BESA

THE BEGIN-SADAT CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

Bar-Ilan University

American Jews and Their Israel Problem

Kenneth Levin

Mideast Security and Policy Studies No. 159

THE BEGIN-SADAT CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES
BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY
Mideast Security and Policy Studies No. 159

American Jews and Their Israel Problem

Kenneth Levin

American Jews and Their Israel Problem

Kenneth Levin

© The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies
Bar-Ilan University
Ramat Gan 5290002 Israel
Tel. 972-3-5318959
Fax. 972-3-5359195

office@besacenter.org
www.besacenter.org
ISSN 0793-1042
December 2018
Cover image: Screen capture from UJA video, via Vimeo

The Begin-Sadat (BESA) Center for Strategic Studies

The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies is an independent, non-partisan think tank conducting policy-relevant research on Middle Eastern and global strategic affairs, particularly as they relate to the national security and foreign policy of Israel and regional peace and stability. It is named in memory of Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat, whose efforts in pursuing peace laid the cornerstone for conflict resolution in the Middle East.

Mideast Security and Policy Studies serve as a forum for publication or re-publication of research conducted by BESA associates. Publication of a work by BESA signifies that it is deemed worthy of public consideration but does not imply endorsement of the author's views or conclusions. *Colloquia on Strategy and Diplomacy* summarize the papers delivered at conferences and seminars held by the Center for the academic, military, official and general publics. In sponsoring these discussions, the BESA Center aims to stimulate public debate on, and consideration of, contending approaches to problems of peace and war in the Middle East. The *Policy Memorandum* series consists of policy-oriented papers. The content of the publications reflects the views of the authors only. A list of recent BESA Center publications can be found at the end of this booklet.

International Advisory Board

Founder of the Center and Chairman of the Advisory Board: Dr. Thomas O. Hecht

Vice Chairman: Mr. Saul Koschitzky

Members: Prof. Moshe Arens, Ms. Marion Hecht, Mr. Robert Hecht, Prof. Riva Heft-Hecht, Hon. Shlomo Hillel, Mr. Joel Koschitzky, Amb. Yitzhak Levanon, Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman, Mr. Robert K. Lifton, Rt. Hon. Brian Mulroney, Mr. Seymour D. Reich, Mr. Greg Rosshandler, Amb. Zalman Shoval, Amb. Norman Spector, Ms. Drorit Wertheim

International Academic Advisory Board

Prof. Ian Beckett *University of Kent*, Dr. Eliot A. Cohen *Johns Hopkins University*, Prof. Irwin Cotler *McGill University*, Prof. Steven R. David *Johns Hopkins University*, Prof. Lawrence Freedman *King's College,* Prof. Patrick James *University of Southern California*, Prof. Robert J. Lieber *Georgetown University,* Prof. Michael Mandelbaum *Johns Hopkins University*

Research Staff

BESA Center Director: Prof. Efraim Karsh

Research Associates: Dr. Efrat Aviv, Dr. Yael Bloch-Elkon, Brig. Gen. (res.) Moni Chorev, Dr. James Dorsey, Dr. Gil Feiler, Prof. Jonathan Fox, Prof. Hillel Frisch, Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld, Prof. Eytan Gilboa, Maj. Gen. (res.) Gershon Hacohen, Col. (res.) Aby Har-Even, Eado Hecht, Dr. Tsilla Hershco, Dr. Doron Itzchakov, Lt. Col. (res.) Dr. Mordechai Kedar, Mr. Yaakov Lappin, Prof. Udi Lebel, Dr. Alon Levkowitz, Prof. Ze'ev Maghen, Ambassador Arye Mekel, Lt. Col. (res.) Dr. Raphael Ofek, Col. (res.) Mr. Uzi Rubin, Dr. Jonathan Rynhold, Prof. Shmuel Sandler, Maj. Gen. (ret.) Dr. Emanuel Sakal, Dr. Eitan Shamir, Lt. Col. (res.) Dr. Dany Shoham, Prof. Shlomo Shpiro, Dr. Max Singer, Prof. Joshua Teitelbaum

Program Coordinator: Alona Briner Rozenman

Publications Editor (English): Judith Levy

American Jews and Their Israel Problem

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 5

Jewish Anti-Zionism Before Israel 6

And Yet... 12

Shifts in Attitudes Towards Israel Among Israelis 13

American Jews, Israel, and the American Left 19

Mainstream American Jewish Bodies and Israel 27

Mainstream Jewish Organizations, Educational Institutions, and Israel 34

Notes 44

American Jews and Their Israel Problem

Kenneth Levin

Executive Summary

Jewish anti-Zionism emerged in central Europe in the early nineteenth century as a response to anti-Semitic claims that Jews were unfit for many civic rights because they constituted a separate nation. Central European Jewish immigrants to the United States later in the century brought their anti-Zionism with them and made it a staple of Reform Judaism in America. The influx of pro-Zionist eastern European Jews, together with the Shoah and the founding of Israel, resulted in a dramatic rise in pro-Zionist opinion among American Jews, including within the Reform movement. But the persistent predilection to appease anti-Jewish opinion by seeking to accommodate anti-Jewish indictments has always had some negative impact on support for Israel among American Jews. In recent decades, as groups within the wider society with whom many American Jews identify have become increasingly critical of and even hostile towards Israel, major segments of the Jewish community have chosen cultivation of their links with those groups over the defense of the well-being of the Jewish state.

Kenneth Levin is a psychiatrist and historian. He is the author of *The Oslo Syndrome: Delusions of a People Under Siege*.

American Jews and Their Israel Problem

Kenneth Levin

Jewish Anti-Zionism Before Israel

In his groundbreaking Zionist cri de coeur, *The Jewish State*, Theodor Herzl noted that his proposal for a Jewish state would inevitably face numerous objections. He observed, "Perhaps we shall have to fight first of all against many an evil-disposed, narrow-hearted, short-sighted member of our own race."[1]

In fact, Jewish anti-Zionism preceded Herzl's book by many decades. The issue of extending civic rights to Jews was first broached in central European polities in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. One of the arguments invoked by those opposed to such accommodation was that the Jews were a separate nation and were therefore disqualified from citizenship rights in the nations in which they dwelt. As with virtually all assertions mustered against the Jews, some Jews took the indictment to heart and sought to reform themselves to counter it. They sought to win over those purveying or subscribing to the "Jews as a nation" indictment by demonstrating that they had abandoned the accoutrements of national identity and had transformed themselves into a purely religious community.

For example, Jews so disposed established new, reformist congregations in German states, congregations in which the liturgy was stripped of all references to longing for Jerusalem and Zion and all aspirations for national rebirth.

Moreover, as with Jewish accommodation of other anti-Jewish arguments, those Jews who took this step often sought to cast their doing so not as an attempt to appease those arrayed against them but rather as a high-minded, ethical decision. They argued that over the preceding two millennia Judaism had evolved from its dual, national and universal, identity into an embrace of a universal moral and ethical belief system and mission. Any persistence or recrudescence of national identity and aspirations was considered atavistic and to be shunned by modern, enlightened Jews.

Reformist German Jews brought their anti-Zionist predilections with them to the United States. As the Reform movement organized itself in America, it repeatedly reiterated these sentiments. For example, the Reform "Pittsburgh Platform" of 1885 declared, "We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine, nor a sacrificial worship under the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state."[2]

With Zionism gaining greater traction among many Jews at the beginning of the last century, Jewish anti-Zionism also grew, spurred in large part by fears that Jewish civic advancement, the accommodation of Jews as equal citizens in parts of Europe and in the United States, would be undercut by the creation of a Jewish state. For example, much of the domestic opposition to Britain's issuing of the Balfour Declaration in 1917 arose from elements of British Jewry moved by such concerns.

In the United States, Louis Brandeis was very much an exception within the Jewish establishment when he enthusiastically embraced Zionism and dismissed concerns that the wider community's doing so would undercut Jews' standing in the nation. Speaking in 1915, Brandeis noted the demands for self-determination by Europe's minorities that had preceded the war then raging in Europe and would have to be addressed in the war's aftermath. He noted as well America's sympathy with these minorities and construed Zionism as consistent with these peoples' aspirations and with the supportive American perspective.[3]

Elsewhere the same year, Brandeis posed the question, "While every other people is striving for development by asserting its nationality, and a great war is making clear the value of small nations, shall we [Jews] voluntarily yield to anti-Semitism [that is, to fears of an anti-Semitic backlash], and instead of solving our 'problem' end it by noble suicide?"[4]

But, again, Brandeis was an exception within elite Jewish circles in America. More representative were those who feared that Zionism would undermine Jews' civic gains. *New York Times* publisher Adolph Ochs insisted that Jews must eschew ethnic or "national" group identity. He wrote, "I'm interested in the Jewish religion – I want to see it preserved – but that's as far as I want to go." Ochs castigated Brandeis for having become, with his embrace of Zionism, "a professional Jew."[5]

Brandeis's wartime predictions proved prescient, as after the war a number of new nations were established in eastern Europe out of territories of the former German, Austro-Hungarian, and Russian empires. In addition, Syrian and Iraqi mandates for the creation of Arab states and the Palestine mandate for the establishment of a Jewish national home were carved out of lands previously part of the Ottoman Empire.

The World War I allies' endorsement of the Zionist project, as well as the subsequent endorsement by the League of Nations, were not without impact on some Jews within the anti-Zionist camp in the United States. In addition, in the post-war decades, a number of Reform rabbis with pro-Zionist views, such as Abba Hillel Silver, Stephen S. Wise, and Nelson Glueck, rose to prominence within both Reform and Zionist circles. The straitened, continually worsening circumstances of Jewish communities in central and eastern Europe in the decades between the world wars likewise had some impact on attitudes towards Zionism. But while Reform Judaism's Columbus Platform of 1937 reflects some of these influences and associated changes, it also conveys what had not changed:

> "... In all lands where our people live, they assume and seek to share loyally the full duties and responsibilities of citizenship and to create seats of Jewish knowledge and religion. In the rehabilitation of Palestine, the land hallowed by memories and hopes, we behold the promise of renewed life for many of our brethen. We affirm the obligation of all Jewry to aid in its upbuilding as a Jewish homeland by endeavoring to make it not only a haven of refuge for the oppressed but also a center of Jewish culture and spiritual life."[6]

The above statement starts by seeking to counter the "dual loyalty" canard, feared by so many as the inevitable outcome of the Zionist project. It then acknowledges the potential role of the project as a haven, "the promise

of a new life," for Jews increasingly under siege in eastern and central Europe. It concludes by seeking to accommodate both the need and the fear: Jews are enjoined to help in the upbuilding of the homeland/refuge, but the homeland/refuge is conceived of not as an independent Jewish state – an entity that might, again, provide hostile forces with ammunition for claims of divided loyalty and grounds for curbing Jews' civic gains – but rather as a "center of Jewish cultural and spiritual life."

