁴

By Hitler's standards, a Jew for sure; by the standards of most Jewish communities though, he would hardly make it onto the roster. Nevertheless, the example is telling: for what the author had to say no less than for the fact that a mainstream publication such as *the Spectator* sought him. Apparently for the British conservative weekly, the best way to commemorate the Holocaust is to have a Jewish convert to the Church of England claim to represent the Jewish people, and then proceed to fulfill his task by comparing Israel to Nazism and lecturing the Jewish people on what the right code of conduct vis-à-vis Israel is. This is a call

on Jews to abandon the main trademarks of their religious and ethnic identity, and turn Jewish identity into a commitment to universal, secular, post-national humanism, and a duty to denounce nationalism.

Similarly responding to the claims of an awakened Jewish conscience has been Jacqueline Rose, an academic whose admiration for Edward Said is inversely proportional to her knowledge of Zionist history.⁵⁵ In her book, *The Question of Zion* (2005) – dedicated to Said – Rose undertook to save Judaism itself from the curse of nationalism. “What is it,” she asks, “about the coming into being of this nation [Israel] and the [Zionist] movement out of which it was born, that allowed it—and still allows it—to shed the burdens of its own history, and so flagrantly to blind itself?”⁵⁶ Zionism, she concluded, has to be seen not as the fulfillment of an age-old Jewish dream but as the out-and-out betrayal of Jewish history and the Jewish heritage, an adoption of all that is, historically and morally, un-Jewish: “[I]n the ascendant today is a vision of the Jewish nation that is, I believe—precisely because it has, as it so fervently desired, made itself master of its own destiny—in danger of destroying itself.”⁵⁷ To save themselves, Jews must discard Israel from their own collective identity.

Can Judaism be saved? Yes, Rose and others assure us, but only by a thorough-going renunciation of Zionism. As anti-Zionist polemicist Michael Neumann writes, referring to Uri Avnery, Noam Chomsky and other Jewish detractors of Israel, “These vigorous critics of Israeli excesses are all Jewish. Their focus on Israel is no evidence of double standards, but of where they feel their responsibilities lie.”⁵⁸ For Neumann, as for Rose, these voices are needed more than ever today, during the Jews’ “dark night of the soul”, as Rose calls it, because, in Neumann’s words, “Israel’s current policies are themselves a threat to Jews and Israelis everywhere.”⁵⁹ That’s why Jews must speak out against Israel, continues Neumann: “The case for Jewish complicity [in Israel’s crimes] seems much stronger than the case for German complicity [in the Holocaust]. If many Jews spoke out, it would have an enormous effect.”⁶⁰ Presumably, by this Neumann means to imply that wartime Germans were powerless victims of Hitler. Perhaps he’d go on to say, as it logically follows, that they were just ‘obeying orders’.

And so Jews line up to comply, as if condemning Israel in the public square were a secular surrogate to the *Vidui*, the ritual confession of sins recited on the Day of Atonement. Oxford historian Avi Shlaim, for example, felt such a need to advertise his Jewish virtuousness in the

press, despite his near-complete estrangement from Jewish tradition since childhood.⁶¹ In an op-ed in the International Herald Tribune, he justified his denunciation of Zionism by appealing to a faith he never felt much connection to: “One of the greatest accolades in Judaism,” he instructed his readers, “is to be a *rodef shalom*, a seeker of peace.” That’s why he sincerely believed that “Israel today is the real enemy of the Jews”⁶², namely for having betrayed the kind of liberal Israel he purports to still support.⁶³ And indeed, one might even chastise Shlaim for not going as far as other fellow travellers. Haim Bresheeth calls Israel “a uniquely brutal society”.⁶⁴ Canadian pianist, Anton Kuerti reacted to the 2008-2009 Israeli Cast Lead operation in Gaza by saying “Israel’s behaviour makes me ashamed of being a Jew, and Canada’s servile support of the United States’ position, that it is all Hamas’s fault, makes me ashamed of being a Canadian”.⁶⁵ Deborah Maccobi wrote in the *New Statesman* that “it is incumbent on Jews to speak out against Israel’s politicide against the Palestinians. Doing so will help to reduce anti-Semitism.”⁶⁶ And Eva Kohner, an emeritus professor from London, responded to the launch of Operation Defensive Shield, in April 2002, by saying that “I am a survivor of the Holocaust, but, in the past 18 months, for the first time in my life, I am ashamed of being Jewish” after having compared Israel’s reaction to a lethal wave of suicide attacks to Nazi tactics.⁶⁷

The language of current Antisemitism is deeply indebted to these Jewish voices and in fact needs them to make its case. Their eagerness to denounce Israel in the most virulent terms and to call for its destruction offers a powerful alibi to Antisemites. In a post-Auschwitz world, Antisemitism is a taboo – a red line few dare to openly cross. But prejudices may regain some respectability – especially if the objects of their hatred begin to endorse them and espouse them. Antisemites rely on Jews to conceal their prejudice and make it presentable. As for anti-Israel and anti-Jewish Jews, their rhetoric is coated in a self-image of heroism. They present themselves as dissenters, purporting to be ‘critical Jews’ who reclaim the authentic tradition of the Prophets of Israel. In this light, their role as critics of state powers and dissenting voices in society makes them not rebels but authentic interpreters of Jewish morality and whistle-blowers on a Jewish community that has lost, in its support for Israel, its moral compass.

Before this claim is elucidated, this article briefly turns to showing how Antisemites exploit Jewish anti-Zionist discourse.

Step Four: The Jewish Alibi of Modern Antisemitism

Once reassured that not all Jews embrace Zionism, Antisemites solicitously take anti-Zionist Jews and use them both as a stick to beat all other Jews, and as a shield to fend off accusations of Antisemitism. For example, referring to Jewish support for Israel, British historian and columnist, Max Hastings had this to say:

If Israel persists with its current policies, and Jewish lobbies around the world continue to express solidarity with repression of the Palestinians, then genuine anti-Semitism is bound to increase. Herein lies the lobbyists' recklessness. By insisting that those who denounce the Israeli state's behaviour are enemies of the Jewish people, they seek to impose a grotesque choice. The Israeli government's behaviour to the Palestinians breeds a despair that finds its only outlet in terrorism. No one can ever criticise the Jewish Diaspora for asserting Israel's right to exist. But the most important service the world's Jews can render to Israel today is to persuade its people that the only plausible result of their government's behaviour is a terrible loneliness in the world.⁶⁸

Two years later, after Israel had completed its withdrawal from Gaza, its people had elected a centrist government committed to a two-state solution while the Palestinian people had elected a Hamas government devoted to Israel's destruction, Hastings wrote that,

Younger Europeans, not to mention the rest of the world, are more sceptical about Israel's territorial claims. They are less susceptible to moral arguments about redress for past horrors, which have underpinned Israeli actions for almost 60 years. We may hope that it will never become respectable to be anti-Semitic. However, Israel is discovering that it can no longer frighten non-Jews out of opposing its policies merely by accusing them of anti-Semitism.⁶⁹

Another European influential intellectual, former Italian Ambassador to the USSR and *Corriere della Sera* columnist, Sergio Romano, suggested that Jews recur to the Holocaust and anti-Semitism as tools for political blackmail. He equated frequent outcries about the return of anti-Semitism to the Spanish Inquisition and said that "There is in the world today a tribunal of anti-Semitism that apparently sits permanently in session and who can summon anyone to give account of their words and feelings."⁷⁰

Given that of the many reports on European anti-Semitism – one commissioned by the French Interior Ministry and written by Jean-Christophe Rufin, one written by the U.S. Department of State, one drafted by the European Union Monitoring Center against Racism,

Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia (EUMC) and several by the Anti-Defamation League – only the ADL might qualify, at least in Romano’s eyes, as ‘Jewish inquisition’ in charge of ‘ascertaining the index of anti-Semitism’ in Christian societies, one must ask how all other institutions and organizations, engaged in monitoring and combating anti-Semitism belong to this ‘Jewish inquisition’. Unless this language, as in all other examples, is used to delegitimize any effort to criticize the kind of rhetoric Romano and those who agree with him are intent on propagating.

