



ACPR Policy Paper No. 104

Arab And Islamic Anti-Semitism

Raphael Israeli¹

Apologia

There is no doubt that, though the anti-Jewish sentiment that one detects in Arab and Islamic utterances has deep and ancient historical roots, it has been exacerbated in recent decades due to the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict and the resultant bloodshed. And, as the conflict escalated, so did the anti-Semitic rhetoric on the part of Israel's rivals. One would have expected then, that as the peace talks progress between the Arabs and Israel, there would be a decrease in the intensity of anti-Israeli and anti-Jewish virulence among those of the Arabs who have succeeded in overcoming the psychological hurdle separating them from Israel. But it turns out that reality frustrates hopes, so much so that the very assumption that innate hatred and fundamental attitudes inherent in a religion or a culture, can shrink or be reversed in the face of a changing reality, is called into question.

Sources of Arab and Islamic Anti-Semitism

Arabs in general have been using the words "Jews", "Zionists", and "Israelis" interchangeably, despite their protestations to the contrary. The negative stance they usually adopt towards these terms and what they symbolize, stems from three strata of sources:

- The traditional anti-Jewish attitudes cultivated by the Holy Qur'an and other Islamic writings;
- An incremental layer of Christian anti-Semitic stereotypes which have seeped into the Arab world, either through the Christian Arabs who are part of the Arab national movement, or through the importation of such European writings as the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*; and
- As a result of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, and the ensuing Arab need to dehumanize Jews in order to justify their annihilation.

The Islamic element in anti-Jewish attitudes of the Arabs finds its wildest and most vitriolic expression in the writings of the fundamentalist Muslims, foremost among them – Sayyid

¹ **Raphael Israeli** is a Professor of Islamic, Middle Eastern and Chinese history at Hebrew University, Jerusalem. **Professor Israeli** is the author of 15 books and some 80 scholarly articles in those domains. A member of the Steering Committee of the ACPR, his work in Hebrew, French and English frequently appears in leading international publications, including *Nativ*.

Qut`b, the martyred head of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt, who has become, especially since he was executed by the Nasserite regime in 1966, the guiding beam of all Muslim radicals in this regard. In his long essay entitled "Our Struggle with the Jews", he toes the doctrinal line of medieval Islam, but his modern usage of the old doctrine extends and even transcends the original boundaries. For, if during the times of the Prophet there already were references to the Jews, which found their expression in the Holy Qur`an, and in the vast body of Hadith literature, in the modern times, and at the hands of radicals like Qut`b, the accusations against, and the condemnations of the Jews have gained in intensity and emotionalism due to the bitterness generated by the conflict. Hence the tremendous intellectual and scholarly effort exerted by many Arabs and Muslims in general, but fundamentalists in particular, to develop this repository of irrational hatred into a rational and systematic "scientific" doctrine.

Qut`b wrote his essay in the 1950s, and he remains an excellent example of this endeavor, when we consider that his work is profusely quoted by other Muslim radicals who have wide currency in the Islamic world. So much so, that the government of Saudi Arabia, the so-called "moderate" Islamic state, which does not attract much scorn from the west due to her wealth and petroleum, found it necessary to re-issue that book in the 1970s, together with other anti-Semitic materials such as the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Since Qut`b taught that the only divine truth left to humankind was Islam, it follows that all others, including Christianity and Judaism, are repositories of distortion and falsehood, not reflections of divine revelations. Therefore Islam, as the only one Truth, must retake its role of universal leadership in order to liberate mankind from their errors. Moreover, Jews and Christians, as purveyors of false revelations, were ipso facto insidious to Islam, as the current Jewish-Christian conspiracy against it proves. Therefore, no coexistence with them is possible. In his own words:

Truth and falsehood cannot coexist on earth... When Islam makes a general declaration to establish the lordship of Allah on earth and to liberate humanity from the worship of other creatures, it is contested by those who have usurped Allah's sovereignty on earth. They will never make peace. Then, Islam goes forth destroying them to free humans from their power... The liberating struggle of Jihad does not cease until all religion belongs to Allah.

