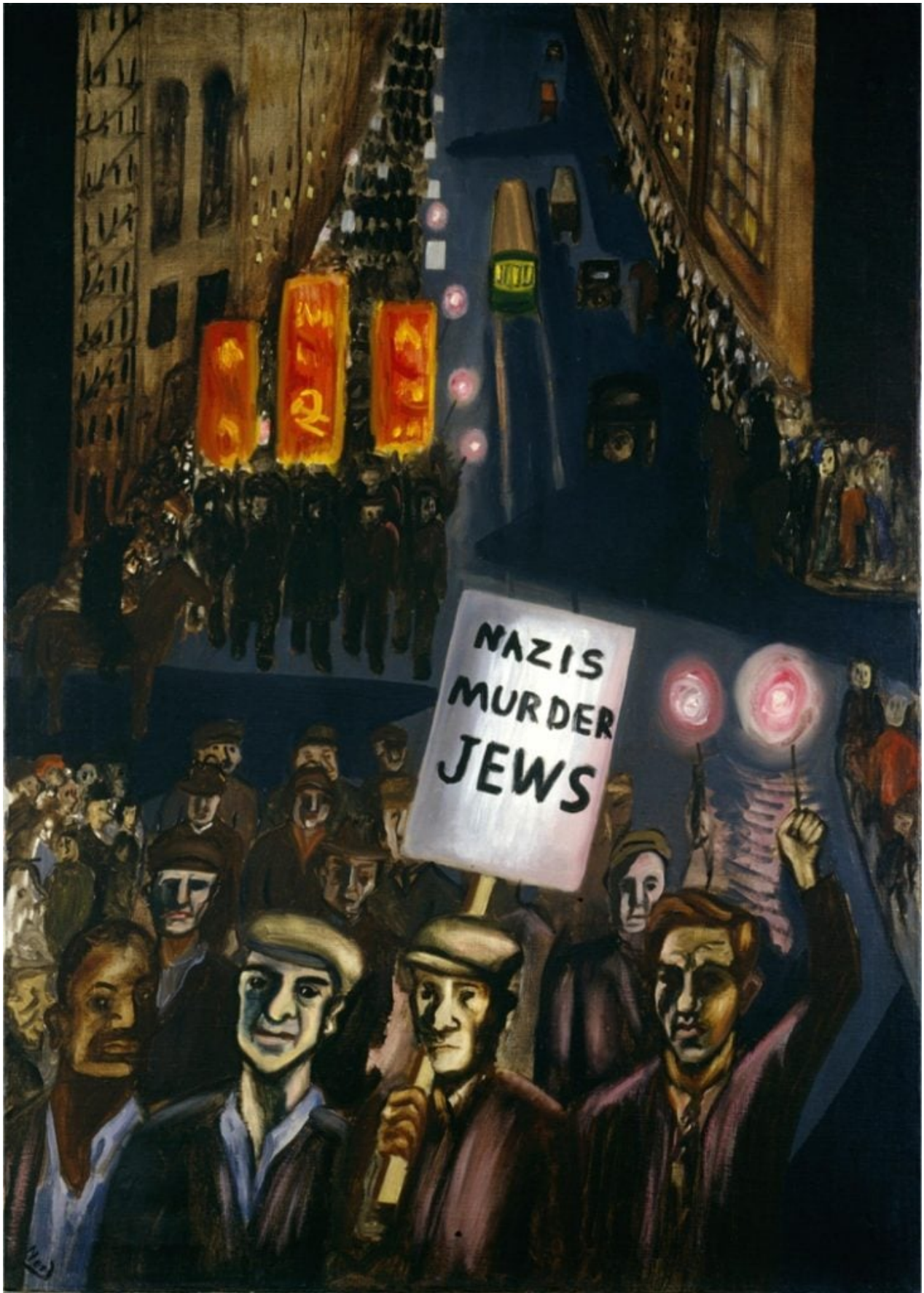


# On Antisemitism/Jew Hate and Anti-Zionism

By [Daniel Mallock](#) (March 2024)



Nazis Murder Jews, by Alice Neel, 1936

**There is some controversy as** to the nature of history. Is the process of history—humanity as it moves forward in time—linear, cyclical, both, or something else?

Our individual lives are undeniably linear. The turning of the seasons, the passing of the years, the children growing, and our own aging proves the undeniable forward movement of time and life.

The passing of time for the human race— “history” —is linear *and* cyclical. Across the generations we continue to strive for perfection and always fail. We continue to try to solve the gravest problems and *almost* always fail.

Time moves forward and the same kinds of people and things seem to arise bringing enormous good and enormous bad—this is the nature of humanity moving forward in time.