This last distinction, with its anti-state bias, had significant consequences. Its translation into concrete action by Felix Warburg and Rabbi Judah Magnes, chronicled by Yoram Hazony in *The Jewish State*, is illustrative.[7] Warburg, a leading figure in the German Jewish elite in America, had earlier agreed to be a major donor to Hebrew University in Jerusalem, founded in 1919. While in favor of building a cultural and religious center in the Mandate such as that alluded to in the Columbus Platform, he was an opponent of Zionist aspirations to a state. He conditioned his support of the university on the appointment of American Reform Rabbi Judah Magnes, who shared Warburg's views on the proper objective of the Zionist project, to a dominant position in the University, ultimately to the post of University chancellor, and to control of the funds. (At the time of his Hebrew University appointment, Magnes was associate rabbi at Temple Beth El in Manhattan.)

In the ensuing years, both Warburg and Magnes fought aggressively against the pursuit of a Jewish state. Both, for example, perceived the 1929 Arab assault on and massacre of Jews in the Mandate, including the murder of 67 Jews in Hebron, as an opportunity to cast the Jewish quest for a state as the source of Arab enmity and to undermine that quest. In October 1929, Magnes met with a confidant of the Grand Mufti, Haj Amin al-Husseini, who had instigated the massacre, and formulated with the Mufti's representative a proposal for the establishment of an Arab-controlled government in the Mandate and the abandonment of Jewish aspirations to a state.[8] When the leadership of the Yishuv, the Jewish community in the Mandate, rejected the plan, Warburg threatened that American Jewish support would be cut off if the Magnes initiative was not embraced. Nevertheless, both the elected Assembly of the Yishuv and the Zionist Executive refused to endorse it.

Magnes's meeting with a member of the Mufti's camp had been arranged by *New York Times* correspondent and avowed anti-Zionist Joseph Levi. In the wake of the rejection of his initiative, Magnes embarked on a publicity campaign to promote his views and attack the pro-state Zionists. *The New York Times,* under the aegis of the no less anti-Zionist Adolph Ochs, gave prominent coverage and editorial support to Magnes's views.[9]

In the spring of 1936, the Grand Mufti again launched attacks against the Jews of the Yishuv, this time in a sustained onslaught that entailed attacks as well against British forces. The following year, the British appointed the Peel Commission to investigate the unrest and formulate recommendations in response to the violence. The commission proposed partition of the Mandate into independent Jewish and Arab states. The Jewish state would consist of about 4% of the original Palestine Mandate. The League of Nations objected to the proposal, insisting that it violated Britain's obligations to the Jews under the Mandate. However, the Yishuv leadership, led by David Ben-Gurion, agreed to the recommendation, prompted by recognition of the looming catastrophe in Europe and understanding that even this mini-state would offer European Jews a refuge. Ben-Gurion argued, "Through which [option] can we get in the shortest possible time the most Jews in Palestine?... How much greater will be the absorptive capacity without an alien, unconcerned... hostile administration, but with a Zionist government...holding the key to immigration in its hand."[10]

Warburg, in contrast, vehemently denounced the partition plan, arguing that acceptance of the Peel proposal reflected a Zionist "lust for power" and "a concept of Jewish life which is abhorrent."[11] This rhetoric of hyperbolic vilification, and its cold indifference to the desperate plight of Europe's Jews, seem incomprehensible unless recognized as representing, beneath the claims of high-mindedness and moral integrity, a response to anti-Jewish pressures and, more particularly, fears that creation of a Jewish state would compromise the fragile status of Jews in America and elsewhere in the West.

The Peel Commission recommendations were rejected by the Arabs and withdrawn by Britain. The British subsequently issued the infamous

White Paper dramatically limiting Jewish immigration, proposing the ultimate establishment of an Arab-dominated government in the Mandate, and essentially cutting off the one internationally recognized refuge for a doomed European Jewry.

Magnes continued his own attacks on those favoring establishment of a Jewish state even after revelation of the genocide unfolding in Europe. In 1943, he did so in articles in both British and American publications. Perhaps his most consistent outlet was *The New York Times*, where publisher Arthur Hay Sulzberger (who had succeeded Adolph Ochs in 1935) had instructed that editorial policy on the Mandate "be predicated on the Magnes point of view."[12] Indeed, that view was promoted in both editorials and news stories. Magnes pursued his campaign after the war as well, even coming to the States at the urging of the State Department to lobby against the United Nations partition plan.[13]

But the genocide in Europe, and Britain's policy throughout the war of blocking Jewish access to the Mandate and obstructing rescue, significantly eroded the ranks of the anti-state camp within the American Jewish elite. Further defections from that camp followed first from Israel's war of independence against surrounding countries that had publicly declared their objective to be annihilation of the Yishuv and its population, and then on the actual establishment of the state.

One notable indication of the shift within American Reform Judaism's leadership regarding the Zionist project is that the pro-Zionist rabbi and archaeologist Nelson Glueck became head of Hebrew Union College (HUC), the premier Reform seminary. Under Glueck's leadership, the HUC ultimately established a campus in Jerusalem where all first-year HUC students study.

Beyond the shift in the leadership, Reform congregants – by far the largest body of synagogue-affiliated Jews in America – overwhelmingly became supporters of Israel. That bond increased even further with the threats to Israel in the lead-up to the 1967 war and with the playing out of that war.

And Yet...

What, then, accounts for the seeming falling away from identification with Israel in recent decades – not to the degree of that seen among unaffiliated Jews, but still of significant scope – within leadership cadres of Reform Judaism, including the rabbinate, and within a significant proportion of Reform congregants? A common theme is to attribute the shift to generational differences and the coming of age of people who are far removed from the Shoah, Israel's creation, and the Six Day War. But there are more specific factors at work in this distancing from Israel.

Again, the key factor driving Reform anti-Zionism into the middle of the twentieth century was the then century-old anti-Jewish indictment that Jewish nationhood disqualified Jews from being given full civic rights in European states. This, and subsequent fears that any civic rights achieved would be rolled back in response to the Zionist movement, drove many Jews to argue that they were no longer a nation but exclusively a religious community.

The open identification of most Reform Jews with Israel in the decades after the state's establishment was made much easier by the fact that the Jewish state has been viewed favorably by large swathes of non-Jewish Americans. But many Jews who, by virtue of profession or other elements of self-identity, draw their sense of themselves from affiliations with cadres within the American scene less sympathetic to Israel, such as academia or the media or particular political groups, have always been less committed to Israel. As those cadres have in recent years tended to exhibit broader and more intense hostility to Israel, Jews who identify with them – whether Reform, of some other denomination, or unaffiliated – have become even more inclined to distance themselves from Israel.

Another anti-Jewish indictment, related to but distinct from the "Jews as a nation" indictment, which likewise can be traced, in its political impact, to early nineteenth-century Europe and which continues to shape Jewish politics in America, is the accusation that Jews are too parochial in their interests, are concerned only with their own, and are therefore not fit to be fully accepted as part of the larger political body. For two hundred years, many Jewish groups have responded to this indictment by laboring to demonstrate their commitment to causes beyond the Jewish community, doing so even when those causes have run counter to the interests of the Jewish community.

Perhaps no groups in America more dramatically reflect this phenomenon than Jewish Community Relations Councils (JCRCs) and their national umbrella organization, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs. For people dedicated to displaying to groups beyond the Jewish community their devotion to the latter's interests, increased criticism of Israel from those latter groups often translates into an even more intense determination to demonstrate sympathy with them even at the cost of sympathy with Israel.

Shifts in Attitudes Towards Israel Among Israelis

Yet another factor that has figured in some American Jews' detaching themselves from Israel over the past several decades has been intense criticism of Israel and its policies emanating from Israelis. While there have always been Israelis voicing such criticism, they tended in the past to be relatively few in number and generally marginalized. This changed dramatically in 1977 with the election of the first non-Left government in Israel under the leadership of Menachem Begin.

Israelis, like Diaspora Jews, have not been immune to the corrosive psychological impact of being targeted by their neighbors – in their case, not as a minority community subject at times to anti-Jewish indictments, but as a Jewish state under chronic siege by its neighbors. Some had always embraced the indictments of Israel's neighbors and had, for instance, insisted after the 1967 war – ignoring the statements and actions emanating from the Palestinian leadership and from Arab states – that if Israel would only return to its pre-war lines all would be well. But the great majority had not. They had supported the government's position that peace could only come when Israel's Arab adversaries were prepared to recognize Israel's legitimacy and end rejection of the state (as was reflected in the Arab League's post-1967 War Khartoum declaration of three no's: no recognition, no negotiation, no peace).

But overwhelming support on the Israeli Left for this position was predicated not only on its obviously well-founded rationale but on the Left's identification with the leftist governments that had led Israel for the first three decades of its statehood. That changed with the accession of Begin and Likud. There soon emerged widespread sentiment on the Israeli Left to the effect that sufficient Israeli concessions would indeed lead to peace and that

the major obstacle to such a resolution was the new right-wing government, which was too militant, too narrow-minded, and too distrustful of Israel's Arab neighbors to take the necessary steps to translate the potential for peace into a reality. This view only grew on the Israeli Left over the next twenty-five years, during which Likud either governed on its own or was senior partner or equal partner in governments of national unity.

Those embracing this stance included much of Israel's academic, cultural, and media elites. Their broad promotion of this perspective had an impact on the overwhelmingly left-leaning American Jewish community, some of whose members readily fell in line with the vision of reality being purveyed by those elites.

That vision, ultimately endorsed by about half of the Israeli electorate, paved the way for the Oslo Accords. In the 1992 Israeli election, Labor head Yitzhak Rabin ran on what was the traditional Labor platform: that Israel needed negotiating partners who eschewed terror and recognized the legitimacy of Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people and that Israel could offer territorial compromises but would need to retain significant portions of the West Bank for its defense. (Rabin elaborated further on the latter point, enumerating some of the areas Israel would need to hold, in his last speech in the Knesset prior to his assassination in 1995.) With Jordan having bowed out as a negotiating partner on behalf of the Palestinians, Rabin suggested internationally supervised elections in the territories to put in place a new Palestinian leadership made up of people living in the territories who would then enter negotiations with Israel.

But Rabin was soon the target of large-scale demonstrations by Israelis who insisted that Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) were the Palestinians' legitimate representatives and that Israel must negotiate with Arafat. Meanwhile, unbeknownst to Rabin, Yossi Beilin and Shimon Peres were in fact overseeing negotiations with representatives of Arafat in Oslo.