In Qut`b's thinking the Jewish danger to Islam, and the West's assault against Islam, are one and the same, because the Jews are only a metaphor of general danger to Islam's destiny, due to their basic dislike of Islam. The Jews intend to destroy it and they would use any means to attain that goal. According to Ron Nettler, who translated Qut`b's work:

In a deceptively simple and highly readable style, Qut`b wove together Islamic historical, religious, political and emotional strands. In the resultant tapestry Islam's sacred sources came together in the focal point of the Jewish problem. With literary precision and religious acumen, Qut`b created a clear and prominent Jewish physiognomy on a tight-knitted fabric which promised great durability over the years. This promise was not frustrated.

Qut`b indeed transmitted a message of eternal enmity between Jews and Islam, since the inception of Islam to the present day. It is a war that "has not been extinguished, and its blaze continues raging in all corners of the world". The Jewish conspiracy is designed to pry Muslims away from their faith. This is supported by quotations from the Holy Qur`an. Qut`b transposes the old stereotypes anchored in the Islamic tradition into the modern world, and finds Zionism as a contemporary expression of the old machinations of Jews against Islam, in much the same vein as the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* which circulate in the Arab world and lend "confirmation" from independent Christian sources, about the nature of the Jews. In his essay, Qut`b elaborates on the natural disposition of the Jews:

The Jews feel that they are cut off from the tree of life, and they just wait for humanity to meet with disaster. They suffer these same punishments repeatedly, in the form of dissensions among peoples and war, which the Jews themselves foment in order to make profits from them. Through these wars and disturbances they cultivate their continuing hatred and the destructiveness which they impose on people and which others impose on them. All the evil arises only from their destructive egoism...

Translated into political terms, the Islamic grievances against the Jews, Zionism and Israel can be summed up in the following terms:

- Israel gave shelter to the Jews, whom the Qur`an had termed “Wretched people”. Jews are obviously not a nation, only a faith tolerated under Islamic rule (*dhimma*); therefore, their claim to a separate political existence amounts to an insult, as it were, to the holy tradition of Islam.
- The very fact that the Jews, who had lived for generations as *dhimmi* people under the rule of Islam, defies and exposes to criticism the traditional Muslim allegation that the People of the Book had enjoyed equality, protection and benevolence under Muslim rulers. The massive exodus of the Jews from Arab lands to Israel belies Muslim contentions that fair treatment had been meted out to the Jews in their midst;
- Those same Jews who had been condemned to humiliation and misery in the Holy Qur`an, have dared, and even succeeded, although vastly outnumbered, in repeatedly defeating the “Elected Nation of Allah”. Despite their assurances to the contrary, Arabs and Muslims in general regard today’s Israelis as descendants of the Qur`anic Jews, hence the correlation between the two, which serves to aggravate Muslim sentiments against Israel;
- Palestine had been part of the Abode of Islam from the early 7th Century through the Ottoman rule, until it was taken over by the British and then by the Jews in the current century. The inter-*regnum* of the Crusaders was a short-lived exception to that rule, inasmuch as they were eventually defeated by the Muslims under Saladin, who restored the land to Islam. The Jewish usurpation of Palestine is thus considered as nothing more than an ephemeral crusader-like colonialist experiment, doomed to failure because it contradicts the logic of history. Thus, Jihad (Holy War) remains, as it has always been, a legitimate tool to be used by the Muslims to retrieve their land.
- A special status is accorded in this scheme to Jerusalem, not only as the core of the Holy Land but also as the place whence the Prophet made his ascension to Heaven.

As regards the European stratum of anti-Semitism borrowed by the Muslims, it is expressed not only in the *Protocols* and the Blood Libel which have found wide currency in the Arab and Islamic worlds in this century, but also in the references to the Shylock depiction of the Jews and Israelis. The Arab media, and even “scholarly” books written by western-educated scholars, delight in bringing up the following Christian-inspired themes:

- The “International Conspiracy” of the Jews and world Zionism, are said to be aimed at undermining the world socio-economic and cultural systems, with the ultimate aim of bringing them under their domination;
- Zionism and world Jewry are often likened to an octopus which extends its tentacles whenever possible in a relentless drive to advance its ambition of enslaving humanity;
- In order to achieve its objectives, world Jewry allies itself to aggressive forces akin to it, such as colonialism and imperialism;

- The Jews in general, and American Jews in particular, are said to dominate and control the banking system, the media and the political arena. They plot behind the scene, concoct intrigues and support shadowy figures in order to advance their case;
- At times, however, Jews and Zionism are “envied” by their Arab slanderers for their determination and *savoir faire*, and for their meticulousness of planning, devilish as it may be.

