

# ISRAFAX

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## AMERICA'S ELECTION & ISRAEL

## CONTENT

- 2 THE U.S. ELECTION & ISRAEL: WINNING *DE IURE*, AND *DE FACTO*
- 4 WEEKLY QUOTES
- 5 SHORT TAKES
- 6 AFTER THE ELECTION: WHAT NOW?
- 7 WILL “PROGRESSIVES” PULL MORE THAN THEIR WEIGHT IN A BIDEN ADMINISTRATION?
- 8 BIDEN: MORE PRO-ISRAEL THAN OBAMA, BUT LESS THAN TRUMP?
- 9 FREEDOM OF THE PRESS OR FREEDOM TO DENIGRATE
- 11 INCREASING ARAB CRITICISM OF THE PALESTINIANS
- 12 RBG: HOW JEWISH WAS SHE?
- 14 ERDOGAN, L’ALLIÉ MÉSALLIÉ
- 16 THE THREAT OF A NUCLEAR IRAN - TIMELINE
- 19 ZIONISM: AN INDIGENOUS STRUGGLE ABORIGINAL AMERICANS AND THE JEWISH STATE
- 20 WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN OGLALA SIOUX JEWISH WOMAN
- 21 CRITICAL RACE THEORY AND ITS DISCONTENTS
- 22 THE IMPORTANCE OF CELEBRATING THE ETHIOPIAN JEWISH HOLIDAY OF SIGD
- 24 THE BEZALEL SCHOOL AND THE ERETZ-YISRAEL STYLE
- 26 CIJR REVIEW OF BOOKS
- 28 SHALOM KHAVERIM FROM CIJR’S TORONTO CHAPTER!
- 29 FROM THE CHAIRMAN

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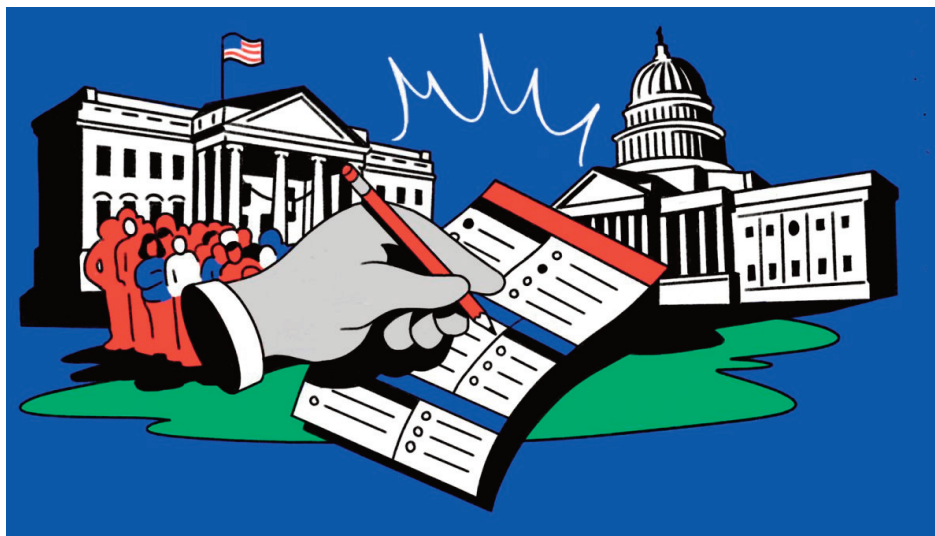
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We welcome your letters, comments and materials, which can be faxed or e-mailed (see cover.)

## EDITORIAL

# THE U.S. ELECTION & ISRAEL: WINNING *DE IURE*, AND *DE FACTO*

Frederick Krantz



THE DISPUTED 2020 U.S. ELECTION MIRRORED DEEP POLITICAL AND SOCIAL DIVISIONS.

It may well be that all the Trump Administration claims of electoral fraud, deception, and un-Constitutional proceeding will come to nothing, and that the Supreme Court, even if it does finally enter the picture before December 14, will fail decisively to set aside the election results. In that case, Joe Biden—already announcing his Cabinet members (mostly Obama Administration hold-overs)—will be inaugurated as President in Washington, DC on January 20, 2021.

But his victory, despite over 80 million claimed votes (a record) is far from imposing. Despite the popular vote total (inflated by the huge pluralities in overwhelmingly blue California and New York), the Democrats’ massive “Blue Wave” victory, predicted by their major-media and pollster echo chamber, never materialized. Trump polled over 74 million votes, itself a record for a Republican candidate, up ten million from 2016, Red candidates increased their numbers in the House and in down-ballot state polls, and it

looks like they will prevail in the Jan.5 Georgia run-offs and hold onto control of the Senate.

In the end, Biden may win *de jure*, formally (though the issue is not yet irrevocably decided), but if so, the Republicans and Trump will in key respects have won practically, *de facto*. In this regard, the election, claimed fraud and all, is a stand-off.

And insofar as Israel is concerned, the Jewish state’s situation—despite inevitable tensions associated with returning Obama-era personnel and policies (above all, legitimate anxiety about Palestinian and Iranian diplomacy)—nevertheless remains, in essential respects, strong. And with two months remaining in Trump’s term, some M.E. surprises—as with Netanyahu’s meeting Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Saudi Arabia, and the recent assassination, in Teheran, of Iran’s chief nuclear-weapons scientist—may yet be in store.

The Democrats, despite immense ex-

penditures and the monolithic support of a *Pravda*-like media suffering badly from Trump Derangement Syndrome, have the slimmest House majority since after WWII. (Very interestingly, even while winning the California vote by a 2:1 margin, they lost the Proposition 16 California affirmative-action referendum by 54-47%.) And continuing Republican control of the Senate will give wily Majority leader Mitch McConnell the legislative whip-hand.

Already, House Democratic moderates are blaming Pelosi and Schumer for not reining in the Party's radical-progressive wing, whose espousal of socialist and "Defund the Police" policies (let alone their loud silence on widespread BLM- and Antifa-led rioting and looting) evidently caused much voter defection.

The Republicans' enhanced popular vote was swelled by markedly increased support from Hispanics, blacks, and Asian-Americans. (Even the notoriously liberal and inelastic Jewish vote went up, to about 30%.) The Democrats had immense built-in coastal majorities in California and New York, and among blacks in big cities like Phoenix, Atlanta, Detroit, Baltimore, Chicago, Madison, and Philadelphia, with their traditional well-oiled machine politics, and held on to the high-tech, university, and corporate elites.

But demographics are no longer overwhelmingly on their side—cities are shrinking, and the working class vote—white, black and Hispanic—is beginning to break Red. Trump has effectively rebuilt and broadened the base of the Republican Party, which is turning into the populist party the Democrats used to be, as they become what Republicans once were.

Hence America will have divided government, probably to be resolved in a Red direction in the 2022 Congressional vote, after which 2024 will loom around the corner. Trump if he wishes could no doubt remain the head of the Party and, strengthened by victory in 2022, return as a candidate in 2024. (There are precedents: Andrew Jackson lost an election in 1824 but came back to win in 1832; Grover Cleveland, elected 1884, was defeated in 1888, then returned to win a second term in 1892).

(And should Trump defer, the Republicans have several attractive and dynamic younger potential candidates waiting in the wings: Sen. Tom Cotton [Missouri]. Sen. Josh Hawley [Arkansas], former South Carolina Governor and UN Ambassador Nikki Haley, Sen. Tim Scott [South Carolina] Nor should Mike Pence, who has been an effective Vice-President, be counted out)

Should Biden stand for re-election again in 2024, he would at 82 be the oldest Presidential candidate. Given questions about his current shape, one wonders what his health would be like after four gruelling years. Should he not make it, and be replaced by Kamala Harris, the Democrats would probably be even further weakened—recall that she was the absolute dead last, and earliest withdrawn, Democratic primary candidate in 2020, and was decisively outpointed by Vice-President Pence in their pre-election

debate.)

IF Trump remained titular leader of his Party he would, given his record and nature, act as President-in-waiting, a constant thorn in Biden's side, leading reinvigorated Republicans in contesting his Administration's every legislative and foreign policy move. With COVID-19 finally vanquished by development of effective treatments and widespread adoption of the new vaccines, the memory of his Administration's remarkable pre-corona strengthening of the economy and employment, and achievement of relative international stability and peace, will maintain his base and haunt the Biden Administration.

Nevertheless, Biden will no doubt attempt major departures from key Trump policies, by executive orders if legislative paths are blocked. Domestically, taxes will increase if some of the Democrats' "Green New Deal"-like social and economic plans are adopted. No doubt moves will be made to make good on key pledges—to raise taxes on the "wealthy", eliminate fracking, rejoin the Paris Climate Accords and radically lower emissions by 2035. He and Harris



#### ELECTORAL STRESS IN LEAD-UP TO THE ELECTION

will seek to implement "free" education and universalize Obama-Care, to legislate initiatives to support high-tech companies and enlarge immigration (including removal of restrictions on what Biden refers to as 11, but are probably closer to 20, million illegal immigrants in the US, including the DACA "Dreamers").

In foreign policy, expect a return to Obamian globalist policies—support for the EU and NATO, and some attempt to soften Trump's increasingly resolute anti-China economic and diplomatic stance. (remember the Hunter Biden computer scandal smothered by the pro-Biden media—the Bidens' connection to China may yet return as an issue).

The region to watch above all, however, is the Middle East,

Continued to page 10

# WEEKLY QUOTES



## AMERICANS VOTE FOR PRESIDENT ON NOVEMBER 3, 2020 IN CONTENTIOUS ELECTION

"I think this is the first agreement that we have seen now in almost 30 years of peacemaking that actually reflects realities on the ground and it is not an expression of a wish," – Ambassador Minister Michael Oren, in an interview regarding President Trump's peace deal. (*The Media line*, Feb. 4, 2020)

"The expanding circle of peace will not make an agreement between Israel and the Palestinians less likely. It will make peace between Israelis and Palestinians more likely. Palestinian leaders will increasingly realize that they no longer have a veto over peace and progress in our region, and hopefully, those leaders will ultimately decide to make peace with the Jewish state," – Israeli Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu told the UN General Assembly in a prerecorded video. He referred to the peace agreements between Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Kingdom of Bahrain. (*Times of Israel*, Sept. 29, 2020)

"Networks don't get to decide elections. Courts do." – former NY Mayor of President Trump personal lawyer Rudi Giuliani. He dismissed the media's role in calling the election, arguing that the Trump campaign is still fighting a legal battle to determine the official result adding that added that courts, not news organizations, get to decide elections,

while critics pointed that it's actually voters who ultimately choose the winner. (*Yahoo News*, Nov. 7, 2020)

"We've never had this before where you have pollsters who do all of these analytics, and then they, in concert, create a narrative that one candidate has no chance to win, when they know their methodology is flawed because it's flawed from the record of 2016. And they know it's flawed. And yet they feel that the poll is not to reflect public opinion, but to change it in a predetermined way. That's new," – political columnist and classicist Victor Davis Hanson commenting on the 2020 U.S. presidential elections. (*Epoch Times*, Nov. 14, 2020)

"Allowing China's oppressive and inhumane regime to choose the world investigators on freedom of speech, arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances is like making a pyromaniac into the town fire chief," — Hillel Neuer, executive director of UN Watch. He was commenting on China's appointment to a United Nations Human Rights Council panel, where it will play a key role in picking the world body's human rights investigators — including global monitors on freedom of speech, health, enforced disappearances, and arbitrary detention. (*UN-Watch*, Apr. 3, 2020)

"In perhaps the most obscene defamation – akin to the infamously anti-Semitic blood libels – the Palestinian Authority accuses Israeli soldiers of deliberately spreading the virus among the Palestinian population" – Israeli Ambassador to the UN Danny Danon in an op ed, responding to Palestinian accusations that Israel was not only not helping them protect themselves from the virus, but rather the opposite (which they know is untrue). (*Fox News*, Apr. 22, 2020)

"Among those [expressing condolences for Saeb Erekat's death] were current Labour leader and minister Amir Peretz, one of his Labour predecessors Shelly Yachimovich, Meretz leader Nissan Horowitz and one of his predecessors Yossi Beilin, Furthermore, former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert who had been in jail for corruption, former Israeli minister Tzipi Livni and even Likud Settlements Minister Tzachi Hanegbi. Most of these people falsely stressed that Erekat was a man of peace. They intentionally forgot to mention that, among other things, he frequently supported payments to murderers of Jews," — writes author and journalist Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld. (*Arutz Sheva*, Nov. 16, 2020)

"As a Jewish student at Stanford with a strong commitment to human rights, I often feel excluded from discourse intended to protect minorities. Even on this campus, I have been told by peers and professors that all Jews are privileged, all Jews are rich and cheap, all Jews are white, and all Jews have big noses. The new wave of anti-Judaism includes a new trope: All Jews who support Israel hate Muslims and Arabs. Normalizing these anti-Semitic assumptions has allowed students to freely express aggression and hatred toward Israel and Israelis," – Stanford University student Zohar Levy. (*The Stanford Daily*, May 25, 2020)

# SHORT TAKES

**ISRAEL, UAE AND BAHRAIN SIGN HISTORIC PEACE DEAL TRUMP SAYS WILL MARK 'NEW MIDDLE EAST'** (Washington) — Israel signed historic diplomatic pacts with two Gulf Arab states at a White House ceremony that President Donald Trump declared will mark the “dawn of a new Middle East,” casting himself as an international peacemaker at the height of his reelection campaign. The bilateral agreements formalize the normalization of Israel’s already thawing relations with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain in line with their common opposition to Iran. (*Global News*, Sept. 15, 2020)



**ISRAEL SIGNS SEPT. 15, 2020 PEACE AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES AND THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN**

**POLL: TRUMP TOPS 30% OF JEWISH VOTE, HIGHEST TOTAL FOR REPUBLICAN IN OVER THREE DECADES** (Washington) — U.S. President Donald Trump received the highest percentage of the Jewish vote for a Republican presidential candidate in Tuesday’s election, while former Vice President Joe Biden received the lowest for a Democratic presidential nominee, in 32 years. Trump received 30.5 percent of the Jewish vote, while Biden got 60.6 percent, according to a Republican Jewish Coalition (RJC) survey conducted by Basswood Research and McLaughlin & Associates. (*Algemeiner*, Nov. 4, 2020)