An open letter signed by 120 scholars of the *Università degli Studi di Bologna*, Italy’s oldest university, appeared less concerned about a ‘Jewish Inquisition’ but more about the possibility that Antisemitism would be, after all, deserved, lest Jews clarified their views of Israel. In March 2003, the academics declared:

We always considered the Jewish people as an intelligent, sensitive, strong people, maybe more than others, because it was selected through suffering, persecutions, humiliations throughout the centuries, through pogroms and in the end the Nazi death camps. We had many schoolmates and friends who were Jewish, many professional colleagues whom we esteemed and many students from Israel to whom we imparted our teachings, taking them through their degrees... Many of us visited Israel, Gaza and the West Bank in the framework of cultural missions or EU programs and therefore are directly familiar with the situation there. It is for these reasons that today, in the wake of what is happening in the Israeli-Palestinian territory, we feel compelled to write you because we regrettably feel that our esteem and our affection for you, the Jewish people, is turning into a painful rage for what you are doing to the Palestinian people. And believe us when we say that so many other people outside our university, who hold your people in high esteem, today feel the same way. You must realize that today you are doing to the Palestinians what was done to you for many centuries past.⁷¹

Clearly, preference here is expressed for a Jewish people that are at the mercy of history, not masters of their own destiny – because such mastery entails a role inversion (from victim to aggressor) that will naturally trigger Antisemitism.

The academic petition had been triggered by news of a group of Israeli soldiers who refused to serve in Israel’s army on political grounds. The scholars appealed to all Israelis to follow that example and refuse to serve. There have been indeed several such initiatives during the Second Intifadah: soldiers were followed by air force pilots, then by five high school boys about to enlist. They were the new great Jewish heroes of the hour. An Israeli academic was again at hand to extol their heroism.⁷² On account of their refusal to join the army, the five

youngsters were ‘patriots’ and a ‘beacon of hope’ for Israel. Though by all standards in a war lasting over four years a few hundred reservists refusing to serve on ideological grounds would be a normal occurrence soliciting no great romantic narrative of heroism, in this case these objectors joined the traveling circus of Jews hired to condemn Israel in front of nodding Western audiences and were met with great fanfare and media hype across the Western world. Another such romantic moment occurred when the London’s *Guardian* published an Op-Ed with the headline, “Why I won’t serve Sharon”.⁷³ The author, an Israeli student doing a degree at Oxford University, gained instant celebrity, though when it transpired that, as an Israeli studying abroad he had not been asked to serve since 1998, his boisterous writing retreated to the confines of Ivy League tutorials.

This morbid fascination with Jews denouncing Israel takes many forms. In Great Britain, the birthplace of parliamentary democracy and student debates, the possibility that ‘Zionism is the real enemy of the Jews’ or ‘Zionism is a danger to the Jewish people’ and not, possibly, old-fashioned Antisemites, was repeatedly debated in respectable forums—including the Cambridge Student Union and the prestigious debating society, Intelligence Squared. In both cases, the line-up of speakers seconding and rejecting the motion was made entirely of Jews.⁷⁴ London’s prestigious Frontline Club, for its part, hosted Avi Shlaim and Shlomo Sand, the author of a book claiming that the Jewish people do not exist,⁷⁵ to engage each in conversation about their respective scholarly contributions. The event was chaired by Jacqueline Rose.⁷⁶ Again, for the delight of the audience, Jewish intellectuals were called upon to argue the evils of Zionism, to undermine the claims of nationhood of the Jewish people, and generally speaking to offer a Jewish stamp of approval for polemics that, if expressed by a non-Jewish voice, may have been otherwise labeled as Antisemitic.

There is, throughout the rhetoric of the Good Jew, an underlying assumption: Zionism and its political achievements involved a loss of innocence for the Jewish people.⁷⁷ Zionism is considered to have performed unspeakable crimes at its founding. Having proceeded to forget those events or having hidden them beneath a dense fog, Zionist leaders conjured up in a ‘conspiracy of silence’ to conceal the past. Fortunately, a small band of heroic Jewish scholars—Israel’s new historians and other post-Zionists among others—have unveiled the evidence and exposed the hidden truth for the world to see. As Laurence Silberstein writes in his sympathetic work on Post-Zionism, “[E]very national memory entails a national forgetting. Behind the events that are narrated in a nation’s myth of beginnings are events that

are eclipsed or “forgotten”⁷⁸ Silbrstein’s central claim is that events were not only ‘forgotten’ in an unconscious act of collective removal, but that there was a knowing complicity by the powers-that-be, with the active help of a subservient academic world. Those who expose this ‘conspiracy of silence’ are not just honest scholars, but also, as enablers of change, a hero.⁷⁹

What is left is for the Jewish people to repent and undo the damage done—Jewish Israel, no less.

Periodic reminders are thus voiced to Jews about the perils of siding with Israel; Jews respond by protesting their bona fide credentials as Anti-Zionists. Their solicitude is awarded by recognition that there are good and bad Jews – a convenient one, since by introducing this distinction, the Antisemite can hate Jews and pretend to be their champion at the same time!

One last question then must be asked: what kind of Jews would those who subscribe to this view wish to see emerge as the standard bearers of Jewish identity?

Step Five: Cleansing Israel of the Original Sin

Exalting the Jew-as-victim offers the right balance to contempt for the muscular Jew who fights back – the Zionist Jew, in short. In other words, those who extol victimhood as quintessentially Jewish, frequently end up demonizing Israel for being at the opposite polar end of this model.

Zionism, according to this view, is a perversion of Jewish humanism. Marc H. Ellis, for example, states that “While it is clear that the creation and expansion of Israel has been and is a catastrophe for the Palestinians, the use of power by Jews to displace and denigrate the Palestinians has also been a severe trauma for Jewish history and the contemporary Jewish community.”⁸⁰ Ellis, in other words, does not only embrace the post-Zionist version of Israel’s history as fact, but decries its consequences on ‘Jewish history’ and the ‘contemporary Jewish community’, thus suggesting that the Jewish return to history as an independent nation has had a corrupting influence on the Jews.

Zionism abandoned the historic Jewish passivity in the face of persecution and affirmed a Jewish right to self-defense. By doing so, it put Jewish self-preservation above some supposed morality inherent to victimhood precisely at the time when intellectual trends in the Western world were relinquishing or rejecting its ancient warrior culture to replace it with a worship of victims as the quintessential expression of defiance. Unwittingly then, Zionism found itself on the wrong side of history, as far as Western intellectual trends go at least. As Anatol Lieven opines:

“For equally valid and legitimate reasons, Western Europe and parts of the liberal intelligentsia of the United States on one hand and the greater part of the world’s Jewish population on the other drew opposing conclusions from the catastrophe of Nazism... The Western European elites and many U.S. liberal intellectuals essentially decided that the correct response to Nazism and to the hideous national conflicts which preceded, engendered and accompanied it was to seek to limit, transcend and overcome nationalism.”⁸¹

There is no doubt that by its recourse to force to protect its right to self-determination, Israel, a sovereign state, reveals the sometimes impossible moral dilemma of those who seek to reconcile the amorality of national interest with Jewish morality. This dilemma is made more acute by Jewish history – given that historically Jews were for the most part the victims of that amorality. But current Antisemitism relies on Jews to go beyond the moral questioning of specific actions. The proposition according to which, on the basis of apparently scholarly and impartial research (the claim put forward by Israel’s post-Zionist scholars) one can prove that Zionism engendered a loss of innocence is in fact an attempt to judge the consequences of renewed Jewish sovereignty on the basis of a morality that views nationalism as evil, but Jewish nationalism as most evil—so evil in fact that it allows some scholars to distort and even fabricate history to prove their political preferences. Through the extreme rejection of the possibility that a Jewish state might ever act amorally (or worse, immorally), Jewish critics of Zionism express an unbearable sense of guilt that does not stop at the gates of historical truth, seeking instead moral solace in the redemptive notion of a return to innocence through the abandonment of Zionism and the discarding of its consequences.

The fantasy of political impotence that seeks to retrieve this supposedly lost moral innocence has its own version of the ideal Jew. The ideal Jew has no motherland; is a wondering Marrano and a revolutionary; his/her political loyalties are progressive and liberal; is fully assimilated; and yet conscious of a Jewish past. Today, Jews are more easily integrated into

the narrative of the modern Western world as the archetypes of victims, rather than as a sovereign nation in arms, especially in the current age of prosperity, multilateral diplomacy and constitutional orders that proscribe war. The only uncontroversial way to express a proud Jewish identity is through the experience of suffering and victimization from the past, which the Holocaust has come to embody more than anything else, and through the modern embodiment of the Prophetic tradition – as a dissident intellectual.⁸² The Jew as a victim and as a witness of the quintessential, archetypal experience of suffering emerges as the positive Jewish role-model, in sharp contrast to the Jewish pro-Israel or even Zionist voice, which is chastised for having betrayed both European values and what Europe sees as the authentic Jew.