While both Islamic and European-inspired anti-Semitism have left their imprint on the Arab perception of Jews and Israel despite their irrationality, there has recently been an added rational element which is tied with the volatile fortunes of the Arab-Israeli conflict. So, while the basic anti-Jewish stereotypes provide the permanent infra-structure of Arab political thought, a process of development is discernable in the articulation of the anti-Jewish attitudes, in accordance with current political events. For example, any Israeli raid into Arab territory will be cited as characteristic perfidiousness and aggressiveness of the Jews, and any Israeli political triumph imputed to control of international politics. However, any defeat of Israel in the international arena will herald the awakening of the world conscience to the danger of Jewish evil. When the Israelis respond to Arab diplomatic initiatives, they are regarded as cowards who are overwhelmed by Arab power and righteousness; when they do not, they are accused of the legendary Jewish obstinacy.

Israel comes then to be regarded as a kinetic entity which reveals different faces under different circumstances: on the one hand, Israel lacks the prerequisites of a state, but on the other, it has the power to assert itself with the impact of a strong nation; whereas Israel could not survive without aid from her colonialist and imperialist allies, it can also manipulate world powers to her own ends; Israel is accused of “Nazi arrogance”, but she is nevertheless a shaky, ephemeral entity whose days are numbered. In order to cope with the unacceptable concept of an invincible Israel, which is constituted by evil and miserable Jews, her bad deeds and failures can always be interpreted as manifestations of her satanic character, while her successes or apparently positive steps can be either imputed to the powers standing behind her or to her arrogance or demonic propensity for secretly plotting and manipulating, as befits a Jewish state.

The layers which make up the Arab perception of Israel can only be differentiated analytically; however, in daily usage they appear so inseparably intertwined that it is often impossible to distinguish between them. When one reads systematically the Arab media or writings by Arab thinkers or Muslim fundamentalists, one is amazed by the wide array of accusations, scorn, condemnations and calumniations that are heaped indiscriminately against the Jews, the Zionists and the Israelis, drawing from all those sources simultaneously, and weaving all those claims and contentions into a powerful fabric of hatred, disgust, fear and suspicion. These accusations include, in fact:

- The racist and imperialist nature of Israel and Zionism, which are inherent in Jewish nature;
- Israel and Zionism undermine the world order, in accordance with the millennial Jewish perversion as described in the *Protocols*;
- Zionism, by dominating the Jews, has made them the enemies of humanity. For, Judaism is only a faith and by instilling in them a sense of nationalism, it has distorted their vocation to live as a submissive and wretched minority under the generous wings of Islam.

- Apart from Zionism, which has poisoned the Jewish spirit, the Jews as such merit all the derogation and contempt the Arabic vocabulary can wield, of their own right. Jews are depicted as masters of trickery, cheating, plots and treachery. They are loaded with psychological complexes and fears: they have a sense of inferiority to others and of imaginary suffering. They masochistically torture themselves with these feelings and sadistically force others to share them.
- Their inner deficiencies are not the worse problems afflicting the world because of the Jews. Their international plotting and scheming, their concocting wars and revolutions, their domination of key positions in politics, economics, media and world organizations places them well enough to subvert societies, to undermine political and economic systems and ruin the world morality.

Arab and Muslim Anti-Semitism in Contemporary Affairs

When translated into the real world, namely when the images of the Jew and the Zionist have to be converted into policy towards them, the negative stereotypes are distilled into a few attributes which make them intractable. Jews are constantly perceived as incorrigibly and hopelessly corrupt, evil, greedy, immoral, intriguing and unconcerned with anyone but themselves. Amazing depictions of “Israeli soldiers cavorting in al-Aqsa Mosque” or “conducting sexual orgies” in the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron, are not arguments that one can debate or refute. They will probably go down as fact in some Arab history books, like the “fact” that the bitter water of the Zamzam well in Mecca are “the sweetest on earth”, or that Jerusalem, in traditional Jewish perception, is the “navel of the world”. For, what seems pure slander to Israel are the authentic Arab perceptions in this regard, and they act upon them, as in their demonstrations of wrath and fury against what they have branded as Israel’s deliberate burning of the Aqsa Mosque.

