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# The Hate That Dare Not Speak Its Name

anti-semitism

Norman Podhoretz

~~anti-semitism~~

LAST March, in a special issue commemorating its 120th anniversary, the *Nation* published an article by the novelist Gore Vidal entitled "The Empire Lovers Strike Back" which impressed me and many other people as the most blatantly anti-Semitic outburst to have appeared in a respectable American periodical since World War II. The *Nation* is a left-wing (or, some would say, a liberal) magazine run by an editor, Victor Navasky, who is himself Jewish. Yet one reader (who happened not to be Jewish) wrote in a personal letter to Navasky that he could not recall encountering "that kind of naked anti-Semitism" even in papers of the lunatic-fringe Right which specialize in attacks on Jews; to find its like one had to go back to the *Völkische Beobachter*. Nor was he the only reader to be reminded of the Nazi gutter press. "I thought I was back in the 30's reading *Der Stürmer*," wrote another.

Actually, however, it was not the crackpot racism of Julius Streicher that Vidal was drawing on, but sources closer to home. Prominent among these, I would guess, was Henry Adams, about whom Vidal has written admiringly and with whom he often seems to identify. Adams, as a descendant of two Presidents, was a preeminent member of the old American patriciate—the class to which Vidal also, if somewhat dubiously, claims to belong—and his resentment at the changes which came over the United States in the decades of industrialization and mass immigration after the Civil War knew no bounds. The country was being ruined, and Adams blamed it all on the Jews: "I tell you Rome was a blessed garden of paradise beside the rotten, unsexed, swindling, lying Jews, represented by Pierpont Morgan and the gang who have been manipulating the country for the last few years." It made no difference that J.P. Morgan was neither Jewish himself nor in any sense a representative of the Jews. For as Adams wrote in another of his letters: "The Jew has got into the soul. I see him—or her—now everywhere, and wherever

he—or she—goes, there must remain a taint in the blood forever."

In Vidal's diatribe there is no explicit mention of blood, but there is its functional equivalent in the idea that Jews born in the United States nevertheless remain foreigners living here by the gracious sufferance of the natives. Incurably alien though the Jews may be, however, they exercise enormous and malevolent power over the politics of what Vidal, conjuring up the long discredited spirit of 19th-century nativism, does not hesitate to call "the host country."

In the days of Henry Adams, and up until the establishment of the state of Israel, the great power of the Jews was supposedly used in the interests of world Jewry; today it is generally said to be deployed in the interest of the Jewish state, which Vidal, taking up this line, characterizes as a "predatory people . . . busy stealing other people's land in the name of an alien theocracy." Here is Vidal's version of how the conspiracy works:

In order to get Treasury money for Israel (last year \$3 billion), pro-Israel lobbyists must see to it that America's "the Russians are coming" squads are in place so that they can continue to frighten the American people into spending enormous sums for "defense," which also means the support of Israel in its never-ending wars against just about everyone.

As befits this resurrection of the two classic themes of anti-Semitic literature—the Jew as alien and the Jew as the conspiratorial manipulator of malign power dangerous to everyone else—Vidal's tone is poisonous. His every word drips with contempt and hatred, and underlying it all is a strong note of menace. The Jews had better watch out if they wish "to stay on among us"—not that "we" will necessarily permit them to stay even if they do begin minding their manners. Their only purpose, after all, is "to make propaganda and raise money for Israel," thereby impoverishing the rest of us and bringing the world closer and closer to a nuclear war.

MY OWN reaction on first reading this article was amazement: I could hardly believe my eyes. What amazed me was not

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the fact that I myself and my wife Midge Decter had been singled out by Vidal as representative examples of the phenomenon he was claiming to expose. I had known Vidal personally for many years, and had followed his career, so I was well aware that he believed in getting back at anyone who had the temerity to criticize him—a crime that Midge Decter and I had each recently committed. Thus, commenting in my syndicated weekly column on his joint appearance with Norman Mailer at a fund-raising evening for the forthcoming PEN Congress in New York, I had observed that (like most of their fellow writers) Mailer and Vidal were hostile “to the kind of country they imagine America has become in the past hundred years: oppressive and repressive both at home and abroad.” I further noted that “the fame and the glory and the riches” they themselves had achieved “make nonsense of their defamatory caricature of America as a country given over body and soul to materialism, puritanism, and philistinism.”

Some weeks later in *Contentions*, the monthly publication of the Committee for the Free World (of which she is executive director), Midge Decter poked fun at Vidal's ideas about “the American empire.” She also observed that Vidal had once again demonstrated that he “does not like his country.”

So a retaliatory strike, or even two, was to be expected from Vidal. Why then should I have been amazed by it when it came? For two reasons. The lesser was that Vidal, who had always seemed to glory in his hostility to America as a mark of superior intellect, virtue, and patrician ancestry, now felt driven to deny what we had said about that hostility. “Of course I like my country,” he wrote. “After all, I'm its current biographer.” For Vidal to describe his historical novels in this way was as if Lytton Strachey had pointed to *Eminent Victorians* as evidence of his great fondness for the generation of his father. And this piece of defensive dishonesty seemed all the more remarkable in that it was accompanied by a restatement of some of the very ideas (“We stole other people's land. We murdered many of the inhabitants. We imposed our religion—and rule—on the survivors,” etc.) Midge Decter had cited in the article he was trying to rebut.

But if I was surprised by the discovery that this famously fearless speaker of his own mind lacked the courage to call his own political convictions by their proper name, I was truly amazed by his introduction of the Jewish issue into an argument over the quality of American society and the nature of the American role in world affairs.

Neither of the two pieces Vidal was pretending to answer so much as mentioned Israel or had anything whatever to do with the particular concerns of the American Jewish community. One of them was about the attitudes of the American

literary world toward the United States; the other dealt with the American role in Mexico, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. By dragging the issue of Jewishness into such a discussion, Vidal was recklessly exposing himself to the charge of anti-Semitism. Who, after all, but an anti-Semite would attempt to refute an opposing political position by interpreting it as a Jewish conspiracy against the rest of “us”?

But Vidal did more than merely introduce the Jewish question—as his anti-Semitic forebears liked to call it—into an unrelated discussion. He did more than sound the classic themes of anti-Semitic literature. He did all this without even bothering to conceal his true feelings. For example, in response to my statement that in America “the blessings of freedom and prosperity are greater and more widely shared than in any country known to human history,” he said that I was wrapping myself in “our flag” and wearing it “like a designer kaftan.” Again, in taking up Midge Decter's detailed challenge to his conception of American imperialism, Vidal countered that “She is [an Israeli] propagandist (paid for?), and that is what all this nonsense is about.” And to make certain that his meaning would not be mistaken, he called us both an “Israeli Fifth Column.”

So it went, literally *ad nauseam*.

Now that a bit of time has passed, I can see in retrospect that I should have been as little surprised by the way Vidal struck back as I was by the sheer fact that he did.

For one thing, I knew that he had long harbored feelings of resentment against what he considered the disproportionate influence of Jews in the American literary world. Many years earlier, he had joked about the domination of that world by a Jewish establishment of critics and editors which made room on the list of the important American novelists of his own generation only for an occasional “O.K. Goy” like himself. Yet as he undoubtedly recognized, Vidal had no standing (either then or now) as a novelist among serious literary critics of any ethnic background. What did make (and would continue to sustain) his reputation outside the world of commercial fiction and the television talk shows was his considerable talent as an essayist. But it was as a novelist that he clearly wished to be recognized, and he evidently blamed the Jewish establishment for preventing justice from being done to his work.

Since it served as the entering wedge for the return to America of an old tradition of cultural anti-Semitism, it is worth pausing over the concept of an all-powerful Jewish literary establishment. Precisely because it had played a part in Berlin and Vienna in the 1920's in forming the climate of opinion to which the Nazis could later appeal, the constituent ideas of this tradition

came to be regarded as so repellent and dangerous that they were shunned and repressed in the years after World War II. Yet these also turned out to be the very years in which Jews were for the first time making a deep mark in the American literary world. Thus the period from the late 40's to the late 50's saw the emergence of novelists like Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth; of poets like Delmore Schwartz, Karl Shapiro, and Allen Ginsberg; of critics like Lionel Trilling, Alfred Kazin, and Irving Howe. And to top it all off, *Partisan Review*, many of whose editors and contributors were Jewish, also came in those years to be widely acknowledged as the leading American literary magazine.

Naturally enough, this development, new and interesting as it was, gave rise to a good deal of sociological and historical discussion, and in the course of this discussion Jews were often said to have found a place in, or even to have taken over, the "establishment." Except for a degree of exaggeration, there was nothing wrong with such talk—until, that is, it began to be combined with the allegation that a conspiratorial network had been created between Jewish editors and Jewish critics for the purpose of pushing and promoting Jewish novelists and poets to the virtual exclusion of everyone else. At first this allegation was made only in shamefaced and guilty whispers. But eventually it achieved open expression in a *Playboy* interview with Truman Capote which was even more outspoken than Vidal's apparently whimsical complaint about discrimination against *goyim*. According to Capote, a "Jewish mafia" had taken control of "much of the literary scene through the influence of the quarterlies and intellectual magazines." He went on:

All these publications are Jewish-dominated and this particular coterie employs them to make or break writers by advancing or withholding attention. . . . Bernard Malamud and Saul Bellow and Philip Roth and Isaac Bashevis Singer and Norman Mailer are all fine writers but they're not the *only* writers in the country, as the Jewish mafia would have us believe. I could give you a list of excellent writers . . . ; the odds are you haven't heard of most of them for the simple reason that the Jewish mafia has systematically frozen them out of the literary scene.

The great irony was that the Jewish editors and critics who were supposed to be pushing and promoting Jewish novelists and poets in this way were in reality their harshest, and often their only, critics. So it was that Bellow and the others were much more roughly treated in *Partisan Review* (and COMMENTARY) than they were anywhere else. Nor was it even remotely the case that except for an occasional "O.K. Goy," a writer had to be Jewish in order to get attention. In addition to Capote and Vidal themselves, who were hardly starving for attention, there were such widely read and discussed novelists as Carson McCullers, William

Styron, John Updike, John Cheever, James Jones, Flannery O'Connor, Ralph Ellison, and James Baldwin; and there were such famous poets as Robert Lowell, John Berryman, Theodore Roethke, Randall Jarrell, Richard Wilbur, Elizabeth Bishop, and Sylvia Plath. All these writers, it might be added, were treated with much greater tenderness by critics like Robert Penn Warren, Allen Tate, and Cleanth Brooks than their Jewish contemporaries could generally expect from such Jewish critics as Trilling, Howe, or Philip Rahv.

About twenty years ago, I myself began trying to blow the whistle on the spreading notion of an all-powerful Jewish literary establishment by arguing that it was not only untrue but that it also represented the revival of a dangerous anti-Semitic canard. I did not, however, argue that Vidal and Capote, whose contribution to its revival I cited even then, were anti-Semitic. On the contrary, I exonerated them. I said that so effective had the taboo been on any open expression of hostility toward Jews since the fall of Hitler that Vidal and Capote, like almost everyone else in America of a certain age, were entirely unfamiliar with the traditional ideologies of anti-Semitism; and it was this very ignorance that had emboldened them to spread an idea they would have been ashamed of embracing if they had been aware of its history and pedigree.

I STILL think this may have been true of Capote (and I think it may also explain why so many people, including a few who are discussed below, are unable nowadays to recognize anti-Semitism when it hits them in the face). But it was obviously too kind to Vidal. As the years went by, the issue of Jewish literary power faded, but not Vidal's animus against Jews, which sought, and in due course found, a new outlet in the issue of Israel.

Most critics of Israel are more concerned with attacking the state than with attacking the Jews as such. With Vidal it was the other way around. In fact, his loathing for Israel was no greater than his loathing for America; the one often even seemed a function of the other, with Israel's main crime being its alliance with and resemblance to the United States. Conversely, and no doubt with the example of Henry Adams to inspire him, he seemed to blame the putative decline of the United States on its susceptibility to the corruptions of Jewish influence, operating not only through the contemporary descendants of J.P. Morgan (symbolized for Vidal by the Chase Manhattan Bank) but also through the Pentagon and "our lunatic Right."

This anti-Jewish animus occasionally peeped through Vidal's essays and interviews. Once, for example, he referred to Hilton Kramer, a critic who has rarely if ever dealt with Jewish topics or with Israel in his writings, as "the Tel Aviv Hilton." But as in this instance, Vidal was always care-

ful to hide his anti-Jewish animus behind a campy façade, which allowed him, if challenged, to claim that he was after all only joking.

Indeed, even when for the first time he came more or less fully out of the anti-Semitic closet, he still thought it the better part of prudence to protect himself by posing as the spokesman for a minority which was being persecuted by the Jews.

The occasion, which served as a kind of dress rehearsal, or tryout, for "The Empire Lovers Strike Back," was an article called "Some Jews and the Gays" that was also published in the *Nation* and that was also aimed at Midge Decter and me—at her for the memoir she had written of summers spent in a largely homosexual community on Fire Island in the 1960's, at me for publishing it in COMMENTARY (under the title "The Boys on the Beach").\*

Unlike her later piece in *Contentions*, "The Boys on the Beach" made no reference to Vidal, but as an early pioneer of gay liberation, he took violent exception to some of the things it said about homosexuality. To be sure, time has not been kind to Vidal's article, which sneeringly dismisses the idea, propounded by "The Boys on the Beach" and now so grimly confirmed by the AIDS epidemic, that there is a suicidal impulse at work in homosexual promiscuity. Nevertheless, Vidal's sneers would have been fair enough if they had been confined to Midge Decter's knowledge of the subject, her judgment, her prose. But Vidal did not confine himself to these things; instead he broadened out into a blast against "a group of New York Jewish publicists" who

know that should the bad times return, the Jews would be singled out yet again. Meanwhile, like so many Max Naumanns (Naumann was a German Jew who embraced Nazism), the new class passionately supports our ruling class—from the Chase Manhattan Bank to the Pentagon to the op-ed page of the *Wall Street Journal*—while holding in fierce contempt what they think our rulers hold in contempt: faggots, blacks, . . . and the poor. . . .

