

18.32x24.26	1/6	עמוד 26	the jerusalem report	13/06/2018	63934327-7
בנימין זאב הרצל - בהקשר לציונות - 80790					

Jewish World

Hate: Herzl's unfulfilled VOW

The Jewish state that was
promised as antisemitism's cure
has become its excuse, focus and
obsession **By Amotz Asa-El**

IT WAS war by other means. Frustrated by their failure to convert them, early Christians set out to demonize the Jews and defame their faith.

The success of the consequent effort transcended anything its originators could have imagined, inspiring a multipronged attack that eventually harnessed legislatures, kings, armies, literati and mobs while crossing continents, lasting centuries and killing multitudes.

Yes, governmental attacks on Jewish citizens have ended, as discussed in Part 2 of this series, but the hatred that fueled them is alive and well – albeit adjusted to changing

times. In the words of Jacob Talmon (1916-1980), the dean of Israeli historians: "The state of the Jews has become the Jew of the states."

The character assassination of the Jews originated in what is now Turkey. From Tarsus, in southeastern Anatolia, Paul emerged with the charges that "the Jews" killed Jesus and that "they displease God and are hostile to everyone" (Thessalonians 1 2:15). In Sardis, off that peninsula's opposite corner, Bishop Melito (d. 180) cried the seminal charge: "God has been murdered! The king of Israel has been slain by an Israelite hand!" And, in Nicaea, south of today's Is-

tanbul, Emperor Constantine instructed in 325 CE, "Let us have nothing in common with this odious people," as he directed 250 bishops gathered on the azure shores of Lake Iznik to ban Easter's celebration on Passover. "It is unbecoming," he reasoned, "that on the holiest of festivals we should follow the customs of the Jews."

It was against the backdrop of this steadily gathering hostility that the libelous imagination was altogether set loose when the Bishop of Constantinople, John Chrysostom (349-407), claimed: "The Jews sacrifice their children to Satan!" "The synagogue is a brothel" and the Jews are at "the level of

27.51x25.04	2/6	27 עמוד	the jerusalem report	13/06/2018	63934371-6
בנימין זאב הרצל - בהקשר לציונו - 80790					



Anti-Israel demonstrators at the World Conference on Racism in Durban, South Africa, in 2001; Muslim anti-Zionism is picking up from where Christian antisemitism left off

MIKE HUTCHINGS / REUTERS

the lusty goat and the pig” before adding for the few who might still have doubted it: “I hate the Jews!”

The geographic setting of this anti-Jewish fermentation is telling because it happened where a sizable Jewish minority flourished while interacting daily with the non-Jewish majority.

In Sardis, for instance, when the local bishop invented the charge of deicide, the town’s Jewish community was so large and solid that it built a magnificent synagogue that seated 1,000 people, was longer than a football field, fully marble paneled, checkered with decorative mosaics and illuminat-

ed by 18 chandeliers made of marble and bronze.

A landmark whose ruins survive to this day, it was, in the third century, the largest synagogue in the world. For Christian proselytizers, however, it was an eyesore because they were at a loss to explain their faith’s rejection by Christ’s people, in general, and in their own towns, in particular.

It was this social geography that Theodor Herzl had in mind when he vowed, in the closing paragraphs of his manifesto “The Jewish State” that as soon as the Jews will begin to return to their land “antisemitism will grind to a halt everywhere.”

It was the one prediction Herzl got totally wrong.

Seventy years since Israel’s emergence and 120 since Herzl assembled the First Zionist Congress, the Jewish state that was supposed to undo antisemitism has become its focus, excuse and obsession. How did this happen, and what does it mean for the future of the Jews?

HERZL’S LOGIC was sound. Antisemitism, he assumed, demanded a social encounter between a Jewish minority and a gentile majority of the sort that took place in Roman Anatolia. It followed that once the

18.06x23.88	3/6	עמוד 28	the jerusalem report	13/06/2018	63934373-8
בנימין זאב הרצל - בהקשר לציונות - 80790					

Jewish World

Jews would leave the Diaspora and become their own rulers in their own land, their place in the world would be normalized and their enemies' hatred would lose relevance and disappear.

