

# Jewish History and Contemporary American Antisemitism – the views of Matthew Hausman



Antisemitic Goy Defense League sign on Austin, Texas Overpass, December, 2021

by [Jerry Gordon](#) (January 2022)

This a wide-ranging interview by Jerry Gordon, a Senior Editor at *The New English Review*, with Matthew Hausman, an accomplished trial lawyer and journalist, whose work appears in *Arutz-Sheva/Israel National News* and elsewhere. Hausman hails from an American Jewish Family with traditional religious and Revisionist Zionist roots and background. He is one of four brothers, who collectively represent a mother's quintessential dream – three attorneys by training, one of whom is also a rabbi, and one physician.

Brothers Matthew and Rabbi Jon Hausman are regular guests on *The Zelda Young Show* on 1250am from Toronto, Canada, which can be heard online. Articles by Matthew and Rabbi Jon Hausman

have been published in *The New English Review* and its blog *The Iconoclast*.

Among the topics addressed in this interview are:

- His family's heritage in the Ukrainian and Austro-Hungarian Jewish worlds, including orthodox and Hasidic forebears were wary of the progressivism they encountered as new immigrants in the America.
- His maternal grandparents' support for Revisionist Zionism and its founder Vladimir Jabotinsky.
- The ironic origins of political and religious Zionism in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe and Russia and the early influence of radical intellectual Moses Hess, who introduced Marx and Engels to Hegelian philosophy and the Theory of Dialectical Materialism. Hess ultimately rejected their political program in favor of Jewish nationalism and authored *Rome and Jerusalem* in 1862 (more than 30 years before Herzl wrote *Der Judenstaat*) which advocated the reestablishment of a Jewish state in the ancient homeland.
- The family's rejection of FDR's administration for its indifference to the plight of Jews during the Holocaust and what they saw as its blatant antisemitism.
- His mother's experience as a teenager attending two of the "We Will Never Die" pageants written by Ben Hecht and organized by Peter Bergson (aka Hillel Kook), and his Rabbi's connection to the 1943 Rabbis' March on Washington to inspire action against the Shoah..
- His recent experience as a target for antisemitic invective while walking home from Shabbat services with his son, when they were set upon by bigots who were neither neo-Nazis nor white supremacists, but rather members of identity groups embraced by the left.
- His recollections regarding his publishing mentor – acclaimed photojournalist [Vernon Merritt III](#) – who gave him advice and guidance as a young journalist reporting

on science, health, and medicine, and who advised him to write fact-based commentary on Israel and similar topics.

- His views on “Righteous Gentiles” and the troubling relationship with certain elements in the Evangelical movement who espouse replacement theology and missionizing Jews in Israel.

What follows is the interview with Mathew Hausman.



Matthew Hausman

Jerry Gordon: I am Jerry Gordon, a senior editor at *The New English Review*. We have an honored guest we are interviewing, Matthew Hausman, contributing columnist to *Arutz Sheva – Israel National News* and weekly guest of *The Zelda Young Show* on Toronto, Canada -based *CHIN 1250am* radio, streamed globally. Matt Hausman is the progeny of a remarkable Jewish American family. He is also a trial lawyer based in Connecticut one of four brothers of whom three are lawyers by training, the fourth is a noted medical clinician and researcher. His brother, Rabbi Jon Hausman, who is trained in the law, is someone should be recognized by readers of *The New English Review*, in part , because of published [interviews](#) with him on *Israel News Talk Radio-Beyond the Matrix*, with host Rod Reuven Dovid Bryant and yours truly. The family relationships go back when we were members of the same synagogue in Fairfield, Connecticut. Congregation Beth El. Matt, why don't you give them some idea of how intriguingly different your family background is from the average Jewish-American family?

Matthew Hausman: The first distinction I would say that is I take umbrage when I hear the word "Jewish-American," I would say my preferred term is American-Jew. Jew is the noun, American is the adjective, which I respect and love deeply.

However, I never lose sight because of the way I was raised about what I am and who I am. We got that from our parents and our grandparents. My parents, unlike many of their contemporaries, were not raised to be devotees of the Democratic Party. They tended to affiliate Republican when they affiliated at all, but they did not always affiliate. They were either independent, which in Connecticut is a party, so I would say registered unaffiliated, which is Connecticut slang for independent, or Republican, but never Democrat. That went back to not just the World War II era, but to my grandparents. My grandparents on both sides were immigrants. My mother's father remembered the revolutionary fervor in Russia and Ukraine when he left. He had little tolerance for anything that he thought was either close to socialism or sympathetic to it. In terms of Yiddish Newspapers, he read, I think, *Der Tog* back in the day, because the *Forverts* was a socialist newspaper.

That grandfather (Harry Madwed) was from a shtetl (village) in Ukraine called Voroshilovka, noted for its religious people. He went to the Slabodka Yeshiva for a year or so but never finished because he was pulled back to go into the family blacksmithing business. His wife, my grandmother, was from another shtetl around there, Brailev, which was Hasidic. They came from traditional communities that were wary of enlightenment but were affected by it, communities which today might fall into the Haredi camp, whether that meant you were Hasidic or from the Litvish yeshiva world, rather than the secular enlightenment camp. In many ways, the Enlightenment gave rise to some of the movements we have today, i.e., the non-traditional movements. I do not want to offend anybody unnecessarily, although I am a lawyer and a writer, so I suppose I offend people, which is part of what my job is. That was sort of their environment from which they came.

