

# The War Against Israel IS the War Against the Jews

By [Eric Rozenman](#) (March 2024)



Unshatterable (Refugees), by Frances Hodgkins, 1916

In 2015, *Atlantic* magazine featured an article by Editor-in-Chief Jeffrey Goldberg that was headlined “Is It Time for Jews to Leave Europe?”

The February issue of *Commentary* magazine’s cover article is headlined, “They’re Coming After Us.” Editor John Podhoretz

begins by writing “I have lost count of the number of times the phrase ‘I have never felt like this before’ has been whispered in my ear, texted or sent to me in an e-mail,” in the three months since Hamas attacked Israel on October 7.”

A public opinion survey in December found that a majority of Americans between 18 and 24 think Israel “should be ended and given to Hamas.”

Two years ago a member of the Virginia General Assembly’s Black Caucus told a member of the Commonwealth’s Commission to Combat Antisemitism that none of the three legislative proposals Governor Glenn Youngkin made, based on the commission’s final report—adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism; barring state contracting with businesses participating in the boycott, divest and sanctions (BDS) movement; and expanding hate crimes provisions to include Jews under ethnicity as well as religion—were necessary. Why? Because “there’s no antisemitism in Virginia.”

That was about half a year after a new parents’ group in Fairfax County had filed a Title VI Civil Rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Education against Fairfax County Public Schools for not responding effectively, when at all, to a pattern of antisemitic incidents in the schools. The department agreed to review the complaint, but may be sitting on it. Meanwhile, Jewish parents in Loudoun and Arlington counties in Virginia and Montgomery County in Maryland have asked United Against Antisemitism for help.

Just before last Thanksgiving, as Hannah Meyers of the Manhattan Institute has written, “around 400 students at Hillcrest High School in Jamaica, Queens, rampaged through the building. Wreaking pandemonium, they even tore a water fountain off the wall. What inspired this riot? A Jewish health teacher had posted a picture of herself at a pro-Israel rally on her private Facebook page. The teens were gleefully

hunting her down.”

As a young reporter in Columbus in the 1970's, I heard Elie Wiesel speaking at Ohio State University Hillel. Among other things, he noted how it had been many years after the Holocaust and World War II before he thought it safe to marry and bring Jewish children into the world, which by then he had.

A dozen years or so ago, Wiesel spoke to the annual New York City banquet of CAMERA (Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis). He said he was concerned by the level of antisemitism he was seeing in the West. This December, his son Elisha Wiesel wrapped an Israeli flag around himself in counter-protest against hundreds of anti-Israel demonstrators at New York's Penn Station. Masked, hooded demonstrators threatened him and police told Wiesel to put the flag away as the situation was getting dangerous.

So it is. The situation in which Israel is the miners' canary for Western civilization—a concept and historical fact now often derided—and the situation in which American Jews are the miners' canary for this country.

### **Cutting the roots**

Seemingly lost at times now is that Israel in its first 75 years has become the freest, most prosperous, and innovative of the 100 or more post-World War II, post-Soviet collapse countries. And has done so while under continual siege.

Also seemingly dismissed as at best irrelevant is the fact that the United States has been history's longest running, freest, most prosperous and creative experiment in self-government. And, since at least 1941 and its entry into World War II, if not since 1917 and its entry into World War I, the world's indispensable nation.

Not just rarities, these two countries, both historical anomalies, share formative values rooted in the Hebrew Bible. By no coincidence therefore, according to Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks and American-born Israeli political scientist and founder of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs Daniel Eliezar among others, the United States also has been home to diaspora Jewry's freest, most prosperous, community in 2,000 years.

Among the questions raised most brutally on October 7—and by the responses to that horror—are, for how much longer? How much longer for Israel, for America, and for diaspora Jewry as we know them today, or knew them before October 7?

A bit more from that 2015 *Atlantic* magazine article: “For half a century, memories of the Holocaust limited antisemitism on the Continent. That period has ended—the recent fatal attacks in Paris and Copenhagen are merely the latest examples of rising violence against Jews. Renewed vitriol among right-wing fascists and new threats from radicalized Islamists have created a crisis, confronting Jews with an agonizing choice.”

