



THE JEWISH PEOPLE POLICY PLANNING INSTITUTE  
(Established by the Jewish Agency for Israel) Ltd.

# MUSLIM ANTI-SEMITISM

The Challenge and Possible Responses

**Prof. Emmanuel Sivan**

With the collaboration of **Dr. Dov Maimon**

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Our thanks to the UJA Federation of  
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Editors: Rami Tal • Barry Geltman

Jerusalem 2009



The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute  
Jerusalem

# FOREWORD

The Muslim world's hostility towards Israel and the Jewish People has intensified in the last quarter century. This hostility, which some have called 'Muslim anti-Semitism,' is even prevalent in Egypt and Jordan, both of which have signed peace agreements with Israel. Among the mega-trends affecting the world at large, including Israel and the Jewish People, the rise in the power of radical Islam has a substantial global impact. Fears with respect to the rising power of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan and Egypt are forcing these regimes to navigate constantly between the considerations of their own survivability and stability and maintaining peace with Israel. We are thus witnessing various manifestations of leniency towards the pressures of Islamic opposition.

This phenomenon is not limited to countries that have reached agreements with Israel; rather, it is widespread, encompassing the entire Sunni and Shiite Arab world, as well as Islamic nations in the East.

The phenomenon of Jew hatred in the Muslim world and its dangers are the focus of Prof. Sivan's study. His historical analysis exposes the ancient roots of this hatred, tracing them to the modern age of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, when Muslim-Christian relations deteriorated, first as a result of the occupation of some Maghreb countries (North Africa) by Christian powers, and later, with the expansion of European colonialism throughout the Arab and Muslim realm.

Certainly, the main catalyst for the increase in Israel hatred is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which has intensified the waves of hostility, from the agitation by the Mufti of Jerusalem in the 1920s, through the Arab Revolt, the establishment of the State of Israel, to the stinging defeat in the Six Day War. All of these have engendered a deep frustration in the Arab world, which has translated into burning animosity towards Israel and the Jewish People as a whole. This animosity has spilled over beyond the boundaries of Arab Islam and reached far into Islamic countries outside the region, which have taken the lead in highlighting the cultural-religious-political ugliness attributed to the Jews and Israel, their subversion and treachery, portrayed as innately Jewish by nature, ever since the days of the Prophet Muhammad. This hatred has found expression, among other things, in Holocaust denial and in accusing the Jews of exaggerating its scale, or even fabricating it altogether, in order to justify their conquering territory that is an Arab endowment.

Professor Sivan's persuasive argumentation leads him to a number of important conclusions and recommendations. The first of these concerns the need to focus on the anti-Semitism that is manufactured and promulgated mainly by the Muslim Brotherhood and other organizations of its ilk, the Saudi regime and the Shiite regime in Iran. It follows that the primary endeavor to address and diminish the intensity of the hatred should be directed towards each specific manifestation which takes on unique dimensions in various countries. Unlike the Al-Qaeda organization, this is not a global phenomenon. Anti-Semitism and hatred are 'national' in character, and their containment must be achieved by focusing on each host-nation according to its specific conditions and characteristics.

The second recommendation derives from the first, and focuses on the need to reduce the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Middle East, the Maghreb and Europe. Along with its franchises, such as Hamas, the movement has managed to thrive and increase its influence, especially within the Palestinian Authority during the two Intifadas and with Hamas' rise to supremacy in the Gaza Strip.

Underlining the need to deepen our understanding of adversaries and enemies and the application of proven, reliable and relevant information in a systematic and non-sporadic manner could bring about a more effective management of the struggle against anti-Semitism. This recommendation also includes supporting 'interfaith dialogue' which may be effective due to the broad theological common ground shared by believers of Islam and Judaism. Within this dialogue, a concerted effort must be made to eradicate negative stereotypes of Muslims held by Jews, and of Jews held by Muslims. The September 2001 terror attacks, which have pushed many moderate Muslims into a tight corner, could serve as a common ground for understanding the plight of any stigmatized group.

Prof. Sivan's extensive knowledge, expertise and close familiarity with Islamic tradition, as well as his thorough understanding of the effects of the Israeli-Arab conflict, have joined to create the basic infrastructure so vital to formulating recommendations for action and response vis-à-vis Islamic extremism, which finds expression in promoting and escalating Jew-hatred for the purpose of attaining other goals. Prof. Sivan's recommendations provide a sound and rational basis for action to decrease hostility towards and hatred of Israel and the Jewish People.

**Aharon Zeevi Farkash**

President of the Jewish People Policy Planning Institute

# INTRODUCTION

This position paper seeks to describe and analyze the phenomenon of hatred against Jews in the Muslim world, note the dangers it embodies, and suggest courses of action for its thwarting and/or alleviation. The work discusses:

1. The legacy of the near and far Islamic past, its empirical presence, its present usages, as well as the influence of the Israeli-Arab conflict and the current Muslim revival.
2. Cultural dialogue as a potential factor in reducing hostility and hatred.
3. Assuming that such dialogue is of limited importance, we examine the deep meanings of Jew hatred, which are critical for any informed strategy to counter the phenomenon.
4. Based on all of the above, we propose possible responses.

In the external environment of the Jewish People, the world of Islam is a prominent force. Although it is based on a monotheistic faith that is similar in many respects to Judaism (e.g., the supremacy of Scripture and of the Law), it is currently hostile to Judaism. Such hostility is often dampened down by the geo-strategic considerations of decision makers in the Muslim world (such as peace agreements, or common interests shared by Sunni Muslims and Jews against Iran and the Shia). This hostility is fueled to a large degree by a surge of hate that has surfaced in the last quarter century, and is referred to by the media as “Muslim anti-Semitism”.

Essentially this wave is a cultural-political phenomenon affecting the “political public” in Islamic countries, that is, that segment of the public that is interested in political issues, whose portion of the general population is usually estimated at 10-15 percent, comprising mostly city-dwelling/urban men. The “political public” includes many active supporters of the incumbent regime and its clients, or followers/cronies (Khodi in Iran), as well as active opposition forces, their leaders and grassroots activists. The top echelons of the political elites (with the exception of Iran and perhaps Saudi Arabia) are not anti-Semitic, unlike the situation in the 1960s, and do not conduct intensive anti-Semitic propaganda. Muslim regimes are on the whole authoritarian, but they are preoccupied by their own survival and not by the question of Palestine or by the “plots of world Jewry.” Today, many of them are so worried by the threat

posed by Iran and emergent Shiism they carry out covert or overt cooperation with Israel – “the enemy of my enemy... Decision-makers are motivated mostly by regime survival and geo-strategic considerations (which often tends to diminish the hate, as mentioned above, turning it into latent hostility). Yet these regimes’ margin of maneuver is also constrained by the currents flowing within the “political public” and its spiritual and communal leaders, which is more or less equivalent to the public of newspaper readers, radio listeners, TV news viewers and Internet surfers, i.e., people who customarily discuss among themselves the meaning of the content offered to them by the media. Within this public, there are various prisms for making sense of reality, and such prisms have a certain cultural depth. By their very nature, prisms also define what is “inconceivable” and who is “abominable.” Unfortunately, Judaism and the Jews have recently become such “abominations”, so that peace or even “co-existence” with them tends to be perceived as “inconceivable” among significant segments of the political public, including the establishment. This situation would be further exacerbated if radical Islamist forces obtain hegemony, or even power, as has already happened in Iran, Afghanistan and the Sudan, or if the regime’s ideology partly overlaps that of the Islamic fanatics (as in Saudi Arabia). In a country like Syria, for instance, the fact that a sweeping Islamization process is taking place within civil society constrains the maneuverability of the regime (which is inherently secular) in terms of concessions towards peace with Israel and/or the nature of relations with Israel after signing a peace agreement.

It must be said, however, that the two regimes that have signed peace agreements with Israel – Egypt and Jordan – have managed so far to maneuver nicely between geo-strategic considerations and responding (mostly on a symbolic and declarative level) to the pressures of Islamic opposition, especially in an era when the Iranian threat is foremost on their agenda. Jordan, for example, ordered its ambassador in Tel-Aviv to return home during Operation Cast Lead, but reinstated him shortly after. Egypt refrained from doing even that, and instead has fortified its position as a mediator between Israel and the Palestinians and tried to block the Rafah crossing, while the official media showered sympathy on the Gazans and sharp criticism on Israel. Saudi Arabia too has limited itself to declarations, without impeding its tacit cooperation with Israel as part of the ‘Pragmatic Alliance’ against Iran.

In North Africa, the societal hatred of Jews has circumscribed the nature of any relationship which could be developed with the regimes in Tunisia and Morocco, and the same is true for South-Eastern Asian countries such as Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia.

As far as the state of Israel is concerned, therefore, hatred of Jews has an effect far beyond its role in mobilizing the Palestinian (and other) masses for the struggle against Israel among those active elements that are hostile to the status quo, such as Iran, Hamas and Hezbollah. In addition, it bears further significance in relation to the Jewish Diaspora, especially in Western Europe, where it is a disturbing, hostile and sometimes violent element, especially on a communal-local level. However, the gravity of this factor varies between different countries, and is a matter of situational and not core consciousness. The gravest case, as described below, is the French one, but even in France, Muslim hatred of Jews does not constitute a critical barrier to the integration of Jews in French society. It seems that the constraints produced by Jew hatred on Israel's integration in our region are far more serious.

In human existence, to speak "of cultural depth" – i.e., a connection to the sphere where a community determines meanings and judges and evaluates its friends and foes (following Robert Bellah's famous definition) – implies, in the Islamic context, a connection to the past. And indeed, the historical relationship between Muslims and Jews carries weight and influence on thought patterns in these prisms of seeing. This refers both to objective-empirical influence, not necessarily on a conscious level, to still vivid historical memories (for instance, the brutal encounter between the prophet Muhammad and the Jews of the Arabian Peninsula), to relationship patterns of ancient times (the Jews as 'protected dependents' or as members of "the Angry Faith"), as well as the deliberate manipulation of these memories and patterns by political and cultural elites today.



# CHAPTER 1: FINDINGS

1. Like modern European anti-Semitism, modern Muslim hatred of Jews is, as its name suggests, modern – that is, a product of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, built upon medieval historical foundations but with totally different add-ons and qualities.

Hatred of Jews in Islam is the outcome of the encounter between two monotheistic religions, first in the Arabian Peninsula and later throughout the Middle East and North Africa, as they were conquered by the Arabs. The encounter in the Arab Peninsula is the result of historical coincidence: although Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, drew some of his gospel from the two preceding monotheistic religions, and acknowledged his debt to Moses and Jesus, he only had flesh-and-blood encounters with Jews, who were the only monotheists living in the Arabian Peninsula at the time, mostly in Medina. Upon his immigration-escape (Hijra, 622 CE) from his hometown, Mecca, where he was persecuted, into Medina, he was called upon to serve as arbiter and ruler and tried to build an alliance with the three Jewish tribes residing in Medina. As a basis for accepting his rule, he offered certain observance concessions (facing the direction of Jerusalem in prayer, Sabbath as the day of rest, the Day of Atonement as a day of fasting), and this cooperation worked properly for about a year and half, until it fell apart. About the reasons for the collapse we only have the Muslim version – the Jews forfeited their obligations (the Jewish tribes, having been defeated in the armed conflict, did not leave behind a version of their own). The violent clashes ended in victory for the Muslims, the deportation of two of the Jewish tribes from the Peninsula, and the killing of all males from the third tribe, selling its women and children off into slavery. From this point and until the death of the Prophet (632), the Jewish residents of Arabia were defined as enemies of Islam, just as the pagan infidels of Mecca. And indeed, the chapters of the Quran revealed in Medina are rife with polemical verses aimed at both these enemies. In stylistic terms, the vitriol hurled at the Jews is much more venomous than against the Christians, with whom the polemic had been merely theoretical (concerning the Trinity, the Incarnation of the Son of God, etc.), and also targets their alleged attributes as a community. Among these, the most prominent is treachery, along with clannishness and divisiveness (as illustrated by the story of Korah, retold in the Quran). Moreover, the Jews are to be

overly strict in their observance, unlike Islam, which according to the Prophet is a tolerant and lenient religion, “the religion of the middle,” which does not demand too much exertion from its believers. The Jews, on the contrary, are fanatical and angry. This being the constitutive period of the Muslim faith, these words and events carry a traumatic significance, with great future repercussions, stemming from Muhammad’s alleged adage: “All the Jews are inevitably similar to their Arabian Peninsula brethren.”