This failed forecast is particularly intriguing because Herzl's other predictions were strikingly accurate. In 1897, he foresaw Israel's establishment "within 50 years at most" and, at another time, he detected the approach of the European catastrophe.

"I cannot imagine what appearance and form this will take," he wrote. "Will it be expropriation by some revolutionary force from below? Will it be proscription by some reactionary force from above? Will they banish us? Will they kill us? I expect all these forms and others."

Even more chillingly, he specified that the impending attack "will overtake even Hungarian Jews with brutality, and the longer it takes to come, the worse it will be... the more bestial will it be."

In fact, antisemitism staged a grand return, casting the Jewish state as the new anti-Christ. Even so, and as if indulging in Herzl's prophecy, Israelis took decades to appreciate this resurgence and its meaning.

This strategic drowsiness was inspired by events in Christendom that Israelis noticed, but belittled, and it was enabled by events in the Middle East that they altogether ignored.

In Europe, the Catholic Church was staging a historic retreat from the legacies of Constantine, Melito and Paul. The momentous process began in 1965 with the Vatican's formal abandonment of the accusation



JERUSALEM POST ARCHIVES

Theodor Herzl: As soon as the Jews begin to return to their land, 'antisemitism will grind to a halt everywhere'

of the Jews as Christ's killers, and with its renunciation of antisemitism "at any time and by anyone." In 1993, repentance matured with the establishment of full diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the Jewish state.

The entire process was viewed in Israel with mixed feelings. Many dismissed it as part of a religious, rather than political, rapprochement, a tango between guilt-ridden bishops and starry-eyed American rabbis out to secure the Diaspora's future even after the emergence of Herzl's Jewish state.

American Jewry's role in and enthusiastic embrace of the Vatican's change of heart was seen by most Israelis not as part of the struggle for Israel's place in the world, but as part of the war on antisemitism. Antisemitism was for most Israelis what it was for Herzl – a Diaspora disease.

Jew hatred was the Diaspora's problem because, in the Israeli mind, it connoted images such as a Jew barred from a medical school in Moscow; a Hasid mugged in Antwerp; or a swastika splashed on a tombstone in a Jewish cemetery in Munich

– all of which were unthinkable in Israel.

As for what Christian theologians did or didn't say about the Jews, the thinking in Israel was inspired by David Ben-Gurion's statement in his nationally broadcast speech during the 1955 Independence Day military parade: "Our future depends not on what the gentiles will say, but on what the Jews will do."

Regardless of this distance, Israelis were skeptical about Christian repentance, noting the Vatican's refusal to exchange ambassadors with Israel, and arguing that this was in line with Pope Pius X's blunt rejection of the Zionist idea after Herzl explained it to him. "The Jews have not recognized our Lord," he said in their 1904 meeting at the Vatican. "Therefore, we cannot recognize the Jewish people."

When a papal ambassador finally presented his credentials to former president Ezer Weizman, Israelis had to acknowledge the seriousness of the transition, whose sincerity and meaning registered most forcefully seven years later, in March 2000, during John Paul II's visit to the Jewish state.

The unprecedented sight of a pontiff standing at attention at Ben-Gurion Airport and listening solemnly, eyes shut, to the IDF orchestra playing the Israeli anthem's recollection of "the hope of 2,000 years/ to be a free nation/in our land, the Land of Zion and Jerusalem" – stood in stark contrast to what John Paul II's predecessor had told Herzl 96 years earlier.

The Polish pope's climbing of the Chief Rabbinate's stairs for an audience with then

18.25x17.08	4/6	עמוד 29	the jerusalem report	13/06/2018	63934370-5
בנימין זאב הרצל - בהקשר לציונו - 80790					

chief rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, his tucking of a note in a crevice of the Western Wall, his emotional visit to Yad Vashem, and his warm meetings with Israel's leaders all generated an epiphanic impression that John Paul II had cured not only Catholicism's, but also Protestantism's and anyone else's anti-Jewish complexes, phobias and hatreds.

Such was the euphoria of winter 2000. In autumn 2001, it came to its end.

JUST TWO weeks after the suicide attack that took 15 lives in downtown Jerusalem's Sbarro pizzeria, Israelis saw on TV multitudes in Durban, South Africa, shouting anti-Israel epithets, inspired by 3,000 NGOs at the World Conference Against Racism that had gathered there. Israel, they charged, is "a racist apartheid state" guilty of "systematic perpetration of... war crimes, acts of genocide and ethnic cleansing."