Rabin, when informed of the Oslo track, acquiesced to its proceeding, and in September 1993, he participated with Arafat in the ceremony on the White House lawn formally launching the Oslo era. About half of Israel celebrated what it saw as the dawn of a long-sought era of peace, while the other half anticipated dire, bloody consequences of a dangerously

misconceived course. Evidence supporting the latter view but essentially unreported in Israel and largely ignored in the Jewish world was provided by Arafat in a speech from Washington on Jordanian television on the evening of the White House ceremony and his famous handshake with Rabin. Arafat explained to his Palestinian constituency and to the Arab world more broadly that they should understand Oslo in terms of the PLO's 1974 plan.[14] This was a reference to a plan that called for the PLO to acquire whatever territory it could by negotiations and then use that territory as a base for pursuing Israel's annihilation. Arafat repeated his characterization of Oslo as the first stage in the "plan of stages" at least a dozen times within weeks of the White House festivities.[15]

Arafat and those around him consistently engaged in anti-Israel incitement, including calls for the state's destruction, in the weeks and months that followed. They enlisted the Palestinian media, mosques, and schools that came under their control to promote the same anti-Israel agenda. But the Israeli government chose to downplay the incitement and defend Arafat.

Beyond incitement, there was also an increase in anti-Israel terror. Over the twenty-two months from Arafat's arrival in the territories, in July 1994 until the fall of the Labor-Meretz government that had choreographed Oslo in May 1996, some 152 people were murdered in terror attacks. The murder rate was more than two-and-a-half times that of losses to terror in the 26-year stretch from the 1967 war to the start of Oslo. Yet the government responded to the terror largely as it did to the incitement. It downplayed the terror's significance, essentially exonerated Arafat, and exclusively blamed the Islamist organizations – despite Arafat's repeated praise of the terrorists and refusal to clamp down on the Islamist groups in any meaningful way. It also continued to make concessions to Arafat, as in the signing of the Oslo II agreement in the fall of 1995.

While the incitement and terror, and the government's response, did not seem to generate a huge shift in Israeli opinion on Oslo, there was enough of a shift that opinion polls began to show consistently that the government would lose to Likud in a new election. This was the situation when Rabin was assassinated in November 1995. His murder triggered a wave of public sentiment in favor of the government, and the ruling coalition sought to capitalize on this by moving the elections scheduled

for late 1996 up to May of that year. However, largely in response to ongoing incitement and terror in the intervening months, the election resulted in defeat of the Labor-Meretz coalition and replacement by a Likud government under Benjamin Netanyahu.

The growing second thoughts about Oslo reflected in the election also had some, albeit limited, impact on the elites that had almost unanimously embraced Oslo. In 1997, Ari Shavit, senior Haaretz columnist and himself an early, enthusiastic supporter of Oslo, wrote: "In the early 90s... we, the enlightened Israelis, were infected with a messianic craze... All of a sudden, we believed that... the end of the old Middle East was near. The end of history, the end of wars, the end of the conflict. Like the members of any other messianic movement, we decided to hasten the end, and anointed Yitzhak Rabin as our Messiah..." Shavit then addressed the Left's hatred of Netanyahu, who at the time of the article had been in office for about a year and a half: "Hatred of Netanyahu enables us to conveniently forget that before the bubble burst, we acted like fools. We fooled ourselves with illusions. We were bedazzled into committing a collective act of messianic drunkenness. Hatred of Netanyahu also gives us a chance to forget that it was not the rise of Netanyahu that brought on the paralysis of Oslo but the paralysis of Oslo that brought on the rise of Netanyahu. The hatred permits us to keep harboring the notion that everything is really much more simple, that if we only pull back, if we only recognize Palestinian statehood... we would be able [once again] to breathe in that exhilarating, heady aroma of the end of history, the end of wars, the end of conflict."[16]

But Shavit was a rare exception among the "enlightened Israelis" of whom he was writing, many of whom excoriated him for his new perspectives on Oslo. Similarly, in the United States, many in the American Jewish leadership who had embraced Oslo still retained their enthusiasm despite the anti-Israel incitement and terror promoted by Israel's "peace partners." Their views often differed dramatically from the Jewish rank and file. Evidence of the difference was offered by a poll conducted by the Indianapolis Jewish Community Relations Council in 1996, several months after the election of Netanyahu as prime minister.

At the time of the poll, JCRCs across America, including the one in Indianapolis, together with the JCRC umbrella group (then called the

National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council), were all advancing an agenda emphasizing social action in a "liberal" vein, an agenda congruent with the desire to demonstrate "non-parochial" Jewish priorities. With regard to Israel, the JCRCs were claiming not only that Israel was now safe – the subtext of which was that American Jews were now freer to focus their energies on the JCRCs' "social justice" priorities – but that American Jews overwhelmingly concurred with this view and also overwhelmingly supported Oslo. But the Indianapolis JCRC poll of community opinion indicated otherwise. About 80% of those questioned believed a Palestinian state would be a threat to Israel's security. Less than half felt that Israel should give up the West Bank, even with a viable peace. More than two-thirds said Arafat could not be trusted.[17]

Netanyahu was ultimately abandoned by elements of his coalition and forced into early elections in 1999. Some of his erstwhile supporters were dissatisfied that he had not only failed to end Oslo-related concessions to Arafat but had acquiesced to further concessions. Others saw clear indications that Arafat was preparing his people and forces for major new hostilities and believed it would be better for Israel if those hostilities occurred not on Likud's watch, when the Left would likely blame "right-wing intransigence" for the explosion, but on Labor's watch, in which case the Right would rally to the government and there would be a much greater likelihood of national unity.

The 1999 election saw Netanyahu lose to the Labor-Meretz coalition led by Ehud Barak. Barak subsequently called for moving to final status negotiations with Arafat and convinced President Clinton to host those negotiations at Camp David in the summer of 2000. Palestinian preparations for war became even more evident and more intense in the months preceding the summit. At Camp David, Barak offered dramatic territorial concessions, far beyond anything Rabin had envisioned and anything thought prudent by Israel's defense establishment. But Arafat rejected the concessions as inadequate, turned down additional Israeli concessions proposed by President Clinton, offered no counter-proposals, and left Camp David. He clearly had no intention of signing any "end of conflict" agreement, no matter what Israel offered. A few months later Arafat launched his terror war against Israel.

Over the ensuing several years, more than a thousand Israelis were killed in the terror war and thousands more horribly maimed. The war led to a much more dramatic shift in Israeli opinion than the terror of the earlier Oslo years. A solid majority of Israelis were now convinced that there was no partner for peace. Additional defections from the "peace camp" occurred with the unilateral withdrawal from Gaza in 2005 and the subsequent seizure of the area by Hamas, with its charter calling not only for the annihilation of Israel but the murder of all the world's Jews. Gaza became not the anticipated venue for peaceful Palestinian development but rather the launching pad for thousands of rockets and missiles into Israel and the trigger for three wars in less than ten years.

The broad shift in Israeli views has had an impact at the ballot box. Parties more focused on security, and more skeptical of any chance for progress towards genuine peace given the Palestinian leadership's actions, declared objectives, and incitement in media, mosques, and schools, have generally prevailed since 2001.

But the shift in Israeli opinion has not meant that Oslo lost its entire constituency. There remain Israelis who are convinced that, whatever the Palestinian leadership – whether the PA or Hamas – says or does, Israel is responsible for the absence of peace, and Israeli withdrawal from the territories (along with other concessions) would end the conflict. Israel's academic, media, and cultural elites are now even more overrepresented among those who cling to this stance. The perspectives of those elites are widely disseminated in the United States, and their views have an impact on American Jewish opinion that outweighs their actual representation of Israeli thinking. They also provide ammunition for those American Jewish leaders who, for reasons of their own domestic political predilections and agendas, are predisposed to identify with what had been the Israeli "peace" camp and have little sympathy for what is, in fact, a wide Israeli political consensus.

This preparedness to downplay or dismiss the Israeli consensus and the painful lessons that engendered its views in favor of claims that peace could be had if only Israel were more forthcoming is a revival of old, familiar themes. It is little different in its roots from the factors that shaped Judah Magnes's blindness to the plight of European Jewry before and during World War II and his insistence that the urgent quest for a Jewish state that

would fulfill the League of Nation's promise of a national refuge reflected a "lust for power" and "a concept of Jewish life which is abhorrent."

To be sure, those in the American Jewish leadership and their like-minded followers, who are so critical of Israel's leaders, do not quite share the fears of American Jews in the first half of the last century – a time of widespread anti-Semitism in the United States that touched the lives of virtually all Jews – that support for a Jewish state might lead to a rollback of Jewish civic rights. But their attitudes vis-a-vis Israel are less the product of considerations of Israel's predicament than the product of domestic considerations and domestic concerns.

American Jews, Israel, and the American Left

One might reasonably ask what such concerns could be, given that polls of American opinion consistently show very high levels of support for Israel, support not diminished over the years of its present government or the years of Netanyahu's premiership. One might answer that some in the American Jewish community nevertheless worry that that support could slip away if Israel does not make what they consider the "right" moves. But a more valid answer is that many American Jews, and to an even greater extent their leaders, identify with the political Left in America, and even more so with academic, media, and cultural elites that are almost monochromatically leftist. They are sensitive to the views of those groups much more than to the views of the population more broadly and are swayed by the anti-Israel predilections rampant among those elites, predilections that have only grown more intense in recent years. Those groups, too, generally insist that Israel bears most of the responsibility for the absence of peace and that if it would only grant Palestinians their "rights," peace would follow.

Why give such weight to the Left? Various factors have fed into this penchant. In Europe, it was typically, although not invariably, liberal parties that supported the granting of civil equality to Jews and conservative parties that opposed it, and Jews brought with them to America the political perspectives formed in this context. Those perspectives became firmly established as support for the Democratic party with the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt. Roosevelt's administration employed Jews at all

levels – including in the work programs established by the New Deal – in a manner that contrasted dramatically with the obstacles to employment Jews routinely encountered in the wider society at the time.

In addition, Jews – for defensive reasons, as in Europe – were eager to immerse themselves in a larger pool of people whom they construed as having shared concerns and objectives, and they chose to view Roosevelt's seeming grand alliance of the disadvantaged in these terms. This propensity was reinforced by the fact that American Jews were concentrated in the large cities of the Northeast, where most of those around them were now Democrat partisans. Jewish eagerness to embrace and cling to such alliances led them, and continue to lead them, to be very slow to respond to changing political winds, or to recognize when those they wish to see as permanent allies move in directions inimical to Jewish interests and Jewish well-being.