My father's father, Jacob, was from a shtetl in the old Austro-Hungarian empire, Nowy Sacz, which was also deeply

religious. My Dad had five brothers and they were always told that their mother was born on this side Why? Because it was a *shande* (that is, a shame), to be known as the children of immigrants. They always said that my grandmother who spoke perfect English was born in New Jersey. I never knew those grandparents. My grandmother died before my father married and my grandfather died when I was an infant. But at a family funeral in the 1980s, my brother Jonathan (who is the family historian and was doing a family tree), asked my Aunt Frances, who was the matriarch on the Hausman side, for information about my grandmother's birth. She was my grandmother's last surviving sibling out of nine or 10 sisters.

Jonathan said to her, "Aunt Frances, can you tell me what town in New Jersey my grandmother was born in?" She just started laughing and said, "You don't believe that bubba meiser, do you?" Jon said, "What do you mean?" She said, "She was born in Vienna's Judenplatz – the Jewish ghetto." She said, "But your grandparents told your father and his brothers that she was born here, so they wouldn't think they were children of two green horns." That said, all my grandparents were from extremely religious stock; and if you did not give up being religious when you came to this country, you did not cotton to the Democratic politics or the New Deal platform for many reasons. The real reason was those Jews who were drawn to secular politics were often the ones who dropped their tefillin (phylacteries) into New York Harbor and gave up Shabbat observance when they saw the Statue of Liberty. None of my grandparents were philosophically part of that world.

During the World War II era, they hated Roosevelt despite the post-war myth that nobody knew about the death camps until they were liberated. That is just not true, as you know, Jerry, from your writings and your research. Just read David Wyman's fantastic book, [\*The Abandonment of the Jews\*](#), which says it all. Professor Wyman's grasp of history is impeccable. My grandparents did not like Roosevelt for that reason.

Everybody knew during the war what was going on. Yet, FDR refused to lift immigration restrictions to permit entry to escapees, so that as a consequence many more people died than otherwise would have. He also refused to bomb the rail lines leading to the camps, claiming the US military could not sacrifice war resources or material against nonstrategic targets. And yet, they sent platoons of troops galivanting across Europe to rescue great works of art that certainly had no strategic value. I am not minimizing the importance of art, but paintings and sculptures by dead artists were apparently more important to FDR than living people who could have been saved.

Both sets of grandparents disliked Roosevelt and, consequently, my parents held likewise. The interesting thing is, not all my father's brothers felt that way. Some were typical Northeastern Jewish Democrats, but not my father or mother. Of all my father's siblings, he and another brother were the only ones who maintained households with any semblance of Yiddishkeit. Out of six brothers, only two of them maintained truly kosher homes. My father always said he could not stand when Jews tried "to pass." That was his litmus test. If you wanted to pass, then you were not good dinner company.

Jerry Gordon: I used to attend minyans daily with your late mother Ethel when she was alive at Congregations Beth El. One of the discoveries that your brother Jonathan made after her demise, in cleaning out her place, was she had programs from the famous pageants that were organized by the Bergson group during WWII.

Matt Hausman: Yes, [\*We will never Die\*](#) written by Ben Hecht.

Jerry Gordon: They were remarkably interesting. I credit your brother for providing me with a facsimile copy, a treasured one as well. Didn't she attend two of them? One in Philadelphia and the other in New York?

Matt Hausman: Yes, Madison Square Garden. Her parents were politically and ideologically in the Revisionist Zionist camp. Interestingly, my grandparents did not agree on everything politically. Broad strokes, they did. When I was interviewing my grandmother a few years before she died (as the family journalist), I would record her stories by interviewing from sets of pre-prepared questions. On one occasion when I ran out of material for the evening, I just said, "When was the first time you voted for president, and can you tell me everyone you voted for since?" Jerry, she recounted every single election. "Did you vote the same as Grandpa?" And then she told me about some of the knock-down, drag-outs they had over a number of elections. Although not as fervently observant as when they came over, they remained very traditional. My grandmother's family did not remain Hasidic when she came to this country because they ended up in a non-Hasidic community. However, politically, everything was about the Jewish people. For example, I remember vividly how my grandmother would read the obituaries and cluck her tongue whenever she came across a Jewish name. She was very ethno-centric. I do not say that in a bad way. It is good to be proud of what you are and where you came from.

My mother's parents were drawn more towards Jewish political groups, ones that if not religious themselves, were conducive or sympathetic to observance and tradition. The Revisionists, for example, were by no means an Orthodox group. However, as Jabotinsky, the founder of the Revisionist movement, who was not religious himself, believed that if religion were going to dictate cultural values in the Jewish state, it would have to be traditional (i.e., Orthodox), which he considered authentically Jewish. My grandfather was a Revisionist, my grandmother was a Revisionist. My grandfather met Jabotinsky when he came to the Northeastern US on a fundraising tour and found him fascinating and inspiring. How long their conversation lasted, I don't, but according to my grandfather it was long enough to go from English to Russian and Yiddish



to Hebrew. My grandfather was fluent in all those spoken languages, and he said meeting Jabotinsky was an amazing experience.