The anti-Semitism here was brazenly obvious to anyone with eyes to see. But as Vidal correctly sensed in writing the article, and as the editor of the *Nation* probably figured in deciding to publish it, anyone speaking on behalf of an aggrieved minority can attack the Jews with relative impunity, especially if he turns the tables by representing them as the oppressors. Thus, just as the idea of a conspiracy against helpless Gentile writers by an all-powerful Jewish literary "mafia" had been tolerated in the early 60's, so a similar idea about the relation of blacks to Jews had been tolerated during the bitter New York City teachers' strike of 1968. Prior to this point, anyone making anti-Semitic statements had been in effect banished from respectable society and consigned to the lunatic fringe. But now, far from being penalized in

this way, blacks could proclaim (as the *African-American Teachers Forum* did) that "The Jew" deliberately and "systematically" (the same word Capote used) "keeps our men from becoming teachers and principals and he keeps our children ignorant," and still be excused and justified by liberals, including Jewish liberals, and even rewarded with foundation grants. (A few who said such things, and worse, have since become prominent in New York politics.)

The reaction to "Some Jews and the Gays" demonstrated that the same license was now being extended to homosexuals. Not only was there no outcry against this article after its appearance in the *Nation*; and not only did many people take the position that Vidal's rage was understandable and perhaps even warranted; but the collection of essays in which it was reprinted (under the title "Pink Triangle and Yellow Star") went on to win a National Book Critics Circle Award. When Ezra Pound's *The Pisan Cantos*, which also contained anti-Semitic passages, was awarded the Bollingen Prize in 1949, there were protests even from some who considered Pound a great poet. But when a book by Vidal, a writer no one considers great, was awarded a literary prize, no protests were heard, and some reviewers even singled out the offending essay for special praise.

Obviously, then, both Vidal and the editor of the *Nation* had been right in their assessment of the risks involved in publishing "Some Jews and the Gays." Even the caution shown in the choice of title proved to be unnecessary.

WITH this experience behind him, Vidal must surely have assumed that he could get away with the same anti-Semitic trick when he decided to play it again in "The Empire Lovers Strike Back." Yet I at first thought that this time he and the *Nation* had miscalculated.

It was one thing to attack "some" Jews for criticizing homosexuality; and if the attack spilled over into abusive remarks about Jews in general, well, that could be dismissed as a forgivable expression of that cleansing "rage" everyone has come to expect from oppressed minorities fighting for their rights. But it was quite another thing to make abusive charges against Jews for supporting Israel. Here no pretense at limiting the attack to "some" Jews (that is, the neoconservatives) could provide protection, since virtually all American Jews, including those who detest the neoconservatives as much as Vidal does, were bound to feel themselves equally implicated. If, as Vidal charged, their support of Israel proved that Jews of a neoconservative bent did not really belong in America, then neither did liberal Jews or radical Jews who also support Israel; and if supporting Israel made the neoconservatives into a

\* September 1980.

"fifth column" (which is to say, agents of a foreign power and even traitors), there was no way the rest of the Jewish community, which was at least as pro-Israel as any neoconservative, could escape being tarred with the same accusation.

If Vidal had made a mistake, so, I thought, had the *Nation*. In recent years, under Victor Navasky, the *Nation* had regularly published articles by such virulently anti-Israel propagandists as Edward Said (a member of the PLO National Council) and Alexander Cockburn. But while attacking Israel, and doing everything in its power to delegitimize the Jewish state, the *Nation* had always piously affirmed Israel's right to exist. Yet here, in a special anniversary issue, the magazine was opening its pages to a piece advocating a cut-off of all American aid to Israel—which was tantamount to calling for the destruction of the state by its Soviet-armed enemies.

This was not all. Like the PLO itself, which it supports, the *Nation* had always insisted on the distinction between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. Yet by publishing an anti-Zionist piece that was so obviously anti-Semitic, it cast serious doubt on its own belief in the reality of this distinction.

For these reasons, I was confident that a storm of protest would be unleashed against Vidal and the *Nation*, and I therefore resisted the urgings of many people that I "do something." Obviously, as an interested party, I was not in the best position to make the case that had to be made. Nor was I in the least concerned about defending myself personally. Although I am as thin-skinned as the next man, I took Vidal's article not as a personal attack on me at all but as an attack on Jews in general. Consequently, what I most hoped for was not that others would spring to my defense, but that a protest would be mounted by people sympathetic to the *Nation's* left-wing political position who would say that while they detested everything Norman Podhoretz, Midge Decter, and all the other neoconservatives stood for, and while nothing made them happier than seeing neoconservatives raked over the coals, they were outraged by the re-introduction of anti-Semitism into American political discourse in general and their own political community in particular.

And indeed, about a week after Vidal's piece appeared, just such a protest came from the very heartland of that community, the *Village Voice*. Under the rubric "Jew-Roasting," its press critic, Geoffrey Stokes, wrote:

Happy 120th Birthday, *Nation*! On the other hand, what the hell was Gore Vidal's anti-Semitic screed doing in the special anniversary issue? Not even clever, . . . Vidal's piece . . . had the unsettling effect of making me briefly sympathetic to Podhoretz.

Gratifying though this was, however, it was followed by complete silence from the Left. In

the *Nation* itself, three issues went by with no letters to the editor, and when an inquiry was made to its editorial offices, the answer was that the mail on Vidal had not been unusually heavy, that it was split evenly pro and con, and that some of it would eventually be run.

Meanwhile, wherever I went in those weeks, I would ask the people I encountered about the Vidal piece, only to find that hardly anyone had read it. This included people who had attended the anniversary party at which more than 3,000 copies of the offending issue had been distributed, as well as other self-professed friends of and subscribers to the *Nation*. It was good to learn that the *Nation* (which claims a circulation of 70,000), had such a small readership, but I did not think the Vidal piece should be allowed to sneak by unnoticed. In my view, ignoring it would only be taken by other anti-Semites as a license to resume saying things on which they had mercifully been choking for so long.

IT WAS at this point that a letter was sent to twenty-nine friends and supporters of the *Nation* whose names were selected both from the magazine's masthead and from the congratulatory messages which had appeared in the anniversary issue. They were: Floyd Abrams; Bella Abzug; Leonard Bernstein; Norman Birnbaum; Bill Bradley; Arthur L. Carter; Ramsey Clark; Arthur C. Danto; Osborn Elliott; Richard Falk; Frances FitzGerald; Fred Friendly; Seymour Hersh; Arthur Hertzberg; Charlayne Hunter-Gault; Peter Jennings; Edward Kennedy; Edward I. Koch; Elinor Langer; Eugene McCarthy; Sidney Morgenbesser; Aryeh Neier; Robert Silvers; Paul Simon; Gloria Steinem; Rose Styron; Mike Wallace; Tom Wicker; Roger Wilkins.

It would later be reported in the press that I had demanded that these people repudiate the Vidal article. But what the letter, signed not by me but by Marion Magid, the managing editor of COMMENTARY, actually said was this:

In connection with a projected article, we are asking a number of friends and supporters of the *Nation* whether they have seen fit to protest against the contribution by Gore Vidal to the 120th anniversary issue ("The Empire Lovers Strike Back"). Could you let us know whether you have made such a protest, either in private or in a letter for publication?

In the four weeks that followed the mailing of this letter we received only seven replies. By that time the *Nation* had also begun running letters in its correspondence columns, of which three were from people who had been on our list. Eliminating overlaps,\* this came to a total of

\* The figures I gave in the newspaper column I later wrote were slightly off because I forgot to take overlapping into account.

eight out of twenty-nine. Of the eight, only five (the attorney Floyd Abrams; Professor Richard Falk of Princeton; Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg; Professor Sidney Morgenbesser of Columbia; and Aryeh Neier, the human-rights activist) said they saw anything wrong with the article or with the *Nation's* decision to publish it.

Of the others, two (the sociologist Norman Birnbaum and Tom Wicker of the *New York Times*), responding directly to Marion Magid, attacked her letter as an impropriety, while either saying nothing about Vidal at all (Birnbaum) or explicitly denying that his article was anti-Semitic (Wicker). The third, the journalist Roger Wilkins, writing to the *Nation* for publication, called Vidal's piece "splendid." By contrast, Wilkins said, the attacks on it as anti-Semitic were "ugly mumblings," a species of McCarthyism, and a threat to the First Amendment.

Striking a note that would be heard over and over again from defenders of Vidal, Wilkins declared:

Scoundrels have many last refuges. One is to attack as anti-Semitic any criticism of the policies of any given government of Israel or of any supporters of Israel, no matter how frothing those supporters may be.

Not content with defending Vidal against the charge of anti-Semitism, Wilkins even denied that his piece was anti-Israel. Like himself, Wilkins wrote, Vidal "apparently" believed "that one can criticize an Israeli government policy or one advocated by a supporter of Israel as being both dangerous to peace and to Israel's security without being either anti-Israel or anti-Semitic."

In other words, the critics of Israel are allowed to say anything they want, no matter how vile, about the state and its supporters, but it is McCarthyism and a threat to the First Amendment to criticize *them*.

To put the same idea another way: it is permissible to make anti-Semitic statements, but it is impermissible to call such statements anti-Semitic.

**B**UT what of the twenty-one who did not respond to Marion Magid's letter? What did their silence mean? Some weeks later, after the controversy had attracted a great deal of publicity, three of them (Fred Friendly of the Columbia School of Journalism; the writer Elinor Langer; and Senator Paul Simon of Illinois) finally got around to communicating their dislike of Vidal's piece either to Marion Magid or to me. All three, however, said that they felt no compelling reason to protest against its publication.

As for the other eighteen, one can only speculate. It may be that the politicians among them (Mayor Koch, Senator Bradley, Senator Kennedy) were never shown the letter by whoever handles their mail. This may also have been the case with

the media personalities (Peter Jennings of ABC, Mike Wallace of CBS, Charlayne Hunter-Gault of PBS) or with a busy celebrity like Leonard Bernstein. It is even possible that they never saw Vidal's article (a copy of which, by the way, had been enclosed with the letter).

Nevertheless, whatever the reasons might be, one glaring and ugly fact remained: a large number of prominent liberals and leftists who had publicly associated themselves in one way or another with the *Nation*, and whose names had appeared in one capacity or another in the very issue containing so blatantly anti-Semitic an article, had not been sufficiently outraged to register disapproval or to express a protest. Nor did many others on the Left respond by (to borrow an image Vidal had used in congratulating himself for candor) calling a spade by, that is, describing Vidal's article as a foul anti-Semitic outburst and expressing dismay or disgust at the fact that a magazine professedly devoted to liberal ideals should have given house room to such an article.

A few did. Stipulating that "Knocking Podhoretz up the side of the head for an inane foreign policy is like shooting fish in a barrel," one liberal reader still characterized Vidal's article as a "leering, taunting, look-at-how-clever-I-am anti-Semitic assault." He also blamed the *Nation's* editor for permitting Vidal to "break the bounds of discourse."

Another reader, dissociating himself even more vigorously from me and Midge Decter, asked whether Vidal was "sallying forth to paste yellow stars on those of us 'foreigners' whose Americanism is questionable because we like Israel?"

A third, summing up the case, wrote:

The implication—that American Jews who support Israel are traitors to their country—is pure anti-Semitism. . . . I do not like neoconservatism and I do not like Norman Podhoretz. I don't like him, as a Jew, as an American, as a Zionist, and as a leftist. But I'd rather see his published ideas criticized fairly than to see him accused of treason without evidence, especially when this accusation extends to me.

Yet in the weeks immediately following the publication of Vidal's article, these three (or stretching a point to include Floyd Abrams, four) were the only letters to the *Nation* from liberals or leftists that seemed to me commensurate with the provocation.

Of the other two protests from the Left published by the *Nation*, one came from Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg. A former president of the American Jewish Congress, Rabbi Hertzberg had been heard to rail privately against the article and had promised to denounce it in the strongest possible terms. In the end, however, all he managed to produce was a letter in which he described the piece as a "personal quarrel with Norman Podho-

retz and Midge Decter," said that he was "delighted" with Vidal's complimentary remarks about Peace Now, and could not even bring himself to use the term "anti-Semitism" at all. As for the second such liberal protest, while denouncing Vidal "for exhibiting a snide anti-Jewishness," it spent more space explaining that the American Jewish Committee, despite its sponsorship of COMMENTARY, was not, as Vidal had ignorantly charged in passing, an organization of "the far Right."

Neither this letter, nor Hertzberg's, was written in the name of the Jewish organizations with which their authors were associated; nor did any other Jewish organization speak up in these first few weeks (though both the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League would subsequently be heard from). A reporter for an Israeli newspaper, who later set out to find out why the Jewish defense agencies had been so quiet, discovered that the feeling was that "Norman can take care of himself." But the issue was not "Norman," and to define it in those terms was to do what Hertzberg was the first (but, as we shall see, far from the last) to do: it was to turn an anti-Semitic assault into "a personal quarrel" and thereby to trivialize it. From there it was only a short step to the prominent lay Jewish leader who went around saying that "Podhoretz and Vidal deserve each other." This idea that anti-Semitism and a protest against anti-Semitism are on an equal moral footing would also be echoed in the weeks ahead. But not usually by people carrying a mandate from the American Jewish community to defend it against anti-Semitism.

AFTER nearly a month of waiting for a serious protest to materialize, it finally dawned on me that I had been wrong to think that Vidal and the *Nation* had made a mistake from their own point of view with "The Empire Lovers Strike Back." If so, things were even more ominous than they had seemed at first. It was bad enough that a presumably reputable author should see fit to write a blatantly anti-Semitic article; it was even worse that a magazine professing devotion to liberal values should see fit to publish such an article; but what was worst of all was that so few of the magazine's friends and admirers had been willing to raise their voices against it. Therefore, in the column I now decided I had no choice but to write, it was the theme of liberal silence I emphasized. It was, I concluded, "a silence as deep as the moral pit into which the *Nation* itself has fallen in welcoming the unabashed return to American political discourse of a murderous poison against which the only antidote is the revulsion of decent people."

A few days before this column was published, first in the *New York Post* and then in the

*Washington Post* and a number of other papers throughout the United States, the *New Republic* ran an editorial denouncing Vidal's article as anti-Semitic on the ground that his target was not just the Jewish state but Jews in general, and that his accusations against Podhoretz and Decter as aliens, and even "in essence" traitors, applied "by extension [to] all American Jews who support Israel."