This ugly picture of the Jews which was, and one suspects still is, universally shared by many Arabs and Muslims, inevitably leads to the conclusion that the State of Israel – the creation of those very Jews – cannot be much different from its creators. “Evidence” for this view they find in the social inequity, discrimination, high crime rate, economic scandal and political dissent that the Arabs say is leading to the disintegration of Israeli society. The Jews, traditionally depicted in despicable terms in Islam and still portrayed stereotypically in Arab writings and cartoons, simply cannot be imagined as capable of maintaining a viable, let alone honest or decent, political life. These perceptions of the Jews and Israel dictate the choice of items that the Arab press publishes about Israel and the policies adopted by Arab states towards Israel. The careful screening of “facts” and the outright fabrication of “data” that fit their negative image of the Jews and Israel, generate contradictions that the Arabs chose to ignore. For example, while the Arabs keep repeating that neither Arab nor Islamic traditions ever called for hatred of the Jews as such, their verbal and graphic descriptions of the Jews are the most contemptible one can imagine. While they assert that the Jews in their midst have always enjoyed equal rights, Arab leaders are often exhorted by the press to improve their treatment of the remaining Jewish minorities, so that those who have migrated might return to their countries of origin and thus allow room for Palestinian refugees to be absorbed in their stead in Palestine. When Israel takes a firm stand in the occupied territories, she is oppressive, and when she shows flexibility and understanding, the Arabs claim that this is a maneuver to gain world sympathy for the occupation.

When Israel clings to her stated goals and policies, she is termed arrogant and high-handed, but when prepared to talk peace or to compromise, this is credited to effective Arab pressure,

world pressure or Arab military prowess. When Israel evinces signs of weakness, she is clearly too unstable to rely on or to conduct negotiations with, but when she is perceived as strong, talks cannot be held either, since Israel is then seen as occupying a position of strength that can humiliate and intimidate the Arabs. If western civilization and Jewish thought are taught in Arab schools in Israel, it means that the Jewish state is trying to erase Islamic and Arab tradition; at the same time, Israel is often accused of not teaching these matters in order to keep her Arabs illiterate and backward. Arab refugees are rotting in camps through Israel's fault, but when Israel makes attempts to resettle them, she is accused of obliterating the Arab character or of eliminating (not solving) the Palestinian issue. If Arab villages in Israel or the territories are left without electricity or running water, this is deliberate under-development, but when Israel provides these and other social services, this is called sheer imperialism. When Israeli Arabs are integrated into the system, Israel is said to be uprooting them from their environment in order to make them forget their heritage; but if they are left alone to their devices, this is called oppression, apartheid, humiliation, exploitation, discrimination and second-class citizenry.

If an Arab prisoner dies while on a hunger strike, Israel is charged with mistreating, starving and torturing him; if he is force-fed, this constitutes barbaric treatment and coercion. When Israeli propaganda is perceived as fanning inter-Arab divisions, this is called an imperialistic divide-and-rule policy; but when she keeps silent in the face of inter-Arab or inter-Islamic infighting, she is accused, all the same, of adopting Goebbels' principle of "non-interference in the growth of a young plant lest it be hindered". The Arabs are entitled to wage war, launch propaganda campaigns, take loans, organize international festivals and conferences; but Israel cannot on pain of being accused of aggression, propaganda, indoctrination, plotting, sapping the resources of others, begging, and interfering in others' affairs, all innate qualities of the Jews. When the Soviet Union supplied the Arabs with airlifts during past wars, she was a friend and good-doer, but if Israel was similarly supplied by the U.S., she was begging and would have collapsed without this emergency charity.