As I commented in *Jews Make the Best Demons: “Palestine” and the Jewish Question*, “be that as it may for European Jews, the replacement of one historical period by another affects not just the Continent. The subhead simply could have read, ‘The post-Holocaust period is over. Anti-Zionist antisemitism confronts Jews with the ultimate demand: “Get out of Israel and get out of diaspora!”’”

Many Americans, Jews and non-Jews, have been shocked by the explosion, and sometimes seeming normalization, of antisemitism since October 7. Hamas commits the biggest one-day slaughter of Jews since the Holocaust, and one result is tens of thousands marching in Washington, D.C.—and more in London, Paris, Berlin and elsewhere, marching repeatedly—against Israel. And, repeatedly, individuals ripping down posters of the hostages.

Six weeks after al-Qaeda murdered nearly 3,000 people on Sept. 11, 2001, Jonathan Rosen, writing in *The New York Times Magazine*, put it this way:

“I had somehow believed that the Jewish Question, which so obsessed both Jews and antisemites in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, had been solved—most horribly by Hitler’s ‘final solution,’ most hopefully by Zionism. But more and more I feel Jews being turned into a question mark once again. How is it, the world still asks—about Israel, about Jews, about me—that you are still here?”

### **Regression to the mean**

Three years later, President George W. Bush’s administration concluded that the State Department needed an office it never had before, one to monitor and combat antisemitism abroad and at home. In 2019—a year after the Pittsburgh synagogue massacre—the head of that office, Elan Carr, said the time had come for every American synagogue and Jewish Community Center to employ armed guards. If so, this was not the America I had raised my children in, much less the one I’d grown up in.

A photograph was taken at singer Aretha Franklin’s 2018 funeral. It showed four men on stage, in front of 4,000 mourner-celebrants. The four were the Rev. Jesse Jackson, the Rev. Al Sharpton, Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, and former President Bill Clinton. Thanks to Associated Press, there it was, a visual of the renormalization in the persons of Sharpton and Farrakhan, of antisemites if not quite, of antisemitism.

In 2015, Robert Wistrich—noted historian of antisemitism at Hebrew University—explained what fueled the so-called “new antisemitism.” Rating neo-fascism as generally a secondary threat, Wistrich spotlighted the red-green or leftist-Islamist connection as primary. He said it merged Islamic triumphalism,

the Palestinian “narrative” that had become a secular religion of “Palestinianism,” and resurgent Jew-hatred. Among other things, Wistrich noted:

“‘Holocaust inversion’ (the perverse transformation of Jews into Nazis and Muslims into victimized ‘Jews’) all-too-often becomes a weapon with which to pillory Israel and denigrate the Jewish people ...” Hence, the belief that more Holocaust education can serve as an antidote “is quite unfounded.” Further, since U.N. General Assembly adoption of the infamous Soviet-inspired, Arab League promoted “Zionism-is-racism” resolution in 1975, the labeling of Israel as racist, apartheid and founded on ethnic cleansing has “turned Zionism into a synonym for criminality” and has made “every Jew (or non-Jew) who supports the totally ‘illegitimate’ or ‘immoral’ Zionist entity ... complicit in cosmic evil.”

Sort of like medieval Jews, often seen by Church leaders and the masses as in league with Satan and responsible for society’s ills, from individual cases of missing children to decimation of the Black Death. Just so today, the cry of “racist Zionist!” or “Israeli genocide!” serves as “Christ-killer!” did centuries ago—inciting mob violence and legitimizing the murder of Israelis, of Jews.

So, we get the 30-plus Harvard student organizations almost immediately issuing a statement placing complete blame for October 7 not on Hamas, not on Islamic supremacism, but on Israel.

Hence, we get South Africa, acting as lawyer for Hamas and behind Hamas Iran, dragging Israel to the U.N.’s International Court of Justice on charges of genocide, when it was Hamas’ founding charter that called for genocide of the Jews.