The *New Republic* likes to regard itself as a liberal magazine, and in some sense it is. But its hatred of Soviet totalitarianism, its belief in the need for American power to contain Soviet expansionism, and its strong support of Israel—not to mention a host of differences over domestic issues—have placed it politically on the opposite side of the *Nation* in recent years. Consequently, its editorial on Vidal could no more be taken as coming from the *Nation's* own political community than an earlier protest by the neoconservative Catholic writer Michael Novak (who in his syndicated column had been the first to call attention to "a piece of bigotry and nativism by Gore Vidal worthy of the anti-Semitism of the KKK") or the indignant letter to the *Nation* by the New Right activist Paul Weyrich.

In any event, to judge by the reaction to its editorial, which seemed to attract more attention than the Vidal article itself had done, the *New Republic* is much more widely and more carefully read than the *Nation*. No sooner had it appeared than I began to get calls and letters requesting more information; and whereas before it was I who had had to ask people about the Vidal article, only to discover that very few had seen or heard about it, now everywhere I went, everyone, it seemed, was talking about it. And when, hard upon the *New Republic* editorial, my own column appeared, the talk became even louder and more insistent.

Nor was this second wave of reaction confined to talk. Before the storm finally subsided two months or so later, at least twenty pieces had been published about the episode in American newspapers and magazines, and nearly half as many again in other countries, including England, France, Germany, Australia, and Israel.

From this second wave of reaction I learned that there is something worse than silence in the face of anti-Semitism, and that is a willful blindness in the face of it. Here the blindness took three different but overlapping forms. One was the outright denial that Vidal's piece was anti-Semitic. The second was to treat the article as part of a longstanding personal feud between Vidal and me. The third was to affect a lofty neutrality as between two equally unpleasant and unacceptable points of view.

LEADING the pack of those who simply denied that Vidal's piece was anti-Semitic were Vidal and Navasky themselves. In



the first wave, replying to the letters on his piece in the *Nation* itself, Vidal had not only ignored the charge of anti-Semitism but had adopted the strategy of heaping abuse on the correspondents who leveled it at him. One of these correspondents, he said, "needs psychiatric attention of a sort that I cannot provide."\* Another he advised to "join the Israeli Army." To a third, he cited "the hysterical tone of these letters" as evidence of the strength of his argument. To a fourth he countered that "the Podhoretzes are doing more to arouse the essential anti-Semitism of the American people than anyone since Father Coughlin."

As for Navasky, he bemoaned the "sad fact" that "when a Gentile criticizes Israel or raises fundamental questions about its connection to American Jewry he or she is often said to be anti-Semitic; when a Jew does so he or she is said to be self-hating." Going so far as to concede that "such ugly accusations" were "understandable in view of Vidal's provocative framing of the issue," Navasky still insisted that they arose out of a misreading of Vidal's "idiom of irony"—and irony, of course, "should not be read literally." Instead of being called bad names, Vidal should be acclaimed for his courage in "violating the taboo that forbids the discussion of the relationship of the American Jewish community to the state of Israel. . . ."

This was too much for Irving Howe, the editor of the socialist magazine *Dissent*. Reaffirming his often stated distaste for Podhoretz and Decter, and referring to Navasky as a "decent and humane man," Howe nevertheless not only lashed into Vidal's "racist diatribe" ("It is many years since I have read anything quite like this in a serious magazine"); he called the Editor's Note in defense of it "still more shocking" than the fact that the *Nation* had printed Vidal's piece:

Whatever are the *Nation* editors talking about? What taboo? Many of us have publicly been engaged in precisely this discussion for years now, and one need only look through the files of various magazines—Left, Right, and Center—to see how fierce this debate has been.

Vidal's piece aroused disgust not because of any issue it raised or taboo it violated, but because of the terms in which it was couched—terms about as close to anti-Semitism as anyone not an openly declared anti-Semite would reach.

Navasky's Editor's Note was also too much for the veteran Old Leftist Morris U. Schappes, the editor of *Jewish Currents*. Schappes "admonished the *Nation* as a devoted friend" for its failure to perceive that Vidal's article was "smelly with anti-Semitism" and for defending it on the false ground that Vidal had raised questions about the relation of American Jews to Israel that no one else had previously dared to ask.

Unchastened by rebukes even from such friendly quarters, Navasky stuck throughout to the same line. But this time, in the second wave, Vidal

himself did deign to notice that he was being charged with anti-Semitism. In a call made to the *Washington Post* after my column had appeared there, he stated:

Anyone who says he is not an anti-Semite is probably one, and so I shall not dignify the dread Norman (Poddy)† Podhoretz's characterization of me in these pages as "a virulent anti-Semite" with a defense where no offense of that nature exists or has ever existed.

In addition to thus fingering himself here by doing precisely what he says an anti-Semite would do, Vidal requested that the *Post* reprint his *Nation* article. This request the *Post* thereupon honored so that, it explained, readers could answer for themselves the question posed in its headline: "Was the Vidal Article Anti-Semitic?" (Will the *Post*, the *New Republic* subsequently wondered, "reprint the writings of Louis Farrakhan or Lyndon LaRouche when next its readers seem puzzled by a columnist's criticisms?")

FIRST out of the gate in the race to join in denying that Vidal's piece was anti-Semitic sprang Edwin M. Yoder, Jr., another *Washington Post* columnist. Yoder, in his courteous Southern way, allowed as how it was "unfair" of Vidal to charge me with being "more interested in Israel than in this country" (is that what he charged me with?) but "The truth is that Norman Podhoretz asked for it, not only by firing the first shot at Vidal in connection with an entirely different subject, but by professing an ostentatious indifference to early American history."

What Yoder is referring to here is a story Vidal told in his article about a remark I am supposed to have made to him twenty-five years ago, to the effect that to me, as the child of immigrants, the Civil War was as remote as the War of the Roses. Though I have no memory of mak-

\* This was not the only time the issue of psychiatric disorder came up. The *New Republic's* otherwise excellent editorial was marred by a concluding sentence stating that Vidal was "ready for the funny farm." But there is nothing in the least crazy about Vidal, and to suggest that he needs psychiatric treatment is to diminish his responsibility for his foul anti-Semitic ideas. In using the phrase, however, the *New Republic* inadvertently provoked a moment of morbid comic relief in the form of the following letter from John Hinckley, Jr., written from the psychiatric hospital to which he has been confined since shooting President Reagan: "I resent the fact that you equate 'anti-Semitism' with insanity. In the first place, Gore Vidal is anti-Zionist, not anti-Jewish, and in the second place, being opposed to Zionism (which is both racist and militaristic) is not a sign of mental illness. If anything, it is patriotic. . . . The easiest way to defame someone and his opinions is to label him as 'loony' and 'ready for the funny farm.' It happens to me all the time. The opinions of Gore Vidal and myself are just as valid as yours, and just because we disagree with you does not mean we are crazy."

† This is what Vidal called me throughout his *Nation* article. It is a nickname invented by him, not one by which I have ever been known by anyone else.

ing the remark, I may well have said something like it. But whether or not I did—and if I did, I was certainly putting Vidal on—Yoder's notion that I deserved to be answered with an anti-Semitic onslaught twenty-five years later takes the breath away. But of course Vidal's onslaught was not, in Yoder's view, anti-Semitic at all. It was only "mischievous and cutting . . . in Vidal's best polemical manner."

No more than Roger Wilkins before him was Yoder satisfied with defending Vidal against the charge of anti-Semitism. He also counterattacked with the accusation that I, like many (most?) American Jews, have tried to silence any and all criticism of Israel by denouncing such criticism as anti-Semitic, even while pretending otherwise:

Podhoretz graciously concedes that "it is possible to criticize Israel without being anti-Semitic." Thanks, we needed that. But has Podhoretz noticed that if one is critical of an Israeli policy one may be accused of attacking Israel's legitimacy? And, just beyond that, of being a crypto anti-Semite? It was that very logic that drove Podhoretz to mistake Vidal's hard-edged teasing for anti-Semitism.

A similar argument was advanced by another columnist, William Pfaff, writing in the *International Herald-Tribune*, who moreover took it upon himself to deliver a lecture on how "reasonable people" should conduct themselves in discussing the subject of Israel. He graciously conceded in his turn that Jews have a right to support Israel "without having imputed to them a lack of patriotism toward the country of which they are citizens." His main concern, however, was clearly to establish the right of "an American to criticize or oppose the policies of the state of Israel . . . without an anti-Semitic motivation being imputed."

Once again, then, the issue was shifted from the appearance of an anti-Semitic article in a respectable left-wing magazine to the alleged efforts by people like me to silence any and all criticism of Israel. On this point Pfaff let it be known that he knew whereof he spoke: "I have . . . been myself denounced by Mr. Podhoretz as anti-Semitic because of things I wrote about Israel's conduct during the siege of Beirut in 1982," he told his readers. What he did not tell them was that in one of these "things" he had begun by asserting that in Israel's conduct "Hitler's work goes on," and he had concluded by predicting that Hitler might soon "find rest in Hell" through "the knowledge that the Jews themselves, in Israel, have finally accepted his own way of looking at things." In my article "J'Accuse,"\* I did indeed denounce these words (not Pfaff himself) as anti-Semitic. Nicholas von Hoffman, another columnist who had used similar words, had the good grace to withdraw them in response to the same criticism. But not Pfaff—who, in addition, had and has the gall to

feel aggrieved and victimized by the fact that he was called to account.

Since Pfaff (like Yoder a decent man who is intelligent enough to know better) remains convinced that comparing Israel to Nazi Germany represents a "reasonable" application to the Jewish state "of the same moral and political judgments as one applies to the conduct of other states," it is no wonder that all he can see in Vidal is an innocent "critic" of Israel like himself. What he does not see is that it is *he*, and Yoder and Wilkins and Wicker, who erase the line between legitimate criticism of Israel and anti-Semitism by their unwillingness or inability to distinguish between the former and a clear case of the latter like the Vidal article (or like his own comparisons of Israel with Nazi Germany).

IF DENIAL was one form taken by this blindness to anti-Semitism, a second was the treatment of Vidal's article as part of a longstanding personal feud with me and/or Midge Decter. "A Big-League Literary Feud," announced the headline of a story in *Newsweek* which went on to describe it as "the sort of literary quarrel that had everything going for it," with "the prospect of more vitriolic prose, more character assassinations, and, in all likelihood, more broken friendships."

Several newspapers also played the story largely for its gossip value. "The dirty little war of words between writer Gore Vidal and conservative columnist Norman Podhoretz appears to have gone nuclear," brightly chirped a reporter in the *Washington Post* Style section. "Long bombarding each other with verbal abuse, Vidal and Podhoretz have now engaged in an exchange that is by all accounts ugly, burying the issues in an atomic barrage of name-calling."

From this kind of trivialization the third form of denial naturally followed. On National Public Radio, Rod MacLeish declared a plague on both our houses for "polluting" public discourse, but he was more incensed at me than at Vidal. Unjustly to accuse someone of anti-Semitism, he said, is almost as base as anti-Semitism itself. But he was so busy explaining to me that it is not anti-Semitic to criticize the economic policies [*sic!*] of the Israeli government that he never got around to explaining how what he himself described as Vidal's appeal to "an ancient American bigotry" differed from anti-Semitism.

The same trick of morally equating Vidal's anti-Semitism with my protest against it was used by Jody Powell in the *Los Angeles Times*. Deploring all the attention being paid to this "grand wrist-flapping dither" at a time when "deficits and exchange rates" were crying out for discussion, Powell proceeded to devote an entire column to it himself:

\* COMMENTARY, September 1982.

What we have here is a trio of aging, self-righteous ideologues bent on exposing the absurdities of their intellectual configuration to all who can stomach the spectacle. What emerges is that they are more alike than different.

Powell therefore "steadfastly refused to choose" because "it is impossible to attack one without appearing to be allied with the other."

But this was only impossible because Powell also "steadfastly refused" to recognize anti-Semitism when he saw it; to those not so blinded, like Paul Berman of the *Village Voice* (which in the second wave as in the first acquitted itself more honorably than any other left-wing publication), there was no question about which side to take as between an anti-Semitic article and a protest against it:

Who but my discombobulated friends at the *Nation* could so bollix things that right-minded leftists have no choice but to rise to the defense of Norman Podhoretz?

I rise. . . . The *Nation* had no business publishing Gore Vidal's spleen. . . . And why must the editors of the *Nation*, having made the mistake of publishing this horrendous stuff in the first place, pass it off as "irony"?

**I**N DESCRIBING both waves of reaction to the Vidal article, I have omitted the protests that came from people outside the circle of friends and supporters of the *Nation*—writers like William Safire, R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., Jeane Kirkpatrick, Richard John Neuhaus, Jeffrey Hart, and David Evanier who are neither liberals nor radicals and whose general political views are closer to mine than to the *Nation's*.<sup>\*</sup> For such people, protesting against Vidal and the *Nation* was as unproblematic as it was hard for leftists who were reluctant to give political aid and comfort to an opponent like me. But as a diabolical fate would have it, the conservative political community was soon to face a similar test of its own.

Joseph Sobran is a syndicated columnist, a commentator on the CBS radio series "Spectrum," and a senior editor of *National Review* (a magazine whose standing on the Right is comparable to, though much higher than, the position on the Left occupied by the *Nation*). For some years now, and especially since the Lebanon war, when he too wrote a few "things" about Israel's "conduct," he has been increasingly unfriendly to the Jewish state. During the Bitburg controversy, in defending the President's decision to visit a German military cemetery in which SS men were buried, he also struck a number of people as decidedly unfriendly to the American Jewish community. Remonstrations were made to him in private about the insensitivity to Jewish concerns reflected in his Bitburg columns, and he was even caricatured as a latter-day Nazi in a small-town paper which had carried those columns.

To all this he responded by defending himself

in print against what he indignantly denounced as Jewish attempts to intimidate and silence him. He would not, he vowed, be intimidated; he would not be silenced. And he was as good as his word. Over the following months, he seemed to let no opportunity slip for attacking Israel and American support for Israel. As bitter an opponent of the Left as can be found, he was even driven to seize on a book attacking Zionism from the Left as a vehicle for the amazing declaration that he had never seen a good case made, except by Jews (whose arguments, of course, could not be trusted), for the American alliance with Israel.

Nor was this the only instance when the Jewish issue drove Sobran into making common cause with people or positions he would normally be the first to attack. The most egregious example was his criticism of the American strike on Libya. This was so uncharacteristic a stance for a hardline conservative hawk like Sobran to take, and so inconsistent with his general world view, that it could only cause his regular readers to wonder how he had come to such a pass. Demonstrating his fearless disregard of the "gas-chamber rhetoric" that would no doubt be thrown at him, Sobran provided the materials for dispelling that wonder:

The Israeli lobby is, of course, the most powerful lobby in America. That is ultimately why Congress so quickly endorsed a direct military strike against Libya, while it quibbles endlessly about whether aid to the *contras* in Nicaragua might lead, someday, to American military involvement in Central America. Qaddafi is an enemy of Israel. Communist Nicaragua isn't. It's an enemy of America, period.

