ROBERT S. WISTRICH

The Old-New Anti-Semitism

The twentieth century may well be seen by future historians as the age *par excellence* of ideological politics. Millions were slaughtered on the altar of false messianisms and their salvationist logic, and in some places the killing still continues unabated. In the totalitarian nightmare of the last century, the secular political religions of Nazism and Marxist-Leninism undoubtedly occupy a special place. So, too, does the oldest and darkest of ideological obsessions—that of anti-Semitism—for which over a decade ago I coined the term “the longest hatred.”

For Adolf Hitler, in particular, anti-Semitism was the axis and *raison d’être* of the Nazi movement he created. His dream of global hegemony was overcome only through the combined military might of the United States, the British Empire, and the Soviet Union. Nazism as a vital force in world politics was indeed destroyed in the flames engulfing Berlin at the end of April 1945, but the anti-Jewish poison it spread to far-flung corners of the globe has yet to be eradicated. The legacy has proven to be especially potent in the former Soviet Union and the Arab-Islamic world, where anti-Semitism is once again acquiring a potentially lethal charge. There is currently a culture of hatred that permeates books, magazines, newspapers,
sermons, video-cassettes, the Internet, television, and radio in the Arab Middle East which has not been seen since the hey-day of Nazi Germany. Indeed, the dehumanizing images of Jews and Israel that are penetrating the body politic of Islam are sufficiently radical in tone and content to constitute a new "warrant for genocide." They combine the blood libel of medieval Christian Europe with Nazi conspiracy theories about the Jewish drive for "world domination" and slanderous Islamic quotations about Jews as the "sons of apes" and donkeys.

The Quranic motifs began to grow in importance after the Iranian Revolution of 1979, along with virulent anti-Americanism. In the Islamic demonology, both America and Israel are now bonded together as "Satanic forces" that threaten the core identity, values, and existence of Islam. This has been especially the case since the beginning of the Palestinian Al-Aqsa intifada in the autumn of 2000 and the massacres of September 11, 2001. Not only did an astonishing number of Muslims seek to place the responsibility for this mass murder onto the Jews, but Israel, more than ever, was execrated as a dagger of the West poised to strike at the heart of the Muslim Arab world. In the anti-Semitic script, America itself is depicted as being run by Jews malevolently determined to subvert and destroy Islam. This chorus of voices has grown even shriller with the American war on Iraq, a conflict that has led to an ever closer twinning of anti-American, anti-Israeli, and anti-Semitic sentiment in Western Europe as well as the Islamic world. Driven by this ideology, Islamists see the fingerprints of the all-powerful Zionist lobby everywhere, spreading its tentacles and deadly lies, draining the life-blood of Arabs and Muslims, gratuitously inciting war against Iraq, and carrying out its sinister plans for global control. The current popularity of "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion"—a forged Russian document from the beginning of the twentieth century in which many Muslims appear to believe—is frightening testimony to the power of such a dramatizing the "domination" is a i dj already penetrate Fundamental from which Osar have sprung, is a 1 specifically calls for Government daily established fact" It pastries." But a nc secular Arab soc. This hysteria can Arab-Israeli conj. odically been hij order to broaden But the "Jewish q totalitarian prede tainly does not se able to rational b characterizes Isla an irrational beli machinations of t seem to be direct on a mythical Jev Of course, the tw hical, and the cor tion" radically ch a Jewish state an Nonetheless, the the potential of ar rather to have att while a new ver in effect has shift
power of such myths. The recent television series in Egypt dramatizing the “Protocols” and their fantasy of “Jewish world domination” is a mark of how deeply this anti-Semitic virus has already penetrated the thinking of political Islam.

Fundamentalist and oil-rich Saudi Arabia, the same soil from which Osama bin Laden and his Al-Qaeda movement have sprung, is a major hotbed of the type of Muslim jihad that specifically calls for the terrorist murder of Jews and Christians. Government dailies even print gory nonsense about the “well-established fact” that “Jews spill human blood for their holiday pastries.” But a no less anti-Semitic outlook holds sway in more secular Arab societies such as Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Jordan. This hysteria cannot be adequately understood in terms of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Certainly, the cause of Palestine has periodically been hijacked by radical Islamists and pan-Arabists in order to broaden their political support in the Muslim world. But the “Jewish question” in radical Islam (as with its Western totalitarian predecessors) is not centered on Palestine, and certainly does not see Palestine as a purely territorial issue amenable to rational bargaining. The ideological anti-Semitism that characterizes Islamist thinking is driven by something else: an irrational belief that history itself is determined by the evil machinations of the Jewish people. In this respect the Islamists seem to be directly following the Nazi model, with its fixation on a mythical Jewish power that strives for global hegemony. Of course, the two models and the two situations are not identical, and the context has changed as well. The “Jewish question” radically changed its contours with the establishment of a Jewish state and Israeli military power in the Middle East. Nonetheless, the creation of Israel could not, on its own, blunt the potential of anti-Semitism as a global phenomenon. It seems rather to have attenuated its force for about two decades, even while a new version of the problem metastasized. Zionism in effect has shifted the focus of postwar anti-Jewishness to an
assault on the dominant collective representation of contemporary Jewish existence—the State of Israel itself. Since 1948, the major ideological and political threat to the survival of the Jewish nation gradually switched from Europe to the Arab-Islamic world, fueled by a politicidal “anti-Zionist” ideology whose main thrust has always been the destruction of Israel as an independent state.