If you were in the Revisionist camp, then you were a supporter of Peter Bergson (aka Hillel Kook) and Ben Hecht. They were not just raising funds during the war, but were trying to raise awareness of the Holocaust as well. Ben Hecht, who was a playwright and Hollywood scriptwriter, was perhaps not the most constant Jew in his personal life. But Jewish nationalism spoke to him, and he was very devoted to the cause. He wrote a pageant called, , [We will never Die](#), which played in most major North American cities, including Philadelphia, New York.

I believe it also played up in Montreal, Canada and perhaps Toronto. My mother at the time was 14 or 15 years old.

She was sent to the show in New York with a contingent of kids. I guess they did have BBYO back then, but youth group was different from what people consider it today. She went as part of the cause – as a Bergson girl, as my grandfather called her. She went to the show in New York and also to the presentation in Philadelphia, where my grandmother's sister, brother-in-law, and nephew lived. To get to Philadelphia in those days, you went by train, which back then took seven or eight hours, or by car via the Boston Post Road. There was no Interstate-95 back then, so it was quite a trip. But my grandparents thought it was important. Jerry, I think the program you have was from the Philadelphia performance, because my uncle worked in a printing company that produced the programs down there.

Jerry Gordon: Yes, you have another connection with the movement to apprise Americans of the Holocaust during WWII. That was a local Rabbi in Fairfield?

Matthew Hausman: Yes, Rabbi Mosha Epstein of Congregation Agudas Achim in Bridgeport was one of my rabbis. He was a Mir Yeshiva graduate and a personal student of Rav Moshe

Feinstein. For those who know from traditional Judaism, Rav Feinstein was the single greatest "Posek," or legal decisor, of the 20th century. Rabbi Epstein, my rabbi, was a personal student of his. Rabbi Epstein's father was a contemporary of Rav Moshe, and both participated in the [1943 Rabbis' March](#) on Washington. I do not have to tell you the history, Jerry, but there were several hundred rabbis, who were old world orthodox, some of whom could not speak English so well. They marched on Washington to raise awareness of the Shoah and to spur on the FDR Administration to do something. What did Roosevelt do in response? Well, he was counseled by his assimilated, acculturated Jewish advisors to ignore these Rabbis. When they made it to the White House, Roosevelt was spirited out of one of the back doors like a breeze in the night and refused to meet with them. Apparently, FDR knew what kind of Jew he liked, and it was not one who looked like a Jew, identified like a Jew, or ate like a Jew. It was one who looked like he could have joined the Country Club and pass as an American Gentile.

I am not saying that assimilating in American culture is a bad thing. What I am saying is, you do not have to give up what you are to be part of the American fabric. However, you had multiple generations of Jews from the late 1800s through the 1900s, and I would submit even 'til today, who want to get as far away as possible from their heritage for a lot of reasons. Some pathological, some not. However, Jewish heritage means little to them. Denying one's heritage might seem necessary for some to move up socially, and many people are willing to do that. My grandparents were not like that, these rabbis who marched on Washington certainly were not like that. I think looking back on that chapter in American Jewish history, it shows a tension we are seeing play out today with toxic ramifications. We are seeing assimilated Jews, these days politically progressive, who are not content to deny their own Jewishness. They want to deny it for others; they are anti-Israel, and basically, I would submit, opposed to traditional

Jewish values. Now, that said, a lot of the problem today has to do with progressivism (though historically it's not limited to progressivism). If you look back at two of the largest banes of the progressive existence during its early days, you'll find nationalism and religion as lightning rods of leftist enmity. The fathers of modern progressivism considered both nationalism and religion to be societal evils.

The Jew was the avatar of everything they hated. In the Jews, they found a people who refused to renounce their heritage despite generations of exile and abuse. They refused to renounce Jewish nationhood and they certainly refused to renounce Jewish religion. Now, interestingly enough, I think we may be the only group that has an integrated ethno-religious identity. You are not a Jew because it is a matter of style, it is not something you put on and take off. Certainly, it is possible to join the Jewish people, and it has happened throughout Jewish history. Nevertheless, our obligations are largely based on our heritage. As I said in another interview recently, you don't have a particular genome or suffer from genetic diseases based on what you believe. However, our heritage comes with essential obligations imparted to us by HaShem.

The progressive movements in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries did not like Jews because they represented everything progressives disliked. Voltaire hated us as well as Prudhomme, the French Utopians, the German socialists, the Austrian socialists. The right-wing was not good to us either. There was a false sense when Jews came to this country, or when the offer of citizenship was finally available in Europe, that it was the promise of progressivism. And at the time, Jews were not considered citizens of most countries or citizens of the world. But to join the common culture, you had to give up Jewish identity and traditional allegiances. That's what progressivism demanded.

[Moses Hess](#) found this out in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, though most Jews don't know his story. Everyone has heard or read about Marx and Engels, right? *The Communist Manifesto*, *Das Kapital*. What they do not know is there was originally an intellectual triumvirate consisting of Marx, Engels, and Hess. Sources indicate that Hess was the one who taught Marx and Engels the theory of dialectical materialism and Hegelian philosophy.