The second encounter between Jews and Islam took place in the lands occupied by the Muslims, where Jews have been a small minority within the vanquished populations, in which most monotheists were Christians. The main Muslim proselytizing thrust (using incentives, persuasion and coercion) was directed at the Christians, and of course the main enemies of Islam outside its realms were also Christians, i.e. the Byzantine Empire. No wonder, therefore, that the primary theological polemic in Islam was directed against Christianity (as in the 1398 debate, recently cited by Pope Benedict XVI in his Regensburg Lecture). Nevertheless, a considerable part of Muslim polemics (both oral and written) was targeted at the Jews, because Islam remained loyal to the perception that Judaism was a worthy and important contender, being a monotheistic religion which preceded and contributed to Islam, yet its rabbis, according to Islam, have distorted the Gospel of Moses, just as the Church distorted the Gospel of Jesus. Hence, one should attempt to convert them all.

Thus the encounter in the conquered lands had a negative historical background, that is the clash in Medina, but a positive theological foundation as well. This combination engendered a concept which affected the legal status of the Jews in Islamic countries. Unlike heathens, they were not faced with the choice of “Islam or the sword,” and their status was comparable to that of Christians as “protected” (ahl al-dhimma), who enjoy protection by public law (and not by privilege, as in the West) of their life, limb and property; are allowed to observe the customs of their religion, though not in public, but forbidden to propagate their faith (capital punishment for anyone attempting to convert a Muslim), or build synagogues of heights exceeding that of neighboring mosques. Their status as second-rate citizens is asserted by a special tax (jizya) and a ban against their occupying high-ranking positions in the administration, judiciary and military.

Despite all the restrictions, it is clear that the Jews in Islam are not condemned to the primarily negative theological and legal standing they have in Christianity: The betrayal of Muhammad by a few tribes is nowhere near the murder of the son of God.

The protection by state law puts them in a much safer position than the one they had in medieval Europe, despite the theological arguments against Judaism as an “angry and pedantic religion,” contrary to Islam, which claims to uphold “the golden way,” “the middle road,” and a “live and let live” philosophy. The theological polemic with Christianity was far more serious, as Christianity was also an incomparably greater political and military enemy, from the days of Byzantium to modern colonialism.

In terms of beliefs and attitudes, the picture is largely similar: there has been disdain tinged with hostility, but not outright hatred against the Jews, and the hostility is not the kind that exists between two equal parties (or almost equal, as the Muslims would regard the Christians in the days of the Crusades and the Reconquista), but between superiors and inferiors. In other words, contempt and humiliation – but not hate. In pre-colonial Morocco the Jews were called “the lowest of the low” (*asfal al-safalin*). In accounts by Muslim travelers, the Jews are usually depicted as subordinate, silent and sword-less to defend themselves. And yet pogroms were rare in the history of Islam, as were forced collective conversions (except in Morocco and Yemen in medieval times and in Iran in the late 18th century). A key means of humiliation is ridicule. And indeed, instances in which the Jews are depicted in ridiculous situations are recurring in the special hadith collections known as *Isra’iliyyat*. Ridicule is moreover mixed with the constant mention of the Jews’ plotting against the Prophet Muhammad in Medina. It is no coincidence that in Egyptian and Persian films depicting the days of the Prophet Muhammad, the Jews have an invariably high-pitched and squeaky voice – a proven device for provoking ridicule.

In return for payment to the rulers and officials, Jews could obtain accommodations in terms of status, such as relaxation of the ban on riding horses, wearing a tag on their hats (usually yellow), etc. The more self-confident the Muslims were, the more they tended to relax their laws and prohibitions; and vice versa, in times of defeat and retreat, the restrictions were aggravated. But in general, we are talking here about a medieval brand of tolerance, granted by a ruling group to a subordinate group, where the ruling religion is a priori considered as theologically superior and the subordinate group has a lower, though still legitimate status in terms of its theological essence. It is therefore a problematic, but not tragic, background for the developments in the modern era.

On the popular culture level, there were many common cults (such as cults of the saints) shared by Jews and Muslims, around the tombs of sheikhs and rabbis, virtuous individuals or mythological figures from their shared past (Prophet Elijah). There is

also evidence of social relations. A prominent exception is Iran, where, under the influence of Zoroastrian traditions, the Jews were considered physically impure and untouchable (*najasa*). Jews were also prohibited from inheriting from Shiites, whereas the opposite was allowed. A Jew who converted to Islam was entitled to the entire inheritance. Shiites were not allowed to marry Jewish women, except for in temporary marriage (*mut'a*), which is an inferior and exploitative type of concubinage.

None of this leads from a complex state of affairs in a deterministic fashion into the new Muslim anti-Semitism. The new anti-Semitism is the product of the encounter with the West in the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries and the Israeli-Arab conflict. The medieval state of affairs may have provided some (but not all) of the building-blocks for the new phenomenon and part of its architecture (but again, not all of it, and certainly not its general features).

2. In the 19th century, during the early transition to the modern era in the world of Islam, a deterioration process occurred in the Muslim-Christian relationship. Parts of the Islamic world (Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia) were conquered by Christian powers, leading to the loss of self-confidence of the Muslim world regarding its sense of inherent supremacy – ideological, political and military – upon which its policy of tolerance of the *ahl al-dhimma* (the majority of whom being Christians) was based. Christian European powers, such as France, Britain and Russia, also enjoyed “capitulations” – ex-territorial rights which provided their subjects residing in the East ex-territorial jurisprudence rights through their respective consulates, in effect exempting entire Christians communities, mainly in the major cities of trade, from the jurisprudence of Sharia, the prevailing legal system based on ancient Muslim religious law. Many Christians also experienced an improvement in their socio-economic status through serving as commercial agents of European interests making headway into the Middle East and the Maghreb. The many tensions created as a result of this inversion of the status of the “protected” did not concern the Jews, because they only enjoyed the “Capitulations” as individuals, and not as a collectivity, and did not secure a special position in the service of foreign powers. (The one exception was Algeria where all Jews were granted French citizenship in 1870.) But the very sensitivity of the Muslim establishment towards the infringement of the *dhimma* status has often resulted in a stricter application of the rules, certainly with respect to Jews who did not benefit from foreign protection.

The very contact with the West in itself brought about several negative shifts in the status of the Jews. Through the Catholic Church and its missionary system, the notion of the Blood Libel, which sipped into consciousness following the Damascus Blood Libel (1840) became widespread and incorporated into the traditional image of the Jews' scheming nature. Catholicism also helped propagate the notion about a global conspiracy linking the Freemasons and the Jews, while Russian Churches and their Greek-Orthodox extensions helped spread the Protocols of the Elders of Zion towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which were supposed to "explain" the advancing globalization of late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century as a Jewish plot to rule the world. Here too, a traditional narrative about the inherent treachery of the Jews has been augmented and upgraded by new information, updated to suit the times. While the blood libels and Protocols had no immediate negative consequences, they were bound to appear in strength in the long run.

Nevertheless, it cannot be said that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Jews' status significantly deteriorated. A lot of the traditional Muslim tolerance remained intact, which was evident in the Dreyfus Affair, when a number of Muslim leading thinkers, including Rashid Rida (a Syrian reformer living in Egypt, who was in fact a spiritual forefather of the Muslim Brotherhood), defended Dreyfus's innocence. If something can be learned from the affair, Rida and others argued, it is the essential hypocrisy of Western culture, including the 'enlightened' France: This culture may uphold freedom of expression and equality for all in theory, but in practice, it discriminates against oppressed minorities.

3. The main catalyst for the transformation of Jew-hatred was the Zionist-Arab conflict, which burst into consciousness with the Balfour Declaration and resulted in a grave violent confrontation during the 1929 riots in Palestine. This transformation involved a change of image, necessitated by the circumstances. The Jews, who were hitherto perceived as "children of death" (*awlad almawt*), cowards, unmanly and subordinate, proved their ability to use violence, raise international support in the Christian world (which until then seemed to be interested only in local Christians), all this in an unexpected colonial effort focused on a Muslim country saturated with historical memories.

Islamic journalism has often covered the subject in the 1920s and 1930s, but as a result of the formidable events the Islamic world had undergone – the fall of the Ottoman

Empire, the abolition of the Caliphate, the establishment of the new states. The issue of Palestine did not have much salience beyond the circle of *Al-Sham* (Greater Syria), the Ottoman administrative unit of which Palestine had been a part until the end of WWI. Ultimately, the Palestinians were still alone in the battlefield, and they are the ones who brought about the change in the image of the Jews.

It was the Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, who emphasized since the late '20s the eventual occupation of Jerusalem by the Jews as a pan-Islamic threat, a kind of revival of the Crusades in order to build the Third Temple – a drama acted out most violently in the 1929 riots. Palestinian educator Izzat al-Darwa detected in biblical times the Jewish obsession with the conquest of the land, stressed the cruelty the Israelites employed to fight against the Canaanite peoples that inhabited the land. These very Canaanites, he argued, were the forebears of the Palestinians. Biblical brutality accounted for their success in using violence then and now. And the resulting arrogance (*ghatrassa*) marked the Jewish attitude as “the Chosen People” towards anyone outside the fold. When inferiors become superiors in Palestine, it is because the heretofore down-trodden Jews, driven by their immanent sense of superiority, are revealing their true nature. Drawsa and others dug and found in the *hadith* (the oral tradition of Islam) the genre of *Isra'iliyyat* (Chronicles of the Jews), which is full of fables and legends of Jewish origin, biblical feats, as well as alleged attempts of Jewish converts to Islam (such as Kaab al-Achbar) to introduce Jewish concepts into their newly adopted religion. In this context they found fertile ground for their plots. They augmented this historical background with the stories of the Protocols, the Freemasons and the legend of the Rothschilds, all of which served to explain how a “religion dispersed to the ends of the earth like specks of dust” could consolidate such extensive international backing for its malevolent schemes.

The issue of Jerusalem played an important role in mobilizing the Palestinian villages into a national consciousness of struggle against the Jews, which hitherto appealed only to town-dwellers, but its impact outside the mandatory borders was inconsequential, despite the Pan-Islamic Congress which convened in defense of Jerusalem (1931). The same is true for other elements of the “Judeo-Masonic Conspiracy” which was purported to overtake “the sacred endowments of Islam and its holy land.” Even among the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt this was seen more as a pedagogical tool, or, as their founder, Hassan al-Banna, said, “both a *mihna* [trial, ordeal] and a *manha* [gift],” meaning that it only goes to show how low Islam had sunk because of the sins of its believers. Still, there was no burning animosity that would

eliminate any sense of common humanity and link to universal values. During 1944-1947, most of the Egyptian press expressed shock and horror at the unfolding story of the death camps, although it largely regarded it as further proof of the degeneration of Western culture. This position of the Egyptians was distinctly different from that expressed in the Palestinian press, which, while not denying the Holocaust, dedicated much less space to it, mainly voicing fears of the Zionists' sophisticated utilization of their brethren's catastrophe to advance their takeover of Palestine.