THE EUROPEAN LEGACY

To grasp the origins of the demonology behind contemporary Islamist versions of anti-Semitism, one needs to be aware of its characteristics as they first crystallized at the end of the nineteenth century. Fin-de-siècle European anti-Semitism was deeply pessimistic. It was obsessed with the “decadence” of Christian and “Aryan” civilization, supposedly in thrall to a newly emancipated and “victorious” Jewry. From the radical journalist Wilhelm Marr’s prophecy of Finis Germaniae (1879) to Edouard Drumont’s La Dernière Bataille (1889) and the Teutonomanics Houston S. Chamberlain’s Foundations of the 19th Century (1899), we find the same specter of Jewish power and gentle demise invoked by a new class of best-selling publicists and populist intellectuals. The anti-Semites inhabited a murky fantasy-world imbued with quasi-apocalyptic visions of European decline, colored by occult sectarianism and permeated with notions of retributive punishment on a cosmic scale. They elaborated negative millenarianism in secular garb—a “reactionary modernism” that reluctantly adapted to democratic mass politics and class conflict while preaching a backward-looking utopia based on pre-modern feudal or even tribal models. In this fin-de-siècle world of economic disorientation, rapid social change, and eroding traditional values, populist anti-Semitic movements arose that became the seedplot of Nazism. They were especially powerful in the decaying Austro-Hungarian Empire, where the young Hitler acquired the “granite-like foundations,” as anschauung. The magical anti-Semitism was twenty-five year that nationalism was uber equivalent of Der by alien, inferior rac struggle and the level hatred, nourished by of capitalism, moder European anti-St sinister forces worki authority, and tradit vacuum induced by especially by the worki lutionary Marxism. the mythological figu all-powerful Jew. Her tic demon of moder to destroy gentle so change, providing a anomic. “All comes i classic formula of Delirious causality err ciple of evil is not in product of conspirac the mythical Jew. Th destruction of tradit archies, and sudden Europe (above all the Autocracy had been in Europe), immeas Semitism. The mass: the Russian Civil We
of contemporaries aware of its
existence, the Arabists' ideology
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Publicists cited a
myth of European
dominance, permeated by a
mythological figure of the satanic,
ubiquitous, immoral, and
all-powerful Jew. Here was,
as Richard Wagner put it, the "plastic
demon of modern civilization," whose
unquenchable will to destroy
gentile society lay behind all
general processes of change,
providing a coherent explanation for
the resulting anomic. "All comes from the Jew,
all returns to the Jew." This
classic formula of Edouard Drumont in 1886
exemplified the
deplorable causality embraced by
modern anti-Semitism. The
principle of evil is not in ourselves; it comes
from outside. It is the
product of conspiracy and
devilish forces whose
incarnation is
the mythical Jew. The
mass slaughter of World War I, with its
destruction of traditional elites,
collapse of established monarchies,
and sudden flurry of revolutionary
coups in central Europe (above all the Bolshevism triumph in
Russia, whose
succes had been the fountainhead of
the old regime in
Europe), immeasurably
envenomed and radicalized anti-
Semitism. The massacres of Jews by
the White Armies during
the Russian Civil War (1918–20), the fierce anti-Semitic back-
lash against Jewish participation in the German and Hungarian revolutions, and the juxtaposition of the "Jewish" and "Red" perils in east-central Europe were all alarming signals of growing extremism.

These events greatly encouraged the mass dissemination of nineteenth-century anti-Semitic stereotypes and ideologies. The climate was ripe for a far more effective translation of conspiracy theories into political praxis than had been the case before World War I. German defeat in that war, crushing economic reparations imposed by the Allies, the resultant loathing for the democratic West, the devastating inflation of 1923, chronic political instability in the Weimar Republic, growing fear of communism, and the ravages of the Great Depression were so many milestones on the road to Nazism. From each one, the sense of helplessness grew, and the longing to blame someone or something for it grew with it. Nazi anti-Semitism thus sprang from popular fears, and at the same time stoked and organized them.

THE NAZI-ARAB NEXUS

Nazi doctrines exerted considerable fascination on the Arab world during these years. Both pan-Arabism and pan-Islamic ideologies in the Middle East looked to Hitler's Germany as a model for national unification, a counterweight to Western imperialism and a source of revolutionary dynamism. Anti-Semitic and anti-British feelings (which anticipated some of the anti-Americanism rampant today) created a powerful sense of affinity between German Nazis and Arab nationalists in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq. A former Syrian Ba'ath leader, recalling the atmosphere of the late 1930s, wrote:

We were fascinated by Nazism, reading its books and the sources of its thinking, particularly Nietzsche, Fichte and Chamberlain. And we were the first who thought about translating Mein Ka

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translating *Mein Kampf*. We, who lived in Damascus, could appreciate the tendency of the Arab people to Nazism which was the power which appealed to it. By nature, the vanquished admires the victorious.