**ISRAELI LAUNCHES HUMAN TRIALS OF HOME-GROWN CORONAVIRUS VACCINE** (Tel Aviv) — The human trial of Israel’s home-grown coronavirus vaccine began Sunday. The latest phase of clinical trials of the corona vaccine developed by the Israel Institute for Biological Research (IIBR) is being conducted at Sheba near Tel Aviv and at Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital in Jerusalem. (*WIN*, Nov. 1, 2020)

**LARGEST NGO OF IMAMS WORLDWIDE ADOPTS UNIVERSAL DEFINITION OF ANTI-SEMITISM** (Baghdad) — The largest nongovernmental organization of imams in the world, the Global Imams Council (GIC), has adopted the widely accepted International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism. The Council’s member-

ship consists of more than 1,000 imams from all Islamic denominations and schools of thought. This makes the GIC the first Imams Council to do so, following Albania, which became the first Muslim-majority country to adopt the definition. (*JNS*, Nov. 4, 2020)

**FROM FRIDAY: IRAQ AND SAUDI-BOUND PLANES IN ISRAELI AIRSPACE** (Jerusalem) — Israeli airspace will now be used by a multitude of Arab countries, including Iraq, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, as part of a new aviation agreement between Israel and Jordan. Jerusalem and Amman signed a deal to open more flight paths over both countries and shorten flight times between Gulf states, the Far East and Asia, and Europe and North America. (*Ynet*, Oct. 8, 2020)

**TRUMP APPROVES SELLING F-22 RAPTOR TO ISRAEL** (Washington) — U.S. President Donald Trump okayed the sale of the F-22 Raptor and precision-guided bombs to Israel. Such a sale would first require the U.S. Congress to overturn a current law barring Washington from exporting the advanced fighter jets. The House of Representatives passed the law in 1998 over concerns that the nigh-unparalleled stealth technology in the F-22 could fall into the hands of Russia or China if the aircraft were sold abroad, including to Israel. Israeli defense officials asked to buy the F-22 — one of the world’s most advanced fighter jets — to maintain Israel’s qualitative military edge

in the region after the U.S. agreed to sell F-35 fighters to the United Arab Emirates. (*Times of Israel*, Oct. 31, 2020)

**HOUSE PASSES BILL TO KEEP SECURITY AID TO ISRAEL, DOUBLE FUNDS TO FIGHT ANTISEMITISM** (Washington) — The U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill that includes the continuation of American assistance to Israel, the restoration of humanitarian and development assistance to the Palestinians, and the doubling of funding for the U.S. State Department’s office that develops and implements policies to combat global antisemitism. The vote tally was 224-189. (*JNS*, July 24, 2020)

**JEWISH GROUPS LOOK TO U.S. CONGRESS AMID ALARMING RISE IN HATE CRIMES DOCUMENTED BY FBI** (Washington) — Hate crimes committed in the U.S. rose to their highest level in more than a decade in 2019, a new report from the FBI disclosed, leading to calls from American Jewish groups for the urgent passage of legislation to counter the trend. The FBI’s “Hate Crimes Statistics, 2019” report recorded 7,314 criminal incidents and 8,559 related offenses as being motivated “by bias toward race, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender, and gender identity” — an increase of 3 percent on the previous year and the highest number since 2008. (*Algemeiner*, Nov. 16, 2020)

# AFTER THE ELECTION: WHAT NOW?

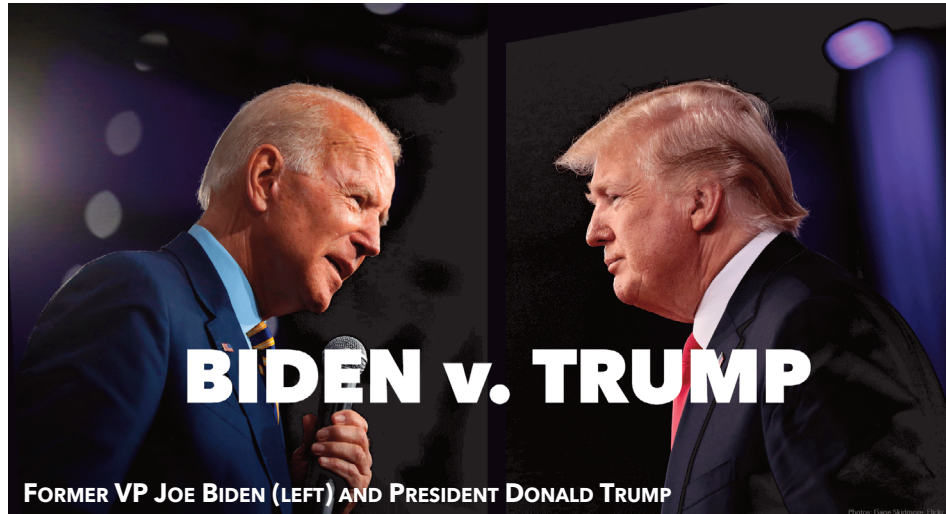
Harold M. Waller

Commenting on the recent U.S. election two days after the fact is a daunting challenge. After all, we do not even know who won! So, we will have to stick to what we do know and then venture some speculation about the things that we do not know for sure.

Looking at the election itself, in many respects it was a replay of 2016. The media, almost uniformly hostile to President Donald Trump, relied on polling that proved to be woefully inaccurate. The media, trumpeting signs of a blowout, raised expectations for a so-called Blue Wave, a sweep by former Vice President Joe Biden and his Democrats. Inspired by the polling data, Democratic politicians gleefully raised expectations about abolishing the Electoral College, packing the Supreme Court, implementing the Green New Deal, abandoning oil, and raising taxes significantly.

"The election can be seen as a repudiation of the ideas put forward by Biden, running mate Kamala Harris, Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and Sen. Bernie Sanders "

All of these brave dreams were smashed by the realization that the Republicans appear to have held the Senate and could block any of the Democrats' ambitious legislative goals. Moreover, the Republicans appear to have increased their House numbers. Though still short of regaining control, their showing put paid to Democratic plans for an ambitious legislative program that leaned decidedly left. So the elec-



tion can be seen as a repudiation of the ideas put forward by Biden, running mate Kamala Harris, Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and Sen. Bernie Sanders.

Although foreign policy was hardly emphasized during the campaign, the Democrats planned to diverge significantly from the policies developed by Trump during his term. Given the president's broad foreign policy powers, a Biden administration is likely to bring renewed interest in and adherence to Pres. Barack Obama's Iran deal. In light of Iran's demonstrated efforts to pursue a nuclear weapons strategy this would be a very dangerous development.

Furthermore with regard to the Middle East, Biden and his colleagues (many probably veterans of the Obama era) are likely to abandon Trump's policy of encouraging deals between Israel and several Arab states, and revert instead to a renewed focus on the Palestinians as the central issue in what has been the Arab-Israel conflict. Such a reversion would seriously undermine the progress in the region over the past four years. Moreover, it is likely that a Democratic administration will get along much less well with a Likud-led government in Israel than Trump has, regardless of whether Binyamin Neta-

nyahu is prime minister.

And what of the Jewish vote? Despite extensive efforts by Jewish Republicans to try to break the Democratic stranglehold on Jewish preferences, a phenomenon that goes back over 80 years, it appears that about 74 percent of Jews voted for Biden over Trump. This of course was despite Trump's efforts with regard to Israel-Arab relations, Israel security, moving the embassy, etc. It certainly appears that the Jews' relationship to the Democratic Party remains as strong as ever.

If Biden does prevail in the post-election skirmishing we can expect a much less ambitious Presidency than what many Democrats had imagined. But it will provide the Democrats an opportunity to lay out the program that they hope to sell to the voters in 2022 and 2024. The question will be whether this will be an amplification of this year's program, socialist leanings and all, or a reevaluation of the party's direction. And if Trump somehow pulls off a victory in the courts, we will likely see an intensification of all that we have endured and celebrated during his term.

*(Harold Waller, a CIJR Academic Fellow and Board member, is a retired Professor of Political Science at McGill University in Montreal.)*

# WILL “PROGRESSIVES” PULL MORE THAN THEIR WEIGHT IN A BIDEN ADMINISTRATION?

Daniel Rickenbacher

The consequences of a Biden Presidential win for Israel and the U.S. Jewish community are still difficult to foresee. Much depends on the influence of the “progressive” movement in a future Biden Administration. During the election campaign, the party’s far-left branch had noticeably lowered the volume of its voice. However, this can be expected to change soon since “progressive” politicians, like AOC, believing themselves instrumental to Biden’s victory, will demand a share of the spoils.

The current Biden platform contains both “progressive” and more traditional Democratic demands, which often clash with each other. Therefore, at the heart of the future Biden administration will be an unsolvable conflict, which will inevitably affect its policies. Let us look, for instance, at foreign policy. On the one hand, the Biden platform alleges that “systemic racism... persists across our institutions today.” On the other hand, it demands a leadership role for the U.S. in the international arena. However, if the U.S. is so thoroughly racist and corrupted as the Biden campaign claims – notably after 16 years of Democratic Presidents in the last 30 years – why should the U.S. assume a traditional leadership role in the international arena?

The many formerly Republican foreign policy experts, and other pragmatists who joined the Democratic bandwagon as they rejected Trump’s America First agenda, appear ignorant of these fundamental paradoxes. Their hopes for normalization may very likely end as pipe dreams. The “progressives” are not seeking a return to the pre-Trump or, rather, pre-Obama era, but a fundamental recalibration of U.S. foreign policy. This recalibration will include, but go beyond, Obama’s foreign policy.

A renewed outreach to Iran and Islamist actors, both domestically and



**LEFT TO RIGHT: DEMOCRATIC CONGRESSWOMEN RASHIDA TLAIB, ILHAN OMER, PRISCILLA PRESSLEY AND ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ**

abroad, can be expected. The progressives will not be successful in pushing their entire agenda, but if the Biden Administration is keen on preserving its power, it will be in no position to reject the “progressive” vision altogether. Therefore, we can expect the Biden Administration to implement many “progressive” policies also in the international arena. And the easiest way out for Biden to pacify his “progressive” base will be to punish Israel, a temptation which will certainly not be resisted.

While the Democrats celebrate Biden’s victory, antisemitic attacks on Jews in New York continue. The perpetrators are usually young black antisemites. Liberal Jews who endorse the left’s anti-racist framework must, for the sake of ideological conformity, deny the reality of antisemitism among Blacks or Muslims. As a result, they have made themselves defenseless against this wave of antisemitism. The “intersectional” alliance, of which they wish to be part, recognizes only the threat of “white supremacism.”

For the coalition to hold together, the alliance must reaffirm this threat continuously. Even an innocuous gesture such as the “ok” sign turned, in this paranoid atmosphere, into allegedly a “white supremacist” greeting practically overnight.

Now, after the election, the need for an external enemy is even greater. On the one hand, more than 74 million voters embraced Donald Trump. On the other, many Hispanic and Black voters rejected the intersectional worldview and thus, in the view of the Far Left, also embraced “white supremacy,” making the enemy seem even more ubiquitous and threatening. There is no room for self-criticism in such an atmosphere, and Jewish Leftists who will include antisemitism among the intersectional enemies will be treated as traitors and excommunicated.

*(Dr. Daniel Rickenbacher is a Kreitman Postdoctoral Fellow, Ben Gurion University, and a CIJR Executive Board member. He lives in Zurich, Switzerland.)*

# BIDEN: MORE PRO-ISRAEL THAN OBAMA, BUT LESS THAN TRUMP?

Bernard Bohbot

Many in the pro-Israel community argue that if Donald Trump fails to win his battle in court, and Joe Biden becomes President in January, the relations between the US and Israel would become tense once again, just as they were during President Obama's tenure.

A Likud lawmaker who insisted on remaining anonymous declared bluntly: "Now they will talk about how Netanyahu severed ties with the Democrats, what price we will all pay and how he — who knows America better than anyone — gambled on the wrong horse." [See here](#).

However, these fears may be exaggerated for two reasons:

Over the years, Joe Biden has been more supportive of Israel than Barack Obama.

The Palestinians are not likely to drive a wedge between Biden and Israel.

How do we know that the former is true? Whereas, many will remember the tiff between Biden (then a young senator) and Israel's former Prime Minister, Menachem Begin, who reacted to Biden's threats to uphold military aid to Israel: "Don't threaten us with cutting off your aid. It will not work. I am not a Jew with trembling knees."

However, during this same exchange, Biden expressed support for Israel's military intervention in Lebanon to dislodge the PLO. Begin even told Israeli reporters regarding Biden that "A young senator rose and delivered a very impassioned speech — I must say that it's been a while since I've heard such a talented speaker — and he supported Operation Peace for the Galilee." [See here](#).

That said, throughout his career, Joe Biden remained a *critical friend of Israel*, one can say a left-wing Zionist. He continuously tried to tone down Obama's condemnation of Israel's policies by opposing his decision to allow the UN Security Council to condemn Israel's settlement activities.

But Biden's support for Israel is not based only on moral considerations. He comes from an ardent pro-Israel family, but as he pointed out in 1986, Israel is, first and foremost, an asset for US security.

"It's about time we stop apologizing for our support for Israel. There's no apology to be made, none. It is the best \$3 billion investment we make. If there weren't an Israel, the United States of America would have to invent an Israel to protect her interests in the region." [See here](#).

Biden knows that Israel is America's sole genuine ally in the region. Other Middle East countries, even the most pro-Western ones, may have pro-American leaders, but their societies remain hostile to the West in general and the US in

particular. Only Israel is pro-American in its fabric. As he once told Netanyahu: "Bibi, I don't agree with a damn thing you say, but I love you."

But more fundamentally, the main reason a clash between the US and Israel is unlikely to happen is very simple. Even if the US presents another peace plan along the Clinton parameters lines, the Palestinian Authority is likely to reject it again, the same way it did the Kerry/Obama framework of 2014.

