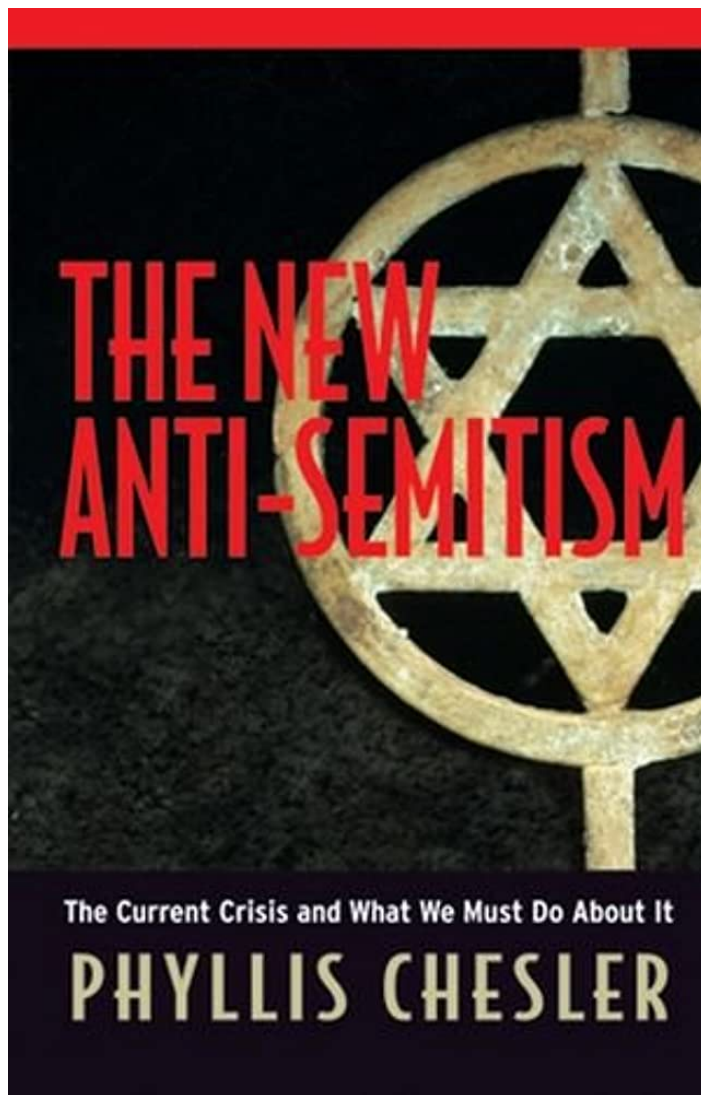


Cognitive War in Israel

The story of anti-Zionism is filled with Israelis who thought that hasbara—propaganda—was unimportant. Have they learned?



by Phyllis Chesler

Israel has finally appointed a “dedicated Minister” to deal with the “narrative” which has so dangerously demonized Israel. However, [Minister Galit Distel-Atbaryan](#) says that she has no budget and that her mandate is not an international

one.

I believe her.

Before Minister Distel-Atbaryan, my friend and colleague, Natan Sharansky, was Israel's first Minister for Global Antisemitism. He, also, had too small a budget. The brilliant diplomat, Aviva Raz-Schechter, whom I also knew, succeeded him in this position. Raz-Schechter did not even have a secretary!

Perhaps Israel, forced to deal with so many hot terrorist wars on the ground, did not believe that the cognitive war against Israel and the Jews was worth fighting. Perhaps they did not have the extraordinary resources required to effectively fight the war of lethal lies.

Here's a little background.

In the very early 1970s, I could not interest most high-profile Jewish feminists into talking about antisemitism or Jew-hatred among us. This is, in part, what sent me to Israel for the first time.

In 1980 I visited Israel for the fourth time to talk about the rise of antisemitism or Jew-hatred. Journalist and poet, Rachel Chalfi, interviewed me for the front pages of *Yediot Aharonot*. She took this subject very seriously, as did Mina Ben Zvi, (the commander of Chen during the 1948 war) with whom I worked at a UN conference in Copenhagen, an event that I termed as the precursor to Durban. The conference was supposed to be about women, but Israel hatred ruled the day.

Chalfi and Ben Zvi understood the danger we faced.

But the Israeli intellectuals, novelists, military men, feminists, and academics, with whom I met, tried to explain to me that nations fight with each other all the time. It is just the way things are. There's nothing to worry about.

It was not just the Israelis who thought that

hasbara—propaganda—was unimportant. When I returned to the United States I tried hard to interest at least two Jewish American organizations to allow me to develop a curriculum for their staff, one that would teach them the language of oppression and liberation. I explained that this was precisely the language that would be used against Israel globally. I offered to do this pro bono. It was 1980-1981 and there was simply no interest.

In other words, more than 40 years ago, there was little interest in combatting the cognitive war against the Jews both in Israel and among Jewish American organizations.

This rapidly rising antisemitism was both old and new. [As I \(and others\)](#) pointed out in the early 21st century, anti-Zionism was now the reason for Jew-hatred.

A dedicated group in which I participate have been covering the cognitive war against Israel for the last 22-23 years. By 2012, I began calling for an Iron Dome to combat the lethal lies against the Jewish state.

Nothing less will do.

Minister Distel-Atbaryan: You have [OldChinaHands](#) and [committedcognitive](#) warriors at your disposal. [Students](#) who are focused on internet hate. Professors who are focused on academic hate. Intellectual activists, including lawyers, who are focused on Lies in the Street, the media, the governing bodies of the world.

Please consider calling upon us to serve; but, like you, we also need resources that we do not yet have.

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