Arab nationalists, radicals, and Islamic militants were clearly influenced by the anti-liberal and anti-Western spirit of fascism, its emphasis on youth, its pattern of organization, and, above all, its cult of power. In Iraq, the Director-General of Education, Dr. Sami Shawkat, told students in Baghdad in the autumn of 1933: “There is something more important than money and learning for preserving the honor of a nation and for keeping humiliation at bay. That is strength. . . . Strength, as I use the word here, means to excel in the Profession of Death.”

Seventy years later, Saddam’s Iraq provided a sinister confirmation of this outlook in its determination to develop weapons of mass destruction and its readiness to use them against internal as well as external enemies. The idolization of power, together with the totalitarian mystique of the nation, was already developed by many Arab radicals in the 1930s and 1940s. Their visions of grandeur were exacerbated by a feeling of deep malaise, and even trauma, which the encounter with Western civilization had inflicted upon Arab society. The Muslim Brotherhood, founded in 1928 by Hasan al-Banna in Egypt, represented the pristine anti-Western and fundamentalist version of this backlash. From the outset, the jihadists around al-Banna developed the cult of the leader and preached fascist doctrines of “unity and discipline” and “martial strength and military preparedness.” Like Ahmad Hussein’s Young Egypt movement of the late 1930s, they were militantly anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic, supporting the boycott and harassment of the Jewish community in Egypt.

The Muslim Brothers, with their vision of a *judenfreier* Palestine as a rallying-point for removing all Western influences
from the Middle East, belonged to the first wave of Islamic fascism. The second wave, which swelled after the Six Day War, had as its leading ideologue one Sayyid Qutb, a revolutionary Egyptian intellectual executed by Nasser only a year before the Arab defeat. For Qutb and his followers, the invasion of Western culture had thrown Muslims back into a state of pre-Islamic barbarism (jahiliyya) dominated by social chaos, sexual permissiveness, polytheism, apostasy, and idolatry. His notorious text of the early 1950s, Our Struggle with the Jews, portrayed the Jews as the “eternal enemies” of Muhammad and the Islamic community who used Christianity, capitalism, and communism as weapons in their war to subvert the Muslim religion. The Islamists of today have faithfully followed Qutb in attributing Marxism, psychoanalysis, sociology, materialism, sexual depravity, and the destruction of morals and the family to “Jewish” influence. In this cultural war, they see Zionism and Americanism as kindred expressions of an existential threat to Muslim identity.

ANTI-SEMITISM TODAY

Today, the identity crisis affecting millions of Muslims is spawning its own brand of Islamic neo-fascism. That crisis is accentuated by accelerating urbanization, overpopulation, and endemic poverty, as well as the prevalence of suffocating dictatorships throughout the Arab world. Without the bogeymen of America and Israel, however, Arab despots would be hard put to explain to their own peoples why the modern world is passing them by. Why is Cairo infinitely poorer than Tel Aviv? Why is heart surgery so much better in London than in Damascus? Why do Arab immigrants prefer Los Angeles or Detroit to Baghdad or Beirut?

The crushing of dissent, the repression of women, the scale of mass illiteracy and underdevelopment, and the oil riches of corrupt ruling elites provide part of the answer. For decades, authoritarian Arab militiam and rage a West. The Islamists own paranoid susic apastasy fuses with l in general. Rank enve vision of veiled x mix. Indeed, Europe: barbarism, was almo compared with the the glorification of fc ever, traits that Nazi in common. The mo drives them to pain to introduce utopia i totalitarian belief, ve encompassing powe: terror—a mystique r nipulative possibility logical dogma. The and subordinate to tli ng space,” “racial pu society,” or the jihad life is so eagerly sacr cessed of a global rev true believers in the c is irrelevant in the lig history or the will of

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authoritarian Arab regimes turned the bitter feelings of hu-
miliation and rage among the masses against the “colonialist” 
West. The Islamists have continued in this vein, adding their 
own paranoid suspicions of modern secular civilization. Fear of 
apostasy fuses with hatred of America, Jews, and non-Muslims 
in general. Rank homophobia and a fiercely puritanical, repre-
sive vision of veiled and enslaved womanhood are added to the 
mix. Indeed, European fascism, for all its male-oriented warrior 
barbarism, was almost liberating in its attitudes toward women 
compared with the Taliban or Saudi Wahhabism. Militarism, 
the glorification of force, and a nihilistic cult of death are, how-
ever, traits that Nazis, fascists, and Islamists share completely 
in common. The morbid addiction to destruction and revenge 
drives them to paint the world red with blood in their mad rush 
to introduce utopia in the here-and-now. Added to this is the 
totalitarian belief, very much shared by Stalinists, in the all-
compassing power of propaganda, party organization, and 
terror—a mystique reinforced by the seemingly limitless ma-
ipulative possibilities of modern technology joined to ideo-
logical dogma. The individual is considered totally malleable 
and subordinate to the revolutionary cause, whether it be “liv-
ing space,” “racial purity,” the “Arab Renaissance,” the “classless 
society,” or the jihad. Promethean doctrines, to which human 
life is so eagerly sacrificed, can only be vindicated by the suc-
cess of a global revolution that grants political hegemony to 
true believers in the cause. Whether millions die in the attempt 
is irrelevant in the light of either the eternal laws of nature and 
history or the will of God.

