

JEWISH LIVES MATTER

Human Rights and
Anti-Semitism

Fiamma Nirenstein



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Preface

More than it is a book, this is an open letter that expresses my utter bewilderment. I was angry and taken aback while pouring out these words, surrounded by a heap of scattered papers and books written by myself and others, who like myself have dealt with anti-Semitism throughout the years. Years in which anti-Semitism should have disappeared, but has instead increased and now is a huge phenomenon. We have failed!

My anger is fueled by pain: I have already explained extensively how anti-Semitism has turned into hatred of Israel, but this is the first time I see my own friends falling prey – slowly and without realizing it, because they are decent people – to an alien anti-Semitic spirit. A spirit that has worked its way into their mindset precisely in the name of the good things in which they believe, that is, human rights.

I never thought that those whom I deemed friends could have been gripped by such an instinctive repulsion for the most important manifestation of the Jewish people, Israel. Instead this hostility is strong and completely shameless, which is also a new phenomenon. Therefore, I sat down and wrote in order not only to respond to the accusations, but also to accuse.

Jewish Lives Matter is dedicated to those who truly fight for human rights without being misled.

The author wishes to thank Shulim Vogelmann, owner of the Giuntina publishing house, who printed and edited the Italian version of the book with courage and sensitivity, and for making the rights to publish this book in English translation available to the Jerusalem Center.

Introduction

As Lenin explained in 1907, “The wording is calculated to provoke in the reader, hatred, disgust, contempt. The phrasing must be calculated not to convince but to destroy, not to correct the adversary’s mistake, but to annihilate his organization and wipe it off the face of the earth.”¹ The statement is a perfect fit for today’s obsessive, counterfactual search for human rights violations by Israel. Aimed at building a worldwide campaign, it’s a powerful, backstage political warfare; concurrently, terrorism creates a situation of immediate danger for any Jewish citizen of Israel.

It started with UN General Assembly Resolution 3379, known as “Zionism is racism.” This page of the history of anti-Semitism was written on the model of Soviet propaganda, even if the notion of the Jews as self-interested, insular, and malign demons was much propagated by the Nazis. This resolution was paradoxically intertwined with the history of the institutions, the United Nations and the European Union, that were both established, among other things, to fight any possible return of anti-Semitism with its genocidal consequences. The resolution’s conceptual offspring is what Robert Wistrich, the late historian of anti-Semitism, called “Holocaust inversion.” A mere 30 years after the defeat of Nazism and the discovery of the astonishing reality of the Shoah, the USSR’s permanent delegate to the United Nations, N. T. Fedorenko, stated in the assembly that: “The overweening aggressors have taken over the notorious Nazi theories of geopolitics, of Lebensraum, of establishing a ‘new order’ and ‘vital frontiers’ in the Middle East.... How monstrous that these devices of the Nazi brigands, condemned by the International Military Tribunal in 1946, have been revived by a government claiming to represent a people which suffered so bitterly at the Nazi butchers’ hands!”² This kind of claim has been

repeated so many thousands of times, in so many places, that it has become – divorced from reality as it is – the received wisdom.

Something more than a year has passed since this book was published in Italian, my mother tongue, by Giuntina, garnering much attention and many reviews.³ It focuses on the nexus between the betrayal of human rights and of civilization on the one hand, and of the State of Israel on the other. The reviews indicate that many people find it contradictory to be both a human rights supporter and an anti-Semite, and this is why this little book has basically been well received. Nevertheless, that contradiction abounds today, and at every turn takes surprising forms. It was, indeed, the irrational international reaction to Israel's war of self-defense against Hamas, which in May 2021 fired 4,600 rockets toward Israel's civilian population in 11 days, beginning with a launch at Jerusalem, that led me to write again about anti-Semitism. And after another year, the situation is getting even worse. Each day the warfare against the Jews is becoming both more blatant and more refined, as BDS and charges of colonialism and apartheid gain wide currency.

In 2021, all the rhetorical weapons we have seen in the subsequent year were already there: the Palestinian "defense" of the Al-Aqsa Mosque against an imaginary Jewish invasion; the invented persecution of the Arab inhabitants of the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood and elsewhere in Jerusalem; Israel's supposed use of the police as an instrument of bloody repression; the Jews' ostensible attack on the status quo at the Temple Mount; an alleged semifascist tendency in Israeli politics...the weapons were all there one year ago, and much, much before that.

In a word, the international media keeps charging Israel with what are actually Arab misdeeds. The contemporary theoretical basis for this endeavor is found in the official documents of the human rights era. Since 1970, for instance, Amnesty International has issued 208 reports on Israel and the Palestinians, but only 61 on Venezuela and 40 on North Korea.⁴ Amnesty's assault on Israel uses language from the Soviet playbook to subvert and ultimately erase the only democratic state in the Middle East, and

perverts the use of all categories like self-defense, fighting terror, repression, aggression, expulsion, ethnic cleansing, and genocide that form the core of the human rights culture. Examples are legion. And this strategy is widely used: even during the Second Intifada, when more than a thousand Israeli civilians were killed in terror attacks, the Greek parliamentary speaker Apostolos Kaklamani asserted that: “The entire Greek people, parliament government and political parties, condemn the genocide that is being carried out today in Palestine”⁵ – meaning, of course, Israel’s self-defense.

During the year since my book was published, in the aftermath of the 11-day war of May 2021, the Temple Mount, including the Al-Aqsa Mosque, has again been the theater of riots and of accusations against Israel that lack any factual basis. The key blood libel is “Al-Aqsa is in danger.” The Palestinians have even spoken of ritual Passover sacrifices carried out on the mount by Jewish invaders aiming to take possession of the third holiest Muslim site in the world. A colonial, even racial, war of religion.

But riots and clashes on the mount have never been initiated by the Israeli police. Rocks, bottles, and Molotov cocktails have been piled up and hurled down at Jews praying at the Western Wall. The police have acted against rioters and to protect Jews who have walked past the esplanade of mosques on the Temple Mount, the most ancient, sacred, and beloved site in the Jewish tradition. Indeed, “in the wake of the normalisation agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates...the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and the Palestinian Territories has issued a scholarly opinion – a *fatwa* – in which he apparently bans Emirati citizens from visiting Al-Aqsa Mosque.”⁶ The former chief justice of the Palestinian Authority’s Religious Court, Sheikh Tayseer al-Tamimi, declared that Jews should not only be prohibited from praying on the Temple Mount but at the Western Wall as well, since the wall is part of “the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque” and not of any “alleged” ancient Jewish Temple. Such “scurrilous talk,” as commentator David Weinberg has called it,⁷ has fueled an

earthquake of Arab violence, accompanied by lies that Jews were “storming” people at prayer and slaughtering innocent Muslims.

But after the winds calmed, everybody could see that there had been no infringement of the status quo from the Israeli side. Things have stayed the same, with no TV or other media objecting to the fact that Islamic youth have smuggled machine guns onto the mount, and flung down rocks and fireworks at worshippers at the wall. There was also little international attention to the fact that during the latest Temple Mount agitations in May 2022, terror attacks killed 19 people in various places in Israel; this while the international media were demanding that Israel stop the “violations” of the status quo and the “unacceptable, excessive use of force.”

The demonization of Israel has continued with the unfortunate killing of Shireen Abu Akleh, a Palestinian-American journalist caught in an exchange of fire in Jenin, the historical alma mater of perhaps three-quarters of Palestinian terrorism. It happened, and nobody can yet say how, during one of the operations by the Israeli army and police to arrest the perpetrators of the terror attacks against civilians.

Abu Akleh’s tragic death prompted worldwide demonization of Israel; most of the Western media outlets immediately and uncritically accepted the narrative of Israeli guilt and even of Israel’s intention to kill a journalist in the field. Yet, on the Palestinian Authority’s refusal to conduct a joint investigation with Israel and to turn over the bullet that killed Abu Akleh, there has been worldwide silence. The Palestinians did not have to respond to questions about whether Abu Akleh was actually a victim of Israeli ferocity, or why they withheld the bullet. Yet when the Israeli police, indeed not very gracefully, stopped a group of Palestinian youths from seizing Abu Akleh’s coffin and thereby turning her funeral into a new occasion for large-scale violence, all of international public opinion was in an uproar, portraying the police response to the violent attempt, unwanted by Abu Akleh’s family, as an act of unprovoked and depraved cruelty.

Even President Biden called the images of the funeral “very disturbing,” and the European Union said it was “very shocked.” Nobody asked how the event of the coffin almost falling to the ground actually unfolded; criminalizing Israel took the upper hand while the police had to contend with multiple attacks and confront a violent mob.

These episodes have been among the many recent triggers of an amazing explosion of anti-Semitism all over the world. The attacks against Israel have sparked “Kill the Jews” demonstrations all over Europe.

After the Second World, anti-Semitism was universally recognized as one of the main causes of the disaster that engulfed the Old Continent, as the trigger for the war and the motivating factor of the Shoah, the most horrendous crime against humanity ever committed. The United Nations and the European Union, with all their proxy institutions, were created to be the safeguards against war and anti-Semitism. In that they have failed.

Many studies report how anti-Semitic activity all over the world has reached record levels, and how much this reflects the decades-long campaign of Palestinian hatred. Israel, the state of the Jews, has been portrayed as a cruel and abhorrent entity from its very beginning. It’s a 74-year-long dogma, and no “occupation” or war, nor any attempt to arrive at a peace agreement, has changed the pattern. The leitmotif is delegitimization, linked to the denial of well-established Jewish history. Jews are seen as a colonial occupation force, not as an aboriginal people that returned home, and the anti-Semitic attacks and violence, alongside the more subtle efforts to create hate and disgust toward the “exploiting” Jews, are not just political but an explicit moral war against Israel. The astonished authors of a recent report by Tel Aviv University’s Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry ask what it is that is not working: attacks have almost doubled in Britain, France, Germany, and the United States, and while “the fight against antisemitism has enjoyed extensive resources worldwide...yet, despite many important programs and initiatives,” the failure is clear to all.⁸

This book will look again at what I have discussed in previous studies:⁹ the institutions themselves that are supposed to counteract anti-Semitism, and the human rights institutions that are also supposed to counteract it but actually promote it.

The last and most important episode to be mentioned here is a document of 18 pages prepared for the occasion of the 50th session of the UN General Assembly by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel. This commission, known as the COI, was established in 2021 by the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), and is a scandal in itself; it was not set up to focus on an event, but on the supposed perennial danger that Israel poses to the Palestinians, basing itself on the premise that Israel is a criminal state that must be monitored at all times. As for the UNHRC, it has dedicated roughly half its resolutions for the entire globe to condemning Israel. The state of the Jews has been the subject of nine commissions of inquiry, no other country more than two; has had more special sessions dedicated to it (nine) than any other country (five); and is the only country for which a permanent agenda item focuses on its alleged wrongdoing.¹⁰

The president of the COI is the South African Navi Pillay, who has a long record of open enmity toward Israel. She has also made repeated use of documents prepared with the help of so-called human rights organizations – that is, the same anti-Israeli NGOs that have testified against Israel over the decades such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, or B’Tselem. Pillay now leads the new and most egregious assault on Israel. The new commission is tasked with investigating “alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law [and] all underlying root causes of recurrent tensions, instability and protraction of conflict, including systematic discrimination and repression based on national, ethnic, racial or religious identity.”¹¹

In her new 18 pages, Pillay has already reiterated her view that Israel is responsible for all wrongdoing, and has again used as sources the “reports” on Operation Cast Lead of 2008-09

and Operation Protective Edge of 2014. The new “report” is an amalgam of prejudice, lies, and decontextualized accusations against the State of Israel. And this time Pillay can also make use of a previous, very convenient, lengthy document of hate by Amnesty International, which is another milestone on the path of the perversion of human rights advocacy.

That “report,” issued at the end of January, centered on the ugliest and most delegitimizing of all the charges: apartheid. Its title, “Israel’s apartheid against Palestinians: a cruel system of domination and crime against humanity,” speaks for itself. B’Tselem and Human Rights Watch provided much help for drafting this 211-page indictment. It uses the terms “segregation,” “brutal repression,” and “domination” to describe a country where all citizens enjoy the same rights, from the Supreme Court to the hospitals to the Knesset to the malls to the crowded beaches of Tel Aviv.¹²

The report indicates, as Pillay has already announced, that an investigation of “apartheid” is on the way. It’s a unique strategy of delegitimization: the Jews are like the French and the British were in the Middle East and in all the world, and will have to pack up and go, leaving the floor to the real inhabitants, the Palestinians, who are like the Blacks, the Indians, or the Algerians before the end of colonization, and according to a wildly irresponsible accusation, are therefore discriminated against, exploited, and segregated. “Apartheid,” evoking the South African case, is not just another of the many buzzwords that are used against the Jewish state: it’s the charge that entails the death penalty.

Meanwhile, the Abraham Accords have offered a path for integration between Israel and its new Arab friends in the Middle East. Citizens of Israel, Jews and Arabs, can now use their passports to fly to a much wider array of places. Business and culture mix, while Israel and its Arab allies work together for peace and security against Iran and its proxies. Yet the major human rights institutions keep working against the development of human rights in this part of the world. Despite occasional protests, the United States still pays 22 percent of the United

Nations' budget no matter how much the world body attacks Israel and the Jews, enabling still more attacks on Israel and providing cover for anti-Semitic, anti-Israeli activity.

The United Nations' partner in this role is the European Union, the other institutional actor in promoting anti-Semitism. The latest of the very many moves – or in this case, an inaction – in that direction is the failure to cut funding for PA anti-Israeli textbooks. After 14 months of freezing funding, the EU voted on June 14 not to withhold about 5 percent of its support for the Palestinian Authority in light of the anti-Semitic incitement in its textbooks: “the European Commission approved a €224.8 million aid package for the Palestinians..., in addition to previous contributions of €92m. to UNRWA and €25m. specifically for humanitarian aid.” This was despite the fact that “an EU-commissioned study by the Georg-Eckert Institute confirm[ed] in June 2021 that Palestinian textbooks feature antisemitism, glorification of terrorism and erase Israel.”¹³ Notably, on that same June 14, European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen visited Ramallah to pay her respects.

When Palestinian textbooks offer such contents, of course, it's a human right, freedom of expression. It is never mentioned or condemned by the media or the institutions. By the same token, neither condemned nor even noticed are the killing and beating of political opponents in the Palestinian Authority and Gaza, the peremptory sentencing and sometimes execution of alleged spies, the persecution of homosexuals, and the sexual abuse of minors through underage marriage. Diplomat Sven Kühn von Burgsdorff, EU representative to the Palestinian Authority, told the Alliance for Middle East Peace why, in his opinion, there is terrorism: “We need to bring to the fore and to the [*sic*] worldwide attention the plight the people of Palestine have been under for the past 74 years.”¹⁴ This is a disgrace that should indicate he is not fit for his assignment. He is one of the many who blame the attacks on the Jewish people on the Jews themselves.

Itamar Marcus, director of Palestinian Media Watch, reminds us that Palestinian Authority chairman Mahmoud Abbas went

so far as to charge the Jews with responsibility for the Holocaust; Abbas wrote that they had brought it on themselves with their behavior.¹⁵ The EU representative is doing just the same: the collective Jew, Israel, brings terrorism upon itself. Isn't this promoting anti-Semitism while denying the basic human right to fight terror? Isn't this a subversion of the concept of human rights?

Even more recently, with a racist resolution, the European Union banned Israeli intellectuals, artists, dancers, singers, musicians, actors, and filmmakers who live on the West Bank from the EU "Creative Europe" program.¹⁶ Again, a violation of freedom of thought and opinion. So the EU has adopted the approach of BDS, which contravenes in principle the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism, which the EU has endorsed.

As always in history, anti-Semitism destroys the fundamentals of the contemporary ethos. Neither the United Nations nor the European Union can pretend to be an institution promoting human rights as long as they persecute the Jews or allow their persecution. Ostensible human rights defenders must change their ways.

From the River to the Sea

The image of the last war that struck Israel in May 2021 is akin to a fireworks display. It's an unequivocal image because there's no way we can't understand what we were looking at: on the one hand, in a steady stream, a barrage of rockets were launched from Gaza into Israel; on the other, the Iron Dome defense system fired missiles to intercept them in the sky. However, some got through. It is impossible to misinterpret these images, if not seized by an ideological conditioning that afflicts the mind, lives, and future of those suffering from this fundamental impairment that causes the crumbling of their cognitive faculties.

What a pity.

The echo of the May 2021 war, Operation Guardian of the Walls, was a roar, a shameful festival of lies and a hymn to the physical obliteration of the only democratic country in the Middle East. There's a part of the world that has turned into Iran's avatar in that it imagines Israel as "a cancerous tumor that must be eradicated."¹⁷ Like Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, it exalts, more or less explicitly, the "pure blood of the resistance of the martyrs";¹⁸ that is, it praises the Palestinians as innocent victims of Israeli – and overall of Jewish – violence. Meanwhile the ambition of removing the Jewish state from its land was coupled with the strategy of placing all Jews in the category of oppressors, or better yet, white oppressors. In Paris, London, and New York, demonstrators – perhaps without even understanding that by using such lingo they were effectively calling for Israel's obliteration – cried "From the river to the sea [i.e., from the Jordan to the Mediterranean], Palestine will be free!" They raged against anyone who appeared to them to be a Jew. All it took was a yarmulke, a Star of David necklace, or a few words in Hebrew to unleash aggression. Isn't this racism? On the contrary, according to the protesters the racists are the Jews, and if you had asked them why they say this in the United States, the response would have been that they view them by now as part and parcel of the "white supremacist"

ranks. That Jews, then, are white is a very peculiar assertion (ask any Ethiopian or Yemenite Jew), but when “white” becomes synonymous with “oppressor,” all doubt is cast aside. Ethiopian Jews are also considered so; even they are deemed hyperwhite.

Even the idea that Palestine will be free from the river to the sea is an abstract one that has nothing to do with history or geography, but instead with the notion that Jews are today’s representatives of historical colonialism. Besides, what do they mean by “free”? Israel’s disengagement from Gaza in August 2005 cleared the area of any Israeli presence. But Gaza still needed to be freed from the clutches of a terrorist, absolutist, and fascist regime that has led it to misery, terrorism, and devastating wars.

The anti-Israeli protesters certainly didn’t take into account the history and geography of the term “Palestine.” Which Palestine? They didn’t know that this was the name imposed on Israel by the Romans in 70 CE to sanction the massacre and expulsion of the Jews who were its inhabitants and yet actually, even after that, never really left. They didn’t know that the name, Palestine, has nothing to do with the Arabs who call themselves Palestinians today. However, that crowd knew one thing, namely that the formula they sang means: “The Jewish state is unworthy to live.” This hate-filled message was evident in the content of their placards and chants, and it was also a clear reflection of what we read in the newspapers during those days: exclamations not of criticism, which can be constructive, but of defamation and contempt. Israel is presented as an apartheid state, racist, colonialist, and a murderer of children.