Interestingly enough, while Obama and Kerry blamed Israel for the failure of the peace talks, Joe Biden pointed out that it was the Palestinian Authority that rejected the Kerry/Obama peace plan. Netanyahu had accepted reluctantly, albeit with reservations.

In other words, Biden is *definitely more pro-Israel than Obama but less than Trump*. That said, the relations between Israel and the US are unlikely to change, as the Palestinians are likely to reject any peace plan that does not leave the door open for further claims concerning the refugee issue. This demand contradicts the Clinton parameters that offered the Palestinians close to 100% of the West Bank but only the return of a symbolic number of Palestinian refugees in Israel.

However, even though Joe Biden is not ill-intentioned towards Israel, one cannot deny that the Democratic Party is no longer Joe Biden's party. The ascending wing of the party, led by people like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC), is fond of Tito's self-management economic model (she wants to turn all corporations into coops).

AOC boycotted the commemoration of the 25th assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, comparing him to a slave-owner, something that even the Palestinian Authority did not dare do. And even if the "squad" is still smallish, so far, it had tremendous influence over the Democratic Party. Neither Nancy Pelosi nor Joe Biden had the guts to confront them. Not because they are cowards, but probably because they know that, pretty much like the last Roman Emperors who gave in to all the Barbarians' demands, they are too weak to defeat the "progressive wing" of the Democratic Party.

They know that the protection of the Democratic Party against the crypto-Marxists is not assailable. The hostile takeover attempt has begun, and it may well be inexorable.

The truth of the matter is that the pro-Israel bipartisan consensus in the US is coming to an end. Joe Biden will have a hard time restoring it. Dark years ahead!

*Bernard Bohbot is a Ph.D. student at Université du Québec à Montréal, and a Research Fellow with the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research.*



# FREEDOM OF THE PRESS OR FREEDOM TO DENIGRATE

Prof. Julien Bauer

Once upon a time, people had a rather simplistic view of the world. You were either rich or poor, a democratic society, or a tyranny. The world revered the U.S. dollar, while the Israeli lira, ancestor of the shekel, was considered Monopoly money. When going to Israel, not a frequent event, you would expect to bring along instant coffee and a jar of peanut butter. Try to do that today, and everybody will burst out laughing. But even if the standard of living in Israel has increased considerably, the shekel is a strong currency, and foreigners, including Americans, invest vast amounts of money in Israeli high-tech, many Israelis still continue to feel inferior in face of American power and wealth.

One field where the U.S. leads and Israel follows is the promotion of foolishness. Under the influence of post-modernism, the concepts of history and the future do not exist, only the immediate moment is real. Similarly, everyone ridicules the notions of true and false, right and wrong, because everybody knows or should know that where all are equal, "narrative" is more important than facts. Along these lines, reliable journalism that distinguishes between facts and opinions based on these facts is no more. The last few years have provided a new norm: denial of reality, non-stop attacks against governments, justified or not, demonization of political leaders, and discourses based not on legitimate differences in views but on prejudice and blind hatred.

In this race to folly, the U.S. is the front runner, Israel not far behind.

In 2016, when contrary to all predictions, Donald Trump was elected President, a massive demonstration accompanied his inauguration under the banner of "The Resistance." Many political science terms originate



ISRAELIS RALLY AGAINST PM BENJAMIN NETANYAHU

from the French, such as "left, right, Jacobins, Girondins, decentralization," etc. The word "Resistance" derives from the opposition of a handful of French citizens against France's Nazi occupation. To demonstrate under the banner of "resistance" against the United States' democratically elected President is to compare him to Hitler. The underlying principle? Everything is permissible if it is against Trump.

For four years, this principle was unceasingly asserted: Trump was accused of working for Russian President Vladimir Putin, and the creation of an atmosphere of hatred towards Trump led to his impeachment. In this climate of delirium, the media played a significant role. If Trump gets the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain to sign a treaty with Israel, the media hides or downplays it. If there are riots in American cities, they are either not reported or disguised as peaceful. If Covid-19 plays havoc with the American population, as it has done throughout the world, blame Trump, because he is a murderer. Social media, which allows the ayatollah to

sprout antisemitic propaganda, enables anyone to censure the United States President when they do not like what he says.

Lies, demagoguery, censorship, every erratic behaviour is legitimate if the only goal is to get rid of Trump.

As in the past, what happens in America directly influences Israel. If the U.S. creates an atmosphere of hate against the President, why, some Israelis ask themselves; can't we do the same against the Prime Minister? Change Trump for Netanyahu "et voilà, le tour est joué." Critics of Israeli government policies criticize Bibi, not the policies. After all, it is difficult to speak against Israel's economic progress, which remains healthy despite the pandemic. It is, similarly, difficult for Israelis to criticize the U.S. Embassy moving to Jerusalem or peace with the UAE, Bahrain, and Sudan. But all that is secondary: the main goal is to get rid of Bibi.

In that endeavor, the Israeli media are no better than those in the United States. They present weekly demon-

strations against Netanyahu as within the law, despite violating Covid-19 rules. A typical "spontaneous" demonstration on Balfour Street includes red flags - a nod to communism -, black flags - hello anarchy -, and sometimes Palestinian Authority flags - hooray PA, with its policy of "pay-for-slay" -, with some LGBT flags added for color.

Even better, at a recent anti-Bibi demonstration, they treated protesters to a free massage. Believe it or not,

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### Continued from page 3

where traditional liberal-Democratic "two-state" pro-Palestinian, as well as pro-Iranian, attitudes will no doubt return. (Biden has already named his foreign policy adviser, Anthony Blinken, a shaper of the JCPOA with Iran, as Secretary of State.)

Whether the decisive turn taken by Trump in support of Israel is reversible is, however, moot. Jerusalem as Israel's capital seems irreversible, although pressure on settlement expansion in the Territories, and the Golan, will surely increase. (Netanyahu, backed by Trump, will no doubt— even while in contact with the incoming Administration— move as expeditiously as possible to create irreversible *faits accomplis* before January 20th. Again, Bibi's recent visit to Saudi Arabia and direct talks with Prince Mohammed bin Salman may well be a tip-off.)

Syria, under Russian influence, seems to have stabilized (though Iranian attempts, with Hezbollah's aid, to establish permanent bases there have recently drawn Israeli military interventions.) Most importantly, Egypt is relatively stable; US withdrawal from Afghanistan and Iraq, though staccato, on-again off-again, is probably inalterably under way. Lebanon is, and will remain, a basket case, though opposition to Hezbollah is rising; and Libya, despite its oil, remains divided and is marginal.

The Saudi-backed Sunni pro-Israel movement, reflected in the Abraham Accords, is—given Iranian Shi'ite expansionism—a solid new fact of regional life. Turkey's revival of Ottoman-Islamist imperialism under Erdogan continues (see Azerbaijan and Libya, Syria, Greece and Cyprus, and Jerusalem). Istanbul, which buys advanced Russian anti-aircraft missile systems even as it retains NATO membership and attacks France for its self-defense against internal Islamic terrorism, is a wild card.

The key focus here should be on Biden's pledge to reinstall the nuclear deal with Iran cancelled by Trump. Here again, reality, reinforced by Iranian intransigence and unforced errors (including patent attempts to hide expanded nuclear preparations, and demands for "reparations" from the U.S. as part of any reconciliation) may nevertheless preclude any effective "re-set" of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). (See the "Threat of a Nuclear Iran—Time-Line" in this issue, below pp.18-19)

there were beds on wheels; you climb on top of one, and masseurs do their job. In that sense, Israel does not follow the U.S. but shows tremendous leadership ingenuity. Has one ever heard of political demonstrations replete with massages anywhere else in the world?

This symbiotic relationship between Israel and the U.S. re-

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Continued to page 28

At the same time, many persons whose reputations were marred by Trump's reneging on the nuclear deal (e.g., John Kerry, just named as Biden's "climate Czar") are probably now clamoring for a justificatory resumption of relations. Biden has a reputation for foreign-policy missteps, and may act precipitately, perhaps by invoking "executive privilege", to force changes without effective safeguards. In that case the international law principle of *necessitas non habet legem*, "Necessity knows no [restraining] laws", invoked when a state's very existence is threatened, may come into play. If Jewish sovereignty and power mean anything, it is that the Jewish people will never again suffer the existential threat of a second Holocaust.

Israel retains the ability, and clearly has the will, to use last-resort force if necessary in order to neutralize threatened Iranian nuclear attack. (In this regard, it is no accident that Trump has just authorized the sale to Israel of America's—and the world's—most advanced fighter-bomber, the F22, capable of rapidly carrying bunker-busting "daisy-cutter" MOP bombs, undetected by radar, to Iran.)

To conclude: while not underestimating a Biden Administration's will to undo Trump's domestic and foreign policies, the *de facto* Republican victory will largely offset any final *de jure* Democratic win. (And although holding on to the Senate seats is crucial, it should also be pointed out that, even in the event they are lost, in his first term Obama controlled both the House and the Senate for two years, yet so complicated and tortuous are DC's legislative processes that he could not get key legislation passed.)

A Biden Administration, internally divided and opposed by a large and self-confident Republican minority, and in any case initially preoccupied by having to deal with the deepening Covid-19 and ongoing economic crises, will not be in a good position to implement its more radical electoral promises. Indeed, Biden might well have to make a virtue of necessity and, invoking his somewhat frayed reputation for being a bridge-building moderate, seek bilateral support for shared, and limited, objectives. And should Fortune bring Kamala Harris to the fore before 2024, the inherent weaknesses in the Democrats' situation would only be reinforced.

Hence the regional cooperation between Israel and Saudi-backed Sunni Arab states fearing Iranian Shi'ite expansion, expressed by the Abraham Accords, will no doubt continue and widen, and—sooner or later—be joined by Saudi Ara-

bia. Jerusalem will remain Israel's increasingly-recognized capitol. The Palestinians—never missing opportunities to miss an opportunity—will remain divided and mired in their revanchist miscalculations. And the Trump Iran policy will probably continue as a *fait accompli* resisting any fundamental anti-Israel re-set (see the recent elimination of Iran's nuclear chief scientist Fakhrizadeh).

Hence, despite some apprehension and tensions, and barring unforeseen major eventualities, a new Administration's M.E. policy changes would be largely cosmetic. Israel's strong regional position, reinforced over the last four years by Donald Trump's remarkable M.E. policy, will—economically, politically, technologically, diplomatically, and mili-

tarily—continue.

Two final, related observations. The strength and security of Israel resides in the sovereign Jewish state—decisions about its ultimate well-being will be made in Jerusalem, not in Washington DC, whomever is in charge there. And insofar as resolving the final status of Judaea and Samaria is concerned, the Jewish people, which took over 2,000 years to re-establish the Third Commonwealth, can easily wait for a few more.

*(Prof. Frederick Krantz, an historian. Is Director of the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research and Editor of ISRAFAX)*

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## INCREASING ARAB CRITICISM OF THE PALESTINIANS

Manfred Gerstenfeld

In the margins of the peace agreements between Israel and – mainly – the United Arab Emirates, Arab criticism of the Palestinians has increased. Over the years, observers of the Arab scene found, albeit rarely, some articles of Arab writers saying that the Palestinian rejectionism was wrong. Israel's supporters often gave these texts exaggerated attention.

Nowadays, the numbers of such articles are becoming more significant, even if there are still not very many. One can even begin to distinguish and categorize themes. Some Arab authors have no criticism of Israel but focus on Palestinian rejectionism. They criticize the Palestinians for their adverse wholesale reaction to peace proposals made to them over the decades.

Others emphasize the corruption of the Palestinian leaders and their actions against the interests of their own people. In an interview with the *i24 News*, Dherar Belhou Al Falasi, a member of the UAE Federal Council, stated that "the United Arab Emirates is committed to the Palestinian people, not to Hamas and the Palestinian Authority," which "are both corrupt and murderers."

He added, "the [Palestinian] anger towards the UAE was created because we stopped paying them. We want to pay, and we will transfer funds to the [Palestinian] people – not to Hamas and not to the Palestinian Authority."<sup>1</sup> Falasi said that the Qatari money paid to the Palestinian Authority over the past two years is funding terrorism.<sup>2</sup>

Other Arab authors take umbrage at Palestinian criticism of the recent peace agreements. On September 8, the London-based Saudi daily, *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*, criticized the Palestinian Authority's rejection of the UAE normalization agreement with Israel. It specifically mentioned

<sup>1</sup> [www.jpost.com/middle-east/uae-is-committed-to-palestinian-people-not-hamas-or-pa-uae-lawmaker-647054](http://www.jpost.com/middle-east/uae-is-committed-to-palestinian-people-not-hamas-or-pa-uae-lawmaker-647054)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



**GCC SECRETARY GENERAL DR. NAYEF AL-NAJRAF DEMANDED AN APOLOGY FROM PA LEADERSHIP**

the emergency conference recently held in protest against this normalization by Palestinian factions from Beirut, Ramallah, and online.<sup>3</sup>

The Gulf Corporation Council (GCC) consists of Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. GCC Secretary-General Nayef al-Hajraf demanded an apology from the Palestinian leaders for criticizing the UAE's normalization agreement with Israel. He accused Palestinian leaders of "incitements and threats" during a meeting of the heads of different Palestinian factions.

The GCC issued a statement, which said: "The secretary-general condemned the falsehoods questioning the historic stance of Gulf nations in support of the rights of Palestinians, calling on responsible Palestinian leaders who participated in that meeting, headed by President Mahmoud Abbas, to apologize for these violations and provocative and false statements, which are against the reality of the relations between the states of the Cooper-

<sup>3</sup> [www.memri.org/reports/saudi-columnist-palestinians-have-no-right-judge-arab-countries-wishing-normalize-relations](http://www.memri.org/reports/saudi-columnist-palestinians-have-no-right-judge-arab-countries-wishing-normalize-relations)

ation Council and the brotherly Palestinian people.”<sup>4</sup>

Some authors mention that the Palestinians are ungrateful for the substantial financial help that Arab countries have given them over the years. It is sometimes also noted that individual Palestinians had shown a lack of respect for the peace-making Arab states’ symbols. UAE Quranic scholar, Waseem Yousef, accused Palestinians and Palestinian leadership of disrespecting the UAE flag ,while Israel flies it proudly. Yousef has 1.6 million followers.<sup>5</sup> Even worse, Palestinian people were sent to the streets to burn pictures of UAE Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed.”<sup>6</sup> Yet other authors indicate that the Palestinian conflict with Israel is not of great relevance to many Arab leaders.