Totalitarian anti-Semitism reached its genocidal extreme 
with Hitler’s ideology and a political praxis that, though it grew 
up on Christian soil, was ultimately determined to replace and 
supplant Christianity. National Socialism was racial politics 
carried out under the sign of the Apocalypse, in which the 
global struggle between the “Aryan” world and Jewry stood at
the center of a closed system of thought. Anti-Semitism was transformed into a crucial lever in the restructuring not only of Nazi Germany but of the entire international order—initially as a weapon for undermining Hitler's domestic adversaries and then for subverting or neutralizing opposition to his policies abroad. Hitler emphasized that the destruction of world Jewry was a precondition for restoring the natural hierarchy within the nation and between the races. The Darwinian racism that he espoused was not the root of his anti-Semitism; it was simply the “scientific” language he employed to give more credibility to his eschatological political agenda. Its deeper sources lay in a pseudo-religious, Manichean vision of a world in which “the Jew” was the negative wellspring and dark side of history driving mankind relentlessly toward the abyss.

Nazi ideology led to acts of murderous race-cleansing of varying kinds during World War II, but only the Jews were singled out for total extermination. The war against them was conceived as an apocalyptic Vernichtungskrieg for global hegemony. What Hitler did was to transform the demonological fantasies of both Christian and anti-Christian anti-Semitism into a practical political program on a universal scale. The choice of the target grew out of centuries of Christian teaching that had singled out the Jews as a deicidal people. But the Shoah was a modernized high-tech version of "Holy War" carried out by totalitarian atheists. These atheists consciously sought to eradicate both the Enlightenment legacy of reason and the entire Judeo-Christian tradition of ethics.

The topography and lexicography of post-Holocaust anti-Semitism changed dramatically after 1945, yet the essential elements of ideological continuity have been remarkably tenacious. Today, the geographical center of gravity is neither Germany nor the European continent (despite the alarming revival of old prejudices) but the Arab-Muslim world and its diasporic offshoots. Anti-Jewish rhetoric in the new millennium tends to be Islamic, anti-global is Christian, conservative, comes from the far Left or ists, its focus now is above the State of Israel. Despite need to separate anti-Zioni cent decades become a dis ence. Whatever theoretical State of Israel is a Jewish destroy it, openly or throu but such destruction, is in yesteryear, whatever their

THE SOVIET LEGACY

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to be Islamic, anti-globalist, and neo-Marxist far more than it
is Christian, conservative, or neo-fascist. Whether the assault
comes from the far Left or Right, from liberals or fundamental-
ists, its focus now is above all the collective Jew embodied in
the State of Israel. Despite the incessant hair-splitting over the
need to separate anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism, this has in re-
cent decades become a distinction without a meaningful differ-
ence. Whatever theoretical contortions one may indulge in, the
State of Israel is a Jewish state. Whoever wants to defame or
destroy it, openly or through policies that entail nothing else
but such destruction, is in effect practicing the Jew-hatred of
yesteryear, whatever their self-proclaimed intentions.

THE SOVIET LEGACY

The case of Soviet communism is particularly interesting in
this regard. In 1931, Josef Stalin officially denounced anti-
Semitism as “zoological,” a form of cannibalism. This was
formally consistent with the original internationalist policy of
Marxist-Leninism and the older communist view of anti-
Semitism as a reactionary tool of the ruling classes to divert at-
tention away from the class struggle. By 1949, however, Stalin
was beginning to sound like Adolf Hitler when it came to “the
Jewish question.” He adopted the classic Nazi mythology of
“rootless cosmopolitanism” and applied it to Soviet Jews. Stal-
ine accusations which developed out of this slogan followed
the pattern of the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion.” This had
an obvious propaganda value in Soviet Russia, as it did in all of
the East European satellite countries that fell under communist
control in the late 1940s, where anti-Semitism already enjoyed
great popularity. The fictitious “world conspiracy” invented by
the Stalinists offered a suitable backdrop for totalitarian claims
to world rule alongside the crusade against Wall Street, capital-
ism, and imperialism.