So I guess you could say Hess, not Marx, was the original communist. And one of the reasons seems to have been that Hess believed the political salvation of the Jew in Europe was tied to the nascent progressive movements, which were casting off the old despotic mentalities. The reality, however, didn't work out that way.

By the 1860s, Hess realized that was not true. He realized that the anti-Semitic elements in European society were not political, but were part of the culture. So what happened to Hess? He broke with the movement after Marx denounced religion and nationality as evil and the Jews as the most pernicious of all national spirits. Thereafter, Hess concluded that Jewish political salvation lay not in European political progressivism, communism or socialism, but rather in Jewish nationalism and self-determination. This epiphany prompted him in 1862 to write [Rome and Jerusalem](#), which presaged Herzl's [Der Judenstaat](#) by more than a quarter century

Hess never ceased being an economic progressive, but he withdrew from the movement. If you put the two books side-by-side, you can see Herzl was disseminating the same message that Hess delivered a quarter century earlier. Both were secularists, but both believed in Jewish nationhood. And the belief comes from somewhere – indeed from Jewish Scripture, tradition, and history. Most people may not know the word, *bubbe meise*. It means ...

Jerry Gordon: Grandmother's tale.

Matthew Hausman: Yes. One of the early *bubbe meises* of the

Zionist movement was that Herzl was a secularist with no connection to Jewishness, but this was not accurate. It seems Herzl's grandfather may well have been a follower of Rabbi [Yehuda Alkalai](#), an early 19<sup>th</sup> century Orthodox rabbi and mystic, who together with [Rabbi Zvi Kalischer](#) was considered one of the early "Proto-Zionists." Sources indicate Herzl's grandfather was a supporter of Alkalai. I honestly think Herzl did not know about Moses Hess, because when he found out about *Rome and Jerusalem*, he apparently said that had he known of Hess's work, he wouldn't have had to write *The Jewish State*. The fact of the matter is, Hess had to come through this milieu, this furnace, to see that antisemitism was not political, it was cultural. And I think a lot of Jews from the Sephardic lands, and the Teimanim and the Mizrachim, found out the same thing. Many if not most of them were living a ghetto existence as well.

Historically, the political diminishment of the Jew was not particular to the political left. However, because the left is ascendant today and Israel has become a pariah state in leftist political society, you find progressives these days voicing these noxious opinions about Jews and their homeland. If you look at US law enforcement statistics, where do the most hate crimes against the Jews come from? They are not coming from the political right, as bad as the far right has been to us. The Proud Boys are certainly nasty. But most incidents today are coming from the left and from identity communities supported by the left.

Jerry Gordon: Can I stop you there for a second?

Matthew Hausman: Sure.

Jerry Gordon: Much of what you are talking about is a background for what has occurred, particularly in the last 15 years, rampant anti-Semitism. Let's exemplify what you were talking about with an actual event concerning you. You and your son were effectively victims of an anti-Semitic incident.

Matthew Hausman: I would not say victim. I do not like the term victimhood or victimization, especially because I have a platform of sorts and can speak out. The incident you are referring to, Jerry, involves me and my son (I have two daughters and a son). My son was visiting from his home in New York, and we were walking home from shul, the synagogue, one Shabbat. You remember the area on Park Avenue with Fairfield on one side, Bridgeport on the other?

Jerry Gordon: Yes.

Matthew Hausman: Well we were walking through what any old Bridgeporter still calls "Ninety Acres Park," although it probably has only about 15-20 acres today. We were set upon by a convertible full of college kids – there are a bunch of local colleges around here – who were shouting anti-Semitic epithets at us. We shrugged it off and kept walking. I mean, this happened to my brothers and me a lot when we were kids and drew us into a lot of fights. I am certainly not going to get in a fight with a car-full of 20-year-olds. My son and I talked about it as being so stereotypical, it was almost comical. I am not saying anti-Semitism is comical, but the comments were so stereotypical. It was like, don't you have any originality? We cut through the park, and as luck would have it, when we came through the other side, the same car came barreling down that road and they started up with us again.

When they expended themselves they drove off. But as my son and I turned the next corner onto one of the side roads leading back home, we were set upon again – this time by a pick-up truck with a couple of people in it, who pulled over and serenaded us with another chorus of anti-Semitic epithets. How did they know what we were? Well, my son wears long tzitzit and we were wearing our kippahs (yarmulkes). And if you're walking someplace in the extreme heat or cold instead of driving on a Saturday, they can pretty much figure out who you are.

I wrote about it as the backdrop for an article in *Arutz Sheva – Israel National News*. The point of the article was that Democrats would have you believe that anti-Semitism is limited to the Proud Boys, neo-Nazis, and the political right. Well, no, it isn't. White supremacists certainly don't like us, but that convertible was full of kids from multi-ethnic backgrounds, and they were from a local university (and Jew-hatred is rampant on college campuses these days). The occupants of pickup truck were speaking Spanish. My point is none of them were stereotypical neo-Nazis attempting to accost a couple of Jews. They showed that anti-Semitism is not limited by race or ethnicity. You do not see this written about because it is not the narrative liberals wish to peddle.