From Israel to the Yarmulke: “F--k the Jews” and Intersectionality

The anti-Israeli wave, as at every previous moment of conflict, dominated the media and town squares with cacophonies and dissonances, but this time it had a specifically anti-Semitic

character. It was as if both Europe and the United States felt the urgency of expressing their antipathy for Israel, emphasizing its Jewish character and highlighting Israel-Diaspora relations. Jews wearing yarmulkes in public have been mocked and attacked in New York, Los Angeles, and Toronto, and many American and Canadian Jews have opted to leave them at home. This sad state of affairs led the prominent American rabbi Shmuley Boteach to openly implore them to don them again with courage despite the ongoing episodes of anti-Semitism.

Chasing two boys because they spoke Hebrew, a Manhattan crowd shouted, “F--k the Jews!” In Los Angeles, a group of pro-Palestinian protesters assaulted diners at a restaurant after asking, “Who’s Jewish?” In the streets of northern London where many of the capital’s Jewish neighborhoods are located, protesters shouted with a megaphone, “F--k the Jews, f-k their mothers, rape their daughters and free Palestine.”

Again in London, while Israeli flags were being burned, Jews were called Nazis and – perhaps even more shockingly – one protester was seen holding a banner with an image of Jesus bearing the cross and a slogan reading, “Don’t let them do the same thing again today.” In other words, Jews, all Jews, according to the most classic Christian anti-Semitic paradigm, have crucified and continue to crucify Jesus (meaning the Palestinians – or Hamas).

Paris, too, has long been a parade ground for anti-Semitism, so much so that even President Emmanuel Macron has implored the French to change course. Vichy France and the trains loaded with Jewish children sent to die in concentration camps must have crossed his mind.

Many of the manifestations of anti-Israeli hatred that have an overt anti-Semitic aspect have discovered their *raison d’être*. Today’s pro-Palestinian movements have found, especially in America but also in France through the Islamic nexus, a conceptual link with the themes of racial injustice, colonial racism, and the persecution of blacks and women throughout history. Although Jews could only be identified by a very manipulative observer as

the “white oppressor” or “masculinist,” this is precisely what has happened. The so-called intersectionality purportedly aimed at realizing human rights for all, has become the catalyst for the current wave of anti-Semitism.

When the protests against the inexcusable and horrific death of George Floyd in May 2020 took place in America (a year before the 11-day war between Hamas and Israel), signs and slogans throughout all American states drew certain analogies. A cartoon circulating on social media depicted an American policeman with his knee on Floyd’s neck alongside an Israeli soldier with his knee on a Palestinian’s neck. A mural of George Floyd wearing a keffiyeh in front of the Palestinian flag also circulated online. A petition circulated by the leaders of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement at the University of California claimed that Israel had taught methods to American police forces that resulted in George Floyd’s death.¹⁹

Ever since 1975 Israel has been painted as a hotbed of racism. That year the UN General Assembly, with the help of the automatic Islamic and “nonaligned” majority, passed Resolution 3379 equating Zionism with racism. The idea that Israel was an unrepresentable “apartheid state” was instilled within major international institutions.

An apartheid state, we know well, must disappear, be burned by the flames of history like South Africa. The collective Nelson Mandela here would be the BDS movement, which says that, precisely because Israel is an apartheid state, it is a criminal entity to be boycotted and ultimately wiped out.

Even within the Black Lives Matter platform, which is doubtlessly of historical importance in fighting racism, there is an anti-Semitic current contradicting the movement’s commitment to antiracism. Police violence is compared to the “genocide” of the Palestinian people while the persecution of blacks is tied to the existence of Israel, the epitome of all evil. These are ridiculous accusations. The Palestinian people have multiplied greatly since 1948, and there is no trace of genocide here. If you really want to find a genocidal urge, you should

look for it in the pan-Arabism that in the same year waged a war to destroy Israel, and then in the Islamism that engages in terrorism against women and children.

This “intersectionality,” which holds that every oppressor is equal to another and that all oppressed people are interrelated, is the cultural framework that pervades today’s political anti-Semitism. According to Natan Sharansky’s classic definition, it can be identified in any one of the three D’s: demonization, delegitimization, and double standards. It is a very useful paradigm for distinguishing between the “new anti-Semitism” and “legitimate criticism of Israel” and very easy to trace in today’s accusations.

Those who advocate this new form of anti-Semitism and articulate it in a thousand slogans know very well what they are doing. They are cognizant of using an extremely elaborate weapon, forever renewed, which today is reinforced by a million tweets and likes. If you are an apartheid state you have to die, you are evil incarnate, and this obsessive refrain goes hand in hand with the slogan “illegal occupation” while intimating that Israel should be destroyed. Indeed, if you are condemned for the “occupied territories,” it means that you must be subjected to legal adjudication by the organizations responsible for world justice. In essence, you are considered a criminal state.

If we add that you are a colonial country, then you are really without hope. Your historical legitimacy is nonexistent, you are not a people with roots in its territory, but an occupier to be driven out.

Alongside these old shibboleths, which are all absurd fantasies, Israeli oppression is now equated with that of whites over blacks, men over women, and heterosexuals over homosexuals.

The life of the Jewish people’s nation is an outrage to the sentiments of those who consider Jews unworthy or “hyperwhite.” Even the basic idea of Zionism, namely the crucial return of the Jewish people to their original homeland, is judged to be an absurd claim, an act of arrogance, despite the fact that the dream of returning to Jerusalem has been the lifeblood of

Jewish survival over millennia; the memory of Israel is what empowered this miracle even in the most difficult times. There are no people who have more rights to that land than the Jews. It is the historical right of those who have always inhabited it, as well as the religious right enshrined in the Bible and the legal right affirmed by the United Nations. It is the right of those who worked and made it flourish. Moreover, the principle of self-determination of peoples grants Israel the right to have a small piece of land where its people can live in freedom. It should be obvious, as Winston Churchill understood and eloquently wrote in the 1922 White Paper, that the Jews were in Palestine “as a right and not on sufferance.” And regarding Jerusalem he wrote in 1908: “[It] must be the [Jews’] only ultimate goal.”²⁰

The Jews of Ethiopia, over the millennia, sent one of their emissaries on horseback to Jerusalem every year to see if the messiah had arrived. Why? Because the emotional and concrete bond between the Jews and their land has never been interrupted.

We are now in a new historical phase of anti-Semitism, and in the course of last May’s war it has overflowed beyond bearable limits from the Seine, Danube, Tiber, and Hudson to even the green rivers of Canada.

Saving Israel

An unsettled account with the Jews, to whom, unconsciously or not, some terrible, presumed unworthiness is attributed, for which they were nearly exterminated in the Shoah – an extermination for which, paradoxically, in the European collective conscience, Jews will never be forgiven – has assumed the aspect of the criminalization of Israel. Meanwhile, the Jewish people have changed; unlike in previous waves of anti-Semitism they now have a state, but it is being delegitimized and mistreated. Now when the individual Jew is targeted he is identified, willingly or not, Zionist or not, with a great new entity of the collective Jew. Moreover, when the political and religious dimension is

added to the ideological one in an explosive mix, the international consequences are fatal for everyone. Israel's indispensable role in the world is the subject of a global dispute between two sides. This is well understood by the positive forces for peace, which also include many Arab countries, and which together with the United States are now part of a world entrusted with the future of humanity. On the other side are those who are intent on a struggle for destruction. There is a camp that first of all plans the end of the Jewish people and then the conquest of the world. We could say that Israel's survival is indispensable for the world, not just for Jews.

The origin of the problem is always the same: the mysterious impulse that for three thousand years has regarded Jews as a special guest on this earth – different, lucky because full of their identity and unlucky for the same reason. The Jew is necessary to lead humanity to new goals, but he has also been blamed for its failures. Not surprisingly, this is the people that discovered one transcendent God. The world without Jews would be a poor thing, and it can become so again.

Each wave of anti-Semitism corresponds to a vertical crisis of the society or culture that produces it. The best actor in fighting it can't, therefore, be the Jews, but those who feed and generate it – when they realize how dangerous it is to themselves. The only way to face it is not *mea culpa*, or more often than not by downplaying or even denying reality. Only by understanding the macro-entity of the phenomenon, its consequentiality for the future of mankind and of the truth that must finally replace lies and stereotypes, can we effectively combat this new and ancient evil. The stakes are high.

To give a simple and paradoxical example, if the Germans at the time of Adolf Hitler had grasped that their leader's hysterical fixation with Jews and his determination to exterminate them up to the last child would lead Germany into a gigantic war that brought it to ruin, would they have embraced Nazism?

The thesis that anti-Semitism served as a crutch to stoke sentiment among the masses who were mortified and

disappointed over their treatment immediately after WWI is completely false. Racial imperialism and the fanatic plan to destroy the Jews were Hitler's main passion, not the desire to regain power and ultimately to win. This is demonstrated, among other things, by the fact that when it became clear that the Nazis were about to lose the war and Germany needed every man and train it could muster, Hitler's men were instead ordered until the end to round up Jews. At the time of Germany's evacuation of Greece, trains continued to transport Jews to extermination camps. What is certain is that the price paid for anti-Semitism was the devastation of Germany, and in a certain sense, the end of Europe. We must add here that all of Europe collaborated in the extermination of the Jews and suffered the consequences.

Today, the price that the world risks paying for the new lie it has been constructing for decades around Israel is the loss of itself, the demise of its own crucial memory of the Shoah, and the weakening of democracy. It is a price that entails surrender to terrorism and intimidation by the illiberal regimes that dominate the Islamic world.

It would be comic and ridiculous, were it not so heavily symbolic, that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un released a statement through his Foreign Ministry in Pyongyang in June 2021 in which he condemned Israel. He said Israel was engaged in "state-sponsored terrorism and [the] act of obliterating other nations," thereby turning the Gaza Strip "into a huge human slaughterhouse and place of massacring children." All this, he said, stemmed from Israel's "misanthropic spirit and ambition for territorial expansion." *De te fabula narratur*; the psychoanalyst is required.

After that, however, came an analysis of what caused the May 2021 conflict between Israel and Hamas where Pyongyang issued words that unfortunately even the *New York Times* or *Le Monde* would find fit to print: "[Israel] prevented peaceful prayer [in the Al-Aqsa Mosque]."²¹ Many believe this. Why? Only because when it comes to Israel, people prefer to make use of recurrent prejudices and fake news rather than truly investigating reality.

Or simply, they are aware of the reality but instead prefer to conform to popular opinion.

What Is Said and What Is True

The story goes: Israel uproots citizens from their homes in east Jerusalem neighborhoods, cruelly curtails religious freedom on the Temple Mount, and is attempting to change the status quo at Jerusalem's holy sites. In other words, it is perpetuating ethnic cleansing, occupation, violence, and apartheid. This is part and parcel of the cognitive basis for which the world has come to the conclusion that the Palestinians are reacting to a state of subjugation that has forced them to fire thousands of rockets at Israel's civilian population. In the end, they are solely responding to a grave injustice: the illegitimacy of the State of Israel and its actions.

Yet a snapshot depicts a simple reality that was easy to verify during last year's war in Gaza. We saw the night sky flashing with lights and smoke. From Gaza, Hamas and other Palestinian groups launched 3,680 rockets at Israel during the 11-day war. The rockets arrived in a row, rapid and regular, one after another. There were many kinds of projectiles and all were designed for the sole purpose of striking Israel: the Kornet antitank missiles are operated by remote control, the Ayyash rockets (named after the terrorist who is credited with developing the tactic of suicide bombings) can reach a range of 300 miles, and there are various other types, more or less sophisticated, some homemade, some made in Iran, with explosives encased by steel. The Ayyash rockets, which were built with Iran's help and assembled in Gaza, are among the newest. War technology has improved dramatically.

They all go in one direction: toward homes, roads, schools, kibbutzim, and the people of Israel, everywhere but especially in the south. On the other side, in a floral design, the air defense system Kippat Barzel, more commonly known as Iron Dome,

has intercepted 90 percent of rockets fired at Israel. Without this great invention Israel would have suffered much larger casualties and massive destruction.

After the thousands of Palestinian rockets that increased every year in size, speed, and range, in 2007 the Labor Party politician Amir Peretz, then serving as defense minister, decided to embark on developing the air defense system that later proved fundamental in saving the lives of the Israeli Jews and Arabs targeted by Hamas and Hizbullah. Iron Dome and its derivatives represent the urgent and wise choice to live under a roof that protects Israel from the threat-infested sky. Without it, Operation Guardian of the Walls would have been a conventional war involving an Israeli ground operation in Gaza to stop the unprecedented rocket fire that Hamas unleashed.

The aerial operations were limited, but accurate and decisive because they hit launch structures wherever they were. The destruction of the rocket bases, the detection and bombing of the underground system of tunnels, and the relatively low number of fatalities – some 236, of whom at least 114 belonged to terrorist organizations²² – led to a cease-fire without excessive bloodshed. And yet, because it hurts to see even a single life lost, the IDF uses measures like telephoning the residents, or the roof-knocking tactic, before bombing a residential building.

In Israel there were 13 deaths, unlucky individuals who were randomly hit, often in unprotected homes, in cases where Kippat Barzel didn't work, as in a tragic lottery. Children experienced shock and hundreds of people were injured, often elderly and disabled people who couldn't run for shelter.

Israel managed to keep the number of casualties low though many structures were destroyed. But what remains, above all, is the terror among the people who were moving targets. These are deep human and political wounds. For Israel, life is the exact opposite of what it represents for Hamas. Every Palestinian leader praises *shahids*, the martyrs, and invites others to join their cause while affirming: “We love death as much as you love

life.” Death is seen as a bridge to glory and victory while crying, “Allahu Akbar!”

Kippat Barzel is a fruit of cutting-edge technology, but also of the culture by which Jews have been able to ingeniously defend themselves against the most varied enemies over the course of two thousand years, and have managed to survive against all odds. The difference today is that, because the State of Israel exists, deterrence is used to preempt threats in the first place. This is a new, totally unprecedented development in the history of the Jewish people. The right to engage in self-defense when danger arises no matter who is leading the country, Yitzhak Rabin, Benjamin Netanyahu, or Yair Lapid, is sacrosanct. Enemies of Israel today run the risk of self-destruction from the hatred that devours them, but also of being vanquished if Israel should be forced to defend itself to the end.

This is the new chapter with which current anti-Semitism must contend. Anti-Semitism today is directed at a people that is very different from the Jewish Diaspora of the past. We are no longer a submissive people. Whoever strikes a Jew today must expect a response.

Not only is the buildup of weapons involved. The ideological war that has developed in recent years against Israel for the most varied reasons – money, land, power, alleged violation of moral principles – has one common aim: that of the destruction, first ideal and then physical, of the Jewish people. But what Israel’s ideological foes do not realize is that such drastic measures would also destroy one of the world’s main bulwarks against terrorism, not to speak of ending further progress in the remarkable contributions Israel has been making to science and the fight against the most terrible diseases such as Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, strokes, and cancer. In addition, it would mean doing without ultra-sophisticated technologies urgently needed by three-quarters of the world involving water, environmental sustainability, agriculture, and software of all kinds. It is pointless to list here the array of ideas and innovations that Israel produces for the entire world. If Israel were to be devoured “from the

river to the sea,” what would become of all this? What would have happened if in the past the Jewish moral message had been erased along with the people who had gifted it to the world?

Over the millennia, those who sought to destroy the Jews in the best cases suffered misfortunes, while in the worst they disappeared into the dark pages of history such as Germany and the Europe of the Shoah.

Wars, Unfortunately

I’ve experienced firsthand most of Israel’s wars since 1967. During the Six-Day War, I was a young girl living in Kibbutz Neot Mordechai, close to the Golan Heights. I escorted children to shelters. As a journalist, I covered the First Intifada. I walked alongside Israeli soldiers at night in Lebanon in 2005. I interviewed Palestinian terrorists in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. I met with a number of Hamas leaders, including Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and his successor Abdel Aziz Rantisi. I covered the entire Second Intifada. I have witnessed the deaths that it perpetrated on buses or in pizzerias throughout Israel. I interviewed Yasser Arafat numerous times from Tunis, after the Sabra and Shatila massacre, and at his Mukata compound in Ramallah where he explained to me how good honey was for his health, offering me some while besieged amid the smoke of battle. I have traveled with soldiers, being tossed around in *nagmashim* (armored vehicles) through occupied Palestinian villages. I covered the battle of Jenin where I almost stepped on a Palestinian mine, and discovered that UN officials’ comparison to the Srebrenica massacre was a lie. I witnessed firsthand the evacuation of Israeli forces from the West Bank in keeping with the Oslo Accords, one town after another handed over to Arafat, and I went back there countless times, as well as to Gaza and Bethlehem.

In August 2005, I also witnessed Israel's terrible disengagement from Gaza, an excess of passion for peace that resulted in Hamas's ferocious takeover in June 2007.

Forever on the sidelines of Israel's wars, I have witnessed the paradox of the international defense of the aggressor take shape, along with sympathy for terrorists and condescension toward terrorist violence, which is justified in the name of the "Palestinian cause."

In Durban, in 2001, I wrote at length in the Italian newspaper *La Stampa* about the United Nations' definitive embrace of anti-Semitism disguised as antiracism. I saw the Palestinians destroy their own cause by rejecting year after year each and every peace agreement, even the most advantageous ones, on behalf of their hope of destroying the Jewish state. From Madrid to Annapolis, I witnessed firsthand all the peace negotiations, for the Palestinians a mere game while Israel tried in every way possible to find a solution like a child who wants to be loved by its mother, or rather by international public opinion.

People in general know little about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Moreover, when they talk about it, they commit numerous blunders, cite inaccuracies, and are endlessly misled. It requires patience, but there's still a long way to go. Israel is tiny, and ignorance often loves to weave its ideological cloak and rear its dangerous head. It is very profitable and easy to blame Israel on multiple levels and yet perhaps feign friendship, God forbid the contrary, toward Jews. "My best friend is Jewish." Is there anti-Semitism in Italy? "I've never seen it." What about the 1938 Italian racial laws? "They were imposed by the Germans." Such rhetoric goes on and on without any real effort to search one's conscience regarding the extent of the problem. At best, those who relentlessly blame Israel are anti-imperialist, anticolonialist, and pity the poor Palestinians.

Yet it is abundantly clear that, as Martin Luther King Jr. asserted in his 1967 "Letter to an Anti-Zionist Friend": "Anti-Zionism is inherently anti-Semitic, and ever will be so."