There are also more nuanced reactions. In the Israeli daily *Haaretz* Khalaf Al Habtoor, head of an international business conglomerate based in the UAE, wrote: “There is a valid argument that says the Israelis have been intransigent. But the same can also be said for the Palestinians, who still insist on the right of return for refugees in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and elsewhere. Never going to happen, and they know that full well. They would be

<sup>4</sup> [www.trtworld.com/magazine/apologise-for-slamming-the-uae-over-israel-ties-the-gcc-tells-palestinians-39581](http://www.trtworld.com/magazine/apologise-for-slamming-the-uae-over-israel-ties-the-gcc-tells-palestinians-39581)

<sup>5</sup> <https://4il.org.il/2416/>

<sup>6</sup> [www.jpost.com/opinion/palestinian-leadership-is-on-a-collision-course-with-arab-countries-642707](http://www.jpost.com/opinion/palestinian-leadership-is-on-a-collision-course-with-arab-countries-642707)

better off asking the host nations to tear down the camps and allow the refugees the right to work and own their own homes. Refugees pass on false hopes to their children along with the keys to the former homes of their fathers or grandfathers and keep a visceral hatred for Israelis alive down the generations. I believe this is unfair for both generations.”<sup>7</sup>

A significant nuanced reaction also came from former Saudi Arabian intelligence chief and ambassador to the United States, Prince Bandar bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz. In an interview with the Saudi-owned *Al Arabia* television station, he said, “The Palestinian cause is a just cause, but its advocates are failures, and the Israeli cause is unjust, but its advocates have proven to be successful. That sums up the events of the last 70 or 75 years.”<sup>8</sup>

Israel is currently in a kind of honeymoon phase, especially with the UAE. Thus, we might expect additional developments along the lines of the themes mentioned above by Arab authors.

*(Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld, renowned author, and journalist, is a leading authority on anti-Semitism. He is a member of the CIJR International Board and resides in Jerusalem.)*

<sup>7</sup> [www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/.premium-to-the-palestinians-and-my-fellow-arabs-your-hatred-for-israel-achieves-nothing-1.9209799](http://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/.premium-to-the-palestinians-and-my-fellow-arabs-your-hatred-for-israel-achieves-nothing-1.9209799)

<sup>8</sup> [www.nytimes.com/2020/10/06/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-palestinians-israel.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/06/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-palestinians-israel.html)

## RBG: HOW JEWISH WAS SHE?

Abigail Hirsch

Ruth Bader Ginsburg (RBG) passed away Friday evening, September 18, 2020, on Erev Rosh Hashanah. She had served as an Associate Justice on the U.S. Supreme court since 1993 when then-President Bill Clinton nominated her for the position, replacing Justice Byron White.

In commemoration of her passing, Hilary Helstein of The Los Angeles Jewish Film Festival organized an hour-long interview with Julie Cohen, producer of the documentary film *RBG*, which I was privileged to attend.

The following morning, I read Melanie Phillips’ recent post, “*RBG: An American Jewish Justice Warrior*” to the *Guardian*, that highlighted Ginsburg’s Jewish identity. Noting how integral it was to her life, Phillips points out that the newspaper was one of the few media outlets that mentioned RBG’s Jewishness, albeit getting it all wrong.

In the *Guardian*, Godfrey Hodgson had written: “*Ruth was brought up in a Conservative Jewish tradition and learned Hebrew as a child, but abandoned her religion because she was not allowed to join a minyan to mourn her mother’s death when she was 17.*” A minyan is a prayer



gathering composed, according to Orthodox Jewish tradition, of ten men.

He continued, “[In 1993, President Bill] Clinton was anxious to make the Supreme Court more diverse, so Ginsburg’s Jewish religion, which she had given up 46 years earlier, may have counted for more than a lifetime of commitment.”

These comments astonished people who knew Ginsburg well and understood that she had never abandoned her Jewish identity, as she defined it. Instead, Jewishness was

threaded into all her life and work.

Why do non-Jews often get so much about Jews, let alone Israel, wrong? Phillips speculates: *"Many non-Jews, assuming that Judaism is merely a religion, cannot understand why a faith group should be entitled to a state... They have absolutely no awareness that the Jews are, in fact, a historical nation, bound by their own system of law and a common language, history, institutions, and culture, and that they are the only people for whom the land of Israel was ever their national kingdom."*

After complaints, the *Guardian* changed the text to read that Ginsburg *"moved away from strict religious observance after she was not allowed to join a minyan to mourn her mother's death when she was 17. Indignant at that exclusion, she, nevertheless, remained deeply committed to her Jewish identity. ... [Moreover] Ginsburg's Jewish identity may have counted for more than a lifetime of commitment to women's equality before the law."*

So, what was that quintessential Jewish characteristic that any learned Jewish person would have recognized in RBG? Ruth Bader Ginsburg embodied that unique Jewish characteristic that began with Abraham, who sparred, even with G-d on justice matters:

*"Shall the G-d of all the world not practice justice!"* he asked. (Genesis 18:25)

The striving for justice-for-all characterized Justice Ginsburg's life. Even her dissenting opinions were well thought through, and reverberated throughout the broader, as well as the juridical, communities. She was not a constitutional originalist as was Antonin Scalia, but a pragmatic liberal who often focused on gender equality. In Judaism, the pursuit of justice is primary. The very idea of an impartial human court structure derives from the Torah, the Jewish Bible.

The *Torah* writes:

*"Moses and the Israelites were commanded by God to establish courts of judges who received full authority over the people of Israel."* (Exodus 18:21–22, Numbers 11:16–17, 11:24–25; Deuteronomy 1:15–18, 17:9–12)

The *Talmud's Tractate Sanhedrin* identifies two classes of rabbinical courts, called Sanhedrin: a Great Sanhedrin (תבית גדולה) and a Lesser Sanhedrin (תבית קטנה). Each city could have its lesser Sanhedrin consisting of 23 judges. However, there was only one Great Sanhedrin, comprised of 71 judges. Among its other roles, it took appeals from cases decided by the lesser courts. The uneven numbers of judges eliminated the possibility of a tie. The last to cast his vote was the head of the court.

The *Torah* also mandates the impartiality of courts and severely prohibits taking any form of bribes:

*"You must not distort justice; you must not show partiality; and you must not accept bribes, for a*

## "Why do non-Jews often get so much about Jews, let alone Israel, wrong?"

*bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of those who are in the right."*  
(Deuteronomy 16: 18 -20)

Modern societies are no less susceptible to bribery, corruption, and bias than ancient Israel was. According to the United Nations, the most significant impediment to economic growth in less developed countries are lapses in the rule of law. (1). In places where corruption is endemic, it may be impossible to make a living, travel across town, or live peacefully. The UN statute also recognizes that those who have the power to demand bribes are more at fault than those who pay them, for the prohibition is against accepting bribes, not against paying them. (2)

In this regard, Ruth Bader Ginsburg followed Abraham's example.

Ginsburg's Jewish values were equally evident in her private life. She embodied personal integrity: She devotedly kept her word, pursued truth, and followed through on her commitments.

Jeffrey Rosen (3), who recently published a book on her life entitled *"Conversations With RBG: Ruth Bader Ginsburg on Life, Love, Liberty, and Law,"* and Dahlia Lithwick (4), senior editor at *Slate*, recorded a memorial interview for the *Jewish Book Council* shortly after her passing. They remark how devoted RBG was to family, notably to her mother, who had been ill for several years and died a day before Ruth graduated from High School. Later, while she and her husband were attending law school, her husband was diagnosed with cancer. Throughout his illness, she took care of his medical needs and kept up with both their classes while raising their infant daughter.

Rosen and Lithwick then reminisce about her life, teasing out extraordinary aspects of her character. They highlight her remarkable capacity to care about others, to remain focused on her goal, and her insistence on not succumbing to useless anger in the face of rejections and challenges. *"She always said, 'Get the work done but do it without making enemies,'"* Lithwick remarks in an *Amicus* podcast.

The two also speculate on how RBD's Jewishness and immigrant status may have contributed to her remarkable personal vision. Lithwick notes that Ginsburg *"was always acutely aware of being an outsider. She describes driving by signs that said 'no dogs, no Jews' on establishments as a*

child, and how much that affected her.” She further notes “... all the doors that were closed to her because of gender, because of Judaism. I think there is something about being an outsider, an outsider in America that was deeply Jewish for her. And when she talked about why Jews were drawn to the law in America, she always said it was because they couldn’t do a lot of jobs. Even within the legal professions, they couldn’t take whatever specialty they wanted, there were some Jewish tasks that you were allowed to do, and there were some that you were not.”

Along with her extraordinary mind and capacity to imagine herself “in the shoes of the other,” Rosen and Lithwick point out how generous she was with her time and energy when it came to sharing her ideas with the next generation.

It is perhaps a divine irony that Justice Ginsburg passed away on the eve of *Rosh Hashanah*, the New Year, when, according to Jewish belief, all the world - every individual

and every community - is judged by the Supreme Judge - the Divine One. Dying on a Jewish Holiday is regarded as passing by the Kiss of the Almighty, a death reserved for the righteous - the *tzadik* - that I believe she certainly was.

*(Abigail Hirsch is a documentary filmmaker and a member of the CIJR Executive Board. She is currently documenting the life of Chazan Moshe Kraus.)*

- (1) United Nations Development Programme, *Issue Brief: Rule of Law and Development* (New York: United Nations, 2013), 3. *Bible Commentary / Produced by TOW Project*
- (2) Bribery and Corruption (*Deuteronomy 16:18-20*)
- (3) Jeffrey Rosen, *Conversations with RBG, Ruth Bader Ginsburg on Life, Love, Liberty, and Law*; NY: Henry Holt and Company, 2019
- (4) Dahlia Lithwick writes about the courts and the law for *Slate* and hosts *Amicus's* podcast.
- (5) You can watch the entire interview on the Jewish Book Council's YouTube Channel.

## ERDOGAN, L'ALLIÉ MÉSALLIÉ

Dr. David Bensoussan

Le président turc Erdogan se veut être partout et s'ingère partout il le peut. La déstabilisation fait son affaire et il ne rate jamais une occasion pour verser de l'huile sur le feu.

Lors du printemps arabe, la Turquie était admirée par plusieurs pays arabes qui voyaient en elle un modèle de pays musulman et démocratique. Ce capital de sympathie a été dilapidé et Erdogan s'est aliéné la plupart des pays arabes. À commencer par l'Égypte, car Erdogan n'a jamais admis l'éviction du président égyptien Morsi associé à la mouvance des Frères musulmans. Il exècre le président syrien et intervient militairement en Syrie pour mieux faire la chasse aux Kurdes ; il envoie des mercenaires prendre part à la guerre civile en Libye et en Azerbaïdjan. Il invective encore et encore l'Arabie saoudite au sujet de l'assassinat du journaliste saoudien Khashoggi ; il offre son soutien aux Libanais sunnites, aux Houtis du Yémen et au Hamas à Gaza.

Son seul allié est le Qatar qui a investi 18 milliards en Turquie et qui héberge sur son territoire une garnison de 5 000 soldats turcs. Le Qatar appuie le mouvement des Frères musulmans dans le monde entier et c'est sur cette



**RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN (LEFT) AND TURKISH PRESIDENT RECEP TAYYIP ERDOĞAN**

mouvance qu'Erdogan compte également pour appuyer ses ambitions néo-ottomanes. Pour ce qui est du Qatar, des milliards de dollars « non déclarés » sont offerts par le Qatar aux universités américaines, lui permettant d'y couvrir des cellules islamistes en zone de confort. En outre, le Qatar est boycotté par les pays du Golfe et les exportations de

la Turquie vers ces pays sont en déclin.

Mais il y a plus que cela : Erdogan remet en question la création des pays arabes qui a suivi le démantèlement de l'Empire ottoman. Il affirme également : « Jérusalem est à nous. » Il remet en question le contrôle des lieux saints par l'Arabie saoudite. Et cela est loin de le satisfaire : aussi, il remet en

**Il affirme également : « Jérusalem est à nous. » Il remet en question le contrôle des lieux saints par l'Arabie saoudite. "**

question la partition des zones économiques de la Méditerranée orientale.

Angela Merkel qui n'est pas d'accord à admettre la Turquie dans l'Union européenne se fait traiter de nazi. Macron qui se prononce contre l'isolationnisme islamiste se fait traiter de déficient mental.

L'Union européenne (UE) menace la Turquie de sanctions en regard de ses agissements à Chypre et en Méditerranée orientale. D'autre part, l'UE éprouve un certain malaise avec les projets grandioses d'Erdogan visant à édifier un nombre élevé de mosquées et d'écoles en Europe, visant ainsi à conserver son influence sur les millions d'émigrés turcs.

#### UN DESPOTE OTTOMAN

Erdogan agit en despote dans son pays où les droits et libertés sont en chute libre. En l'espace de deux ans, 150 000 personnes, dont des juges des professeurs, des journalistes, des fonctionnaires et des militaires, ont été arrêtées et emprisonnées. Plusieurs tentatives visant à bloquer les réseaux sociaux turcs ont été faites. Les médias turcs ont été muselés : plus de 200 organes médiatiques ont été fermés. Plusieurs dizaines de milliers de personnes dont des centaines de mineurs ont été traduites en justice pour manque de respect envers Erdogan, la pénalité pouvant aller jusqu'à 4 ans de prison.

#### UN ALLIÉ SUSPECT

Tant pour les États-Unis que pour la Russie, la Turquie est un allié suspect.