4. The 'big bang' came in 1948: Islamic territory fell to the hands of Jewish infidels; most of the population fled or was driven out; four Arab armies suffered defeat at the hands of an enemy that had seemed so tiny and weak. This was a turning point of historic proportions – Jews fighting Muslims and winning – and a cognitive dissonance followed. In order to explain away that dissonance, a conspiratorial explanation was needed: It was the aid of closely intertwined powers (in the spirit of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion), and the use of military or diplomatic deception, a reincarnation of the treachery theory from the days of Muhammad back in Medina.

The rise in anti-Semitism was immediately manifested in the mounting social isolation of the Jews in Arab countries, several waves of pogroms and deportation (in Iraq, Yemen, and later Egypt). Thus ancient and modern-day elements were blended into a new formation, focused on the "Zionist entity" and its allies, Jews around the world. What up until then had mostly been contempt was replaced by a hatred that was as enormous as the catastrophe itself (*nakba* – as the defeat in the war over Palestine was named), and served as an acid test for the faults and weaknesses of Arab societies as a whole, as it also did in 1967. Thus, the traditional sense of contempt turned into a sense of deep humiliation, mixed with the loss of self-confidence.

The pan-Arab movements, and especially its champions, the populist-military regimes that sprang from the ruins of the 1948 fiasco, became the primary carrier of anti-Semitism during the 1950s and 1960s. But despite its being a basically future-oriented and secular movement, it often utilized elements of the Islamic past, including the traditions brought forward by Quran interpreters regarding the Jews' recalcitrant and treacherous attitude towards Muhammad, in order to lend its animosity historic status, depth and continuity. This Islamic dimension, however, remained secondary, merely one among the many characteristics of *Qawmiyya* (pan-Arab nationalism) in its struggle, centered around Palestine and its land (*Wataniya*), and included as part

of a Third World struggle against the forces of imperialism, the enemies of progress, development and the abolition of backwardness. This 'Third World' context is the fabric into which pan-Arabism has been woven from the 1950s onwards, so that accepting the notion of an organic connection between Judaism and its schemes and international capitalism was fairly easy (Karl Marx's 1844 essay "On the Jewish Question" became a seminal text in Arabic and Persian translations). Once again, the cruelty of the Jews befits that of imperialism and has a collective characteristic, as asserted by Muslim oral traditions and the interpreters of the Quran. Especially active in the dissemination of such ideas was the nationalized film industry in Gamal Abdel Nasser's Egypt. Films about the Prophet's times emphasized the themes of the Jewish Shylock-style greed, as well as the Jewish proclivity for lust and its financial exploitation (e.g. fathers trading their own daughters) – themes that do not appear in the Quran. But more important was the covert and scheming hatred attributed to the Jews of Medina in their dealings with the Prophet, and their cooperation with the Qureish tribe, Muhammad's sworn enemies. These plots were embroidered in several films glorifying the Egyptian guerrilla war against Israel. Israel itself was depicted as a country where Jews from Arab countries became forced laborers.

The 1967 war, the second turning point in the history of the conflict, also saw the beginning of the decline of pan-Arabism as an ideological-political force all over the Arab world. It is typical that when Anwar al-Sadat appealed to the Al-Azhar religious scholars in the early '70s for a *Fatwa* (ruling) according to Muslim law to justify the struggle, he did not use pan-Arabism as justification, but Islam. Thus was ushered in the era of "the Return of Islam," in Bernard Lewis' apt coinage. The return, in the sense that the agenda and priorities of Radical Islam now set the tone, and legitimacy by religion became the *sine qua non* to all social forces wishing to have their voices heard.

In general, the main outcome of the era of reemerging Islam is the view of Judaism and Zionism as one monolithic whole (which was not the case prior to 1948), and primarily – the Islam-Judaism struggle as an all-out, age-old global holy war that has now reached its culmination, with the enemies of Islam enjoying the support of the four superpowers and their all-invading culture (a.k.a. "spiritual imperialism"): from Hollywood to the Internet, from invading armies to global economic interests. This grand conception made headway even into conservative circles close to the Egyptian and other regimes, from Indonesia to Africa, and is no longer a strictly Arab matter; although it is prevalent mainly in the militant (not necessarily violent) circles in the



core Muslim countries, from Afghanistan to Morocco, as well as among Muslim immigrants in Europe (especially in light of their lack of societal integration and their envy of the prospering Jews). The innately negative essence of Judaism is now perceived as the **cause** of the conflict; it is not the conflict that justifies hostility to the Jews.

The paradox, however, is that this cluster of negative qualities attributed to Judaism is prevalent not among the most violent fanatics such as al-Qaeda or Sadat's assassins, but mainly among those who are mostly involved in *da'wa* (propaganda, education, social action), whether by principle (rejecting violence) or from opportunism (i.e. fear of the government's response). This *da'wa* is leaking into conservative and traditional currents that are not hostile to the regimes but support them.

Jihadist fanatics, on the other hand, tended during the 1970s to the 1990s to pay mere lip service to the animosity towards Israel and Judaism, but less frequently than the *da'wa* people. They usually stressed (even during the days of Nasser and Sadat), that "the immediate enemy," i.e. the rulers of their own countries, were the real enemies, and that Palestine and the Jews should be addressed at a later stage, when circumstances allow. (The exception was attacks on Jewish tourists, which the militants regarded as desirable acts because they had an adverse effect on the regime's economy as well). The religious war is important only in relation to the territory of the nation-state from which the particular fighting group came. (Of course Jihadist Shiite fanaticism was particularly affected by the close relationship between Israel and Shah's regime, a relationship which was the object of Khomeini's attacks while he was still in exile).

Nevertheless, one should not underestimate the effectiveness of the *da'wa* factor, both in inter-personal contacts, and through audio-visual or virtual media. These create a sound basis with considerable overlap with the world of Jihad warriors on the one hand, and the conservative-traditional (and ruling) sector, on the other.

This explains the revolutionary nature of the *Al Qaeda* consciousness that has proliferated in the last decade. It seeks to create a universal avant-garde, the identity of whose members (exiles, volunteers, immigrants) is exclusively Islamic, focusing its utmost efforts on a given territory as dictated by the circumstances and based on the principle of concentrated effort. The international framework is one of holy war (Islam against Judaism and Christianity), a kind of modern reincarnation of the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century Counter-Crusades in an era of globalization. In any interpretation of

the events, regardless of its distance from Palestine, world Jewry features as an active factor, and more so in countries where Jews are prominent minorities.

The only components of the international Jihad movement that focus on Israel and Zionism (excluding Al Qaeda bases in South Lebanon's refugee camps), are those marked by apocalyptic tendencies, such as the followers of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, a religious scholar of Palestinian origin currently incarcerated in Jordan, formerly the mentor of Abu Musa'eb al-Zarkawi, the top al-Qaeda commander in Iraq, or the Wahabi-Saudi adherents of Sheikh Salman al-Awda, who foresee Armageddon before the *Mahdi* (Messiah) can arrive, in which the Jihad will face a formidable struggle against the US as well as Israel. They are highly preoccupied with calculations of the date of that final struggle and the deciphering of various signs heralding his arrival. Up until now, their real effect is not being felt. At the other (non-international) extreme of Jihad, there is a clear anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish Islamic obsession, especially among Hamas, which draws mainly from an anti-Jewish historical reservoir and constantly enriches it with Quranic interpretation as well as the *hadith* on Jewish history (*Isra'iliyyat*), mainly in order to prove the fundamental depravity of Judaism, which is the cause for the struggle over Palestine. This struggle is currently the top priority of Jihad in order to liberate Islam from the repressive onslaught by modern civilization, its economic and military supremacy, of *Dar al-Islam* (the Muslim world). The connection between *da'wa* and Jihadist action in terms of motivation is thus clear, and the media visibility of Hamas suicide missions makes it an important factor in recruiting members for the general Jihad (not necessarily against Jews) among Muslim immigrant populations in the West.

The main shift in the *da'wa's* anti-Semitism in the last two decades has been the rise of Holocaust denial (and its definition as a "yet another/renewed falsehood" and a "giant conspiracy" propagated by inherently deceitful Jews). Attempts to deny and/or to minimize the scope of the Holocaust had already been made by a Palestinian national movement in 1945-1948, as part of its attempt to neutralize the mobilization of global public opinion by the Zionists in favor of Jewish immigration to Palestine (Aliyah), and the establishment of a Jewish state. But at the time, there was also an important current in the Arab public opinion, led by prestigious Egyptian intellectuals (such as Taha Hussein and Tawfik al-Hakim), who expressed shock at the scope of the Holocaust and compassion for its victims. It was only in the early 1950s, following the devastation of 1948, when voices in the Arab public began to question the actual scale of the Holocaust and to rage against its "cynical exploitation" by the Zionists. A

sharp expression of such sentiment was the speech given at the Bandung Conference (1955) by Dr. Charles Malik, the Lebanese scholar and diplomat. The emergence of the theme of alleged Holocaust exploitation, exaggeration and fabrication was catalyzed by Eichmann's trial (1960-61) and the rapprochement between the Catholic Church and Judaism during the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). The pan-Arab public perceived both events as unfair moral victories of Judaism and as reinforcement for the Zionist state which cuts apart Arab unity while propagating pitiful lies throughout the allegedly enlightened world. In the 1980s, these themes gained huge support from the supposedly scientific information provided by Holocaust deniers in Western Europe, such as Garaudy, Roques, Faurisson and Irving, whose writings were promptly translated into Arabic. There was also a Soviet influence in minimizing the Holocaust, which is manifest, among others, in the Ph.D. thesis submitted by Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazen) to Moscow University's Institute of Middle Eastern Studies (1982).

These notions and rationales soon transferred from pan-Arab literature into Islamist literature, which conquered the cultural and political high ground. The cruelty, treachery and deceitfulness that Islamists have found in Judaism from the days of Muhammad have been newly vindicated here.

(Opinion polls conducted recently among Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, as well as among Israeli Arabs, indicate that a considerable share of respondents think that the scope of the Holocaust is exaggerated, and some refuse to believe it altogether. We have no data for comparison from previous years, so it is impossible to detect a trend, but the phenomenon is cause for concern).

# CHAPTER 2: BETWEEN ANIMOSITY AND DIALOGUE

Muslim anti-Semitism is undoubtedly burgeoning and thriving, especially in the European diaspora, but also among Muslim publics that are involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (i.e. the Palestinians of the territories, but also in Jordan and in Lebanon). In other Muslim countries, with the exception of Iran where state propaganda disseminates it, the phenomenon exists and is on the increase, but its depth and emotive power are lower (except during high-profile violence). The general public is less involved in it, compared to militant groups, and even these are not engaged in it on a daily basis, although anti-Jewish stereotypes are increasing with time, becoming almost obvious clichés. The decline of pan-Arab solidarity in the last two decades has also contributed to these developments.

As a grave and aggressive phenomenon, this strain of anti-Semitism calls for a proactive, well-thought-out and assertive counter-action. But to what extent can such a response be accompanied by the 'soft power' of rapprochement and dialogue?

It should be stressed that the findings described above are indeed severe, although not in the bleak and hyperbolic style that marks certain institutions for the study of anti-Semitism, sensationalist tabloids and communal leaders. There is no question about the authenticity of the concern and pessimism conveyed by these leaders, as they clearly express the sentiments of their constituencies, but honest feelings must also be regarded in the proper context; and that context is historical-dynamic, and is not based on essentialist hostility (as in "Ishmael is hostile to Israel from time immemorial").

Some of the findings – such as that the main problem is not the extreme faction of Al Qaeda but the Muslim Brotherhood and the banalization of anti-Semitism among traditional audiences – are, counter-intuitive. They contradict common inferences, such as "the more radical Muslims are in their opinions, the more they are anti-Semitic." And there are implications for possible courses of actions.

Moreover, the picture may be a bit too bleak because it fails to consider two phenomena: on the one hand, the emergence of intra-Arab and intra-Muslim

criticism of anti-Semitism (and Holocaust denial), which targets the same “political public”; and on the other, the development of interfaith dialogue.