The peace process between Israel and the Arabs, far from attenuating the intensity of anti-Semitic sentiment in the Arab and Islamic world, on the contrary aggravated it in many instances. For now, the Arabs and Muslims could claim, that even though they gave the Jewish state a chance to redeem itself from its inherently evil Jewish attributes, it has squandered that opportunity and proved how incorrigible it remains. Moreover, the victory of the Iranian revolution in 1979, has enhanced the Islamic anti-Semitism of the Muslim fundamentalists and widened the circle of the conflict in the Middle East. The entry of Iran, a non-Arab country and one that has no common boundaries with Israel, into the anti-Jewish club of the Arabs, on Islamic grounds, and Khomeini's vows to eliminate Israel, voiced in the most vitriolic anti-Semitic terms, have indeed exacerbated the anti-Jewish sentiments of the Muslims. For, from now on, not only direct clients of Iran, such as the Sudan and the Hizbullah in Lebanon, would pick up the anti-Semitic gauntlet and amplify it worldwide, but fundamentalist movements throughout the Islamic world would begin copying and diffusing the anti-Jewish message on an unprecedented scale, using the same vocabulary and symbolism well beyond the Arab world.

And so, even in Egypt which was the first Arab country to conclude peace with Israel, in 1979, anti-Semitic onslaughts did not relent. Some of that output is edifying, especially that it reflects the thinking of mainstream Egypt rather than opposition groups which have refuted the peace process since its inception. Two cases in point are found in popular books: *The War of Survival between the Qur'an and the Talmud, and the Jews – Objects of the Wrath of Allah*, published in Egypt in 1980-1, namely two years after the conclusion of the peace, and

were reportedly much in demand during the Cairo Book Fair of 1981. Similarly, Anis Mansur, a notorious Christian anti-Semite and one of the closest aids to President Sadat, wrote a book, entitled *The Wailing Wall and the Tears*, which ridicules, slanders, condemns and calumniates the Jews as no other anti-Semite in recent memory has dared to do. For example, he wrote that “Jews are enjoined by their faith to ravish all women of other religions”; that the secret constitution of the Jews – *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* – encourages them to pursue the profession of obstetrician in order “to specialize in abortion and so reduce the number of non-Jews”; that children in Israeli kibbutzim are raised “to hate everybody who is not Jewish”; that the Talmud advises Jews to kill all non-Jews; and that the soul of the Jews is full of hostility to all people without exception.

The apogee of anti-Semitism, the blood libel, also appeared in Cairo after the peace treaty with Israel, not to speak of denials of the Holocaust, the mass circulation of the *Protocols*, and viciously anti-Semitic attacks in both the mainstream press and the Islamic journals. Under the respectable guise of a “scholarly” book, Dr Kamil Sa`fan’s *Jews, History and Doctrine*, recounts as historical fact, and in considerable detail, the February, 1840, Damascus Blood Libel, and affirms that “similar cases went unnoticed by the chronicles or were manipulated by the Jews”. Another scholar, Dr Lutfi abd-al-’Adhim, wrote in *al-Ahram al-Iqtisadi* (the *Wall Street Journal* of the Arab World) of September 27, 1982, three full years after the peace treaty, a substantial article entitled “Arabs and Jews: Who will Annihilate Whom?” which did not fall far behind Anis Mansur. Here are some excerpts:

One of the assumptions that needs to be straightened out is the distinction made between Jews and Israelis...for Jews are Jews; they have not changed over thousands of years: they embody treachery, meanness, deceit and contempt for human values. They would devour the flesh of a living person and drink his blood for the sake of robbing his property. They would not live in peace with Arabs. We lived under that illusion when some of our leaders declared the October, 1973 War to be the last war. But I am absolutely certain that when Menachem Begin was signing those accords he was laughing at our naivete...

If we looked realistically into the problem, we would find out that it is one of a total war of annihilation waged by the Jews against the Arab nation. This war of extermination probably took its root from their assumption that the best way to wipe out the Arab nation, was through its humiliation, slander, character assassination, and the destruction of its present and past noble history. There was no better way to achieve that than dismembering the Arab nation, beginning with Lebanon, while the Israeli flag is hoisted in Cairo... We do not mean necessarily that the Jews aim at the physical extermination of the Arabs; this is simply impractical, although they would have been delighted to do it. Rather, they intimidate them by such atrocities as Sabra, Shatilla and Deir Yassin... There is no doubt that the Israeli master-plan strives to commit the same in Libya, Iraq, Syria and other places in the Arab world...even Egypt would not escape this bloody and base Jewish scheme... And there is no difference in this regard between the gangs of saboteurs ruling Israel and the Jewish lobbies across the globe...