As sociologists Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab noted in 1995, polls of American Jews through the latter part of the last century continued to reveal that a vast majority believed anti-Semitism was more rife among American conservatives than liberals, even though actual surveys of American opinion regarding Jews did not support this assumption.[18]

The embrace of liberalism, and of imagined liberal allies, as a defense against perceived anti-Jewish forces has become even more marked as the religious content of being Jewish has further eroded for many American Jews. The self-definition of what it means to be Jewish and share in the Jewish vocation has become more narrowly focused on a universalist humanitarian agenda.

This emphasis on social liberalism can be seen as far back as a 1964 meeting of rabbis from the three major branches of Judaism who had convened to try and reconcile their differences. The only common ground they could find was support for the civil rights movement and the War on Poverty.[19] A 1988 survey conducted by the *Los Angeles Times* found that when Jews were asked which among three facets of Jewish identity they most valued, many more chose the pursuit of social justice and equality (50%) than either Israel (20%) or the "religion" (20%).[20]

Yet another facet of Jewish social liberalism as a perceived defense against anti-Jewish forces and, as part of that defense, immersion in a wider pool of the imagined like-minded was noted by Lipset and Raab in their 1995 book: "[This emphasis] within the Jewish community [has] become most explicit when some of the main streams of American Christianity, usually the higher status denominations, have established a moralistic rather than a theological cast and espoused the 'social gospel.'"[21]

The deleterious consequences of American Jews wishfully thinking in categorical terms about allies and enemies, wishfully conceiving of alliances as of transcendent validity, and resisting giving credence to evidence that such convictions are misplaced can be seen as early as the community's dealings with Roosevelt. Roosevelt's cold indifference to the plight of European Jewry during World War II, his refusal to support rescue of those tens of thousands, likely hundreds of thousands, of Jews who could have been saved, via steps that were readily available to him and would have cost him nothing politically, elicited only very weak responses from the American Jewish leadership. Fear of stirring up even greater anti-Semitism was no doubt a factor in inhibiting a more forceful response, but there was also disbelief among many that the man who had had such a positive impact on the American Jewish community could now be so indifferent to the plight of Europe's Jews. This factor can be seen in the correspondence and actions of, for example, Rabbi Stephen Wise, the community's leading figure, who sought to promote rescue and was forced to acknowledge Roosevelt's failure to help – yet refused to question Roosevelt's "goodwill." When the Republican National Convention, in June 1944, put a strong pro-Zionist plank into its platform for the upcoming election and criticized Roosevelt for not pressing Britain to open Mandate Palestine to Jewish refugees, Wise wrote to Roosevelt, "As an American Jew and Zionist, I am deeply ashamed of the reference to you in the Palestine Resolution adopted by the Republican National Convention. It is utterly unjust, and you may be sure that American Jews will come to understand how unjust it is."[22]

The eagerness of many in the Jewish community, and in its leadership, to believe alliances to be of immutable strength, led to numerous other distortions of reality in subsequent decades. For instance, the umbrella organization of Jewish Community Relations Councils has typically

convened annual meetings to formulate policies and objectives, and Jewish-black cooperation on social justice issues has perennially been a centerpiece of the ensuing programs. However, citing the organization's 1953 statement on the issue, noted rabbi and historian Arthur Hertzberg, himself a man of impeccable liberal credentials, observed that the statement, while touching on what were indeed shared concerns and aims, suggests an identity of black and Jewish interests that was not true. Hertzberg also pointed out that, in the 1960s, elements of the black civil rights movement, and other groups that gained prominence within the American black community, became radicalized, adopted a rhetoric that was often anti-Semitic, and pursued militant confrontations with segments of the Jewish community. Yet major circles within the wider Jewish community and its leadership, including the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, strove to ignore or downplay the changed reality and to construe the Jewish-black alliance as they had previously done. Hertzberg went on: "In late May 1967, the Anti-Defamation League published a study in five volumes on black anti-Semitism, to assert that there was less such prejudice among blacks than among whites. The Anti-Defamation League would soon change its estimate of black anti-Semitism, but in May 1967, this was the dominant 'orthodoxy' of the American Jewish establishment."[23]

The ongoing identification by much of the Jewish community, and even more so the cadres of its leaders, with institutions, groups, and causes associated with the Left, and the reluctance to acknowledge developments on the Left inimical to Jewish interests, is on vivid display in today's America. The Anti-Defamation League has typically been much readier to call out right-wing anti-Semitism than that emanating from the Left, as suggested by Rabbi Hertzberg's observations. The ADL has over the last year repeatedly and strongly condemned what can be seen as something of a resurgence of neo-Nazi and other extreme Right anti-Semitic groups in the United States. But such groups, however vile their rhetoric and their behavior, hardly represent a greater threat in terms of the numbers of their followers and their penetration into mainstream society than the no less ugly Jew-hatred coming from the other end of the political spectrum.

Louis Farrakhan is without doubt the spewer of anti-Semitic invective with the widest following in America today, and his apologists extend to members of the Congressional Black Caucus and other prominent mainstream figures.

Yet the ADL and other Jewish organizations have devoted much less attention to addressing Farrakhan's Jew-baiting or to criticizing his enablers than to issuing statements condemning hate-mongers on the Right.

American campuses, almost without exception left-wing bastions, have become collectively the American institution most associated with attacks on Jews, with those attacks emanating from both faculty and student groups. Jewish students are repeatedly subjected to marginalization, intimidation, verbal abuse, and even physical abuse. Yet the ADL and a number of other mainstream Jewish organizations have been largely AWOL in addressing the crisis in academia.

In December 2017, four imams in the United States called for the mass murder of Jews. Three did so in sermons in their mosques and the fourth in a Facebook posting. While the incidents drew criticism from mainstream Jewish organizations, including the ADL, those criticisms almost invariably failed to note that such anti-Semitic rhetoric is standard fare in these imams' countries of origin and throughout much of the Muslim world. The statements by Jewish organizations also routinely included expressions of hope for dialogue and cooperation with the imams' constituencies – a flourish not generally part of the response to right-wing anti-Semitism.

One might ask why the hateful bigotry of imams would be considered left-wing rather than right-wing. The answer lies in the fact that much of the American Left has made defense of Muslims in America, including Muslim groups with radical, Islamist agendas and affiliations, a political issue, seeking to cast those to the right of themselves, and those critical of elements of the Muslim community, as nativist bigots preying on American Muslims. Many in the Jewish community, particularly in the mainstream leadership, have readily embraced this formula and sought to fashion relations with Muslims in a manner consistent with this comprehension. Similarly, the Left, including President Obama during his tenure and many of those around him, has repeatedly spoken of the depredations emanating from Islamophobia in America, and this theme too has been picked up by many in the Jewish community. Yet, while some incidents of Muslims being targeted have occurred and any such episode is one too many, in fact, according to FBI statistics, it is Jews

who are overwhelmingly the primary targets of religiously based hate crimes in America. In 2016, they were the victims of 54% of such crimes; Muslims the victims of 24%.[24] Those on the Left inveighing against Islamophobia, again including the former president and the people around him, have virtually never acknowledged this reality. Nor has the mainstream Jewish leadership taken issue with their failure to do so or, all too often, even noted what the statistics actually showed.

There are other, broader threats to American Jewry emanating from the Left that have likewise been largely ignored by much of the Jewish community and its leaders.

Certain core traditional "liberal" principles, principles long widely embraced by the majority of those at both ends of the political spectrum in the United States, are now under siege as the popular ideology of the political Left, including of increasing segments of the Democrat party, shifts from liberal to so-called "progressive" stances. Freedom of speech has for some time been under attack on American campuses and increasingly outside the bounds of academia, in other areas dominated by the Left. It has been devalued in the service of "sensitivity," of protecting people from ideas they find offensive. The emphasis on the individual and individual rights is likewise losing ground to leftist, progressivist promotion of the centrality of group identity and group rights. Martin Luther King's dream of seeing people judged by the content of their character rather than the color of their skin, or some other group characteristic, is now inconsistent with the objectives currently holding sway on the Left. Both freedom of speech and the right of the individual to be judged on his or her own merits have been critical to making the Jewish experience in America the success it has been, and so different – despite episodes of popular anti-Semitism – from the Jewish experience elsewhere. Yet organized Jewry has failed to respond in any meaningful way to the leftist devaluing of these principles.

When the leadership, and much of the community, have been so weak in addressing anti-Jewish rhetoric and actions, as well as other threats, coming from the Left, when they have persisted in their determination to identify with the Left and march with the Left no matter what stands inimical to American Jews the Left embraces, it is hardly surprising that, as the Left targets Israel, the response is pathetic. The inclination among much of American Jewry,

and particularly among community leaders, is less to challenge the Left than to wish Israel would shape its policies to accommodate leftist criticism – whether that criticism comes from the professoriat, or elements of the Democrat party, or the mainstream media, or the so-called "liberal" churches of whose influence on Jews Hertzberg wrote.

In the same vein, much of American Jewry, especially within the leadership, has tolerated and even supported American leftist whitewashing of the Palestinian leadership while casting Israel's leaders as the obstacles to peace. Mahmoud Abbas has repeatedly asserted that Jews have no historic connection with the Holy Land, that they are merely alien invaders, and that he will never recognize the legitimacy of a Jewish state. He has declared that he will never give up the Palestinian "right of return," the supposed right of Palestinian refugees and their descendants to settle in Israel. He has incited violence against Israelis in his media and mosques and has taught in his schools that the highest calling of Palestinian children is to dedicate themselves to Israel's destruction. He has spent hundreds of millions of dollars yearly promoting terrorism and supporting terrorists and their families. He has complained about Jews violating the Temple Mount with their filthy feet, insisted the site is holy only to Muslims, and called upon his people to defend it from supposed Jewish depredations. He has walked away from every peace plan put forward by Israeli or American administrations, failed to make any counter-proposals, and made clear there is no plan to which – if it is cast as a final, end-of-conflict, arrangement – he will agree. He has made clear that he, like Arafat, will regard any arrangement as just a step towards the ultimate dissolution of Israel and establishment of a Muslim state on all the land between the Jordan and the Mediterranean.

Yet, according to the previous president and those who were around him, Abbas is the "moderate" and the present Israeli government is the problem in its failure to make the concessions that would satisfy Abbas and win peace. Many American Jews, again most particularly community leaders, rather than challenge this gross and bigoted distortion of reality have gone along with it and hoped that Israel would change course and somehow deliver those magical, peace-assuring concessions. This stance is adopted even by many who are, in their own way, devoted to Israel and its well-being.