There are ubiquitous, difficult, and painful things that never go away. These things seem unsolvable and haunt the past and create nightmares for every generation wherever and whenever in time they might be. These are the great ugly truths of humanity (for the previous and present moments though perhaps not in perpetuity) that defy resolution despite extraordinary efforts.

These are the great challenges and the great horrors that in themselves cause further horrors. The reader should note that this is, by no means, a comprehensive list:

*War*

*Poverty*

*Crime*

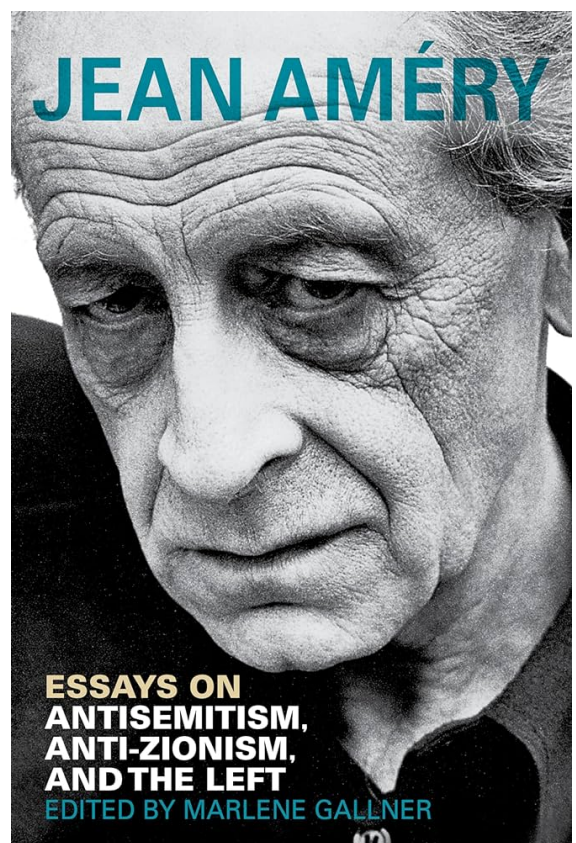
*Disease*

*Cruelty*

*Hatred*  
*Suffering of the innocent*  
*Starvation, etc.*

Jew hatred (antisemitism) is one of the great elements of human misery and failure.

When Israel was invaded in a sneak attack by an intractable, genocidal enemy on October 7, 2023, and almost two thousand innocent people were murdered, raped, tortured, and hundreds taken as hostages (and then many of *them* murdered, raped, tortured, etc.), antisemites around the world blamed the Jews of Israel and, by extension, Jews everywhere else for the myriad crimes the invader had perpetrated against them.



Essays on Antisemitism,  
Anti-Zionism, and the Left  
by Jean Améry, 2022  
(translation edition), 124  
pages.

The explosion of Jew hate that began almost simultaneously around the world after Israel declared war on Hamas and took decisive military action against them, as any state/nation on the planet would have done, came as a shock to many around the world.

Some of the post-October 7<sup>th</sup> public expressions of antisemitism/Jew hate in which Israel, the victim of invasion and atrocities, is blamed as an aggressor for defending itself after having been attacked, is camouflaged as political criticism against the state of Israel.

This vicious and unfair criticism of Israel and Jews everywhere is a base demonstration of ignorance and hate indulged mainly by those on the political left. This political characterization and misdirection of what is and has been basic Jew hate from the political left is the subject of this extraordinary, prescient, and troubling collection of essays by Jean Améry.

Améry, a confirmed leftist in France (formerly of Austria), believed that much of the criticism of Israel by his colleagues on the left was actually simple Jew hatred masquerading as political rhetoric. Améry examined and strongly condemned this form of Jew hate (and every other incarnation of it) in numerous essays.

Writing in the late 1960s through the late '70s, Améry's views were confirmed by recent events around the world after the invasion of Israel on October 7, 2023. He was a man far ahead of his times.

A stunning wave of Jew hate spread rapidly around the world in the days following October 7 in scenes of vile hatred and murderousness not seen since the Nazi times in Germany and those countries occupied by them. Much of this present-day, yet old, Jew hate/antisemitism was couched as criticism of Israel for displacing those innocent non-combatants living in



the Gaza Strip, due to Israel's invasion of it, as if there was no context nor justification for Israel's military actions.

However, this supposedly *political* anti-Israel international reaction was not the most common. What was more common was that all Jews *everywhere* were vilified and condemned and calls for the destruction of Jews (not only the state of Israel) were commonly heard and seen.

