

# The Devil and The Jews

In 1943, even before the full story of Nazi inhumanity was revealed, Joshua Trachtenberg published *The Devil and the Jews*, a brilliant analysis of how the Christian world turned Jews and Judaism into a version of evil totally detached from reality. People who had never met Jews believed they poisoned wells, killed children for their blood, spread diseases. By dehumanizing Jews, Christians transformed them into the symbol of evil. Islam followed. The blood libel migrated. Jews were accused this week of poisoning wells. Jews living under Islam transmitted impurity. Stoning the devil in Mecca was stoning the Jews by proxy. All this explains the way popular antisemitism retains its illogical grip on much of the world, religious and secular. Blame the Yids. It has metastasized into the minds of left and right.

A well-known English journalist (with a Jewish name, though not Jewish) has been writing about the moral bankruptcy of the left ever since his book *What's Left?: How the Left Lost its Way* came out in 2007. More recently he has written about how left-wing anti-Semitism has forced him to identify with Jews. Here are a few extracts:

"It took me 40 years to become a Jew. ... Whether the antisemitic conspiracy theory is deployed by German Nazis or Arab dictators, French anti-Dreyfusards or Saudi clerics, the argument is always the same. Democracy, an independent judiciary, equal human rights, freedom of speech and publication—all these 'supposed' freedoms—are nothing but swindles that hide the machinations of the secret Jewish rulers of the world. ...the Labour party [in the UK] is in danger of becoming as tainted as UKIP by the racists it attracts.

"...[many] leftwing activists [believe that] western governments are the main source of the ills of the world. The 'Israel lobby' controls western foreign policy. Israel itself is the 'root cause' of all the terrors of the Middle East, from the Iraq war to Islamic State. Polite racism turns the Jews, once again, into demons with the supernatural power to manipulate and destroy nations. Or as the Swedish foreign minister, Margot Wallström ... explained recently, Islamist attacks in Paris were the fault of Israeli occupiers in the West Bank.

"Or consider the otherwise bizarre indulgence of ultra-right religious extremists by people who otherwise describe themselves as liberals and leftists. The belief that Jews fuel radical Islam allows them to overlook superstition and the tyrannical denial of equal rights. They're against Israel and that's all that matters.

"As someone who warned in the 00s about the growing darkness on the left, I am pessimistic about the chances of change. If you keep shouting 'fire' and the fire brigade never comes, you tend to assume the house will burn to the ground."

That, I am afraid, is the reality of left-wing dogma everywhere today. Israel

is the devil. And not a few Jews and former Jews agree, as they did in the middle Ages. Nick Cohen is pessimistic. He sees the alliance between the Left and Islam in Europe as unstoppable and incapable of granting Israel a fair hearing. I recognize the reality. But I am not so pessimistic.

An alternative narrative comes from Martin Kramer; in *Foreign Affairs (Israel and the Post-American Middle East: Why the Status Quo Is Sustainable)* he writes:

“Israel faces all manner of potential threats and challenges, but never has it been more thoroughly prepared to meet them. The notion popular among some Israeli pundits that their compatriots live in a perpetual state of paralyzing fear misleads both Israel’s allies and its adversaries. Israel’s leaders are cautious but confident, not easily panicked, and practiced in the very long game that everyone plays in the Middle East. Nothing leaves them so unmoved as the vacuous mantra that the status quo is unsustainable. Israel’s survival has always depended on its willingness to sustain the status quo ...such resolve has served Israel well over time.

“Even as Israel seeks to deepen the United States’ commitment in the short term, it knows that the unshakable bond won’t last in perpetuity. This is a lesson of history. The leaders of the Zionist movement always sought to ally their project with the dominant power of the day, but they had lived through too much European history to think that great power is ever abiding.

“They were alone during the 1930s, when the gates of the United States were closed to them. They were alone during the Holocaust, when the United States awoke too late. They were alone in 1948, when the United States placed Israel under an arms embargo, and in 1967, when a U.S. president explicitly told the Israelis that if they went to war, they would be alone.

“[Over the next 50 years] large swaths of the Middle East will be left to their fate, to dissolve and re-form in unpredictable ways. Israel may be asked by weaker neighbors to extend its security net to include them, as it has done for decades for Jordan. Arab concern about Iran is already doing more to normalize Israel in the region than the ever-elusive and ever-inconclusive peace process. Israel ... will loom like a pillar of regional stability—not only for its own people but also for its neighbors, threatened by a rising tide of political fragmentation, economic contraction, radical Islam, and sectarian hatred.

“Although Israel has made plenty of tactical mistakes, it is hard to argue that its strategy has been anything but a success. ... Only if Israel’s adversaries conclude that Israel can sustain the status quo indefinitely—Israel’s military supremacy, its economic advantage, and, yes, its occupation—is there any hope that they will reconcile themselves to Israel’s existence as a Jewish state.

“Statements like Obama’s don’t sway Israel’s government, which knows better, but they do fuel Arab and Iranian rejection of Israel among those who believe that the United States no longer has Israel’s back. ... Israel is well positioned to sustain the status quo all by itself. Its long-term strategy is

predicated on it.”

So as I said last week, I am not worried for our survival.

Meanwhile Europe and the USA have far bigger self-inflicted internal problems than they realize. In last weekend's Wall Street Journal, Mohed Altrad, himself a refugee from Syria to France, a billionaire, PhD, novelist, and World Entrepreneur of the Year, warns that millions of refugees have a basic cultural mindset that is anti-Western and anti-Semitic. Like them, he was educated to hate the West and to kill Jews. Eventually he realized that hatred was self-defeating. The path to success was to change his attitude and stop blaming others. His is a success story. But most will not follow his example. He strongly believes the West must insist on immigrants adjusting to Western values rather than the West conceding to theirs.

Hatred of the other just because he or she is different is a poison wherever it appears. When you add religion, it becomes overwhelmingly evil. This is the toxic mix we are encountering everywhere. No community, no religion is immune. Wherever it rears its head, it must be dealt with or we are all lost.