It is the stance reflected, for example, in the writings of Gary Rosenblatt, editor and publisher of *The Jewish Week*, a newspaper produced with the support of the UJA-Federation of New York. In an article that appeared early in 2016 under the title "Frustration with Israel Growing Here at Home," Rosenblatt reports grievances against Israel that he says he has heard from members of the Jewish community, including community leaders. Seemingly topping the list, and reflecting a view clearly shared by Rosenblatt, is "The hard fact... that Israel's leadership is moving in a direction at odds with the next generation of Americans, including many Jews, who want to see greater efforts to resolve the Palestinian conflict and who put the onus for the impasse on Jerusalem."[25]

In the same vein, Rosenblatt observes, "Whether or not it is fair, the strong perception today is that the Israeli government is moving further right, and intransigent..." And "One national leader told me he'd like to fly to Israel, with a group of his top colleagues, to try to convince Netanyahu in dramatic fashion of the need for 'a plan, any plan' to break the impasse." And while these statements are couched as representing what Rosenblatt has heard from others, it is in his own voice that he states near the end of the piece, "... Netanyahu and his government will continue to make decisions based on their own narrow and immediate political interests, and we can only hope they will coincide with national interests as well."[26]

The obvious implication is that the author does not see the prime minister as having been acting in Israel's national interest, and that – reflecting the thrust of the article – this charge refers specifically to the prime minister's not being forthcoming enough in the quest for peace.

But, again, the falling away from Israel among some in the Jewish community, including in its leadership, is much less a reaction to Israeli policy than a functon of those American Jewish circles identifying with and wanting to propitiate elements in the wider society who have increasingly adopted anti-liberal, "progressive" world views, including a hostility to Israel. This is also why those same American Jewish circles are so receptive to, indeed enamored of, Israeli voices that – unlike the clear majority of their fellow citizens – cling to the Oslo fantasies of yore and blame Israel first and always.

Gerald Steinberg, head of NGO Monitor (which follows and calls out the myriad NGOs dedicated to pushing anti-Israel distortions of reality

and often aiding groups pursuing Israel's destruction) touches on this assessment of the American scene in a response to Rosenblatt entitled "Why Israel Is Frustrated with American Jewish Leaders: Fringe Israeli voices that polarize and demonize our society are given legitimacy and resources in America" (published by Rosenblatt, to his credit, in *The Jewish Week* on January 27, 2016). Steinberg notes that, "Like most Israelis, I also hope for a peace plan, but not any plan, and certainly not one that will bring us yet another disaster when it fails...So no, 'any plan' that helps Israel's PR among liberal [sic] students, but makes our security situation even worse, is not better than the status quo."

Mainstream American Jewish Bodies and Israel

Rabbi Rick Jacobs, president of the Union for Reform Judaism, is another prominent American Jewish leader whose perspectives regarding Israel are shaped largely by attitudes towards Israel on the American Left and by the American Jewish embrace of those attitudes. Jacobs has been almost invariably critical of Prime Minister Netanyahu and his policies. Over the past year, that criticism has focused largely on the issue of prayer at the Western Wall in Jerusalem. In January 2016, after years of negotiations, the Israeli government agreed to establish a so-called "egalitarian" prayer area at the Wall, an area outside the control of the Orthodox rabbinate and free of its strictures. But in June 2017, the government froze implementation of the plan, triggering angry reactions from, particularly, American Reform and other non-Orthodox circles, including from Jacobs. Jacobs's unhappiness with Netanyahu, however, predates the Western Wall controversy and goes well beyond issues related to treatment of the Reform movement in Israel.

Reporting for *The Jerusalem Post* on the Union for Reform Judaism's biennial convention in 2015, Elliot Jager noted the prominence of "calls for more vigorous criticism of Israeli policies...and heightened activism for social justice." Of Rabbi Jacobs's keynote address, Jager observed: "[He] could not identify a single policy of Benjamin Netanyahu's government that his movement could heartily embrace. For him, 'asking Jews around the world only to wave the flag of Israel and to support even the most misguided policies of its leaders drives a wedge between the Jewish soul and the Jewish state. It is beyond counterproductive.'"[27]

And Jacobs has made clear that among those "misguided policies" are, to his perception, the Israeli government's failure to do more to achieve a solution to the conflict with the Palestinians.

The great majority of Israelis may feel – having paid a steep price in blood for previous concessions in Israel's search for peace – that there is no partner on the other side, whether the PA or Hamas, with whom a genuine peace can be negotiated at this time. Israelis may now overwhelmingly believe both Palestinian leaderships when they declare that they are not interested in peace with Israel and that their goal remains Israel's demise. But Jacobs, and many others in the Reform leadership, moved by a frame of reference not Israeli, somehow construe this Israeli perspective as representing "a wedge between the Jewish soul and the Jewish state."[28]

Another indication of the gulf between consensus Israeli views and those of Jacobs was his response to President Trump's announcement in December 2017 that he would be moving the American embassy in Israel to Jerusalem. It should be noted that the announcement made clear the embassy would be in pre-1967 Israeli Jerusalem and its move therefore would not pre-judge the resolution of borders, which would have to be decided in bilateral negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians. Nevertheless, Jacobs quickly issued a statement on behalf of the Union for Reform Judaism that, among other points, declared, "[W]e cannot support his decision to begin preparing that move now, absent a comprehensive plan for a peace process."[29]

Israelis almost universally support the embassy move, and the Palestinian leadership has repeatedly demonstrated its lack of interest in genuine peace, but Jacobs somehow construes the Jewish soul as requiring that the Palestinians be given a veto over America's moving its Israeli embassy to Israel's capital. In the same statement, Jacobs further declared that, "Additionally, any relocation of the American Embassy to West Jerusalem should be conceived and executed in the broader context reflecting Jerusalem's status as a city holy to Jews, Christians and Muslims alike."[30] But how could the embassy move reflect negatively on the city's religious status, especially given that it has only been under Israeli governance that the city's significance to all three monotheistic religions has been respected? In his response to the proposed embassy move, Jacobs

demonstrated his indifference to Israeli opinion and his sensitivity to the views of Israel's critics on the American Left. In this instance, while he may have had the backing of others in the Reform leadership, there were many in the rank and file who opposed his stance.

Indeed, there were significant, or at least vocal, segments of the Reform movement that opposed the selection of Jacobs as president of the URJ in 2011 because of his affiliations with groups in many respects hostile to Israel. Jacobs at the time was a member of the rabbinic cabinet of J Street and on the board of the New Israel Fund. J Street characterizes itself as pro-Israel and pro-peace, but its pro-Israel claims are belied by its stances.

Israelis of almost all political stripes reject a return to the pre-1967 armistice lines, the so-called Green Line, in any Israeli-Palestinian agreement. The consensus is, as the authors of UN Security Council Resolution 242 (the key UN document relating to the territorial issue) asserted, that those lines left Israel too vulnerable and invited further aggression against the country.

As mentioned, Yitzhak Rabin, in his last Knesset speech prior to his assassination, listed West Bank areas – an incomplete list, as he indicated – that Israel would need to retain and populate in any final settlement to assure its security and survival. Yet J Street opposes any Israeli presence beyond the Green Line and advocates the United States supporting, via unilateral policy initiatives or a UN Security Council resolution or an initiative in conjunction with other major powers, reversing Resolution 242 and endorsing the Green Line as the basis for defining a future border.[31]

J Street also advocates the United States instituting punitive measures against Israel for any activity beyond the Green Line. It claims that a number of American administrations have viewed settlements beyond the Green Line as "illegal," when in fact only the Carter administration labeled them illegal and, as attested to by many experts in the field, there is much in international law that weighs in favor of their legality.[32]

Israelis have fought three wars against Hamas in Gaza since Israel's withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, with each conflict triggered by Hamas attacks, particularly rocket fire, against Israel's civilian population. Yet J Street has repeatedly drawn a moral equivalence between Israel and its openly genocidal foe, and has often parroted Hamas claims and statistics about the course of the conflicts and the resultant casualties.[33]

J Street is consistently silent about the goals of Hamas and of the Palestinian Authority, their mutual rejection of the legitimacy of a Jewish state within any borders in "Palestine," and the PA's rejection of all negotiation proposals offered by Israel or by the United States.

J Street asserts it opposes the "global BDS movement" that targets all of Israel for boycott, divestment, and sanction, but does not oppose BDS efforts targeting the territories beyond the Green Line. It sees such boycotts as consistent with its goal of promoting Israeli withdrawal to the Green Line. But, again, the vast majority of Israelis, along with notable Western military and strategic experts, believe such a withdrawal would render Israel fatally vulnerable.[34]

In addition, the "global BDS movement" also sometimes promotes, like J Street, more circumscribed boycotts limited to the "territories," as in its partially successful efforts to advance such boycotts in Europe. It does so because it knows that even such limited boycotts, which serve to weaken Israel's presence in the territories and to advance the goal of Israeli retreat to the Green Line, also serve to undermine Israel's strategic viability and ultimate survival.

J Street has worked with supporters of the Iranian government and strongly backed President Obama's 2015 agreement with Iran that legitimized that nation's nuclear program and released to the mullahs over $100 billion in embargoed funds in exchange for limited curtailment of its pursuit of operable nuclear weapons. It did so even as Iran has consistently reasserted its goal of annihilating Israel and consistently used its resources to arm and finance terrorist proxies, such as Hezbollah, that target Israel. Of course, Israelis of virtually all political stripes opposed the Iran agreement.[35]

Shortly before the consummation of the Obama administration's Iran deal, at J Street's annual conference in March 2015, J Street Board of Advisors member Marcia Freedman, echoing those in the last century who opposed a Jewish state even as Jews were being subjected to mass slaughter for lack of a sanctuary, declared that Jews should become a minority in an Arab-dominated binational state.[36] Her suggestion was apparently greeted with much display of assent by fellow panelists and her audience. She and they seem to have no difficulty depriving Jews of the right of national self-determination accorded other peoples. Nor were they troubled by the

horrific treatment widely meted out to religious and ethnic minorities, such as Christians, Yazidis, and Kurds as well as Jews, in the Arab world, and meted out even more dramatically in the context of events that have marked the "Arab Spring" since its beginning in 2011.

Jews becoming a minority in a binational state is not official J Street policy. But the leadership of J Street is obviously less interested in the concerns of most Israelis, the realities of their predicament, and the well-being of the Jewish state than in aligning itself with elements of the American Left indifferent at best towards those concerns and realities and Israel's fate.