***The hijacker said, "I'm no Nazi!  
I am an idealist."***

This astounding globalized hatred of Jews as a reaction to the invasion of Israel in which Israeli Jews and citizens from at least 20 other countries were murdered, raped, [tortured](#), and kidnapped by a genocidal enemy validated Améry's argument that anti-Zionism was actually Jew hate/antisemitism. No country on earth would be expected to do anything other than declare war and fight to destroy such a vicious enemy—except Israel, the country of the Jews.

The anti-Zionists and the antisemites, mostly the same people, described Israel's declaration of war and invasion of Gaza to destroy, dismantle, and defeat Hamas as nothing short of an "aggression." In the world of the antisemitic anti-Zionists, Israel is always bad, always the negative actor even when they are the victims of war crimes and of the most heinous crimes against humanity.

In the present historical moment, there is no longer a need to pretend that Jew hate is *only/merely* political criticism of Israel. The character and consequence of this widespread and apparently insoluble hatred of Jews just for being Jews, and

its relation to the existence of the state of Israel are the difficult issues that Améry covers in this challenging and insightful collection of essays.

Améry was born in Vienna in 1912. His Jewish father was killed in 1915 as a soldier fighting for Austria-Hungary during the First World War. He was raised by his Catholic mother. Améry, born "Hans Chaim Maier" had no connection to Judaism and never thought of himself as Jewish. In his 1966 essay "On the Impossible Obligation to be a Jew," Améry wrote, "So, if being a Jew means sharing a cultural heritage and religious affiliation, I have never been a Jew and never will be."

Regardless, Améry's Jewishness (or perhaps better described as his search for his Jewishness) became the center of his identity. "The environment I had inhabited in the years in which one learns to be oneself was simply not Jewish, and there is no way of undoing this. Yet," Améry wrote, "the futility of my search for a Jewish self in no way undermines my sense of solidarity with every single endangered Jew the world over."

When the Nazi antisemitic Nuremberg Laws came into force, Améry knew that he would be targeted. In 1938 he fled Austria for Belgium and joined the resistance. His role of distributing anti-Nazi leaflets (the same action that got [Sophie Scholl](#) of the anti-Nazi White Rose executed in Munich in 1943) resulted in his arrest. Originally treated as a resistance agent, Améry was sent to Auschwitz when his Nazi captors realized that he was Jewish.

In 1978, Améry wrote that he had "joined the resistance without the slightest heroic stirring, playing only the most modest of roles. Thinking about it now, this may have been my final unconscious attempt to elude the Jewishness I had long since assumed intellectually. The Jews were hounded, caught, arrested, and deported *because they were Jews* and for no other reason. With hindsight it seems to me that I wanted the enemy

to detain me, not as a Jew but as a resistance fighter. This was my final, absurd attempt to run away from the lot of my collective. I risked my life disseminating futile leaflets, vaingloriously deluding myself that I was a 'fighter' and not one of those people who allowed themselves to be taken to the slaughter like bleating sheep."

An avowed leftist, Améry became friends with Jean-Paul Sartre (no stranger to the issue of Jew hate having written *Anti-Semite and Jew* (1948)). When he began to see anti-Zionism exploding on the European political Left (that is, among his political brethren) he wrote extensively on the subject exposing Israel hate as Jew hate in disguise.

An astute observer and analyst of the political scene, a vocal and proud defender of Israel, and a frustrated, haunted survivor Améry committed suicide in 1978.

Améry's strong support of Israel was based on his own experience with antisemitism and his observations of its continued existence (yet morphing into anti-Zionism). In a world in which Jews are vilified and considered aliens everywhere, Améry believed that the possibility of a second Holocaust was not small. The existence of Israel was therefore an existential issue for Jews everywhere. "The existence of no other state means more to me ... Israel must under all circumstances be preserved."

Prior to October 7<sup>th</sup>, the overt expression of Jew hate was considered by most of polite society as disgusting and grotesque. To express Jew hate/antisemitism in an acceptable manner then required that the state of Israel be substituted for Jews themselves. In this way, Jew hate/antisemitism could be disguised as political speech which allowed for a wider range of acceptable callousness than supposed polite conversation would allow. During Améry's post-Holocaust life, he observed that "antisemitism in the guise of anti-Zionism has come to be seen as a virtue." This facade, after October



7<sup>th</sup>, is no longer necessary, however.

Améry was not the only notable analyst or observer to describe this relationship. In a different October, the one in 2015, Pope Francis declared that “to attack Jews is antisemitism, but an outright attack on the state of Israel is also antisemitism.”