As it will be shown in this last section, anti-Zionist Jews and those who exploit them as an alibi for Antisemitism do not merely wish Israel to behave differently; they object to the Jewish identity that Zionism has nurtured among Israel's Jewish citizens and Diaspora Jews alike—one that takes pride in the accomplishments of statehood, that strongly embraces the notion of Jewish peoplehood and that reaffirms the historical bond between the people and the land.

Jewish intellectuals, again, are at the forefront of this argument.

Consider the following examples.

Writing in April 2010 about a family member perished in the Holocaust, the late historian and intellectual, Tony Judt pondered about the meaning of being Jewish:

There is no general-purpose answer to this question: it is always a matter of what it means to be Jewish for me—something quite distinct from what it means for my fellow Jews. To outsiders, such concerns are mysterious. A Protestant who does not believe in the Scriptures, a Catholic who abjures the authority of the Pope in Rome, or a Muslim for whom Muhammad is not the Prophet: these are incoherent categories. But a Jew who rejects the authority of the rabbis is still Jewish (even if only by the rabbis' own matrilineal definition): who is to tell him otherwise?

I reject the authority of the rabbis—all of them (and for this I have rabbinical authority on my side). I participate in no Jewish community life, nor do I practice Jewish rituals. I don't make a point of socializing with Jews in particular—and for the most part I haven't married them. I am not a "lapsed" Jew, having never conformed to

requirements in the first place. I don't "love Israel" (either in the modern sense or in the original generic meaning of loving the Jewish people), and I don't care if the sentiment is reciprocated. But whenever anyone asks me whether or not I am Jewish, I unhesitatingly respond in the affirmative and would be ashamed to do otherwise.⁸³

Of a similar mind was his Cambridge-based Marxist colleague, historian Eric Hobsbawm, who, in his seminal work, *Nations and Nationalism*, stated that "People can identify themselves as Jews even though they share neither religion, language, culture, tradition, historical background, blood-group patterns nor an attitude to the Jewish state."⁸⁴ While descriptively this may occasionally be true, it appears that Hobsbawm's statement is prescriptive as well. From denying that Jewish identity has any connection to 'religion, language, tradition, historical background' or even 'an attitude to the Jewish state' to lamenting the insistence by fellow Jews about clinging onto those elements, the journey is short.

In a *London Review of Books* essay published in 2005 where he deplored both Israel's creation and Jewish religion because in his view they are both obstacles to full Jewish integration in modern Western societies, Hobsbawm predictably went further:

The paradox of the era since 1945 is that the greatest tragedy in Jewish history has had two utterly different consequences. On the one hand, it has concentrated a substantial minority of the global Jewish population in one nation-state: Israel, which was itself once upon a time a product of Jewish emancipation and of the passion to enter the same world as the rest of humanity. It has shrunk the diaspora, dramatically so in the Islamic regions. On the other hand, in most parts of the world it has been followed by an era of almost unlimited public acceptance of Jews, by the virtual disappearance of the anti-semitism and discrimination of my youth, and by unparalleled and unprecedented Jewish achievement in the fields of culture, intellect and public affairs. There is no historic precedent for the triumph of the *Aufklärung* in the post-Holocaust diaspora. Nevertheless, there are those who wish to withdraw from it into the old segregation of religious ultra-Orthodoxy and the new segregation of a separate ethnic-genetic state-community. If they were to succeed I do not think it will be good either for the Jews or for the world.⁸⁵

The rejection of a Jewish identity based on anything but the most universal abstract values leads to conclude that Israel (as well as Jewish religion) is such a burden to Jews, that they may as well discard it for their own sake. With these premises, the journey to writings where Jewish intellectuals actively advocate a radical change in Jewish identity that forever discards Israel from its core is a short one.

In an essay published in the Jewish magazine, *Tikkun*, Marxist scholar, Bertel Ollman recounted how, on his way into the operating room, he realized that, had he not survived the surgery, he would have died a Jew. The prospect was so unsettling that, once healed, he wrote his, 'Letter of resignation from the Jewish people', where he did just that: he resigned. The reasons were Zionism, Israel, and the support its policies enjoy from other Jews. Ollman might yet reconsider, but for that to happen, Jews would have to embrace his own version of Jewish identity. Paraphrasing a Lenny Bruce joke, he said,

"Noam Chomsky, Mordechai Vanunu and Edward Said are Jewish. Elie Wiesel is *goyish*. So, too, all 'Jewish' neo-cons. Socialism and communism are Jewish. Sharon and Zionism are very *goyish*". And, who knows, if this reading of Judaism were to take hold, I may one day apply for readmission to the Jewish people.⁸⁶

Said was not Jewish, though he was the darling of many anti-Zionist Jewish intellectuals. Vanunu is a convert to Anglicanism and his alienation goes as far as refusing to speak Hebrew – his mother tongue. The only Halachic Jew of Ollman's trinity is Chomsky, who qualifies more for his anti-Israel venom than for his devotion to his ancestry's traditions. What makes Chomsky, Vanunu and Said 'authentic' Jews, then? For Ollman, it's their adherence to a political orthodoxy: being Jewish equals being a certain type of progressive intellectual.

Ollman may sound outlandish. But he is not alone. For every Jewish intellectual who rejects any premise for Jewish identity that is not firmly rooted in universal, progressive, liberal values, there is an Antisemite who applauds the readiness of Jews to abandon anything that makes their Jewish identity distinctive.

The notion that a retreat to religious and national identity is bad both for the Jews and the world is widespread. Italy's foremost historian, Sergio Romano, celebrated, in his book *Lettera a un Amico ebreo* (A Letter to a Jewish Friend), the image of the intellectual, cosmopolitan, stateless, Marrano Jew who harbored skepticism for Zionism as the expression of authentic Judaism:

They were not Zionists and were not at all attracted by a country of which they could not share either the political philosophy or the predictable religious narrow-mindedness. They knew that in Israel, had they chosen it

as their homeland, they would have to live with the Ashkenazi Jews from the Shtetl or with Sephardic Jews from Arab countries – archaic characters in a world they had no familiarity with and for which they felt considerable discomfort.⁸⁷

For Romano, Baruch Spinoza is the archetypal Jew he likes because Spinoza in his view was, intellectually, a Marrano. What does Romano mean by the idea of a Marrano Jew?

They came into the world from Jewish parents or mixed marriages and were conscious of a blood link with the great tribe they were born into. But they could not be fully Jewish. Many... were attracted to Christianity for esthetical reasons. Others saw baptism as a way out of the small spiritual Ghetto of Jewish traditions. Yet others, put their hopes in the emancipation offered by the liberal State or the socialist revolution... The only thing in common in their intellectual curriculum was probably a certain tendency to transgress, to provoke and to be unpredictable.⁸⁸

This tendency, Romano goes on, is reflected in a “rejection of any automatic loyalty and the desire to escape the ‘totalitarian’ pressures exerted on their conscience by the two worlds of which [the Marrano Jew] represents the boundary. Ubiquity was the intellectual condition which they felt most at ease with.”⁸⁹ It is difficult to comprehend how this idealized image of Jews is nothing more than a prejudice toward real-life Jews who, across the centuries, sought to survive on the basis of a Jewish identity that, despite being flexible and dynamic, nevertheless was grounded in a religious tradition, a language, a cultural heritage, a shared ancestry, and an emotional bond with the Land of Israel.

By making authentic Jewishness conditional upon the breaking of all these links, many intellectuals effectively are only prepared to accept Jews if they conform to the ‘non-Jewish Jew’ described, extolled and embodied by Isaac Deutscher and many others after him.⁹⁰ Such Jews have nothing Jewish to speak for. They are accidental Jews – born Jewish but with no bond remaining with their origins. To exalt them as positive and authentic representatives of Jewish identity appears to suggest that adherence to all other elements that traditionally constitute Jewish identity are not only unnecessary to express Jewishness but are actually a negative trait that Jews would do well to shed for their own sake. Not a conversion, but not far from it. As Dennis Praeger and Joseph Telushkin commented,

These people do not feel rooted in anything Jewish, religious or national; their Jewish identity consists of little more than having been born Jews, and they affirm none of Judaism's components. They remain Jews by virtue of having not converted to another religion.⁹¹

Romano's grotesque contrast between the cosmopolitan Jew and the stereotyped Israelis finds an echo in Eric Hobsbawm's regret for the danger of a Jewish retreat back to religion and nationalism. Again they are not alone.