Self-criticism of Muslim-Arab anti-Semitism as a pathological and alarming phenomenon in terms of the society’s indifference to universal human rights had been raised already after the Six Days War, by a few thinkers, such as the important Syrian philosopher Sadeq Jalal al-Azm. But it turned into a substantial current during the 1990s, mainly among liberal publicists (some of them former Marxists) such as the Lebanese Hazem Saghya, Tunisian Salah Bechir, Palestinian politician Yasser Abd Rabbo, Syrian Yassin al-Haj Saleh, Iraqi academic Kanan Makiya, Egyptian Muhammad Abd al Munaim Said and their likes – all prominent figures who command important public stages (such as the daily newspapers *Al Hiyat* and *Al Ahram*, and the Institute of Strategic Studies).

Most of these critics regard anti-Semitism as the embodiment of negative, xenophobic aspects of pan-Arab nationalism (or, alternately, modern Islam). In the apologetic Radical Islam, or in Arab nationalism, the sentiments of jealousy and loathing are extremely salient, so that, according to these critics, the ‘other’ is portrayed as evil incarnate, an innately malevolent being. Two liberal Muslim Internet sites, al-Awan and Shafaf al-Shark al-Awsat, consistently denounce manifestations of anti-Semitism. The Al-Saki publishing house (Beirut and London), which has a well-established distribution network, often publishes essays in the same vein.

But ultimately, this remains a small current, elitist in style and content, without any major influence on the “political public,” and certainly lacking any effect on mass media.

A much bigger and more salient volume of activity is produced by interfaith dialogue, mostly Christian-Muslim, which for obvious reasons has developed especially in the wake of the 9/11 attacks in 2001. Under the shadow of the Second Intifada and increasing tensions in Western Europe, a similar Judeo-Muslim dialogue has evolved as well.

**This dialogue is expected to yield the following outputs:**

1. To mitigate the effects of propaganda and polemics, and to eradicate stereotypes and prejudices.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter 1 is full of examples from Islam. For a parallel Jewish approach, based on a conception of the essence of Islam, see Bat Ye'or, *The Dhimmi*, 1985.

2. To diminish (if not remove altogether) mutual fears, remove communication failures, create an atmosphere of mutual trust and develop constructive ways towards conflict resolution.
3. In all inter-group conflicts, the key issues are identity, foundation myths and narratives that each side tells itself about itself and about the 'other'. Thus, the very listening to the myths and narratives of the other side, and discovering that they are diverse, not uniform, are in themselves a prerequisite for conflict resolution.

Are such outputs being achieved, and if so, to what extent?

Even the most optimistic proponents of dialogue admit that the results so far are not very uplifting. They are a long way away from fulfilling the wish of Dr. David Rosen, a leading champion of interfaith diplomacy, who maintains that if we do not want religion to be part of the problem, then it must be made part of the solution, and that a constructive integration of the religious leadership is vital to the fight against prejudice.

It should be said, however, that the scope and persistence of this activity, despite the disappointments, are quite impressive, especially in Western Europe. Yet, it could be argued that such activity is the equivalent of the boy who tried to block the leak in the dike with his finger to prevent a flood.

The following is a schematic map of selected initiatives:

## **Institutional Initiatives: International Summit Conventions**

Meetings of religious leaders of international stature, along with leading ethical, religious and political notables (such as Eli Weisel, Alain Finkelkraut, Chief Rabbi for Israel Eliyahu Bakshi-Doron, Sheikh al Azhar Tantawi, philosopher Mohamed Arkoun, etc.). The objective of such encounters is their visibility in the media and among the believers. The thrust for such initiatives increased greatly after the 9/11 terror attacks and found its expression in the Alexandria Convention – a location of great symbolic value for the dialogue of ancient civilizations – in January 2006. It was followed by other gatherings, including the World Congress of Imams and Rabbis for Peace (March 2006), The Kazakhstan Conference on Religious Tolerance (September 2006) and the Alexandria Conference on Interfaith Issues in January 2008. These meetings were characterized by hundreds of attendees and observers, flowery speeches in praise of pluralism and open debate, vague closing declarations which tended to blur differences, and primarily, to conceal the fact the militant minority

– if it is indeed just a minority – excites the believers’ imagination, especially in Islam, and has obtained hegemony in terms of setting the agenda in the public sphere. As is customary in international conferences, public relations work is the main activity, and there is no substantial dialogue, although ‘corridor encounters’ have the added value of discovering the ‘other’ and/or maintaining relations with them.

These weaknesses were augmented by other shortcomings: an exaggerated emphasis on theology, which stems from the model of the intra-Christian and intra-Jewish dialogue, and the fact that the majority of institutional religious leaders are suspected by the believers, not necessarily the militants among them, to be accommodating collaborators of the regimes. These faults keep recurring in the undoubtedly well-meaning initiatives for interfaith dialogue undertaken by US Federal agencies, UNESCO and the European Union. In short, much ado about nothing. In the long term, their imprint on the public sphere is almost imperceptible.

## **Institutional Initiatives: Jewish Bodies and Religious Non-Profit Organizations**

Given the bitterness and jealousy rampant in Islam in relation to the Jews, many communal leaders have decided not to invest their limited resources in dialogue, and to conduct only perfunctory and irregular meetings with Muslim leaders. Those who argue that this is a self-fulfilling prophecy may be right, but one should not ignore the rational judgment of communal leaders, following the disappointing experience of international conferences and the lack of emotional willingness of their congregations to “offer the other cheek.” There is therefore an ongoing effort to maintain the dialogue by over-arching institutions such as the AJC in the US, the Board of Deputies in Britain, and the CRIF in France, but in each of these locations, its persistence depends on the existence of a few ‘possessed’ individuals, who soon tire out. The only place where a systematic effort is being made is Canada, where Jewish institutions emphasize the creation of alliances with Muslim activities on general public issues (homophobia, gay marriages, adoption), in which they find a common ethical basis for result-oriented public activity (such as changing the laws), stemming from common monotheistic tenets. In each case, the issue pertains to religious conduct, not theology, in keeping with the nature of Judaism and Islam as religions in which the “will do” precedes the “will hear,” preferring Sharia and Halacha to theology, unlike Christianity, where debates about the main tenets of belief, whether intra-Christian or in relation to ‘other’ religions, are paramount.

## Educational Programs

Education should be a key instrument in reducing prejudice, complaints and grievances. No wonder a considerable effort has been invested in various countries in youth encounters, educational enrichment programs, student exchanges between schools, professional encounters (mainly among educators) and/or neighbor encounters. Most of the programs are not professionally planned or nationally coordinated. The exception is the Anne Frank Institute in Amsterdam, which has developed professional programs in a number of languages, and conducted periodical and systematic professional evaluations to determine their value and impact. Another example in the same spirit is Neveh Shalom in Israel, but that initiative takes a different context – that of the Israeli-Arab conflict – which has not been imitated, although professional evaluations have indicated that it could diminish racial stereotypes. It is obvious that only an inter-personal structured encounter between Muslim and Jewish populations (such as youngsters), who ordinarily do not get to meet each other, could reduce demonization and simplistic images, but not only is the educational activity in this respect highly inadequate, but also external, high-profile events (the Second Intifada, violent incidents in Western Europe, etc.) have had a simultaneous negative effect, not to mention the constant agitation by religious fanatics that relentlessly trickles its venom.

## Local-Institutional Initiatives

Many initiatives on a local municipal level have flourished, especially in France, in towns and suburbs where large concentrations of Jews and Muslims reside (with the majority of Jewish residents of North-African origin with a difficult legacy of negative experiences and stereotypes). Especially notable were Marseilles as well as Créteil and Sarcelles (both lower-middle class suburbs in Paris's 'outer circle'). The success in thwarting hostility and consolidating good neighborly relationships, especially in light of the incidents among youth during the beginning of the second Intifada, stemmed from the fact that the representatives of both sides (members of the municipal councils, police chiefs) interacted with both authentic and unofficial leaders; in some cases, rabbis and imams, some of them highly popular, also took part in the negotiations. An exemplary model for all such initiatives is the Marseilles-Espérance initiative, undertaken by the mayor of Marseilles himself, who set it as a focus for a town identity that is built on co-existence. Thanks to this effort, the suburban riots



of late 2005 never affected Marseilles in general, and the relationship of Jewish and Muslim communities (in mixed residence areas) in particular. Another example is the suburb of Bagneux, near Paris, where neighborhood initiatives (assisted by local social workers) succeeded in creating a regular, mediated dialogue mechanism which prevented riots following the brutal murder of local resident Ilan Halimi by a gang of Muslim fanatic criminals in February 2006.

## Grassroots Dialogue Groups

Such initiatives are multiplying especially in Israel, but there the religious and ethnic elements are thoroughly intertwined. Generally, initiatives are more successful among Israeli Arabs than among residents of the Occupied Territories, most likely because the latter are too preoccupied with their sense of oppression and bitterness to allow any positivity. In Israel too, success is greater when the encounters have a concrete goal (such as care of disabled children, women's status, environmental issues, etc.). In most cases, about two thirds of the participants are women, perhaps because their capacity for empathy is more developed than in male cohorts. Groups comprising women only were particularly successful, owing, among other things, to the orthodox rules of conduct in both populations, which prohibit the mixing of the sexes.

In the Diaspora, there is a similar phenomenon of local initiatives, but it is mostly religion-based: for instance, Sufis and Cabalists, study groups (usually of men who work together on interpreting sacred texts), student groups, etc. The political and civic aspect is mostly absent from such initiatives.

In general, no longitudinal studies have been conducted to examine changes in stereotypes as a result of the encounters (with the exception of the Anne Frank Institute in Amsterdam and Neveh Shalom in Israel), so that we are left with mere impressions, which are of course better than nothing. In certain cases, such as pacifying the public after incidents or riots in Western Europe, the very prevention of collective negative phenomena from recurring is in itself an important achievement. However, many of these initiatives are short-lived and tend to be transient, as can be expected of any voluntary action. Moreover, the overall ethnic-cultural context in each country determines the value of such initiatives. In secular France, where the spokespersons of Islam are usually secular, coming from the fields of philosophy or psychiatry, what is the value of maintaining dialogue with Jewish scholars? Religious

figures (moderate and extremist alike) are marginal in both communities. In contrast, in the UK, where religious pluralism is promoted, there is a certain value in interfaith encounters. Thus the Leo Beck College (which qualifies liberal rabbis in London) holds regular meetings on Sundays between its pupils and the pupils of the Jama'i'ya al Islamia's Imam Qualification Seminar. A typical gathering begins with ping-pong games and continues with a comparative discussion of Halacha and Sharia (a good topic, because it is here, and not in philosophy, which the French love so much, that the two religions really meet).

As an interim conclusion: There are in this issue more question marks than proven factual findings. But regardless of all the doubts, initiatives for the development of inter-personal and inter-communal relationships must not be stopped. Even if they do not help, they will certainly do no harm, and sometimes may even be highly beneficial.

An interesting and more constructive dialogue is already being woven between thousands of visitors from Iran (and the Iranian diaspora) and the Persian-language version of the Yad VaShem website; the correspondence reveals a deep and pluralistic interest in the Holocaust and in Judaism. A similar interest is revealed in the responses to the Arab-language version, inaugurated in January 2008.

## Economic Relationships

The dialogues discussed above are based on the exchange of words and concepts. But exchange of goods and services should be considered as well, especially between Jewish (and to a certain extent Israeli) and Muslim companies.