Now Israelis understood.

The hijacking of a UN conference designed to fight racism, like the absurdity of the anti-Israel charges leveled there along with their loudness, visibility, and timing – the Palestinian war of terrorism that followed Israel's peace offer at Camp David in summer 2000 – convinced Israelis that the hatred their forebears faced had traveled from the Diaspora's Jew to Zion's Israeli.

The Israeli awareness of hatred's morphing and potency was novel, but the scourge they faced – a relocated and refocused antisemitism – had by then been more than half a century old.

Arab politicians, clergy and journalists had been regularly depicting Israel as a nation of well poisoners, ritual murderers and

The anti-Jewish bug that had unsettled Christendom was now stinging the Arab mind

drinkers of blood. Anti-Jewish absurdities, like one that attributed evolution theory to "Darwin the Jew"; one that said Al Capone was an Israeli; one that claimed the assassins of John Kennedy, Abraham Lincoln and William McKinley were Jews; and one that said abortion was a Jewish plot to reduce the world's non-Jewish population – abounded in Arab media, as Middle East scholar Bernard Lewis showed in his study "Semites and Anti-Semites" (1986).

The anti-Jewish bug that had unsettled Christendom was now stinging the Arab mind.

In 1951, the antisemitic classic "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" was translated into Arabic, followed by countless editions. Saudi King Faisal (1906-1975), who used to hand his guests a copy of "The Protocols," said – and likely believed – that "the Jews" were conspiring to rule the world, that they murder Muslim children and plotted the Crusades.

Subsequent events would prove that none of this was anecdotal, but Israelis in those years believed that "what the gentiles say" was not important and that antisemitism was the Diaspora's challenge. That is why few in Israel took stock of the Arab response to Vatican II, which was no less fascinating than the Christian retreat it decried.

In Mecca, a grand meeting of the World

Muslim League admonished "the Catholics" for "mutilating their own dogmas and altering their own laws" by allowing "a circle of prelates, seduced by and in complicity with Zionism, to trifle with dogmas and shatter religious convictions that have survived for 2,000 years."

It must have been the first time ever that one faith demanded that another retain any of its tenets, let alone one that the former did not itself believe, as the Koran says Jesus was not executed at all (Surah 4:157).

Even so, an ambitious Arab effort was afoot, picking up from where the Vatican left off.

THE RELIGIOUS statement soon inspired diplomacy as the Arab League called on all Arab ambassadors "to keep constant contact with the bishops and cardinals who participate in the Council in Rome and to enlighten them about the political background behind the Jewish schema debated by the Council."

Arab media joined the campaign, most notably when influential Egyptian journalist Anis Mansur reprimanded the Catholic Church for "making peace with the Jews" whose "great deception" would now undo their blame "for killing both Christ and Kennedy."

These political and journalistic attitudes were compounded by the education system in which, for instance, the Saudi high-school textbook "Studies from the Muslim World" taught that "Jewish influence has cut deeply into several Western countries and [the Jews] have taken control of their economies and media." Syrian textbooks, surveyed by American Arabist Joshua Landis, taught that "it is dangerous to live

18.55x17.8	5/6	30 עמוד	the jerusalem report	13/06/2018	63934372-7
בנימין זאב הרצל - בהקשר לציורו - 80790					

with Jews or near them" and that the Jews constitute a "danger" that "threatens the existence of the Arab and Islamic world with destruction and disappearance."

Coupled with newspaper caricatures that depict Israeli leaders and soldiers the way classical antisemitism demonized the European Jew, and bolstered by TV soap operas that depict Israeli soldiers as cold-blooded murderers, the hatred that was once driven by Christianity's frustration with Judaism is now driven by Arab frustration with Zionism.

Moreover, the hostility that was originally brewed in Arab lands soon spread to non-Arab lands and their leaders from Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad ("The Zionists are a cancerous tumor" speech in Tehran, August 2012) through Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdoğan ("Israel's barbarism surpasses Hitler's" speech in Ordu, July 2014) to Malaysia's Mahatir Mohamad ("The Jews rule the world... they invented human rights and democracy so that persecuting them would appear to be wrong" speech to the Organization of Islamic Conference in 2003).