Italian columnist, Guido Ceronetti, for example, commented Mordechai Vanunu's release from prison, in 2004, by exalting him as a novel Spinoza, defining him as a 'true Jew'. For Ceronetti, the essence of being Jewish is to be rootless and without a homeland, to be wandering and spiritually restless, cosmopolitan and devoid of loyalties – to a nation or even a faith.⁹²

The late Prime minister of Ireland, Justin Keating expressed similar, if more strident views. In November 2005, he published a controversial article in the monthly Irish magazine, *The Dubliner*. His opening statement was that "I have reached the conclusion that the Zionists have absolutely no right in what they call Israel, that they have built their state not beside but on top of the Palestinian people, and that there can be no peace as long as contemporary Israel retains its present form."

He then went on to say that,

"Jews have made an immense contribution to civilization, developing as they were between the great empires of Mesopotamia and the Nile, with both of which they had intimate contact, and by which they wanted to avoid being swallowed. They developed a religion and an ethos based on independence, liberty and democracy to which we all owe a debt. That religion is based on the twin concepts of Law and Righteousness, which inspired over the millennia extraordinary contributions to culture and morality. All admirable. In Israel/Palestine, where are they now? Zionists have betrayed all of this, and that is a tragedy not just for Jews, but for all of us."⁹³

Keating's article triggered an acrimonious controversy. The State of Israel demanded an apology from the serving Irish Prime minister – who refused to oblige. Writing in the next issue of the magazine, Keating defended his position by adding that

Zionism is a blind alley. Entering it, Zionists abandoned Righteousness and the Rule of Law. The defence of Israel endangers all that is best, most noble and valuable for all mankind in the Jewish tradition. I am anti-Zionist because I am pro-Jewish.⁹⁴

Keating, at least, did not go so far as others – in his view, apparently, Jews are allowed to retain their traditions, but only practice them in perpetual exile. Still, despite the fact that this type of rhetoric falls short of calling for a conversion, some Jewish intellectuals appear to be ahead of the game, as their anti-Zionist language is imbued with the salvific language of Christianity.

If one pays close attention to the discourse about Jewish identity that pits anti-Zionist intellectuals and their Israel-hating supporters against pro-Israel Jews, one discovers that the Jew-as-victim they extol is the idealization of innocence and represents, with his unconditional rejection of violence even when confronting extermination, a primeval moral condition that precedes original sin. In politics, that sin is the use of power and the sometimes impossible moral choices and dilemmas that power demands of governments and states.

The notion that Zionism entailed a loss of innocence, which only its abandonment can ever restore, is central to current Antisemitism because it enables those who call for the demise of Israel to claim that such demise will save the Jews—much like baptism or the Inquisition's fire did once. The abrupt descent from heaven has been described, in the acrimonious debate over Israel's new historiographical school and its writings, as an 'original sin.' As Benny Morris put it,

How one perceives 1948 bears heavily on how one perceives the whole Zionist/Israeli experience. If Israel, the haven of a much-persecuted people, was born pure and innocent, then it is worthy of the grace, material assistance, and political support showered upon it by the West over the past forty years – and worthy of more of the same in years to come. If, on the other hand, Israel was born tarnished, besmirched by original sin, then it was no more deserving of that grace and assistance than were its neighbors.⁹⁵

Morris subsequently attributed this theological term to others and while his former fellow traveller Avi Shlaim denied that the term had even been used,⁹⁶ he quickly ridiculed the notion that Israel's creation might have equally been 'an immaculate conception'—another Catholic theological concept closely correlated to the notion of sin.⁹⁷ Yet, it was the same

Shlaim who, more recently, expanded the vocabulary of Christian salvation by deriding Israel on the grounds that the Jewish state wished to have both ‘thirty pieces of silver’ and ‘the crown of thorns’, a clear reference to Judas and the Passion.⁹⁸

How does Israel restore its supposedly lost innocence? By a process of political and moral rehabilitation that will save Jews from the evils inherent to Zionism. The argument that the Jewish state was born in sin, is central to this notion of rehabilitation. The use of terms borrowed from Christian theology leave little doubt as to what subtext informs this discourse, reflecting as it does a vision of Israel that finds echoes in the very theology from which it borrows its terminology.

Giving up Israel’s Jewish nature becomes a means to address the charge of ‘original sin’. If the injustice Israel is charged with is inherent to the project that led to its creation—as the notion of original sin suggests—there is only one remedy for addressing that injustice. Original sin is a distinctive Christian theological concept. According to the Catholic Encyclopaedia “Original sin may be taken to mean: (1) the sin that Adam committed; (2) a consequence of this first sin, the hereditary stain with which we are born on account of our origin or descent from Adam.”⁹⁹ This same theology traditionally postulated that the only salvation from original sin could be provided by baptism—for Jews, it meant conversion to Christianity. If at the individual level a Jew can be saved from the original sin through baptism and conversion, what would be the baptism equivalent for Israel?

Present anti-Semitism does not demand baptism and conversion to Jews as individuals. But it surmises that Israel was born in sin. If its birth was characterized by original sin, only an act equivalent to baptism will save Israel from eternal damnation. Ridding Israel of its Jewish nature provides that equivalent: by ceasing to be Jewish, the state of the Jews rather than Jews as individuals will be granted forgiveness and salvation, and will be redeemed from the kind of damnation that a pre-baptism condition would have guaranteed. Washing away the stain of the original sin will restore a primeval condition of innocence that somehow characterized Jews prior to Israel’s establishment. It will also free the Jewish spirit from the burden of Jewish power and release the potential for the Jews to act as ‘prophets’ in the world again, by being the voice of conscience for the nations amidst which they dwell.¹⁰⁰ If Zionism entails a loss of innocence, paradise will be won over through conversion to the new

dominant ethos of the age, the new baptism for a sinful Israel that needs to be saved from itself.

New historians are not alone in using this highly charged Christological language of salvation. For example, in 2000, Bernard Avishai, used the term ‘atonement’ in a review of two books by new historians. He was illustrating what tool Israel should deploy to confront its past and achieve peace. The tool was post-Zionism: ‘One reads Morris and Shlaim, presumably, to find reasons to encourage Israeli leaders to approach peace-making with pragmatic humility and even an openness to atonement.’¹⁰¹ In 2005, Avishai doubled down in a *Harper’s Magazine* essay entitled “Saving Israel from itself”,¹⁰². In thinking the ‘unthinkable’ in the *New York Review of Books*, the late Tony Judt explained European anti-Semitism as the result of the Ariel Sharon’s misguided policies. The Jews, once again, had only themselves to blame for their own misfortunes. He then advocated an end to Zionism to be replaced by a bi-national state – the only way to save the Jews from themselves. For Judt, their suffering would be relieved through a simple act of self-effacing, a veritable spiritual and intellectual *Auto da Fé* for the modern times. As Judt wrote,

In a world where nations and peoples increasingly intermingle and intermarry at will; where cultural and national impediments to communication have all but collapsed; where more and more of us have multiple elective identities and would feel falsely constrained if we had to answer to just one of them; in such a world Israel is truly an anachronism. And not just an anachronism but a dysfunctional one. In today’s “clash of cultures” between open, pluralist democracies and belligerently intolerant, faith-driven ethno-states, Israel actually risks falling into the wrong camp.

To convert Israel from a Jewish state to a binational one would not be easy, though not quite as impossible as it sounds: the process has already begun de facto. But it would cause far less disruption to most Jews and Arabs than its religious and nationalist foes will claim.¹⁰³

Judt was a scholar of nationalism—and one who had no illusions about the viability of its alternatives. In his celebrated book, *A grand illusion: An Essay on Europe*, Judt celebrated the nation-state, “the only remaining, as well as the best-adapted, source of collective and communal identification”.¹⁰⁴ As for Europe, he summarily dismissed the European effort to paper over national identities as a pipedream:

From Spain to Lithuania the transition from past to present is being recalibrated in the name of a “European” idea that is itself a historical and illusory product... But what will not necessarily follow is anything remotely resembling continental political homogeneity and supranational stability.¹⁰⁵

For Israel alone, Judt chose the opposite standard. There, for reasons that defy reason, Judt assumes that the “only remaining, as well as best-adapted, source of collective and communal identification” is an “anachronism” and that the best way forward is a “conversion” to a non-existent alternative identity, binationalism. There is nothing logical in singling Israel out the way Judt did—and besides, Judt’s use of the term ‘conversion’ is no coincidence. That is what anti-Zionism advocacy is truly about. Convert the Jews.