This time the genesis of the story had appeared so clear that it seemed impossible it would happen again. Yet, amid the latest Gaza war, the reaction of hatred toward Israel went far beyond even the terrible ones triggered by previous wars. If we look at the humanitarian background of the issue, we know that there are mass movements all over the world that support the uprisings of the poorest and deem them as struggles for good. They don't consider, for example, as British author and political commentator Douglas Murray did in his book *The Madness of the Crowd: Gender, Race and Identity*,²³ that "the victim is not always right, or nice and deserves help – and may not be a victim."

Double Standards and Impunity

Our world may be guilty of its history of colonialism, slavery, and imperialism of the last century, as well as for Africa's starvation, India's and other Asian countries' misery, and discrimination against women, gays, and transsexuals. In addition, it is undeniably frightened both by terrorism and its dependence on oil. And yet even if we could attribute to a good heart or to ignorance or necessity the attempts to understand the motives of a terrorist organization such as Hamas, it is quite another matter to build a castle of phantasmagoric accusations with words of violence and hate against Israel that are so obviously unjust that they lead us to suspect we are dealing with the Jewish rather than the Palestinian question.

No levelheaded person can truly believe that Israel can be comparable to Nazi Germany or the racist apartheid of South Africa. Simply uttering this, shouting it in the streets or writing it in the newspapers, is an admission of bad faith even by those who claim to care about Palestinian lives.

The anti-Israeli hate machine can be defined as a specific pathological phenomenon. It hurls unfounded accusations against Israel, legalized by the frantic votes of condemnation of international institutions such as the International Court of

Justice (ICJ) or the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva that ignore infinitely more serious violations throughout the world. The hate machine seeks to delegitimize the very existence of the Jewish state. How can it be that in the 15 years of its existence the UN Human Rights Council has condemned a democracy like Israel 95 times and Iran 10 times?²⁴ It is frustrating that self-proclaimed democrats who condemn Israel fail to acknowledge the human rights abuses perpetrated by Hamas, along with its Islamist oppression and its racist, anti-Semitic discourse. In addition, it is disheartening that they don't take the time to read its charter, which seeks the subjugation of the West while killing Jews.

It is ridiculous to keep speaking of occupation when it is a well-known fact that Israel evacuated Gaza 17 years ago and that Hamas took full possession of the area less than two years later and destroyed all its productive infrastructures, including the beautiful greenhouses that grew strawberries, cherry tomatoes, and carnations and already had great commercial outlets, especially in Europe. Hamas also demolished houses and synagogues and killed Fatah's men with bare hands, throwing them off the roofs of the highest buildings. Today, Hamas continues to execute without trial whoever opposes their rule.

It is maddening that we defend the right to freedom of those who use hundreds of millions in international aid to arm to the teeth a small portion of land that could become like Hong Kong with that money, and allow its leaders to personally enrich themselves. Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh with an estimated net worth in the billions is just one example.²⁵ How can the world ignore the fact that Hamas persecutes homosexuals and enslaves women, while also using babies as human shields and teaching minors to become suicide bombers? Has no one noticed that hundreds of the rockets fired by the Palestinians have fallen inside Gaza itself causing destruction, death, and injury? These fundamental realities of Hamas are ignored by those who demonstrate in its favor.

We don't hear any calls for Hamas to show restraint, to lay down their arms, to renounce terrorism, or to amend their murderous charter filled with deadly vilification of Israel, and this is part and parcel of the lack of criticism of the Palestinians in general. It also goes unnoticed that Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas, as soon as the Biden administration restored American aid, immediately dished out \$42,000 "to complete the agreed payment" to the family of a terrorist who killed two Israelis and wounded two others, including a two-year-old child.²⁶ Palestinians can do whatever they want, and when in 2020 French president Emmanuel Macron went to greet Abbas during the Fifth World Holocaust Forum, the big conference on anti-Semitism, it didn't occur to him to explain that he shouldn't have outbursts about "filthy Jewish feet" contaminating sacred sites of Arab Jerusalem.²⁷

Palestinians can target civil society, violate the Oslo Accords in every way, illegally build, import, and export prohibited goods, damage basic infrastructure such as electricity or water facilities on the Gaza border so as to afflict Israel, and indefinitely hold the bodies of slain soldiers hostage. And meanwhile they send their loved ones to be treated in Israeli hospitals, as Mahmoud Abbas and Ismail Haniyeh have done. They can reject any peace proposal or territorial concessions; no one will utter a word of criticism of the Palestinians. They are sacred, an idealized people rather than a reality, a way to affirm Israel's unworthiness and, therefore, that of the Jews.

This victimhood is proclaimed by believing or pretending to believe that the Jewish state is a colonial enterprise, while the truth is that no design of exploitation, neither territorial nor human, characterizes the hard-earned return of the Jews to their homeland. But if you are considered a colony, the need and the right to self-defense becomes null and void. You only deserve to disappear into the vortex of the history of a reviled past.

The Ideological Background of a War

An Arab missile on Jerusalem is a paradox. It was shocking in 1991 when Iraqi president Saddam fired one at it, as it was when Hamas rockets landed near the city on May 10, 2021. Is it possible that the Islamic world is willing to bomb its own people solely in order to eliminate some Jews? I wondered about this back in 1991 when Saddam launched Scud missiles from Iraq as I sat with my sister Simona in her bathtub-turned-shelter on Rehov Yotam in central Jerusalem.

Back in 1991, we wore gas masks on our faces as we waited patiently for the radio to give word that we could exit our shelters. There was no chemical-attack alert that time; but Saddam, in bombarding Israel, had political aims. In 2021, however, there was solely the determination to terrorize and kill, seemingly with no other objective than to confirm that Hamas was healthy and their war against the Jews was underway.

At 6 p.m. on Tuesday, May 10, I went out on the balcony of my home in Jerusalem without really understanding what was going on. I thought: How could this be happening? Is this for real? Are we going backward into the past? Outdoors I could be sure that the siren was warning us in a wailing, wavy voice, not a recorded message coming from the TV or the radio. The alarm that filled the air in Jerusalem, everywhere, with its steady blare was saying: Go take cover somewhere, a rocket is arriving. I stood looking up in amazement at Jerusalem's wide blue sky. I learned later that a rocket had flattened a house on the outskirts of the city.

I recalled hearing that same sound back in 1991 while walking fast to Simona's house with a gas mask on my face. I was the only person on the street; just the siren and me. Jerusalem's then police chief Shahar Ayalon had interrupted our interview earlier because he had to attend to more important things. I walked down the sidewalk with my gas mask on and felt like laughing. I was funny, on foot, the only wayfarer in the entire city. But the siren wasn't funny. It said: Jew, get out of there! I heard them at the border with Lebanon numerous times. The wars of the

Middle East always begin with a siren announcing that the Jews will be wiped out and the state of Israel will no longer exist. That of the Yom Kippur War could have really been the last; it almost was. Today, there are not so many armies attacking Israel all at once, but there are lurking tigers, like Iran on the Syrian border; and then there is the great social media war, like TikTok, where there are inordinate praises of Hitler and curses against Israel, a state of “apartheid and genocide.”

When you explain that anti-Israeli hatred is anti-Semitism, many people respond with the arrogance of the ignorant by proclaiming that they are only engaging in “legitimate criticism,” a criticism indeed morally necessary, a way to protest misery, discrimination, perhaps apartheid, along with ethnic cleansing and “occupation,” or to respond directly to “media domination,” “white supremacy,” and “control of world politics.”

No, it is anti-Semitism. Moreover, it is political anti-Semitism. It is dangerous, deadly, and increasing rapidly. It is the old-new disease of the global society we live in, and it is being equated with good old common sense as it was during Nazism and later under communism. What is ignored, however, is that it can create immense conflict and destroy entire civilizations.

Today, anti-Semitism is once again chosen as the banner for issues completely unrelated to Jews. But let’s start here, today, from Jerusalem where I sit at my desk.

Explaining the war again, telling how it really went, serves to sweep away the myth that Hamas reacted to some sort of unconscious instinct to repress Islam in the mosques, and, worse, to a violent attitude toward the inhabitants of a Jerusalem neighborhood aimed at driving them from their homes.

The factors that this time brought Israel, very reluctantly, to launch Operation Guardian of the Walls against Hamas are part of a very well-planned strategy of the enemy. It focuses on the stones of Jerusalem and on the religious appeal of Al-Aqsa, while taking shape in the palaces of power in the surrounding Arab and Muslim world. In particular, Iran has long planned with Hamas the best time to attack. After all, Hamas’s leaders continually

thank the ayatollahs for weapons, money, and moral support. Yet what bore Hamas's stamp from the very beginning, and added to the ideological factors that gradually led it to launch the war, was Hamas's long-standing desire to overthrow the rule of then-85-year-old Mahmoud Abbas, something it knows it can do.

Mahmoud Abbas is a leader of the past, who is decidedly loyal to the concept of fighting Israel with every possible weapon, including the promotion of terrorism, but above all by relying on international propaganda. Simultaneously, he is aware of the need to maintain a credible facade of wanting peace. His hatred for the Jews is not religious like that of Hamas, but territorial and marked by a secular and socialist education. He wrote a thesis at the University of Moscow maintaining that the Jews not only helped to perpetrate the Shoah, but also that the Zionists collaborated with the Nazis to spur more Jewish immigration to Palestine.

Abbas likes to don the guise of a moderate and yet continues to give money to imprisoned Palestinian terrorists and their families. And his personal wealth, which by now is as famous as Arafat's corruption, is no mystery. However, nobody from the West criticizes him. Hamas, however, now wants to replace him. When Hamas talks about Palestine it is implicit that it wants an Islamist leader. Its 1987 charter explicitly states that Hamas will build the Islamic State of Palestine and that Israel will cease to exist. It is also openly anti-Semitic and calls for the murder of all Jews. Abbas, the former head of Fatah and president of the Palestinian Authority since 2005, doesn't like this approach. He is a leader who prefers to prepare Israel's demise in a suit and tie. Hamas knows that by now the Palestinians no longer support him and are tired of the corruption and inconclusiveness of the old, ambiguous Fatah leader. The opportunity to proclaim this aloud returned when Abbas canceled the elections – by blaming Israel of course – that were set for the parliament on May 22, 2021, and for the presidency on July 31, 2021. Hamas is intent on wresting all power from the hands of the man who now, seeking to recover ground, trudges behind the ideology of the unrelenting

struggle and of the Islamist *shahid*. But if it can't do it through elections, which Abbas will continue to avoid after 17 years in power, Hamas will find another way to do so.

Therefore, in Hamas's view, it is time to launch the battle for Jerusalem, to which Abbas let the United States transfer its embassy almost without response. It is also a time to launch hostilities because the American president is no longer the same and Israel's governments are fragile. In addition, Iran is very willing to step in, and Qatar is always there for Hamas with its wallet open. After an internecine Palestinian conflict, Hamas wants to further its supremacy by confronting the perfidious Zionist regime that, it keeps claiming, wants to banish Islam and ethnically cleanse Al-Quds (Jerusalem) of Muslims.

In 2021, the project took form during the weeks of Ramadan. There is no better period for unrest and religious aspirations than these holy days, a good 30 in number, in which Muslims fast from dawn to sunset, eating no food, drinking no water, and praying together. In the international background was virulent incitement, particularly Iranian and Turkish, that helped produce the magnificent media audience that terrorism has always needed to make sense.

Ramadan culminates in a mix of religious tensions, which stem from a mix of fasting and calls to arms. It is a time of preternatural hyperexcitement. April is marked by the numerous days of the hot and humid desert wind called *khamsin*. One sweats profusely as horrific terrorist attacks follow one after the other. In 2021 the foremost one was a drive-by shooting carried out by Muntasir Shalabi (44), who had returned, radicalized, from a long sojourn in the United States. He drove from the town of Turmus Aiya, near Ramallah, and shot three yeshiva students waiting for a bus at the Tapuah Junction. Yehuda Guetta (19), who was shot in the head, died days later at Rabin Medical Center in Petah Tikva. His mother proclaimed at the funeral that she considered herself lucky to have been able to still hug her son at the hospital and be at his side while he was battling for his life.

The security forces looking for the murderer unceremoniously scoured Jerusalem and its environs for four days. Clashes, raids, and stone throwing ensued during those days and a young Palestinian was killed.

Tensions rose, pervading Jerusalem. Hamas could not have asked for anything better. A group of young Arabs attempted to lynch a man while he was taking his dog out for his nightly walk, and it went viral on TikTok where sinister laughter and calls to kill the Jew were heard. The astonished and terrified man didn't even know that he was a focal point of incitement. He ended up in the hospital, badly battered.

Meanwhile, the chaos spread quickly to two other parts of Jerusalem: the neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah, the Arabic name for Shimon HaTzadik, and the Old City, around the area of the Temple Mount. Israeli police restricted access to the mount from Damascus Gate, where a group of Jews clashed with Arabs on April 22, 2021. The international media depicted them as two groups of extremists.

The prohibition, ordered by the Israeli police, against sitting on the steps of the Damascus Gate – though it pertained to everyone, Arabs and Jews – was a measure that, instead of placating, infuriated. The fury led to an accumulation and use of weapons ranging from stones to Molotov cocktails and guns, which were hidden in Al-Aqsa Mosque. It was at this time that Hamas, just before the Israeli national holiday of Yom Yerushalayim (Jerusalem Day), began to proclaim that Al-Quds was in danger and that Al-Aqsa was under attack.

Meanwhile, Iran prepared its annual Al-Quds Day, in which the ayatollahs exalt Jerusalem and ramp up incitement against Israel and Jews. Ayatollah Khamenei wrote: “The endeavors of Palestinians and the pure blood of the Resistance martyrs have managed to...increase the internal power of Palestinian jihad by a hundred times. One day, the Palestinian youth used to defend themselves by throwing stones, but today, they respond to enemy attacks with precision missiles.”²⁸ He has firsthand knowledge of this; Iran has provided the Palestinians with tens of thousands

of missiles, and also taught the Palestinians in Gaza to build their own. Meanwhile, the sense of international support was augmented by a speech in Lebanon by Hassan Nasrallah, the head of Hizbullah, who warned Israel of a “regional war” if it took any unilateral steps at the Al-Aqsa compound.²⁹ Hamas’s aim is to create a *casus belli*, and together with Islamic Jihad it foments clashes day after day that are meant to convince the Arab world – which has indeed begun to react – that Israel wants to change the status quo on the Temple Mount.

Al-Aqsa Mosque stands on the holiest site within the Jewish tradition, the Temple Mount, which was devastated by the Romans in 70 CE. In 1967 Israel assigned it to the jurisdiction of the Jordanian-based Jerusalem Islamic Waqf. Israel must uphold the unwritten arrangement known as the status quo, which regulates the relations between the religions coexisting in the Holy City. At the same time, it must implement the laws of the state and not allow a mosque, however large or symbolic, and despite being administered by the king of Jordan and the Palestinian mufti of Jerusalem, to become a sanctuary for weapons and Islamist violence.

Thus, following a long series of clashes and attacks in which elements of the Israeli right wing managed to aggravate the situation, the police carried out what Hamas considered a violation of Islamic sanctity. They moved to clear out the accumulated weapons and counteract the violence by Muslims on the mount, which included throwing stones at Jews praying at the Western Wall below.

Meanwhile, a comparable situation in Sheikh Jarrah allowed Hamas to link events there to the holy war for Al-Quds by using the most classic clichés in delegitimizing Israel: “ethnic cleansing,” “apartheid state,” and “rights violations.” Sheikh Jarrah was once called Shimon HaTzadik before Jews were violently expelled from it in 1948 in a true ethnic cleansing perpetrated by Jordan. It is a neighborhood whose name has changed according to its inhabitants – once Jews, now Arabs. Later, after the 1967 Six-Day War reopened the question of

ownership, some Arab families who had been living for many years in homes originally owned by Jews found themselves in a legally ambiguous situation. As activists of the Israeli right claimed ownership, it was up to Israel's High Court of Justice (or Supreme Court), a bastion of fairness where the law alone holds sway, to adjudicate. Arab tenants haven't paid the rent they are legally required to pay for years, so what is to be done? They run the risk of eviction – not ethnic cleansing – but meanwhile international pressure protects those nonpaying tenants. Yet the atmosphere is combustible, right-wing Israeli politicians add to the tension by demonstrating in front of the houses, which have not been vacated, and consequently decisions are postponed.

Meanwhile, the international media became a key actor in the standoff: ethnic cleansing, colonization, and the expulsion of poor Palestinian tenants magically took center stage. The four disputed houses of Sheikh Jarrah/Shimon HaTzadik, whose status still hasn't been determined because Israel's Supreme Court needs to examine all the documents thoroughly, became the cause of demonstrations even in the United States. Together with prominent European commentators and politicians, the group of four U.S. Democratic congresswomen known as "the Squad," of which Rashida Tlaib of Palestinian descent is a member, propagates the idea that this is a heart-rending Jewish invasion of the Palestinian world.

In the run-up to the Palestinian elections, which were to be held last year but were later canceled by Abbas, Hamas's list was to be called "Jerusalem Is Our Promise." This name has become the slogan of the campaign to unite all radical Islamist groups against Israel. Hamas envisaged a great new wave of violence that would overwhelm Abbas and force him, by now old and weak, to engage in a direct confrontation with Israel. In other words, a new intifada in which Hamas, better prepared, would have proved to be the Palestinians' true leader.

It was Hamas that decided to opt for war when it saw thousands of Palestinians in Jerusalem and the West Bank raising their flags high and shouting, "We are all Hamas!" Mohammed

Deif, the organization's wounded military commander, spoke directly to the people and declared war. Deif, who has been called the Palestinian Bin Laden, is the author of multiple terrorist attacks against Israel and has escaped death in several attempts to assassinate him.

It was Deif, "the living martyr," who issued an ultimatum to the Zionists. This was a brazen gesture especially after, on May 9, Israel had altered the route of its annual Jerusalem Day march in the Old City so that it would not pass through Damascus Gate. Israel had also forbidden Jews, notwithstanding protests, to ascend the Temple Mount – which many Muslim texts, too, deem Judaism's most sacred place.

So on the day Israel celebrated Jerusalem Day in its capital, Hamas declared war once again. Deif's ultimatum was for Israel to remove all its police and military personnel from both the Al-Aqsa Mosque site and Sheikh Jarrah by 6 p.m. on May 10. If it failed to do so, he announced, the combined military forces of the Gaza Strip would attack. What a magnificent propaganda gesture: a flaunting of power to the Islamic world while complaining about the nonexistent occupation of those houses and playing the victim vis-à-vis the West. A winning double hit in the game of Middle Eastern billiards, and a substantial part of the West was ready to support Hamas. Why? Out of anti-Semitism and self-destruction. There were no good reasons involving human rights.

