

Jews Who Hate the Jewish State

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The Jewish Press,
August 30, 2006

If they [Jews] all gather in Israel, it will save us the trouble of going after them worldwide.

- Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah commander

I say this without fear: for those who believe in freedom and dignity, we are all Hezbollah now.

- Norman Finkelstein, Jewish anti-Zionist

That any human being could proclaim his support for a movement whose goal is to annihilate all the world's Jews must be shocking to the normal observer. That a Jew could take this position seems all the more astounding. Yet Norman Finkelstein, university professor and best-selling author, is by no means unique among Jews in his allegiances. His mentor, Noam Chomsky, has publicly embraced the murderous Sheikh Nasrallah. In fact, during the recent war, Chomsky was among several Jewish signatories to an open letter offering "solidarity and support" to the "resistance" in Lebanon and Palestine – meaning Hezbollah and Hamas. And these pledges of loyalty to genocidal fanatics have become quite common among Jews who distinguish themselves by their hatred for Israel.

How is it possible for any Jew to support those who seek the destruction of his fellow Jews? This is the question that intrigued Edward Alexander and myself as we compiled our book *The Jewish Divide Over Israel*. Our contributors – including Cynthia Ozick, Alvin Rosenfeld, Menachem Kellner, Jacob Neusner and Efraim Karsh – were all too aware of the tragic history of Jewish antisemitism. We knew, for example, that Martin Luther's program of terrorizing Jews originated with a Jewish convert, Johannes Pfefferkorn; and that the myth of the Jewish world-conspiracy, which culminated in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, was assiduously promoted by a Russian Jewish author, Jacob Brafmann. We suspected that as the Pfefferkorns and the Brafmanns departed from the stage, the Finkelsteins and the Chomskys made their entrance.

Today, as in the past, the conduct of Jews who despise their own people spans the full spectrum of political depravity. There are anti-Zionist Jews

who peddle vicious libels about Israel. There are anti-Zionist Jews who compare the Jewish state with Nazi Germany. There are anti-Zionist Jews who support the PLO, Hamas or Hezbollah. There are anti-Zionist Jews who collaborate with antisemites and Holocaust deniers. There are anti-Zionist Jews who defend suicide bombings, anti-Zionist Jews who support the destruction of Israel, and – incredibly – there are even anti-Zionist Jews who advocate measures against other Jews that could plausibly be described as genocidal.

It is tempting to dismiss these views as a fringe phenomenon. But not all of our targets identify with the radical left. The liberal Jewish “critique” of Zionism is exemplified by the celebrated historian Tony Judt. According to Professor Judt’s now-notorious outburst in the *New York Review of Books*, Israel’s ruling elite is “fascist” because it once considered killing the terrorist murderer Yasser Arafat, and its security fence (intended to forestall the entry of terrorists into a free country) bears comparison with the Berlin Wall (designed to prevent the escape of unarmed civilians from a communist dictatorship). Worse still, Judt maintains, the nefarious Zionists have convinced America to destabilize the Middle East for the sole benefit of Israel, thus “alienating” its hitherto devoted allies in Syria and Iran. Such is the Jewish stranglehold on public opinion, says Judt, that Americans “censoriously rebuke” anyone who speaks out, shamelessly charging the dissidents with antisemitism. Fortunately for Tony Judt, the international Zionist conspiracy was unable to prevent the publication of his thoughtful disquisition on the role of Israeli “fascists” in propelling America to war against the entire Middle East for the purpose of defending a Hebrew-speaking version of communist East Germany.

Perhaps the most revealing aspect of Judt’s essay was his rationale for abolishing the freest country in the Middle East. “Today,” he wrote, “non-Israeli Jews feel themselves once again exposed to criticism and vulnerable to attack for things they didn’t do,” and so Israel must disappear. Thus the legitimacy of a Jewish state is determined by the attitudes of antisemites: “Israel today is bad for the Jews.” Critics were not slow to point out that the extinction of the Jewish state, along with its army, might also turn out to be “bad for the Jews,” inasmuch as it would endanger the lives of several million Israelis. To this rather important objection, Judt gave a two-word response: “Things change.”

