

Ralph Nader Expropriates Anti-Semitism to Include Arabs



Ralph Nader

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Ralph Nader, the consumer crusader, five time presidential candidate and pro-Arab defender has a new cause; expropriating anti-Semitism to include Arabs. Manfred Gerstenfeld in our [review](#) and [interview](#) about his latest book, [The War of a Million Cuts](#), noted such examples of flagrant abuse of semantics. Examples, like accusing the Israelis of being the new Nazis and Palestinians as the oppressed Jews. Raphael Medoff, of the David S Wyman Center for Holocaust Studies in Washington, DC, wrote about Nader's latest twist- anti-Semitism applies to Arabs- because it is about common Semitic linguistics. This is the subject of Medoff's *Algemeiner op-ed* [Ralph Nader Targets 'The Jews' and Linguistically Hijacks Anti-Semitism](#).

Here is what Nader said at the American –Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) convention in Washington:

You never avoid using the word anti-Semitism when Arabs and Arab-Americans are discriminated against, are arrested without charges, are exposed to all kinds of swears and bars against employment and all kinds of discrimination that goes on, and that is anti-Semitism. The Semitic race is Arabs and Jews and the Jews do not own the phrase anti-Semitism.

Medoff asks the relevant question:

Is the Semitic race “Arabs and Jews,” as Nader asserted? Actually, it’s not. “Semitic” refers to a group of Middle Eastern languages. There’s no such thing as a “Semitic race.”

In his critically acclaimed 1986 book, *Semites and Anti-Semites*, Bernard Lewis (professor emeritus of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University) wrote, “‘Semitic’ is a linguistic and cultural classification... It has nothing whatever to do with race in the anthropological sense that is now common usage.”

Medoff goes on to provide the origin of the term anti-Semitism in 19th Century Europe:

The German anti-Jewish agitator Wilhelm Marr in 1879 coined the term “Antisemitism” (“antisemitismus” in German). His target was still Jews; he simply believed the new phrase would make his brand of hatred sound more legitimate and even scientific. The organization he founded to further these aims was called the Antisemiten-Liga, or League of Antisemites.

He then delves into the purpose of Nader’s abusive semantics:

Ralph Nader’s real aim, however, is not linguistic accuracy. As he explained to the ADC convention, he wants to use language as a tool to advance the Arab campaign against Israel.

“Once you use that word, you have equivalence with the other use of that word. It’s anti-Semitism against Arabs, anti-Semitism against Jews—why ignore one to the other?” Nader said.

According to this formula, Arabs would gain victim status just like Jews.

Nader seems to be particularly sensitive to the fact that some hatred of Israel is perceived as anti-Semitic—and he wants to prevent that perception from taking hold.

[Supporters of Israel] know how to accuse people of anti-Semitism if any issue on Israel is criticized, even though the worst anti-Semitism in the world today is against Arabs and Arab-Americans and they know how to use the language, he complained. I suspect AIPAC spends more money on hotels for their national meeting in five hours than ADC's entire budget, so it's important to ask the question: "What does it take in terms of human hours and resources to get things turned around?"

I got to know Nader up close and personal in the late 60's to early 1970's before my association came to a screeching halt.

Having collaborated and co-authored pieces with Nader and testified on Capitol Hill on worker safety issues back in 1968 to 1970, I came to know what he was like. Fortunately, I was never a so-called "Nader's Raider" nor employed in any of his various 'Centers'. My involvement preceded those developments. I was an independent researcher and later a systems consultant for a decade in DC.

I left Nader's circle because of two things: his monumental jihadist ego and his maltreatment of subordinates. Some of my comments about this are contained in a chapter on Nader in [*Playing for Keeps in Washington*](#), 1977 by Laurence Leamer.

Nader in his earlier days as the mysterious "white knight of consumerism" lived a monk like existence in a rooming house not far from DuPont Circle in DC. At the time he had a colleague, the indefatigable Ted Jacobs. Nader was paranoid and a control freak. One day he walked in to Ted's office and basically told him that he was fired, locked him out of his office and secured all his files!!

Nader developed a messiah like complex that went well beyond the consumer issues. He subsequently became an icon in the anti-war movement allied with anti-Israel leftists like Noam Chomsky. The fact is that he may have mistakenly identified his Lebanese Maronite Christian immigrant parents as Arabs because they spoke Arabic. He bought into the Arab vision with all of its attendant problems, including being a *dhimmi* fellow traveler and an anti-Semite of the 20th Century variety. Not surprising as Nader had a Princeton undergraduate major in Arabic studies. One wonders if he had Professor Bernard Lewis for any of his undergraduate professors at Princeton.

He subsequently earned a law degree from Harvard, became a plaintiff's attorney opening offices in Hartford, Connecticut. His real climb to fame began when the late Senator Pat Moynihan, former aide to New York Governor Averill Harriman, moved to Washington as a Kennedy appointee. Moynihan brought with him the treasure trove of his auto crash data files. Nader sought access to that, wrote Moynihan when the later was Assistant Secretary of Labor for Policy Evaluation and Research in 1961-62. Nader was invited down to plough through Moynihan's files virtually camping out in Moynihan's office mining the auto crash data files. From that research emerged the Chevy Corvair controversy, the breathless *J'accuse* against GM in Nader's best seller [Unsafe at Any Speed](#). Because GM didn't know who he was they hired a private detective to check him out which led to a suit by Nader that resulted in a \$400,000 legal settlement with GM in 1964 for violating his privacy. The settlement, initial and subsequent book royalties created Nader's personal wealth. Nader was wise enough to hire a real pro investing the settlement funds for several decades. Nader also had a reputation for not spending much on himself or for that matter on anyone else. Funds for the Center for Auto Safety and Public Citizens were raised from donations.

Nader always reminded me of [Girolamo Savonarola](#), the famous mad monk who ruled Florence and drove Florentines to burn books, art and other alleged fripperies in the famous Bonfire of the Vanities. He sought to found a New Jerusalem in Florence as a world center of Christianity following the invasion of Italy by French King Charles VII. After the ousting of the Medicis, Savonarola ruled Florence as the head of a virtual populist republic from 1494 to 1498. After refusing fealty to Pope Vincent VI's Holy League against the French, Savonarola was invited to Rome, tried and excommunicated. He and two Dominican Friars were ultimately condemned, tried by both church and civil authorities, hung and burned in May 1498. There is a famous statue in Ferrara, Italy where gaunt like Savonarola looks as if he's uttering that famous Italian expression: "ecco uomo." Nader resembles a leftist American version of Savonarola.