According to this victim narrative, which would become the daily bread of the media from that moment on, Sheikh Jarrah wasn't a legal dispute but an instance of flagrant bullying, dovetailing with the classic Palestinian claim that the Jews steal land. Those houses, whose Arab tenants will probably end up remaining even though they haven't paid rent for many years, once belonged to Jews who were expelled or killed in 1948 during the war of aggression unleashed by Jordan and other Arab states against the newborn State of Israel, which had accepted the UN partition plan. It is true that this is a very old story. But the Israeli Supreme Court, which tends to rule in favor of the Palestinians

in legal disputes, wants to take the time needed to determine the truth. It is not a matter of apartheid, but so be it.

When Deif demanded that the Jews abandon Sheikh Jarrah, he assumed his ultimatum would garner a consensus not only from international institutions but also from Muslims ready to take up the struggle and supply arms. In short, he was counting on the usual chorus of severe disapproval of Israel, viewed as a colonial state and illegal occupier. Deif's announcement of imminent rocket attacks postponed the court's deliberation as street clashes broke out. His aim of reigniting the holy war for Jerusalem had been achieved.

Bassem Eid, a Palestinian intellectual who has been shouting in the wilderness for years, is right. Hamas saw in Sheikh Jarrah an opportunity to show Palestinians in Jerusalem and elsewhere that it could do that "something" which Fatah could not do.³⁰ And so Hamas incited the Palestinians of east Jerusalem to violence with lies and propaganda on social media, and in the end "responded" to the clashes it had fomented by firing indiscriminately at Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, thus guaranteeing an Israeli military response that was exactly what Hamas desired.

A Well-Prepared Campaign

Nevertheless, the governments of Western and moderate Arab countries neither jumped at the Palestinians' request for arms and funds nor sided with Hamas because it was clear that it, and not Israel, had initiated the war. But in the end, Europe's traditional political instinct to condemn Israel, with the backing of woke demonstrations, which are generically anti-oppression, had the upper hand. The demands for a cease-fire brought with them the usual bizarre statements about the very low number of Israeli casualties and Israel's disproportionate response. While U.S. president Biden resisted pressure to call for a cease-fire, European Commissioner Josep Borrell demanded one as Israel

had just begun to defend itself while Hamas rockets rained down throughout its territory.

It never ceases to amaze me how major international observers just don't feel the need to examine the genesis of the conflicts they later go on to judge. In this case, Iran, Turkey, and Hizbullah's meddling was obvious. Whoever really wanted to calm the waters couldn't ignore the fact that it would entail demanding that Iran stop arming Hamas, and that Turkey stop financing it while exploiting sectarian tensions in Jerusalem and fomenting sedition against Israel in the hope of dominating the city again as it did during the Ottoman Empire. But after an initial moment when German chancellor Angela Merkel protested Hamas's aggression, public institutions mostly engaged in blaming the Jews.

When Israeli police clashed with Arab youths on the Temple Mount on May 10, 2021, the very day of Deif's ultimatum, a host of allegations about Israeli plots that were hatched well over a month beforehand converged in the winning narrative: a war was needed to regain the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound and Jerusalem. Mahmoud Abbas, for his part, realizing that if he deviated from Hamas's line, his standing in Palestinian public opinion polls would plummet even further, opted to back Hamas even if it meant going against his own interests.

Meanwhile, President Erdoğan harangued Turkish crowds by calling Israel a "murderous regime" that must cease to exist. Iran's ayatollahs were busy making their usual proclamations while increasing their steady delivery of weapons to Hamas. And even Israeli Arabs started to riot throughout Israel. They set 10 synagogues ablaze along with 112 Jewish residences and 849 cars, stoned Jews, and killed three of them. In Lod, isolated Israeli right-wing groups clashed with Arab gangs that were looking for Jews to beat and lynch. After the murder of Yigal Yehoshua (56), who was pelted with rocks by an Arab mob, they attempted a lynching that fortunately did not succeed.³¹

Deif's ultimatum was the conclusion of a campaign for which the launching of rockets was the planned outcome. From

then onward they were fired at Israel throughout the country in numbers such as 200, 300, and 800 a day. By the end of the 11-day period, according to the Israeli military, 3,680 rockets had been launched at Israel.

At 6 p.m. on April 10, as Deif had promised, the first rocket was fired at Jerusalem. From my house I heard the explosion shortly after the air-attack sirens went off, and I was amazed. One of the rockets struck a house in the village of Beit Nefoka near Jerusalem; fortunately the inhabitants made it to a shelter in time.

Eleven days began in which southern Israel once again became a war zone. The war spread from the south, and the TV obsessively rebroadcast images of death and destruction from across Israel's tiny territory. Although the north was initially unscathed by the war, eventually rockets were fired from Lebanon and border raids were attempted that were warded off by Israeli forces.

Two women were killed when a rocket hit a house in the southern Israeli city of Ashkelon on May 11, 2021. In heavily populated Gush Dan (or Greater Tel Aviv), a rocket hit a bus that burned for hours under the astonished eyes of residents. In Rishon LeZion, the children of Leah Yom Tov (63) watched a rocket hit their mother's house while they were talking to her on the phone. When they managed to reach her home, they found her neighbors frantically digging to recover her body. Khalid Awad and his daughter Nadin, Israeli Arabs, were killed when a rocket struck their car. Meanwhile Lod, their small town, was racked by ethnic-religious clashes that left five dead. Omer Tabib (21), an Israeli soldier who was a few months away from completing his military service, was killed by a rocket on the Gaza border that also wounded two of his fellow soldiers.

These are just a few of the many episodes of death, a drop in the ocean of the gigantic Israeli trauma of endless terrorist attacks, in which people have been killed while riding on buses, eating in cafés or pizzerias, or simply being in their homes. This

is the chosen strategy of Hamas, whose aim is to destroy the Jewish people.

Jewish Lives Matter

How to describe the condition of a population under all-out rocket attack if you've never experienced or witnessed it? Or hear very little about it in the international media that is reluctant to talk about it?

At night you jump out of bed three or four times to run to shelters, waking children from their sleep as you frantically check that the windows are closed. You anguish over your mother, husband, or children because you know there are those who will not be strong enough and will collapse either mentally or physically, as in fact has happened, and will suffer depression or profound trauma. You risk your life, and you know it, at the blaring of every siren, even if you try to laugh at the absurdity of it all. Sometimes, at the time of blaring, you are not at home and so must lie face-down on the ground and cover your head, as instructed by Pikud HaOref, the Home Front Command, or take refuge at the nearest stairwell. If it's daytime, you're on the road and you can't reach the nearest shelter, and have the children with you, you hug them tightly, covering them with your body. On more than one occasion a rocket has reached a moving car and reduced it to a pile of burning scrap metal. Elderly people who can't move easily sometimes stay still, waiting for a rocket attack to end as they pray. Sometimes it happens that those who tend to them are hit, like Soumya Santosh, an Indian woman killed by Hamas while she was talking on the phone with her husband in Kerala. The deserted streets are full of potholes, schools are closed, stores keep their shutters down, and hospitals turn into crowded war shelters. The kibbutzim are silent and petrified while their fields are set ablaze because a cheerful colored balloon landed with a Molotov bottle or even a piece of dynamite attached to a wire.

The people I've interviewed simply ask for the government to put an end to this torment; they don't cry and they don't shout. There are those who want to see Hamas's leadership destroyed and others who just don't want to talk with it. The *kibbutznikim* keep going to work in the factories or fields as much as possible.

Many insist that more decisive measures must finally be taken; that Hamas's and Islamic Jihad's power must be eradicated. They say it was a mistake to allow them to receive suitcases filled with dollars from Qatar, and that not enough has been done to stop weapons and men moving from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard to the Islamist leadership in Gaza. Scathing criticism is directed at the government. However, the dilemma is substantial: Israel does not want to govern Gaza anymore and take a risk of becoming the lion-tamer there; let Egypt deal with it or whoever wants Hamas in power.

It is very hard for a European or an American to understand what it means not only to be in the range of enemy fire constantly, day and night, but also to be a hostage in their hands every day of the year, and yet continue to resist.

Yet the stance Israelis finally take is always courageous. Almost no one leaves. People are used to war; they look into its eyes and say, "OK, let's get on with it. I don't have another country, and I like mine." From Sderot to Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, Israeli citizens, unlike those in much of the Western world, have to become hard as steel – even those who have no desire to, such as those who have many children or young people who simply want to go dancing or stroll along the waterfront with their sweethearts.

Hospitals are filled not only with the injured, but also with families trying to recover from personal trauma, the anguish of children who become mute or do not want to go to sleep at night because they know they will be awakened by nightmares of bombs. Israeli schools have teachers who know how to talk about war and they are often pacifists. Yet the wars with Arab countries, the very long periods of successive terrorist attacks as during the Second Intifada, which killed more than a thousand

Israeli citizens from 2000 to 2004, have forged resilience among both children and the elderly.

So the religious and tribal war continues to pour down on this postmodern, politically correct country, where it is not uncommon for there to be children of same-sex couples in the schools, and the issue of equality between the sexes, religions, and ethnic groups is central to the effort to improve the country, as are the scientific inventions and technologies that emerge one after another. Israel is a country that is always active in providing humanitarian aid to those who ask for it and also to those who don't. The latter include Syrians injured in that country's civil war who have been treated in Israeli hospitals, hundreds of ailing children and adults from Gaza such as Ismail Haniyeh's 17-year-old niece who received a spinal cord transplant, and Turkish earthquake victims for whom aid was provided. Even countries that have declared their intention to destroy Israel have accepted medical assistance from it.

War is an ancient thing for this country forever at war. And this adds to its anger at being so greatly misunderstood. Even Matthias Schmale, head of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), said that despite all the claims about Israeli cruelty, Israel's May 2021 air campaign was marked by "huge sophistication" and "precision." In other words, it was more than proportional. Result: Schmale was, in effect, thrown out of his post by Hamas, which was astonished that a UN official dared to describe Israel as something other than an agent of the Devil, a cruel enemy who is only awaiting an order from the chief of staff of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to bomb Palestinian women and children.³²

Self-Defense

I do not believe that if a region of Italy or France were to be subjected in every small town to bombardments as fierce as they are random and unexpected, accompanied by incendiary balloons

and raids by armed men determined to kill women and children, a war would be fought with such evident restraint and without rhetoric.

Hamas has boasted of a new “suicide drone,” used a large new rocket with a range of 250 kilometers (155 miles), and has fired up to 140 rockets within minutes in an effort to confuse the Iron Dome air defense system. It targeted Ben-Gurion Airport, which had to be shut down. It deliberately fired a Kornet antitank missile at a school bus, killing one boy.

With its airstrikes, Israel has succeeded to destroy a good part of the underground tunnel network Hamas has built. This very sophisticated and expensive network was built to smuggle weapons, money, and terrorists into Gaza, and, based on Hizbullah’s model, to infiltrate terrorists into Israeli territory. In addition, the IDF bombed Hamas’s rocket launchers, from which at any moment a new attack could have been unleashed. It also struck those who commanded, directed, and carried out the launches. What else could it have done? Nothing could or should have stopped the Israeli army from trying to prevent the next round of rocket fire at its own citizens.

How could the world not understand the fact that Israel had no choice but to strike at the sources of the war, or eliminate its perpetrators who have held the people of Gaza hostage? As referred to earlier, among the 236 Palestinians killed in Gaza last May, at least 114 were terrorists.

Women and children were also killed, but how can we not understand that they are dead because of an authoritarian and malevolent power that rules Gaza and requires each and every one of its citizens to allow it to use any apartment, school, hospital, or office as a weapons factory, weapons depot, rocket base, or operational office? Since Israel evacuated Gaza in 2005, it has become with Iran’s help a constantly developing military stronghold. Most of the millions of dollars it receives in aid are used for its endeavors of targeting Israel. Islamic Jihad, which is independent and also directly financed by the ayatollahs, has the same purpose.

Israel couldn't have done anything other than what it did. It could have perhaps decided to put boots on the ground to take over Gaza and dismantle Hamas's web of power. Instead it chose to wage a war of attrition, not of conquest. But to stop a rocket you have to destroy its launch apparatus; otherwise you are at its mercy.

But Is Terrorism Not Terrorism?

This question, therefore, is crucial; it is a question that haunts almost the whole world to varying degrees and in different terms: How to fight terrorism? If the answer one chooses to give is that of perplexity in the face of the bloody gesture that has been witnessed, implying that the terrorist may be right, then the response can only be weak. This is the case, for example, with many trials of Islamists in Europe who were acquitted for lack of evidence or due to alleged mental illness, or worse, mildly penalized or even set free.

A well-known example is the murder of Sarah Halimi, a 65-year-old kindergarten teacher killed by Kanili Traore in her apartment in Paris in 2017. While he killed her, he sang verses from the Koran and shouted, "Allahu Akbar!" In line with Article 122 of the French penal code, he was found to have been in the throes of a psychotic episode and acquitted. Because he had smoked a large quantity of marijuana, the judges said, Traore had "lost the ability to discern." However, in an obvious contradiction, the judges also acknowledged that it was an anti-Semitic crime.

It is a very interesting and at the same time appalling episode. Even Macron stepped in by asking the judges to reconsider. The sentence, both exculpatory and full of fear, appears above all replete with good intentions toward ethnic and religious minorities, that is, the "disadvantaged." Moreover, it also appears fraught with uncertainty on the issue of narcotics. In the end, however, the court assumed the responsibility not of the social order and the defense of life, but that of different values and an

alternative reading of contemporary history, where the issue of immigration and social oppression trumps justice.

Deep down, unspoken, lies the idea that a French Muslim is a victim of circumstances, lacking responsibility because he is isolated from public sentiment and common sense. He killed while reciting Koran verses! He murdered an elderly Jewish lady who had done nothing to him! He praised the killing of Jews! He shouted “Allahu Akbar”! But marijuana and his status as an immigrant are to blame.

Did Hamas fire thousands of rockets at Jewish homes? Does it not spend billions with solely this aim in mind? Does it sacrifice its children to its war strategy? But it is seen as a reaction to injustice, a way to fight for its own independence. Hamas is viewed as representing an oppressed people, poor, prisoners within their borders and subject to a colonial regime of apartheid, etc., etc. It makes sense that its population fires rockets: Gaza is occupied. What? Ah, it hasn't been occupied since August 2005? OK, but it's as if it's occupied because its borders are closed. Aren't they closed for obvious security reason? Nonsense, they are closed for racist reasons. Israel is an apartheid state.

It has even been said that if the war had been just, Israel should have suffered more casualties. It had too few. Look at the difference: in Gaza there were 236 deaths and in Israel there were only 13. Is it because Israel invested so much in a defense system? This was wrong, and it should have provided one to the Palestinians too. There is no limit to the absurdity of such an outlook. Israel shouldn't have tried to impede the rockets of the oppressed people in Gaza, but instead should have suffered the historical-divine punishment it deserves, just as the French court shouldn't have put Sarah Halimi's murderer in prison. In fact, it didn't. You can get away with killing your Jewish neighbor.

The oppressed have the right to go crazy; they can strike without paying a price. Neither the murders carried out in the name of Allah nor the attacks on Israel are seen in terms of the religious-political, hate-filled anti-Semitism that Hamas touts in its charter and repeats in every speech, sermon, and

document as an essential duty. On January 17, 2009, the Islamic scholar Muhammad Hussein Yacoub asserted in a speech on Al Rahma TV: “We must believe that our fighting with the Jews is eternal, and it will not end until the final battle. You must believe that we will fight, defeat, and annihilate them, until not a single Jew remains on the face of the Earth. As for you Jews... the curse of Allah upon you, whose ancestors were apes and pigs. You Jews have sown hatred in our hearts, and we have bequeathed it to our children and grandchildren. You will not survive as long as a single one of us remains.”³³ Hamas’s charter gives this same message and its TV reiterates this language in many programs, including those for children. One program on official Palestinian Authority Television (PATV) featured children reciting poems extolling martyrdom and encouraging them to kill Jews. Palestinian Media Watch has extensively documented “Children and Education” in the Palestinian territories.³⁴

In today’s Western culture, the most extreme anti-Semitism, or rather the desire to see the Jews disappear from the face of the earth, finds its *raison d’être* in a castle of lies built around the figure of the Jew as oppressor. It is the postmodern way of justifying the most ancient hatred. It is the new version of anti-Semitism that puts the Jew in the same category as the “white supremacist.” And it is also a symptom of a cognitive disease that overturns the concept of responsibility and guilt to the point of deeming racist even those who are avowedly and politically antiracist just because they are white or, in the case of Jews, Israeli. Both whiteness and Israeliness are now associated with alleged apartheid in a country that is an evident mosaic of ethnicities, skin colors, languages, and histories, which recognizes the rights of all its minorities while having one defect, namely that of not wanting to be devoured by its enemies.

This tendency arises from a view of the world as a hub of evil inflicted on the weak and oppressed, who therefore have the right to rebel using all means. Jews have been strangely expunged from the list of the persecuted and added to that of the persecutors. But for Jews the invitation to *mea culpa* is like a

death sentence. Accepting it would mean exposing themselves to hatred and physical attack without defense, and for Israel, a tiny Jewish country in the middle of the Islamic world, doing so is impossible.

There is a second notion that can lead us not to defend ourselves against terror: a charitable and pacifist conception of the civilian population, whatever its role in a war. But the moral choice to avoid striking civilians used as human shields, certainly commendable if it can be done without sacrificing one's own population, becomes lethal if the human shield encompasses an entire geographical area or a large portion of the urban population and is meant to guarantee total impunity for aggression against another civilian population. This is Hamas's strategy.

The denial of Israel's right to self-defense by newspapers, human rights organizations, many left-wing parties, politicians, and cultural figures, and even some Israeli intellectuals reaches pathological peaks, such as the Irish demand to expel the Israeli ambassador from Belfast or "the Squad's" demand to cut U.S. military aid to Israel.