The anti-Zionists and the antisemites (generally one and the same) both pretend to want to solve an important question so that the world can be improved (one supposes). Améry rightly and insightfully rejects the entire concept as just another fraud perpetrated by Jew haters. “In their capacity as historical, socially conditioned intellectual phenomena, antisemitism and the ‘Jewish Question’ neither were nor are any of my business,” Améry wrote. “They are the antisemites’ preserve, their ignominy, their sickness.”

Améry repeatedly makes the case that the existence of and necessary military strength and power of Israel are required both for the survival of the state itself and for Jewish identity everywhere. Because of Israel, Jews no longer need to see themselves as merely victims.

“Those of us who belong to the generation that experienced Hitler’s crimes in the flesh find ourselves as isolated, once again, as we were between 1933 and 1945. We no longer have a choice, can no longer choose *ourselves*, because we have already been chosen: as victims.” Améry asserted that the existence of Israel disproved one of the great lies of the antisemites—that the Jews are cowards. The success of Israel in building itself and in defending itself affects Jews everywhere. “Every Jew, no matter where he lives, lives off this achievement whether he admits this to himself or not,” he wrote in “Between Vietnam and Israel” (1967).

In 1969, Améry identified the rise of anti-Israel antisemitism as coming most stridently and commonly from the political

Left. Asserting that anti-Zionism and antisemitism were fashionable and essential elements of European (mainly in France) leftists, such that “in the past it was considered the socialism of fools, it is now evolving into an integrative constituent of socialism *per se*.” Améry saw his socialist colleagues, “of their own free volition ... universally turning themselves into fools.”

[American leftists](#) also were not spared this foolishness of anti-Israel antisemitism. In fact, many on the American and Western left [wallow](#) in it. Writing in 1969, Améry may as well have been writing about conditions today in quoting Robert Mizrahi, a French philosopher and “part of ‘Sartre’s extended family,’” who wrote that “Anti-Zionism is a fundamentally reactionary phenomenon camouflaged by its revolutionary and anti-colonial rhetoric about Israel.”

While some modern American leftists such as Hillary Clinton [noted publicly](#) that American youth (that is those American youth calling for the destruction of Israel— “the [young Left](#)” as Améry would describe them) are “woefully uninformed” about antisemitism and the Holocaust. Clinton noted that “invidious strain of antisemitism that has never gone away ... that has been poking its head up for quite some time now.” In 1969 it also then had “never gone away.” “In the anti-Zionism of the young Left it finds not only a functioning outlet but (supposedly) also an ally,” Améry wrote. “After all, the Jews have always had to play the bogeyman, the global foe. Little wonder, then, that they are once again being stigmatized as oppressors. Hence my contention that left-wing anti-Zionism must and will merge into the generalized antisemitism that is in the air...”

It was critically important to expose this facade of fake political criticism because its often fiery and bitter political rhetoric was nothing other than speech whose purpose was the facilitation of the destruction of [Israel](#) (and, by extension, of Jews everywhere).

To add significant power to his logic and arguments, Améry quotes German philologist Hans Meyer, who Améry (the proud European Leftist) introduces without irony as “a man steeped in the knowledge of Marxism.” Meyer wrote in his book *Outsiders* (1982):

*Whoever attacks Zionism, but by no means wishes to say anything against the Jews, is fooling himself or others. The State of Israel is a Jewish state. Whoever wants to destroy it, avowedly or by means of a policy, which cannot but result in its annihilation, is dealing in the anti-Jewish hatred that has been with us since time immemorial. The extent to which this is reflected in the interplay of domestic and foreign policy is demonstrated by the domestic policies of the current anti-Zionist states. It is predicated on the assumption that their own Jewish citizens are virtual Zionists and harasses them accordingly.*

Améry declared that this form of antisemitic Jew hate was attractive to young leftists provided that it remains camouflaged as anti-Zionism.

In recent days one can see the virtue-signaling, ignorant, bitter, hateful, callous, woke leftist youth marching on college campuses and city centers across the country ignoring the crimes committed against Israelis and citizens of 20 other nations (including the United States) and criticizing Israel as an oppressor as it defends itself after a vicious and horrific sneak attack on October 7<sup>th</sup>. Was there such criticism against the United States when it went to war against the empire of Japan after the sneak attack of December 7, 1941 at Pearl Harbor? (Hint: No.)

“Provided it dresses itself up as anti-Zionism, young people

are happy to align themselves with this reprehensible and idiotic antisemitism,” Améry wrote in 1976. “We are not dealing here with a handful of youngsters led astray by their unreconstructed Nazi parents and grandparents, but with ostensible socialists.” Améry may as well be writing about America in 2024.