In the Arab world and in South-East Asia, this is important not only for the creation of common interests, but also, and mainly, for the creation of a common conceptual world, particularly because in the world of Islam traders constitute a group of influential notables (*wujaha*). It is no coincidence that Saudi businessmen, alarmed at the threat of Iranian hegemony, recently showed interest in proposing a pan-Islamic solution that would protect the Holy Basin of Jerusalem jointly with the Chief Israeli Rabbinate and the Vatican. Businessmen in Morocco, Tunisia and Qatar have invested considerable efforts in developing pre-diplomatic economic relations between their respective countries and Israel. Certain beginnings in this direction are already underway with investments by Jewish companies in Malaysia and Indonesia,

although it cannot be said that they are already bearing fruit in terms of the fabric of the relationship between the civil societies. In an opinion poll conducted in Egypt in 2009 on attitudes toward 'normalization' of relations (i.e. close relations) with Israel, businessmen were the only socio-professional group overwhelmingly in favor of such a notion.

# CHAPTER 3: IMPLICATIONS

The severity of the findings described in Chapter 1 calls for a proactive and probably somewhat aggressive strategy, but in order to formulate a strategy one needs to fully understand the implications of the current and expected circumstances, in all their complexity. It should be stressed – we speak about the **current** situation.

**This is not about a struggle between civilizations, not about some eternal theological enmity that allegedly originates in the Quran, in the relationship between Muhammad and the Jews of the Arabian Peninsula, or in the status of the *dhimma* ('protected') ascribed to the Jews, a status which in itself has undergone many transformations in place and time (see Chapter 1). Some Muslim thinkers and writers use the argument of the 'civilizational struggle', but it is a mere rhetorical-propagandist trick, which has no factual basis whatsoever.**

1. The most important implication is counter-intuitive, in that it seems to contradict common sense. The most radical stream in the Islamic movement, i.e. Al Qaeda, fell apart in the wake of the blows dealt to the organization during October-December 2001, and split into several semi-autonomous groups (*jama'at*), mostly territorially-based within the Islamic world and its diaspora. Still, the Al Qaeda stream preserved a strong common denominator, which finds expression in its being pan-Islamic – (strategic management of the revolution according to the situation of Islam internally, and in relation to its external enemies, led by the US), transnational, and even anti-national (in terms of nation-state, *wataniyya*), and not just anti-*Qawmiyya* (pan-Arabism), as in less radical factions. This is a major novelty, because in the past, the nation-state was considered by Islamic radicals as a necessary, almost inevitable transitional phase towards the renewal of Muslim political unity. The pioneers of radicalism, founded by Said Kutab in Egypt in the late 1950s, regarded the nation-state as an entrenched entity which enjoyed the affiliation, loyalty and even love of the masses.

Al Qaeda claims that the nation-state cult is a kind of modern idolatry, just as the idols of greed, of the capitalistic variety, which empty the lives of Muslims of any substantial content. Muslims in the diaspora in particular must not associate with each other

based on their national origin, but instead should identify and organize as *Muslimun* or *Mu'minun* (believers). This imperative had been easier to enforce in the dispersion, where immigrants and exiles got together anyway and were generally labeled as Muslims by the host environment. But in Islamic countries as well, a strong sentiment has emerged, especially among the battalions of volunteers for the war against the Soviets in Afghanistan (in 1980), in the rear bases in Pakistan, and later among those who volunteered for the fights in Chechnya, Bosnia and Kosovo (and now in Iraq), the experience and identity are firstly pan-Islamic. That common experience had influenced local organizations (as in Egypt, Libya and Saudi Arabia), which then merged into Al Qaeda. The most recent 'acquisition' came from Algeria – the most consolidated nation-state in the Arab world, born out of a war of independence. The GSPC (Muslim Jama'a for propaganda and Jihad) joined Al Qaeda and became a combatant movement for the liberation of the entire Maghreb. Recently, there have been signs of similar phenomena in Libya, Yemen and Somalia.

Within such ideology and experience – which, one should bear in mind, exclusively characterize the Sunni world – the main external enemy is Western culture and its military and economic extensions, headed by the USA. Israel is a small, albeit exasperating ally. And in the eyes of Al Qaeda adherents in the Maghreb, the danger of France – the US's objective ally – cannot be compared to the danger of the Jews, which is much smaller. The issue of Palestine as well, although covered in much rhetoric, is not an obsession. Ayman al-Zawahiri, Bin Laden's deputy, keeps reiterating that this is a secondary problem, "whose day will come," and that at present there are other regions in the Muslim world that provide a much better opportunity for the actions of the mighty fist of Muslim volunteers, launched from a firm basis (*qaeda sulba*) located at the margins of the Muslim world, for instance in Afghanistan, which is a non-state, Chechnya (another non-state), Bosnia (ditto), Somalia (a failed state) or Yemen (ditto). Israel's might, a hard nut to crack, makes Palestine less attractive for their strategy. And of course the fact that the main Palestinian Islamic power, Hamas, has a strong *watani* orientation, seeking to liberate Palestine and sharply criticizing 'pan-Islamic excuses' for non-action, further explains why Palestine is merely a secondary objective for Al Qaeda, if not less.

It is therefore not surprising that in a quantitative content analysis conducted using the Opinion-Mining method; we found in Al Qaeda publications a low frequency of anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli themes, and almost no Holocaust denial. While the fact that the founder of Al Qaeda, Dr. Abdullah Azzam, was a Jordanian of Palestinian

origin crops up immediately, it is emphasized that his transnational identity had been forged during the Afghanistan war.

In other radical movements, in the style of *Jama'at Jihadiyya* for the liberation of Egypt, Syria, etc., the incidence of anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic themes was five times higher. In radical movements seeking to implement Sharia law in their countries using legal means (whether because they despaired of Jihad against the strong state or were in principle against the use of violence), the incidence was six times higher. While the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt is not as willing as it had been in 1948 to volunteer for Jihad in Palestine, they and their constituency (which won them a fifth of the seats in the Egyptian parliament in the November-December 2005 elections) are very sympathetic to Hamas, regard it as an exemplary body, empathize with the suffering of Palestine and use its tragedy to mobilize hostility against the US – “the *de facto* ruler of Egypt.”

Similar findings were collected for radical organizations in Europe that are not affiliated with Al Qaeda. **“The War on Terror” is therefore not identical to the struggle against global anti-Semitism.**

2. The second implication is the trend of Islamization (or theologization) of the Israeli-Arab conflict in the last generation, which is turning Muslim anti-Semitism, both Shiite and Sunni, into a hostage of the Palestine-Israel conflict. The roots of this process are found in the 1967 defeat, symbolized by the *fatwa* issued by the *Ulama* (religious scholars) of Al Azhar University in 1968, at the request of Nasser, which posited the “forceful liberation of the occupied lands” as an act of Jihad – not just as an implementation of Sharia, but as an act of transcendental dimensions. The religious revival in Israel, which regarded its victory as “the beginning of salvation” and return to the holy sites, had its mirror image reflected in the Muslim world, and thus a connection of perpetual feedback was created between the two religious revival movements, the Jewish and the Muslim. But the religious establishment harnessed itself voluntarily, in the last days of Nasser and the beginning of the Sadat era, to the effort to emphasize the religious dimension of the conflict, using the fall of Jerusalem into the hands of the Jews, which indeed was received as an authentic shock by the Islamic world, in order to incite and inflame the masses. In addition, any action taken by the national religious movement in Israel was perceived as confirming this argument. What had been a Zionist-Palestinian or Israeli-Arab conflict gradually took

the shape of Judaism vs. Islam. The stories of Muhammad and the Jews in the Arabian Peninsula, the *dhimma* issue, and the role of the Jews in the doomsday scenario all became salient themes in propaganda and education, including seminars held in the Egyptian army in preparation for the October 1973 war.

But the main push for Islamization was brought on by the Muslim resurgence – be it radical, conservative or mystical (Sufi) – throughout the Middle East and Africa, which from the 1980s on has spread to Western Europe as well. Its most severe impact was among the Palestinian public, which until then was led by a secular movement, the Fatah (although it contained an Islamic faction led by Abu-Jihad). Even Fatah underwent Islamization, as manifested in the rise of Islamic Jihad from 1984 on. But the most tremendous phenomenon occurred within the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood movement in Palestine, which up to that point had been concerned only with reinstating righteousness in society.

From the mid-1980s, a young generation emerged in the Brotherhood of Gaza seeking to regard the conflict with Israel as a first priority. Fearing of losing this activist and idealistic generation to Fatah (or to Islamic Jihad), in 1987-88 the leadership of the Brotherhood (under Sheikh Ahmad Yasin) changed its course. Thus Hamas was born, positing the eradication of Israel as a fundamental Muslim commandment, which is also a fair retaliation for the crimes of Judaism against Islam throughout the sweep of history. The important contribution of this theological concept is “the historic necessity of the disappearance of Israel” (also the title of a popular book in the movement’s circles) – a concept which builds confidence that the struggle is sure to end in victory, even if the road leading there is fraught with difficulties and setbacks. Thanks to the first Intifada, Hamas became a role model for all the Sunni movements of the world, and even more so when suicide attacks were first launched.

The writings of the Muslim Brotherhood everywhere are now rife with quotations and statements regarding the character of the Jews, based on Quran verses and linked to current attitudes towards them in light of the present situation. Such characteristics produce stereotypes, such as that the Jews were deceitful and treacherous towards Muhammad, and so one may infer that then as now, the Jews will not honor a peace agreement, will not reconcile and will not make peace, because the innate nature of the Jews prevents them from living in peace with others. What was true for the tribes of *Banu Nadir*, *Banu Qurayza* and *Banu Qaynuqa* in the city of Medina in Muhammad’s lifetime is true for Israel today.

From the Quran the Muslim Brotherhood also learn about the treacherous and deceitful nature of the Jews of the Arabian Peninsula, and from the Book of Nehemiah they learn about the ungratefulness of the Jews, who kept on sinning and rebelling against God despite the miracles he had bestowed upon them. This suggests that the Jews are not the Chosen People, but a people who have earned the grace of God for a while, and then were finally punished as befitting their moral depravity. A similar lesson is drawn from the biblical story of the spies: God promised the Holy Land to the Jews, but they procrastinated and were filled with fear – their hearts lacked faith. They wanted to receive the land on a silver platter, and that is why they were punished and banished to the desert for forty years.

The danger of the Jews, a.k.a. 'World Zionism,' which will only be exacerbated if a peace treaty is signed with them, stems from their control over world economy and media, especially in the US, their striving to expand that control and their contribution to the propagation of avarice throughout the entire world (especially in Muslim lands). Normalization between Israel and the Arabs must be avoided at all costs in order to prevent a stealthy penetration and diffusion of Israeli/Jewish culture, its corrupt essence and ubiquitous political control.

In Shia circles, the course has been somewhat different. Since 1979, the revolutionary Shia has been in power in Iran. Today the Shia's position is identical to that of the Iranian regime, which is soaked in Third World anti-imperialist ideology. The linkage between the Iranian regime and Palestine had been authentic – certainly because Israel had cooperated with the Shah and his domestic intelligence agency (Savak), but it also served as a manipulative tool for the fortification of Shiite hegemony in the region and assailing the Sunni regimes collaborating with the US (and some with Israel as well). The first and second Lebanese Wars aggravated the phenomenon, embodied in the slogan "From Tehran to Jerusalem and from there to Mecca" (for Shia, the seat of the most detested Sunni regime). Obviously here the conflict is instilled with Shiite themes of the Jews' impurity, their betrayal of Shia founder Ali Ibn Talib, and so on.

Iranian propaganda harps on classic themes of Jew hatred, such as greed and pilfering, which have always been used to slander Jews; the robbery of Palestine from its lawful owners is but one recent example of that. This argument features frequently not only in Ayatollah Khamenei's speeches, but also in statements by Khatami and Rafsanjani in 2003, praising Hitler for annihilating the Jews.



Why are the Jews hated? The Iranian answer is twofold. On the one hand, the Jews project power and prominence, and on the other, their meager numbers convey vulnerability. The Jewish success raises questions about the source of the power of this “global tribe”, and at the same time raises suspicions of a Jewish conspiracy running the world. Indeed, “World Zionism” is defined as Iran’s enemy Number 1, whereas Israel is only rated at number 4, following the US (2) and Britain (3). This ranking is confirmed by a statistical frequency analysis based on the Opinion-Mining method. It runs across the entire body of speeches and sermons made by the Iranian leader Ali Khamenei.