When she was still working for the *New York Times*, Bari Weiss, wrote about antisemitism and about how Jews in New York are perhaps the most frequent target of hate-crimes. Unfortunately, mainstream outlets are reluctant to write about the reality because it doesn't fit the narrative they wish to portray.

The interesting aspect about this is that such observations are out of character for *The New York Times*, which has been printing revisionist anti-Israel drivel for years. Fans of the Times may call it political or criticism of Israeli policies, but let us not forget this outlet's online edition was called out for running a classically anti-Semitic cartoon that looked like it could have come from *Der Sturmer*.

The point of my experience with my son was that we were not set upon by white supremacists or Nazis. We were not set upon by working class white people. We were set upon by a multi-ethnic crowd spread across a couple of cars. When the local press finally took notice, it got much of the story wrong. They portrayed the incident as involving an attorney walking home one Saturday from synagogue with his young son in tow. My "young son" was actually 30. We were accosted by anti-Semites who didn't fit the mainstream media profile, but none

of this came out in the press, other than the article I wrote in *Arutz Sheva* several months earlier. The point is, the incident was apparently good enough for a brief soundbite, not reasoned analysis.

Jerry Gordon: Matt, you have a dual career as both a trial lawyer and a former journalist specializing in health science and medicine articles. You had a valued mentor and publisher who paid homage to in a column on the current condition of "activist" journalism who gave you your moral compass when it comes to appreciating what good journalism is all about. Could you tell us about him and what his suggestion was?

Matthew Hausman: Yes. His name was [Vernon Merritt III](#), and he was a photojournalist. During the '60s and '70s, he was in the *Time Life* Saigon Bureau during the Vietnam War and he covered the Civil Rights Movement in this country. If anyone is old enough to remember, he had several famous cover photos in *Life Magazine*. One was a portrait of Coretta Scott King after Dr. King was assassinated. A stunning photo that still sells as a poster today. There were also pictures of helicopters being thrown off aircraft carriers at the end of the Vietnam War. And Vernon went to great lengths for the story – he was even shot in Vietnam. When I met Vernon, he was producing science, health, and medical magazines and newspapers stateside. I had an editor who quit at lunchtime one day, so Vernon found himself having to fill in and edit my work, and he liked what he saw. He told me, and I still do not know what it means, that I had a "voice." I honestly do not know how you get that. However, he said anything I write he could tell that I wrote it because it sounded like the way I talked, without dumbing it down.

We became close. Vernon was old enough to be my father and I learned a lot about journalism from him. We used to talk about a lot of things. I mean everything. He was a baseball fan, he was a student of history, and at some point, he started asking me about the "Arab Israeli crisis," as it was called in those



days. As I wrote in a piece in Israel National News column earlier this month, he asked me why so many of the Jewish activists and journalists he knew from the '60s turned against Israel after the Six Day War. I explained that part of it had to do with Israel no longer being seen as "David," but as "Goliath." They bought into the whole Palestinian national narrative and forgot about its antisemitic revisionism. And they made this new narrative part of the progressive and the liberal agenda. Vernon and I had a dialogue about this for the next 15 years, and it was the jumping off point for what he taught me afterwards. I explained that these journalists already had a media platform, which they used to promote their agenda, their political views. I told Vernon that much of what they wrote about Israel was ahistorical. He did his research and he agreed with me. I gave him things to read; and though he was old enough to be my dad, he listened, he read, and we discussed.

Vernon was a Southern gentleman, born and raised in Alabama. There was not an ounce of Jewish blood in his veins, but he told me, "This is something you're passionate about." He said, "As good as I think you are writing about things you're not enthusiastic about, how much more so about topics that really means something to you?" He told me, "You should be writing commentary about these issues." He said, "However, commentary to be effective should be based on fact. Your opinion can be whatever it is, but those facts better be correct."

Moreover, he told me, "There is more truth to fact-based commentary than there is to advocacy journalism." When I started writing about these issues, I authored the odd article about the Middle East and Jewish issues while still writing about science, health, medicine, and business. I had a legal column in a professional magazine for several years, but I did not focus on Jewish issues exclusively. Vernon died in a tragic accident in the year 2000, but if he could see what I write about today, I think he would be as proud of me as if I

were his own son.

He took an interest in me, I think, because none of his kids were interested in journalism. He became my surrogate and my mentor. I learned from him, certain truths, that you do not learn in school. You don't learn them by reading *The New York Times*, nor by listening to *CNN*, and frankly not even from those outlets that still report honestly. You must have somebody who believes it, who has lived and experienced it, and can pass it on to you. It's not like Semicha (ordination) from a rabbi, but in retrospect I almost felt like I was anointed by somebody who was truly gifted and visionary.

Believe me, I'm not gifted; but if I've done anything since then that he could take pride in, then I did something right despite myself.

Jerry Gordon: You and your brother, Rabbi Jon Hausman are on a broadcast weekly that originates out of Toronto, Canada and streamed on-line globally. It is called [\*The Zelda Young Show\*](#) on Radio station *CHIN* 1240 AM and 91.9 FM, and has listeners in throughout Canada, the US, and Israel. It reminds me a lot of what I was doing with my former partner, Rod Reuven Dovid Bryant, on *Israel News Talk Radio- Beyond the Matrix* where we had listeners from all over the globe. How did that come about for both you and for Jon?