Celle-ci est considérée comme la brebis galeuse de l'OTAN, car Erdogan n'arrête pas de vilipender l'Amérique et l'Occident. IL commande un système antiaérien russe (S-400) et de ce fait se fait éliminer du programme de construction et d'achat de l'avion furtif américain F-35. Aussi, l'adhésion de la Turquie à l'OTAN est de plus en plus remise en question. En outre, une pénalité de plusieurs milliards de dollars plane sur la banque turque Hallmark accusée d'avoir aidé l'Iran à enfreindre l'embargo américain.

Erdogan est présumé être allié à la Russie. Or, les accrochages entre militaires russes et turcs sont nombreux tant en Syrie qu'en Libye. Du fait qu'il veuille prendre trop de place au Haut-Karabagh, la Russie l'attaque de façon indirecte en bombardant des miliciens parrainés par la Turquie en territoire syrien et en brouillant électroniquement les drones turcs d'Azerbaïdjan qui ne peuvent achever leur vol qu'en piqué.

#### LE MILITANT ISLAMISTE

À ses débuts sur la scène politique, Erdogan a savamment caché son jeu en simulant être démocrate ; par la suite, il a progressivement et systématiquement détruit l'héritage laïque d'Atatürk en écrasant sur son chemin toute opposition potentielle.

Il habille sa verve d'audace vengeresse en se posant effrontément comme la victime de la zizanie qu'il continue d'attiser.

En baisse de popularité dans son propre pays, il veut se montrer comme le chef de file du soutien aux Palestiniens si ce n'est du monde arabe. Il a adopté le slogan populiste et accrocheur de l'islamophobie en Occident pour rallier à ses côtés des masses musulmanes.

Ce dernier slogan décrie une islamophobie plus imaginaire que réelle. Erdogan tente d'instrumentaliser la religion de toute son énergie, haranguant les masses en vue de les rallier derrière sa posture califale. Il veut se poser en héros du panislamisme, célébrant en toute pompe la capture de Constantinople et convertissant Sainte-Sophie en mosquée.

#### EN VUE DES PROCHAINES ÉLECTIONS

Erdogan est en perte de vitesse. Sa popularité baisse en Turquie même : l'économie turque est en sérieuse difficulté ; plus de 25% des jeunes âgés de 15 à 34 ans sont au chômage et beaucoup cherchent à émigrer ; 26 % des diplômés d'université ne trouvent pas d'emploi. Les maires d'Istanbul et d'Ankara seront des rivaux de taille aux prochaines élections prévues pour 2023.

Erdogan cherche à arborer des victoires en s'interposant dans les conflits régionaux et en vantant les armements turcs. Il sait que la porte de l'UE est close. Néanmoins, il fait pression pour que l'UE revoit l'entente douanière actuelle, annule l'apposition de visas d'entrée et augmente son assistance financière aux réfugiés de Syrie qu'il menace de repousser vers l'Europe.

Il met de l'espoir en des gisements d'hydrocarbures découverts en Mer noire. Il compte aussi sur la construction d'un nouveau pipeline azéri passant par la Géorgie pour faire de son pays une plaque tournante de la fourniture d'hydrocarbures à l'Europe. Ces perspectives n'enchantent pas la Russie et Erdogan aura grand mal à trouver les capitaux et les technologies de pays occidentaux pour l'exploitation des hydrocarbures en Mer noire, alors qu'il les vilipende profusément.

Au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, l'Empire ottoman était considéré être « l'homme malade de l'Europe. » La Turquie d'aujourd'hui devient « l'homme qui rend malade l'Europe et pas seulement l'Europe. »

Il faut s'attendre à d'autres coups d'éclat si Erdogan veut continuer à attiser la ferveur nationaliste ottomane d'ici les prochaines élections.

*(David Bensoussan est professeur at l'École de technologie supérieure et membre du conseil exécutif du ICRJ.)*

# THE THREAT OF A NUCLEAR IRAN - TIMELINE

With the clock possibly ticking on the Trump administration, President Donald Trump may over the next two months have unfinished business regarding Iran's nuclear ambitions. During his recent trip to Israel, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told the *Jerusalem Post* that all options remained on the table, including the military option.

Only the week before, the *NY Times* broke the story that President Trump was considering attacking Iran's nuclear facility at Natanz, but was dissuaded by his advisors (who included VP Mike Pence, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo; and Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller).

This alleged meeting took place a day after the IAEA, the UN's nuclear watchdog, reported that Iran had expanded its enriched uranium reserves at Natanz, Iran's leading uranium enrichment site. Now at 2,449 kilos, roughly 12 times the amount permitted under the 2015 nuclear agreement, Natanz is fully operational. Most of this reserve was in the form of UF<sub>6</sub> gas, another violation of the JCPOA. Israeli intelligence has estimated

that Iran has today enough enriched uranium to produce one atomic bomb by the end of the year and a missile capable of carrying and delivering a bomb within two years. The IAEA disagrees, claiming that Iran does not yet have enough enriched uranium to produce a nuclear bomb.

The rumour mill is churning full speed after PM Netanyahu, and Mossad Head Yossi Cohen met with Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in Neom, Saudi Arabia to discuss Iran, a meeting Saudi Arabia denies.

A spokesman for the Iranian Executive Ali Rabiei responded to the *NYTimes* report by stating, "Any attack on the Iranian people will have a crushing response." He is skeptical that such an attack will take place.

– Machla Abramovitz

## 'FATHER' OF IRAN'S NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROGRAM GUNNED DOWN

Nuclear physicist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, known as the "father" of Iran's secretive nuclear weapons program, was assassinated on Friday, November 27, in the town of Absard, east of Tehran, allegedly at the hands of Israeli gunmen. The U.S.'s participation is unknown.

A brigadier general in Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, singled out Mr. Fakhrizadeh as the leader of Iran's Amad project during a television presentation where he revealed Israel's seizure of 5,000 Iranian documents. These documents exposed Iran's continued work on what Israel says is its military nuclear program, which Iran claims to have disbanded in 2003.

Instead, the program was clandestinely kept alive by an organization within Iran's defense ministry called the Organization of Defensive Innovation and Research (S.P.N.D.) according to PM Netanyahu.

On October 16, 2020, Alireza Jafarzadeh, Deputy Director of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (N.C.R.I.)

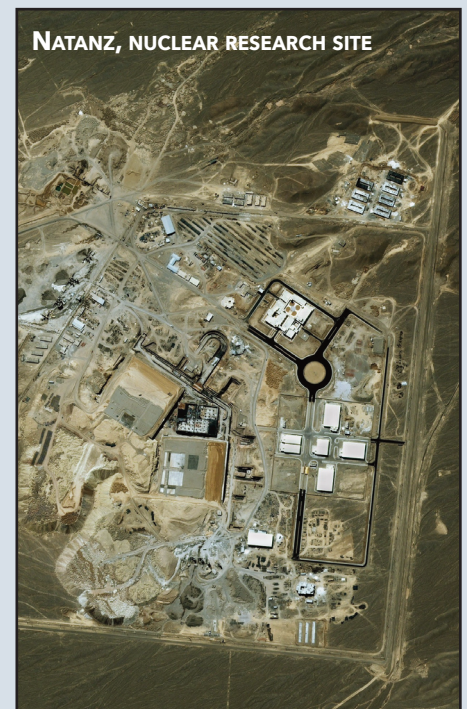
U.S. Representative, and Soona Sam-sami, U.S. Representation, publicly confirmed PM Netanyahu's allegations. They released information about Iran's new center, including its location and activities on its nuclear program.

They further alleged that the center was built in 2012 before the J.C.P.O.A. and continued after its signing. Furthermore, the center is working with the S.P.N.D., which is tasked with the research and development of nuclear weapons, on tests of preliminary explosions and recording its results by military-grade sensitive seismometers, which it continues to purchase.

**"You will not be surprised to hear that S.P.N.D. is led by the same person who led Project Amad, Dr. Fakhrizadeh,"** PM Netanyahu said.

Responding to the assassination, Iran quickly threatened retaliation. **"We will not rest until we track down and take revenge on those responsible,"** said Brig. Gen. Mohammad Bagheri, the chief of staff for Iran's armed forces.

Former C.I.A. Director John Brennan,



who served under Obama, called the killing **"a criminal act & highly reckless"** in a tweet. He urged Iran to resist the temptation to retaliate.

The Pentagon's former top Middle East policy official, Michael P. Mulroy, said Fakhrizadeh's assassination was **"a setback to Iran's nuclear program."**

– Machla Abramovitz



# THE THREAT OF A NUCLEAR IRAN - TIMELINE



NATANZ NUCLEAR FACILITY

## HOW DID WE GET TO WHERE WE ARE?

Based on information obtained NTI and The Cairo Review

### THE OBAMA YEARS

**2009** — **“The United States wants the Islamic Republic of Iran to take its rightful place in the community of nations.”** – President Barack Obama, Nowruz (Iranian New Year) message to Iran’s **“people and leaders.”**

IAEA condemns Iran for developing the secret uranium enrichment site near Qom; Iranian President Ahmadinejad announced that Iran had produced 20% enriched uranium and had the ability to enrich it more; Ali Akbar Salehi, the head of the AEOI, announced that Iran had identified close to twenty sites for future nuclear enrichment plants and that construction work on two of the plants would begin **“within the year.”**

**2010** — IAEA - Iran has now produced a stockpile of nuclear fuel that would be enough, with further enrichment, to make two nuclear weapons; Bushehr nuclear plant completed; The Stuxnet cyber attack at Natanz nuclear facility that disrupted centrifuge activity for months, was attributed to the US and Israel; bomb

blasts in Tehran killed a nuclear engineer and injured a scientist.

**2012** - SWIFT international banking network bars electronic transactions by Iranian banks; Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu warns that Iran’s stockpile of enriched uranium – traces of 27% enriched uranium were found at the Fordo facility - could put it within reach of a nuclear weapon by mid-2013; hints at military attack if Iran fails to heed **“red line.”**

**2013** - **“All options are on the table. The United States obviously has significant capabilities,”** – President Barack Obama tells Israel TV; IAEA - Iran produced 324 kg of 20% enriched uranium; Hassan Rouhani wins Iranian Presidential elections, and signals his intent to resume negotiations with the P5+1; first round of talks takes place in Oct 15-16; the P5+1 announced on November 24th that they had reached an agreement on a *Joint Plan of Action (JPOA)*, as well as a *Framework for Cooperation (FFC)* binding both parties to cooperate further **“with respect to verification activities to be undertaken by the IAEA to resolve all present and**

**past issues.”**

**Mar 3, 2015** – Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu addresses the US Congress in person: He warns against what he calls a **“bad deal”** being negotiated with Iran to freeze its nuclear program, denouncing it as a **“historic mistake.”**

**July 14, 2015** — the P5+1 States and Iran signed the **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)**; On July 20, 2015: the UN Security Council adopted UNSCR 2231 endorsing the plan. Seeking to hold the Obama administration accountable for the deal, the U.S. Congress passed the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015, which requires the president to certify Iran’s compliance with the deal to Congress every 90 days. Congress never passes the JCPOA, which was severely criticized for its innate weaknesses.

### THE TRUMP YEARS

**2018** President Donald Trump criticized the JCPOA, and challenged European allies to **“join with the United States in fixing significant flaws in the deal”** or face U.S. withdrawal from the deal, which he had called a **“disaster”** and **“the worst deal ever negotiated”** during his campaign for the White House. He told AIPAC, in March, that his **“Number-One priority”** would be to **“dismantle the disastrous deal with Iran.”**

**2019** Speaking to the UN, Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu drew attention to the Turqazabad site in Tehran. In 2019, IAEA inspectors took environmental samples from the site that showed traces of processed uranium, and has been seeking answers regarding those traces ever since: **“What they [Iran] are telling us from a technical point of view doesn’t add up, so they need to clarify this,”** IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi said.

# THE THREAT OF A NUCLEAR IRAN - TIMELINE

Israeli PM Netanyahu reveals the seizure of over 100,000 documents by Israeli intelligence from what he called **"Iran's secret atomic archives;"** President Trump announced that the US would withdraw from the JCPOA and begin to reimpose nuclear-related sanctions on Iran: sanctions banning the supply of nuclear-related materials and technology and freezing the assets of key individuals and companies related to the program.

Declaring that the deal was **"defective at its core,"** President Trump justified his decision by citing Iranian support for terrorism and pursuit of ballistic missiles, as well as Iran having violated the JCPOA by lying to the IAEA about the existence of its nuclear weapons programs and hiding its massive archive of nuclear weapons. Efforts by the State Department to work with the P5+1 States to correct innate flaws in the deal (force inspectors at Iranian military sites, extend restrictions beyond 2025, and curb Iran's ballistic-missile program) proved unsuccessful; France, the United Kingdom, and Germany issued a joint statement approving the deal, which UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres supported. Russia's Foreign Ministry also reiterated its support for the JCPOA, and further stated that U.S. actions compromised international trust in the IAEA.

**2019** – Iranian production exceeds 300 kilograms of uranium hexafluoride; Iran enriched uranium past 3.67% up to 4.5%; and on September 8, Iran announced that its commitments under the JCPOA would be completely removed. On November 16, Iran notified the IAEA that its stock of heavy water had exceeded 130 metric tons, forgoing all agreed-upon limits on centrifuges.

**2020** – The US kills Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, commander of Iran's Quds Force, in a drone strike; Israeli army intelligence estimates that Iran can have enough enriched uranium to produce one nuclear bomb by the end of the year and a missile capable of carrying a nuclear bomb within the next two years – the IAEA disagrees; IAEA - Iran's growing stockpile of nuclear fuel recently crossed a critical threshold, and it blocked IAEA inspectors from visiting three critical sites; the UK, France, Germany and US call on Iran to allow IAEA inspection teams in all requested sites; mysterious explosions took place at Khojir, near Tehran — a liquid fuel production site for the country's missile program; a blast also occurred deep underground at the Natanz nuclear facility on July 2; In August, Israeli agents kill Abu Muhammad al-Masri, al-Qaida's No. 2, on the streets of Tehran, at the behest of the U.S. (al-Masri, wanted by the FBI for his role in planning the 1998 attacks on U.S. embassies in Africa, had been living freely in an Iranian suburb).