The New Israel Fund, on whose board Jacobs also served, is an umbrella organization that finances a number of Israeli NGOs, many of which are likewise hostile to the views and concerns of the vast majority of Israelis and some of which also challenge the right of Jews to national self-determination.[37]

Others in the leadership of major American Jewish organizations have, like the Reform movement's Jacobs, embraced J Street and additional groups that purvey stances hostile to Israel. Jonathan Greenblatt, head of the Anti-Defamation League and formerly a special assistant to President Obama, spoke at J Street's 2016 annual convention and echoed some of J Street's habitual drawing of moral equivalences between Israel and those openly dedicated to her annihilation. He also urged extending greater legitimacy to the Palestinian "narrative," the Palestinian denial of any Jewish historical connection to the land of Israel, and the confabulated rewriting of virtually the entire history of the Arab-Israeli conflict.[38]

The ADL, under both Greenblatt and his predecessor, Abe Foxman, has criticized state and federal efforts to pass anti-BDS legislation, including legislation to withhold funds from institutions of higher learning that enact BDS measures. The ADL has argued that its stance is based on the defense of freedom of speech.[39] But it requires considerable logical contortion to twist into a free speech issue the withholding of taxpayer funds from publicly supported colleges and universities that pursue policies biased against Israel and ultimately aimed at undermining that nation's viability. The ADL stance seems another instance of conforming to the political predilections of particular echelons in America with which its leaders identify, and to doing so with little regard for the impact on Israelis.

Examples abound of mainstream Jewish organizations accommodating even the most extreme manifestations of Jewish hostility to Israel.

Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) militates for Israel's dissolution.[40] It is most active on campuses, where it works as, in effect, the Jewish auxiliary of the Arab-dominated Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) in promoting BDS resolutions and activities and in silencing pro-Israel voices.

In April 2018, the Durham, North Carolina city council voted to ban city police "military-style" training with any foreign entities and to ban police exchanges of any sort with Israel. Israel is the only nation named in the ban. The city council resolution was spearheaded by JVP activists.[41]

According to a Jewish News Service story of May 6, one of the activists, Sandra Korn, "is a board member and head of adult education at Durham's Judea Reform Congregation" and works as a youth Midrasha teacher at the Jewish Federation of Durham-Chapel Hill. Another, Lara Haft, "is a Hebrew-school teacher at Beth El Synagogue for the Jewish Federation."[42]

Leaders of both the Judea Reform Congregation and Beth El Synagogue emphasized that their congregations/communities include people with diverse opinions, and Rabbi Daniel Greyber of Beth El stated that his community "offers every Jew a place to study and pray."[43] But for Jewish institutions to employ as teachers and community leaders individuals who aggressively militate for Israel's destruction, who campaign in American colleges and universities and lobby in American political fora to advance that objective, reflects something more than open-mindedness. It is an indication that those institutions place their support for Israel's well-being and survival at a lower priority level than their conforming to current progressivist dogma about diversity, where diversity means giving legitimacy to whatever radical elements of the Left are promoting, including attacks on Israel aimed at its dissolution.

Another example: Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion is the largest Jewish seminary in North America and, according to its self-description, "the academic, spiritual, and professional leadership development center of Reform Judaism." For its Los Angeles campus graduation ceremony on May 14, 2018, it recruited as its commencement speaker author Michael Chabon, known for his anti-Israel views.

In 2017, Chabon and his wife, Ayelet Waldman, who is also a writer and also has a long history of vilifying Israel, enlisted essays from other writers from around the world on the horrors of the Israeli "occupation" and published them along with essays of their own in a book entitled *Kingdom of Olives and Ash: Writers Confront the Occupation*. The various pieces are filled with factual inaccuracies about supposed Israeli misdeeds, but the bigger problem is the overarching false premise: that the current state of affairs, and all its negative impact on the lives of Palestinians, is perpetuated by Israel's heartless desire to maintain the status quo and prevent Palestinians from assuming fuller control over their own lives. There is nothing on the violence that followed upon Israel's ceding much of its control in the context of the Oslo agreements. There is nothing on the Palestinian leadership's rejection of every Israeli offer of a final territorial division, its refusal to propose counter-offers, its insistence that it will never accede to any final resolution that recognizes Israel's right to exist within any borders. There is nothing on the three wars, triggered by Hamas attacks, that have followed upon Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza. All that is apparently deemed inconsequential, not worthy of note, in *Kingdom of Olives and Ash*.[44]

Rabbi David Ellenson, in his introduction of Chabon at the HUC-JIR graduation, reportedly referred to his having written a book on "the occupation" and suggested the book was particularly relevant now because of the decision to relocate the American Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem.[45]

In his speech, Chabon picked up on a theme he addressed in his essay in the 2017 collection: He claimed that the security barrier built by Israel during the terror war in reality had nothing to do with security but was intended to "imprison" Palestinians. Other remarks were in the same vein.[46] According to a graduate at the event, Chabon's observations were greeted with wide audience approval and his speech received enthusiastic applause.[47]

A story by the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* on the subsequent controversy about the choice of Chabon as commencement speaker noted these responses from heads of the HUC-JIR: "As both an Israeli and American institution, belonging to two proud democracies defined by lively civil discourse, it does not occur to us at HUC-JIR to quash or vilify political criticism of Israel out of a preemptive fear of controversy," wrote Rabbi

David Ellenson, the interim president and chancellor emeritus, and Joshua Holo, the dean of the Los Angeles campus of HUC-JIR. "On the contrary, we know that the confidence to invite challenging ideas both defines and validates democracy in the first place."[48]

But, of course, the issue is not one of quashing free speech but of honoring someone who dismisses Israel's legitimate security concerns and blames Israel, rather than those who seek the Jewish state's destruction, for the difficulties of the Palestinians. Once again, a major, mainstream Jewish body placed championing Israel's well-being second to accommodating the Israel-vilifying rhetoric currently so popular within leftist circles.

Mainstream Jewish Organizations, Educational Institutions, and Israel

Among the most consequential examples of leaders of a mainstream Jewish organization accommodating Jewish groups hostile to Israel is Hillel.

Hillel has long provided a center for Jewish activities and connectedness on campuses for those students seeking such connectedness and has been the leading organization in doing so. It reports that it has a presence at more than 550 colleges and universities. With regard to Israel, Hillel International guidelines declare that the organization is "steadfastly committed to the support of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state with secure and recognized borders as a member of the family of nations."[49]

The guidelines also assert that "Hillel will not partner with, house, or host organizations, groups, or speakers that as a matter of policy or practice: Deny the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish and democratic state with secure and recognized borders; delegitimize, demonize, or apply a double standard to Israel; support boycott of, divestment from, or sanctions against the State of Israel; [or] exhibit a pattern of disruptive behavior towards campus events or guest speakers or foster an atmosphere of incivility."[50]

But in recent years, students on some campuses have taken exception to these guidelines and insisted, for example, that their campus Hillels host events co-sponsored by the virulently anti-Israel and often openly anti-Semitic Students for Justice in Palestine and the hardly less anti-Israel Jewish Voice for Peace. Under the rubric "Open Hillel," advocates of

this course claim they are simply seeking to broaden the discussion of Israel beyond the positions articulated in the Hillel guidelines.

The first "Open Hillel" conference was held in the fall of 2014 and reportedly drew more than 350 participants. Jewish Voice for Peace played a prominent role in the conference program, as did other voices hostile to Israel and challenging of its very existence. An attendee, writing in *The Tower* magazine, noted that "... while there were definitely some views expressed that were even more extreme than JVP, I never heard a single opinion expressed that could be called more ardently Zionist than J Street – which itself has a very problematic relationship with Zionism."[51]

Thus far only a handful of campus Hillels in America have embraced the "Open Hillel" agenda. But many more partner with organizations that support BDS at some level and promote other anti-Israel policies – most notably J Street, but also at times groups such as JVP and even SJP. A key explanation for this is that many, likely most, Hillel directors – either because of views held before coming to their Hillel position or because they have been won over to popular campus biases – are sympathetic to the intellectually insupportable and morally obtuse blaming of Israeli policy for the absence of peace and for the wide hostility to Israel in academic circles.

Hillel directors who are fully supportive of Hillel International's guidelines regarding Israel, and are unabashed supporters of the Jewish state and its right to demand a genuine and defensible peace in return for concessions, are a distinct minority.

Moreover, Hillel International has not aggressively sought to hold Hillel chapters to the organization's guidelines on Israel as a condition for their continuing to use the Hillel name. Nor has the wider community of leading Jewish organizations openly addressed the highly problematic developments within this key Jewish campus institution, much less taken a stance on those developments. No doubt this is, again, in large part because so many prominent figures in those organizations are likely to be among the Jewish leaders who are not prepared to challenge Israel-baiting segments of society, such as major elements of academia, with which they identify, and prefer instead to blame Israeli policy for those groups' hostility to Israel.

Some voices in Jewish leadership are essentially sympathetic to the strong Hillel International parameters regarding Israel but at the same time argue that Jewish organizational life ought to provide a "big tent" and be open to Jews of all opinions who want to identify with the community.

Proponents of this view suggest, regarding Hillel, it ought to be seen as a positive that those Jewish students so critical of Israel nevertheless want to be part of campus Jewish communal life.

But of course they want to be part of Hillel not to share a common space with Jewish students different from themselves – that is to say, Jewish students who see Israel differently from how they do. If that were their interest, they would create an "Open J Street" and "Open JVP." Rather, they want to be part of Hillel so they can 1) undermine support for Israel from within the flagship Jewish campus organization; and 2) use the organization in their quest to separate identifying with Israel – at least Israel as comprehended by and defended by the great majority of Israelis – from Jewish identity.

Compromising defense of Israel in order to "enlarge the tent" by appeasing those who traffic in stances advocated by seekers of the Jewish state's destruction is at once morally reprehensible and likely doomed to failure, if the ultimate objective is to moderate the views of Jewish students hostile to Israel. In November 2017, Rabbi Julie Roth of Princeton's Hillel canceled a talk by Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotovely in the wake of protests against Hotovely's appearance by J Street and others.[52] It is highly unlikely that Rabbi Roth did so because she thought her disinviting Hotovely would somehow increase support for Israel from within the circles of Israel's Jewish critics on campus. Did those in Hillel International who tolerated Roth's blackballing of Hotovely believe it would?

In the so-called Al Aqsa intifada that began in the fall of 2015, the PA urged Palestinians to defend the Al Aqsa mosque from what it falsely claimed to be Israeli depredations. Israelis were soon being killed by Palestinian assailants. A Jewish student group at Stanford wanted to hold a vigil for the Israeli victims and asked the Hillel rabbi, Serena Eisenberg, to lead the memorial prayer. But she reportedly refused to do so because the Palestinian assailants who were killed in the course of their attacks were not also being memorialized and because J Street was not co-sponsoring the

event.[53] It is likely that Rabbi Eisenberg was not simply bowing to J Street students and like-minded others but was acting on her own predilections. In any case, does the American Jewish community really want to embrace this new comprehension of Jewish morality? And, if not, how much will the community nevertheless be silent and hamstrung because this is the morality of the day as pushed by the elites with whom it identifies?

Israel's primary obligation is not to win a popularity contest, either in the world at large, or within the ranks of a hostile Left, or within some Jewish "big tent," many of whose members have priorities inimical to the state's well-being. Rather, its obligation is to protect and defend its citizens, build the state along the same ethical, Jewish, and democratic principles that have been its essential guidelines since its founding, and make its case as best it can to the world, including to the jaundiced within the Jewish world. It has no obligation to compromise its vital interests for the sake of advancing its case.