Conclusion

The process by which the Jewish alibi for current Antisemitism is created requires the creation of a dichotomy whereby the negative self-image of the Zionist Jew is contrasted with the righteous alternative of the anti-Zionist Jew who combats Zionism and its manifestations in the name of authentic Jewish values. Central to this dichotomy is the idea that dispersion and statelessness is the authentic, natural and desirable condition of Jewish existence in the world. Jewish voices are drafted to defend and actively promote this view, so as to shield its proponents from accusations of Antisemitism.

Despite Israel’s centrality to Jewish communal identity, Jews are targeted for their attachment to and support for Israel and are asked to relinquish them in exchange for legitimacy. This demand, far from being seen as anti-Semitic, is vigorously pursued in certain quarters in the name of a liberal vision that rejects nationalism and religion as foundations of a collective identity. Guided by a post-national, secular and pacifist vision of international politics – a ‘brotherhood of mankind’ worldview – those who advocate anti-Zionism pose an intolerable dilemma to most Jews: either discard an important component of their identity, or face isolation, harassment and, in time, possible discrimination. Once again, Jews seem out of step with the dominant ethos of society, and for this they are chastised and under pressure to conform.

There is little doubt that if this is Antisemitism, it is vastly at variance with past form of anti-Jewish hatred. Regardless, it still bears many hallmarks of the ancient hatred—because of its recourse to old Antisemitic stereotypes and tropes, because of its double standards towards

the Jews and because of its effort to force an unbearable choice on the Jews—embrace an identity others tailored for them, or face the consequences.

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¹ In Germany, anti-Semitic acts increased by 69% from 1999-2000 and, although there was a slight decrease in 2002, between 2000 and 2003, the number of anti-Semitic violent crimes rose significantly over that time. EUMC Report, “Manifestations in the EU 2002-2003: Executive Summary,” p. 10. In France, of the 313 racist, xenophobic or anti-Semitic incidents reported in 2002, 193 were directed at Jews, six times more than in 2001. A striking example of this is the rise in anti-Semitic acts seen in the spring 2002 surrounding increased violence between Israelis and Palestinians, including Israel’s Operation Defensive Shield, one of Israel’s more aggressive responses to Palestinian terror. In France, this rise was particularly pronounced: in April 2002, the peak of Israel’s Operation Defensive Shield, 118 “physical acts of violence towards Jews, their communities, organizations or property,” were reported, while 32 such acts were reported in March, and 12 in May. EUMC, “Manifestations...: Part on France”, p. 9.

² “Manifestations... Preface”, p. 3: “Although we know – and opinion polls show – that anti-Semitism is permanently present in Europe in a more or less hidden way, many of us have hoped that manifest forms of anti-Semitism will not see any revival in Europe again. At present, Jews are rather well integrated economically, socially and culturally in the Member States of the European Union (EU). But the attacks in New York and Washington on September 11 and the conflict in the Middle East have contributed to an atmosphere in Europe, which gives latent anti-Semitism and hate and incitement a new strength and power of seduction. Even rumours that Israel was responsible for 11 September 2001, for the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, and that Jews bring about a situation in their interest in order to put the blame on somebody else, found a receptive audience in some places. Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories are spreading over the Internet, which provides a cheap vehicle for the distribution of hate.” See also, more recently, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Anti-Semitism – Summary Overview of the situation in the European Union 2001-2008*, February 2009, p. 23: “As regards general causes for increases and decreases in anti-Semitic activity, the Agency’s Annual Reports have noted that for some countries statistical trends allow us to discern an impact of Middle East political developments on anti-Semitic activity.” available at http://194.30.12.221/fraWebsite/attachments/Antisemitism_Update_2009.pdf. It should be added that even when violent incidents are far rarer, the EUMC documented “extremely nasty anti-Semitic everyday discourse which is relatively widespread amongst the general population.” “Manifestations...”, p. 14.

³ There are many reliable surveys and data analysis documenting this correlation. See for example multiple resources on the Anti-Defamation League International site at http://www.adl.org/main_Anti_Semitism_International/Default.htm. See also resources from the Coordination Forum for Countering Antisemitism at <http://antisemitism.org.il/list/4>.

⁴ Among them, see for example Pierre-André Taguieff, *La Nouvelle Judeophobie*, Mille et Une Nuits, 2002; Paul Igansky & Barry Kosmin (Eds), *A New Antisemitism? Debating Judeophobia in 21st Century Britain*, Profile Books, 2003; Ron Rosenbaum (Ed.), *Those Who Forget the Past The Question of Antisemitism*, Random House, 2004; Bernard Harrison, *The Resurgence of Antisemitism Jews, Israel and Liberal Opinion*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2006; and Denis MacShane, *Globalising Hatred The New Antisemitism*, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2008.

⁵ It is important to premise this argument by clarifying that I am not referring here to the robust debate about the merits of specific Israeli policies, which occurs daily within the Jewish world. Jews of all religious and political persuasions express a diverse range of views on the matter without their disagreements being a reflection of bias against Israel or the Jewish people. Here, I refer only to those Jews who cross two lines in their views of Israel: first, they embrace a language of delegitimization, demonization and double-standards – to borrow Nathan Sharansky’s 3 D’s for the new Antisemitism (Nathan Sharansky, “3D test of Anti-Semitism: Demonization, Double Standards, Delegitimization”, *Jewish Political Studies Review* 17:1-2, Spring 2005, available at <http://www.jcpa.org/phas/phas-sharansky-s05.htm>) – and in the process they even adopt traditional anti-Semitic tropes. And second, they root their arguments against Israel in some supposed claim of Jewish authenticity.

⁶ There have only been a handful of scholarly studies of the phenomenon to date. See Emanuele Ottolenghi, “Europe’s Good Jews” in *Commentary Magazine*, December 2005, pp. 42-46; Alvin H. Rosenfeld, “Progressive Jewish Thought and the New Anti-Semitism” The American Jewish Committee, 2006; available at http://www.ajc.org/atf/cf/%7B42D75369-D582-4380-8395-D25925B85EAF%7D/PROGRESSIVE_JEWISH_THOUGHT.PDF; Emanuele Ottolenghi, *Autodafé: L'Europa, gli ebrei e l'antisemitismo*, Lindau, 2007.

⁷ See for example John Pilger, "Listen to the Heroes of Israel", in *The New Statesman* 25 February 2010, available at <http://www.newstatesman.com/print/201002250009>, where Pilger relies on Israel-born Holocaust denier, Gilad Atzmon: "proof of the murderous, racist toll of Zionism has been an epiphany for many people; justice for the Palestinians, wrote the expatriate Israeli musician Gilad Atzmon, is now "at the heart of the battle for a better world". However, his fellow Jews in western countries, such as Britain and Australia, whose influence is critical, are still mostly silent, still looking away, still accepting, as Nurit said, the "brainwashing and reality distortion". And yet the responsibility to speak out could not be clearer, and the lessons of history - family history for many - ensure that it renders them culpable should their silence persist. See also Henri Picciotto, "Silence is Complicity", in *Counterpunch*, 11 August 2006, available at <http://www.counterpunch.org/picciotto08112006.html>: "Many Jews question Israel's policies, but are afraid to speak out in their congregations or even to their families. But the time has come for Jewish dissidents to challenge the policies of the Israeli government. In the short run these policies kill Arabs, mostly innocent civilians; in the long run, they can result only in disaster for Israelis and Jews worldwide."

⁸ Alan Hart, *Zionism The Real Enemy of the Jews*, Kent, World Focus Publishing, 2005, p. v: "There is nothing anybody in publishing, the media in general and politics fears more than being accused of anti-Semitism. Since the obscenity of the Nazi Holocaust, the false charge of anti-Semitism is the blackmail card Zionism has played brilliantly to prevent informed and honest debate about who must do what if there is to be a peaceful resolution of the Palestine problem, which is the prerequisite for averting a clash of civilizations, Judeo-Christian v. Islamic."

⁹ See James Cohen, "The Accusation of Anti-Semitism as Moral Blackmail" in *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, VII, 2: Spring 2009, pp. 23-34.

¹⁰ See Jerome Slater, "How bad can the Jewish right-wing get?" Blog entry for August 5, 2010, available at <http://www.jeromeslater.com/2010/08/how-bad-can-jewish-rightwing-get.html>.

¹¹ See Antony Lerman, "Diaspora Jews find their voice", in *The Guardian*, 20 May 2009, available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/may/20/israel-middleeast>.