Matthew Hausman: Jon met Zelda Young, I think, at a Christian United for Israel (CUFI) event in Canada. That could be where it started with him, and he was on her show periodically. Then in 2013, in response to Israel Apartheid Week, which was metastasizing all over North America, a group in Toronto put together a program they called "Israel Truth Week." They had read some of my commentary in *Israel National News* and other publications, and they knew Jon, as he was very sought-after public speaker who had been up there several times.

They invited us both up to speak. I was the keynote speaker

the first night and Jon was the keynote speaker the second night. They had about 20 speakers total, including Israeli military people and diplomats.

Zelda heard that Jon had a brother and asked whether he could get me on the show. We were not in studio, but she interviewed me by phone. I was sitting in the living room of the host who had put us up for the event, talking to Zelda for the first time. That was in December of 2013. Then she started having me on the show more regularly. At some point, she asked me to take a weekly spot and I agreed. It has since expanded to twice weekly – Sunday and Wednesday mornings – and Jon has a regular segment as well.

Jerry Gordon: That is how I spent close to four years on [Israel News Talk Radio, Beyond the Matrix](#) with Rod Reuven Dovid Bryant. I was invited on for a couple of shows, and suddenly I found myself when his former partner left him for another media stint, becoming producer and co-host. It was a fast relationship in that regard. There is an issue out there, that I would like to see you address.

Matthew Hausman: Sure.

Jerry Gordon: It is about an event on the first day of Hanukkah 2021 in Hebron. It reflects on media rejection of the basic facts of Jewish heritage and legacy in the Holy Land. The new President of Israel, Mr. Isaac Herzog, lit the first candle in Hebron, a place where five generations of his family had lived. His grandfather [Yitzhak HaLevi Herzog](#) was the First Chief Rabbi of the Republic of Ireland from 1921 to 1936 when he left to become the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi under the Palestine Mandate in 1936 following Rabbi Kook and was a supporter of the Irgun resistance group. His father Chaim Herzog was a former President of Israel.

Matthew Hausman: His grandfather was a chief Ashkenazi rabbi after Independence in 1948.

Jerry Gordon: That is correct. The second reason was that the [Cave of the Patriarchs, the Machpelah](#) is revered by Jews all over the world. Troy Gil , who I admire, [said](#) this about the Hebron event, “It’s depressing to watch, some Jews embrace every claim every Palestinian makes, while ignoring basic history truths.” Why are American Jews, especially among the millennials, abandoning support for the Jewish nation itself?

Matthew Hausman: You cannot start with the millennials; you must start with their parents and grandparents. Their connection to Yiddishkeit – to Judaism – has become very attenuated over successive generations. The bottom line is the non-traditional movements have been horrible at education. The fact is that since the year 2000, 73% of all Jewish marriages outside of orthodoxy have been intermarriages.

Though the surge goes back before the 1960s, this form of assimilation has been going on since the enlightenment of Haskalah in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries. This was a period where Orthodox rabbis were very wary of the Enlightenment because Jews taken in by its embrace often no longer found it essential to learn Jewish history. Many no longer found it relevant to learn the language of their ancestors (though we were taught conversational Hebrew as kids).

Our Jewish education was probably unusual for the day – they threw us into classes with Hebrew-speaking teachers who didn’t speak to us in English. When you’re young you pick it up quickly. And it was important, because if you don’t have at least some facility with the language (though not necessarily conversational fluency) you cannot access your heritage, you cannot access your sacred text. So, what have the nontraditional movements done? They’ve substituted secular values and declared them “Jewish.” In many Reform and Conservative synagogues liberal values and Democratic politics are presented as synonymous with Judaism. Now, I am not saying if you are Jewish, you must be liberal or conservative, I am not saying that at all. What I am saying is, if you know

Jewish values and they've been inculcated in you, they should inform your political priorities. But you can't say any secular, political value is innately Jewish. Look, there are some liberal values that are consistent with Jewish values, but so are a lot of conservative values. Unfortunately, for generations in this country, young Jews were taught to believe that to be a Jew you had to be liberal and Democratic. This is where my parents were different from their peers.

That is not what Judaism is about. Unfortunately, many millennials were raised by parents who themselves never learned traditional Jewish values. The gap in knowledge goes back in some cases, ten generations. The fact of the matter is, when you take the Jew out of the community, and he has no connection to his past or his sacred literature, and if all being all being Jewish is to him is the Holocaust or Tay-Sachs disease, there is no real connection. That is what we are seeing. I do not blame the millennials themselves. They were taught horribly, often by nontraditional clergy who don't have classical training or traditional knowledge. I am not casting aspersions on individuals. I know a lot of dedicated Jews across the movements. However, it is more common for liberal ritual movements to conflate Judaism with secular political values at the cost of real tradition. And when those political agendas incorporate elements that are anti-Israel – even anti-Semitic – millennials often don't know what to believe.