As this example suggests, one of the salient traits of today’s anti-Zionists – especially the academics among them – is their blatant intellectual dishonesty. British professor Jacqueline Rose, in her book explaining

why Israel should be wiped off the map, concocts the claim that Herzl and Hitler were inspired by the same Paris performance of Wagner's music. Illan Pappé, a communist historian at Haifa University, writes learned essays documenting a fictitious Israeli massacre at the village of Tantura in 1948. Norman Finkelstein has revived the old Soviet hoax that Israel was poised to invade Syria before the 1967 war. In these and countless other instances, the anti-Zionists are disciples of Canadian philosopher Michael Neumann, author of *The Case Against Israel*, who candidly informed a neo-Nazi website that he is "not interested in the truth, or justice, or understanding," unless it serves the Palestinian cause.

Contempt for truth certainly characterizes another well-known anti-Zionist trope, the belief that Israel is the reincarnation of the Third Reich. Ever since the Israeli theologian Yeshayahu Leibowitz branded his country "Judeo-Nazi," the equation of the victims and the perpetrators of the Holocaust has evolved into a malignant orthodoxy in opinion pieces, editorial cartoons, effete dinner discussions and Jew-baiting websites. The reason for its appeal – and for the popularity of alienated Jews who espouse it – is transparent: anyone who convinces himself that the horrors of Nazism have been reborn in its victims can invoke the fate of the dead Jews to justify his hatred of living Jews. Anti-Zionists – always quick to provide an alibi for antisemites – are well aware of that fact.

So it is that Noam Chomsky can compare Israel's wars of self-defense with "Hitler's moves to blunt the Czech dagger pointed at the heart of Germany... Hitler's conceptions have struck a responsive chord in current Zionist commentary." So it is that Norman Finkelstein can avow that Jewish supporters of Israel are actually *worse* than the perpetrators of the Holocaust: "the Germans," he writes, "could point in extenuation to the severity of penalties for speaking out against the crimes of state. What excuse do *we* have?" Perhaps he aspires to compete with the late Israel Shahak – for years a fixture on the PLO lecture circuit – who revealed to the world that "there are Nazi-like tendencies in Judaism." But even these worthies would find it hard to outdo the London-based Gilad Atzmon, who recently imparted this insight: "To regard Hitler as the ultimate evil is nothing but surrendering to the Ziocentric discourse... [Israel's] vulgar biblical barbarism on the verge of cannibalism... is wickedness with no comparison." Atzmon is heavily promoted by radical leftists on both sides of the Atlantic.

Although they lose no opportunity to equate their fellow Jews with Nazis, anti-Zionists readily lend a helping hand to actual Nazis. At one time the *ne plus ultra* of Jewish collaboration with antisemites was the infamous

Alfred Lilienthal, who insisted that the *Diary of Anne Frank* was a fake. Then the baton passed to Noam Chomsky, who explicitly praised Holocaust deniers, allowed them to publish his books and essays, collaborated in their propaganda campaigns, and defended his performance with the memorable observation that he saw “no antisemitic implications in denial of the existence of gas chambers.” Nowadays the committed neo-Nazi will find anti-Zionist Jews falling over themselves to assist him. Paul Eisen, of the PLO front group Deir Yassin Remembered, has openly defended Ernst Zundel, now on trial in Germany for his neo-Nazi activities. Neve Gordon, the Israeli professor who sued his critic Steven Plaut in a blatant attempt to silence him, has not called in the lawyers to remove his own articles from Zundel’s website. And the anti-Zionist journalist Shraga Elam went to the trouble of writing to David Irving in order to share his belief that “Hitler was no part of the project Auschwitz.”

One does not need the wisdom of Solomon to suspect these Israel-haters and neo-Nazi collaborators of a certain lack of charity in the Jewish direction. Even so, it is astonishing to discover the sheer virulence of their opinions about their fellow Jews. Noam Chomsky tells packed audiences that “Jews in the US are the most privileged and influential part of the population,” adding that “privileged people want to make sure they have total control, not just 98% control.” In Michael Lerner’s journal *Tikkun*, which advertises itself as the guardian of the authentic Jewish conscience, we read of Jewish “conspirators” who run America on behalf of “Jewish interests” – evidence of the “industrial sized grain of truth” in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. And even this does not go far enough for Norman Finkelstein, who blames Holocaust compensation programs on “Jewish leaders carrying on like caricatures straight from the pages of *Der Stuermer*.” Is it surprising that Finkelstein’s books and essays are reproduced on neo-Nazi websites all over the Internet, or that Holocaust deniers celebrate him as “the Jewish David Irving”?