American Jews and their institutions that support Israel in its pursuit of that primary obligation should act accordingly. If, for example, campus Hillels exerted themselves to promote an honest, educational exposition of Israel's case, rather than compromising their doing so for the sake of not offending other-minded Jewish students, they may find that they win over some of those students, particularly among the ambivalent. They will certainly strengthen the resolve of those students genuinely sympathetic to Israel. And as to those who are not winnable, Hillel leaders and others should remember that it has always been thus. Every assault on Jews and indictment of Jews has invariably gained the support of some Jews who want to distance themselves from the community of the besieged. And invariably, the Jews who have taken this course have sought to ascribe their doing so to some higher moral purpose. Whenever Jews, or a portion of their community, have been under attack, there has always sprung up the equivalent not only of J Street but of more extreme groups, full-throated supporters of the Jews' attackers, such as Jewish Voice for Peace.

The more comprehensive explication of the history of the Zionist movement, and defense of Israel, that Hillels fail to provide is also all too often missing from Jewish education at earlier levels, whether Jewish day schools or after-school programs. It is common for such schools to

promote support for Israel. But they typically do little to educate their students in the nature of the threats faced by Israel since its inception and the goals of its enemies over the years, the objective of the state's eradication advanced by both the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, and the propaganda war, indoctrination of constituents, and incitement as well as phyical attacks undertaken by both Palestinian leaderships and through which they seek to advance their annihilationist agenda. This failure to educate more fully – perhaps out of a desire to avoid material deemed by some to be controversial – leaves students unprepared for bigoted assaults on Israel, and on them as Israel's supporters, that they will all too often encounter in their colleges and universities.

One of the organizations of Jews established in recent years to oppose Israeli policy is the IfNotNow movement, which identifies "ending the occupation" as its goal and seeks to counter American Jewish entities that they perceive as supporting "the occupation."[54] There is nothing in their literature that notes the many times, including in recent decades, when Palestinian leaders walked away from Israeli and American proposals for dividing the land between the Jordan and the Mediterranean into two states. There is no noting that Gaza has been under full Palestinian control since 2005 and that the vast majority of Palestinians on the West Bank live under Palestinian governance. There is no weighing that the rulers of Gaza have launched thousands of rockets at Israeli civilians and call not only for the murder of all Israelis but the murder of all Jews. There is no acknowledging that the leader of the Palestinian Authority has said he will never recognize the legitimacy of a Jewish state within any borders.

A video of IfNotNow members shows a number of them participating in a ceremony that seems modeled on an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, except that in the latter the speakers take responsibility for their earlier problematic behavior and humbly seek the strength to forego such behavior in the present and future. In contrast, the IfNotNow members characterize themselves as victims of their past – of Jewish educations that lauded Israel and failed to expose them to Israel's alleged transgressions against the Palestinians – and declare their break from that past and their righteous quest to set right Israel's wrongs.

Perhaps these individuals' Jewish education did provide them a fuller immersion in the realities confronting Israel in dealing with its Palestinian

neighbors and the challenges entailed in the quest for a more comprehensive separation of the two populations, but they were not paying attention. Or perhaps they chose to jettison what they had learned once they were at college and faced with a zeitgeist that rewarded the adopting of perspectives different from those in which they had been educated. But it could also be that their education in Jewish day or after-school programs or summer camps entailed promotion of Israel without exposure to the threats posed by the state's neighbors and the difficulties addressing those threats. The latter reality would not, of course, excuse these partisans of IfNotNow from their failure to educate themselves, but it would represent a weakness of Jewish education that needs to be corrected.

The shortcomings of Israel-related education in Jewish day and after-school programs are only a very small part of the problems surrounding education about Israel in pre-college public and private schools. The larger difficulties, while not caused by Jewish communal organizations, have been allowed to metastasize by the failure of Jewish communal organizations and their leadership to counter them and even at times by their seeking to block efforts to counter anti-Israel bias in the schools.

Texts and curricula produced by Arab states and by academic Middle East Studies departments hostile to Israel have widely been offered to and adopted by public and private schools for use in history, social studies, and related courses.[55] Teachers also commonly and uncritically download material from media websites likewise hostile to Israel, with little or no vetting for accuracy or objectivity. Again, Jewish organizations have done little to counter this trend.

An illustrative example is provided by the schools in my own city, the Boston suburb of Newton, Massachusetts, whose population is about one third Jewish. A parent complaint in 2012 about factually false anti-Israel assertions being taught in a high school classroom was dismissed by school officials. This led to some grass-roots rallying around the issue and to calls for a review of curricula and vetting of anti-Israel bias. School officials responded by stonewalling, rejecting all complaints, and refusing to provide town residents with copies of the curricula in question – despite Massachusetts state law mandating public access to public school curricula.

Rather than support the concerned parents and seek clarification of the curricula and potential problems, the Boston Combined Jewish Philanthropies, Anti-Defamation League, Jewish Community Relations Council, and a number of local rabbis – apparently without examining the relevant teaching materials – all came to the defense of school officials.

Some in the community ultimately turned to Judicial Watch, which filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) petition with the Newton school system, requesting the teaching materials that the system had until then refused to provide. Newton subsequently did hand over relevant course material – how comprehensively is uncertain – beginning in the spring of 2015. Judicial Watch, at the request of community activists, transferred the material for analysis to the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA). (In the interests of full disclosure, I am a member of CAMERA's national board.) In 2017, CAMERA published a monograph on the material entitled *Indoctrinating Our Youth: How a U.S. Public School Curriculum Skews the Arab-Israeli Conflict and Islam*.[56] (Parents' complaints, and the provided material, also touched – in addition to the teaching about Israel – on the teaching of Islam in the schools. Complaints have been raised across the nation about such teaching, challenging both the accuracy of what is taught and the appropriateness of teaching Islamic doctrine to an extent that no other religion – most notably Christianity or Judaism – is covered and that would seem to run counter to standard understandings, vis-a-vis public schools, regarding the separation of church and state.)

The CAMERA monograph documents myriad factual errors in the course material provided by the Newton school system, as well as omission of information vital to an understanding of the Arab-Israeli conflict, with both the factual errors and the omissions reflecting an anti-Israel bias. Publication of the monograph finally led the school system to acknowledge publicly a problem with the curricula and to promise reform (although in subsequent statements some school officials backtracked from this straightforward acknowledgment). It also led some of the Jewish leadership that had uncritically supported the school system but had already somewhat shifted their stances as more information about what was being taught in the schools was revealed – leadership including that of the local ADL and JCRC – to acknowledge more fully that there were indeed problems at the schools.

But not everyone among the community's Jewish leaders responded this way. In November 2017, the local Newton newspaper, the *Newton Tab*, published an interview with CAMERA's executive director about the monograph. Included in the interview was a discussion of CAMERA's three recommendations to the Newton Public Schools. These were: 1) having teaching materials carefully vetted for accuracy and academic rigor, 2) making the curriculum and teaching materials easily available to parents and other interested citizens, and 3) excluding from the classroom those materials that had already been proven to be biased and factually unreliable.[57]

A subsequent letter to the *Tab* from five local rabbis, including Toba Spitzer, president of the Massachusetts Board of Rabbis, attacked the article and the monograph. The rabbis declared:

> "...We are troubled that outside groups [in fact, CAMERA is based in Newton and a number of its board and staff have family members attending Newton public schools] with a clear political agenda are trying to advance their own interests by criticizing the school system unfairly and inaccurately.
>
> "Our ultimate hope is that students in the Newton public schools will learn the stories from both sides of the conflict, and will grow to appreciate that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is complex, not that one side is 'right' and the other 'wrong.'
>
> "That possibility grows smaller when outside parties, including so-called 'media watch groups,' attempt to dictate what the 'truth' is, which group's grievances get aired over the other's, or what curriculum materials should be taught in schools, with the goal of forwarding their own specific agenda.
>
> "Just as a variety of opinions about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict exist within the Greater Boston Jewish community about Israel, so, too, are there many legitimate angles from which to teach our students about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
>
> "We support the Newton Schools for approaching the subject carefully and with respect for the many human narratives of Israelis and Palestinians, an educational perspective which advances the cause of peace for Israel and her neighbors."[58]

Perhaps not surprisingly, the rabbis did not cite or challenge any of the CAMERA monograph's specific claims of inaccuracies and distortions in the classroom materials handed over by the Newton Schools. There is in fact nothing to suggest that any of them actually read the monograph.

That rabbis dismiss calls for factual accuracy, and concerns over the many examples of falsehoods taught in the curriculum materials, as a promotion of pro-Israel bias; that they argue, in effect, that there are no facts and no "truth" but only "many human narratives"; and that they declare the objective of the Newton Schools should not be teaching about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as fully and accurately as possible but rather providing what to their particular lights is a "perspective which advances the cause of peace" is another clear example of some within the Jewish community seeking to accommodate popular, primarily leftist, indictments of Israel, however divorced from historical and present reality, and justifying their doing so with claims of being motivated by higher moral purpose.

Anti-Israel curricula and programs have infiltrated public and private schools across America with little if any pushback from Jewish communities and all too often with Jewish support. The assault on Israel at all levels of the American education system will almost inevitably have an impact on American public opinion and ultimately, as its sponsors hope, on American policy. The supine Jewish response will have consequences.

But many American Jews are clearly willing to subsume to other conflicting priorities, whatever commitment they may feel to Israel's survival and well-being. Many may choose to delude themselves into believing those other priorities and Israel's well-being are in fact reconciliable, or they may simply choose to give precedence to the views of groups with which they identify and which adopt a jaundiced, even hostile, attitude towards Israel. In any case, such a course of falling in line with Israel's often clearly bigoted critics is, again, consonant with recurrent Jewish responses to the circumstance of Jews being under siege. And, once more consonant with historical precedent, those who adopt such attitudes cast their stance as the more ethical course.

A cynic may view it as simply the more self-protective course. But then one can question how self-protective it will ultimately be, as the groups with which those who adopt this path identify – generally groups associated

with the so-called "progressive" wing of the American Left – move further and further into embracing political positions traditionally inimical to Jews while also increasingly tolerating within their ranks not only the open expression of anti-Israel bigotry but of anti-Jewish sentiments as well.