The anti-Israel libel resembles classical antisemitism not only in the imagination, rhetoric and propaganda methods it deploys, but also in its motivation.

The early Christians were at a loss to explain the Messiah's death and his tribe's refusal to accept his divinity. Arab governments were at a loss to explain their failure to win the war they had picked with a vastly outnumbered and outgunned Jewish state. That is why they, too, set out to change the subject from their failures to their enemy's character. Similarly, non-Arabs like Erdoğan set out to change the subject from what they see as Muslim civilization's defeat by the West.

Then again, the new antisemitism's mo-

tivations had to be hidden and its rhetoric had to be adjusted if it were to transcend the Muslim world. Classic antisemitism performed such adjustments well, back when it journeyed from religion to its secular alternatives, and its successor would now make such adjustments with equal agility and zeal.

JEW HATRED was first shepherded from religion to secularism by French philosopher Voltaire (1694-1778), a founding oracle of modern liberalism who wrote that the Jews are "vagabonds upon the earth, abhorred by men... an ignorant and barbarous people" that is "the most contemptible" in the world.

After having journeyed, this way from faith to heresy, the hatred of the Jews soon traveled to nationalism, which made thinkers such as German historian Heinrich von Treitschke (1803-1885) claim the Jews were "an alien element which has usurped too much space in our life." It then traveled to socialism, whose prophet Karl Marx wrote that the Jews' God is money; to capitalism, whose emblem, Henry Ford, warned that the Jew "controls the world's finances" and "rules by the power of gold"; and to racism, whose prophet, Houston Stuart Chamberlain (1855-1927), claimed the Jews were out to "infect the Indo-Europeans with Jewish blood."

This remarkable ability to harness disparate and contradictory ideas in order to spread and diversify hatred for the Jewish people also was applied to the hatred of the Jewish state.

The turning point in this transition was the Six Day War of 1967, and its pioneers were Charles de Gaulle and the Soviet Union.

De Gaulle sought a way to explain his moral betrayal of Israel by embargoing pre-paid arms shipments just when Israel needed them most. The Soviets sought ways to

explain the military defeat of their proxies and their Soviet-made arms. The Soviets launched a concerted media attack on Israel, which for the following two decades would be derided in cartoons, opinion articles and TV segments as a fascist, imperialist, colonialist and murderous oppressor. The undertone was obvious: The Soviets were emulating the czars who incited against the Jews to draw attention away from their own mismanagement of Russia.

De Gaulle, meanwhile, picked up from where Voltaire left off.

"The Jews," he told 900 journalists and 200 diplomats, are "an elite people, domineering and sure of themselves," a nation that – once gathered in its own state – was prone to display a "burning and conquering ambition" and a state that had indeed become "warlike" and "determined to expand."

Moreover, Israel enjoyed "vast help in money, influence and propaganda from Jewish circles in America and Europe," which meant that de Gaulle did not bet on the wrong horse, because the winning horse was doped by the "International Jew."

Made in autumn 1967, when liberal Europeans still saw Israel's struggle as legitimate and even inspiring, de Gaulle's charges triggered public wrath, including a cartoon in *Le Monde* of a Jewish prisoner climbing a concentration camp's barbed wire under the words: "Domineering, confident." Yet, de Gaulle's attack legitimized Israel's defamation in polite society and showed Europeans how to dust the weaponry of Europe's old war on its Jews and now aim it at Zion's Israelis.

In due course, Israel's conflict with its neighbors would be taken out of context and used to portray Israel as evil in its substance, and to ultimately demand that it not only

23.58x24.08	6/6	עמוד 31	the jerusalem report	13/06/2018	63934374-9
80790 בנימין זאב הרצל - בהקשר לציונו -					



A demonstration against Israel in London's Trafalgar Square: Diaspora Jews often avoid studying the facts that debating anti-Zionist propagandists demands

alter its policies in disregard of its security, but – like Richard Wagner's solution for the European Jew – cease to exist.