So we fight Qaddafi, and maybe, the administration hints, Syria and Iran as well. Ostensibly the issue is "terrorism," but that sounds more and more like a surrogate word for enemies of Israel.

Having thus explained how Congress was manipulated by the Jews into approving the Libyan strike, he went on in another column to explain why the *New York Times* also applauded Reagan for this misconceived action:

On the issue of Libya, the *Times* sounds like *Soldier of Fortune* magazine. It even chides our allies for ingratitude in failing to support Reagan's action: "The failure to cooperate against Libya plants poisonous seeds of disintegration."

The *Times* didn't use that kind of language at the moment when it might have done so more appropriately: When Israel was discovered to have been paying a U.S. citizen for U.S. military secrets. Our European allies are our allies

<sup>\*</sup> One such writer, however, Richard Grenier, agreed with those on the Left who denied that Vidal's article was anti-Semitic. Vidal's hostility to Jews was, he said in his column in the *Washington Times*, rooted in other passions—social snobbery, anti-democratic elitism, and envy. Perhaps. But anti-Semitic ideas are and should be identified as anti-Semitic, no matter what may lie behind them.

for the purpose of resisting Communism, not terrorism. But the *Times*, one of America's most ardently Zionist newspapers, understands that Israel has its own reasons for desiring to pit the United States against the whole Arab world. So bombs away.

Never mind the ignorance and/or misrepresentation here. Never mind that the Sandinistas—who are so close to the PLO that some of them were trained in PLO camps before the overthrow of Somoza; who still receive help from the PLO today; and who have declared that “the PLO cause is the cause of the Sandinistas”—are enemies of Israel. Never mind that the *New York Times*, far from being “ardently Zionist,” is by a wide margin editorially more critical of Israel than approving. Sobran will not permit such elementary facts to stand in the way of his theory that the Jews first manipulated Reagan into bombing Libya, and then manipulated the Congress and the media into applauding him for doing so.

As if all this were not enough, Sobran took the occasion of the Pope's visit to a synagogue in Rome earlier this year to dredge up canards against the Jews as a people and Judaism as a religion that had rarely been heard since the Middle Ages (though it is possible that Sobran found them in the writings of such Edwardian Catholics as Hilaire Belloc and G.K. Chesterton who seem to play a part for him as mentors in anti-Semitism analogous to the one Henry Adams plays for Vidal):

Millions of Jews chose to migrate to Christian Europe. They lived there for centuries. If Christians were sometimes hostile to Jews, that worked two ways. Some rabbinical authorities held that it was permissible to cheat and even kill Gentiles. Although the great Jewish theologian Moses Maimonides insisted that it was as wrong to kill a Gentile as a Jew, it seems strange that this should ever have been a matter of controversy, and Maimonides was in some quarters regarded as a heretic.

Again, never mind the ignorance here. Never mind the preposterous lies about rabbinical permission to cheat and kill Gentiles or the suggestion that the most revered Jewish thinker of post-biblical times (“From Moses to Moses,” Jews say of him, “none has arisen like Moses”) was regarded as a heretic because he considered it wrong for a Jew to kill a Gentile. Never mind the ludicrous moral judgment that (in another passage of the same column) equates Christian “hostility” to Jews—manifested over the centuries in mass expulsions, pogroms, forced conversions, and denial of civil or political rights—with the less than respectful Jewish attitude toward Jesus that prevailed in those same centuries. The point to be stressed is that in this column, although Israel comes in at the beginning and the end, the issue is not Zionism, or rather anti-Zionism, but Jews and Judaism throughout the ages. Anti-Semitism, in other words.

FOR me personally, as well as for Midge Decter, a difficult problem was posed by the growing but finally inescapable conclusion that anti-Semitism was at work in those Sobran columns. In contrast to Vidal (with whom in general he has, to put it mildly, nothing in common), Sobran did not single us out for attack. On the contrary, in one of the very columns from which I have quoted, he defended us against Vidal's charge of disloyalty to America. Not that this did anything to mitigate his own hostility to Israel; it did not, in fact, even prevent him from playing on the theme of dual loyalty himself: “As their frequently duplicitous behavior shows, the Israelis know very well the difference between their interests and ours. It's Americans who love Israel who don't know it yet.” Then he used a column of mine (which he might have noticed gave the lie all by itself to the charge that I consider any and all criticism of Israel to be ipso facto anti-Semitic) to drive the dual-loyalty point home:

When the Pollard spy story broke, Podhoretz wrote that American Jews had been doubly betrayed—as Americans and as Jews. If so, they have been doubly betrayed again—and again. It's time they stood up for their rights against their unreliable ally.

But if there was no problem by now over how to characterize Sobran's writings about Israel and the Jewish community in general, there was a problem of what to do about it. With the Vidal controversy still raging, it seemed reckless to open up, so to speak, a second front. On the other hand, to let Sobran's pieces go by without protest might only make it seem that while neoconservatives were all too ready to attack anti-Semitism on the Left, we were perfectly content to tolerate it on the Right. It was Midge Decter who hit on the idea of writing a letter to Sobran himself and to send copies to a number of mutual friends and political allies. Her letter was very tough. It opened by accusing Sobran of being “little more than a crude and naked anti-Semite” and it proceeded to document this charge (pretty much along the lines of the foregoing account).

*Mutatis mutandis*, then, just as members of Vidal's political community had been asked for their reaction to his piece in the *Nation*, so Sobran's political friends were now being asked how they felt about the anti-Semitic sentiments to which he had been giving expression in his column. But there the similarity ends.

In contrast to the Vidal-*Nation* case, none of the clearly anti-Semitic Sobran columns had appeared in *National Review*. In spite of this, the editor of *National Review*, William F. Buckley, Jr., responded to Midge Decter's letter, and to the urgings of nearly all the people to whom it had been sent, by deciding to publish an editorial dissociating the magazine from Sobran on this issue. This editorial, written by Buckley himself with the concur-

rence of all the other senior editors of *National Review*, affirmed that while his colleagues were sure that Sobran was not in his heart an anti-Semite, anyone who did not really know him "might reasonably conclude that those columns were written by a writer inclined to anti-Semitism. . . . Accordingly, I here dissociate myself and my colleagues from what we view as the obstinate tentatiousness of Joe Sobran's recent columns." Buckley also expressed confidence that Sobran would in the future respect the "welcome" structure of "prevailing taboos concerning Israel and the Jews."

It would be pleasant to report that this was an end of it. Unfortunately, Sobran himself and a number of his other friends and allies sprang to his defense in terms very similar to those used by Vidal and his apologists. They denied that the columns in question were anti-Semitic; they complained that anyone who criticizes Israel is smeared with accusations of anti-Semitism; they charged that the Jewish lobby was trying to silence them; they invoked the First Amendment. One of them even compared me with Jesse Jackson: as Jackson has tried to silence opposition with charges of racism, so I have tried to silence it with charges of anti-Semitism.\*

FROM Vidal's political friends on the Left, then, mainly denial, and from the editor of the *Nation*, stonewalling. From Sob-

ran's political friends on the Right, mostly outrage, and from the editor of *National Review*, dissociation and repudiation of anti-Semitism.

What emerges from the contrast between the two cases is further evidence that anti-Semitism has largely if not entirely been banished from its traditional home on the Right, and that today, especially in the guise of anti-Zionism, it is meeting with more and more toleration, and sometimes even approval, on the Left.

Meanwhile liberals and other leftists, including large segments of the American Jewish community, go on refusing to face these immensely important facts. If they should therefore also go on failing to undertake the job of housecleaning that conservatives like Buckley have long been doing within their own political community, the poison of anti-Semitism will continue spreading through the American air, with what consequences no one can foresee.

\* In perhaps the most bizarre—and, from the Jewish point of view, scandalous—turn of events in this entire history, the *Washington Jewish Week* reprinted this article (with the parts about Jesse Jackson cut out). Thus a liberal Jewish editor joined forces with a right-wing extremist in whitewashing two of the vilest anti-Semitic outbursts in forty years and in attacking me for protesting against them—adding the usual lie that "the victims of such attacks by Podhoretz have been many and various, and their only apparent sin has been criticism of Israel and its policies." And this was sought out and reprinted in a Jewish paper!

# BRIEFING

Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Information Division - Jerusalem

## Antisemitism in the Arab World (II)

### JUDAISM IN SAUDI EYES

A perusal of the Saudi press in recent months shows that there has been no let-up in its heavy use of negative stereotypes of Israel, of Judaism and of Zionism, inspired and nurtured by antisemitic concepts long in vogue in that country. Some of these concepts have their roots in Islam; others have been borrowed from the writings of Western antisemites, the notorious "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" being a case in point.

Nearly half a century ago, Saudi Arabia's King Ibn Saud set the tone for modern Saudi antisemitism when - according to an official British document (Foreign Office File No. 371/20822 E 7201/22/31), he told Britain's Political Representative in Kuwait, Colonel Dickson, on 23 November 1937: "Our hatred for the Jews dates from God's condemnation of them for their persecution and rejection of Isa (Jesus Christ) and their subsequent rejection of His chosen Prophet. It is beyond our understanding how your Government, representing the first Christian power in the world today, can wish to assist and reward these very same Jews who maltreated your Isa (Jesus)."

Among the more recent manifestations of Saudi antisemitism was a long and venomous tirade against Jews and the Jewish religion delivered by Marouf al-Dawalibi, the Saudi delegate to a seminar on - of all things - religious tolerance held, under the auspices of the UN Human Rights Commission, in Geneva in December 1984. In a 40-minute diatribe against Jews and Judaism, Dawalibi did not shrink from repeating such obscenities as the ancient blood-libel against the Jewish people: "The Talmud says," asserted the Saudi delegate (5 December 1984), "that if a Jew does not drink every year the blood of a non-Jewish man, he will be damned for eternity." Dawalibi, in his statement, also revived the notorious 1840 blood-libel of Damascus, when the Jewish leaders of that city suffered repression and torture after being falsely accused of killing a Christian priest and collecting his blood for religious purposes.

No wonder the Saudi scene has proved fertile ground for the gamut of European antisemitic concepts - from the image of "the money-grabbing Jewish merchant" (An-Nadwah, 12 April 1986) to the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" (Ar-Riyadh, 26 May 1986) and Hitlerian racism (Ukaz, Jeddah, 30 April 1986).

Further excerpts from Saudi antisemitic writings will be found in the attached Appendix.

APPENDIX

RECENT EXAMPLES OF ANTISEMITIC WRITINGS IN THE SAUDI PRESS

The terrorist attacks and mass-killings at Karachi airport, on 5 September, and at the Istanbul synagogue, on 6 September, evoked the following comment from Ar-Riyadh on 9 September 1986:

"The investigation of these events must not be limited to a search for those who executed them, but must also seek out those who were behind them, who had an interest in the execution of so barbaric an act. ... The truth of the matter is that Israel's fingerprints are clearly discernible here, and that the Zionist gangs which took an active part in striking a blow against the Jews in the Nazi era do not hesitate, now, to attack a synagogue in Istanbul and an American aircraft, as has happened in the past."

(NOTE: Ar-Rihadh reflects the views of the Saudi royal family.)

From Ar-Riyadh, 10 June 1986:

"When Waldheim was elected Secretary-General of the UN, nobody talked about Nazism and the sufferings of the Jews - which the Jews have always traded in, ever since their wanderings in the desert with the Prophet Moses, and until Hitler realized how far the evil had spread in the Jews' exploitation of the German economy, when he found that all the corner shops were in Jewish hands... The Arabs should now congratulate Waldheim for his victory over his pro-Jewish rival... The voters of Austria have demonstrated that they remembered the suffering of Jesus, more than they thought about the blood of a few Jews who have schemed and plotted against the lives of all the prophets and nations - and still the Jewish hand is stretched out, with its tiger's and bear's claws, to crush every native Palestinian!"

From Ar-Riyadh, 25 June 1986:

"The Five Books of Moses provide 'milestones to stealth, robbery, usury, prostitution, deceit and bloodshed - for, in the eyes of the Jew, the blood of the gentile may be spilled with impunity."

From Ar-Riyadh, 26 May 1986:

Headline: THE JEWISH PERIL: THE PROTOCOLS OF THE ELDERS OF ZION,\* translated by Muhammad Khalifa at-Tunisi, summarized by Ahmed Abd al-Aziz Abu Amer.

\*The "Protocols" are a notorious forgery repeatedly cited by antisemites the world over. The ostensible date of the Protocols - 1897 - was the year in which the First Zionist Congress was convened in Basle under the chairmanship of the Father of Modern Zionism, Theodor Herzl.

"The Zionists who founded the oppressor-aggressor-state in Palestine in 1948 did so in accordance with a long-range plan. The Protocols are the most important book ever published - a book that deserves to be studied very carefully, so that one may understand how the various parts of this scheme are linked together. Who would have thought that this group, driven to evil by the sons of Satan, actually could meet and impel its members to produce this malicious scheme to destroy the world and gain domination over it? Indeed, this conspiratorial conference took place in 1897, when the conspirators plotted to carry out a scheme that would enable the Jews to control the world - a scheme in which all their evil traits were manifested. ... The scheme is divided into 15 protocols, and you will see that this is the root of all evil in the world."

From Ukaz, 30 April 1986:

"...As for the Jews who lived in Europe in modern times, their influence grew until they were able to rule high-handedly over the innocent, which resulted in the rise of the Third Reich party in Germany, under the leadership of Hitler. He headed the antisemitic movement and tried to get rid of the Jews, but he failed. ... However, Allah will fight against them, and He will carry out his promise to destroy them and smash them."

From An-Nadwah, 12 April 1986:

"We have all heard about the latest lies and the methods of the Zionists, who imagine that, with a few billions, one can achieve a solution in this region. This is fully in keeping with the Jewish character, which is based on the traits of the usurer: They think that anything can be bought with their stolen money. It is in this fashion that Shimon Peres proposed what he called 'a Marshall Plan for the Middle East,' deluding himself into thinking that he had submitted a peace initiative. ... What we fear is that there will be those who will be deceived by these Zionist peace calls, which are predicated on dreams of the extorted billions designed to shore up the collapsing Zionist economy..."