## MILITARY OPTIONS

For Israel, a nuclear Iran is an existential threat, and it is committed to preventing Iran from having a nuclear bomb. Should all else fail, a military strike against Iran's nuclear facilities may be the only option, which the Trump administration reportedly supports. Complicating matters considerably, Iran's nuclear sites are built under cities with large civilian populations.

### Weapons Israel needs to get the job done:

**Bunker Buster bombs** – The US's Massive Ordnance Penetrator bunker busters, or MOPs, are the most effective bomb on the market; still, B-52s with massive loads of smaller ordinance can do the job as effectively. Whereas, previous administrations denied Israel these bombs, President Trump approved their sale, but this requires Congressional approval. There is no indication that a Biden administration will withdraw the legislation from Congress.

**Precision guided missiles, helicopters, and satellites;** President Trump accelerated their transfer.

**Nuclear powered ballistic submarines SLBMs** – Because the cost is prohibitive, Israel developed its own, which remains veiled in secrecy. The submarine is possibly the Pop-eye Turbo, that can allegedly carry a 200-kiloton nuclear warhead. The Dolphin, another submarine, is equipped with tubes for firing guided torpedoes and Harpoon anti-ship missiles, as well as cruise missiles large enough to carry a nuclear warhead.

**F-22 Raptor fighter planes,** which are the world's premier air superiority platform. President Trump recently approved their sale to Israel, which must pass through Congress.

– Machla Abramovitz

# ZIONISM: AN INDIGENOUS STRUGGLE ABORIGINAL AMERICANS AND THE JEWISH STATE

Edited by Nathan Elberg and Machla Abramovitz, NY: RVP, 2020.

The book is available on Amazon

## Barbara Kay reviews 'Zionism: An Indigenous Struggle'

'Zionism: An Indigenous Struggle' exposes the Palestinian appropriation of the suffering of North American native peoples

On March 16, 2003, at the height of the Second Palestinian Intifada, Rachel Corrie, an anti-Israel activist filled to the brim with righteous fury on behalf of the Palestinians living under Israeli control, travelled with a group of comrades-in-arms to Gaza and foolishly positioned herself inside an active combat zone to bruit her political message. She died when an Israeli Defence Force armoured bulldozer ran her down. The incident caused an international furor, with dueling accounts as to fault.

Corrie's anti-Zionist professors had encouraged her to go, having already stoked her receptive mind with images of the Palestinians as a sadly deracinated Indigenous people, their land stolen from them by rapacious imperialist Euro-colonizers.

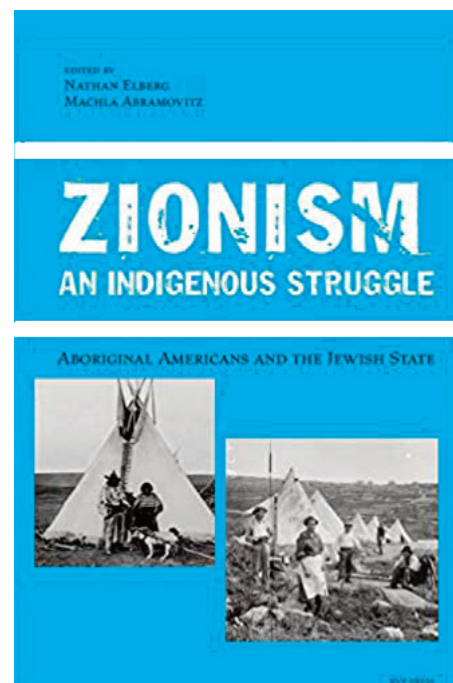
An under-appreciated irony of the story is that Corrie's trip was undertaken as part of a senior-year Evergreen College assignment to link her Washington state home town, Olympia, with Rafah in Gaza as a "sister city" solidarity project. It happens that her own domestic and pedagogical habitat—the territory where Olympia and Evergreen College now stand – had belonged to the Coastal Salish people since 9000 BCE, but in the 1850s was ceded to the White Man through treaties backed by false promises and lies.

Before running off to virtue-signal in Gaza, Corrie should have contem-

plated the hypocrisy of setting herself up on a high horse of social-justice purity regarding Middle Eastern land disputes, when its dainty hooves stood firmly planted on actually stolen land she and her anti-Zionist colleagues would never dream of actually returning to the estimated 56,000 Coastal Salish peoples living in the US and Canada.

There was huge, almost all anti-Israel press around the tragedy, but to my knowledge this aspect of the affair never came to light in the coverage. My introduction to it came from an essay, "The Convergence of the Native American and Jewish Narratives in our Times," by Jay Corwin, a professor of Spanish and Latin American Literature of dual cultural provenance: his Indigenous mother was Tlingit of the Eagle moiety in Alaska, and his Jewish father descended from Galitzianer forebears.

The essay is one of many in a new book, *Zionism: An Indigenous Struggle: Aboriginal Americans and the Jewish State*. And Corwin is one of several authors in the anthology who come to the subject of Indigeneity from the perspective of mixed Jewish-Indigenous provenance. Mining both lived experience and often unusual archival sources, these writers bring fresh, illuminating and evidence-based historical truths to a subject long freighted with a heavy code of Indigenous "correctness" they breezily ignore.



The anthology is dually edited: by anthropologist Nathan Elberg, who has had extensive experience living amongst Quebec's James Bay area Cree Indians, as well as amongst the Eskimos of Quebec's Hudson Bay region and the Inuit of Labrador; and by Machla Abramovitz, publications editor for the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research, a pro-Israel think tank.

The anthology's purpose is to expose and delegitimize the relentless campaign by Palestinians and their left-wing allies in academia and the media to appropriate the suffering of North American native peoples as a propaganda tool for their anti-Israel crusade. Palestinians have co-opted the true stories of native Americans' oppression, land theft, social marginalization, cultural and/or literal genocide to brand themselves as partners in victimization, when in historical fact no such correspondence exists. *Read the full article [here](#) or [here](#).*

# WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN OGLALA SIOUX JEWISH WOMAN: A PERSONAL ACCOUNT: MARA COHEN, ISRANET, 2020

excerpted from 'Zionism: An Indigenous Struggle'

In these days of change, (Aren't they all . . . and haven't they always been) I wanted to share some of my own experience of being born in a liminal place and of a liminal status. Always on the cusp of beginnings and endings, of being between Worlds, and Peoples, and what it means to me as a Jewish Woman of the Oyukpehe Tiyospe "White Horse Creek People," Hehaka Sapa Tiawe "Black Elk," from the Oglala "Scatters Their Own" Band of the Titonwan Lakota "Red Earth People."

In Lakota, the language of my mother's birth people, "lyeska," has taken on a pejorative meaning—literally meaning "Speaks with white mouth." It was first used to identify the children born of unions between those who came from "over the water" and those who are indigenous to this land. These were the children who could speak both parents' language and who had exposure to both cultures. The Tiyospaye, the Lakota extended Family structure, was one where people intermarried with other Peoples, their Ceremonies allowed family members to "Hunka" "Makes Relatives" from outside, and to make them ours. As the whole World is perceived Lakota Way, to be a vast interconnected web of Relatives, therefore one must Respect all. Subsequently, Lakota perspectives were never exclusionary, nor did Lakotas feel particularly threatened by other people's ways. Either the others were tolerated, or they weren't, as relations with other Tribes and Tribal Histories demonstrated. We had no use for cannibals, human sacrifice or the imbalance created by disrespect. By the Lakota way of timekeeping, we moved from Dog Days, when dogs pulled our Travois, as we followed the herds of buffalo across the Grasslands of the North Plains, to Horse Days, when the Sacred Elk Dog came home. We knew little hunger, and the great blossoming of our Culture happened, and then the heartache of the conquest and the loss of freedom that came with Reservation Days, and the ever-abiding hurt of 1893, and the butchery at Wounded Knee.

This was when the "lyeska" label had begun to pick up its negative connotations. Often the "lyeska" used their knowledge of both languages and their relationships with the "other" parent's people, who were now in control, to their personal advantage. And often they encountered the worst of the European prejudices and racism, which they took on as their own, and with which they identified. This is the very definition of being "colonized." We see this happening wherever peoples have been subjected to conquest and dispossessed of their heritage and history. These peoples identify with the oppressor, as the kapos did in the European concentration camps for my father's People. From 1876 until 1978, when the United States allowed the Indian Religious Freedom Act to become law, there were the ongoing depredations of boarding/residential schools where children were



**AS AN OGLALA SIOUX SEPHARDI WOMAN, MARA W. COHEN JOANNIDES LIVES BETWEEN WORLDS.**

taken to assimilate them. The "Kill the NDN; Save the Child" policy of the US government damaged generations that have yet to heal. (NDN is shorthand spelling for Indian.) The forcible removal of Children from their Families, and their Peoples to gut the Cultures and the Identity of these generations, along with the Graveyards filled with Children's remains are just a few of the hallmarks of genocide. The challenge then was bare survival. Humans tend to become very tactical living for the next meal, surviving the next big storm—when the goal is to survive this season, this year—and you can lose hope when there is just more of the same, no future and the sense of valuing who and what they are has been erased.

But there are those who survive, who take a long view, and find what is right for them, despite all they have been through, personally and generationally. My mother was one such indigenous survivor. She rarely spoke of what she had lived through. In fact, not until the evening before she passed did she tell me the worst of it—the rapes, the medical experimentation, the grinding poverty, but also how she had triumphed, finishing university and learned what she needed to know to survive in the world of a dominant culture and make it her own. But she came from a very spiritually focused family, and people whose own spirituality was prescribed though practiced secretly. And then, post Second World War, she found a spirituality that resonated with her and a people she felt at home with, more than any of the other immigrants who had come to North America. She found Judaism. She told me once, "Since all these Peoples didn't seem to like Jews, I wanted to find out why? And I found out that it was because they were a Good People, different from any other." ... (Read the full essay [here](#))

# CRITICAL RACE THEORY AND ITS DISCONTENTS

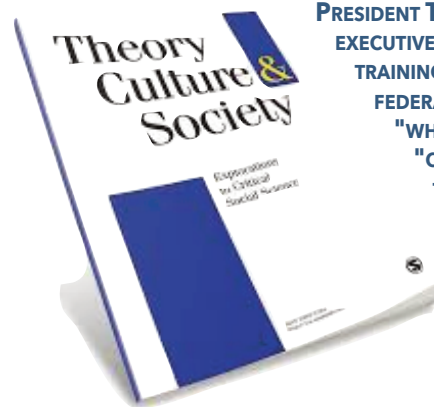
Philip Carl Salzman

Critical race theory is one of the formulations of neo-marxism or cultural marxism. Neo-marxism arose in the 1960s counter-culture movement. The first major enunciation was feminism, which reframed the way we look at society. In contrast to the classical liberal vision of society as many free citizens cooperating, competing, and collaborating in building families, communities, industries, and political parties, the neo-marxist vision, drawn from orthodox marxism, was of a hierarchy of classes, in which the upper classes oppressed and exploited the lower classes for its own profit. Classes would conflict over control of society.

Feminists saw society as divided into gender classes, with the upper male "patriarchy" class exploiting and oppressing the innocent female victims of the lower class. This same model was adopted by homosexuals, who saw themselves as oppressed by the heterosexuals. This neo-marxist class model was subsequently adopted by race activists, who saw society consisting of race classes, the white upper class exploiting and oppressing the lower class of "people of colour." In the neo-marxist vision, class membership was all, and individuals mean nothing; what is important is only the sex, sexuality, and race of people. All judgements were class analyses, and policies advocated were all framed in class terms.

Neo-marxist identity politics brushed aside liberal notions, such as those by Martin Luther King that we should aim at a society in which people were judged by their character rather than by their skin colour. Ideas such as "colour-blind" recruitment were rejected, and came to be denounced as "white supremacy." Rather, neo-marxist political policies were aimed at genders, sexualities, and races. For example, so-called "affirmative action," originally intended by President Kennedy to ban consideration of race, became a series of sex, sexuality, and race preferences. These preferences morphed into requirements for "diversity, equity, and inclusion," which, of course, means "diversity, equity, and inclusion" for females, homosexuals, and people of colour, and the at least partial exclusion of males, heterosexuals, and whites.

Unlike Feminist Studies, Queer Studies, Latinx Studies, African Studies, and other grievance studies, that celebrate and advocate for the subjects of those fields, White Studies was designed to demean and condemn whites as racial oppressors of people of colour. Critical race theory claims that America and Canada, and the West generally, are best understood as "systemically racist." All you need to know about America and Canada is that people of col-



**PRESIDENT TRUMP ISSUED EXECUTIVE ORDER HALTING TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES ON "WHITE PRIVILEGE" AND "CRITICAL RACE THEORY."**

our are discriminated against and attacked by whites at every opportunity. This claim is not only fact-free, but contrary to all evidence that could be adduced.

Every survey of public opinion, and every other index of race relations in America and Canada, indicate that racial prejudice and discrimination against people of colour are minimal and miniscule. For example, Americans elected a black man president twice, and the media treated him as if he was the second coming of Christ. At a more quotidian level, there has been a huge upsurge in racially mixed marriages. Furthermore, we have enjoyed fifty years of "affirmative action" preferences, special considerations, and special benefits for people of colour in universities, industries, and government.

Critical race theory claims that statistical disparities among races, "underrepresentation" of some races proves discrimination. For example, the fact that American blacks, at 13% of the population, make up only 5% of the doctors is taken as evidence of discrimination against blacks. But other minorities of colour, such as Asians, are highly "overrepresented" among doctors and other professionals. Other explanations of statistical disparities are ignored, such as the academic achievement gap between blacks and others. Nor is any consideration given to family and community cultures, which are known to have a large impact on the behavior and success of children.

Critical race theory claims that every institution in society is racist, none more than the police, who murder blacks as soon as they walk out of their houses, and sometimes inside their houses. This outright malicious lie became the basis of this year's riots, looting, arson, assaults on police, and murder of police and civilians of all races. Anyone conversant with the facts, or with the slightest interest in the truth, would know that many American blacks are murdered, 90%, by other blacks, and that more police are killed by blacks than blacks are killed by police, and more whites are killed by blacks than blacks are killed by whites. Studies have shown that police are more reluctant to shoot blacks than to shoot whites; blacks usually get shot by police when they attack the police

and/or try to take police weapons.