Stalin’s shift toward the Nazi paradigm became transparent
in the Slansky show trial in Czechoslovakia (1952–53), which proceeded as if all Jews were potentially Zionists and all Zionist groups were “agents” of American imperialism. This was followed by the extinction of Soviet Jewish culture and a planned “final solution” of the “Jewish question” by mass expulsion to Siberia. This disaster was averted only by Stalin’s sudden death (on Purim, incidentally) fifty years ago.

Under Nikita Khrushchev’s somewhat erratic but bold de-Stalinization policy, there was a temporary respite, though Soviet adventurism in the Third World and domestic campaigns against religion ensured that prejudices against Israel, the Jews, and Judaism continued to fester. After the Israeli victory in the Six Day War, a new Soviet-style version of the “Protocols” emerged behind a thin veneer of Marxist-Leninist verbiage. Relentless Communist Party propaganda unleashed a massive campaign portraying Zionism as “Fascist,” “Nazi,” “racist,” driven by “hatred toward all peoples” and a “chosen people” superiority complex. It was no accident that Moscow played such a major role in masterminding the infamous UN resolution equating Zionism with racism.

These ideological fictions had little to do with the actual policies of the Jewish state. They assumed the existence of a dark Jewish conspiracy, linked to America and freemasonry, that sought planetary domination. The Zionist goals were allegedly to overthrow the communist systems in the USSR and Eastern Europe, to dominate the economy of the largest capitalist states, and to liquidate national-liberation movements throughout the Third World. The so-called Zionism “bourgeoisie” aimed to reduce the Arabs and the Third World to servitude. The “socialist” camp, led by the USSR, saw itself as the main obstacle to this pernicious design.

By the 1970s, Zionism was considered one of the darkest forces of world reaction, an ideology and an organization no less dangerous than Hitlerism and “Aryan” racism. History was rewritten by Soviet propaganda of inspiration for the Nazi agent of “collaboration” in the Holocaust. In the Brezhnev Zionist” anti-Semitism became chauvinist ideology. This was to totally defame Zionism: to discredit the Torah as a book. The Jewish religion was systematically and its manifestation for Lebensraum. As literature, the grand sweep of twisted into a narrative of morality.

The Soviet anti-Semitic immediately collapsed with the 1990s, the so-called “Red-Bro Russian ultra-nationalists, anti-national Zionist conspiracy, doctrines of hate. The alliance channels of mass communic- sisted that they had deliber- Communist Revolution, and were now delivering the natic cosmopolitan clique working- ist designs. This was the credit ten years ago, won a quarter elections. Depicted in the mecialized in ethnic slurs again and blacks as well as Jews; he German and Austrian radical talked openly of restoring a G he execrated Jews and Zionist: Arab nationalist dictators like S
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rewritten by Soviet propagandists to make Zionism the source
of inspiration for the Nazis! It was even branded as an active
agent of “collaboration” in the German implementation of
the Holocaust. In the Brezhnev era of Soviet expansion, “anti-
Zionist” anti-Semitism became a cardinal feature of the official
chauvinist ideology. This was the first major political campaign
totally defame Zionism as the incarnation of evil and to
discredit the Torah as a book of hatred, preaching genocide.
The Jewish religion was systematically slandered as a teaching
of racial exclusion and its messianic ideals smeared as a justi-
fication for Lebensraum. As in contemporary Islamic and Arab
literature, the grand sweep of Jewish and Zionist history was
twisted into a narrative of pure criminality, sadism, and im-
morality.

The Soviet anti-Semitic demonology of Zionism did not
immediately collapse with the fall of communism. In the early
1990s, the so-called “Red-Brown” alliance of neo-Stalinists and
Russian ultra-nationalists, animated by their belief in the inter-
national Zionist conspiracy, continued to preach anti-Jewish
doctrines of hate. The alliance claimed that Jews controlled the
channels of mass communication throughout the world, insis-
ted that they had deliberately ruined Russia through the
Communist Revolution, and proclaimed that Jewish oligarchs
were now delivering the nation into the hands of a rapacious
cosmopolitan clique working on behalf of American imperial-
ist designs. This was the credo of Vladimir Zhirinovsky, who,
ten years ago, won a quarter of all ballots cast in the Russian
elections. Depicted in the media as the Russian Hitler, he spe-
cialized in ethnic slurs against Balts, Armenians, Caucasians,
and blacks as well as Jews; he established close ties with the
German and Austrian radical Right (including neo-Nazis) and
talked openly of restoring a Greater Russian dominion. Just as
he execrated Jews and Zionists, so he identified strongly with
Arab nationalist dictators like Saddam Hussein.
PAN-ARABIST AND ISLAMIST VERSIONS

The Russian communist model, like that of German Nazism, was an important formative influence in Saddam’s version of Ba’athism. The Iraqi leader grew up in the framework of this dogmatic ideology, which not only glorified the Arabs as a “master race” but also emphasized the need for relentless struggle and perpetual revolution in the name of the pan-Arab cause. Saddam imbued his radical nationalism from Michel Aflaq, a Greek Orthodox Christian born in Damascus who had turned his back on all Western ideas to create the Arab Renaissance in the 1940s. In the Aflaqian concept, the Arab nation was the culmination of spiritual perfection, far superior in its traditions and culture to the superficiality of Western civilization. But Arab unity would remain a dream without sacrifice, conflict, martyrdom, and bloodshed.