The new effort's damage surfaced early with the UN's equation in 1975 of Zionism and racism. At the same time, an alliance steadily emerged between the new incitement's target audiences in the West, and the old incitement's audiences throughout the Muslim world.

Yet, the worst damage, from the viewpoint of the Jewish future, is the new hatred's creeping division of the Jewish people.

AMONG ISRAELI Jews, the new antisemitism is mostly a matter of consensus.

This became manifest, for instance, when Portuguese Nobel Laureate Jose Saramago emerged in Ramallah in March 2002 – a month in which 92 Israelis were murdered in a dozen suicide attacks – and attacked Israel for fighting “in the spirit of Auschwitz.” The Israeli journalist who rose from the audience and asked angrily, “Where are the gas chambers?” was veteran anti-occupation activist Amira Hass.

It was also difficult to find anyone in Israel who would back rock star Roger Waters's cancelation of a concert in Tel Aviv, or his call to boycott Israel and his anti-Israel broadsides while in front of the anti-terrorism barrier. All understood his partiality, considering he had previously held a concert in Istanbul while ignoring Turkey's occupation of northern Cyprus and oppression of its Kurdish minority.

The same went for Irish Nobel Laureate Mairead Corrigan Maguire who, in 2010, joined a flotilla that symbolically tried to break Gaza's naval blockade, but when asked by journalist Irit Linur why she had so much to say about Israel's leaders and so little about China's, answered cantingly, “I

have never been to China.”

The sense of threat by the new antisemitism is so consensual in Israel that the mass-circulation Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper published guidelines for debating anti-Israel libelers despite that paper's frequent opposition to the current government's Palestinian policy. The same goes for its centrist columnist Ben-Dror Yemini and opposition leaders Yair Lapid of Yesh Atid and Isaac Herzog of Labor, all of whom have been particularly active in combating the new antisemitism.

THAT IS not what has been happening in the Diaspora. Yes, very few Jews go as far as Italian journalist Barbara Spinelli, who wrote in 2001 that “Israel constitutes a scandal,” or the late British playwright Harold Pinter, who derided Israel on the eve of its 60th birthday as “a state founded on terrorism, massacre and the dispossession of another people.”

More commonly, Diaspora Jews shy away from defending Israel, and in many cases prefer to hide their Jewishness rather than find themselves involved in a discussion of the Middle East. Most are uninformed to differentiate between legitimate criticism and libel, and unmotivated to study the facts.

Many Jews are vulnerable to anti-Israel propagandists, especially on university campuses, which the anti-Israel effort cleverly targets, realizing the vulnerability of uninformed, impressionable students whose Jewish education is shallow at best.

At the same time, many Jews who legitimately oppose the occupation, driven by a sincere concern for Israel, are arguably exploited by new antisemites whose hidden agenda is not the end of the occupation, but the end of Israel.

In any event, the possibility that behind

American anti-occupation activists lurk European anti-Zionists behind whom lurk Muslim antisemites – is often ignored by Diaspora Jews, who assume that ending the occupation would swiftly end the new antisemitism.

This thinking about the new antisemitism is as wishful as Herzl's was about the old antisemitism.

The Diaspora Jew's thinking in the face of all this, therefore, should be this: If they are criticizing Israel fairly – I will hear them out; but if they are libeling Israel, they are libeling me and I will fight them. Such an attitude would echo the instinct of solidarity with which Jacob Schiff fought the czar, Elie Wiesel fought the Soviets, and Moses Montefiore fought the libelers of the Damascus Affair.

That is not what is happening now. The Right and Left camps that alternately hail and decry Israeli policies according to the government of the day are on the Diaspora's margins. Between them sprawls a silent mass that increasingly sees anti-Israel libels the way Israelis once saw the anti-Jewish libel – Israelis thought anti-Jewish libels were the Diaspora's problem; now many in the Diaspora think anti-Israel libels are Israel's problem.

So, the hatred, which once united the Jews almost as strongly as their religion, today seems ready to split them. What, then, should the Jewish people do, as its forebears' instinct of solidarity wanes while their two great unifiers – the Jewish faith and the anti-Jew hatred – increasingly divide a shrinking Diaspora and a defamed Jewish state?

This is the fourth of a five-part series on the future of the Jews. Next issue: 'Genius: Spiritual Zionism's great opportunity'