And we get—among countless examples—

- The Muslim Students Association at Woodson High School in Fairfax County, Va., outside Washington, D.C., first staging a 100-plus student walkout “in support of Gaza” then lobbying the principal to show an Islamist anti-Israel “documentary” called “Occupation 101,” and most recently hoping to sing an Arabic song at a school cultural event and take donations for UNRWA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency notorious for being a Hamas jobs program and inculcating anti-Israel antisemitism at its schools;
- Arlington County Public Schools holding a teacher training session on the conflict featuring a pro-BDS professor from George Washington University;
- A Washington state elementary school teaching kids antisemitic chants and holding an anti-Israel demonstration; and
- Protesters in Canada blocking entrance to a Jewish hospital and calling for “intifada.”

October 7 and reactions to it remind us that for all Israel’s successes—in many respects an actual light unto the nations—it’s not the day after the 1967 Six-Day War, a day of miraculous-seeming triumph, but rather, a renewed war for existence. More than 200,000 Israelis cannot return to their farms, villages and towns near the Gaza Strip or the Lebanese border before Israel wins. If it is allowed to win. And if they cannot go home, to resume normal lives, it is difficult to see how Israel, tiny as it is, can sustain normal life.

### **Witches’ brew**

The Jewish state is nearly surrounded by surrogates of an Iran sworn to its destruction and on the verge of nuclear weapons capability. Hence, the necessity of destroying Hamas. And of

defeating Hezbollah. And destroying West Bank terrorism. Not to mention repulsing Iran's proxy militia in Syria and Iraq, in repelling the Houthis in Yemen and ultimately defeating Iran itself.

But Iran is now allied with Russia and is one of China's biggest oil suppliers. Israel, a New Jersey-sized country with nine million people, not quite seven and half million of them Jews, can and must destroy Hamas and quite likely Hezbollah—with solid American support. But only the United States can lead the defeat of Iran's other surrogates and Iran itself.

Does Washington, does the American public understand that Israel's fight, that of "the little Satan," is but the preliminary to the battle of "the great Satan?" America, and whatever allies it can retain, confronts the red-green alliance and the anti-Western, anti-American, anti-democracy, anti-capitalist and therefore essentially anti-Jewish, revisionist powers of China, Russia, North Korea and Iran.

A growing number of Americans under 40 tell pollsters they don't think much of patriotism, don't support aid to Israel, and belong to no organized religion—making them difficult to reach with references to Judeo-Christian ethics and talk about Jews' disproportionately large contributions to this country. If the secular fundamentalism of woke progressivism is permitted to dictate that America is systemically white racist, Zionism is racism, and Jews are white adjacent, then Jews—definitely not covered by Diversity, Equity and Inclusion—are part of the problem, not its solution.

In his 2009 best-seller, *The Israel Test: Why the World's Most Besieged State is a Beacon of Freedom and Hope for the World Economy*, George Gilder wrote that antagonism toward Israel springs from, like antisemitism everywhere, envy of superior accomplishment. Israel's rise as a world capitalist and technological power, he argued, stemmed in part from the



Jewish “culture of mind” and in part from Judaism itself, which, “perhaps more than any other religion, favors capitalist activity and provides a rigorous moral framework for it.” Critics—threatened by Jews and Judaism, I would add—seek to tear down Israel’s success rather than emulate it. America’s ability and desire to defend Israel, Gilder said, will define our own future survival as a nation.

And that of American Jewry as well. America’s post-1945 rise as the indispensable nation—not the world’s police officer, but, as I have written, freedom’s guarantor—coincided with a decline in domestic antisemitism. Resurgent Jew-hatred signals, among other things, abandonment of founding U.S. principles that underlay the U.S.’ indispensability.

Meanwhile, Jews will have to rely primarily on themselves. Welcome allies, of course—genuine, in-the-trenches-with-us, not lip-service allies. But understanding that inculcating Jewish knowledge and Jewish pride, growing Jewish families, welcoming converts and taking first-responder responsibility for their own safety—and always standing up for and standing with Israel—is up to them. No one else will do it if the Jews don’t lead.

## [Table of Contents](#)

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