Saddam adopted Aflaq’s highly charged ideological style while accentuating the Leninist party structures of Ba’athism in order to consolidate his grip on power. He embraced a quasi-mystical view of the Arabs which assumed that an exalted eschatological mission had been assigned to them by God himself. Saddam added to this belief a tremendous emphasis on the will to power, the need to crush a world of enemies, to prepare for endless war and perpetuate the revolution as a sacred task of the Ba’ath Party. For the Iraqi leader, there was never any question about his right to murder “inferior” groups such as the Kurds or anyone defined as an internal “enemy” of the regime. It was also an axiom that America and its civilization must be humiliated. It was no less self-evident to him that the “Zionist entity” must be eradicated.

For the Ba’athists, Israel was always an artificial “implant” in the Middle East, a multi-tentacled “octopus,” a “deadly cancer” or an “AIDS virus” to be burned up, as Saddam Hussein publicly threatened to do shortly before the first Gulf War. Only two years ago he declared and must be liberated first who emigrated to land a fact that Saddam filled the Baby Jewish Temple and Serbia but also his detest and teach the Western would never forget. In Arabism, Jews were by dilies of the Arab nation Israelis are completely d and the scum of the earth literature. Wiping out Isra tion of “rootless nomads’ own. For Islamic fundi it is no less of an ideological for the Ba’athism, but it is a far-reaching and even ap tion with Israel and Zioni year-old history and respect Muhammad’s war with them a vitally important return to the distant past h roving extensively from the most extreme anti-Semitic lims have enthusiastically 1 Christianity and adopted the Jews as part of their Islam.

The September 11, 2001 trends to new heights of de the World Trade Center in tion of war against the great alism. It was also seen by it
two years ago he declared on Iraqi television: “Palestine is Arab and must be liberated from the river to the sea and all the Zionists who emigrated to the land of Palestine must leave.” The fact that Saddam filled his speeches with references to Nebuchadnezzar (the Babylonian ruler who destroyed the first Jewish Temple) and Saladin demonstrated not only megalomania but also his determination to destroy the Jewish State and teach the Western “Christian” Crusaders a lesson they would never forget. In Saddam’s totalitarian version of pan-Arabism, Jews were by definition “outsiders,” “aliens,” and enemies of the Arab nation. Hence it is no surprise to find that Israelis are completely dehumanized as murderers, criminals, and the scum of the earth in Iraqi (as well as in Syrian) Ba’athi literature. Wiping out Israel meant expelling or killing a collection of “rootless nomads” who stole a land that was not their own. For Islamic fundamentalists, the “liberation of Palestine” is no less of an ideological and political imperative than it is for the Ba’athis, but it is also a “war of civilizations” in a more far-reaching and even apocalyptic sense. In their confrontation with Israel and Zionism, the Islamists appeal to a 1,400-year-old history and repeatedly invoke Quranic precedents. Muhammad’s war with the Jews in seventh-century Arabia is for them a vitally important guideline for the present. But this return to the distant past has not prevented Islamists from borrowing extensively from the much execrated Western culture’s most extreme anti-Semitic motifs. Thus, fundamentalist Muslims have enthusiastically revived the blood libel of medieval Christianity and adopted the scenario of a “final struggle” with the Jews as part of their Islamic Heilsgeschichte.

The September 11, 2001, attack on America escalated such trends to new heights of defamation. The Al-Qaeda assault on the World Trade Center in New York was not only a declaration of war against the greatest metropolis of international capitalism. It was also seen by its perpetrators as a blow against the...
nerve-center of “world Jewry.” There is a line of continuity running from Hitler to Ramzi Yousef, who planned the World Trade Center bombings of 1993, and Mohamed Atta, who masterminded the 9/11 atrocity. The Islamo-fascists, like the Nazis before them, are genuinely convinced that a corrupt America is in Jewish hands. Hence, the jihad to liberate Muslims across the world from oppression and injustice is simultaneously anti-American and anti-Jewish. It is also viscerally opposed to liberalism, individualism, and modernity as such. It goes without saying that the Islamists reject laissez-faire principles in economics, politics, and culture. It is axiomatic that they deeply despise the political liberties of the West, such as freedom of speech, freedom of thought, and freedom of association and assembly. In these respects they often find common ground with anti-globalist leftists and right-wing radicals in the West today, who concentrate all their spleen on the “sins” of America and Israel while dismissing the threat posed by international terrorism.