In the Western thinking that has emerged from the postwar period to the present, the question of Israel has been conflated with the Jewish question. It is true that because the memory of the Shoah was and is very near, anyone who is neither a Nazi nor a negationist of any color is likely to have an uncomfortable sense of historical connection with the Jewish people, located anywhere on the spectrum from sympathy for the persecuted to hatred toward Israel. But precisely for this reason, there are also many organizations in the institutionalized struggle against anti-Semitism that simultaneously claim to be pro-Jewish and are anti-Zionist. It is a strange story that complicates things a lot. Angela Merkel is a clear example of it, as is German society as a whole. In Germany today there are several powerful anti-Semitic movements, while BDS is outlawed and Israel's right to self-defense has been recognized. But the urge to demand that Israel stop exercising that right, and let Hamas thrive, has been irresistible. Indeed, Israel is supposed to help Gaza rebuild

itself, even if rebuilding Gaza without dismantling Hamas could have fatal consequences. Germany is one of those countries, then, that despite having adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's Working Definition of Anti-Semitism, which links anti-Semitism to Israelophobia, has continued in many situations to produce and protect Israelophobia with official stances. On the other hand, what can be more fascinating for a European than accusing the Jews – whose genocide his continent carried out – of committing genocidal massacres? The Palestinians have understood this very well, and their propaganda machine is pointed like a missile.

Children

The latest war between Israel and Hamas has thrown open the gates of hell. The power exerted on the public by lies when it has been conditioned by prior ideological messages is immense. This is what the American historian Richard Landes calls “liquid journalism,” that is, an ideological overflow without facts but with many biases. This was certainly one of the most significant consequences of the 11-day war, more than even the strategic achievements of either side.

From being a long-drawn-out legal issue that had not yet reached a resolution, Sheikh Jarrah has become ostensible proof, in Arabic, English, Italian, and French, of the usual narrative that Israel “stole the land and expelled the Palestinians,” committing “ethnic cleansing.” Historically, therefore, it is the author of the Nakba or catastrophe, the so-called Shoah of the Palestinians, the purported counterpart of Jewish history, and Israel is cast as perpetually owing something to the Palestinians.

The disturbances around the Old City and the Al-Aqsa Mosque were not reported as what they were: attacks by groups of young Arabs, often armed, on Jewish citizens, leading to clashes between those Arabs and the Israeli police when the latter tried to restore order. Instead it was reiterated that “Israel stormed the Al-

Aqsa Mosque,” as if the fundamentally evil Israelis had attacked Muslim civilians who merely wanted to pray during Ramadan.

The demonization rapidly intensified later as the IDF carried out airstrikes to stop the launching of thousands of rockets at Israel from its north to its south, made possible by Hamas’s substantially increased firepower since the 2014 war. As Israel returned fire against military targets, it warned Palestinian citizens to evacuate the targeted buildings. Even when the military presented evidence of such warnings, as in the case of the May 15 destruction of the building that housed Associated Press and Hamas military-intelligence offices, the Jewish state still continued to be portrayed as a barbaric regime that attacks unarmed civilians, including Palestinians and others – especially the press – out of a criminal instinct, and in particular prefers to kill children.

The *New York Times*, which covered the whole war as if Israel were its personal enemy, exemplified this attitude, as did the left-wing Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*. On May 26, 2021, the *Times* published on its front page photographs of dead Palestinian children, who, it claimed, had been killed by Israeli airstrikes. Israeli children weren’t depicted there. The bad faith of the world’s most powerful newspaper is very evident: among the 67 children depicted to show Israel’s cruelty was Khaled al-Qanou (17), whom the Mujahaddin Brigades had already claimed as a fighter and *shahid*. Of course, it is against international law to recruit or deploy minors in armed conflict, but this was never mentioned. Palestinian terror groups are known to take pride in the presence of fighters even much younger than Khaled, brainwashed children whose mothers hope all their children will die as *shahids*. They are typically trained in summer camps like the one shown by Hamas in its 2015 propaganda video *Vanguards of Liberation*: an industry of violent moral corruption of minors.³⁵ According to the Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center (ITIC), which bases its studies largely on Palestinian sources, eight of the children photographed were hit by Palestinian fire that fell within Gaza itself, from Beit Hanoun

to Jabalia. That fire accounts for a good part of the Palestinian casualties in Gaza during those 11 days.

Others among the children shown were innocent children of Hamas commanders. For example, Muhammad Suleiman (16) was the son of a field commander of the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, who was killed – along with his son – in Jabalia on May 11, 2021. Is it less painful, then, that his son was killed as well? Of course not, perhaps even more so, but the father was a fighter who had recruited his son³⁶ and saw fit to keep him at his side in war. No one has talked about this.

And as ITIC further notes: “The IDF carried out about 1,500 aerial attacks, and despite its efforts to avoid harming civilians in general and children in particular, Hamas’ tactic of positioning its command centers in the heart of densely populated areas led directly to the unfortunate deaths of more than 50 children.”³⁷

Hamas deliberately places Palestinian children in harm’s way because it creates an irresistible propaganda impact that arouses outrage in the West. And it is logical that this should be so: the culture of which Israel is also a part prohibits child sacrifice. In matters of conscience, children represent an ultimate limit.

But if the one who uses a child as a human shield is going to shoot at my child, don’t I have to stop him? And to the parents and teachers of Palestinian children I would say: Didn’t you think about how to protect, shelter, and hide your children before attacking Israel? And why did you attack Jerusalem and then Tel Aviv when you knew well that the Israeli air force would respond by bombing the civilian buildings where the rocket launchers and those who use them are located, that is, the military infrastructure that is now concealed by your families? And why, in the buildings where your children live, are there so many offices and apartments of jihad leaders who plan the attacks? And why are even news agencies, crammed with Hamas operatives, located in the same buildings? But nobody asks these questions.

The world merely blames Israel for the number of Palestinian civilian deaths while, perversely, complaining that Israeli

casualties are far less. The claim, then, is that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is imbalanced. Would you like more Israeli deaths? If there were more, would the conflict be balanced? If Israel defended itself less, would it then have the right to fight more aggressively?

Hamas's *modus vivendi* is very clear even if nobody dares to oppose it: it exploits its own people's blood as part and parcel of its objective of destroying Israel. Isn't this unabashedly masochistic? This is an interesting point. Hamas would answer no, and claim that it fights for victory. But many forms of anti-Semitism have defined themselves in that way, including, as mentioned, Nazism.

The Arab world has suffered several defeats since, in 1948, it adopted the anti-Semitic endeavor as a major political choice. Societies that refuse to regard anti-Semitism as a problem have been gripped by terrorism.

The image of Hamas's Gaza leader Yahya Sinwar, proudly – as he addresses a rally in Gaza City on May 26, 2021 – lifting a young child who is holding a machine gun, speaks volumes.³⁸ It shows a notion of childhood contrary to all our beliefs. But did anyone in the media protest or simply say this was a violation of all children's rights? Did it cause a scandal? Shouldn't the implication here – that all of the most sacred principles are just a subparagraph of the far more sacred task of wiping out the Jewish state – be criticized in the name of our values? And when such criticism is sacrificed to the idea that Hamas is only fighting “oppression,” aren't we unwittingly adhering to its murderous and suicidal ideology?

The *New York Times*, which purported to show its love of children with that big page, didn't pose these questions. Going forward, this is very troubling with regard to children's rights in general. No one will protect Palestinian children from the abuses of their society if the human rights advocates don't deem it as politically advisable.

Many Palestinian mothers have proudly shown off their children in front of TV cameras and proclaimed their fate as

shahids with joy. Unfortunately, however, they have never been subjected to the criticism they deserve according to the obvious logic that children must be protected, which is codified under international law.

After all, the criteria for bad and good parenting are being politicized. For example, in line with the new curriculum adopted by Los Angeles schools, every parent will have to accept the notion that their child, if white, is part of a racist legacy; if they deviate from this ideology delineated by Black Lives Matter, they could be deemed bad parents. In short, every parent must become the custodian of a world devoted to fighting for human rights according to the current doctrine.

Hatred for Israel Throws the World into Chaos

The logic, therefore, on which the current ideological insurgency against the Jewish state rests is a frightening deconstruction of our own democratic and antifascist principles. It is a suicidal logic because it obliterates the critical capacity on which democratic ethics have been built.

No one, for example, except for a courageous few, ever speaks about the persecution and even deaths of gay and lesbian youth in Palestinian society,³⁹ or the torments to which Christians in Gaza are subjected,⁴⁰ or the fate of dissidents in the Palestinian Authority like human rights activist Nizar Banat, who was arrested and beaten by Palestinian security forces for his criticism of Abbas and the PA.⁴¹ The monstrous punishments, including hangings, that are carried out by the Iranian regime for the same reasons are addressed only in passing.

The basic moral acquisitions of our culture are obliterated as during the days of Stalinist communism in order to safeguard what we consider politically indispensable. But those insights become headlines and the stuff of scandal when they are employed to criticize what is viewed as oppression.

Another senior Hamas leader, Ismail Haniyeh, was caught red-handed with a billionaire account in a five-star hotel in Doha complete with massage services.⁴² Yet the media felt no need to highlight the matter, especially compared to the misery of Gaza, which is indeed constantly in need of international aid.

The Israeli economic newspaper *Globes*⁴³ and many other studies report that there are at least 600 billionaires in Gaza. One of them, Mousa Abu Marzouk, is a financier who spent several years in prison in the United States on terrorism charges. (I personally met this jovial little man and interviewed him at his ultra-modest office in Ramallah, where he explained to me the righteousness of being a member of Hamas.) Abu Marzouk has an account valued between \$2 and \$3 billion. The 2014 *Globes* article also reported that former Hamas leader Khaled Mashal's worth was estimated as at least \$2.6 billion. Ismail Haniyeh's capital was estimated at \$4 million, while the rest of his wealth was registered in the names of his son-in-law, his sons and daughters, and less prominent Hamas leaders. Within Gaza's (and the Palestinian Authority's) borders, it is easy for corrupt leaders to reap the benefits of international funding intended to help the population.⁴⁴ This aid is regularly provided by various NGOs and Muslim charities such as Zakat.

Tunnels, many of which the Israeli army has destroyed, are not only an underground route for terrorists and weapons; they have also been used to smuggle large quantities of money, especially from Egypt. Hamas leaders have also slapped heavy taxes on goods coming through these tunnels. In addition, these leaders skim funds sent from overseas donors to fictitious names of Hamas workers and soldiers. A billion-dollar fund for Hamas in Syria, known as the "Syrian fund," was controlled by Mashal while he lived in Syria and then embezzled by him when he left Damascus. All this means villas, travel, and immense privileges for Hamas leaders at the expense of misery for the Gaza population, which Hamas's propaganda machine likes to display as a showcase of Israeli cruelty.⁴⁵

Why is the money aspect relevant? Because even more than the criticisms of the blockade and the so-called occupation of Gaza that ended in 2005, the lack of criticism of Hamas's multibillionaire revolutionaries is a symptom of how our minds want to be tricked into thinking of ourselves as defenders of the poor and dispossessed.

Ignoring the obvious reality of Hamas's corruption is a symptom of a cognitive disease about which Israel warns all of humanity. Imagining Hamas as a manifestation of special hardship and poverty puts us all, the entire liberal and democratic West, in danger. It is a genocidal terrorist organization, and only anti-Semitism can prevent us from seeing that evident fact.

Israel, with its tireless self-defense, warns that its enemies have made a basic choice of terrorism. Concomitantly, for those who want to see, Hamas has chosen to have ties with Iran, at one time with the Islamic State, and today with Hizbullah as well. Yet anti-Semitism prevents one from seeing clearly the dynamics of the entire globe, and from understanding how Iran and Turkey, from two sides of the fence, both proclaim nonsense about their possession of Jerusalem, or invite Hamas leaders to their respective capitals, Tehran and Ankara, and side with China against the United States to buttress their anti-Semitic and anti-American dreams in a manner reminiscent of the Cold War.

In a word: Israel with its self-defense is indispensable for the survival of our society and our values. Israel and the Jews are a guarantee of positive development in the world of freedom, democracy, and a humane and respectful social order, in which we know what is good and what is evil. Israel is part of an international order in which internationality and reciprocal respect for statehood prevail. It has signed the Abraham Accords with four Muslim Arab countries, allowing us to imagine a better future; more on that subject later.

Why the Jews?

The reasons for anti-Semitism consist precisely in the universal difficulty of accepting ethical principles that impose on man a codified behavior, which for Jews is the one stipulated by God in the Torah. Dennis Prager and Joseph Telushkin's book *Why the Jews?*, published in the 1980s, contains a quote from the anti-Semitic British-German philosopher Houston Stewart Chamberlain. In his 1899 book *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, Chamberlain wrote: "I cannot help shuddering to think of the portentous, irremediable mistake the world made in accepting the traditions of this wretched little nation...as the basis of its belief. The Jew came into our gay world and spoiled everything with his ominous concept of sin, his law, and his cross."

Jews throughout history have been accused of everything: from ethnic, racial, and religious hatred to antinationalist dual loyalty. They have been deemed too revolutionary or too conservative, excessively wealthy or extremely poor, and charged either with dominating society or with overly burdening it with their troubles. However, all these notions do not adequately explain the universality of the phenomenon, nor the expulsions of Jews from England in 1290, France in 1306, Hungary in 1349, Austria in 1421, and Spain in 1492, and then from Arab countries between 1948 and 1967. The Russian Empire indeed invented the word *pogrom* to describe the specific assault, torture, and violent death of Jewish civilians in their homes. The Khmelnytsky massacres in Eastern Europe during the 17th century were on a magnitude of the systematic destruction of the Jewish people that the Nazis would envy.

Yet the fundamental reason for the universality of the phenomenon, from Nazi anti-Semitism to the contemporary anti-Semitism of the Islamic world, as well as the postmodern anti-Semitism of Corbynism in the United Kingdom and "the Squad" in the United States, can be found in Jews' moral loyalty to a value system and choice of life that places the world before

an ethical mirror; in other words, if one wants, to the role of a chosen people. The moral weight of this chosenness is its greatest significance, but there are those who like to mistake it for egotism and contempt. Thus they dismiss the fact that the Torah, God, Israel, and the multimillennial persistence of a nation that survives in spite of everything proclaim universal truths that are very difficult to accept.

The Italian Jewish rabbi, writer, and educator Dante Lattes (1876-1935) wrote in his book *Apologia dell'ebraismo* (Apology for Judaism):

The idea of Israel has been open for thousands of years to men of all races and languages and is the ideal humus on which humanity is laboriously sowing the seeds of its moral harvest. The Hebrew Bible and its derivations are the purest and most universal instruments of human education, the ladder of man's ascent. This Hebrew idea must have had a great beauty if, entrusted to the hands of a small unknown people of the Mediterranean, surrounded and threatened by the great empires that converged in its small territory, it succeeded in surviving throughout the ages despite the dangers and misguidance that threatened its life without respite; if without the help of material forces and not accompanied by lonely foolish apostles it conquered the people; if it caressed men with so many comforts, aids and hopes, sowing flowers and lights in the flowerbed of their lives.

Later in the book Lattes explains the impact of Judaism on human society:

With the prophets a new era of human history begins, indeed the universal history penetrated by the ideal of spirituality begins.... These vindicators of justice in the name of mercy and love, these proclaimers of the eternal values of morality in the name of the one God and of the brotherhood of men are truly the realizers of religion, of the world of peoples, of moral utopia, of the society of peoples.... For Judaism...there is no possible distinction between

religion and life...we are in a domain of thought in which political, national, and ethnic factors no longer have any importance, we are in the truest humanity.⁴⁶

The book was published in 1923. We know what happened next.

The world has often reacted with outrage to the idea that Jews intend, in a manner explicitly stated in their texts, to help heal the world and change it for the better, as well as to “help God,” and to act through example while not trying to convert their neighbors. Paradoxically, the latter approach had the effect of arousing further suspicion.

The choice and the impulse to change the world affects the Jewish world itself. The human being acquires a special significance, the family upholds standards of respect, children are called upon to honor their father and mother, and parents seek continuity, knowing that, however secular the family may be, these special values that are called Judaism are transmitted and persist, mysteriously, among a thousand difficulties, from the beginning of time.

Of course, as happens with human beings, these intentions sometimes fall short of the mark, and that is a good opportunity to say: “I told you so! You are a fraud. In fact, you’re worse than us.”

In all this, Israel is the greatest icon. It has brought the Jewish people back to life after numerous massacres, won wars that according to logic it should have lost, made arid land fruitful, saved Jews in exile who otherwise were destined to be persecuted or killed, populated itself with children while throughout the entire Western world birth rates have been tumbling, supplied us all with invaluable medicines as well as high-tech electronics and software, and brought home Jewish immigrants from all over the globe, including those who had never before seen water flowing from a tap.

It is obvious that the anti-Semitic rejection of Israel – that is, not legitimate criticism, which is sacrosanct, but its delegitimization and moral nullification as the Jewish homeland,

to which the Jews manifestly remained attached throughout the exile, continuing to live in communities throughout the Land of Israel and to see Jerusalem as the only true soul of their moral geography – is harmful to the world as a whole. That rejection effaces the joy that Christianity and Islam, Jewish history's legitimate children, might otherwise take in honoring their father.

The biggest mistake in trying to understand anti-Semitism is therefore universalization, the idea that hatred for Jews resembles the racial or religious hatred of any other minority, people, or religion. It doesn't. The motives that fuel anti-Semitism are specific, though many prejudices converge under its guise: here it arose because Jews were identified with communists and revolutionaries, here because they were seen as capitalists and bourgeoisie. But at the core they are always the same Jews.

In the German case, it is very clear that Nazism wasn't about using the Jews as a scapegoat, but rather that the belligerence that led to World War II was a force that Nazism created above all to eliminate the Jews. The Shoah was Hitler's sovereign end, and the true purpose of the camps was the Jews' physical elimination, not their exploitation for Germany's war effort. Those who imagined, like the German-born Jewish political philosopher Hannah Arendt, that anti-Jewish hatred stemmed from economic factors did not consider the multimillennial accumulation of malevolent sentiments. Even the psychological explanation, which is in vogue today and describes anti-Semites as a throng of crazy and stupid people, ignores the many great writers and intellectuals such as Saint Augustine, Martin Luther, and Louis-Ferdinand Céline who propagated anti-Semitism.

Hatred of Jews, as French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre maintained, is never just a case of the general hatred of those who are different. It demonstrates that the Jew is ultimately a fantasy projected by the mind of the anti-Semite. If Sartre meant to say that it is not the Jews who create anti-Semitism, he was certainly right. But the Jewish identity with its different, strange inner world that sets aside other gods is imagined as something

dangerous and has always been targeted. In the history of Christianity and Islam, the renunciation of one's identity, that is, conversion, was the pass needed to escape persecution. Hitler's Nazi Germany, however, saw Jewishness as an indelible mark and viewed the Jews as an unfit race that had to be eliminated from the face of the earth. Iran's ayatollahs state repeatedly that they are a "cancerous tumor" that must be excised.

In the effort to destroy the Jews, dehumanization has been the main weapon, and it continues to be in all forms of anti-Semitism we witness today. The extreme left and the Muslim world, along with the Nazi-fascist right, have all promoted political forms of dehumanization against those who have given the contemporary world its central identity, that is, its moral one. It is a very risky game, which makes us enemies of ourselves. And in the geopolitical dimension it makes us alien to both democracy and human rights, especially when the effort to preserve and promote them is so heroic as to endure even in war and under siege.

