

## Hatreds Entwined

*Yossi Klein Halevi*

In January 2003, during anti-globalization protests in Davos, Switzerland, an AP photograph taken of the event showed several demonstrators carrying a golden calf. One of them wore a mask with the face of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon; another, a mask of American Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. The Rumsfeld figure wore a large Star of David.

In that photograph is a convergence of the recurring themes of European anti-Semitism and anti-Americanism. Consider the golden calf, the first betrayal by the Jews of their divine mission, that biblical moment intimating that God had chosen the wrong people. And, crucially, it is a *golden* calf, resonant with Marx's phrase that money is the Jews' "worldly god"—a charge often leveled by European intellectuals at Americans. Finally, it is Rumsfeld, not Sharon, who is wearing the Star of David—and the notion of Jewish domination of Washington is precisely what defines the latest permutation of anti-Semitism and anti-Americanism.

A key characteristic of those hatreds is their entwinement: One is often an expression of the other. And they have been nurtured by similar resentments and fears. There is jealousy: Both America and Israel, each in its way, are extraordinary success stories. There is cultural contempt: Both Jews and Americans have been portrayed in European and Muslim intellectual discourse as crass, money-grubbing hypocrites.

And there is fear. Jews and Americans have been seen as harbingers of a rootless world. Diaspora Jews of course embodied that terrifying spirit of

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rootlessness—a ghost people haunting the nations, as the Russian Zionist thinker Leo Pinsker put it.

America was perceived as the concretization of that threat. America terrified much of pre-World War II Europe—as it terrifies much of the Muslim world today—with its vision of a world where the slow accumulation of social and religious identities is replaced by a high-speed, high-volume, constantly shifting culture. A world remade in America’s melting pot image, with a global culture controlled by Hollywood Jews and a borderless world of finance controlled by Wall Street Jews.

Though anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism seem to resonate most deeply in Europe and in the Muslim world, those two regions are today moved by different, contradictory reasons for demonizing America and the Jews.

Muslim demonizers have adopted the old European contempt for America and the Jews as rootless and godless peoples. America isn’t only hated for being the political patron of Israel; Israel is hated for being a cultural carrier of America. Ali Muhammad Besharati, a senior Iranian government advisor, recently explained why September 11 may have been a joint American-Israeli plot: “The American nation is a nation without roots. Therefore, this type of nation is ready to utilize any means and methods in order to pursue its goals.”

But where Europeans once despised America and the Jews as rootless enemies of tradition, now Europe’s demonizers despise America and the Jewish state for being excessively rooted—for rejecting the new European cosmopolitanism in favor of unilateralism, nationalism, and territorial possessiveness. As for the old accusation of American and Jewish godlessness, post-Christian Europeans fear an America and Israel maddened by religious zeal.

European resentment toward America and Israel comes, in part, from an unconscious sense that these two nations, founded on a biblical sense of mission, have betrayed their messianic calling. Having repeatedly rescued

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Europe in the twentieth century, America has now exchanged its role as savior, in European eyes, for destroyer.

That duality—of savior and Satan—also applies to Europe’s tortured relationship with the Jewish people. Hatred for Israel tends to be a replay, in secular form, of traditional Christian contempt for the Jews. Once again, Jews have betrayed their redemptive mission—this time, their mission to be carriers, in the post-Holocaust era, of the new “religion” of human rights. And Europeans, with their passion for klezmer music and Woody Allen films, have embraced the suffering, wandering Jew—in fact Europeans in some sense are trying to *become* that wandering, cosmopolitan Jew. But instead of endorsing Europe’s post-nationalism and being worthy of its love, Jews abandoned their historic mandate, as victims, and chose a nationalist identity which, in European eyes, celebrates land and power and transformed the victims into victimizers. Once again, “physical Israel” has betrayed its calling. Implicitly, it is Europe, with its commitment to peace and human rights, that has learned the lessons of World War II, that is still, however secularized, “spiritual Israel.”

**A**nti-Zionism and anti-Americanism help Europeans cope with their two historical burdens, the Holocaust and colonialism. By transforming Israelis into the new Nazis, Europeans relativize the Holocaust. And by attacking Americans as the new colonialists, Europeans prove they have repudiated colonialism.

A recurring motif of European anti-Americanism, already evident in the nineteenth century, is the notion of a uniquely American hypocrisy. Once America spoke in the name of freedom yet permitted slavery; now America speaks in the name of democracy yet ignores human rights. On September 11 of this year, *Le Monde* chose to commemorate the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington with a cartoon showing a plane marked “U.S.” crashing into twin towers marked “Chile 1973.”

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According to this view, hypocritical America pretends to be a victim, yet is in fact a victimizer. Similar notions of Israel as a victimizer masquerading as a victim are routine in European discourse on the Middle East. In the demonizers' political passion play, America and Israel assume the role of Pharisees, hypocrites who promise freedom and democracy but deliver the golden calf.

In the new Europe, many equate virtue with powerlessness. And so what is particularly galling about America and Israel—what truly defines them as Pharisees—is that both invoke the language of idealism to justify their use of power. The Jewish problem with Europe seems to be one of timing: When Jews were powerless, many Europeans worshipped power and despised the Jews for their supposed cowardice. Now, when Jews have regained power, many Europeans worship powerlessness and despise the Jews for their supposed aggression.