In its attitude toward the Jews, Islamic fundamentalism displays many parallels with Nazism and Stalinist communism as well. The identification of Jewry with threatening forces of modernity such as secularism, capitalism, liberalism, and moral lassitude is a pattern that applies to each of these ideologies. There is the same obsession with Jews as a revolutionary, subversive, and corrosive force; with their hidden, occult, manipulative activities; with their boundless “materialism” and abstract rationalism and its imagined undermining of “sacred values” like family, nation, and state. Global conspiracy theories reappear in fundamentalist Islam in apocalyptic colors reminiscent of those favored by its Christian and post-Christian totalitarian predecessors. In the Manichean struggle of the Forces of Light, Goodness, and Truth against those of darkness, evil, and falsehood, it is clear that the Jews are a spearhead of the Devil’s legions. Sixty years ago, Haj Amin al-Husseini, the leader of the Palestinian, spent much of World War II in strong ideological parallels between anti-communism. By way of example, he proposed an anti-Jewish movement, and Anglo His speeches would often beg from the Quran. In March 1942, he called on the Arabs to rise up: “I am with them. This pleases God, history; earlier, celebrating the friendship the German Nazis and Arabs, the Jews, and Arabs, for the way “they [the German Jews] were a problem.” In the light of the past two years, one has to ask: what has changed. Neither Yasser Arafat, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, nor Hizb their desire to see the eradicatio by a “liberated” Palestine. Like the Palestinian Islamists are driven by anti-Jewish religious fanaticism. conceived as an existential threat to identity. The Jewish state is thero tolerable because no “protected” state sovereignty on what is de- rity.” This is understood as a right” of Muslims to enjoy exclus al-Islam (the House of Islam). T lions of Sunni and Shi’a Muslims, Iranian Ayatollahs, Al-Qaeda, H Brotherhood, Islamic Jihad, and ists, despite the many differences Islamist ideology remains the mo- itarian options since it insists that must be waged against “infidels” u
is a line of continuity who planned the World of Mohamed Atta, who Islamo-fascists, like the convinced that a corrupt jihad to liberate Muslim and injustice is simul- vanish. It is also viscerally and modernity as such. It reject laissez-faire princip- es. It is axiomatic that they if the West, such as free- and freedom of associ- they often find common right-wing radicals in the ir spleen on the “sins” of he threat posed by inter- umic fundamentalism dis- Stalinist communism as ith threatening forces of ism, liberalism, and moral each of these ideologies. as a revolutionary, sub- ir hidden, occult, manipu- ‘materialism’ and abstract numing of “sacred values” a conspiracy theories re- apocalyptic colors remi- nistian and post-Christian anichean struggle of the nth against those of dark- at the Jews are a spearhead go, Haj Amin al-Husseini, the leader of the Palestinian Arab national movement (who spent much of World War II in Berlin), insisted that there were strong ideological parallels between Islam and National Social- ism. By way of example, he pointed to a common authoritari- anism, anti-communism, Anglophobia, and hatred of the Jews. His speeches would often begin with anti-Jewish quotations from the Quran. In March 1944, speaking on Radio Berlin, he called on the Arabs to rise up: “Kill the Jews, wherever you find them. This pleases God, history, and religion.” A few months earlier, celebrating the friendship and ideological links between the German Nazis and Arabs, Haj Amin expressed his admiration for the way “they [the Germans] have definitively solved the Jewish problem.” In the light of what has been happening in the past two years, one has to ask if anything fundamental has changed. Neither Yasir Arafat, the Fatah Al-Aqsa Brigades, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, nor Hizbollah differ from Haj Amin in their desire to see the eradication of Israel and its replacement by a “liberated” Palestine. Like the global jihadists of Al-Qaeda, Palestinian Islamists are driven by a violently anti-Western and anti-Jewish religious fanaticism. Israel and the Jews are perceived as an existential threat to Muslim culture and collective identity. The Jewish state is theologically and ontologically intolerable because no “protected people” (dhimmis) can exercise state sovereignty on what is defined as “sacred Muslim ter- ritory.” This is understood as an affront to the “God-given right” of Muslims to enjoy exclusive political hegemony in dar al-Islam (the House of Islam). This outlook is shared by millions of Sunni and Shi’a Muslims, conservative Wahhabi Saudis, Iranian Ayatollahs, Al-Qaeda, Hizbollah, Hamas, the Muslim Brotherhood, Islamic Jihad, and many secular Arab national- ists, despite the many differences among these groups. But the Islamist ideology remains the most intransigent of all the total- itarian options since it insists that permanent war—the jihad—must be waged against “infidels” until the Day of Judgment. No
strategic compromise is possible with the American or Israeli “devils,” let alone with Muslim “heretics” (i.e., normal, pious Muslims). There can certainly be no “normalization” with a Jewish state, since its very existence is the symptom of the malaise, decadence, and corruption in Islam as it is practiced today.