Islam is a main factor making the new anti-Semitism, in its anti-Israeli form, political; indeed, Islam becomes the mother of all political anti-Semitism, which plays a major role today. The idea at the core of Islam, born with Muhammad and the Islamic conquest, is that Islam dominates and is not dominated. With the emergence of Israel on soil of the Muslim *ummah*, the reality of the Jewish nation becoming an independent state and not subjugated as the *dhimmi*, which conquered peoples ought to be, becomes intolerable.

The former mufti of Jerusalem Hajj Amin al-Husseini, a friend and follower of Hitler, clearly explained how he saw the Jews: "They cannot mix themselves with any other nation, but live as parasites among the nations, suck their blood, embezzle their property, corrupt their morals.... The divine anger and curse of the holy Koran towards the Jews is the cause of their unique character."⁴⁷

We know where this road in the history of West European civilization led. The Enlightenment, which we hold so dear, was the intellectual milieu in which anti-Semitism found its modern

form; and what has emerged is one of the most intellectual and horrific eras of hatred precisely because the hatred was formulated by outstanding minds. It is a good thing that every now and then in France, in addition to Voltaire, one encounters Montesquieu who furthered the cause of emancipation,⁴⁸ and in England John Locke who called for equal rights, while in Germany Immanuel Kant called for the “euthanasia” of Judaism. Karl Marx’s appalling essay “On the Jewish Question” gives way to a genocidal anti-Semitism. Marx viewed rich Jews as craftily manipulating society and poor Jews as primitive savages obstructing his revolution.

Zionism

Jewish loyalty to monotheism, to Jewish law, and ultimately to being a nation, while also being a transnational people to which any Jew anywhere in the world is connected, formed the basis for the declaration in 1789 by the French revolutionary Count Stanislas de Clermont-Tonnerre: “We must deny the Jews every right as a nation and grant them every right as an individual.” These words of delegitimization are apt for those who are vehemently anti-Israeli today: in the era of the preeminence of religion, Jews were offered integration in exchange for their abandonment of religious identity; in the era of nations, for their abandonment of Israeli national identity. If you are a Jew who is critical of Israel, you instantly regain a special social and intellectual dignity.

Even the Soviets invoked this theme, and so did the United Nations in 1975 when it ratified the “Zionism is racism” resolution, which affixed a morally negative concept to the Jewish nation that still reverberates today. The idea that Jewish nationalism is fundamentally negative is inherently linked to the justified critical view of the European nationalist movements of the past century, which led to fascism and Nazism, or the imperialist ones that led to colonialism. But for the Jews, recognizing themselves as a nation has nothing to do with those

phenomena; on the contrary, Jews have always been antagonistic to nationalism when it became authoritarian or expansionist. Jews are a nation because they have a cultural and moral identity to preserve, not so that they can impose it on others. Even the idea of induced or forced conversion is completely foreign to Judaism.

Moreover, the accusation of “dual loyalty” hurled at Diaspora Jews is just as preposterous because the values of democracy, equality, tolerance, and self-determination are fully compatible with being a Diaspora Jew. For thousands of years Jews have loved two countries, and even now that a large bulk of them live in Israel they continue to love their respective Diaspora countries, speak their languages, sing their songs, and follow and participate in their political events.

Human Rights and World Politics

It is a misunderstanding of history stemming from laziness or ignorance if many consider anti-Semitism only a consequence of Nazism, as if the Shoah marked the end of all the evil in the world and particularly hatred for the other, including Roma, blacks, homosexuals, and, of course, Jews. Since then, it has been crucial to overcome all the propensities that led mankind to accept Hitler’s seizure of power, such as supremacist nationalism, racial prejudice, and the genocidal hatred that led to the extermination of the Jews.

But similar propensities – which led to purges, imprisonments, and executions – also helped lay the groundwork for Soviet communism. Natan Sharansky was imprisoned for nine years because of his Zionism, and the activist Ida Nudel was confined to the Gulag until Soviet communism fell. Sharansky and Nudel were refuseniks – Jews who joined a Zionist awakening that began among Soviet Jews in the mid-1960s but were refused permission to emigrate to Israel.

The horrors of the 20th century have given rise to a slew of “no’s” that Alain Finkelkraut has often discussed in several works. The “no’s” that Europe has adopted to avoid a Second Holocaust against the Jews include: no to dictatorships, dukes, führers, wars, nationalism, expansionism, the oppression of other peoples, and cultural or racial exclusion. Therefore, alongside the new, generally beneficial European institutions, all sorts of human rights organizations, and in particular nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), have sprung up and flourished across Europe and throughout the world, seeking to address problems of the weak, the sick, immigrants, women, the LGBTQ community, the Third World, the environment, and so on.

These organizations have engaged in difficult and sometimes heroic struggles, but from the very beginning they have suffered from a serious flaw: having been born during the Cold War, their political preference for the so-called anti-imperialist side became a pervasive and compulsory cultural choice. For example, feminist movements that initially arose in the factories to obtain work equality later morphed into movements against discrimination and male repression.

Well and good; but they magically forget, while rightly putting Western sexism and violence under scrutiny, to say a single word about the horrendous slavery of Muslim women in the Middle East, Africa, and the Far East. Silence on the forced harems, female genital mutilation, imprisonment, beatings, and honor killings goes hand in hand with silence on the repression of the Baha’is in Iran, the Copts in Egypt, and dissidents in Syria and Iran.

The world has only recently woken up to the danger of an organized Chinese conquest, for example, and perhaps only because of the woes inflicted by COVID-19. As for Russia, Vladimir Putin largely enjoyed international amnesty before his invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Throughout the years, amid the genocides in Cambodia, Central Africa, Rwanda, and Tibet, Fidel Castro’s bloody dictatorship, the tens of thousands killed in Chechnya, the persecution of whites in Zimbabwe, the

tens of thousands condemned to death in Iran, the corruption and authoritarian rule imposed by Palestinian leaders both in Ramallah and Gaza, the United Nations has been preoccupied with one country, Israel. And while it expended little energy on the relocation of the last century's refugees by entrusting the task to a single international organization, it created a separate organization for the Palestinians, the ubiquitous, multimillion-dollar support group known as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

It is interesting to note that the term "anti-Semitism" has been dropped from all UN resolutions that should have addressed it, including the 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the 1981 UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. While anti-Semitism can take the form of either racial or religious intolerance, race and religion are deemed mutually exclusive categories, and as a result anti-Semitism is not mentioned in these documents and sadly, not addressed.

In 2001, Durban marked both the peak and the source of all subsequent anti-Semitic hatred turned into anti-Israeli propaganda. The words "anti-Semitism" and "Holocaust" never appeared during the conference, but the Palestinians were referred to as victims of "Israeli racism." It was a throwback to the 1975 "Zionism is racism" resolution; Jewish self-determination was portrayed as the enemy of all humanity despite the fact that the resolution had been revoked in 1991.

In 1975, the United Nations established a permanent committee, dubbed the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to focus solely on alleged Israeli wrongdoing. Yet the massacre of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics had been perpetrated in 1972, and the next year Arab armies had launched a surprise attack on Israel on the solemn Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur. But it was still Israel that had to be monitored. Years later, when Palestinian suicide bombers were attacking men, women, and children

in eateries, buses, and streets during the Second Intifada, the UN Human Rights Commission tabled a resolution in favor of “armed struggle,” which, although the United States and Canada staunchly opposed it, passed by a wide margin.

The virus of the anti-Israeli and anti-American fantasy has been nourished abundantly by traditional anti-Semitism; it has been augmented by what Lord David Trimble, the Irish Nobel Peace Prize recipient, called the “great curse” of human rights organizations when he accused them of complicity with terrorism.⁴⁹ Europe has excelled in such complicity, which was inaugurated by French president Charles de Gaulle in 1967 when he imposed an arms embargo on the region, which mostly affected Israel, three days before the outbreak of the Six-Day War.

More than 20 years ago, the American commentator David Brooks characterized a certain human type as a “bobo”: an individual who feels revulsion (“and wants his friends to know it”) at the vices of those who brought evil to earth in the form of capitalism and imperialism, and before that slavery and racism.⁵⁰ That human type has persisted since the time of the Cold War and now flourishes amid the woke and intersectional ideology (which proclaims: “All oppressions are one, and Jews are part of the group of white oppressors”). The United States and Israel have been lumped together in an onslaught of accusations for a long time; the anti-Americanism/anti-Semitism nexus is one of the most important political phenomena of our era. If Jews have never been forgiven for carrying on their tragic coat of arms the memory of the Shoah, which connotes the criminal nature of Europe’s recent past and reverberates in the present, Americans will never be forgiven for having saved Europe from itself.

The latest twist of this joint hatred has by now also invaded American streets and universities, and it is a very notable phenomenon with overtones of anti-Semitic criminalization and street assaults on anyone who wears a yarmulke or Star of David or dares to speak Hebrew. During Israel’s 2021 operation in Gaza, the idea that Jews are institutional oppressors led to truly astounding allegations, such as Black Lives Matter’s claim

that Israelis were the “trainers” of the American policeman who killed George Floyd; or the hoarier assertion that American aid to Israel (which Senator Bernie Sanders and Congresswomen Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Rashida Tlaib, among others, are calling to be withheld) is inextricably bound up with oppression of the Palestinians.

Suicide

Just as the anti-Semitism of fascism, Nazism, and communism was not only essential to their construction but also, as the necessary historical conditions evolved, to their subsequent destruction, so Western culture – which harbors the toxin of anti-Semitism disguised as criticism of Israel – is in fact aiming a time bomb at itself. The anti-Israeli battle with its myriad of anti-Western lies has now been appropriated by the very leaders of the cultural revolution that destroys statues of George Washington and prohibits reading works by William Shakespeare⁵¹ at schools and universities because they are believed to promote “racism,” or intimidates professors until they agree to teach his books according to the woke agenda. Such scholars are forced to put aside their love for distinguished white exponents of the history, philosophy, and even art history they have always taught because they are now considered supremacists.

In a 2015 panel hosted at Harvard Law School, the founder of Black Lives Matter, Patrisse Cullors, clearly called for the “end” of Israel: “Palestine is our generation’s South Africa, and if we don’t step up boldly and courageously to end the imperialist project that’s called Israel, we’re doomed.”⁵² The remark seems to imply that to forestall the failure of our dreams for a society based on human rights, we need only to eliminate the collective Jew, Israel, which is not the state of the Jews that is secular, democratic, and besieged but an “imperialist project.”

What could be more delegitimizing? French foreign minister Jean-Yves Le Drian asserted in May 2021 that there is a risk of

“long-lasting apartheid” in Israel.”⁵³ On what did he base such a statement? Was it perhaps his impression of the clashes between Jews and Arabs that erupted in several Israeli cities during the Gaza war? But there is no reason to take such a view unless there is a preexisting conviction, a prejudice.

Delegitimization based on the apartheid theme is among the most powerful forms of it; a regime that actually practiced apartheid was eliminated because of it. It is curious that the French minister did not seem to know, for example, that one of the three judges who sentenced former Israeli president Moshe Katsav to seven years in prison for rape was an Arab. There are thousands of other examples that demonstrate that Israel is not an apartheid state, but they are completely ignored.

Not knowing what racism really consists of is a huge problem for our societies, which are certainly not free of it: we risk creating an environment for destructive impulses that invent new categories to be outlawed. Certainly Jews, as holders of a different, original tradition, are the easiest to target, but also as custodians of an ethos antithetical to the destruction of past culture.

The criminalization of Israel has by now been disseminated worldwide. It is a mindset based on lies that have become part and parcel of the media’s daily fare since the Durban Conference in 2001. It is a unifying factor in the international struggle against a purported oppressor, just as communism was and as human rights are today.

Anti-Israeli notions are indeed a great source of international unity and act as a cultural and political cement in the fragmented world of the American left, and certainly among all the actors in the Islamic world: Shiites and Sunnis, Iran and Turkey, Hizbullah and Hamas are all united at least on that score. Turning against Israel is also a way of diverting attention from the world’s real problems and of shirking responsibility to help entire populations at the mercy of dictators who, yes, don’t respect human rights.

Western crowds waving Palestinian flags should stop for a moment and ask: Together with whom are we waving them?

And this whole plethora of actors should remember what I saw with my own eyes in Durban a few days before the attack on the Twin Towers: the mass of demonstrators around the building that housed the UN-sponsored conference against racism who chanted slogans against Israel, the United States, and the West, and triumphantly hoisted pictures of Osama Bin Laden.

Preferred Lies and the Reasons for Them

I have already alluded to the risk our society faces if it embraces anti-Semitism again. Cynthia Ozick, for her part, has discussed the terrorist impulse and the sympathy it has aroused in the West, which seeks false, psychoanalytic explanations for the blatant savagery of our time. Quite simply, the International Criminal Court, while it continues, under the guise of occupation-related bullying, to threaten to prosecute Israel for its attempts at self-defense against terrorism, has never investigated, for example, the countries or NGOs that give shelter and money to Hizbullah's deadly activity disguised as "resistance," or why countries have designated solely its "military wing" as a terrorist organization while legitimizing and supporting its "political wing."

The mechanism by which anti-Semitism was embraced in this way can be reconstructed in stages. On September 28, 2001, in the wake of September 11, the UN Security Council adopted a promising Resolution 1373 on terrorism. But then there was a regression; whereas, initially, the basic rights of the person were identified with peace and security and the battle against terrorism, subsequently, little by little, the usual automatic Third Worldist majority shifted the emphasis to Israel as a "threat to international peace and security." After Durban laid the groundwork, Israel became, with the ultimate criminalization of the Jewish state, the test case for espousing terrorism as an acceptable weapon.

Terrorism, of which the Islamist component is always respectfully set aside, is closely tied to Israel's delegitimization: as attitudes toward Israel worsen, terrorism *increases*.

In March 2001, while a part of the Israeli population was overwhelmed with grief and disappointment at discovering that Arafat had remained an enemy and a terrorist despite the Oslo Accords, the country found itself condemned by the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva. It was put on a par with countries marked by ethnic and religious massacres, frequent use of the death penalty and of torture, and curtailed freedom of expression. Amnesty International, addressing terrorism while Israeli citizens are being attacked, demands "that terrorists be tried in accordance with human rights law obligations."⁵⁴ But the discrimination Israel faces as a Jewish state leads to a substantial change in the very conception of human rights. As noted earlier, in 2003, amid an onslaught of Palestinian terror, the UN Human Rights Commission overwhelmingly approved a resolution justifying terrorism that the United States and Canada declared abhorrent.

Cold War and Peace

After the German war had destroyed all semblance and pretense of human decency, fighting, even in self-defense, became morally illegitimate: the sun rose on peace as a basic value of the Western individual, of the democratic citizen. The peace campaigns concocted by the Soviet Union in those years, albeit waging its wars, put millions of the world's citizens on the march with multicolored flags opposing colonialism while favoring some pro-Soviet revolution in Africa and Asia. The Palestinians, too, were seen as righteous.

Meanwhile Jews saw in leftism a new homeland, and the socialist ideology accompanied the birth of the state. However, the contradiction emerged when the semantic domain of human rights and democracy incorporated the word "peace." In

December 1968, British philosopher Bertrand Russell addressed an open letter to Polish prime minister Wladyslaw Gomulka protesting the wave of anti-Semitic agitation and propaganda in Poland, which was part of a larger campaign the Soviet Union had launched after Israel defeated its proxies, Egypt and Syria, in the Six-Day War of June 1967. “By some twisted logic,” Russell wrote, “all Jews are now Zionists, Zionists are fascists, fascists are Nazis, and Jews, therefore, are to be identified with the very criminals who only recently sought to eliminate Polish Jewry.” The Russian newspaper *Pravda*, for its part, proclaimed on October 4, 1967: “Zionism is dedicated to genocide, racism, treachery, aggression, and annexation.” In short, all the world’s worst faults – except apartheid, which wasn’t yet cited as a crime – were trumpeted in relentless efforts to delegitimize the State of Israel, a crusade that the BDS movement would adopt years later.

Historian Bernard Lewis reported the use of nearly identical language at the World Conference of the International Women’s Year held in Mexico City in late June and early July 1975. He observed that “the ‘Declaration on the Equality of Women’ issued on that occasion repeatedly emphasized the share of women in the struggle against neocolonialism, foreign occupation, Zionism, racism, racial discrimination and apartheid.”⁵⁵

It is in this way that peace in the Middle East, an obvious objective of the State of Israel, has become a *flatus vocis* that isn’t examined in its reality but instead refashioned as a monstrous lie that, simply put, must eventually mean Israel’s surrender. The lie begins in 1948 and is reiterated down to Operation Guardian of the Walls in May 2021 and onward. The Jews are colonialists and the bad guys while the occupied Palestinians are the good guys, and not since 1967, but 1948 and even earlier. In 1967 de Gaulle’s surprise arms embargo was imposed on Israel at a crucial moment; in 1973 the European states prohibited American planes carrying desperately needed supplies to Israel from flying over their territory. Such measures ushered in an era of cynicism. That same year, French president Georges Pompidou and West German chancellor Willy Brandt issued a joint foreign policy

declaration that aligned them and the European Economic Community (EEC) with Arab countries, opening the door to a formal dialogue with the Arab League.

In 1975 the Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Cooperation called on European governments to “facilitate, for the Arab countries, the creation of generous means” to enable immigrant workers and their families to participate in their host European countries’ cultural and religious life. Gradually, after the 1973 Yom Kippur War, European countries began to vote against Israel at the United Nations; the oil crisis dictated their position. And Durban in 2001 restored de facto the “Zionism is racism” credo that had been revoked.

Apartheid

Israel is accused of much nonsense, not all of which can be analyzed here because there is simply far too much of it. That said, let’s debunk the idea that Israel is an apartheid state like South Africa: it is enough to take a look around at any Israeli hospital, shopping mall, public park, or in its parliament to see that it isn’t. There are Arab ministers and members of Knesset, professors, public and private employees, technicians, journalists, leading cultural figures, a Supreme Court justice, doctors, and even hospital patients who all happily intermingle with Jews in the Jewish state.