In a speech during Germany’s “[Brotherhood Week](#)” in 1976, Améry quoted Thomas Mann, the great German novelist from his book “Germany and the Germans” (1945). “If it did not sound like a detestable condonation,” Mann wrote, “it might be said that they (the Nazis) committed their crimes for dreamy idealism.”

In that same speech Améry described “antisemitism, even when it calls itself anti-Zionism” as both “ineradicable” and a “stain on the honor of civilized humanity.”

In her scholarly, informative, and highly readable introduction, the collection’s editor, Marlene Gallner, noted the involvement of German leftists in the 1976 hijacking of an Air France jet with 248 passengers that was then flown to Entebbe in Uganda. At Entebbe, the hijackers/terrorists “separated the hostages into two groups, Jews and non-Jews.” The non-Jews were released.

A Jewish hostage, a holocaust survivor, approached one of the German hijackers and showed him the concentration camp tattoo on his arm. The hijacker said, “I’m no Nazi! I am an idealist.”

Améry describes the [Left](#) as “a child of the enlightenment, of the *Encyclopédistes*, of the great French Revolution...” The reader perhaps is meant to suppose that Améry must mean that—with such elevated and humanist credentials—those on the political Left ought to be immune to such vile, indulgent, hateful, murderous agendas as anti-Zionism and Jew hate/antisemitism.

Most historians see the French Revolution as a catastrophe and

the wars of revolutionary hegemony/expansion followed by wars of Napoleonic conquest just as bad or worse. Améry, himself a leftist, does not see it this way.

This ideological blind spot is perhaps the only significant criticism that arises in the essay collection. Such things are not unusual when a person is a [true believer](#) in a given political ideology.

Leftist politics are about creating a utopia. They believe that a utopia *can* be created because humanity (and human political systems) *can be* perfected. This belief in the perfectibility of humans is the greatest difference between them and rationalists/pragmatists.

They hate those who oppose them and their plans because, to them, anyone who opposes the advancement of humanity and the creation of a perfect society (utopia) must certainly be evil.

This absolutism and intellectual, spiritual, and too often physical brutality fundamental to Leftist politics was lost on Améry—though he is certainly not the only one.

The post-October 7 world shows Améry to have been right—anti-Zionism was and is a cover for simple Jew hate/antisemitism.

An anti-Zionism that proposes ideas or policies that will result in the destruction of Israel is antisemitic Jew hate. This was true for Améry just as it is today.

It is a valuable and frustrating collection.

It is valuable because Améry is an important voice from the Left—critical of his colleagues for their moral, ethical, and intellectual failures particularly relating to Jews and Israel.

It is frustrating because Améry sees Jew hate/antisemitism as “ineradicable.”

It is frustrating because history is linear and cyclical.

If hate of Jews—or hate of any other people—despised only because of their religious, racial, or national identity is “ineradicable” then what is the basis of utopian Leftist politics?

If Jew hate is ineradicable then humanity (and human political systems) is *not* perfectible.

After reading this collection of essays, it would be understandable to take a dim view of humanity. But, it is clear that humans *can* learn. History is linear *and* cyclical because (so many) humans *refuse* to learn.

The global explosion of Jew hate after the atrocity against the Jews of Israel and citizens of 20 other countries on October 7th proves Améry’s central thesis—that expressions of anti-Zionism are actually antisemitism. This validation is more than a passing curiosity of political commentary and analysis.

Améry was right because antisemites—in their tens of thousands—marched the streets of the capitals of the world to celebrate and express their support for the mass murder of Jews and those who perpetrated it—and a hope that such things should continue.

The validation of Jean Améry by the post-October 7th world is not only a confirmation of his impressive insight (and foresight). It is not only, as Améry wrote, that antisemitism/Jew hate is “an ineradicable ‘stain’” on the supposed “honor” of “civilized humanity,” it is the expression and communication of a wide-spread, profound moral and ethical depravity and collapse.

In fashion similar to holocaust survivor memoirists and analysts Viktor Frankl, Elie Wiesel, Primo Levi, Viktor Klemperer, and many others, Améry’s purpose is to report the



truth and speculate as to what the truth means. The consequence of the truthful observations and speculations about humanity, politics, Jews, Israel, and the future described in Améry's essays is not a pleasant one.

If Jew hate/antisemitism is, as Améry and numerous others have characterized, "ineradicable" –it means that any "idealism" –held by a Nazi, a far-left terrorist, a Jacobin, a communist, a utopian of *any* sort–is the very same sort of fake sublime and nobility that leads to the gates of the camps, the steps of the guillotine, and the dark prisons of the world where light does not enter.

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**Daniel Mallock** is the author of [\*Agony and Eloquence: John Adams, Thomas Jefferson and a World of Revolution\*](#).

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