Look what we have in Congress. I am certainly no fan of the Republican US Representative from Georgia, Marjorie Taylor Green, who apparently made some outrageous statements offensive to Jews for which she was condemned. However, where are all the critics when members of the "squad" make anti-Semitic comments? Are they censored by party leadership? Are they punished? No – they are rewarded with prestigious committee appointment and laudatory press coverage. This past June, twelve Democratic congressmen and women finally came out

and condemned some of these comments. But there are 36 or 38 Jews in Congress – why did it take them two years to finally call out progressive Democratic anti-Semitism, and why was the criticism voiced by only 12 Jewish colleagues?

Perhaps , because they won't publicly criticize the squad because of partisan loyalty. Or maybe there's some pathology in the failure to acknowledge comments that are in fact anti-Semitic. Look at the reaction to Omar's comments that occasioned a resolution to condemn anti-Semitism. The sad fact is that the Democrats couldn't get enough of their own caucus to support it until they dumbed it down into a general resolution against "all hatreds" and deleted all reference to the specific comments that necessitated it in the first place. In effect, it was no longer a resolution against anti-Semitism.. Why are not the Jews speaking up as Jews – because you can be sure if it were a Republican who said some of these things the Democrats would be all over it – and rightly so, by the way. But it must work both ways. I suppose the difference in mindset can be characterized by what happened when the late William F. Buckley concluded that some people on the editorial board of the *National Review* were spouting antisemitism masquerading as criticism of Israeli policy. Do you know who I am talking about?

Jerry Gordon: Yes, I do.

Matthew Hausman: Buckley acknowledged it as antisemitism and, as you will recall, removed some folks from the editorial board. But Buckley didn't stop there. He authored a feature-length article called [\*In Search of Antisemitism\*](#), which he turned into a book. If you have ever read the book, it contains comments and essays contributed by people as diverse as Buckley himself and Dershowitz. Now, what was the significance? In 1993, Buckley and his intellectual contemporaries had a "come to G-d meeting" as it were. They realized how much of a fixture anti-Semitism was in the political, cultural, and religious landscape. For him (as a

Roman Catholic) to acknowledge this was pretty telling. Buckley wrote the book to try to start the rectification process. That is what Tikkun means – not what the Conservative and Reform movements mean by their erroneous understanding of “Tikkun Olam” as a repository for their progressive political values. Real Tikkun or rectification is something that Buckley tried to do, though he certainly wasn’t conscious of it.

Now, since then, which party has voted pro-Israel more often? The Republican Party. Trump, like him or hate him, made combating antisemitism a priority of the US State Department, an agency which itself has had an antisemitism problem since at least the days of FDR. If you want to find people who regularly use their Congressional pulpit to condemn anti-Semitism, it is not coming from the Democratic side of the aisle.

Since the 1990s, the Democrats have had multiple occasions to do the same thing as Buckley. They could have used the squad’s ramblings as a watershed moment. They could have used the Obama Administration’s gross anti-Israel extremism as a rallying point. They could have spoken out about [UN Resolution 2334](#), which was coordinated by the Obama Administration on its way out of office, which says among other things that the Jews have no historical connection to Judea and Samaria. That the Temple never stood in Jerusalem. The Wiesenthal Center referred to this as one of the most significant acts of anti-Semitism of 2016.

But where were Democrats who could have confronted Jew-hatred in their political camp the same way Buckley did in the early ‘90s? Liberals and Democrats have had dozens of opportunities where they could have done the same thing as Buckley. Instead, they have punted every time.

Jerry Gordon: Before we began this discussion, we were talking about what constitutes a “righteous Gentile.” We were making a

distinction about the basic concept of the Baal Teshuva, those who follow the [Noahide Commandments](#). I know one personally, because my former talk show partner Rod Reuven Dovid Bryant is a Noahide, who converted from evangelicalism. In fact, his [life change story](#) is up for everybody to see on the NETIV *YouTube* playlist.

Matthew Hausman: I have watched it. It is captivating.

Jerry Gordon: Yes, very captivating. What then is your objection to elements inside the evangelical movement?

Matthew Hausman: I have no problem with evangelicals who support Israel for the right reasons. I have a big problem with those who do it for the wrong reasons. And I know a lot of evangelicals. I certainly know a lot through my brother. When you are a Jew who knows Hebrew Scripture in the original language you get asked many questions; and you ask a lot in response. If I ask an evangelical supporter of Israel, "Do you believe in [replacement theology](#)?" and the answer is, "No, I think that's horrible," that's only a start. Replacement theology is theological anti-Semitism, but that's not where the questioning should end. The next question should be, "Why do you support Israel? Do you believe you have to support Israel so that the Jews will be ingathered for their ultimate conversion to Christianity in the end of days?" And if the answer is "yes," that's the wrong reason. Now I know plenty of Christians who never believed that – and some who did but no longer do. But they have to be open to the fact that they don't really know Jewish scripture and that we don't all share the same Bible.

That is, they have to be open minded not to the latest ideas, but to the oldest ones. For those who talk about Biblical prophecy, they need to understand they don't truly know Hebrew Scripture unless they can read it in its original tongue. Jews don't believe in the Christian Bible or in the Christian iterations of the "Old Testament." There's a saying that



counter-missionaries have regarding non-Jewish scripture that “anything true isn’t new, and anything new isn’t true.” Regarding messianic prophecy, we go back to the original source – the Tanakh.