¹² See for example Tony Klug, "Are Israeli Policies Entrenching Anti-Semitism Worldwide?" in *Tikkun*, 25(3), May/June 2010, available at <http://www.tikkun.org/article.php/may2010klug>: "In the more likely, if regrettable, event that the current Israeli government will commit itself to no such thing, what should Jewish diaspora communities do? I believe they would be well advised to take a deep breath and reconsider their habitual reflexive responses, which are in part responsible for the mess we are in. No one would expect them to waver from their uncompromising support for the genuine welfare of the Israeli state and people, and I do not propose this. But, with precisely this welfare in mind, it is beyond time for them to distance themselves from the expansionist policies of the Israeli government, its belligerent approach to problem-solving in the region, and its propensity to infringe Palestinian human rights, periodically on a massive scale. Some Jewish groups and many individual Jews are already doing this, to the consternation of certain voluble self-appointed guardians of the Jewish good. However, in the main, these dissenting Jews are, I believe, helping to lower the temperature of anti-Jewish feeling."

¹³ See for example Deborah Maccobi's letter to the Editor, *The New Statesman*, July 5, 2004: "I believe it is incumbent on Jews to speak out against Israel's politicide against the Palestinians. Doing so will help to reduce anti-Semitism." See also Allan Levine, "Jews are dishonored by a blind defense of Israel" in *Ha'aretz*, May 20, 2011, available at <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/opinion/jews-are-dishonored-by-a-blind-defense-of-israel-1.362926>.

¹⁴ See Marc H. Ellis, "On Jewish Particularity and Anti-Semitism: Notes from a Jewish Theology of Liberation", in *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, VII, 2: Spring 2009, pp. 103-122.

¹⁵ See for example Richard Greener, "The "Self-Hating Jew" Myth: Debunked" in *The Huffington Post*, March 30, 2010, available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/richard-greener/the-self-hating-jew-myth_b_518984.html: "The myth of the "self-hating Jew" is a slander against many American Jews who do not march in lockstep to the Likud drummer."; Julian Kossoff, "Tony Judt, Zionism, and the Self-Hating Jew" in *The Daily Telegraph Blogs*, August 12, 2010, available at <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/juliankossoff/100050311/tony-judt-zionism-and-the-self-hating-jew/>; and David Herman, "Today's Cultural Icon: The Self-Hating Jew" in *The Jewish Chronicle*, November 2, 2010, available at <http://www.thejc.com/comment-and-debate/comment/40488/todays-cultural-icon-self-hating-jew>. For a literary representation of the phenomenon, see Howard Jacobson, *The Finkler Question*, Bloomsbury, 2010; see also Michael Marqusee, *If I Am Not for Myself: Journey of an Anti-Zionist Jew*, Verso Books, 2010.

¹⁶ Sander Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred*, 1986.

¹⁷ I rely, here, on the Italian translation of the original French, Camillo Berneri, *L'ebreo antisemita*, Roma, Carucci, 1984.

¹⁸ Berneri, 'L'ebreo...' p. 34.

¹⁹ Sander Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred*, 1986, p. 16.

²⁰ Sander Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred*, 1986, p. 1.

²¹ *Ibid.* p. 12.

²² *Ibid.* p. 270.

²³ Far from being a hyperbole, this is precisely the argument used by Jemima Khan in an Op-Ed published in *The Guardian* at the beginning of the second Intifadah: after decrying “to overwhelming Jewish influence in US politics and the media” Khan went on say that “Many of my friends are Jewish, as was my paternal grandfather. The sad part is that I know the majority of them desperately want peace in the Middle East, but that peace can only be achieved once the US acts as an honest broker, and the US media as impartial commentators.” See Jemima Khan, “Tell the Truth about Israel” in *The Guardian*, November 1, 2000, available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2000/nov/01/comment.israelandthepalestinians>.

²⁴ Gideon Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*, Brandeis University Press, 1995, p. 85. See also www.zionism-israel.com: “Zionism is the national revival movement of the Jewish people. It holds that the Jews have the right to self-determination in their own national home, and the right to develop their national culture. Historically, Zionism strove to create a legally recognized national home for the Jews in their historical homeland. This goal was implemented by the creation of the State of Israel. Today, Zionism supports the existence of the state of Israel and helps to inspire a revival of Jewish national life, culture and language.”

²⁵ For a discussion of present-day anti-Zionism, see Ted Lapkin, ‘The Strange Mythology of Anti-Zionism’ in *Quadrant*, December 2005; for a worldview sample of secular, leftist anti-Zionist organizations, see for example the statement of purpose of the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network available at http://www.ijsn.net/about_us/purpose/. For the classical anti-Zionist position espoused by such ultraorthodox Jewish groups as Neturei Karta see, Rabbi Aharon Cohen, “Anti-Zionism is not Anti-Semitism” in *Against Zionism: Jewish Perspectives*, London, The Islamic Human Rights Commission, 2008, available at http://www.ihr.org.uk/file/against_zionism_jewish_perspectives.pdf.

²⁶ For a discussion of Jewish powerlessness in history, see David Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History*, Schocken Books, New York: 1986; see Emanuele Ottolenghi, ‘Paradise Lost’ A review article of *The Postzionism Debates*, by Laurence Silberstein, in *Israel Studies* 8,3, Summer 2003.

²⁷ As Anthony Julius writes in a two-part essay on Anti-Zionism, “The anti-Zionist is not just a Jew like other Jews; his dissent from normative Zionist loyalties makes him a better Jew. He restores Judaism’s good name; to be a good Jew one has to be an anti-Zionist.” See Anthony Julius, “Jewish Anti-Zionism Unravelling, Part One: the Morality of Vanity” in *Z Word*, March 2008, available at http://www.z-word.com/uploads/assets/documents/zword_Julius_Z4N6s4qT.pdf.

²⁸ See Uri Davis, “Apartheid Israel and the Political Zionist Claim for National Self-Determination” in *Anti-Zionism: Jewish Perspectives*, London, The Islamic Human Rights Commission, 2008, p. 27: “I have been an active participant and a vocal opponent to the idea of a Jewish state arguing that a Jewish state is by definition an apartheid state. You can’t have a Jewish state that is not and apartheid state.

²⁹ See famed historian, Eric Hobsbawm’s comments on the establishment of Independent Jewish Voices, a British-based group of Jewish anti-Zionist intellectuals who, from the pages of the *Guardian*, launched a new platform in 2007 to challenge what they called the ‘pro-Israel Jewish establishment’: “It is important for non-Jews to know that there are Jews ... who do not agree with the apparent consensus within the Jewish community that the only good Jew is one who supports Israel.” Quoted in Martin Hodgson, “British Jews Break away from ‘Pro-Israeli’ Board of Deputies” in *The Independent*, February 5, 2007, available at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/british-jews-break-away-from-proisraeli-board-of-deputies-435146.html>.

³⁰ See Alexei Sayle, “I’ve got what it takes to lead the PLO: good Jewish looks” in *The Independent*, October 3, 2000, available at <http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/ive-got-what-it-takes-to-lead-the-plo-jewish-good-looks-637796.html>: “I am Jewish, which should make me immune to the charges of anti-Semitism that fanatical Zionists trot out whenever anybody suggests that Israel’s constant use of torture and ethnic cleansing might be a teensy bit racist and wrong. I say “should”, but of course it won’t. The Zionists have thought up a good psychobabble condemnation for those Jews like myself who think that Israel is merely Serbia with yarmulkes and felafel. They call us “self-haters”, as if our recognition of injustice is somehow a psychological condition. Well, I say better to hate yourself than an entire other people. And it’s bollocks anyway.”

³¹ Explaining her support for Independent Jewish Voices, Susie Orbach was quoted as saying that “As a Jew, I feel a particular duty to oppose the injustice that is done to Palestinians ... The Israeli government does not speak for me..” Quoted in Martin Hodgson, “British Jews Break away from ‘Pro-Israeli’ Board of Deputies” in *The Independent*, February 5, 2007, available at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/british-jews-break-away-from-proisraeli-board-of-deputies-435146.html>.

³² As many surveys have shown over the past five years, Europeans variously view Israel as ‘a threat to world peace’ (59% said so in late 2003, in a EU sponsored poll: see Flash Eurobarometer 151, European Commission, *Iraq and Peace in the World*, November 2003, p. 80); consider Israel as an oppressive and undemocratic regime akin to Apartheid South Africa (See the Anti-Defamation League surveys on European attitudes toward Jews and Israel from 2002, 2004 and 2005, available at www.adl.org); and in more extreme (but by no means marginal) cases, endorse Israel’s comparison to Nazi Germany, as a European-wide survey conducted by the Italian daily *Il Corriere della Sera*, in January 2004, conclusively showed (*Il Corriere della Sera*, 26 January 2004).