And yet recent events – as well as the modern history of elements of Jewish communities in Europe and in America seeking to accommodate anti-Jewish sentiment and anti-Jewish indictments, a history that at its inception included, for some, embracing anti-Zionism – may point to how segments of the Jewish community will manage the burgeoning Jew-baiting of the "progressive" Left. Michael Chabon, in his speech at the HUC-JIR commencement, not only reprised his oft-repeated attacks on Israel but also attacked Judaism and advocated the disappearance of the Jewish faith and its followers. He did so in the language of universalism and breaking down barriers.[59] Perhaps the doyens of the "academic, spiritual, and professional leadership development center of Reform Judaism," who so vigorously defended their invitation to Chabon, wanted to impart to their newly minted rabbis and cantors Chabon's answer to the challenges facing the Jewish world. Perhaps they wanted their graduates to consider seriously not only Chabon's anti-Israel arguments but his anti-Jewish proposals as well, his calls for the dissolution of the faith and its followers. Such a course, and not simply a distancing from Israel, is, after all, the logical ultimate step, the reductio ad absurdum, in the Jewish accommodation of anti-Jewish sentiment.

Notes

1 Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State* (New York: Dover, 1988), p.154.

2 "Reform Judaism: The Pittsburgh Platform," November 1885, jewishvirtuallibrary.org.

3 *Brandeis on Zionism: A Collection of Addresses and Statements by Louis D. Brandeis* (Washington, D.C.: Zionist Organization of America, 1942), p.11.

4 Ibid., p.23.

5 Gay Talese, *The Kingdom and the Power* (New York: World, 1966), p.168.

6 "Reform Judaism: The Columbus Platform, 1937, jewishvirtuallibrary.org.

7 Yoram Hazony, *The Jewish State: The Struggle for Israel's Soul* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

8 Ibid, pp.213-214. Magnes's interlocutor was Harry St. John Philby.

9 Ibid, p.215. See also, Arthur A. Goren, ed., *Dissenter in Zion: From the Writings of Judah L. Magnes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1982), document 66, "An International Enclave," pp.282-285. The document was published in *The New York Times*, Nov. 24, 1929.

10 Cited in Shabtai Teveth, *Ben-Gurion: The Burning Ground* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1987), pp.611-12.

11 Cited in Hazony, *The Jewish State*, p.231.

12 Ibid., p.247.

13 See Goren, ed., *Dissenter in Zion*, pp.461-520.

14 Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), Near East and South Asia, "Daily Report Supplement, Israel-PLO Agreement," Tuesday, Sept. 14, 1993, pp. 4-5.

15 Efraim Karsh, *Arafat's War* (New York: Grove Press, 2003), p. 59.

16 Ari Shavit, "Why We Hate Him: The Real Reason," *Haaretz*, Dec. 26, 1997.

17 See Tom Rose, "NJCRAC's Mistake," *Forward*, July 12, 1996.

18 Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab, *Jews and the New American Scene* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1995), p. 152.

19 Jack Wertheimer, *A People Divided* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), p. 38.

20 Lipset and Rabb, *Jews and the New American Scene*, pp.54, 134.

21 Ibid., p. 54.

22 Rafael Medoff, *The Deafening Silence* (New York: Shapolsky, 1987), p. 178.

23 Arthur Hertzberg, *The Jews in America* (New York: Columbia University, 1997), p. 354.

24 "2016 Hate Crime Statistics," https://ucr.fbi.gov.

25 Gary Rosenblatt, "Frustration with Israel Is Growing Here At Home," *The New York Jewish Week*, Jan. 6, 2016.

26 Ibid.

27 Elliot Jaeger, "Have Reform Jews given up on Israel?" *The Jerusalem Post*, Jan. 7, 2016.

28 Ibid.

29 "Reform Jewish Movement: Concerned About White House Jerusalem Announcement," Union for Reform Judaism, Dec. 5, 2017.

30 Ibid.

31 See, for example, "Our Policy" statement on "Settlements and Creeping Annexation," jstreet.org. Also, "J Street Calls for Stronger American Response to Israeli Settlement Expansion," press release, June 6, 2014, jstreet.org. Also, "Without Strong Action, Israeli Government Will Continue to Ignore US Opposition to Settlement Expansion," press release, Oct. 6, 2016, jstreet.org. Also, "The settlements are illegal. It's past time to say so." Petition, jstreet.org.

32 Ibid.

33 See, for example, "Statement by Jeremy Ben-Ami, Executive Director, on Israeli Airstrikes in Gaza," press release, December 27, 2008, jstreet.org. Also, Chris Gold, "J Street spars with Reform Judaism Leader over Gaza," *The Hill*, Jan. 5, 2009.

34 See, for example, "Our Policy" statement on "Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS)," jstreet.org.

35 "Our Policy" statement on "Iran," jstreet.org. Also, "J Street received over $500,000 to push Iran deal," *The Times of Israel*, May 22, 2016.

36 Ari Soffer, "J-Street Speaker Calls for End of 'Jewish State'," Israelnationalnews.com, Mar. 29, 2015.

37 See, for example, "New Israel Fund," NGO Monitor, June 21, 2018.

38 "Remarks by Jonathan A. Greenblatt," adl.org, Apr. 17, 2016.

39 See, for example, Morton A. Klein and Liz Berney, Esq., "Why Does the ADL Continue to Hinder Anti-BDS Efforts?" zoa.org, June 20, 2016.

40 See, for example, "What is your position regarding Palestinian refugees?" under "Policies," jewishvoiceforpeace.org.

41 Miriam Elman, "Demonization: Durham NC City Council bans police exchanges with Israel," legalinsurrection.com, Apr. 22, 2018.

42 Eliana Rudee, "Durham BDS Activists Employed by Local Synagogues, Federation," JNS News Service, May 7, 2018.

43 Ibid.

44 Michael Chabon and Ayelet Waldman, ed., *Kingdom of Olives and Ash: Writers Confront the Occupation* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2017).

45 "Special Memorandum: Concerning the Recent HUC Graduation," coalitionforjewishvalues.org, May 28, 2018.

46 Michael Chabon, "Those People, Over There," tabletmag.com, May 30, 2018. (Text of commencement speech.)

47 Morin Zaray, "Why I Walked Out on my Graduation," *Atlanta Jewish Times*, May 30, 2018.

48 Ben Sales, "Michael Chabon attacks Jewish inmarriage and Israel's occupation in speech to rabbinical students," Jewish Telegraphic Agency, May 25, 2018.

49 "Israel Policy," Hillel Israel Guidelines, hillel.org.

50 "Standards of Partnership," Hillel Israel Guidelines, hillel.org.

51 Aiden Pink, "'Open Hillel' Is a Much Bigger Problem Than You Think," thetower.org, Issue 20, Nov. 2014.

52 See, for example, Raphael Ahren, "Princeton Hillel cancels Hotovely speech after dovish Jewish groups protest," *The Times of Israel*, Nov. 6, 2017.

53 See, for example, Paul Miller, "Is Jewish students' safe space on Israel threatened by 'pro-Israel' lobby?" Jewish News Service, Apr. 2, 2017.

54 See "About Us," ifnotnowmovement.org.

55 See, for example, Jewish Telegraph Agency staff, "Tainted Teachings, What Your Kids are Learning about Israel, America and Islam, Parts 1 through 4," Campus Watch, meforum.org, Oct. 27, 2005.

56 Steven Stotsky, *Indoctrinating Our Youth: How a U.S. Public School Curriculum Skews the Arab-Israeli Conflict and Islam* (Boston: Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America, 2017).

57 Andy Levin, "CAMERA focuses on Newton schools' Arab-Israeli conflict curriculum," *Newton Tab*, Nov. 21, 2017.

58 "Letters," *Newton Tab*, Dec. 6, 2017.

59 Michael Chabon, "Those People, Over There," tabletmag.com, May 30, 2018. (Text of commencement speech.)

Recent BESA Center Publications

Mideast Security and Policy Studies

No. 139 Greece, Israel, and China's «Belt and Road» Initiative, *George Tzogopoulos*, October 2017

No. 140 Arabs and Turks Welcomed the Balfour Declaration, *Efraim Karsh*, November 2017

No. 141 Schoolbooks of the Palestinian Authority (PA): The Attitude to the Jews, to Israel and to Peace, *Arnon Groiss and Ronni Shaked*, December 2017 (Hebrew)

No. 142 Conflicting Interests: Tehran and the National Aspirations of the Iraqi Kurds, *Doron Itzchakov,* December 2017

No. 143 Russia's Strategic Advantage in the Baltics: A Challenge to NATO? *Jiri Valenta and Leni Friedman Valenta,* January 2018

No. 144 Surviving Donald Trump: Israel's Strategic Options, *Louis René Beres*, February 2018

No. 145 Militant Islam's War Against the West, *Max Singer,* March 2018

No. 146 Reframing the Middle Eastern and Palestinian Refugee Crises, *Alex Joffe and Asaf Romirowsky,* March 2018

No. 147 Water, Trump, and Israel's National Security, *Donald D.A. Schaefer,* March 2018

No. 148 Sudan's Policy in the Era of Arab Upheaval: For Good or for Evil? *Haim Koren,* April 2018

No. 149 The Privileged Palestinian Refugees, *Efraim Karsh,* May 2018

No. 150 The Israel Defense Forces, 2017-1948, *Kenneth S. Brower,* May 2018

No. 151 In Memoriam: Per Ahlmark, *Manfred Gerstenfeld,* June 2018

No. 152 Iran's President Rouhani: Part of the Problem, Not Part of the Solution, *Udi Evental,* July 2018 (English and Hebrew)

No. 153 China's Military Base in Djibouti, *Mordechai Chaziza,* August 2018

No. 154 The Oslo Disaster Revisited: How It Happened, *Efraim Karsh,* September 2018

No. 155 The «Separation» Fence: A Political Border in a Security Guise, Gershon Hacohen, October 2018 (Hebrew only)

No. 156 The North Korean Air Force: A Declining or Evolving Threat? *Noam Hartoch and Alon Levkowitz,* October 2018

No. 157 The 1981 AWACS Deal: AIPAC and Israel Challenge Reagan, *Arnon Gutfeld,* November 2018

No. 158 Pakistan and Its Militants: Who Is Mainstreaming Whom? *James M. Dorsey,* November 2018

No. 159 American Jews and Their Israel Problem, *Kenneth Levin,* December 2018

Policy Memoranda

No. 7 The Gaza War, 2014 – Initial Assessment, *Efraim Inbar and Amir Rapaport*, December 2014 (Hebrew)

No. 8 Perfect Storm in the Middle East, Yaakov Amidror, June 2015 (Hebrew), July 2015 (English)

No. 9 Israel-Greece Relations, *Arye Mekel,* September 2015 (Hebrew)

No. 10 Space Wars, *Aby Har-Even,* May 2016 (Hebrew)

Colloquia on Strategy and Diplomacy

No. 28	The IDF Force Structure (Hebrew)	May 2014
No. 29	Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations: Whereto? (Hebrew)	August 2014
No. 30	IDF Challenges (Hebrew)	August 2016

www.besacenter.org