Since I would rather be the killer than the killed (and I hope I am no exception in the Arab world), I cannot be expected to sit by and wait for the blood-thirsty and enraged Israeli dogs to dismember my body and bury the remains of the bodies of my wife and children... Let me declare unequivocally that, yes, this is anti-Semitism, but since Arabs are also Semites, our anti-Semitism is against Jewish Semites... The Jews do not hesitate to resort to any means in their battle: they shot their own Ambassador in London and killed Bashir Jumayyel in Lebanon, who had given them on a platter all they wanted... I advise the Arabs not to be taken in by the appearance of protests in Israel and by the Jews around the world. All this is a well-orchestrated game where role-playing is effectively assigned... The only difference between various Jewish

circles is whether to kill their Arab victim under anesthesia or attack it ferociously and drink its blood outright... On the goal, all Jews are agreed...

This article was headed by a cartoon featuring a Zionist monster ripping children, presumably Arab, to pieces. Although the scholarly assumptions advanced by the learned author are echoed in the Arabic press in general, it remains particularly alarming in that it not only presents deep seated hatred of the Jews, but also summons Arabs to act upon the perceived threat that the Jews constitute, "before it is too late". Only one or two generations ago similar contentions and appeals in other anti-Semitic lands had ended in the mass extermination of Jews. And the fact that the Egyptian regime is either unable or unwilling to control this kind of violent rhetoric, which runs counter to its stated policy towards Israel, may be indicative of the predisposition of the Arab masses to absorb it. Otherwise, how can one explain the current Sho'ah denial in Arab lands, the siding of Arab and Islamic intellectuals with revisionist historians in the West who have been denying the Sho'ah, and even the banning in almost all the Arab and Islamic countries of the movie "Schindler's List", which seemed to confirm the veracity of the Holocaust and to show some sympathy for its victims.

This virulence in post-peace Egypt does by no means exhaust the anti-Semitic sentiment in the Arab and Islamic worlds. If one peruses through the writings of the Hizbullah in Lebanon, the Hamas in the West Bank and Gaza, and even the fundamentalist Muslims in Israel proper, one can find the same sort of anti-Semitic stuff and worse. Moreover, while in those cases, radical movements take the lead in vilifying the Jews, and their views are carried in the media, including those of the mainstream, in Iran one can find state-initiated and state-led anti-Semitism of the worse kind. Paradoxically, the fundamentalist Muslims of Israel, who are represented in the Israeli Knesset, and six of their leaders have been elected as mayors of six towns and village in Israel, have more leeway to express themselves politically than in any Arab country, except Sudan, itself a fundamentalist-run state. Nevertheless, taking advantage of the freedom of expression that is sacrosanct in Israel, they allow themselves to be openly anti-Semitic, and to even deny the Sho'ah, with impunity, something that in European countries like Germany, France or Sweden, they would have been convicted for.

When one comes closer to our days, one does not find solace. In a masterly article by the dominant Islamic scholar of our time, Bernard Lewis, he enumerates the latest, and most disturbing, manifestations of anti-Semitism in the contemporary world. He asserts that Islamic anti-Semitism has conquered new grounds in recent years and risen to a new intensity. For not only the old Christian anti-Jewish accusations (crucifying the Christ, well-poisoning, invented Talmudic quotations, conspiracies to take over the world etc) are reaffirmed and given an Islamic twist, but new ones are added to lash at the Jews, Israel and Zionism in the modern world, and to delegitimize them and struggle against them politically, culturally and religiously. He shows that many Arabic media, of the left as well as of the Islamic fundamentalist trends, acclaimed as heroes the 1995 and 1996 "suicide" attacks of the Hamas against Israeli civilians. In a way, the hatred is apparently displaced from the Jews per se to the Israelis and the Zionists, but the way these murders are justified leaves no doubt as to their anti-Semitic import. One of them, for example, said "those who shed torrents of tears in mourning for filthy Jewish blood while sparing their tears when Palestinian or Lebanese blood is shed by the hands of the Jews, may Allah curse them."