³³ See for example Ahmed Samih Khalidi, ‘A One-State Solution: A Unitary Arab-Jewish Homeland Could Bring Lasting Peace to the Middle East’, in *The Guardian*, 29 September 2003. See also Michael Tarazi, ‘Two People, One State’, in *The New York Times*, 4 October 2004.

³⁴ Adam Shatz (Ed.), *Prophets’ Outcast A Century of Dissident Jewish Writing about Zionism and Israel*, New York, Nation Books, 2004.

³⁵ Tony Kushner & Alisa Solomon (Eds), *Wrestling with Zion Progressive Jewish-American Responses to the Israel-Palestinian Conflict*, Grove Press, 2003.

³⁶ Jonathan Shainin & Roane Carey (Eds), *The Other Israel Voices of Refusal and Dissent*, New Press, 2002.

³⁷ Michael Neumann, *The Case against Israel*, Counterpunch & AK Press, 2005.

³⁸ Alexander Cockburn & Jeffrey St. Clair (a cura di), *The Politics of Anti-Semitism*, Petrolia, CA, Counterpunch Press, 2003.

³⁹ Jews for Justice for Palestinians, ‘Mission statement’, available at <http://www.jjfp.org>.

⁴⁰ Jerome Segal, *Creating a Palestinian State*, Chicago, Lawrence Hill Books, 1989, p. 5.

⁴¹ Barbara Spinelli, ‘Ebraismo senza “Mea Culpa”’, *La Stampa*, 28 ottobre 2001, p. 1.

⁴² Michael Neumann, ‘What is Antisemitism’, in Alexander Cockburn & Jeffrey St. Clair (a cura di), *The Politics of Anti-Semitism*, Petrolia, CA, Counterpunch Press, 2003, p. 5.

⁴³ Norman Finkelstein, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: Image and Reality*, London, Verso Books, 2003, p. 4.

⁴⁴ Michael Kustow and 44 others, “We Renounce Israel Rights” in *The Guardian*, August 8, 2002, available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian/2002/aug/08/guardianletters4>.

⁴⁵ The letter was originally published on a website called Professors of Conscience, which was closed after the Iraq war ended and no ethnic cleansing occurred. The text of the open letter is still available at <http://www.rumormillnews.com/cgi-bin/archive.cgi?read=23500>. See Will Youmans, “Pre-empting Transfer” in *Counterpunch*, October 9, 2002, available at <http://www.counterpunch.org/youmans1009.html>.

⁴⁶ The American petition was similarly removed after the end of the Iraq War, but it can still be viewed at <http://www.warwithoutend.co.uk/middle-east-and-asia/2002/12/23/american-academics-join-israeli-colleagues.php>. See also Nigel Parry, “800 American professors sign document warning of coming Israeli ethnic cleansing” in *Electronic Intifadah*, December 18, 2002, available at <http://electronicintifada.net/content/800-american-professors-sign-document-warning-coming-israeli-ethnic-cleansing/4286>.

⁴⁷ See Avi Shlaim, “Teenagers who stand for honesty, decency and sanity” in *The Guardian*, 22 March 2004, available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2004/mar/22/comment?INTCMP=SRCH>.

⁴⁸ The original boycott letter, published in the Guardian on April 6, 2002, was spearheaded by Profs Hilary and Steven Rose and is retrievable here: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2002/apr/06/israel.guardianletters>. For their rationale, see Hilary and Steven Rose, “The choice is to do nothing or begin to bring about change” in *The Guardian*, July 15, 2002, available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2002/jul/15/comment.stevenrose>; Steven Rose, “If not Boycott, What?” in *The Guardian*, 24 May 2006, available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2006/may/24/ifnotboycottwhat>.

⁴⁹ Steven Rose, “Why Pick on Israel? Because its actions are wrong” in *The Independent*, June 4, 2007, available at <http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/steven-rose-why-pick-on-israel-because-its-actions-are-wrong-451648.html>.

⁵⁰ Gerald Kaufman, “The Case for Sanctions against Israel” in *The Guardian*, 12 July 2004: “That a task is difficult does not mean that it should not be attempted. There is no point in seeking to change Israeli policy by appealing to its government’s better nature, since such a nature does not exist. Sanctions and an arms ban must be our objective.”

⁵¹ ‘Israel can halt this now’, *The Guardian*, 12 June 2003.

⁵² Gamal Nkrumah, “A Matter of Morality,” Interview with South African Minister for Water, Ronnie Kasrils (*Al-Ahram Weekly*, English version, 13-19 February 2003, Issue No. 625).

⁵³ Shama K. Leibowitz, “In defense of Divestment” in *Against the Current*, 114, January-February 2005, available at <http://www.solidarity-us.org/node/339>. Discussing his personal appearance at a debate to support a divestment resolution in Somerville, in November 2004, Leibowitz wrote that “Dozens of Jews were among the many supporters of the divestment resolution who gathered in the Somerville City Hall on Monday, November

8. I, and several others, spoke in favor of this resolution, saying that it is precisely because we are Jews and because we truly care about Israel that we are asking the City of Somerville to pass this resolution.”

⁵⁴ Anthony Lippman, “How I became a Jew” in *The Spectator*, 22 January 2005.

⁵⁵ Several reviewers demolished Rose’s book; for a reviewer sympathetic to her politics but unforgiving of her scholarly shortcomings, see for example, Simon Louvish, “How words went to war” in *The Independent*, June 10, 2005, available at <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/the-question-of-zion-by-jacqueline-rose-752498.html>; see also the exchange between Shalom Lappin and Jacqueline Rose in the online journal *Democratiya* (now moved to *Dissent Magazine*): Shalom Lappin, “The Question of Zion,” *Democratiya* 6, Autumn 2006, pp. 11-36, available at http://www.dissentmagazine.org/democratiya/article_pdfs/d7lappin.pdf; Jacqueline Rose, “The Question of Zion: A Reply to Shalom Lappin” in *Democratiya* 7, Winter 2006, pp. 94-115, available at http://www.dissentmagazine.org/democratiya/article_pdfs/d7rose.pdf; and Shalom Lappin: “The Question of Zion: A Rejoinder to Rose” in *Democratiya* 7, Winter 2006, pp. 116-137, available at http://www.dissentmagazine.org/democratiya/article_pdfs/d7lappin.pdf.

⁵⁶ Jacqueline Rose, *The Question of Zion*, Princeton University Press, 2005, p. xii.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 155.

⁵⁸ Michael Neumann, *The Case against Israel*, Petrolia, CA, Counterpunch Press, 2005, p. 181.

⁵⁹ Michael Neumann, *The Case against Israel*, Petrolia, CA, Counterpunch Press, 2005, p. 190.

⁶⁰ Michael Neumann, *The Case against Israel*, Petrolia, CA, Counterpunch Press, 2005, p. 5.

⁶¹ Shlaim confirmed his secular background in an interview to Meron Rapoport, which appeared in Israel’s *Ha’aretz* to accompany the release of Shlaim’s *Iron Wall* to the Israeli market: “Shlaim describes a home in which Judaism was not an important component of his parents’ identity. “Judaism was ritual,” he says. “My parents used to attend the synagogue once a year, at home we spoke Judeo-Arabic, we listened to Arabic music.” See Meron Rapoport, “No Peaceful Solution” in *Ha’aretz*, August 11, 2005.

⁶² Avi Shlaim, ‘Is Zionism Today the Real Enemy of the Jews? Yes.’ In *The International Herald Tribune*, 4 February 2005, p. 6.

⁶³ Although, in other circumstances, Avi Shlaim has more openly expressed shame and regret at Israel’s founding. See for example Avi Shlaim, “The New History and the Nakba”, London workshop, 8 November 2003 (courtesy of the author): “I feel doubly guilty towards the Pals. As an Englishman, I am ashamed of my adopted country’s astonishing record of duplicity and betrayal going all the way back to the Balfour Declaration. As an Israeli, I am burdened by a heavy sense of guilt for the monumental injustice and never-ending suffering that my people have inflicted on the Pals since the beginning of this conflict over 100 years ago.”

⁶⁴ Haim Bresheeth, “Israel’s Apartheid”, in *Prospect Magazine*, July 28, 2007, available at <http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/2007/07/israelsapartheid/>.

⁶⁵ “Israel makes Pianist feel ‘ashamed of being a Jewi’” in *The Vancouver Province*, January 9, 2009, available at <http://www.canada.com/theprovince/news/story.html?id=2f5a79fb-2f23-49bb-a038-6afb7d78cd45>.

⁶⁶ Deborah Maccobi’s letter to the Editor, *The New Statesman*, 5 July 2004.