Last winter, I was in Rome just after the massive demonstration against American intervention in Iraq, which drew upwards of three million people. The atmosphere in the city was frightening in its political uniformity. Peace flags hung from seemingly every balcony. Nowhere did I see a sign, a sticker, expressing an alternative position. Instead, there was this graffiti: "Sharon-Bush-Blair: The real axis of evil."

In citing Ariel Sharon and George Bush, rather than Yasser Arafat and Saddam Hussein, as symbols of evil—and note that Sharon appears first in this anti-trinity—Europeans are not merely opposing the foreign policies of America and Israel but demonizing them. The lack of relationship to objective reality in this political critique can be seen in the demonizers' timing. Demonization of America intensified after it was attacked on its mainland for the first time since the War of 1812. Demonization of Israel intensified after it became the first country in history voluntarily to offer shared sovereignty over its capital.

The twin demonization of America and Israel is the vindication of the Iranian mullahs' notion of the Great Satan and the Little Satan. And there is another vindication at work here, as well. The old Soviet *Pravda* routinely

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invoked the “Tel Aviv-Washington axis,” imagining a Nazi Israel and an all-devouring America. That perspective has now become mainstream in much of the European media. At least so far as the attitudes of many Western Europeans toward the United States and Israel are concerned, the Soviet Union has posthumously won the Cold War.

**I**n the last two years, the demonizers have focused on the Bush administration’s neo-conservative Jewish advisors as proof of the existence of that “Tel Aviv-Washington axis.” Like the pre-World War II isolationists of the America First Committee, who warned against a “Jewish war,” the new demonizers are obsessed with the neo-conservatives—or “Likudniks,” as they’re often disparagingly called—who have dragged America and the world into war, all for the sake of Israel. Referring to the Jews, the French ambassador to England, Daniel Bernard, is reported to have said, “Why should the world be in danger of World War III because of those people?” The venerable catchword “cabal” has made a comeback, finding its way into critiques from isolationist Pat Buchanan to British Labor Party MP Tam Dalyell. With the emergence of a neo-conservative “cabal”—manipulative and Jewish—the demonizers have finally found their proof.

In a recent opinion piece in the *International Herald Tribune*, columnist William Pfaff cited a list of the contemporary political figures who are destroying American foreign policy. All of them happened to be Jews—Ariel Sharon, Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz. Pfaff writes that President Bush took up the neo-conservative project, “with seemingly little or no grasp of its sources, objectives, or assumptions.” Gentile dupes are as essential to the demonic passion play as manipulative Jews.

The hunt for Jewish conspirators in government—for Jews who acted primarily as Jews, on behalf of “the Jews”—began after World War I, when demonizers named Bernard Baruch, who represented President Woodrow Wilson at the Versailles Conference, as a war-monger who had pushed America into war to further Jewish world domination. Henry Morgenthau,

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who was President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's secretary of the treasury during World War II, served a similar imaginary role. The Nazis routinely referred to America as a Jewish-dominated mongrel nation. "My feelings against America are those of hatred and repugnance," Hitler said, "half-Judaized, half-negrified, with everything built on the dollar." According to Albert Speer, Hitler fantasized about attacking New York's skyscrapers, striking a blow at the heart of international Jewish finance. The lunatic militias of America's Midwest have picked up the theme, warning about the Jewish lobby's takeover of Washington, what they call ZOG—Zionist-Occupied Government.

**N**ow, however, you do not have to be a Nazi or a paranoid militiaman to discern a Jewish conspiracy to destabilize and control the world, via Zionist domination of Washington. Increasingly it is the Left that has taken up, in new form, the warning against ZOG. In significant circles, the notion of saving America from the Zionists—the Sharon-Wolfowitz axis—has become axiomatic.

Among the most telling pathologies of the new demonization is the convergence of extremes of Left and Right against the common Zionist-American enemy. In France, Jean-Marie Le Pen attacks global capitalism and B'nai B'rith; while on the far Left, Jose Bove, one of the charismatic leaders of the anti-globalization movement, who vandalized a McDonald's to protest American influence, declared that the attacks on French synagogues were being orchestrated by the Mossad.

In Germany, neo-Nazis wearing kaffiyehs march in demonstrations together with radical leftists wearing kaffiyehs, chanting the same slogans against globalization, and waving the same Hezbollah flags. Horst Mahler, leader of the neo-Nazi NDP, is a former member of the far-Left Baader-Meinhoff gang. Here is what Mahler had to say on September 12, 2001: "The aerial attacks on Washington and New York mark the end of the American century, the end of global capitalism, and also the end of the

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Jehovah cult and of Mammonism.” Mahler precisely expressed the sensibility of those demonstrators in Davos, with their Rumsfeld mask and Star of David and golden calf.

The convergence between extreme Left and Right in support of radical Islamism was prefigured in the Entebbe hijacking in July 1976, when German and Palestinian hijackers imposed a “selection” on the passengers, some of whom were Holocaust survivors, separating the Jews from the non-Jews. For several decades, the folly of these German hijackers—who tried to prove how different they were from their parents by defending the oppressed, and ended up attacking Jews—helped discredit anti-Zionism, at least on the German Left. One of those deeply affected by Entebbe was Joshke Fischer, now Germany’s foreign minister and one of Israel’s best friends in Europe. Tragically, though, the Entebbe warning has dimmed. Today, those German Marxist hijackers are an apt symbol for those who would affirm their humanity by demonizing America and the Jews.

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