The fear of the Arabs lest Israel take them over economically as she did militarily, also breeds their dislike for any economic cooperation with her even in the era of peace. Similarly, cultural exchanges are meant in the Arab nightmare, to undermine Islam from within and Judaize Arabic culture. Both items fit well with the *Protocols*, whose "veracity" is now rediscovered by the Arabs and the Muslims, among others, in Shimon Peres' book about the

New Middle East. A prize was accorded, tells us Lewis, to a Masters dissertation at the University of Alexandria describing the Jewish economic role in Egypt, based on the *Protocols*. Agricultural products of Israel are attacked in the Egyptian press for containing hormonal elements that kill men's sperm, and rumors circulate in Egypt and other Arab countries that Israel markets a chewing gum similarly treated, in order to harm the Arabs' posterity and fertility. Jews are also accused of selling poisoned seeds in order to destroy Egyptian agriculture and poison its population.

These open, or implied, critiques of the peace with Israel, which has only brought dangers and disasters upon the Arabs, are coupled with the traditional Islamic negations of Jews and Israel in an uncompromising way, quite aside from those other accusations taken from European sources. The most abominable manifestations of that hatred can be found in the Hamas platform, which was published in 1988, and which takes Western anti-Semitism, adds to it Islamic or Islamized themes, and presents the whole mishmash as one coherent, sensible and well documented doctrine. A few articles from that document will suffice to show the point:

- From Article Seven: The Prophet, Allah Bless Him... has said: The Day of Judgement will not come about until Muslims fight the Jews; when the Jews will hide behind stones and trees. The stones and trees will say O Muslim, there is a Jew behind me come and kill him.
- From Article Seventeen: The Muslim woman has a role no less important than that of the man in the battle of liberation... The enemies have realized the importance of that role. They consider that if they can direct and bring her up the way they wish, far from Islam, they would have won the battle. That is why you find them giving these attempts constant attention through propaganda campaigns, films and the school curricula, using for that purpose their lackeys, who are infiltrated through the Zionist organizations under various names and shapes, such as Freemasons, Rotary Clubs, espionage groups and others, which are all nothing but cells of subversion and saboteurs. These organizations have ample resources that enable them to play their role in societies for the purpose of achieving the Zionist targets and to deepen the concepts that would serve the enemy... The day Islam is in control of the affairs of life, these organizations, hostile to Islam and humanity, will be obliterated.
- From Article Twenty Two: For a long time, the enemies have been planning, skillfully and with precision... With their money, they took control of the world media, news agencies, the press, publishing houses, broadcasting stations, and others. With their money they stirred revolutions in various parts of the world in order to achieve their interests... They were behind the French Revolution, the Communist Revolution and most revolutions we heard and hear about... With their money they formed secret societies, such as the Freemasons, Rotary Clubs, the Lions and others, in different parts of the world for the purpose of sabotaging societies and achieving Zionist interests. With their money they were able to control imperialistic countries and instigate them to colonize many countries in order to enable them to exploit their resources and spread corruption there... They were behind World War I, when they were able to destroy the Islamic Caliphate, making financial gains and controlling resources. They obtained the Balfour Declaration, formed the League of Nations through which they could rule the world. They were behind World War Two, through which they made huge financial gains by trading in armaments, and paved the way for the establishment of their state. It was they that instigated the replacement of the League of Nations by the United Nations and the Security Council to enable them to rule the world through them. There is no war going on anywhere, without they having their fingers in it.

- From Article Twenty Eight: The Zionist invasion is a vicious one, it does not refrain from resorting to all methods, using all evil and contemptible ways to achieve its end. It greatly relies in its infiltration and espionage operations on the secret organizations it gave rise to, such as the Freemasons, the Rotary and Lions Clubs, and other sabotage groups. All these organizations, whether secret or open, work in the interest of Zionism and according to its instructions. They aim at undermining societies, destroying values, corrupting consciences, deteriorating character and annihilating Islam. It is behind the drug trade and alcoholism in all its kinds so as to facilitate its control and expansion... Israel, Judaism and the Jews challenge Islam and the Muslim people. "May the Cowards never sleep."

The Arab and Islamic anti-Semitic literature also rewrites history in order to vilify the Jews: for example, the Cana'anites are Arabs, therefore the Jews are usurpers of the land today as were their ancestors; Jewish history, including the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judea, are obliterated from Arab and Islamic "scholarship", and to the extent that ancient Jews are referred to, it is only in negative contexts such as deliverance from their "oppression". Holocaust denials are rife, even among Arab citizens of Israel. Holocaust deniers in Europe, such as Garaudy, were protected, defended and welcomed with great pomp and honor in the Arab countries, even in those who made peace with Israel. So even though one sees from time to time some dissenting voices in the Arab and Islamic world that call to reason, they are usually silenced by the mainstream and the authorities, who wish to cultivate the traditional anti-Jewish sentiment, and to manipulate it to their purposes whenever it suits them.