From collaboration with antisemites and propagation of antisemitism, it is only a short step to glorifying the murder of Jews. Many anti-Zionists are happy to take that step. For Jacqueline Rose, suicide bombing is “an act of passionate identification” that creates an “unbearable intimacy shared in their final moments by the suicide bomber and her or his victims.” Safe in her London lecture theater, Rose does not tell us whether the “intimacy” would be heightened if the jihadists were to succeed in their periodic attempts to blow up an Israeli skyscraper. Another left-wing British Jew, Mark Elf, draws a subtle distinction: “To be rid of an Arab presence is to engage in ethnic cleansing. To be rid of a Zionist presence

is to be rid of those who would engage in, or excuse, ethnic cleansing.” His comrades translate these principles into action: Jewish members of the International Solidarity Movement travel to Israel in order to facilitate “the armed struggle” for the “liberation of Palestine” – a struggle whose realities can be seen in the burning corpses and severed limbs of their co-religionists.

Occasionally, the bloodlust of Jewish Israel-haters provokes unease: Gilad Atzmon did raise eyebrows when he suggested that the burning of synagogues was “a rational act.” But the effect is short-lived. I recall no particular commotion when the prominent Israeli philosopher Adi Ophir contemplated the bombing of his countrymen by NATO.

It must be noted, with all due caution, that some anti-Zionists appear to harbor genocidal intentions towards their fellow Jews. Decades ago Arie Bober, leader of the communist Matzpen party, boasted of his support for an “Arab revolution” that would either split the Jewish workers from Zionism or slaughter three million Israelis in “another Holocaust.” Today we can detect similar ideas in the writings of Norman Finkelstein, who has invoked the destruction of Japanese cities in World War II as precedent for holding the Israeli people “accountable for the crimes of the Israeli state”; he also regards hundreds of thousands of Israeli settlers – including pregnant women and helpless invalids – as “legitimate targets for armed resistance.” In conversation with a neo-Nazi website, Michael Neumann was equally blunt: “If an effective strategy [for fighting Israel] means that some truths about the Jews don’t come to light, I don’t care. If an effective strategy means encouraging reasonable anti-Semitism, or reasonable hostility to Jews, I also don’t care. If it means encouraging vicious, racist anti-Semitism, or the destruction of the state of Israel, I still don’t care.” Recall that these are not the ravings of drunken skinheads in Germany or jihadist preachers in Saudi Arabia, but of salaried professors teaching at North American universities.

Sometimes the murderous impulses of Jewish radicals are quite independent of Arab-Israeli disputes, however broadly defined. According to Israel Shahak, even the proto-Hitlerian Chmielnicki massacres in Eastern Europe are not beyond the bounds of justification: after all, is it really fair that “an enslaved peasant is transformed into a racist monster, if Jews profited from his state of slavery and exploitation”? Competing in his genocidal frenzy was the Israeli leftist Yigal Tumarkin, a founder of Peace Now, who disclosed: “When I see the black-coated *haredim* with the children they spawn, I can understand the Holocaust.” And if these outpourings seem to be the products of

deranged minds, let us not forget that even the impeccably liberal Tony Judt displays a striking indifference to the practical consequences of his proposals for the people of Israel. For Professor Judt, and for other advocates of the “one-state solution,” it is perfectly acceptable to leave millions of Jews helpless before the armies and suicide bombers of the Middle East (“Things change”), just so long as faculty dinners and cocktail parties are no longer spoiled by the latest controversy over Israeli military tactics.

Such are the ideas exposed to the light of day in *The Jewish Divide Over Israel*. Our book’s contributors – who range from left-wing supporters of Peace Now to right-wing advocates of peace through strength – are united around one principle: whatever their views on the future of Israel, they maintain that the Jewish homeland no more deserves to become a provisional country whose “right to exist” is the subject of legitimate discussion than the Jewish people deserve to be a pariah nation whose survival is conditional on the approval of antisemites. In repudiating the Israel-haters in our ranks, we affirm not only our solidarity with embattled Israeli Jews, but also our own basic self-respect.