From Ar-Riyadh, 21 March 1986:

"Israel was created from an imaginary substance, with the Church believing that if, for a blissful millennium, the Jews were to rule Jerusalem, they would then return to Christianity; and with imperialism embracing these fantasies to build upon them a state serving to conceal its Western infiltration. ...

"Israel, in the distant future, will yet find itself existing solely with its empty fancies. Then will the Zionist wet-nurse in anguish cut off her breasts and burn the last Torah scroll in the Jewish synagogues, as she faces a new wandering in the desert."

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

جريدة يومية  
تصدر عن مؤسسة  
الرياسة الصحفية

# الرياض

AL RIYADH - 6480 - 22nd Year - Friday - 21 - 3 - 1986

٦١٨٠ - السنة الثامنة والعشرون

لاستعرب ان تمثل دور الممثل في المسرحية الهزلية العائية، وهي تحطف الطائرات، وتمنهر كرامة المرابط الفلسطيني؛ وتدبح الساسي في الجيوب، وتعد لكل راثر لها الصك المقدس الذي يملكها من النيل الى العرات. كل هذا وهي تفهم ان قانون البقاء للاصلح، يرتبط بعوامل الدهومة التي أصلها الارض والاساس، والترتكب الضخم الذي لانفذه كل تلك الاحداث.

ما وقع في مصر باغتيال اسرائيليين خارج معرض الفاهرة الدولي، هي نفس الحوادث التي كان يظنها سليمان حاطر، ولا مخرج ياسينا عن المقاومة المنتشرة على طول فلسطين المحتلة والجولان، وجنوب لبنان، حتى ان معاهدة (الكاسب) كانت رصاصة الموطن العربي اقوى منها، وانه لاتوجد قوانين مكتوبة ومرفقة تحمي اسرائيل من الذراع العربية، وسوف تكون الحركة السريعة، العرضية التي تزدي الى الرقص المطلق لتلك الشجرة السامة التي جاءت وفق طفوس مجوية، لتعيش في ارض خارج مداراتها.

قد تعتقد اسرائيل انها برقصها مظنة التحرير الفلسطينية، وعدم الاقرار بالشعب الفلسطيني، تجمل الحياض العربي حفيفة، ليسهل صرب النضبة من عمقها، ولكنها تنسى ان الذي يرفض مبدأ هذا الحياض والتعايش معه هو الشعب العربي، وانها لا تخارب مع فصل عسكري صغير، وانما مع امة لها فداستها وتراثها، وعمقها الكوني الكبير، وبذلك سوف نصبح الجدلية على

وجود وتاريخ ونصال امة، واسترى نفسها في المستقبل البعيد تعيش على فراغ وهمها فقط، وعندها سوف تكون المرصعة الصهيونية اول من نغظ ثديها، وتحرق آخر سعر في الكعبس اليهودي، لتشهد التيه الخديدي

## كلمة الرياض

### الشتلة السامة في الارض العربية..

ستظل اسرائيل تبت شادة في الارض العربية، لانها جاءت من مشتل لا بلانيتها الطغس العربي وهبوب رياحه الباردة والساحية. كلنا يعرف كيف ان بلداً صغيراً مثل البرتغال استطاعت ان تستولي على ساحلي قارة اسيا في حرر اندونيسيا، وكذلك على الجناح الاخر في جنوب امريكا، ولكنها في الوقت الراهن لاتساوي حيا في مقاطعة هلاوباولو، او جزيرة صغيرة في الارخبيل الاندونيبي. صحيح ان البرتغال أصبحت تعرفها فارات وجواهر ارضية وماتية عن مستعمراتها القديمة، وكذلك انتهت العداوات بحكم تنازع التاريخ، لدرجة انها هي التي تعيش عزلتها خارج الكون المؤثر في سيات الرمس.

اسرائيل صنعت من مصمون حراي حيا ذات الكعبة تعتقد بالالف السنة السعيدة التي سيحكمها اليهود بيت المقدس، ومن ثم يعودون الى الهديني المسيحي، وكذلك ما وفرته قيم وفود الاستعمار الذي خطف تلك الاساطير وبني عليها دولة تحكيم من خلال تسلسل العنود العربي.

وإذا كانت اسرائيل قد دخلت الحارث... رفق عبروات سطحية وساذجة، فان تقديرها ل... بات لصالحها، لأن مجرد التصور بارناطها بامعاب صافية للمضائق يجعلها رمزاً اولياً للعداوة والتكره. ولذلك

From Al-Jezira, 17 May 1986:

"The Zionist enemy, which has imposed its very existence for over thirty years, through massacre and imprisonment, now struts upon the skulls, its hands smeared with blood, and dares to talk of terror, with no shame, and speaks of the Nazis, pretending that the intellectual roots of Zionism do not lie, as they do, deep in the Nazi movement itself. For Israel, in its fantasies, considers itself 'über Alles' (above all), glorifying violence and terror. Its record over the years is full of all that is bestial and evil, inhumane and immoral; for Israel itself is the rallying point for racism and expansionism by the force of arms. Its present leaders will go down in history as war criminals and butchers...

"Israel was born in battle and can survive only by drinking the milk of wars, so that with the end of war there can be no peace, but only the extinction of Israel. Therefore ... we should be united and coordinate our efforts and capacities to lay siege to the enemy, tear up his roots and wrest him from the heart of the Arab nation!"

شؤون عربية

Saturday, May 17, 1986 G. — Ramadan 9, 1406 H. — No. 4979



## كلمة الجزيرة

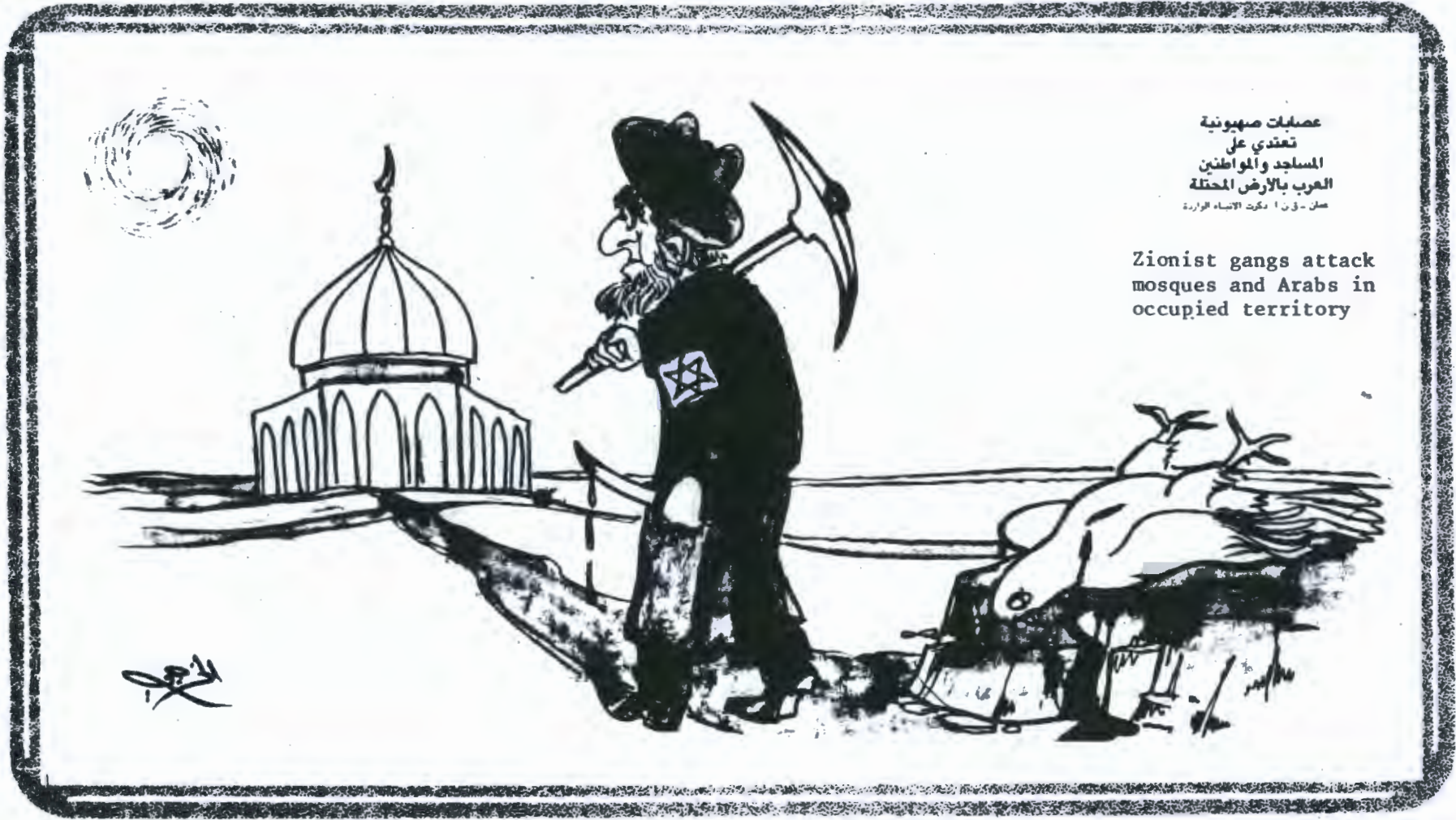
### الذكرى المخزومة

مرت يوم أمس الذكرى المشؤومة البغيضة الى النفس، الذكرى الثامنة والثلاثون لزرع السرطان الصهيوني في المنطقة العربية وهذه الذكرى التي احتفل بها الكيان الصهيوني تجيء وسط مقاومة شرسة من جانب المقاومين العرب الذين رفضوا اغتصاب اراضيهم وحياتة القمع والمعتقلات، مضحين بكل مرتخص وغال من اجل الدفاع عن كرامة العربي واصالته وتاريخه الميم بالاصجاد والبطولات، ومن اجل تحرير بلدهم من المعتدين الذين استطاعوا بمساعدات خارجية ان يضمو ايديهم عليه ويشردوا ابنائه بكافة صنوف الارهاب ومخططات التآمر الدنيبة وخرق القوانين الدولية

والمؤسف حقا هو ان العدو الصهيوني الذي فرض وجوده خلال ثلاثين عاما من المذابح والسجون يأتي اليوم وهو يقف على الجماجم ويدها ملطختان بالدم ليتحدث عن الارهاب دون حياء او ضمير ويتحدث كذلك عن النازية متناسيا ان المنطلقات الفكرية للصهيونية هي ذاتها منطلقات الحركة النازية لان اسرائيل الواهمة تضع نفسها فوق الجميع وتمجد العنف والارهاب وان سجلها في هذا الشأن وعلى امتداد هذه السنين الطويلة حافل بكل الخزي والعار المخالفين للانسانية والاعراف وهي بالطبع دعوة عنصرية توسعية بقوة السلاح. هذا اضافة الى ان قادتها الحاليين عرفهم التاريخ على انهم مجرمون سفاحون ويكفي كمثال على ذلك ما قاله موشي ديان في

نظريته المعروفة المسماة (بالردع النشط) ضد حركة المقاومة الفلسطينية اذ انه هو القاتل ان اسرائيل، ولدت من رحم الحروب وهي لا تسكطع ان تعيش الا من حليب الحروب، فحين تنتهي الحرب لا يأتي السلم وانما يأتي موت اسرائيل. وبعد فان هذه الذكرى المشؤومة تمثل والمقاومة الفلسطينية داخل الاراضي العربية المحتلة في تنام مستمر لمواجهة مخططات القمع والاستلاب الصهيونية المستمرة الا ان المطلوب عربيا واسلاميا وبشكل عاجل هو دعم هذه المقاومة لا بعد مدى، وفي الوقت نفسه مطلوب كذلك اعادة التضامن وتوحيد الصفوف وتنسيق المواقف والامكانات لمحاصرة العدو المشترك وخلق جذوره واقتلاعه من قلب الامة العربية.

(الجزيرة)



عصابات صهيونية  
تعتدي على  
المساجد والمواطنين  
العرب بالأرض المحتلة  
عقل - قن - الحكيم الأسياد الواردة

Zionist gangs attack  
mosques and Arabs in  
occupied territory

٦

Handwritten signature or mark in the bottom left corner of the cartoon.

From Ukaz, 7 July 1986:

Headline: THE LIE LIVES ON

Byline: Shabib al-Ummawi

Subheads: '800 Million Jews Killed by the Romans' - A Lie That Is Dead and Buried in the Talmud; 'Six Million Jews Burned by the Nazis' - A Lie That Still Lives and Has Been Swallowed by the World

"It is a lie propagated by the Zionists and swallowed by the world. Even the Arab media, drawing on Western sources of information, have digested the lie and have repeated it uncritically. Palestine is the price that has been paid for this lie - and the continuation of the Zionist occupation, and Israeli expansion in the occupied Arab land, and the growing support of the Zionist capacity for aggression. These are some of the results of this ongoing lie, and, like a blown-up balloon, all that this lie needs is a pinprick to make it collapse, to empty it of its false content, so that the world may know the truth.

"The lie is that six million Jews died or were killed or burned in Hitler's ovens in the 'Holocaust' - the subject of hundreds of books, scores of feature films and hundreds of documentaries: figures that may be multiplied, for an effort has been made to exploit the world's sentiments in order to justify the occupation of the land belonging to the Palestinian Arabs. ...

"With the help of this lie, Israel gained the recognition of the Great Powers within minutes of the announcement of its independence, and, with the help of this lie, the West's unlimited support of Israel continues - as manifested in the famous reparations agreement with West Germany, made with America's blessings. The lie is still alive, and it keeps Israel alive as it brings ruin to the Arabs, which is why we must refute it. ...