These are all fed by a traditional Shiite hostility towards the Jews, which has always been less tolerant than the Sunni brand of Islam that dominated Iran until 1501. It should be mentioned, however, that other minorities suffered as well under the first Shiite dynasty, the Safavids (1501-1722). Shia emphasizes the separation between believers and non-believers, expressed in terms of purity versus impurity. Therefore a Shiite Muslim is forbidden to marry a non-Muslim woman. The Jew, being impure (*najasa*), cannot drink water from a Muslim’s cup and is forbidden to touch vegetables in the market. It is no coincidence that *ulama* were at the front of the struggle against granting equal right to non-Muslims during the constitutional revolution in Iran (1906-11).

The Islamic revolution of 1979 intensified the hostility, for it regarded Israel as the focus of the global struggle against post-colonial imperialism and a primary lackey of the US. Indeed, Ahmadinejad is not the first Iranian leader to call for the annihilation of Israel. Ayatollah Khamenei called for its eradication already in 2000, and a year later, the reformist president Khatami repeated this call in an interview with CNN, as did another relatively moderate politician, Rafsanjani, who was twice president and chairman of the Iranian parliament and currently officiates as Chairman of the Assembly of Experts and the Expediency Discernment Council. Rafsanjani expressed his regret that Hitler failed to finish the job of annihilating the Jews, which was justified because it was aimed against the Zionist control of Europe. Common to all of these leaders is the notion endorsed by Khomeini, regarding the global struggle between the Third World and colonialism, spearheaded by Israel, which therefore deserves to be annihilated. Rafsanjani’s view is typical of the Israeli paradox: Israel manipulates the US and Britain, and at the same time, it is a tiny and artificial entity. All these elements are taken from Khomeini’s famous attack on Israel in his book, *Islamic Government*

(1970), in which, it should be noted, the emphasis is on Israel and not on the Jews. (A positive change has occurred only in one aspect: according to regime propagandists, the Jews as members of a religion are not impure; what is impure is organized world Jewry, which seeks to control the entire globe).

The popularization of such ideas is carried out mostly through Iranian state-owned television, which frequently airs quasi-documentaries depicting the atrocities perpetrated by the IDF against Palestinian citizens, or ‘illustrates’ in period dramas the collaboration between Zionists and the Nazis. More than a few documentary series have focused on the Zionist plot to overtake Iran and/or the world (for example, one such series set out to prove that the Zionists took over and now control Hollywood).

On the quasi-academic level, studies are undertaken to confirm the claims of Holocaust denial, under the supervision of Ahmadinejad’s advisor, Muhammad Ali Ramin. Ramin is also responsible for organizing in November 2008 (in response to Obama’s victory) the Tehran conference titled “The Holocaust – a Holly Lie of the West.” In the last decade, Iran has begun to disseminate these ideas among Muslim immigrants in Western Europe, the majority of whom are Sunni. Since 1999 their mouthpiece in Germany has been Muslim Markt, a high-quality German-language website, was built in Bremen, edited by Yavuz Ozoguz, a Shiite Turk who holds a Ph.D. from a German Polytechnic and specializes in anti-Catholic, anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli propaganda.

The ideas we found in these Sunni movements are finding their way from the Muslim Brotherhood (and this term includes the circles of the AKP party in power in Turkey) into other, younger circles within the Muslim establishment, such as *Jamiyat Ulama al-Azhar*, the body that inspired, among others, the battle against the Danish caricatures of Muhammad, and regularly propagates anti-Semitic ideas in Egypt, in contrast to the moderate position of Sheikh al Azhar al Tantawi. In Europe this trend has dominated large organizations such as the UOIF in France (which endorses even ‘independent’ and anti-Semitic preachers like Hassan Iquioussen), BAM in Britain, and the Islamic Liberation Party (*Hizb al Tahrir*) in Britain and in Italy. The fact that such organizations often cooperate with left-wing bodies (a green-brown-red alliance), as in Holocaust denial, solidarity with Palestine or boycotting Israel, increases their danger.

3. We are thus faced with a “core consciousness,” that is, a cluster of fundamental beliefs and worldviews that is passed on from generation to generation, in which the Jew is perceived as:

1. Hostile to Islam right from its inception.
2. Cunning, deceitful, not to be trusted, and treacherous.
3. Member of an angry, pedantic and strict religion, as opposed to Islam, which is the “religion of the middle,” “the golden road,” a tolerant and lenient religion.

These three elements are the contribution of the past, and they originate mainly in the polemics of Muhammad and the Jews in Arabia. The importance of another historical component, Judaism as the religion of the *Asfal al Safalin* (“the lowest of the low”), which in pre-modern history related to the status of the Jews as ‘protected,’ has decreased due to the changing circumstances relevant to a given time, and eventually relegated to a “situational consciousness,” that is, attitudes and emotions related to a specific issue that is time- and space-dependent. It appears mostly among Muslim immigrants in the West, where it is contrasted with the inferior status of Jews in Islamic countries.

These three elements have been augmented in the core consciousness by three additional elements, contributed by the Israeli-Arab conflict:

4. *Ghatrasa* (arrogance): The Jew as one who strayed from his historical humble status and occupied an undeserved dominant position, full of vanity and self-importance, seeking to control all, especially Muslims.
5. The Jew as the ruler of al-Quds (Jerusalem), i.e. the third most holy city in Islam (the Hamas conception of Palestine as the Holy Land is also a “situational consciousness,” but this is a Palestinian-local variant that is not common throughout the Muslim world).
6. The brutal Jew, one who abuses citizens, women and children, is a theme that emerged mostly in the wake of the first Intifada, but is rooted in the concepts of Palestinian Azzat Drawza, and its foundations were laid during the period of in-depth bombing of Egypt, in 1969-70.

Alongside all these, motifs from European anti-Semitism have penetrated the core consciousness, whether directly or via Eastern Christianity:

- The Protocols of the Elders of Zion and the world conspiracy: This is important mostly as an explanation for the Muslims’ defeat by Israel, which evoked a cognitive dissonance. This theme integrates comfortably with an Islamic political culture that is rife with conspiracy theories in general.

- Holocaust denial (or minimization): This element has been added especially since the establishment of the State of Israel, beginning as a situational consciousness, i.e., time and space-dependent attitudes and beliefs, but now it increasingly invades the core consciousness. Another foreign element, the **Blood Libel**, did not become part of the core consciousness, and appears mainly as situational consciousness in countries with an Eastern-Christian minority, such as Syria and Lebanon.

The above implications are all embracing. However, there is a concurrent trend in which the specific national-cultural setting affects the causes, contents and weight of new Muslim anti-Semitism. This is especially true in the Muslim diaspora, a relatively new realm in which this type of anti-Semitism has been flourishing for the past thirty years, and in particular during the last decade. A good example of this is the differences between France and the UK. Both are countries whose Muslim populations had come in droves from the territories of the former empires, mainly from rural and culturally disadvantaged regions, and were employed – mainly the parents’ generation – in menial jobs, providing an unskilled to semi-skilled blue collar workforce for the reconstruction of post-war Western economies, which was based on ‘second-wave industrialization’ (such as automobiles, mechanics, chemicals, mining, etc.). In both countries, members of the second generation of immigrants are faced with the challenges of ‘third-wave industrialization,’ which is now based on information, knowledge and communications and requires different skills (mainly intellectual), which these young people (mostly the males) lack due to discrimination in schooling, their concentration in culturally disadvantaged areas, and discrimination in labor market on ethnic-racial grounds. The outcome of the second-generation crisis has been the emergence of a belligerent Islam, protesting the deprivation and injustice of the hypocritical Western culture. As a prominent symbol of success in that culture, the Jews are an obvious object of envy and animosity, even before the effect of the Israeli-Arab conflict is added to the mix.

On the face of it, both France and the UK are faced with the same situation, but in actual fact – what a difference!

The British context, certainly from the 1980s on, is underpinned by:

- a. Increasing participation rates of immigrants and their offspring (arriving from the British Commonwealth) in representation in local, regional and national government. This is made possible by the automatic granting of citizenship to British Commonwealth nationals, and the growing interest of political parties and societal organizations in recruiting “new blood” to their ranks.

- b. At the same time, all surveys indicate that the rates of discrimination (in employment, housing, education) are constantly dropping, thanks to systematic application and monitoring of the 1980 legislation which resulted from inter-racial and inter-ethnic riots (as in Brixton). Monitoring is by both governmental and inter-ethnic voluntary bodies.
- c. Survey after survey consistently shows that there is a growing awareness among the British public, including the lower socio-economic strata, that cultural and ethnic distinctions are legitimate. An important vector for the dissemination of such awareness is an ongoing field activity coordinated by inter-ethnic committees where activists learn to cooperate with each other.
- d. Because the basic attitude to religion in Britain is positive, it is possible to conduct a legitimate and rational public debate about giving expression to Islam, which is the religion of a considerable share of immigrants from the Indian sub-continent, and finding 'live-and-let-live' solutions.

Against this background, it is clear why Muslim extremism (whether violent or non-violent) has had no appeal for the vast majority of Muslims residing in Britain. They have an infinite range of other options for self-expression, and their education allows for social mobility. Within a single generation, the children of illiterate Pakistani laborers are enrolled in state colleges, although not in the top universities (where the Hindus, who came from the more culturally advanced regions of India, are more prominent). According to a governmental report published in late 2007, the percentage of students who have at least five GCSEs (examinations marking the completion of secondary education) is 58% for the general population, 56% for Bangladeshi students, 65% for Pakistani and 72% among students of Indian descent.

Muslim British citizens are entitled to express their rage about the war in Iraq, or the occupation of other Muslim lands by infidels, as part of a broad British political movement in which different people with various motivations are partners – as is common in any mass movement. In this way, they can express their objection to US imperialism alongside moderate and extreme left-wingers, drawing a sense of power, influence and pride. Thus they eventually gain a sense of belonging, which operates first and foremost on the communal, neighborhood level, in face-to-face encounters. A recent report has found that 78% of Muslims identify themselves as British, compared to 49% who consider themselves French and 23% who feel German (The Daily Telegraph, Dec. 29, 2009).

Anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial could isolate the Muslims, so even Islamic movements in Britain are usually careful to avoid it. Nevertheless, a survey conducted by the conservative Policy Exchange Institute found in October 2007 that in a quarter of the hundred mosques examined, sermons with anti-Semitic content are being preached (with or without Holocaust denial), or anti-Semitic propaganda materials are disseminated (mostly from Saudi Arabia). This type of material is available, among others, at the central London mosque in Regent Park. The fact that nearly all British Imams are natives of Pakistan only increases their proclivity for such themes, to which they have been extensively exposed in their homeland.

But in effect, only one radical movement, The Islamic Liberation Party (Hizb al Tahrir, founded in the West Bank during Jordanian rule and currently centered in the UK), has made anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial a cornerstone of its ideology and rhetoric.

And what about France?

France is characterized by a high degree of centralism, and thus the prevailing perception is that its inhabitants are equal, but as individuals, which prevents any of the rectifying discrimination/affirmative action of the British model. President Sarkozy launched an attempt to break this 200-year-old Republican pattern, but due to the financial crisis he lacks the resources needed. And yet only such affirmative action could alleviate the real distress of the Muslim population that arrived in France as a menial labor force; while they did come from countries formerly dominated by France, they were received only as temporary residents. It was not until 1973 that their status was revised to permanent residents and they were allowed to bring their families over to France. Crowded into huge, cheap housing projects on the margins of the big cities, their schools were considered inferior, and French teachers working there set their Maghrebi pupils' expectations very low (at least for boys; girls are known to be highly industrious in their schooling, as education is often their ticket to breaking away from their father's or older brother's control). These areas have rapidly become infested with crime and drugs, attracting youth populations with high crime and school dropout rates. A culture of second and third generation poverty has evolved, as a result of the state's lack of investment in immigrants (housing, education, sanitation) – an ongoing neglect exacerbated by the fact that the non-citizen immigrants have no political clout (not even the right to vote for municipal government). The children of immigrants are entitled to apply for citizenship at age 18, and it is usually granted automatically, but it does require any proactive initiative on the part of these youngsters, who in at least

half the cases forego their right, whether out of apathy or ignorance (or, in the last decade, out of a growing sense of alienation from France).