⁶⁷ Eva Kohner, “Ashamed to be Jewish”, *The Daily Telegraph*, Letters to the Editor, April 4, 2002, available at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/letters/3574934/Ashamed-to-be-Jewish.html>.

⁶⁸ Max Hastings, ‘A Grotesque Choice’, in *The Guardian*, 11 March 2004.

⁶⁹ Max Hastings, “Israel can no longer rely on the support of Europe’s Jews,” *The Guardian*, Tuesday 20 June 2006.

⁷⁰ Sergio Romano, *Lettera a un amico ebreo*, Milano, TEA, 2004, pp. 16-17.

⁷¹ Available at <http://www.carta.org/agenzia/palestina/020403letteraAperta.htm>, February 13, 2003.

⁷² Their actions are referenced in the already mentioned article by Avi Shlaim, ‘Teenagers who stand for honesty, decency and sanity: the refusal of five patriots to serve in the army is a beacon of hope for Israel’, in *The Guardian*, 22 March 2004.

⁷³ Shlomi Segall, ‘Why I won’t serve Sharon’ in *The Guardian*, 5 July 2002.

⁷⁴ The Intelligence Squared panel is available here: <http://www.intelligencesquared.com/events/zionism-today-is-the-real-enemy-of-the-jews2>; the panellists supporting the motion were Amira Hass, Jacqueline Rose and Avi Shlaim; those opposing it were Shlomo Ben Ami, Raphael Israeli and Melanie Phillips. The Cambridge Union event had Brian Klug, Daphna Baram and Richard Kuper second the motion and Jeremy Brier, Daniel Shek and Ned Temko opposing it; see Ben White, “This house believes that Zionism is a danger to the Jewish people” in *Electronic Intifadah*, 20 February 2006, available at <http://electronicintifada.net/content/house-believes-zionism-danger-jewish-people/5875>.

⁷⁵ Shlom Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People*, London, Verso Books, 2009.

⁷⁶ The event can be watched here: <http://versouk.wordpress.com/2009/11/13/avi-shlaim-in-conversation-with-shlomo-sand-few-modern-conflicts-are-as-attached-to-history-as-that-of-israel-and-palestine-avi-shlaim-professor-of-int/>.

⁷⁷ See for example Ilan Zvi Baron, “A Reluctant Zionist” in *Open Democracy*, 17 December 2010: “The innocence of Zionism led to not-so-innocent ethnically determined labour and land policies in Palestine, and ultimately to a civil war, and then the first of (too) many Arab-Israeli wars. Zionists may have been innocent, but Zionism certainly was not.” Available at <http://www.opendemocracy.net/dr-ilan-zvi-baron/relevant-zionist>.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

⁷⁹ See for example John Pilger, ‘Ethnic cleansing and the establishment of Israel’, *the New Statesman*, 19 June 2002: “In challenging the Zionist version of Israel’s past, Ilan Pappé is one of Israel’s “new historians”, a distinguished and courageous critic.”

⁸⁰ Marc H. Ellis, “On Jewish Particularity and Anti-Semitism: Notes from a Jewish Theology of Liberation”, in *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, VII, 2: Spring 2009, p. 120.

⁸¹ Anatol Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*, London, Harper Collins, 2004, p. 192.

⁸² Marc H. Ellis, “On Jewish Particularity and Anti-Semitism: Notes from a Jewish Theology of Liberation”, in *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, VII, 2: Spring 2009, p. 120.

⁸³ Tony Judt, “Toni”, *NYR Blog – The New York Review of Books*, 19 April 2010, available at <http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2010/apr/19/toni/>.

⁸⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780 Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 8.

⁸⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, ‘Benefits of Diaspora’, *The London Review of Books*, 27, 20, 20 ottobre 2005.

⁸⁶ Bertell Ollman, ‘A letter of resignation from the Jewish people’ *Tikkun*, ?

⁸⁷ Sergio Romano, *Lettera a un amico ebreo*, Milano, TEA, 2004, p. 100.

⁸⁸ Sergio Romano, *Lettera a un amico ebreo*, Milano, TEA, 2004, p. 108.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁹⁰ This is how Isaac Deutscher defines the non-Jewish Jew in his famous essay that goes by the same title : ‘They had in themselves something of the quintessence of Jewish life and of the Jewish intellect. They were *a priori* exceptional in that as Jews they dwelt on the borderlines of various civilizations, religions, and national cultures. They were born and brought up on the borderlines of various epochs. Their mind matured where the most diverse cultural influences crossed and fertilized each other. They lived on the margins or in the nooks and crannies of their respective nations. Each of them was in society and yet not in it, of it and yet not of it. It was this that enabled them to rise in thought above their societies, above their nations, above their times and generations and to strike out mentally into wide new horizons and into the future.’ Isaac Deutscher, ‘The non-Jewish Jew’, in Adam Shatz (a cura di), *Prophets Outcast*, New York, Nation Books, 2004, p. 5.

⁹¹ Dennis Praeger and Joseph Telushkin, *Why the Jews?* New York, Touchstone Books, 2003, p. 42.

⁹² Guido Ceronetti, ‘Lanterna Rossa’, in *La Stampa*, 26 April 2004.

⁹³ Justin Keating, “The Zionist State Has No Right to Exist” in *The Dubliner*, November 2005, available at <http://www.irishsalem.com/individuals/Politicians%20and%20Others/justin-keating/justinkeating-thezioniststate-nov05.php>.

⁹⁴ “Justin Keating Responds” in *The Dubliner*, December 2005. The article is no longer available. The *Dubliner* still provides its own version of the controversy here: http://www.thedubliner.ie/the_dubliner_magazine/2007/04/justin_keating.html.

⁹⁵ Benny Morris, *The New Historiography: Israel Confronts Its Past*, in *Tikkun*, November/December 1988, 21a.

⁹⁶ Avi Shlaim, *The Debate about 1948*, in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 27, 1995: 292.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Avi Shlaim, *The War of the Israeli Historians*, lecture delivered at Georgetown University, 1 December 2003 (courtesy of the author). Speaking of his opponents, Shlaim says ‘[They] put so much store by Israel’s claim to moral rectitude that they cannot face up to the evidence of cynical Israeli double-dealings or brutal dispersal and dispossession of the Palestinians. It is an axiom of their narrative that Israel is the innocent victim. Not content with the thirty pieces of silver, these people insist on retaining for Israel the crown of thorns.’

⁹⁹ <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11312a.htm#VII>.

¹⁰⁰ It is worth, here, to quote Marc H. Ellis again, at length: “The inclusion of Palestinians in the Jewish vision of the future, in the deep sense that is no longer possible to be Jewish without living among, with and in solidarity with Palestinians, is one definitive break point between Progressive Jews and Jews of Conscience. Another break is each group’s dating when Jews, the Jewish community and the state of Israel went wrong: Progressive Jews citing the occupation and settler movement after the 1967 War as the turning point, thus a return to the 1967 borders more or less solves the problem with Palestinians and the internal troubles within the Jewish community; Jews of Conscience cite the 1948 War, thus the initial occupation and settlements of what became the state of Israel as the place of wrong that devastated Palestinians and the Jewish witness in the world. Here, in the interaction between Palestinians then and now, the Palestinian voice, in its contested understandings, needs to be heard, absorbed and thought through by Jews of all persuasions and taken to heart as a deep and biding indictment of Jewish particularity as it has been expressed in the post-Holocaust period.

The voice heard, action must be initiated, as it has been on some fronts. This action includes rewriting the narrative of the history of the state of Israel, with its effects on Palestinians, as well as the lifting up of Jewish voices who then and now point to a radically different encounter in Israel/Palestine.” Marc H. Ellis, “On Jewish Particularity and Anti-Semitism: Notes from a Jewish Theology of Liberation”, in *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, VII, 2: Spring 2009, p. 120.

¹⁰¹ Bernard Avishai, ‘Post-Zionist Israel’, *The American Prospect*, Vol. 11, 12, 8 maggio 2000, p. 46.

¹⁰² Bernard Avishai, “Saving Israel from Itself: A Secular Future for the Jewish State” in *Harper’s Magazine*, January 2005, available at <http://www.harpers.org/archive/2005/01/0080361>.

¹⁰³ Tony Judt, *Israel, The Alternative*, in *The New York Review of Books*, 50, 16, October 23, 2003.

¹⁰⁴ Tony Judt, *A Grand Illusion? An Essay on Europe* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996).

¹⁰⁵ Judt, “The Past is Another Country: Myth and Memory in Postwar Europe,” in István Deák, Jan T. Gross, Tony Judt, eds., *The Politics of Retribution in Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 317.