الكذوبة لاكتها الواد الصهيونية وابيضا العالم حتى اعلامنا العربي الذي يعتمد في مصادر اخباره على وسلط اعلامية غربية . هضم الكذوبة وراء بردها غير وعي محتواها الخطير  
 المحطة والدعم المتزايد للفرار . لغوية الصهيونية كل ذلك عن مبيحة لاستمرار الكذوبة . ومثل الماور المنضخ كانت هذه الكذوبة في حلبة ال . شقة ديموس . حتى غربا من مستواها الكاذب وتعرف الدنيا كلها الحقيقة  
 اما الكذوبة فهي ان ستة ملايين يهودي قد ماتوا او قتلوا او اجبروا في الهزاع هظر في البولوكوست الذي صدرت عنه مئات العكب وعشرات الالام الروائية ومئات الالام الوثائقية  
 واما الحقيقة فهي ان هذا الرقم قد تضخم اكثر من مئة مرة مقصد تسول عطف العالم وايجاد المبرر الاخلاقي للاستيلاء على اراضي العرب في فلسطين  
 ثم . هب انهم كانوا ستة ملايين احرقتهم النازي فلماذا لم تغم دولة اسرائيل فوق جزء من اراضي المانيا النازية . اما اذا كان يتعين على العرب وخدم ان يسددوا فاتورة البولوكوست النازي ضد اليهود . ثم من الذي قال ان اسرائيل تحتل كل يهود العالم . وهناك مئات الالام من اليهود يتفكرون ان ضلهم اسرائيل بكل ما فيها من عنصرية وتعتصب  
 بسبب تلك الكذوبة انزعجت اسرائيل اعتراف القوتين العظيمي بعد ذلك فقبلة من اعلان قيامها وبسبب نفس الكذوبة استمر الدعم الغربي لاسرائيل بلا حدود واتخذ طابع الالتزام الموثق في اذواق النعوضات الشهير الذي وقع بين المانيا الغربية واسرائيل بمباركة الولايات المتحدة ولان مفعول الكذوبة مزال ساريا . ولانها مزلت تؤذي اكثها سلاحا لاسرائيل ودمرا للعرب فلننا ننقلها هنا بشيء من التفصيل والتفصيل ايضا

# وماذا بالحد الأكل كذا ورواية حصار غزة

● ثمانمائة مليون يهودي قتلهم الرومان .. كذوبة مية دفنت في التلمود  
 ● ستة ملايين يهودي احرقتهم النازي .. كذوبة حية ابتلعها العالم

● كلها هي ابيهي الكصفونية ،  
 ● ثمانمائة مليون يهودي قتلهم الرومان في حصار صربيا ، من الاراضي مئة  
 ● ليشان .. ما سبب ما في الاموان برقم حتى الصر .. من العرب ..

THE JACOB BLAUSTEIN INSTITUTE  
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

anti  
semitism

# Anti-Semitic Rhetoric at the United Nations

by Daniel Meron



THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE, Institute of Human Relations, 165 East 56 Street, New York, N.Y. 10022

## The Jacob Blaustein Institute For The Advancement of Human Rights

Through a wide variety of programs, the Jacob Blaustein Institute aims to narrow the gap between the promise of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights agreements -- and the realization of these rights in practice.

Blaustein Institute projects fall roughly into four broad categories, albeit with considerable overlapping:

- a) scholarly endeavors designed to clarify basic human rights concepts or issues;
- b) educational and training programs to promote wider knowledge and use of international human rights principles and institutions, to develop a critical public constituency capable of extending and improving them, and to encourage young people to consider careers in this field;
- c) programs that nurture and strengthen human rights organizations and movements;
- d) the creation of a corpus of legal writings for use by human rights pleaders and advocates as they confront human rights violations.

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THE JACOB BLAUSTEIN INSTITUTE  
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# Anti-Semitic Rhetoric at the United Nations

by Daniel Meron



THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE, Institute of Human Relations, 165 East 56 Street, New York, N.Y. 10022



## FOREWORD

Particularly since 1975, when the General Assembly adopted a resolution equating Zionism with racism, some representatives of Arab and Soviet bloc governments have used UN bodies as platforms for anti-Jewish statements. Yet there has been little systematic analysis of such speech. As part of our UN-related activity, the Jacob Blaustein Institute engaged Daniel Meron, a Harvard College undergraduate, as a summer intern to undertake as a case study a systematic survey of the records of one General Assembly and of selected Security Council sessions during 1982, to determine the extent and character of anti-Jewish manifestations during that session.

Mr. Meron was confronted with the complex relationship between traditional, unequivocal anti-Semitism, newer anti-Zionism, and attacks on Israel, as have been previous analysts of anti-Semitism at the UN. His research yielded relatively few examples of crude, classical anti-Semitism; anti-Zionist and anti-Israel statements were much more pervasive. The research also showed that anti-Semitic speech was restricted mainly to a few Arab states and the PLO with some objectionable rhetoric coming from the Communist bloc (including Cuba). It indicated that within the anti-Zionist rhetoric there was a discernible strain of traditional anti-Semitism.

Mr. Meron also analyzed the principles in international legal documents, mainly the Convention on Racial Discrimination and the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, that might be used to combat anti-Semitic rhetoric.

Annexed to his paper is a list of examples of the several types of statements: some unequivocally anti-Semitic, others anti-Zionist or anti-Israel with or without anti-Semitic overtones depending on interpretation.

It is pleasing to bring this interesting research paper by a Blaustein Institute intern to your attention.

*Sidney Liskofsky*  
*Program Director*

## ANTI-SEMITIC RHETORIC AT THE UNITED NATIONS

In recent months there has been renewed controversy over anti-Israel rhetoric in the United Nations. Representatives of Israel and Jewish groups in the United States have claimed that virulent anti-Israel statements made by delegates were also anti-Jewish. "In an effort to combat what they see as persistent anti-Semitism at the United Nations,"<sup>1</sup> American Jewish leaders met with Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar and urged him to do his utmost to try to put an end to outbursts<sup>2</sup> such as the statement made by the representative of Libya, Mr. Treiki, who accused American Jews of being pornographers and of attempting to "debase" the American people.<sup>3</sup> Many delegates, however, view even such outbursts as mere "diplomatic indiscretions"<sup>4</sup> or as acceptable political criticism of Israel not directed against Jews in general.<sup>5</sup> The question is, which statements constitute acceptable criticism of Israel, and which utterances should be condemned as anti-Semitic? For analytic purposes this paper distinguishes between three different types of rhetoric: those statements explicitly using the term "Jews" or "Jewish," those about "Zionism" or "Zionists," and those referring to Israel.

### Anti-Jewish Speech

Article 1 (1) of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (hereafter the Convention) defines "racial discrimination" as "any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms. . . ." <sup>6</sup> (emphasis added) Article 4 (a) prohibits "dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, incitement to racial discrimination, as well as all acts of violence or incitement to such acts" against any group on grounds of race, colour or ethnic origin.<sup>7</sup>

The definition of racial discrimination prohibits distinctions which have "the purpose or effect" of impairing the equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.<sup>8</sup> The prohibition of racial propaganda in article 4 is broader and includes the dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or which promote hatred. Thus, under article 4, it is not necessary to demonstrate adverse impact, or even intent to promote racial discrimination or violence, in order to prohibit racist propaganda.

Under this Convention, virtually any invidious distinction on the basis of race, either in law or in propaganda, is almost per se invalid. This conclusion is also supported by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Article 2(1) of the Covenant requires a state to "ensure to all individuals within its territory... the rights recognized in the present Covenant, without

distinction of any kind, such as race, colour... religion, etc.."9 Article 24(1), discussing the rights of children, prohibits any "discrimination on grounds of race, colour, religion, national origin, etc."10

In short, the protections in the Racial Convention (and the Covenant) against racial discrimination, hatred and propaganda are so far-reaching that, according to some members of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which implements the Convention, any statement insulting or maliciously ridiculing individuals belonging to certain groups is punishable.11

Accordingly, it can be safely warranted that criticism of "Jews," the "Jewish lobby" and perhaps even invidious reference to Israel as the "Jewish State" (as opposed to criticisms [of specific individuals or] of the policies of the Israeli government ) are prohibited by international human rights law.

### Anti-Zionist Rhetoric

There is controversy over whether virulent attacks on "Zionism" are anti-Semitic. The thesis that anti-Zionism as well as anti-Israel tirades are equivalent to anti-Semitism has been advanced by Yehuda Z. Blum, former representative of Israel to the United Nations, in a letter to the Secretary General dated 16 January, 1984:

Throughout all these years the State of Israel and the Jewish people have been under no illusions with regard to the true intent and purpose of the "anti-Zionist" and "anti-Israel" outbursts at the United Nations and elsewhere. It has been well understood by decent people everywhere that behind the "anti-Zionist" and "anti-Israel" tirades there lurks anti-Semitism, pure and simple, and that "anti-Israel" and "anti-Zionist" slogans are being used by closet and crypto-anti-Semites to disguise their true intentions. . . .12

Blum, here, argues that the "true intent" of "anti-Zionism" is to foster anti-Semitism, and that criticism of Zionism, the national liberation movement of the Jewish people, is in itself anti-Semitic.

As noted above, article 4(1) of the Convention condemns "all propaganda... which attempt to justify or promote racial hatred or discrimination in any form."13 Thus, under the Convention, anti-Zionist rhetoric intended to promote hostility towards Jews in general would be prohibited. But how does one demonstrate intent? The difficulty of demonstrating such intent is compounded because some delegates who virulently criticize Zionism and Zionists deny any hostility towards Jews.

Idi Amin, in an address to the General Assembly in 1975, for example, said:14

The United States of America has been colonized by the Zionists who hold all the tools of development and power. They own virtually all the banking institutions, the major manufacturing and processing industries and the major means of communication. . . I call upon the

people of the United States of America. . . to rid their society of the Zionists in order that the true citizens of this nation may control their own destiny and exploit the natural resources of their country to their own benefit.

The similarity between this statement and the propaganda of the Nazis is quite striking. There can be little doubt that when Idi Amin speaks of Zionists owning all the banking institutions and not being true American citizens he is referring to Jews and is intentionally using traditional Jewish stereotypes. Yet, just a few sentences later he says: "I like the Jews but I do not approve of zionism [sic]."<sup>15</sup> Even though so invidious a statement might be considered to demonstrate intent despite the disclaimer, how does one prove this? Given the difficulty of proof it would appear that an argument based on intent is not helpful for Blum's argument.

Blum's second argument poses another difficulty: The enemies of Israel, he implies, are engaging in "ideological and political anti-Semitism" by denying the right to Jewish self-determination, as by the expression "Zionism is racism" which defames the ideology of "Jewish peoplehood."<sup>16</sup>

First of all, it is not clear that the denial of the right to Jewish self-determination is equivalent to anti-Semitism. If it is, are Israelis who deny the Palestinians the right to their own state, racist? Secondly, not all Jews accept Zionism. In fact, some feel that Jewish cultural and religious identity can best be maintained in the diaspora. Are those groups that are most vocal in their opposition to the state of Israel, such as Neturei Karta, anti-Semitic? Rabbi Elmer Berger, a longstanding anti-Zionist activist, stated in a speech at the University of Kansas on October 21, 1982 that "the racist/theocratic character of Zionism complicates any process which contemplates peace through reasonable territorial adjustments."<sup>17</sup> Though Rabbi Berger may be misguided, should one label him<sup>18</sup> an anti-Semite? Thus, any flat equation of anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism is problematic.

Again, perhaps the best approach would be one based on the Convention. As Jack Greenberg observes, the Convention distinguishes between purpose and effect when dealing with discrimination.<sup>19</sup> An act or statement which has the effect of promoting racial hatred or discrimination, even if intent is lacking, would still be prohibited under Articles 1(1) and 4(1).

This emphasis on effect is not unique. Indeed, a number of Supreme Court decisions on discrimination have construed certain statutes as forbidding discriminatory effect irrespective of intent.<sup>20</sup> Federal employment guidelines, moreover, also prohibit practices with discriminatory effect, regardless of intent.<sup>21</sup> By this approach, it would be enough to demonstrate that hostile criticism of Zionism in general, as opposed to specific policies of Israel, is likely to promote racial hatred, and thereby bring it within the prohibition of the Convention. It would be sufficient to show such a likelihood without demonstrating a "clear and present danger."

If the assertion that "the Zionism equals racism resolution has had the effect of promoting, sustaining and legitimizing anti-Semitism in various parts of the world"<sup>22</sup> is correct, then not only those who cite it but the resolution itself is condemnable under articles 1(1) and 4(1) of the Convention.

#### Anti-Israel Statements

As with anti-Zionist Statements, Ambassador Blum, in the letter quoted above, complained that anti-Israel "tirades" were really "smoke-screens" for anti-Semitic slogans and as such should be prohibited.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately, any attempt at limiting anti-Israel criticism, no matter how virulent, on the grounds of anti-Semitism, raises serious problems.

It could be argued that the Convention's broad prohibition of propaganda whose effect is to promote racial hatred, would prohibit the anti-Israel rhetoric Blum complains of. But that would require proof of impact. Surely some criticism of Israel, even harsh criticism, is legitimate. How, then, does one determine which statements constitute legitimate criticism and which should be prohibited? Because such statements would have to be addressed on a case by case basis, impact would be very difficult to measure. How can one demonstrate the effect of one statement?

One solution might be to prohibit not particular statements but certain types of statements. For example, statements denying Israel's very right to exist would be ruled anti-Semitic in effect and prohibited. Blum himself seems to do just that when quoting, as an example of an anti-Semitic remark, one by the Iranian Foreign Minister, referring to Israel as a "cancerous growth" that must be removed.<sup>24</sup> However, if this remark is anti-Semitic, then is Neturei Karta also anti-Semitic, since it objects to the very existence of the State of Israel?

Another type of prohibited statement might be one comparing Israel to the Nazis, on the ground that this comparison is an intentional attempt to demean the atrocities committed by the Nazis by claiming that their crimes are no different from Israeli policies, and as such is intended to cause pain to all Jews. A statement such as that made by the representative of Syria, Mr. Khaddam, that "Israel has. . . exceeded all the crimes perpetrated by the Nazis . . ." <sup>25</sup> would then be prohibited. This is a weak argument, however, not only because of the difficulty of demonstrating that the use of Nazi metaphors are intended to have these effects, but because not only Israel is compared to the Nazis. Mr. Rajaie-Khorassani, the representative of Iran, for example, compared both Israel's and Iraq's leaders to the Nazis. He stated: "if Nazi criminals deserved--and of course they did--to be condemned and punished by international bodies, why then should not Saddam Hussein and Begin be punished in this Assembly for their war crimes?"<sup>26</sup>

These difficulties lead to the conclusion that anti-Israel criticism cannot be prohibited on the grounds of anti-Semitism. One must look elsewhere for a solution, perhaps to Article 20(2) of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which states that "any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be

prohibited by law."<sup>27</sup> Statements such as "the Zionist entity. . . should be removed like a cancerous tumor,"<sup>28</sup> therefore, could be prohibited as providing an incitement to violence and advocating national hatred against Israel. Thus, even virulent criticism of Israel which could not be termed anti-Semitic, could still be prohibited as advocacy of national hatred against that state.