This is the context for a predictable hostility towards the state and the dominant culture, in which the Jews – certainly after 1945 – play a central role. The dazzling success of Maghrebi Jews, who in a single generation have managed to attain an economic and educational level that took their Ashkenazi brethren three generations to attain, only serves to intensify the envy and sense of grievance and deprivation. The explanation given for this by Islamists is that the Jews have used the Holocaust to get preferential treatment from the French state and culture, which are totally hypocritical and wishing to atone for the sins of the Vichy regime. Such an explanation enables the Muslims to avoid difficult questions: Why did Jewish immigrants invest so much in their children's education while we have not? Is it really all due to state discrimination? (It must be noted, however, that there were indeed instances of political discrimination by the French establishment: The Jews of Algeria, evacuated to France when Algeria gained independence in 1962, were immediately granted French citizenship and adaptation funds, similar to other French-Europeans, because the Jews in Algeria had enjoyed equal rights already since 1870. In contrast, the Muslims who left or were evacuated at the same time, and especially the Harkis, collaborator militiamen who fought on the French side, were not only denied citizenship in return for their service, along with their family members, but they were concentrated in economically backward regions in the center of France, most remaining ignorant and eventually developing a multi-generational culture of institutionalized poverty.

The immigrants' anti-Semitism, which in the last two decades has taken on an Islamic nature, is a strong channel for venting hostility and alienation, which focuses not only on violent expressions but also on clichéd prejudices. Most of the third-generation Muslims no longer know any Jews personally, because the Sephardic Jews managed to extract themselves from the poverty-stricken tenements through education and savings. But while their forefathers maintained reasonable neighborly relations with the Jews, here, the lack of actual contact has engendered among the third-generation Muslim immigrants a strong, diffused and virtual hostility (the latter term refers mainly to the salient presence of Jews in the media, politicians, news anchors and entertainment hosts, and as 'talking heads,' TV pundits such as Bernard-Henri Lévy and Alain Finkielkraut). This is a new version of the "anti-Semitism without Jews," which has been prevalent in Poland and Hungary since 1945.

It is interesting to note that the most prominent Jews who attract such envy are Sephardi Jews, whose success, by the way, is often widely covered with admiration by the French media, in magazines, news weeklies and gossip columns (as in the case of President Sarkozy's ex-wife's enigmatic new husband, tycoon Richard Attias). There is an authentic, if not justified, general feeling that the government reacts more forcefully to acts of arson against synagogues (and anti-Semitic incidents in general) than to acts of arson in mosques (and other Islamo-phobic acts). This accounts for the indifference of the Muslim community to the brutal 2006 murder of Ilan Halimi by the Muslim gang that calls itself the Barbarians.

This envy and sense of deprivation in Islamic ideology comes almost naturally because of another, deeper reason: If there is anything in Islam that resembles a cultural tradition that is close to 'essence' (*Wesen* in the Hegelian terms of classic Middle Eastern studies), it is the sense of an ideal of justice on earth, the infringement of which provokes an especially deep protest and mobilizes extremely high emotional resources (according to the German Islamic scholar Josef Van Ess).

The centrality of the idea of justice and redressing wrong-doing (*Zulm*) is rooted already in the Quran, especially during the Mecca period (until 622), when Muhammad was an spokesman on behalf of the down-trodden lower classes. Ever since then, this notion has always played a major part in the revolutionary (particularly messianic) movements throughout Muslim history.

But at the same time, it has a universal element – as a motivation in conflict situations. For instance, game theory experts Simon Gaechter and Ernest Fehr found out in games based on labor conflicts, that from the point of view of employees, the material-financial element may be secondary to the perception of the principles of fairness being infringed, and that people are willing to pay a considerable price in lost wages, in order to remain on strike until an employer who is perceived as unfair surrenders to their demands.

Indeed, in Opinion-Mining analyses conducted on the educational materials published by radical Islamic movements, the incidence of the argument of protesting injustice is much higher than that of other issues such as honor and the redressing of humiliation, which the prevalent stereotype regards as typical Muslim or Arab motivation.

The revolutionary power of the concept of injustice may be assessed from comparative studies of Communist revolutions in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (see, for instance, Archie Brown, *Communism: Its Rise and Fall*, 2009), which found that their common motivation had



been a sense of injustice on the one hand, and a lust for revenge on the other. The injustice to which these revolts referred had usually been well-corroborated, in clear and quantifiable data; it was real, not an illusion.

The common denominator of Muslim Brotherhood movements in the UK and France is that they have a vested practical interest, not just an ideological one, in rallying their supporters for mass demonstrations against Israel when it is engaged in military operations. In these demonstrations, an anti-Semitic tone is discernable, whether latent or explicit (as in the case of Fuad Alawi, vice president of UOIF, who said during Operation Cast Lead: "There can be no peace in the Middle East as long as the Zionist project exists, because it is based on the negation of the existence of Palestine"). Such demonstrations provide these movements with an opportunity to parade their power and recruit members to their communitarian ideal, through the manipulation of rage against the atrocities as seen on TV. Moreover, they allow the movements to expand their cooperation with the left wing that favors the Third World, whose members attend these demonstrations as well.

Frank Furedi, an astute British observer, argues that these Muslim demonstrations are revitalizing anti-Semitism within the British radical left and radical right wings in civil society. Both these radical extremes find in these demonstrations a cover and justification for taking to the streets in the name of anti-Zionism (from the left) and racist anti-Semitism (from the right). If the Muslims are angry at what is being done to their brethren in the Middle East, why not show our sympathy to them and our hatred of their oppressors? In this way, even the right wing that is clearly hostile to immigration in both countries can once again spread its anti-Semitism, which in recent times has been confined to the realms of social unacceptability. Curtailing the scope of Muslim anti-Semitism in Western Europe could therefore also curb some of the traditional anti-Semitism, left and right.

# CHAPTER 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

## RECOMMENDATION NO. 1:

**“Know How to Pick Your Fight”** Even if the required course of action is an offensive, one should still choose wisely the arena for the fight, so as not to dilute power. The connection between anti-Semitism and the War on Terror launched by President Bush is by no means a simple equation. It is far better to concentrate on the anti-Semitism whose vector is the Muslim Brotherhood and their ilk among Islamic radicals and their extensions within the Sunni governmental establishment, as well as on two specific regimes – the Iranian and the Saudi, who are prime purveyors of anti-Semitic consciousness – and not on that of Al Qaeda.

The linkage with Holocaust denial (or minimization) has gained visibility in the brand of banal anti-Semitism promoted by the Brotherhood and their allies (such as the younger Ulama at al Azhar, Ahmadinejad and the Islamic Liberation Party) only in recent times. This is not an inevitable outcome, but in a sense, it is a self-inflicted wound by Muslim anti-Semitism – and it must be exploited, all the more so when the Holocaust is being justified. The same is true for the opportunistic pact between extremists such Tariq Ramadan with the anti-globalization left, and his animosity towards liberal Jewish intellectuals (Alain Finkielkraut, André Glucksmann, Alexandre Adler, etc.). Tariq Ramadan, who had recently been under attack for his views, has indeed rescinded (in an interview to *Le Point* on June 4, 2009) some harshly anti-Semitic utterances, modifying them into somewhat vaguer terms.

The Hamas phenomenon calls for special treatment (see Recommendation No. 2 below), but in general, there is a common basis for a counter-attack by the Jews and their allies on a global scale. Nevertheless, due to the need for coordination, the main action outside the Middle East (Europe, Australia), must be carried out within the framework of each and every country, and according to its conditions. There is no comprehensive formula of the one size-fits-all variety.

## RECOMMENDATION NO. 2:

The main rival is the most intensive producer (although not the distributor) of Jew hatred propaganda today, i.e. the Hamas movement and other branches of the Muslim Brotherhood, whether in the Middle East or in Western Europe (UOIF, BMA, etc.). In certain countries – Saudi Arabia, and to a lesser degree Egypt, Algeria and Morocco – the penetration of Muslim Brotherhood's ideology into the ruling and cultural establishment is noticeable. These movements have turned the eradication of Israel into a basic Islamic commandment, which is also perceived as fair retaliation for the crimes of Judaism against Islam throughout history. (According to some of Hamas theorists, the Holocaust was just the first installment of that historical payment). This essentialist overlap, designed to instill a deterministic sense of inevitable victory, creates a broad **theologization of the Israeli-Arab conflict and its inherent Muslim hostility**, which, at least in Hamas, has moved even beyond the high threshold set by revolutionary Iran and the puritanical Wahabi sentiment in Saudi Arabia, which is extremely hostile to rival monotheistic religions. This is exacerbated by the fact that Palestine is increasingly being perceived as the Holy Land, an inalienable religious endowment (*waqf*) that can never be forfeited. While there have been previous attempts at such theologization (for instance by al Azhar in 1968), the present scale and intensity are unprecedented. Moreover, as a result of the two Intifadas, Hamas has become a role model for Sunni movements the world over, and its suicide terrorists have set an example. This is also true in non-religious pan-Arab circles, such as some of the viewers of Al Jazeera or the followers of Egyptian Nasserite theorist Hassanein Heikal, who are concentrated around the monthly *Wijhat Nathar wa-Kutub*. Tapes by Hamas preachers or by suicidal terrorists on the eve of their attacks are widespread throughout the world of Islam and its diaspora, carrying further the gospel of eternal hatred of Jews and Judaism.

In this way, among others, the theme of Holocaust denial – which is, for the Palestinian camp, an innovation introduced by Hamas – is being propagated throughout the Sunni world. The idea of Holocaust justification first appeared in Nasserite Egypt, but died out in the 1970s, only to be resurrected in the last decade by Hamas.

These themes enjoy a unique emotional hold on the minds of the three hundred cadres of Hamas; according to the findings of a study conducted using the Collective Biography method. Two thirds of these cadres are descendants of refugees, and another two thirds (not necessarily the same ones) come from *ulama* families.

Likewise, 60% are villagers (a traditional sector). One could easily assume therefore that such themes are an active, integral and viable factor.

Quite apart from the political struggle against Hamas, it should therefore also be dealt with on a cultural-ideological level, as a well-poisoning movement impacting Muslim lands. It should be denounced and condemned using documentation, and isolated from liberal and leftist circles in the West which tend mistakenly to regard it as moderate. Obviously, certain non-tactical and un-opportunistic manifestations of forsaking the present attitude are possible at some point in the future even within Hamas circles. We must keep alert and attentive to such a possibility. This entity may not necessarily continue to exist forever; but it is likely to endure during the lifetimes of the dominant cadres in Hamas, who are, as mentioned, refugees and refugees' children, such a change is not foreseeable.

### **RECOMMENDATION NO. 3:**

An informed and long-term offensive must be based on serious, systematic, non-anecdotal, un-sensational and in particular non-essentialist information in contrast to the approach promoted by Bat Ye'or, (see references section) and her ilk. Only such an offensive will have sufficient credibility and endurance. It must rely on systematic monitoring of varied information sources (mostly written but also audio-visual), as artfully done by MEMRI. A good example is the book by M. Litvak and E. Webman, *From Empathy to Denial*, Columbia University Press, 2009, which addresses Holocaust denial in the Arab world. Quantitative and computerized content analysis methods, such as Opinion-Mining, should be introduced, allowing the examination and follow-up of long-term trends and tracing and comparing the ebb and flow of certain themes and different countries and movements.