As was the case with Nazism, only the comprehensive and decisive defeat of these dark and irrational forces in the Islamic world can clear the road for peace in the Middle East and a genuine “dialogue of civilizations.” Saddam’s defeat will undoubtedly be a powerful blow in that cause, not only by eliminating the specter of deadly weapons in the hands of a ruthless dictator and stopping bonuses for the suicide-killers in the Palestinian territories and Israel, but by destroying one of the historic patrons of global terrorism. But this is also a war of ideas as much as it is a military and political confrontation. Its long-term success will depend on a dramatic awakening of the moderate and rational forces within the Arab-Muslim world, forces that have hitherto been strangled by the terrible legacies of totalitarianism, jihad, and anti-Semitism. Hopefully, that long-term reformation of Islam will begin in the aftermath of the Iraq War, even if its fruits may take time to mature.

We see that Nazism, communism, radical pan-Arab nationalism, and Islamism share a remarkably similar demonology of the Jew. Each of these modern ideologies declared war in different ways on Judeo-Christian and Enlightenment values and sought, or is seeking, the downfall of Western liberal democracy. They all share the same penchant for conspiracy theories of history, society, and civilization, as well as the same closed system of beliefs, addiction to mystical or salvationist politics, and will to power. In the case of the jihadist, the return of anti-Semitism also needs to be seen as a powerful backlash against Western and Israeli visions of a “new Middle East,” as well as the rejection of a new world order, a global economy, "normalization" waged peace. Indeed, driving force beh as a century ago pean anti-Semites and supranationa eagerly scavenges onset of modernit mobile, rootless, tuned to exploit caricature of the approx. contemporary Israel becomes their great and the corrupt n speak, has coalesce globalization that

One can see the radicalization of Islam. On October 2002 the state has become cedes. Its Wahhabis educational system damentalist creed of Jews, and Hindus lins. Such fanatici nd reporter Darri American). It stoked beliefs in Pakistan sacre, and it carries with India. Pa the empirical wor pure ideological nurtured by the H
merican or Israeli "normalization" with the Jewish state, and the idea of a negotiated peace. Indeed, "world Zionism" is today perceived as the driving force behind globalization ("Americanization") much as a century ago "international Jewry" was depicted by European anti-Semites as the satanic engine of finance capitalism and supranational cosmopolitanism. The new anti-Semitism eagerly scavenges this arsenal of older images which, since the onset of modernity, have stereotyped the Jews as a dangerously mobile, rootless, abstract, and transnational mafia uniquely tuned to exploit capitalist economy and culture. The protean caricature of the Jew has been given a new lease on life by the contemporary Islamist apostles of jihad. Israel and Jewry have become their great surrogate in the holy war against America and the corrupt modern world of jahiliyya. Uncle Sam, so to speak, has coalesced with Shylock into a terrifying specter of globalization that threatens to swamp the world of Islam.

One can see this syndrome clearly at work in the ongoing radicalization of Pakistan, where obscurantist, intolerant, and misogynist Islamist parties were the biggest winners in the October 2002 elections. This Sunni Muslim nuclear-armed state has become increasingly Islamicized in the past two decades. Its Wahhabi influenced and funded private Islamic educational system has been thoroughly penetrated by a fundamentalist creed in which hatred of Western civilization, Jews, and Hindus is matched only by loathing for Shi'a Muslims. Such fanaticism produced the murder of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl in January 2002 (both a Jew and an American). It stokes the fantastic conspiracy theories, so widely believed in Pakistan, that the Mossad engineered the 9/11 massacre, and it carries with it the danger of a nuclear confrontation with India. Pakistani "anti-Semitism" has no connection to the empirical world or Israelis and Jews as real people. It is a pure ideological product of totalitarian Islam—paid for and nurtured by the House of Saud.
A century ago, partisans of the radical Right and Left first began to converge in a common hatred of "materialist" values represented by international capitalism. They discovered in political anti-Semitism a powerful new weapon against the liberal, democratic order. The German Social Democrat August Bebel once called this kind of bigotry the "socialism of fools." However, like so many others on the Left and in the liberal center, he hugely underestimated the genocidal potential of this ideology once it was harnessed by ruthless totalitarian parties or movements. The simplistic belief that, thanks to technological and scientific progress, the twenty-first century would usher in universal peace across the globe has proven to be no less naive. Today, in the context of a far more media-saturated and globalized village, anti-Semitism (often masquerading as anti-Americanism and anti-Zionism) has recharged its batteries with a vengeance.

In the Islamic world (and increasingly in western Europe), it has become a dangerous form of auto-intoxication and self-destruction—the intellectual equivalent of the suicide bomb. In the first half of the twentieth century, many good-hearted, rational people refused to accept that such highly irrational beliefs could be taken seriously by many people. They were wrong. This is an error well worth avoiding in the first half of the twenty-first century.

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Self-Description
Denying Privilege

I n a recent review of [*Europe: A不会有 account of E* that since the book's explanation of the dist ten," the reviewer wrote." In a letter to "Why?" The question plied to that book's author, who asserts that he or she not that self-descriptive dence at all, but that the both senses: fragment in judging the presence

On the surface, the implace. After all, a any reasonable measu

*Norman Davies, Europe: A viewed by Tony Judt, The Ne*