As this paper has shown international legal instruments, if used properly, may provide an effective means to combat anti-Jewish rhetoric at the UN.

ANTI-JEWISH, ANTI-ZIONIST AND  
ANTI-ISRAEL SPEECH, 1982

Anti-Jewish Rhetoric

Iraq  
Mr. Al-Hadawy  
A/37/PV 87, General Assembly

"Jewish financial influence had increased in the United States because of war conditions and their aftermath, when the United States adopted an open-door policy towards Europe, which had been destroyed by the war. The Jewish societies succeeded in lessening discrimination against Jews in some parts of the country and hastened to impose their absolute domination on finance, the mass media and various sectors of public opinion. They gained positions in the American Congress, the White House and the Department of State. Those who needed the support of the political personalities involved hovered around them, and the influential Jewish lobby appeared on the scene."

Nicaragua  
Mr. Chamorro Mora  
A/37/PV. 96, General Assembly

"It is difficult to believe that a people that suffered so much from the Nazi policy of extermination in the middle of the twentieth century would use the same fascist, genocidal arguments and methods against other people."

PLO  
Mr. Abdel Rahman  
S/PV. 2375,  
pp. 72

"Crime, drug taking, prostitution, are the trademarks of the society that he and his colleagues declare that they want to establish for the Jewish people."

Syria  
Mr. El-Fattal

"Are not the forces of pressure -- that is, the Jewish Lobby in the United States -- the obstacle preventing the restoration of stability and security in Lebanon? . . .

The voice of Rabbi Schindler confirmed what we have stated, that is, that the Jewish Lobby, in spite of its strength, is not the only giant beast imposing its will on the United States Administration.

[Continues by explaining that Jewish Lobby is only successful because the best interests of the U.S. are best served that way.]

### **Anti-Zionist Rhetoric**

Cuba  
Mr. Roa Kouri  
A/37/PV. 86, General Assembly

"Once again the Zionist authorities have shown their racist sadism and their profound contempt for the most cherished values of mankind."

Cuba  
Mr. Malmierca  
A/37/PV. 23, General Assembly

"Hitler would have had much to learn from the madness of Messrs. Begin and Sharon.

The Zionist genocide in Beirut is the direct result of the United States government's policy of force, violence and repression."

Djibouti  
Mr. Farah  
A/37/PV. 16, P. 106, General Assembly

"During the first half of this century the Nazis, in their . . . campaign for racial superiority, arrogated to themselves the right to determine who should live and who should be deprived of life. They institutionalized terror and mass killing as means of achieving that goal.

"In the second half of this century the Zionist neo-Nazis have espoused a similar concept, although more limited in scope . . .

These Zionists have unfortunately made us relive a tragedy which history wished to bury at Nuremburg and which we thought had been removed from our memories forever."



Iraq  
Mr. Al-Hadawy  
A/37/PV. 87, General Assembly

"It [Zionism] is a racist, imperialist, political movement that distinguishes between Jews and non-Jews, believes in the purity of the Jewish race and is based on terrorism, repression, treachery and expansion, just as Nazism distinguished between the Germans and the non-German races and resorted to terrorism, repression and expansion. Since its inception in 1947 the Judenstadt has been guilty of putting into practice all these evils."

Jordan  
Mr. Nuseibeh  
S/PV. 2396, Security Council

"This has been the incessant pattern of murder and destruction which the Zionist Nazi racist gangs have been perpetrating against the Palestinian people ever since . . . Menachem Begin desecrated the hallowed soil of the Holy Land when, in 1943, he arrived in Palestine as an immigrant."

Syria  
Mr. Abouchaer  
A/SPEC/37/SR. 27 para. 20, Special Political Committee

"Israel, acting from the hatred of humanity dictated by its Zionist ideology . . ."

"The Zionist usurpers, the enemies of mankind."

Syria  
Mr. Khaddam  
A/37/PV. 8, pp. 84-85, General Assembly

"Much suffering and bleeding continue as a result of the plots of world Zionism to establish a racist empire starting in Palestine and extending to other parts of the world, defined by Zionist doctrine as being from the Nile to the Euphrates . . ."

Syria  
Mr. Khaddam  
A/37/PV. 8, p. 83, General Assembly

"The racist regime in Pretoria, like the racist Zionist regime in Palestine, has not only detonated explosive situations of conflict and tension, but its practices have always been an affront to humanity and a blot on its history."

Syria  
Mr. El-Fattal  
A/37/PV. 93, General Assembly

" . . . Zionism with its racist, expansionist nature and its past and present crimes against international peace and security . . ."

Libya  
Mr. Treiki  
A/37/PV. 96, General Assembly

"The General Assembly has recognized that Zionism is a form of racism and that the fascist Nazi regime in power in occupied Palestine is a racist regime."

### **Anti-Israel Rhetoric**

Angola  
Mr. Jorge  
A/37/PV. 16, P. 92, Current Assembly

"The brutal armed invasion carried out by the racist and fascist Tel Aviv regime, with the full and shameful connivance of the United States Administration . . ."

Cuba  
Mr. Lopez Del Amo  
A/37/PV. 93, General Assembly

"In the course of recent months the international community has witnessed acts of barbaric behavior, acts of extermination by Israel, comparable only to Nazi-Fascist actions during the Second World War."

Iran  
Mr. Rajale-Khorassani  
A/37/ PV. 41 p. 16, General Assembly

"If Nazi criminals deserved -- and of course they did -- to be condemned and punished by international bodies, why then should not Saddam Hussein and Begin be punished in this assembly for their war crimes?"

". . . the innocent Iraqi subjects and residents who had been expelled from Iraq . . . because of the Iraqi regimes' racist commitment."

Jordan  
Mr. Nuseibeh  
A/37/PV. 92. General Assembly

"It [Israeli expansionism] is extremely reminiscent of the rise of Nazism in its theoretical conceptual creed of racism, expansion and hegemony, which subsequently erupted one of the most devastating wars of this century and the total breakdown of the League of Nations and international law as arbiters of relations among nations. That is not a vain and propagandist analogy, for while the motivating theoretical frameworks are identical in both movements and cataclysmic culmination of one came with the massive deluge of the Second World War . . . the, second namely the Israeli-Zionist thrust, is in the middle stage of its unfolding, stupendous as the early stages have been."

Jordan  
Mr. Nuseibeh  
S/PV. 2388, p.7, Security Council

". . . the Israeli Nazis are at the present continuing to perpetrate their barbaric assault on and genocide against the capital of the independent sovereign state of Lebanon . . ."

Morocco  
Mr. Boucetta  
A/37/PV. 17, p. 52, General Assembly

"The abominable massacre planned by the Israeli army of occupation in the camps at Sabra and Shatila claimed more than 4,000 victims among innocent unarmed Palestinians, including women, children and old people. It reminds us of a similar massacre carried about by Menachem Begin in the Palestine village of Deir Yassin in 1947, and it transcends in atrocity and the manner in which it was committed the deeds of the Nazis during the Second World War."

PLO  
Mr. Terzi  
S/PV. 2379, p. 87, Security Council

"Did they provoke the attack in order to bring us back to a state of war? Is the criminal mentality of the Nazis still there?"

PLO  
Mr. Terzi  
S/PV. 2380, p. 22 Security Council

". . . the developments in Jiddah . . . were answered by the neo-Nazis with some savage attacks which caught unaware scores of Beirut civilians who had hoped to benefit from the relative calm to secure basic needs."

PLO  
Mr. Terzi  
S/PV. 2388, Security Council

"The members of the Herut party and the Irgun Zvai Leumi are known for their identification with Hitlerian doctrines and policies."

Saudi Arabia  
Mr. Allagany  
S/PV 2325, pp. 13-14 Security Council

"It has constantly used the highly publicized Nazi practices against Jews as an excuse for its excesses in Palestine but has failed to realize that its atrocities against the Palestinian people . . . were not incomparable to the atrocities attributed to the Nazi regime during the Second World War."

Syria  
Mr. Khaddam  
A/37/PV.8 pp. 91-92, General Assembly

"Are the Israelis committing their criminal acts to serve their racist Zionist interests or on behalf of the United States and its interests? If Israel's crimes against the Arabs are not committed on behalf of the United States or its interests, why does it provide this support and backing to Israel?"

Syria  
Mr. El-Fattal  
A/37/PV. 40, General Assembly

"Foremost among such [racist] regimes are those of the governments of South Africa and Israel, which are guilty of the most invidious and murderous acts against the people under the yoke of occupation."

Syria  
Mr. Khaddam  
A/37/PV. 8, General Assembly

"No country in the world -- either in the ancient or in the modern world -- has a record as dark as Israel's. It is a record abounding in racist crimes, acts of aggression, wars and crimes against humanity. Israel has thus exceeded all the crimes perpetuated by the Nazis and the fascist forces during the first half of this century . . . In spite of all this the Israelis still claim that they want peace. Is that any different from what Hitler and the Nazis used to say when they were destroying towns and villages and killing the civilian population, including women and children?"

Syria  
Mr. Khaddam  
A/37/PV. 8, General Assembly

"In a notorious statement, reminiscent of the Nazi concepts which were denounced by all mankind, the Israeli Minister of Defense [Sharon] states that he believes that Israel's lebensraum will stretch to include Pakistan in the East and North African countries in the West."

Syria  
Mr. Khaddam  
A/37/PV. 8, pp. 88-90 General Assembly

"Then came the horrible massacres perpetuated by the Israeli forces of occupation in the refugee camps of Sabra, Shatila and other localities. Israeli forces murdered, slaughtered and mutilated more than 1,000 innocent Palestinian citizens, mostly women and children, in a bloodbath reminiscent of the massacre of Deir Yassin, perpetuated by Begin on 9 April 1947. This horrible carnage, which exceeds Dir Yassin and all the crimes of Nazism, confirms that a genocidal war of extermination is being waged by Israel against the Palestinian and Labanese people before the very eyes of the whole world."

Sudan  
Mr. Osman  
A/C. 1/37/PV. 13, Government Committee

" . . . my delegation cannot fail to express regret at the fact that the two racist regimes in Pretoria and Tel Aviv have found the means to acquire and manufacture nuclear weapons."

Uganda  
Mr. Irumba  
Security Council

". . . the twin brothers in the furtherance of racism and aggression --namely, Israel and Apartheid South Africa -- have persistently and arrogantly flouted numerous resolutions of the security council and the General Assembly."

Ukrainian, SSR  
Mr. Martynenko  
General Assembly

"The tragedy of Beirut has brought back to the memory of mankind the darkest scenes from the past -- the bloody crimes of the Nazis in the second world war . . .

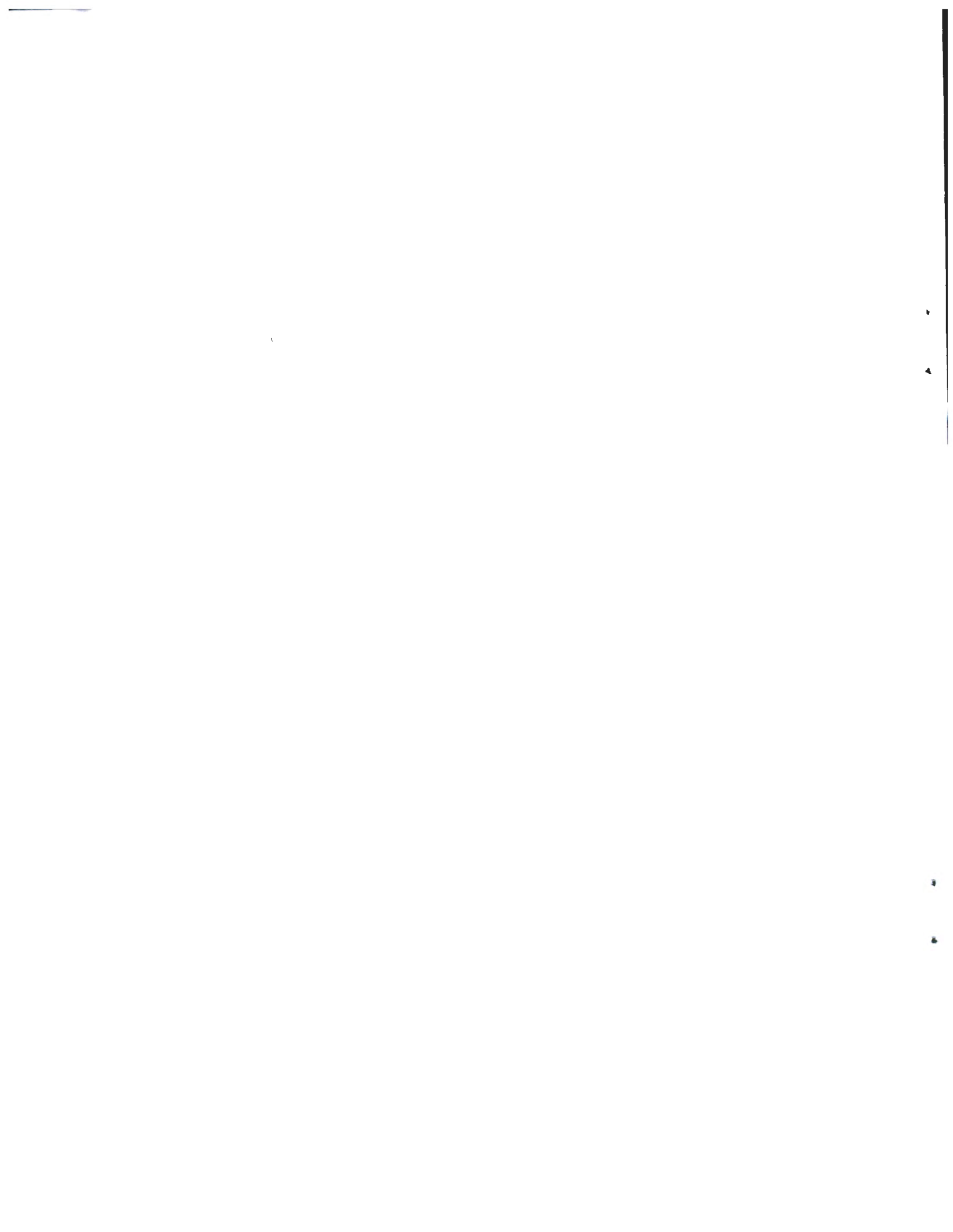
Such brutal behavior by the aggressor would not have been possible without the political protection and extensive military and financial aid Israel has been receiving from its influential American benefactors."