Critical race theory has led to other aberrations of the truth, such as the disgusting 1619 project of the *New York Times*, which argued that America was founded for and about slavery, and for nothing else. The entirely counter-factual moral was that blacks are still slaves in America, just as they were when America was founded. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Critical race theory training has been imposed by universities, companies, and government agencies, often

on people segregated by race. The training is basically anti-white racism intended to shame whites and force them to confess their alleged race crimes. President Trump banned such "training" in government agencies. If Joe Biden takes office as president, he is likely not only to overturn the ban, but to mandate obligatory CRT training. This would lead to more anger on all sides, divisiveness, and worsened race relations.

*(Philip Carl Salzman is professor emeritus of anthropology at McGill University and a member of the CIJR Academic Board)*

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF CELEBRATING THE ETHIOPIAN JEWISH HOLIDAY OF SIGD

Lisa Koenig

Today, over 135,000 Ethiopian Jews live in Israel. As a community, Beta Israel (House of Israel) has been often overlooked and misunderstood. The Jews (and non-Jews) living in the Diaspora know extraordinarily little about the dynamic traditions and history of these Jews. This lack of awareness is slowly changing, arguably due to the greater exposure of the unique Ethiopian Jewish holiday called Sigd.

In 2008, the Knesset declared Sigd a national holiday in Israel. Over the years, many Israelis have started to embrace and join in its celebration; a holiday observed exclusively by the Ethiopian Jewish community for thousands of years. Deputy Public Security Minister Gadi Yevarkan recently encouraged all Jews to celebrate Sigd. "The chief rabbis and anyone who deals with the issue of Israeli and historical Jewish identity should understand that this holiday is a holiday of the people of Israel," he said.

Derived from the Hebrew word for prostration, "sigda," the holiday takes place 50 days after Yom Kippur, which is the 29<sup>th</sup> of the Jewish month of Cheshvan. The holiday recognizes the Jewish covenant with G-d created on receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai and the Torah's re-acceptance upon returning to Judah from exile in 538 B.C.E led by Ezra the Scribe before the construction of the Second Temple in Je-



**ETHIOPIAN WOMEN CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAY OF SIGD**

rusalem.

Ethiopian Jewry's origins are somewhat obscure. Historians speculate that a community of Jews forcibly emigrated from ancient Israel between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries and settled in what is known today as Ethiopia. For thousands of years, Ethiopian Jews prayed to return to the Land of Israel, with especial focus during the holiday of Sigd. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, while many Ethiopian Jews forcibly converted to Christianity, many of them secretly continued to observe Jewish tradi-

tions and holidays and adhere to their Jewish faith.

The importance of educating people about the rich history of the Ethiopian Jewish community cannot be overstated, especially in the context of diversity among Jews and the definite need for greater societal unity. Naftali Aklum, an Ethiopian Jew, made Aliyah on his mother's back when he was six months old. His family was one of the first to escape Ethiopia via Sudan in 1984. He uses his voice and compelling story to educate people about the Ethiopian Jewish community.

During a November 13, 2020 [webinar](#) co-sponsored by the *Atlanta Israel Coalition* and *Herut North America*, Aklum gave a brief history of Ethiopia's Jews. Central to his story was Aklum's rivetting description of his family's - and thousands of others - harrowing journey by foot to flee a famine-ridden and politically dangerous Ethiopia through Sudan to Israel.

Many of these stories are depicted in the 2019 action movie "The Red Sea Diving Resort," for which Aklum was a consultant. The film recounts the origins of "Operation Moses," the mission to rescue Ethiopian Jews.

"Operation Moses" was a seven-week clandestine mission that began on November 21, 1984, where the Israeli Special Forces, the CIA, and the United States Embassy in Khartoum worked together with Sudanese State officials to bring more than 8,000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel. Tragically, more than 4,000 Ethiopian Jews died from dehydration, starvation, or brutal attacks from militia during the arduous and risky journey from Ethiopia to Sudan. Aklum's grandfather was among them.

For this reason and others, Operation Moses was personal to Aklum: His older brother, Ferede Yazezow Aklum z"l, one of the first people to make the journey, went back and forth dozens of times, risking his life on rescue missions. "The Red Sea Diving Resort" can be found on Netflix.

Aklum then described some of the fascinating traditions that Ethiopian Jews observed during Sigd when they lived in Ethiopia. Dressed in white, the community followed their spiritual leaders, called kesim, carrying the Torah up a high mountain where they faced Jerusalem, beseeching God to bring them back to Zion. In Ethiopia, the day was not joyous or happy but was commemorated by fasting and studying Torah.

Their prayers answered, Sigd is now a joyous holiday. Aklum waxes poetic in describing the celebrations and what they mean to Ethiopian Jews.

"If you are a spiritual person, you will feel you are close to heaven," he says.

The kesim stand on the stage with their multi-colored umbrellas and sing the songs-of-old in their ancient liturgical language Ge-ez, which, he says, is very similar to the language Jews spoke during the First Temple era. Only the kesim use that language. Their songs and prayers are accompanied by drums' beating, with the magnificent Jerusalem hills as background. All the children, men, and women are dressed in white while holding colorful umbrellas. Traditionally, umbrellas heralded the arrival of people of import, such as the kesim.

Aklum credits their spiritual leaders for their community's continuous adherence to their Jewish traditions. "They are why we kept Judaism for 2500 years in the Diaspora. The kesim conducted the brit milahs, funerals, taught Torah. When Christianity came to Ethiopia, we didn't convert because of them." Interestingly, the Beta Yisroel adhere strictly

to the written Torah; traditionally, they never accepted the oral law, a compilation of the Mishnah and Talmud.

The holiday is not only an expression of gratitude to God for fulfilling their 2500-year dream of returning to Zion but one of prayer to bring peace to a fractured Israeli society.

"Within Israel, we have many societal problems. New immigrants against old immigrants, Ashkenazim, Sephardim, Black, and White. We ask G-d to bring peace to its people. There is strength in unity. Surrounded by enemies, if we can't unite, how can we be strong?"

He believes that what hinders unity from being achieved is ignorance of one another's customs and traditions, which each group brings to the Jewish State. Ignorance, he says, breeds prejudice. "We just don't know one another well enough."

Yaklum admits that Ethiopian Jewry's integration into Israeli society was extremely challenging, coming as they did from a third world country. The government did what it could to help. Still, despite providing a house in which to live, many remained unemployed. Furthermore, their neighborhoods and schools were exclusively Ethiopian. Separated from the general population, racism loomed large. "It's not easy being a black man in a country where most people are white," he says.

Subsequently, many Beta Yisroel succumbed to drug and alcohol addiction, as well as violence and crime.

Yaklum experienced a personal epiphany when he returned to the Ethiopian village where his family lived a few years back.

"I saw a beautiful country and community. I experienced the conditions in which my parents and family lived and maintained their Jewish way of life. I returned a proud black man."

He found this new-found pride empowering. "I'm Jewish, I'm Israeli, and I'm a black man. When you take all those identities within you and create a strong identity, you know you're worth something, and then people will see you the way you see yourself."

Today, conditions are different. Even though racism, discrimination, and police brutality exist and must be addressed, these issues are not systemic. The government of Israel does everything it can to support the Ethiopian community and help them advance. It provides them with a free university education, which has enabled many Beta Yisroel to pull themselves out of poverty and integrate more fully into Israeli society, especially women.

"Young people in our community need hope. Now they know that if they are prepared to work hard to educate themselves, there will be people along the way to help them succeed."

*(Lisa Koenig is the East Coast Director of Herut North America's U.S. division. Herut's website is [herutna.org/](http://herutna.org/))*

# THE BEZALEL SCHOOL AND THE ERETZ-YISRAEL STYLE

Jacques Chitayat

The cultural industry worldwide is going through its perhaps driest period in history. Museums, concert halls, theaters and galleries remain locked up as governments, in fits of pandemic fiscal panic, have deemed cultural institutions non-essential during these strange times. While the livelihoods of stage actors, museum curators and musicians remain in limbo, their only quasi-certainty, a gloomy one, is that the artistic scene will probably be the last sector to reopen.

However, discussion on whether this blanket suppression of cultural life by the authorities is a necessary evil or a gross exaggeration, is never-ending. This article would rather discuss, instead, a specific time when, *au contraire* the arts, including Jewish art, were thriving.

Decades before the State of Israel was established, Jewish pioneers in the land built not only kibbutzes and towns, but also art schools. Jewish values have always made education, knowledge, and culture its highest priorities. Just as the Zionist pioneers were settling and struggling to survive, they also founded in 1906 the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem. While not the first art school in the Jewish settlements, this one would define the beginning of a specifically Israeli art style. To accomplish this, its founder, Boris Schatz, combined European and Middle Eastern influences. Students came from all parts of the Diaspora, and since they lacked a common language, those at the Bezalel were taught Hebrew alongside their art lessons.

These new Israelis created paintings, jewelry, tapestries, and ceremonial objects with Jewish themes, portraying classical folk tales and



BEZALEL CERAMIC TILE, THE 1920s (SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS)



BEZALEL CERAMIC TILE, EARLY 20TH CENTURY

Biblical scenes. Using this fusion of different influences, such as the ornamental and floral European *Art Nouveau*, and traditional Persian and Syrian art, the Bezalel academy succeeded in creating a genuinely distinctive Israeli art style.

For all the merits of this Bezalel style



BEZALEL RUG, 1910s

and its contributions to Israeli art, some artists, who found it too rigid, too formulaic, decided to break off from this movement. This shift came about in the 1920s when the entire Western art world, from Europe to America, was going through rapid changes, aiming at changing strict artistic conventions in favour of more



free, subjective and individual styles.

One of these artists was Romanian-born Reuven Rubin. A student at the Bezalel, he rejected the school's classical approach and wished to create art that would not solely focus on Biblical scenes and classical Jewish imagery. Rubin depicted the Israeli landscape and its inhabitants, with a modern look and a romanticized, expressive style.



**REUVEN RUBIN, *SAFED IN GALILEE*, 1954**

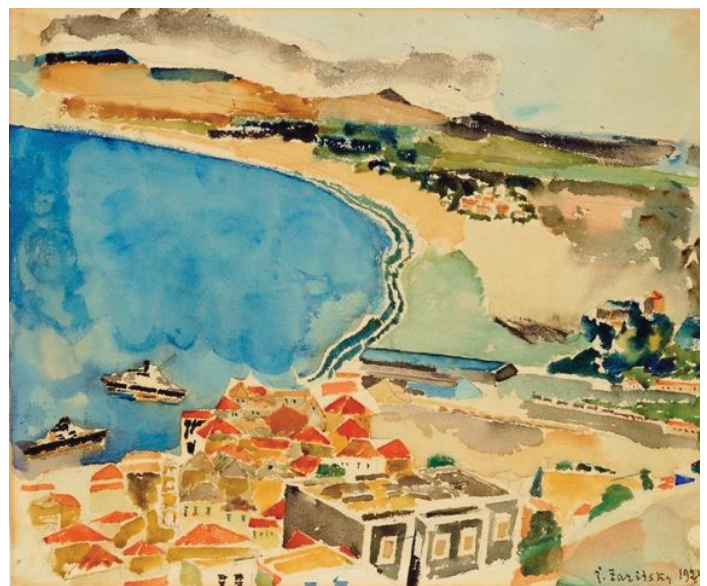


**REUVEN RUBIN, *THE ROAD TO EIN KEREM***

Rubin later joined other artists who were also rebelling against the Bezalel School's traditional style, forming a group that would eventually create the modernist "Eretz-Yisrael" style. Their work reflected a love for and sensitivity towards Israel's land, blanketing sun-bathed landscapes with a romantic, mystical and calm atmosphere. Drawing inspiration from European Post-Impressionist artists of the time like Paul Cézanne and Henri Rousseau, this group often painted in what is called a "naive" style: bright colours, flat shapes, and more basic representations of objects and perspective.



**NACHUM GUTMAN, *PORT OF JAFFA*, 1960s**



**JOSEPH ZARITSKY, *HAIFA*, 1924**

Later, Israel's visual arts, moving in many more directions, found new influences, and created new styles. Nonetheless, the creation of the Bezalel School and the subsequent rebellion that formed the Eretz-Yisrael style were the most crucial moments in the early days of Israeli art, and, importantly, played a role in the formation of national identity. Since then, the Jewish people, combining Diaspora experiences and esthetic influences with their newfound love for Biblical themes and the Land of Israel, have created a myriad of art styles, classical and modernist. They attract international attention and are the subject of numerous expositions, and yet are indisputably Israeli in form and content.

*(Jacques Chitayat, a graduate student in political science at the Université de Montréal, is a Baruch Cohen Israel Internship Fellow at the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research.)*

# CIJR REVIEW OF BOOKS

## HOW TO HEAL SOME OF THE DEEPEST SCARS OF OUR TIMES

Raphael Uzan

*Book Review* – Rabbi Johnathan Sacks, *Morality: Restoring the Common Good in Divided Times* (New York, Basic Books, 2020; 384 pp.)

Few books offer an all-encompassing look at what is going wrong with our times, while at the same time offering solutions to build a better world. Yet, Rabbi Lord Johnathan Sacks, the former Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, provides a truly inspiring and reflective experience. His book *Morality: Restoring the Common Good in Divided Times* was published in September. In it, he argues that a series of societal choices since the 1960s has led us to a grim moment in modern history. The dissociation of the state and the market, and the emergence of radical individualism (“the move from “we” to “I””) has led to, as he puts it, a “cultural climate change”, that is, a society that seems to have forgotten the fundamental value of morality.

Rarely has a book been so timely. Rabbi Sacks wrote it before the coronavirus crisis dramatically shifted our world. However, many of the issues we blame on the pandemic are only an extension of underlying problems - divisiveness and loneliness, distrust of objectivity, among others.

