



PERSPECTIVES

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Antisemitism Is Woven into Western Culture

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: It is not difficult to prove that antisemitism is an integral part of Western culture. To be clear: this is radically different from saying that all Europeans are antisemites. Yet Western politicians and leaders almost never admit this evident reality about their societies' cultures.

One of the few Europeans to have stated unambiguously that antisemitism lurks within Western culture is Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby. In 2016 he wrote:

Antisemitism is an insidious evil. The habits of antisemitism have been burrowing into European and British culture for as long as we can remember. In England, during the late medieval period, the Jewish community faced constant persecution: Shylock, the great villain of the *Merchant of Venice*, was a cliché of his time. By the time Cromwell reopened England to Jewish settlement under the Commonwealth in the 1650s, antisemitism had mutated within common parlance and culture. It is a shameful truth that, through its theological teachings, the church, which should have offered an antidote, compounded the spread of this virus.

The centuries-old interweaving of antisemitism into Western culture shows up in many ways. Contemporary antisemitism contains not only major elements of medieval antisemitism but also newer manifestations. In many new ideologies, movements, and intellectual currents, expressions of antisemitism eventually come to the fore. The hatred may focus on Jews or on Israel. The phenomenon can be found in a variety of arenas.

In the human rights arena, for example, antisemitism is clearly visible. The UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is at the top of the list of promoters of the newest type of antisemitism, the endorsement of Israel-hatred. Many of its

member states are dictatorships. Hillel Neuer, executive director of UN Watch, summarized it thus: “The United Nations Human Rights Council, located in Geneva, has a standing agenda item against Israel. Israel is the only country specifically targeted at every meeting. Not even major human rights abusers like China, Cuba, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria or Zimbabwe are subjected to such treatment.”

Feminism is another movement in which antisemitism frequently manifests itself. American emeritus professor of psychology and women studies Phyllis Chesler, herself a prominent feminist, was invited in 2003 to speak to a mainly African-American and Hispanic-American feminist audience at a conference at Barnard College. She was asked where she stood on the issue of women in Palestine. Chesler answered that Islam is the largest practitioner of gender and religious apartheid in the world. She backed up her statement by referencing forced veiling, arranged marriage, polygamy, honor-based violence, and honor killing in Palestinian society. Chesler says, “A near riot broke out. I was hustled out for my safety. These feminists didn’t care about Palestine, but about demonizing Israel.”

American academic and feminist Angela Davis, a former Black Panther and communist, is an extreme anti-Israel inciter. She is among those who have compared the killing of an African-American man by a white policeman in Ferguson, MO to alleged, entirely unrelated Israeli actions in Gaza.

The platform of Black Lives Matter, another egalitarian movement, accuses Israel of genocide.

Enemies of Israel among movements that focus on the rights of the LGBTQ community often accuse Israel of “pinkwashing,” which is the accusation that Israel’s granting of equal rights to the gay community is simply a means of diverting attention from its (supposed) discrimination against Palestinians. In 2017, organizers of the Gay Pride parade in Chicago expelled marchers carrying flags with the Star of David.

The vegetarian and vegan populations are increasing in numbers, and their ideological elements are strengthening. The comparison of the suffering inflicted on animals to the evils of the Holocaust is a recurring theme. Ingrid Newkirk, founder of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), used Holocaust analogies as long ago as 1983: “A rat is a pig is a boy” and “Six million people died in concentration camps, but six billion broiler chickens will die this year in slaughterhouses”. The term “animal Holocaust” has recurred in PETA material over the years, for which the organization occasionally apologizes.

Then National Director of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Abe Foxman had

this to say on this practice:

The effort by PETA to compare the deliberate systematic murder of millions of Jews to the issue of animal rights is abhorrent. PETA's effort to seek 'approval' for their 'Holocaust on Your Plate' campaign is outrageous, offensive and takeschutzpah to new heights...Abusive treatment of animals should be opposed, but cannot and must not be compared to the Holocaust. The uniqueness of human life is the moral underpinning for those who resisted the hatred of Nazis and others ready to commit genocide even today.

The animal rights movement in Europe has succeeded in banning Jewish ritual slaughter in several European countries. Newer cases are more difficult for the movement because they focus mainly on Muslim ritual slaughter. The children's rights movement, too, often attacks non-medical circumcision.

In opposing the threat of genocide from the use of atom bombs, an expression in mainstream use is "nuclear Holocaust." In his 2007 statement, President George W. Bush said Iran's nuclear program threatened to put "a region already known for instability and violence under the shadow of a nuclear holocaust." The phrase is in common use across the internet, in films, and in fiction. It radically distorts the uniqueness of the Holocaust, which was preceded by a complex neo-industrial process of discrimination, robbing, and physical abuse of Jews.

In academia, post-colonialism has become a popular new intellectual category. At some point Israel's enemies started calling it a colonial power. This new expression of antisemitism gained traction and is often used by leftists against Israel. The term is completely inappropriate: Israel's behavior bears no relation to the massive crimes of the Belgian, British, French, German, Portuguese, and Spanish in their colonies over the centuries. Those powers invaded and conquered their colonies to make money from them. The Jewish People did the precise opposite. Not only did it return to its ancestral homeland from which most of its members (though by no means all) had been exiled, rather than invade foreign lands, but it invested great efforts and substantial sums of money and efforts into reviving the land from its longstanding neglect and disrepair. Still, the utter falseness of the comparison has done nothing to hinder Israel's enemies in academia.

Anthropologist Philip Carl Salzman, who teaches at Montreal's McGill University, said: "[post-colonialism does not so much illuminate the peoples, places, and times of which it speaks, but rather imposes its discourse and attempts through *ad hominem* and partisan arguments to silence all others.](#)"

Another new concept is intersectionality, which tries to unite the oppressed in contemporary societies across ethnicity, gender, and class. Just as the nineteenth-century left-wing anthem the *Internationale* called for workers to unite, intersectionality calls for minority victims to unite. The only victimized minority not invited is the Jew.

None of this is to say that the majority of human rights promoters, feminists, vegan ideologists, academics promoting post-colonial theory, and so on are antisemites. But their movements contain significant degrees of antisemitism – new hate elements that link back to earlier ones.

Interconnected to all this is the concept of absolute evil in contemporary society: to commit genocide or behave like Nazis. In an extreme example of the extent to which antisemitism is interwoven into Western culture, about 150 million out of 400 million adult EU citizens believe Israelis behave like Nazis toward the Palestinians or intend to exterminate them.

The use of semantics has been summed up by French linguist Georges-Elia Sarfati. He said the false equivalences used against Israel “are so evil because they attach the four major negative characteristics of Western history in the last century – Nazism, racism, colonialism and imperialism – to the State of Israel. They relate to a collective memory and are easily memorized.”

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