U.S.S.R.  
Mr. Gromyko  
General Assembly

"Could Israel commit aggression and perpetuate genocide against the Palestinians but for its so-called "strategic consensus" with the United States?"

March 1985

85-900-16



NOTES

- 1 Note: Throughout this paper the term "anti-Semitic" will refer to its commonly accepted meaning of "anti-Jewish."
- 2 Richard Bernstein, "Jewish Groups Press UN Chief on Anti-Semitism," The New York Times, 19 June 1984.
- 3 UN document, A/38/PV.88, pp. 19-20.
- 4 The New York Times, 6.19.84.
- 5 The New York Times, 6.19.84.
- 6 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Article 1(1).
- 7 Convention, Article 4(a).
- 8 Convention, article 1(1).
- 9 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 2(1).
- 10 Covenant, Article 24(1).
- 11 UN document, GAOR, Supp. no. 18 A/32/18, para. 84.
- 12 Letter addressed to the Secretary General by the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations, Yehuda Blum, dated 16 January 1984.
- 13 Convention, Article 4(1).
- 14 UN document, A/PV. 2370, pp.71-72.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Letter circulated by Professor Irwin Cotler, dated March 6, 1984.
- 17 Amy Kaufman Gantt and Steven J. Rosen, eds., The Campaign to Discredit Israel (Washington: AIPAC, 1983), p.100.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Jack Greenberg, "Race, Sex, and Religious Discrimination in International Law," in Human Rights in International Law: Legal and Policy Issues (T. Meron ed., 1984), vol. II, p.322.
- 20 See Board of Education of the City of New York v. Harris, 444 U.S.130 (1979).
- 21 See Equal Employment Opportunity Commission 1607.3: "The use of any selection procedure which has an adverse impact on the hiring, promotion, or other employment or membership opportunities of members of any race, sex, or ethnic



group will be considered discriminatory..." 29 CFR 153 (1978, rev. 1 July 1983).

22 Ibid.

23 Blum letter, p.4.

24 Blum letter, p.3.

25 UN document, A/37/PV.8.

26 UN document, A/37/PV. 41, p.16.

27 Covenant, article 20(2), (emphasis added).

28 UN document, A/38/PV.102.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

I. Choice of Research Period. The most accurate method of determining how prevalent is anti-Semitic rhetoric at the UN was to examine as thoroughly as possible, one complete year of meetings rather than random meetings covering a number of different years. After comparing the sources available, both at the United Nations library and at the N.Y.U. library, I chose the UN's 37th year, covering January 1 to December 31, 1982 and including the 37th session of the General Assembly. The reasons for this choice of this time span was the following:

(1) The 37th year (1982) is the most recent for which reasonably complete records exist, and the most recent year for which a complete index exists. This index was important in that it greatly facilitated my research. Furthermore, a number of documents, such as the summary records of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, can only be obtained by requesting the records from the UN librarian using the exact call numbers which are identifiable only through the index.

Finally, the 37th year saw the invasion of Lebanon in June, as well as the siege of Beirut, the tragedy of Sabra and Shatila in September, and the shooting of Arab worshipers at the Temple Mount by Alan Goodman, incidents certain to provoke sharp reactions at the UN.

Method of Research. The first step was to read all debates indexed under the headings of "Israel," "The Middle East," "The Palestinians," etc., using the index to proceedings of the General Assembly and the separate index for the Security Council. I also read records of meetings which discussed South Africa and Apartheid, nuclear weapons in the Middle East and the debates on the Iran-Iraq war. In this research, I read the statements of all delegates, particularly though not exclusively, of the Arab countries and the Soviet bloc. These debates include discussions in committees that report to the plenary of the General Assembly, though (with the exception of the First Committee), no verbatim records exist for these bodies.

On completing these records, I skimmed the records of all the other meetings of the General Assembly and Security Council in search of other discussions involving Israel. I found, indeed, a considerable number of relevant meetings which were not indexed, especially of the Security Council. By the time I had completed my research, I had read well over half the records of the General Assembly and the Security Council. My final step consisted in reading all of the records of meetings of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People during 1982 that were available at the United Nations library.

Choice of Library. In my research I used both the UN library and the N.Y.U. library. The N.Y.U. library is the more pleasant of the two, is quieter and stays open much later at night. It has complete records of the General Assembly plenary, the Security Council, and theoretically all the General Assembly committees. In practice, however, its records of committee meetings are not complete.

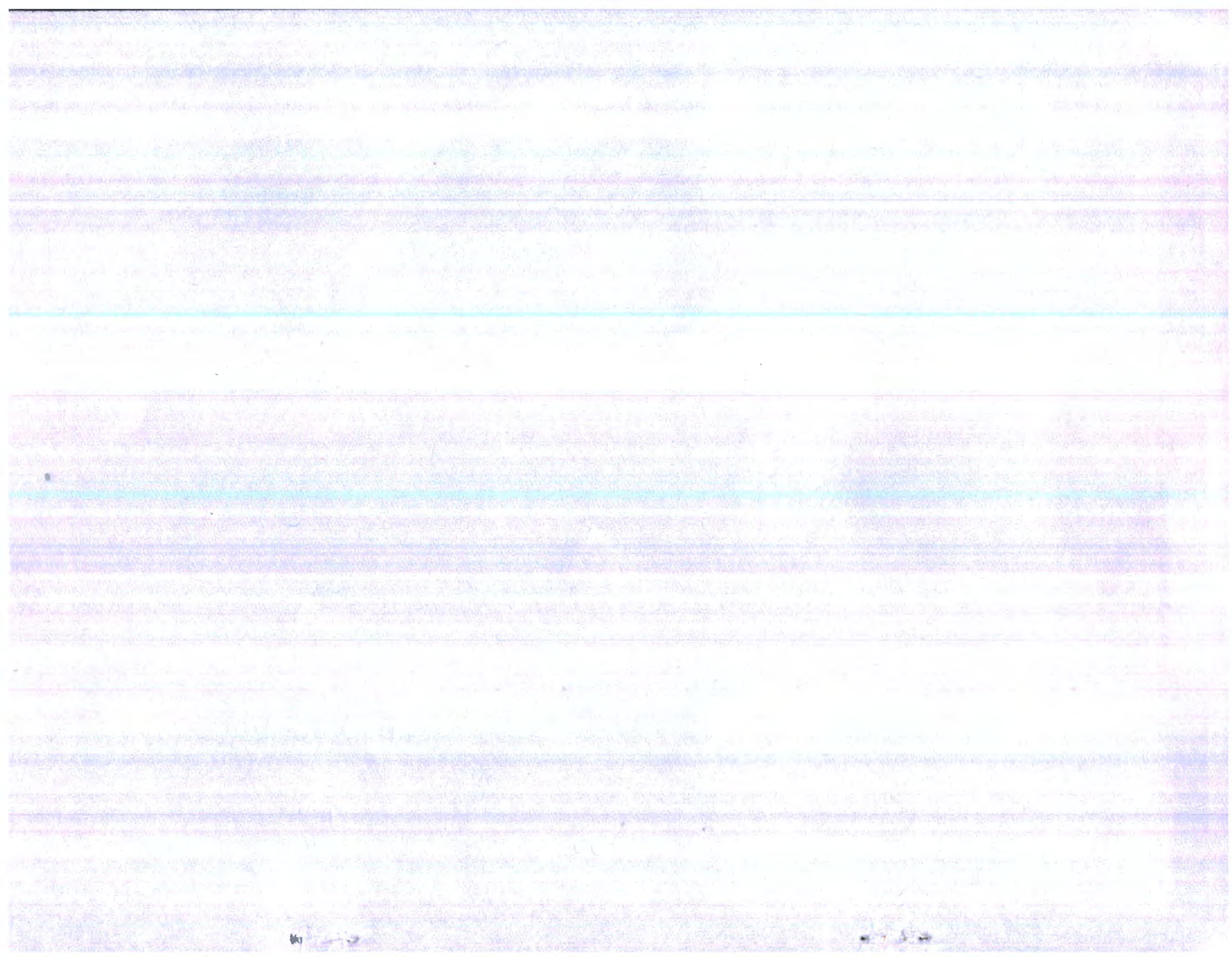
The United Nations library, on the other hand, has as complete records as one can find, and its librarians are more knowledgeable than N.Y.U.'s. Its drawbacks, however, are its limited accessibility, which is restricted to delegates, staff, relatives of staff, as well as selected doctoral and post doctoral students.

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Anti-Semitism

ESSAY

William Safire

A

Vidal, Waldheim, Grant

By A.H

The Presidentia... King... prov... democracy.

WASHINGTON

Norman Podhoretz, editor of Commentary magazine, that incubator of neoconservatism, and his wife, Midge Decter, driving spirit behind the hawkish, bipartisan Committee for the Free World, have on occasion taken the novelist Gore Vidal to task for the way he condemns the "predatory" American past, excoriates the defense budget of the Reagan present, and predicts the doom of our society.

Mr. Vidal, author of "Myra Breckinridge" and "Lincoln," lashed back with an attack in The Nation.

"To make sure that nearly a third of the Federal budget goes to the Pentagon and Israel," writes Mr. Vidal, "it is necessary for the pro-Israel lobbyists to make common cause with the lunatic right."

That's pretty silly, as is Mr. Vidal's proposal to unite the white superpowers against the yellow peril, but it reflects a resentment that burns in the soul of the dovish far left. Then Mr. Vidal gets rough. He recalls a conversation of a generation ago in which Mr. Podhoretz expressed a lack of interest in our Civil War, and writes:

"I realized then he was not planning to become an 'assimilated American,' to use the old-fashioned terminology, but rather, his first loyalty would always be to Israel." He adds about Miss Decter: "Like most of our Israeli fifth columnists, Midge isn't much interested in what the goyim were up to before Ellis Island."

The novelist does not merely charge "pro-Israel lobbyists" with dual loyalty, which is bad enough; he accuses the entire ilk of being fifth columnists, a locution coined by Spanish General Emilio Mola in 1936 to mean "subversives acting in support of an invader." That active disloyalty is its meaning today.

Nor was this accusation an excess of zeal in the heat of the moment. To Miss Decter's observation that "Mr. Vidal does not like his country," Mr. Vidal writes: "Of course I like my country. After all, I'm its current biographer. But now that we're really

The presidentia a rank-and-file p last month's elect resenting 70,000 N tal workers is a power over a re reaucracy buttrea eral Government: rights guaranteed

For nearly th 1199 of the Drug, ) Care Employees symbol of libera tion for tens of th ing poor—the gr women, with b predominating jobs in health ca the last four ye had become the units all over th from its ideals

Gross irregul election, in 1984 tlement of a di that year wer final contract b the union me promised wag

A. H. Raskin labor correspor Times.

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By Ma

In Haiti, as bled plac to iden demons w assume t would bri months have pas President, Jea boarded a waitj Force jet and fl exile in France, sadly clear that Haiti" will be a s cess—and one th can do little to in

charge "pro-Israel lobbyists" with dual loyalty, which is bad enough; he accuses the entire ilk of being fifth columnists, a locution coined by Spanish General Emilio Mola in 1936 to mean "subversives acting in support of an invader." That active disloyalty is its meaning today.

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## The Fifth Column's columnist mixes in

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leveling with each other, I've got to tell you I don't much like your country, which is Israel."

Virulent anti-Semitism? I will stipulate that disliking Israel is not, ipso facto, proof of being an anti-Semite or a self-hating Jew (but as Southey said in 1860, not all Republicans are abolitionists, but all abolitionists are Republicans). Mr. Vidal now insists "no offense of that nature exists" and that Israel is like Camelot compared with Reagan's America.

But consider: To the Decter fair comment that he does not like his country, the U.S., Mr. Vidal says that the Podhoretzes' country is really Israel—and not the United States. That clearly brands all of us who unabashedly like Israel, and who strongly advocate military aid to that democratic ally, as not merely unpatriotic, but as outright traitors.

The Vidal fifth-column charge, more specific than Joe McCarthy's "twenty years of treason," is directed against all "pro-Israel lobbyists" as a class. "Unassimilated" Jews like Norman and Midge "stay on among us," he writes, "in order to make propaganda and raise money for Israel." (Irony: what could be more Zionist than telling Jews to go back where they came from?)

For nearly a decade, with a secret Nazi heading the U.N., the lie was propagated that "Zionism is racism"; now, from the pen of a bestselling American novelist, we have the lie that for Jewish Americans, Zionism is treason.

I pass the Vidal test for assimilatedness: I stay home on both Yom Kippur and Christmas, take it slow during Ramadan, and for six years have been writing a novel about our Civil War. That presumably makes it harder to detect my activity as the Fifth Columnists' columnist; it helps explain my anger at Israel's refusal to punish its rogue spymaster in the Pollard affair.

But it enables me to look back: In an episode described by The New York Times on Jan. 18, 1863, as "one of the deepest sensations of the war," Gen. Ulysses S. Grant issued his infamous

By Ma

In Haiti, as bled plac to iden demons w assume t would bri months have pas. President, Jean boarded a walth Force jet and fl. exile in France, sadly clear that Haiti" will be a success—and one th can do little to in

Mr. Duvalier be try a weak interir is headed by the fo staff, Gen. Henri, spent the past t gling to wrest th from a newly voc 60 people are al paigning to be Pre ernment has not elections. Seven p demonstration Ap bet bloody, conf nervous soldiers a jans.

Mr. Duvalier h down, but the for him remain strong has come to be c "the revolution" he to alter them. Mr. father, François "lier, were only the a lineage of rapa century and a hal Haiti meant little n anism to channel thr and resources from

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## The system still corrupt and inert

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countryside to a tiny leged in the cities, a confined to struggles

Mr. Duvalier's depa ing to change the grim drag behind the country ball and chain. Well Haiti's workers are Eight of 10 Haitians are most a third of Haitia: before their fifth birthc pectancy is 53 years, r come \$300. Once the ric the world, Haiti is fe country in the hemisp the poorest on earth.

The events that brou lier down may proper revolution only in the s somehow gave birth to tians suddenly consci power to influence rule. ways been confident a: them. Drawn from the urban poor and recent into neighborhood com tied to the Raman Cat