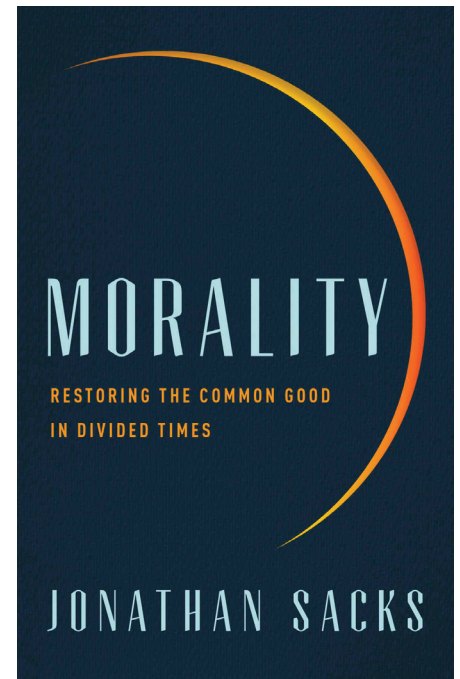
Rabbi Sack's book covers an extensive range of topics. From economic inequality to identity politics, to divisions in society and the decline of democracy, he explores many of today's contentious issues. Even though the philosophical arguments and concepts are quite abstract, the author does an excellent job of popularizing these issues, enabling the reader quickly to grasp his nuanced insights.

Structured in five parts, the first three tackle the problems of our times (loneliness, populism, and division), while the last two explain morality's origins. The book ends with a call to restore moral values.

The rabbi begins by discussing the rise of loneliness, which he maintains is a natural consequence of the concept of radical individualism. Loneliness, he points out, is characterized by the rise of the self-help industry, depression in young people prompted by social media (though the enormous benefits brought about by such platforms is recognized), and the family's decline.

Rising individualism, he explains, spawns a world dominated by market values, a never-ending quest for profit wherein politics becomes more about personal power than societal policies. He argues that by living only by market values, a third institution, that falls between the market and the state, civil society, is lost. When there are no more community, clubs, or public places of debate, citizens turn to the government or state for support, which, in part, explains the rise of populism over the past five years. However, as Rabbi Sacks rightfully notes, in the long run the state cannot satisfy every individual need. As the current environment suggests, the government can impose restrictions but, in free societies, cannot on its own contain the spread of disease. It is, instead, through individual action that we protect others.

In Part III, Rabbi Sacks addresses the causes of current divisions in society. Though they disagree on who is to blame, both left- and right-wingers can agree that these are contentious times. A disdain for objective facts and truths, the emergence of “cancel-culture” and “de-platforming” (suppressing or refusing to hear someone else's views because we disagree with them) are symptoms of a divided society. We are collectively failing each other, turning almost exclusively only to sources we agree with, and refusing to hear thoughts that make us uncomfortable. This year's first Presidential debate between President Donald Trump and former Vice-President Joe Biden dem-



onstrated this fact: it was not a debate, but a cacophony of accusations directed one against the other.

Yet, in the very Jewish perspective of *Tikun Olam*, a principle in Judaism that loosely translates to “repairing the world,” the book also offers solutions. In one of my favorite chapters, the Rabbi explains that debates in society, which today give vent only to divisions, are necessary and useful. However, as the former Chief Rabbi notes, any debate's goal is the search for truth, not for power or profit.

We can see a connection to the Talmudic idea of the argument *leshem shomayim*, for the sake of heaven, wherein the Talmudic discussions between rabbis never translate into personal attacks, no matter how vehemently they disagree with one another. A contemporary example is the late Justices Antonin Scalia and Ruth Bader Ginsburg of the U.S. Supreme Court, who often took opposing positions in judiciary opinions, yet remained great friends.

Indeed, the most substantial part of Rabbi Sack's book lies not in identifying problems, but in offering solutions. His ultimate message: Restore morality, for no free society can thrive without it.

Repairing the world is not about one side winning or losing; it is about not allowing disagreements to create cultural and societal divides. It is also about nurturing communities built on solidarity, trust, and the greater good, values that cannot be attained through the market "laws" alone.

As a "Gen Z" member, I can identify with much of what Rabbi Sacks says about my generation. He points out that we are more individualist, more extreme, and less prone to hearing opposing views than our predecessors. On the other hand, we are a more significant part of the solution than the problem. Confined in our apartments and houses at the outset of this pandemic, many young people developed creative and useful social initiatives. A group of students in the United Kingdom founded "Students Against Corona," a platform enabling students to connect with people in need and offer their help. With initiatives such as these, there is much hope for the future.

The lesson I draw from Rabbi Sack's book is perhaps best formulated by David Attenborough, the natural historian, in his most recent documentary. He examines the current environmental crisis, arguing that nature builds on an equilibrium in which "no one species can thrive on its own." Rabbi Sacks demonstrates that this truism also applies to society: to thrive as human beings, we need others in order to succeed. For that to happen, we need to bring morality back into our personal lives and our societies.

*Rabbi Sacks passed away on Saturday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020. An influential figure for Jews of all backgrounds and denominations, he will be greatly missed. His extensive use*

*of media to communicate his teachings will leave a legacy for generations to come. His many books will remain a source of inspiration.*

*Yet his loss leaves a huge gap: Few rabbis were as unifying as was Rabbi Sacks. One of the many lessons we can draw upon, particularly in our times, was his appeal to view difference not as a threat but as an opportunity. Never has it been more important to reach out, heal wounds, and establish inclusive policies while embracing debate for the sake of the common good.*

*I first met Rabbi Sacks as a child on the choir in Hong-Kong's Ohel Leah synagogue: He was on an official visit as Chief Rabbi of the Commonwealth. Even though I was too young to understand much of what he said at the time, his lectures always drew standing ovations from unusually packed audiences. Our paths crossed again in London in 2018 when I heard him lecture at the Marble Arch and St John's Wood synagogue, where his relationship with the community was more intimate. Not long after, I started following his weekly essays ("Covenant and Conversation") and later read his books.*

*Rabbi Sacks' work similarly touched many young people worldwide, in different languages and from all walks of life. The best way we can honor him is to keep studying his timely lessons and integrate them into our lives.*

*Raphael Uzan, a Baruch Cohen Israel Intern at CIJR, is a law student at the Université de Montréal. His work has focused on online antisemitism and Jewish community issues.*

## CIJR REVIEW OF BOOKS

Aviv, Efrat. *Antisemitism and anti-Zionism in Turkey: from Ottoman Rule to AKP*. New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017

Frampton, Martyn. *The Muslim Brotherhood and the West: A History of Enmity and Engagement*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018

Kurlander, Eric. *Hitler's Monsters: A Supernatural History of the Third Reich*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018

Morris, Benny. *The Thirty-year Genocide: Turkey's Destruction of its Christian Minorities, 1894*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2019

Panofsky, Ruth. *The New Spice Box: Canadian Jewish Writing*. Toronto, Ontario: New Jewish Press, 2017

Smith, Steven. *Modernity and Its Discontents: Making and Unmaking the Bourgeois from Machiavelli to Bellow*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016

Taylor, Cory. *How Hitler Was Made: Germany and the Rise of the Perfect Nazi*. Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2018

Thurston, Alexander. *Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018

# SHALOM KHAVERIM FROM CIJR'S TORONTO CHAPTER!

Alan Herman

We are very proud to report the following exciting events:

On two separate occasions, we had the immense privilege of teaming up with Kulanu Canada to bring Jacob Steinberg's fascinating talk, "The Jews of Suriname," to the Toronto community. On November 4, at the Lodzer Shul and on February 2, at Beth David Synagogue, Steinberg introduced attendees to the rich, almost 400-hundred-year history of the Jews of Suriname. At the Lodzer, Steinberg emphasized the impact of the Shoah upon this community; at Beth David, he guided us through the Saramaca Plan, which almost succeeded in creating a post-war Jewish homeland for 30,000 Jewish refugees in Suriname. Both audiences much appreciated Steinberg's vast knowledge and passion for the subject. He will undoubtedly speak to us again on this fascinating topic.

In other exciting news, on November 10, 2019 the Institute proudly hosted Greek filmmaker Steven Priovolos at the Lodzer Shul, who presented his brilliant film, "Life Will Smile." The film tells of how the Greek island city of Zakynthos risked everything to save their Jewish community from the Nazi Holocaust. It was thanks to this courageous effort that all 275 Jews of that city survived the ravages of WWII. Both Priovolos, and Consul-General of Greece in Toronto, Victor Maligoudis, spoke movingly of the importance of maintaining close ties between the Jewish and Greek communities. This message resonated strongly with the mixed Greek and Jewish audience, which also included Superior Court of Justice Judge the Hon. Madam Justice E. Ria Tzimas. We are pleased to inform you that "Life Will Smile" was screened on October 28 & 29 at the virtual Toronto Jewish Film Festival!

On March 4, highly accomplished journalist and author Ellin Bessner spoke at the Lodzer on "How Canada's Jewish sol-

diers in WWII liberated Nazi death camps, including Bergen-Belsen." Based on interviews she conducted with Jewish soldiers, Bessner explained how many of our very relatives rescued Jews from camps and fought against the Nazi extermination machine. Bessner then introduced Bob Delson, the son of a Canadian Jewish soldier who was at Belsen within hours of liberation, who related his father's experience through photos and stories. Following her talk, Henry Gold of the Jewish War Veterans Association awarded Ellin the "Flames of Memory" Memorial Medal for her original research on this crucial topic. As well, Dr. Steve Samuel, founder and former director of Doctors Against Racism and Antisemitism (DARA), recounted how his father, while fighting in Britain's 8th Army in Europe, found his father in Dachau at the end of WWII, as well as recalling his mother's experiences surviving the war.

As well, on February 27, the Institute proudly joined B'nai Brith Canada and other Zionist organizations in an initiative that will potentially transform the war against antisemitism on campus. The CIJR signed on to an open letter to university President Meric Gertler from University of Toronto faculty members, who called on the university to adopt the definition of antisemitism proposed by the International Holocaust Remembrance Association (IHRA.) The adoption of this IHRA definition will enable the shutting down of Jew-hatred on the school's grounds.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic we are in the process of planning our programs via Zoom, which has the potential to reach even more people. We will keep you abreast of further developments.

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Continued from page 9

mains tight. When one country tries a new line of attack, the other one follows. The very same judiciary and media accusing Trump and his family of the most egregious behaviours are absolutely mum on the rather shabby business of Hunter Biden, son of the former vice-president. In Israel, the very same judiciary and media who accused Netanyahu of anything and everything, such as trying to obtain a positive exposure in a newspaper, do not bother investigating politicians, such as Ehud Barak, accused of wrong-doing.

When the Senate confirmed Amy Coney Barret as a Supreme Court judge, Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi labeled her "illegitimate." Similarly, when Netanyahu suggests that, as in most democracies, elected officials choose Supreme Court judges and they not be co-opted by the sitting judges themselves, he is treated by politicians, judges, journalists, and other pundits, as an

"enemy of democracy" if not an outright fascist.

Does this unending barrage of disinformation lead to a massive wave of anti-Trump and anti—Netanyahu votes? The U.S. results, with the electorate divided in two quasi-equal camps, and the split polls in Israel, indicate that many American and Israeli citizens see through the campaign of vilification and are eager to exercise their democratic rights the way they wish, rather than as the media want. Perhaps political "experts", regardless of their political orientation, should feel inspired by average citizens who are trying sincerely to understand complex political realities rather than participate in a chorus of demagoguery.

*(Julien Bauer, a Professor ([retired] of Political Science at l'Université du Québec à Montréal, is a CIJR Academic Board member and Director of the French CIJR Communiqué Isranet)*

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# EXTRA! EXTRA!

## FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Jack Kincler

Since our last *Israfax* communication, the events we have seen unfolding have made the world a more unstable and dangerous place, and even more so for Jews.

To mention a few of these destabilizing and disruptive situations:

- As of mid-November, the U.S. elections remain unsettled, with the sitting President claiming vote irregularities and refusing to concede. Hopefully, the transition will finally be peaceful and according to democratic norms.
- China is becoming more aggressive and assertive, tightening its autocratic grip on Hong Kong and, ominously, pressuring Taiwan. With its newly acquired (not always by legal means) economic power and military might, Beijing is dangerously expanding its sphere of influence and dominance
- Iran, despite the punishing American sanctions imposed by the Trump Administration, is advancing its nuclear ambitions. Some experts maintain that Iran already has enough fissile material to build a few bombs. E.U., Great Britain, Russia and China, ignoring American sanctions, are more than happy to trade with Iran. As regards Israel, some existential decisions may soon have to be made.

I could go on and on. Antisemitism, from the left and the right, is surging, Turkey's Erdogan makes aggressive moves and threats, Islamists are again terrorizing Europe and inciting hatred, particularly against Jews. Massive illegal migration continues, mostly from Africa into Europe, and rising tensions between India-Pakistan, India-China, and Greece-Turkey, could degenerate into significant conflicts.

Moreover, we are still coping with the unrelenting, world-wide daily devastation of the Covid-19 pandemic, unrelenting and currently peaking in a second wave.

Still, in the best Jewish traditions, we hope and pray for a better and more peaceful and harmonious world. Let's cross our fingers.

Meanwhile, the CIJR office has since March remained closed. We are all working as best as we can from home: technology is the savior, and we use it. All our publications have appeared without break, and our *Baruch Cohen Israel Internships program* is working well, with excellent young people in Montreal and Toronto. We are planning a virtual *Anniversary Gala* event in March of next year and, until then, will feature several Zoom speaking events with individuals of great Israel and Jewish-world interest.

Stay tuned for the imminent launch of our new, significantly-redesigned website, which will enhance CIJR's online presence. We hope you like it.

Many thanks as always to our Director, Frederick Krantz, and his wife, Prof. Lenore Krantz, to CIJR's President, Herb Feifer, our Publications Editor, Machla Abramovitz, to our dedicated staff and lay Board leaders in Montreal and Toronto, and to our student Interns, for all their hard work and contributions during a difficult time.

As we continue on in our fourth decade, we are also grateful to our donors and supporters, without whom we couldn't accomplish all that we do. Thank you all from the bottom of our hearts, and accept our best wishes for good health and an end to this Covid-19 plague.

May we all be happy, feel well, and stay safe. Amen!!

(Jack Kincler is Chairman of CIJR's National Board.)