Recently I got into a discussion with a friend who I believe at first was trying to convert me until he realized he didn’t know Tanakh as well as I did. I talked about some of the differences between the reality and his understanding of Hebrew Scripture, and he asked whether the differences are significant. I told him they are not only significant, but fundamental. He asked me for an example, and I instructed him to name a passage or verse he believed to be Christological. So he cited Psalm 2, Verse 12, which he recounted as saying “Kiss the Son lest he [G-d] be angry.” So I explained to him that the Hebrew is significantly different. The text does not say “kiss the Son...” Rather, it says, “Arm yourself with purity...” But if you don’t know Hebrew – as he didn’t – and you’re quoting from the King James Version – as he was – you’d never know. I then gave him an impromptu Hebrew grammar lesson, which opened his mind.

I believe this caused something of a reformation in his thinking. He acknowledged that what he’d been taught about Jewish Scripture was wrong and that he’d endeavor to learn. When somebody like that, with whom I’ve had real dialogue, says he’s an ardent supporter of Israel for the right reasons, I believe him. If you support Israel and the Jewish People for reasons of history and justice, then I don’t have a problem. But if you have a conversionary agenda, then I do. Many people may not be aware of it, but there’s a problem with missionaries in Israel who have entrenched themselves in Israeli society, often pretending to be Jews, getting involved in absorption centers, and preaching through deception. If you’re going to tell me the Messianic movement is just another Jewish movement, I’d say it’s not Jewish at all. Indeed, it’s an evangelical sect with a meaningless

overlay of Jewish customs and traditions.

My point is, if you want to determine which evangelical support is legitimate and which isn't, you have to scratch below the surface and ask these questions. If they support missionary activity against Jews or vouch for the bona fides of messianic groups, I think Israel and Jewish organizations should decline their support. If they support us for legitimate reasons, then fine. The thing I find interesting is how many people originally came at us with a conversionary perspective, only to alter their views after really learning Hebrew Scripture.

My brother is very often responsible for that. When he addresses crowds of evangelicals, they will call out verses they want him to cite. Jon always says the same thing, "Do you want me to recite what you think it says or do you want me to tell you what it really says?" I have been at some of these events, and they've never said, "Tell us what we want to hear." And that's where dialogue begins.

I have a problem with agendas, and the hidden ones are the worst because if somebody is wearing it on his sleeve, you know what he is all about. But if it's hidden, you have to be wary. We need to educate ourselves to be able to educate others. Unfortunately, too many Jews do not know their own Scripture, heritage, and history. Who do you think missionaries prefer to target when soliciting Jews to become "messianic" or join churches? They don't have much luck talking to people like you or me. They prefer to target the poorly educated, those who don't know their own Scripture.

I am not shy about saying that. I said it when Jon hosted a program at his shul with Pat Robertson, about which I wrote an article. Somebody asked me what I thought about Christian support of Israel, and I said exactly that. One of the evangelical pastors who was there at the time, a friend of my brother, agreed with me. I don't mean to offend anyone, but I

won't keep quiet. In using a phrase that's been overly politicized, I will speak truth to power – especially as a Jew speaking to a religious hierarchy that was devoted to crushing the Jewish spirit for 2000 years.

I am not letting Islam off the hook under the false assumption that the Muslim world was gentler to the Jews. It wasn't. The Rambam (Maimonides) left the Iberian Peninsula not because of the Christians, as bad as they were, but because of the Al-Mohad Muslims, whose war cry was "convert or die." He migrated to a more tolerant Muslim regime to be sure, but as a subjugated Jew, nonetheless. And let's not forget there were pockets of toleration within Christendom as well. For example, the Jews were originally invited into Poland, which provided safe haven for a century-and-a-half. Amsterdam was also a safe zone where Jews could live unmolested. But such islands existed discretionarily; Jews could not depend on them indefinitely. If this history teaches us anything, it's that ultimately we can only depend on ourselves.

That was the long way of saying that the millennials haven't learned this history, and don't know that they have only themselves and their people to depend on. They seem to think they can rely on political allies based on ephemeral cultural values that themselves are not innately Jewish.

Jerry Gordon: On that note, I want to thank you for this brilliant discourse. We look forward to more discussions of this type with you. Where can our readers find you?

Matthew Hausman: My [columns](#) appear in *Arutz Sheva – Israel National News*, and my work is republished in numerous cites in the US and internationally. You've been very gracious in reprinting my articles in the *Iconoclast* blog of *The New English Review*. I can also be heard on *The Zelda Young Show* (CHIN Radio 1250AM from Toronto and 91.9 FM from Ottawa) on Sunday mornings from 9:10 to 9:35 or so, and on Wednesdays from 11:10 AM to 12:00 Noon with a break in the middle. You

can also hear my brother Rabbi Jon at the end of the Sunday show and on Tuesdays, 11:10 to 12:00 Noon. The station streams live every day so you can listen in real time. In addition, both of us appear on other radio shows periodically around the country.

Jerry Gordon: Thank you , we look forward to more.

Matthew Hausman: It was a pleasure talking to you.

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[Watch this YouTube video](#) of the interview with Matthew Hausman.

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Jerry Gordon is a Senior Editor at *New English Review* and Producer and former co-host of *Israel News Talk Radio – Beyond the Matrix*.

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