In this "light", or rather obscurity, one has to view current outbursts of anti-Semitism in the Arab world which have raised eyebrows in Israel and the West due to the putative "peace process" that has been unfolding in the past 20 years. In the middle of peace negotiations with Syria, its *Tishrin* daily, an organ of the ruling Ba'ath Party, has lashed out at Israel at its weakest spot by denying the Sho'ah. This happened at the same week that Israel's heightened anxiety about Haider's party joining the government coalition in Vienna has occasioned an outpour of sentiments and public debates which climaxed in Israel's withdrawing its ambassador from Austria. And was done in spite of Haider's extreme caution to appear democratic and humanistic, to renege on his previous anti-Semitic and pro-Nazi statements, and his pledges to be politically correct in the future. The people of Israel ask, why then should their government strive to complete negotiations with the Syrians, at a heavy price, and be so eager to send a Jewish ambassador to Damascus, while the regime is committed to persist in its anti-Semitism, and promises not to relent?

Nowhere else is the official stand adopted by the Syrian regime and exemplified by its giving asylum and protection to the notorious Nazi criminal Alois Brunner, better expressed than in the writings of its Defense Minister since 1972, General Mustafa Tlas.

In his preface to his book *The Matza of Zion*, published in 1985, Tlas wrote:

The Jew can kill you and take your blood in order to make his Zionist bread... Here opens before us a page even more ugly than the crime itself: the religious beliefs of the Jews and the perversions they contain, which draw their orientation from a dark hate towards all humankind and all religions. I hope than I have done my duty in presenting the practices of the enemy of our historic nation. Allah aid this project...

On February 8, 1991, at the Commission on Human rights in Geneva, a Syrian delegate urged all representatives to read *The Matza of Zion* in order to discover the "historical reality of Zionist racism". In 1999, still hoping to obtain a doctorate in Paris, Tlas declared:

The assassination of Father Thomas [which lay at the base of the 1840 blood libel in Damascus] by the members of the Damascus Jewish community in 1840 is a known fact... This event is authentic, for there have been in the history of the world sects and fanatical individuals who have committed inhuman acts (*France-Pays Arabes, July-August, 1999*).

In November, 1999, the Syrian literary magazine *Al-Ussbu' al- Adabi* published an article by Jbara al-Barguti entitled: "Shylock of New York and the Industry of Death" (November 27, 1999) in which he explains how

The Talmud instructions, soaked in hatred and hostility towards humanity, are stamped in the Jewish soul. Throughout history, the world has known more than one Shylock, more than one Thomas, as victim of these Talmudic instructions and this hatred... Now Shylock of New York's time has come... Israel's matza will continue to steep in blood, the spilling of which is permitted in the Talmud, in order to glorify the Jewish military. This happens because the Jews have more than one God, in contrast to their claim that they are monotheist (MEMRI, Special Dispatch, No 66 – Syria, December 22, 1999).

The same bewilderment can be raised with regard to the "peace process" with the Palestinians who, at the same time that they press Israel for more withdrawals in the name of peace, continue to teach their children, in their official school curricula, fabricated "quotations" from the Talmud which have no leg to stand on but denigrate the Jews and accuse them of the basest crimes. Children are internalizing those ugly and hateful stereotypes, and will end up acting upon them when they come of age. For if the enemy is delegitimized, as the Arabs do to the Jews in the most blatant and dehumanizing ways, then what is to constrain Palestinians, Syrians and other Arabs to avoid hostility and violence against the object of their hatred?

Bibliography:

- Israeli, Raphael, *Muslim Fundamentalism in Israel*, London: Brassey's, 1993.
- Israeli, Raphael, *Peace is in the Eye of the Beholder*, Berlin and New York: Mouton Press, 1991.
- Lewis, Bernard, "Muslim Anti-Semitism", in *The Middle East Quarterly*, June 1998, pp. 43-50.
- Littman, David, in *Midstream*, February-March, 2000.