### **RECOMMENDATION NO. 4:**

It is doubtful whether dialogue with Islam has much value; there is substantial value only in maintaining "dialogue between believers" (or dialogue between those who observe the commandments of their faith), not between traditionalists or pretenders, who are not really observant. A dialogue of believers, as the one maintained by mystical sects (Sufis and Cabalists) benefits from their shared basis of belief. The same

is true for the dialogue between Halachic and Sharia scholars, mainly around sensitive issues such as the status of women and the 'other.'

A real dialogue may develop through the Yad VaShem Arab-language website which opened in January 2008. The Persian-language version has already yielded thousands of inquiries (a third of them from Iran), which deserve study and proper response.

Dialogue around common worries, leading to joint action, is best. As in the case of rabbis and imams fighting against abortion in Canada, or Orthodox rabbis in Switzerland supporting Muslim clerics in the fight against the ban on minarets, which they take to be a blatant case of religious discrimination.

## **RECOMMENDATION NO. 5:**

An effort must be made to eradicate stereotypes held by Jews about Muslims. This has educational as well as PR value. An eradication of stereotypes about Muslims in our camp would enable us to undertake an uncompromising fight against Muslim anti-Semitism with 'clean hands.' In this fight, the phenomenon (which is often merely opportunistic) of Holocaust denial by Jew haters must be exploited, because it is a self-inflicted wound, and as the saying goes, "*à la guerre comme à la guerre.*" This also applies to the ludicrous and scary figure of a populist like Ahmadinejad, brandishing a nuclear weapon. It is unclear whether he has a say on nuclear issues or whether his utterances correctly express the motivation of the real decision makers (headed by Khamenei).

Here we touch upon a somewhat paradoxical issue. "Therefore shall thy camp be pure" is not only a commendable moral imperative, but also a useful rule of engagement in an all-out war. It is extremely important to eradicate manifestations of racism and cultural crassness in our midst; not only in order to be able to show our 'patte blanche' to the global public opinion, but also in order to be able to fully understand the danger of anti-Semitism in its actual and non-hyped proportions. It is vital to understand the empirical socio-economic reality from which anti-Semitism often stems. It is also important for Jews to support affirmative action for Muslim minorities in the West, because in the intermediate and long run this could diminish hostility towards the Jews. It is advisable to avoid hyped-up exaggerations of unverified incidents (as in the case of mythomaniacs who fabricate anti-Semitic abuse). This would save us the erosion of credibility in cases of real anti-Semitic incidents.

Moreover, we should develop empathy for the predicament of Muslims who are stigmatized as a group. This would not only help to see reality as it is, where there is no actual clash of civilizations, not even in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. It would also serve as an educational and therapeutic means for Jewish activists on this issue. It is in the name of such empathy that we can prepare for the difficult and long struggle against the stereotype-laden and ideological Muslim anti-Semitism of the Muslim Brotherhood variety.

A useful educational tool is TV comedy, such as the *Sleeper Cell* sitcom series in the US, which deals with the suspicion that all American Muslims are actually “home-grown terrorists.” The series centers on an African-American FBI agent infiltrating a sleeper cell headed by a Muslim extremist. The Muslim environment in which he operates is normal and American. In the same vein, an episode of *The Simpsons* (produced by Fox) depicts a Muslim named Bashir who suffers discrimination and prejudice in the small town inhabited by the protagonists, to which he recently moved. Homer Simpson groundlessly suspects Bashir of involvement in a terrorist plot, but his son Bart protects Bashir against his persecutors and publicly proves his innocence.

An even better example is the Canadian sitcom *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, which revolves around the diverse world of a mosque in a rural area in Canada. This series has also been syndicated in France, Finland and Turkey, and is marked by a humanistic and empathic characterization. In cinema, the films by (Tunisian born) French director Abdelatif Kechiche are remarkable in their empathetic ability: *La Faute à Voltaire* (2001), *L'Esquive* (2003) and *Le Grain et le Mulet* (2007) candidly describe the lives of North-African immigrants. An even more sensitive issue, that of groundless charges of anti-Semitism by mythomaniacs, is approached in the film *La Fille du RER* (Andre Techine, 2009), which is based on a true story. The predicament of clandestine immigrants is well treated by the Algerian-born filmmaker Merzak Allouache, in *Harragas* (2009). It is important that Jewish activists who are engaged in the struggle against anti-Semitism watch and study such series and films.

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On a personal note I would add, that the most alarming finding does not concern the specific contents of Muslim anti-Semitism, but the banalization of anti-Jewish images among Muslim youth in Europe (and possibly in Australia). F. Khosrokhavar and D. Joly, who studied Muslim youth in the UK and France through in-depth interviews and focus-groups conducted in 2004-5, sought to grasp the conceptual world of their respondents. The issue of their attitude toward Jews was expected by these scholars to be raised. To their surprise, they found a near-obsession with the Jews (not necessarily with Israel), who were blamed as the main reason for the plight of Pakistani and Maghrebi immigrants in these countries, across a range of different problems, such as the shortage of social workers and quality housing in poverty-stricken suburbs, the income disparity (“the Rothschilds steal everything”), and so on.

The conclusion is that in Western countries (including Australia), the main target for the fight against anti-Semitism must be the majority society, and especially the opinion shapers, who must be persuaded of the need to make it clear that anti-Semitism and its concomitant themes (such as Holocaust denial) are strictly out-of-bounds for any civilized human being.

An educational and public media effort is as important as, if not more important than, any legislative prohibitions.

## GLOSSARY

<b>Ahl al-Dhimma</b>	“Protected Peoples” = the status of non-Muslims, who are not pagans, in the lands of the caliphate.
<b>Asfal al-Safilin</b>	Lowest of the low
<b>Awlad al-Mawt</b>	Children of death
<b>Dar al-Islam</b>	Abode of Islam, the world of Islam
<b>Da’wa</b>	Propaganda of social-educational activity of radical Islam
<b>Dhimmi</b>	See Ahl al-Dihmma
<b>Fatwa</b>	Religious ruling
<b>Ghatrasa</b>	Arrogance
<b>Hadith</b>	Canonical traditions about the prophet and his companions
<b>Harki</b>	Muslim militias aiding the French army during the Algerian war
<b>Hijra</b>	Muhammad’s migration from Mecca to Medina (622)
<b>Hizb al-Tahrir</b>	Islamic liberation party
<b>Isra’iliyyat</b>	Muslim traditions about Jews
<b>Jama’a</b>	Association
<b>Jam’iyat ulama al-Azhar</b>	The young guard of al-Azhar clerics
<b>Jizya</b>	Capitation tax levied on non-Muslims
<b>Mahdi</b>	The Muslim messiah
<b>Mu’minum</b>	Believers
<b>Mut’a</b>	Temporary marriage (in the Shia)
<b>Najasa</b>	Impurity
<b>Nakba</b>	The catastrophe = the Arabs dub the 1948 defeat
<b>Qawmiyya</b>	Pan-Arab nationalism
<b>Sufi</b>	Muslim mystic
<b>Sham</b>	Syria in the Muslim era (comprising also present day Jordan, Lebanon and Israel-Palestine)
<b>Shari’a</b>	Islamic Law
<b>Ulama</b>	Muslim clerics
<b>Waqf</b>	Religion endowment
<b>Wataniyya</b>	Nation-state nationalism
<b>Wujaha</b>	Notables



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## JPPPI MAIN PUBLICATIONS

### **The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute – Annual Assessment 2004-2005 The Jewish People Between Thriving And Decline** *JPPPI Staff and Contributors 2005*

To succeed, large resources, judicious coping with critical decisions and careful crafting of long-term grand-policies are needed. The full volume contains analyses of the major communities around the world and in-depth assessments of significant topics.

### **Between Thriving and Decline – The Jewish People 2004, Executive Report, Annual Assessment No. 1** *JPPPI Staff and Contributors 2004*

### **Facing a Rapidly Changing World – The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute, Executive Report, Annual Assessment No. 2, 2005** *JPPPI Staff and Contributors 2005*

### **Institut de Planification d'une Politique pour le Peuple Juif, Rapport Annuel du JPPPI 2005/2006, Le Peuple Juif en 2005/2006** *Entre Renaissance et Declin, Special edition in French, JPPPI Staff and Contributors 2006*

### **Major Shifts – Threats and Opportunities – The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute, Executive Report, Annual Assessment No. 3, 2006** *JPPPI Staff and Contributors 2006*

### **Societal Aspects – The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute, Executive Report, Annual Assessment No. 4, 2007** *JPPPI Staff and Contributors 2007*

### **The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute, Executive Report No. 5, 2008, with a Special Section on Women in Jewish Society** *JPPPI Staff and Contributors 2008*

### **China and the Jewish People: Old Civilizations in a New Era** *Dr. Shalom Salomon Wald 2004*

This is the first strategic document in the series: Improving the Standing of the Jewish People in Emerging Superpowers Without a Biblical Tradition

### **A Strategic Plan for the Strengthening of Jerusalem** *JPPPI Staff 2007*

### **2030: Alternative Futures for the Jewish People** *Avi Gil and Einat Wilf 2010*

### **Position Paper: Global Jewish People Forum** *JPPPI Staff 2005*

The position paper examines president Moshe Katsav's initiative to establish a "Second House" and makes a number of recommendations.

### **Soft Power – A National Asset** *Dr. Sharon Pardo*

Today's global changes in the international arena require more consideration of soft assets possessed by the Jewish People. Prepared for the 2005 Herzliya Conference.

### **Strategic Paper: Confronting Antisemitism – A Strategic Perspective** *Prof. Yehezkel Dror 2004*

The increasing ability of fewer to easily kill more and more makes new antisemitism into a lethal danger that requires comprehensive, multi-dimensional and long-term counter-strategies.

### **Alert Paper No. 1: New Anti-Jewishness** *Prof. Irwin Cotler 2003*

The new Anti-Jewishness consists of discrimination against, or denial of, the right of the Jewish people to live, as an equal member of the family of nations.

### **Alert Paper No. 2: Jewish Demography – Facts, Outlook, Challenges** *Prof. Sergio DellaPergola 2003*

There may be fewer Jews in the world than commonly thought, and if the current demographic trends continue unchanged, there might be even fewer in the future.

### **A Road Map for the Jewish People for 2025** *JPPPI Staff 2006*

Published in the context of the Alternative Futures for the Jewish People 2025 project. Prepared for the Herzliya Conference.

## About JPPPI

The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute (JPPPI) is an independent professional policy planning think tank incorporated as a private non-profit company in Israel. The mission of the Institute is to ensure the thriving of the Jewish People and the Jewish civilization by engaging in professional strategic thinking and planning on issues of primary concern to world Jewry. Located in Jerusalem, the concept of JPPPI regarding the Jewish People is global, and includes aspects of major Jewish communities with Israel as one of them, at the core.

JPPPI's activities are action-oriented, placing special emphasis on identifying critical options and analyzing their potential impact on the future. To this end, the Institute works towards developing professional strategic and long-term policy perspectives exploring key factors that may endanger or enhance the future of the Jewish People. JPPPI provides professionals, decision makers and global leaders with:

- Surveys and analyses of key situations and dynamics
- "Alerts" to emerging opportunities and threats
- Assessment of important current events and anticipated developments
- Strategic action options and innovative alternatives
- Policy option analysis
- Agenda setting, policy recommendations and work plan design

JPPPI is unique in dealing with the future of the Jewish People as a whole within a methodological framework of study and policy development. Its independence is assured by its company articles, with a board of directors chaired by Ambassador Stuart Eizenstat, and composed of persons with significant policy experience. The board of directors also serves as the Institute's professional guiding council.



**THE JEWISH PEOPLE POLICY PLANNING INSTITUTE**  
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