If instead one wants to say that the Jewish state is not binational, well, it isn’t. Israel is the state of the Jewish people as Italy is the state of the Italians, but like the latter it respects minorities with laws that protect all its citizens, including Israeli Arabs. If we also want to add that there are checkpoints for West Bank Palestinians and sometimes impatience and even violence, how could it not be otherwise in a country that suffers from repeated terrorist attacks, persistent as a chronic disease, by members of the Palestinian population? I am reminded of an episode in 2004 where “a 22-year-old Palestinian mother of two

children, pretending to be disabled,” blew herself up and “killed four Israelis at a Gaza border crossing...after duping soldiers into allowing her a personal security check rather than going through a metal detector.”⁵⁶ Apartheid has nothing to do with checkpoints. There is no apartheid here, not even remotely. As already mentioned, one of the three judges who sentenced President Moshe Katsav was an Arab, as was one of the three who turned down his request for an appeal. This president did time in the “apartheid” prison for five years.

Just as there is no civil apartheid in Israel, there is no discrimination in the military: Druze, Bedouins, and Christian Arabs serve beside Jews in the Israel Defense Forces. Belaynesh Zevadia, one of the many black immigrants who arrived in Israel thanks to the Jewish state’s covert evacuation of Ethiopian Jews from Sudan during a civil war that caused a famine in 1984, served as Israel’s ambassador to Ethiopia and Rwanda.

Richard Goldstone, the South African judge who initially wrote then retracted the 2009 UN fact-finding mission report on the Gaza conflict, in which he said the Israelis had intentionally killed Palestinian civilians, declared two years later in the *New York Times*: “If I had known then what I know now, the Goldstone Report would have been a different document.” He went on to write:

In Israel, there is no apartheid. Nothing there comes close to the definition of apartheid under the 1998 Rome Statute: “Inhumane acts...committed in the context of an institutionalized regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other racial group or groups and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime.” Israeli Arabs – 20 per cent of Israel’s population – vote, have political parties and representatives in the Knesset and occupy positions of acclaim, including on its Supreme Court. Arab patients lie alongside Jewish patients in Israeli hospitals, receiving identical treatment.... Israel has agreed in concept to the existence of a Palestinian state in Gaza and almost all of the West Bank, and is calling for the Palestinians to

negotiate the parameters.⁵⁷

So attested even the author of the infamous Goldstone Report.

Occupation, Colonialism

In May 2021 the anti-Israeli demonstrations widely used the term “illegitimate occupation.” They were not only invoking the 1967 Six-Day War but also Israel’s 1948 War of Independence. The aim was to delegitimize its existence since the year of its birth and to paint it as a colonialist country. Yet in 1948, if the Arabs had accepted UN Resolution 181, which was passed in 1947 and called for the partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states, they would by now have had their state for more than seven decades. They have continued to reject it several times even after 1967.

However, the so-called occupation – a state of affairs always referred to as illegal – is neither an occupation nor illegal. As Israeli international-law expert and former ambassador Alan Baker, who participated in the negotiation and drafting of the Oslo Accords with the Palestinians, and of agreements and peace treaties with Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon, has pointed out:

International law defines “occupation” as one power occupying the lands of a foreign sovereign. In Israel’s case, Israel is not occupying any foreign sovereign’s land; Israel entered the area known as the West Bank in 1967 and took over the authority to administer the land from Jordan, which was never considered to be a sovereign in the area.... The Jordanians, who occupied the territory after the 1948 war, annexed it, but this annexation was never really recognized or acknowledged by the international community. At a later stage the king of Jordan voluntarily gave up any Jordanian sovereignty or claim to the territories to the Palestinian people. So the Jordanians came and went, and the issue remains an issue between the Israelis and the Palestinians.⁵⁸

Who, we add, never had a state; Palestine was transferred from the Ottoman Empire to the British Mandate. Since 1967 we speak rather, and with greater legal accuracy, of “disputed” territories that, according to UN Security Council Resolution 242, require a solution that satisfies both Israelis and Palestinians from the security standpoint. That seems difficult in light of the complete Palestinian denial of any Jewish or Israeli Middle Eastern ancestry, or historical heritage in Jerusalem and the land. The latest wave of anti-Semitism that is the subject of this work stems precisely from this outlook and not from the question of borders for two states. The demonstration in New York on July 31, 2021, organized by the pro-Palestinian Within Our Lifetime–United for Palestine movement, called for freedom from “Zionism, which is an extension of American imperialism” and chanted “Globalize the intifada,” referring to a terror onslaught that killed more than a thousand Israelis. This is nothing other than hysterical and definitive delegitimization.

On this denial, and not on the possibility of a territorial settlement, both Fatah and Hamas build their narrative, along with their wars and refusals. That’s why an agreement cannot be reached and instead the anti-Semitic incitement grows, resulting in the atrocious conviction that Hitler, as a BBC journalist wrote on Twitter,⁵⁹ should have finished the job because it would have been much better for the Palestinians. Meanwhile the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines Jerusalem as part of the Islamic cultural heritage without wanting to know or find out about its centrality to Jewish tradition and history. We are, therefore, talking about the obliteration of a people.

The Arch of Titus epitomizes the Jewish people’s exile from the Land of Israel. Jews banished from their homeland in 70 CE after the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem are shown walking in a line while hauling the menorah, the seven-branched candelabrum, their symbol, on their shoulders.

A sculpture of an identical lamp was recently found in Israel near the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus, a Jew, fished during his

lifetime. He knew that lamp well; it was the symbol of his people, found throughout his land, Israel. Just as he knew Beit HaMikdash, the Temple in Jerusalem, which would be destroyed a few decades later. And with a little imagination, you can still see him, as the New Testament describes – a little Jew on a pilgrimage, omnipresent on the stairs on which he was lost as a child while Mary, frightened, was looking for him, or in the streets of the Old City where he preached.

It was all part of that indispensable legacy that the Jewish people are miraculously rebuilding. Mankind should be proud of it.

Ethnic Cleansing

The notion of ethnic cleansing is always part of BDS's repertoire. In reality, the Israeli Arab population is multiplying rapidly: in Jaffa, for example, its growth rate is clearly higher than that of the Jewish population. It is a notion that stems from a myth, promulgated among the Palestinians, a thousand times examined and deconstructed, proven wrong by the Israeli historian Benny Morris and others. It is said that David Ben-Gurion intended to drive out all the Arabs at gunpoint in 1948. But as several documents make clear, including a famous letter Ben-Gurion wrote to his son in 1937, there was room for a necessary, though difficult, coexistence. The main reason the local Arabs fled was that Arab leaders urged them to. Some, as occurs in all wars, were driven out, but that certainly was not the norm. According to realistic Palestinian sources, those who left numbered around 539,000. Not as many as the 800,000 Jews whom the Arab countries expelled, seizing their property, after the State of Israel was founded.

The pogroms in the Arab countries were as terrible as the Russian ones. Jews from those countries had to make harrowing escapes. Yet these refugees rolled up their sleeves, asking neither

for special subsidies nor reparations while helping build up the tiny land of Israel.

And as for the Israeli Arabs, they and their children are guaranteed high life expectancy as well as educational and civic opportunities within Israel's democratic, nonauthoritarian society.

The Abraham Accords versus Anti-Semitism

No moral uprising can save the world from this new wave of general absolution of anti-Semitism, the intensive criminalization of Israel, and the consequent indulgence of terrorism.

This work has tried to explain why. To the arguments made here about today's anti-Semites and the question of why they have ventured down the slipperiest road in history, many will respond: You cannot accuse anyone who criticizes Israel of anti-Semitism. Some will say "I have many Jewish friends," and they will not change their minds even when faced with the three fateful D's: demonization, double standards, and delegitimization. Outwardly civilized people, who have become anti-Semitic today, have drunk from the inexhaustible fountain of victimhood that makes them heroes of virtue, and that's enough for them: already in Marxist texts the Jew is associated with all that is evil in the universe such as war, the systematic alienation of workers, and exploitation. Marx describes the Jew as irredeemable, and over the decades this notion has been extended to Israel, becoming part of the communist and "liberal" critique of the free economy and above all of American power, with Israel identified as America's Middle Eastern crutch.

The one core value that the left and right share, however, is that of peace. And Israel has offered more than once the possibility of reaching a peace agreement, even at a cost that would have been gravely perilous in the face of an attitude of rejection accompanied by terrorism. It is not clear why, in fact, a very small democratic country should offer swaths of the

ancestral land on which it finally built an independent state in response to a stance based substantially on blackmail that would, on those swaths of land, give rise to autocratic rule. Israel has agreed to negotiate on a blackmail basis: either you give me what I ask or I will kill you, says the other party. And then, if you offer to give it to me, I'll reply that it is not enough and kill you anyway.

Yet it is precisely on the issue of peace that glimmers of good sense and mutual understanding have opened up between the Arab and Jewish worlds. No, not because someone has once again embarked on the useless path of some peace conference that serves only to reiterate the media fable of "illegal Israeli occupation," followed by impossible territorial demands that are continually rejected. A breakthrough occurred because a group of four Arab countries, which may be followed by others, discovered that for their own prosperity, security, and, moreover, historical dignity, it was prudent to jump over the red line that for so many years had given the Palestinians veto power over any peace agreement.

Egypt and Jordan had already signed peace agreements with Israel in 1979 and 1994, but the courage of their leaders hasn't been followed by a growth of cultural and economic ties, nor of acceptance of Israel among the two Arab countries' populations. In both cases it has been a cold peace, though current Egyptian president Abdel Fattah el-Sisi maintains close ties with the Israeli leadership especially in the security sphere. But Egypt has a large fundamentalist movement to reckon with, the Muslim Brotherhood. Jordan, too, has close ties with Israel on the intergovernmental and security levels, but King Abdullah, a man of peace, cannot afford to rile his population, which is 75 percent Palestinian. His country's historic role as guardian of the Islamic holy places in Jerusalem also puts him in a sensitive position.

With the United Arab Emirates, followed closely by Bahrain, and then later Sudan and Morocco, it was a completely different story. If anything, these countries, especially the UAE, have had to curb the influx of visitors on the newly inaugurated direct

flights from (and to) Israel because of COVID-19; meanwhile a network of trade, technological, and scientific collaboration is being built in essential areas such as water, space, cybernetics, and security. The Israelis have had to learn a little courtesy and restrain their excessive candor; the Arabs have had to withstand countless accusations, especially from Iran and Turkey, of betraying the Palestinians.

The normalization agreements, however, appear to harbor immense possibilities. A geographical, political, and cultural clash pits an aggressive and terrorist camp headed by Iran against those who are interested in maintaining stability and good relations with both East and West.

The events that led to the signing of the Abraham Accords at the White House on September 13, 2020, began when then Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave a speech to the U.S. Congress on March 3, 2015. In it he described the risks of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – the Iran nuclear deal that the Obama administration pursued with great energy. The speech was harshly criticized for jeopardizing Israel’s relationship with the United States by underlining the risks of war entailed by the pact, Iran’s aggressiveness, and the absolute unreliability of the ayatollahs’ promises. But Netanyahu’s arguments, together with Israel’s courage in making the most of the prevailing situation, became – as witnessed by Ambassador Dore Gold, who became a key interlocutor for the countries involved – the basis of a close relationship between Israel and its former adversaries.

Some rumors even spoke of a message delivered to Jerusalem thanking the Israeli prime minister for “speaking for all of us.” In Gold’s telling:

Iran had unquestionably left its mark on much of the Arab world in the years since the Revolution. A contingent of the Revolutionary Guards had been deployed in Lebanon’s Bekaa Valley since 1982. As part of the Iran-Iraq War, Iran fired missiles into Kuwaiti territory back in 1987. In 1996, Iran employed a branch of Hezbollah to

detonate a truck bomb at Khobar Towers near Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, killing over a dozen U.S. Air Force personnel. It fortified its presence on three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates, near the strategic Straits of Hormuz.

...With hindsight, Netanyahu's controversial appearance in Washington in March 2015 looks like the catalyst that accelerated rapprochement between Israel and many Arab states. It set the stage for the Abraham Accords in August 2020, which formalized new normalization agreements between Israel and key Arab states. Iranian aggression – more so than any peace plan or blueprint for economic cooperation – became the glue that was binding Israel and some of its former adversaries together.⁶⁰

In this situation of coinciding interests between Israel and the Arab countries threatened by Iran, Gold saw the possibility of achieving what Henry Kissinger referred to in 1971: “What you need is a ‘code of conduct’ for the Middle East.”⁶¹ Kissinger's experience had taught him that even the bitterest of enemies, such as the United States and the Soviet Union, could find mutual benefits when they agreed on basic needs. The important thing is to figure out which side to be on to promote stability and prosperity.

Therefore, the Abraham Accords have very wisely highlighted religious tolerance, descendance from a single root, and the admission of Israel, and hence of the Jews, into the great aboriginal Middle Eastern family. Here anti-Semitism, finally, finds a foil, and it is noteworthy that this turning point is born in the Arab world and not in the highly civilized democratic West. Obviously, in addition to the heart, mind, and wallet, security concerns play a considerable role and foster collaborations between armies, including the acquisition of drones and defense systems of the latest generation. The momentum of the accords' first year has generated well-crafted agreements, and the Biden administration is pushing the partner countries to ensure – as Salem Al Ketbi, an Emirati analyst, put it in the *Jerusalem Post* on August 2, 2021 – that alongside the deals involving energy,

tourism, innovation, agriculture, and medicine now taking shape, with trade expected to reach more than \$4 billion in five years, there will be “a major qualitative breakthrough toward the resolution of the Palestinian issue.”⁶² It is difficult, but both sides are pondering it.

Today’s Novelty: Full-Blown Anti-Semitism Directed at Israel

However, it must be understood that there is something very special about anti-Semitism. It is a crazed urge to say something terrible without having to adhere to the truth or examining any evidence. In this regard, the blood-libel accusation during the Middle Ages is the same as the genocide accusation against Israel today: they are demented inventions that nevertheless work. The repugnant accusation – still heard today – that Jews ritually sacrificed Christian children at Passover to obtain blood for unleavened bread is analogous to the accusation that Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians. The demand for the Palestinians to renounce this absurd claim should come from the Arab world itself. The idiocy of such accusations proves their ideological origin; in reality, a Palestinian population of 700,000 in 1948 has grown to around six million today. The whole history of Israel’s relationship with the Arabs has been marked by an invitation to live peacefully together, like the famous one that David Ben-Gurion addressed to them in the midst of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war as Arab leaders were urging Palestinians to leave their homes and return to battle with guns in hand.

The lies about Israel are not an end in and of themselves; they have a dual moral and political character. In the notion of an intertwining between the vileness of the Zionist endeavor and that of Jewish nature, political aims overlap with moral assertions. Here several elements of novelty compared to past hostility toward Israel emerge, and they should worry not only the Jews but all of humanity. Today’s Israel-focused anti-Semitism

is not based on a suggestive implication as it might have been in the past, when some of Israel's problems were ascribed to an alleged Jewish defect. Today the propagation of such notions as "Hitler was right," "If Hitler had won then today there would no longer be Jews," and " Hamas is right," despite the revolting Nazi overtones, has become a widespread practice, from the demonstrations in the streets of Manhattan or Paris to TV in Ramallah. It is an explicit and proclaimed hatred.

For the first time, moreover, full-blown hatred of Jews has crossed the Atlantic Ocean. Today not only American intellectuals but also American citizens at large are declaring to the world, in publications and in demonstrations, their sympathy for Hamas and eagerness for the Jewish state's destruction.

Iran is not isolated; instead, in defining Israel as a "cancerous tumor," it is a leader of a widespread trend. Current Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi built his career at the head of the Astan Quds Razavi Foundation, which waged a large-scale campaign to disseminate the notions implicit in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*;⁶³ he reached the presidency by climbing the stairs of anti-Jewish hatred. Anti-Semitism is the lifeblood of Nasrallah's Hizbullah; and Erdoğan, before his more recent diplomatic moves and security cooperation with Israel, declared that he would regain Jerusalem for the Muslims from the terrorist state now controlling it. Moreover, in hosting Hamas for various summits in Ankara and allowing it to orchestrate anti-Israeli terror from his territory,⁶⁴ Erdoğan made anti-Semitism a central plank of his policy, while demonstrating sympathy for the "armed struggle" not only against Israel but against the West in general. For him it was a struggle worth pursuing to free the world of the Jewish people.

Let's get used to considering anti-Semitism in this way: not as a side issue, but as a stairway arriving at the heart of Western democracy.

Just look at the dynamics of the May 2021 war: on the one hand, the anti-Israeli animus sparking shouts of "F--k the Jews!" during international demonstrations; on the other, Hamas's

identity as the positive protagonist despite being a terrorist jihadist group that has been outlawed by many Western and even Arab countries such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Its will to destroy Israel has remained identical since Israel completely evacuated Gaza in 2005. Not even the north of the Gaza Strip remained in Israel's hands even though many Israeli security experts advised retaining it as a buffer. Nine thousand Jews living in Gaza were evicted, and as I witnessed firsthand as a reporter, some had to be dragged away with steely determination. Yet afterward the attacks did not subside; they have increased ever since. In addition, nothing in the basic ideology espoused by the Hamas Charter has changed since the document was issued in 1988: "There will be no solution to the Palestinian question except through Jihad.... Initiatives, proposals, negotiations, are all a waste of time."

This is because it is a global war, not a local one. It must be clear that Hamas does not act alone. In its world, the Sunni one, Hamas is one of the wings of the Muslim Brotherhood, whose territorial demands – as its founder Hassan al-Banna wrote in the 1930s – embrace those areas of the Middle East and Europe that the Islamic world dominated under the Ottoman Empire, as it waged its wars of conquest by sea and land, besieging Vienna, Spain, Sicily, and parts of southern Italy. Not a year goes by without imams declaring the future conquest of Rome, such as Hamas MP and cleric Yunis al-Astal in 2008: "Rome will be conquered, just like Constantinople was."⁶⁵ Or in the words of Fatah Central Committee member Abbas Zaki, both "America and Israel will disappear."⁶⁶ It's a leitmotif and listing all such statements would fill numerous pages.

Hamas's wars can certainly count on the support of extremist Sunnis, whose hub is Turkey. Although, again, Erdoğan has lately for pragmatic reasons signaled a different disposition toward Israel, regarding which Israel has been properly cautious, he is the main representative of the Muslim Brotherhood today. It is not by chance that he has pursued, on the one hand, a strategy of ideological penetration of the West, while, on the other, making

unlimited and unregulated use of his army against all internal and external enemies from Syria and Iraq to Libya. His anti-Semitic passion has led him to paroxysms of rage from the podium as he denounces Israel's alleged killer instinct to the crowds.

But Hamas's trump card is Iran, even if it is a Shiite power. After all, an ongoing anti-Semitic alliance has also enabled collaboration between Turkey and Iran along with its vassals, Shiite and Sunni. Hamas, therefore, launches its wars with both Sunni and Shiite support. For example, Qasem Soleimani, the commander of Iran's Quds Force who was killed in a U.S. airstrike in Iraq in January 2020, personally oversaw a complex operation involving the transfer of Russian Kornet antitank missiles to Hamas via Hizbullah. In addition, Iran's Arabic-language Al Alam TV confirmed Iran's direct supervision of military training in Gaza in 2021.⁶⁷

And regarding Iran's bombardment of Israel in the 2021 Gaza war, Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh noted that Tehran "did not hold back with money, weapons, and technical support."⁶⁸ Already in 2005, shortly after Israel's disengagement, Gaza hosted 250 officers from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, who offered military training to Hamas.

Palestinians, Syrians, Lebanese, Yemenites, and Iraqis are accomplices and prisoners of a strategy of world conquest. Iranian aggressiveness matches that of Turkey and, in fact, the two play off the alliances of the major anti-Western countries, Russia and China. Russia is dangerously taking the Iranian side more and more, as shown also by Putin and Raisi's meeting in Turkmenistan on June 29, 2022 – a strange event in the midst of the war in Ukraine.

Meanwhile, China has signed a 25-year cooperation deal with Iran that poses a huge challenge to the West and especially to President Biden. Iran has sought a new nuclear deal without abandoning its expansionism, seeking to manipulate public opinion and buy time so that its centrifuges can enrich uranium beyond any agreed limit. For the ayatollahs, a new nuclear

agreement would bring great economic and military advantages. It should, seemingly, be obvious that there is no hope that an ideological actor so determined and by now so well armed and blessed with such powerful friends will deviate from its program: to destroy Israel as an outpost of the hated West while continuing its overall Islamist war. The large and desperate protests that erupted throughout Iran during the summer of 2021, and reemerged in the spring of 2022, were not only due to food and water shortages but also to the Iranian people's exasperation with their corrupt government. But no one in the world takes any decisive step to change the situation.

Europe, of course, would have every interest in making that happen. But it still hasn't been able to forge a new policy in that direction. Nor does it dare to say that Iran should stop planning the elimination of the Jewish people, even if it is aware that fighting anti-Semitism means fighting for its own good. Except for a few episodes, such as some speeches by Macron following the shameful acquittal of Sarah Halimi's murderer in which he condemned the excesses of hatred in the streets, and a fruitless attempt by Merkel to counter the huge anti-Semitic/anti-Israeli hatred in Germany, there is, for now, no organized and effective response to Iran as one might logically expect from the Europe of the Shoah, which forever pays lip service to fighting against the rise of the ancient hatred of Jews.

The reason lies in the fact – and this also pertains to Israel – that it is very difficult to directly confront anti-Semitism when it assumes a liberal and left-wing, international and interethnic guise, cloaking itself in the defense of human rights. It is easier to identify and condemn classical right-wing anti-Semitism.

To those who say that Israel is an "apartheid state," it should be natural to respond by telling them to go to hell. But no one does so out of deference to Nelson Mandela and those who fought real apartheid in South Africa. We always protest against apartheid in and of itself, even if it does not exist in Israel. It was much easier to respond to accusations that Jews were spreading

COVID-19, which echoed medieval accusations against Jews, in the classical anti-Semitic vein, as spreaders of the plague.

But a change of mindset is needed today.

As noted earlier, identity politics has given rise to an endlessly repeated idiocy whereby Jews have become white, indeed hyperwhite, and Palestinians are identified with blacks as an oppressed minority. It is useless to invoke the enormous bulk of literature on the long-standing discrimination against Jews, with their alleged physical characteristics such as dark complexions and hooked noses – in contrast, for example, to the Aryan ideal of the individual who was athletic, white, and blond. According to woke movements, the Jews' ability to integrate over the centuries into the societies of the various diasporas is now one and the same as the "white" history of oppression, exploitation, and colonization.

This too is a senseless madness, which ignores the real history of colonization, a multifaceted sequence of imperial conquests in distant lands that were generally achieved through violence and subjugation. The Jews, in contrast, came to Israel one by one, impoverished and persecuted, on the wings of an ideological movement that simply wanted to bring them home. In an era of destruction, Jerusalem became not only their destination of return to origins but their only possible refuge.

The homeland of the Jews cannot be other than Israel, and this has nothing to do with colonialism. The vocation to return there, before becoming concrete in Zionism, has its roots in three thousand years of Jewish texts, prayers, ceremonies, and even in the physical direction of prayer, always that of Jerusalem. "If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand be paralyzed," says the groom at the crucial moment of the marriage ceremony, in which a glass is broken and the pact with the beloved bride is accepted.

Furthermore, again, if the Arab side had accepted the UN partition plan in November 1947 or one of the subsequent Israeli offers, there would have been two states living side by side for decades instead of war.

The path chosen, however, was the one based on anti-Semitic hatred, buttressed by and indeed stemming from the religious concept of holy war.

The dynamic is very interesting: Palestinians and pro-Palestinian Islamic movements rely on anticolonial and anti-apartheid movements from Black Lives Matter to women's rights groups and the LGBTQ community. An absurd identification, similar to that of early feminism with the Soviet Union...a perverse logic.

Confusing “Narrative” with Historical Truth

Again, the wake-up call is for everyone, not just Israel. We are confronted with a crazy and self-defeating dynamic that has negative implications for our world, including the cognitive and moral damage inflicted by the slogan “From the river to the sea” and others like it.

It is enough to think that amid all this conceptual confusion, a murderous terrorist organization like Hamas is exalted. It attacks buses and discos, persecutes Christians under its purview, kills homosexuals, celebrates mass marriages between adult men and little girls, executes supposed collaborators, uses civilians as human shields, misfires hundreds of rockets that fall within Gaza and claim victims – for all of which no one demands any accountability. Such moral inversion is a boost for the world of dictatorship and militias. “Good people” can now love Hamas, and by loving Hamas they can approve of the new, great camp that hates Israel, forgetting that it hates not only Israel but all of us.

Iran, with its Russian, Chinese, and also Turkish connections, its support for terrorism and program to build a nuclear bomb, is at the helm of this wide-ranging camp. Former British Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn and Ilhan Omar of “the Squad” are formidable subverters of positive associations with Israel in the contemporary world. When Omar, with her status as U.S.

congresswoman, says that Israel is comparable to Hamas and the Taliban, her viewpoint seemingly affirmed by her traditional attire and contrite look of an oppressed woman who has finally achieved liberation in her relentless struggle, she extends the struggle of the oppressed to institutionalized anti-Semitism, and in the end also condemns to death Biden's United States, whose flags are burned alongside Israel's.

The confusion whereby this lie becomes a credible "narrative" erases any possibility of discussion; the message is considered all the more compelling when it comes from someone allegedly weak and dispossessed like Omar. And this "narrative" made of "authentic" lies is systematically deployed to assert that Israel should be eliminated...in favor of what? Authoritarian, hateful regimes opposed to human rights.

Palestinian hatred of Israel is legitimized by moralistic exclamations devoid of meaning and truth, and this has always been the hallmark of anti-Semitism. Today a large part of Western public opinion is focused on Palestinian misery, imagined rather than real. Such identification with the figure of the oppressed exalts terrorism and those who back it. If after the Shoah, hating Jews was for a time considered abhorrent, the resuscitated anti-Semitic urge is now identified with the Palestinian stance, erroneously conferring on it all the nobility of the struggle for human rights. It was this that rehabilitated anti-Semitism.

The assumption made is indeed totally fantastic: true, the Jews were persecuted, but look what they do once they have a state in their hands. This attitude, which has been abundantly nourished by "liquid journalism," has its basic myths in events such as the case of Muhammad al-Dura, the child who allegedly died in his father's arms when an Israeli soldier shot him – while it has now been proven that the incident was staged. Or like the 2002 Battle of Jenin where a supposed massacre took place, like so many crimes that never happened, with funerals in which the dead jumped from their coffin. I was there.

On such false foundations, Mikis Theodorakis, José Saramago, Günter Grass, and many other leading cultural figures in Europe

and America have woven today's anti-Semitic myth of the Nazification of Israel, a Goebbelsian myth. All the more so when it is an incontrovertible historical reality that Arab nationalism sympathized with Hitler's national socialism before turning to communism. Bernard Lewis devoted many pages to that shift.

When anti-Israeli anti-Semitism went from being an unspeakable implication to a weapon used in newspaper headlines and public speeches, even some Jewish journalists and intellectuals accepted this shameful international practice without batting an eye, worried about being accused, in concert with Israel, of human rights violations. In a word, they have accepted the idea that Israel should be considered fundamentally racist, an apartheid state, even murderous, and that Jews should wash themselves of any association with it by renouncing Zionism. Many have hoisted, as in the past, the flag of a Judaism that is obligatorily linked to liberal-progressive or even communist values. Why did this happen? The reasons are mainly historical and not philosophical or religious. Following the Nazi-fascist persecutions, Jews found a home and a sense of belonging on the left, and for this they are certainly not to be blamed because it was a reaction to the thought, power, and deeds of Nazism-fascism and the extreme right.

Quite another thing is the delegitimization of Israeli policy based on the canard that it swerves dangerously to the right. As long as Netanyahu was prime minister he suffered systematic denigration by the media and much of public opinion despite his respect for the judicial system, the law, and parliamentary procedures.

Israel actually has a solid and stable judicial system, impartial to all political orientations, with the left more fragmented and the liberal right more compact, but often held hostage by the religious parties. The electoral system, however, leaves something to be desired, producing governing coalitions that are frayed and fragile. The social system, however, with the strong Histadrut union and universal health insurance, is solid, even if it is riddled with pockets of poverty. In the legal and economic domains it

promotes social mobility even amid a difficult security situation. Minorities are guaranteed all rights, including that of becoming prime minister (in some countries the prime minister must be Christian, in many Muslim). Prosperity has brought with it an increase in Jerusalem's Arab population, with a higher annual growth rate since 1988 than that of the city's Jewish population. Muslims and Christians have complete religious freedom, including with regard to food and dress (unlike, for example, in France or Belgium). And lastly, Israel invests resources in minorities, such as the Druze or the Christian Arabs, whose members in different proportions serve in the army. In short, it is a society always on the alert for a possible war that nevertheless must remain small in size, without affecting daily life too much. While Israel is overwhelmingly capitalistic in its passion for startups and entrepreneurial innovation, its all-inclusive health system, from birth to the end of life, is very efficient though perhaps too regimented and bureaucratic in nature, sometimes with untenable waiting times. In conclusion, Israel is a country that strives to remain democratic and responsive to its population despite being under siege.

Can it prevail? Sometimes the stress of danger weighs heavily, and the defects of the society are found above all in behavior related to security. Thus checkpoints can become onerous. The police must contain organized crime and violence in Arab villages. Fear can make people wary and unfriendly, leading to distance between different groups.

Ultra-Orthodox Jews, like the Arabs, live very closed in their physical confines and beliefs, but they do not hesitate to try to impose prohibitions on the secular world, while refusing military service for most ultra-Orthodox men and all ultra-Orthodox women, and often harshly censuring those of the men who do serve. Sometimes they are aggressive and separatist toward the secular society, whom they regard as sinners.

Some of the "sinners" are contemptuous toward the ultra-Orthodox and consider them retrograde. And this is felt in Israel's most religious cities, especially Jerusalem, where on

Friday evenings a cloak of silence falls that can be affecting, but also dull and empty. The rabbinate wields intrusive power over public life, and those who do not want a religious wedding can only marry abroad. Those who want a kashrut certificate for eateries or products must submit to very specific rules. During COVID-19, the reluctance to comply with lockdowns, masks, and then later with vaccinations was overwhelming not only in the ultra-Orthodox Jewish community but also in the Arab one, even if it was eventually overcome.

The left, for its part, sometimes takes an exasperated stance, claiming sole credit for all that was good in Zionism's beginnings. Street demonstrations often get rowdy, and even in families there are deep political rifts. The settlers, generally people very different from the criminalized image applied to them, also include aggressive groups that go beyond the right and the left and engage with reality from their own biblical worldview, including with regard to language and dress. Such groups are picturesque but difficult. Among them, small cliques of Jewish terrorists are the most extreme and dangerous manifestation.

Israeli Arabs, in turn, hide hostile feelings, and that some of them engage in terrorist or mob violence is a fact even if it is not the norm. When it comes to involvement in the social life of the country, they are uncertain and therefore uneasy about their true identity. A 2019 survey found 65 percent of Israeli Arabs proud to be Israeli – while 77 percent denied Israel's right to define itself as the Jewish nation-state.⁶⁹ They express their ambiguity with sporadic statements and gestures that sometimes include rhetoric supportive of terrorism by Arab members of the Knesset.

The general atmosphere in Israel, however, is intensely vital and also very cheerful. It rates very high among the world's countries in terms of happiness and citizens' satisfaction, its schools are teeming with initiative, COVID-19 has been substantially defeated, concerts and parties occur at a frenetic pace, the Start-up Nation shines with genius, and the overall atmosphere in the country is one of great optimism even as the

radio at every hour blares a new crisis and many households are short of funds even though the economy is basically doing well.

Then there's the army experience – three years for young men and two for young women, fostering a high level of excellence and indelible friendships. The army is still a demographic melting pot, full of emotions and tragedies that mature and change people, and in the end make them feel what life is all about. Cynicism and boredom disappear when you win, lose, or a friend dies, or you save him or her from death. The emotional impact of the military on society is huge; a young soldier is at the center of every family's heart. There is nothing more natural, in an etymological sense, and yet stranger in the contemporary world than to love first and foremost a soldier at war.

Israel is ultimately a young country in progress, vivacious even if full of problems. Young people and children are ubiquitous. No one has the right to criminalize Israel for defending itself, nor to force it into concessions that it does not believe are safe for its people. If criticism of Israel is a stupid national sport in important countries like Britain or France, or even in the United States, it must be clear that this is their problem, not Israel's. It is the culture and politics of these countries that are flawed if a wave of anti-Semitism develops in them, and they must address it directly without wasting a second. The danger is not just about Israel, but all of us.

Conclusion

Fighting anti-Semitism has become an even more difficult task today because it runs counter to cultural fashions and the general trend of political correctness. It seems remarkable, but if you try to denounce it today in public, even among your friends, as the great wave of hatred that has come back to pounce on Israel and the Jews, you will not find a scandalized attitude toward this “oldest hatred.” Cutting off the head of the hydra that is capable of sprouting at will has never been easy, but the diabolical

confusion between blaming Jews and exalting human rights has created a serious short circuit. The notion of an intersectionality that must identify oppressed and oppressors – espoused today from institutions such as the United Nations or the European Union to movements such as Black Lives Matter and those of the LGBTQ community – has proved to be a breeding ground for anti-Jewish hatred, to the point of spawning absurdities that range from imagining Israel as an apartheid state to asserting that Jews are “white supremacists.”

Although nothing could be more wrong and twisted, and often in bad faith, the Palestinian narrative has insisted with great success since the days of the Soviet Union that Israel is a long arm of capitalism and world imperialism that helps oppress Third World nations with colonialism. That view has won over much of public opinion and the media. So has the notion that the Islamic world suffers from prejudice and discrimination, while omitting all mention of the concrete threat that it can represent, and hence it is a mortal sin to say “anti-Semitism” without immediately adding “Islamophobia.” Also propagated is the idea that “over there” in the Middle East, they (Israel) still use the most abominable means, war, for the purpose of racist oppression...closing our eyes to the reality of a country inspired by the sacrosanct principles of democracy, and inhabited by a people, the Jewish one, that engages very freely in self-criticism including moral self-criticism.

It is in this way that the people we tend to love the most, namely those committed to human rights, who always accompanied us in numerous political battles and daily life, have abandoned the Jewish people and Israel’s struggle for survival. Those dazzled by an internationally regnant ideology, as has always happened in the inauspicious world of ideologies of the last century, attack the Jews.

If the battle had remained focused on implementing justice and the concern with anti-Semitism had been linked to the fight against Nazism-fascism, it would have been different. We would already have an army of pundits and politicians in the field. But

we don't, and one isn't supposed to talk about it. But it needs to be talked about.

All that remains is for us to seek to create a general awareness and an awakening, based on an outlook that unites all those sincerely devoted to peace. And here we have one available, namely the peace delineated by the Abraham Accords. It is very sturdy because it is based on common interests and mutual respect. It is stronger than the ideological and fictitious peace that has already failed numerous times, which was always presented as a doctrine and not as a real prospect that one could strive toward.

First and foremost, however, it is the Jews and Israel who must hold their heads high and not be intimidated by the abundance and violence of the accusations we have discussed here. It's hard, but fighting anti-Semitism is essential. Jews themselves must be outraged and organize more, without fear, regardless of ideological convictions or moral preferences, mustering the magnificent vitality that has guided them through a thousand difficulties over the centuries until they not only reached a safe haven but also returned home to the State of Israel.

They indeed hold in their hands the key to their own salvation, which is the ultimate answer to anti-Semitism: to accept themselves and not be afraid of being Jewish, and to respond blow by blow to the calumnies hurled against them.

And then the world must follow suit, all those who have not yet realized how toxic it is to hate Jews and Israel. They must all finally accept the Jewish presence among people and nations. This will be a real, historical victory of human rights, a great new opportunity that awaits all people of good will.

Jewish Lives Matter!

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Combating Delegitimization and BDS – A public diplomacy program exposing those forces that are questioning Israel's very legitimacy. Publications include *BDS Unmasked: Radical Roots, Extremist Ends* (2016), *Defeating Denormalization: Shared Palestinian and Israeli Perspectives on a New Path to Peace* (2018), and *Students for Justice in Palestine Unmasked* (2018).

Global Law Forum – A program that undertakes studies and advances policy initiatives to protect Israel's legal rights in its conflict with the Palestinians and radical Islam.

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In *Jewish Lives Matter*, award-winning journalist and author Fiamma Nirenstein poses a blunt question: Why did the May 2021 Gaza war, in which Hamas fired more than three thousand rockets at Israel's civilian population, spark a worldwide uproar of anti-Semitism as Israel was put in the dock for defending itself?

In a powerful, incisive analysis, Nirenstein traces the post-Holocaust emergence of a new, virulent, Israel-focused, anti-Semitism. She challenges the world at large – and the human rights community in particular – to remove its blinders and finally see Israel as a democracy compelled to fight back and as a fulfillment of age-old Jewish aspirations, and its enemies as aggressors bent on its utter destruction.

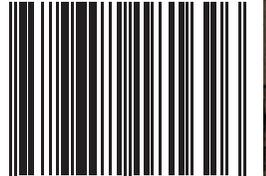
Award-winning journalist and author Fiamma Nirenstein was a member of the Italian Parliament (2008-2013), where she served as Vice President of the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the Chamber of Deputies, served in the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, and established and chaired the Committee for the Inquiry into Anti-Semitism. She is a Fellow at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs.

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