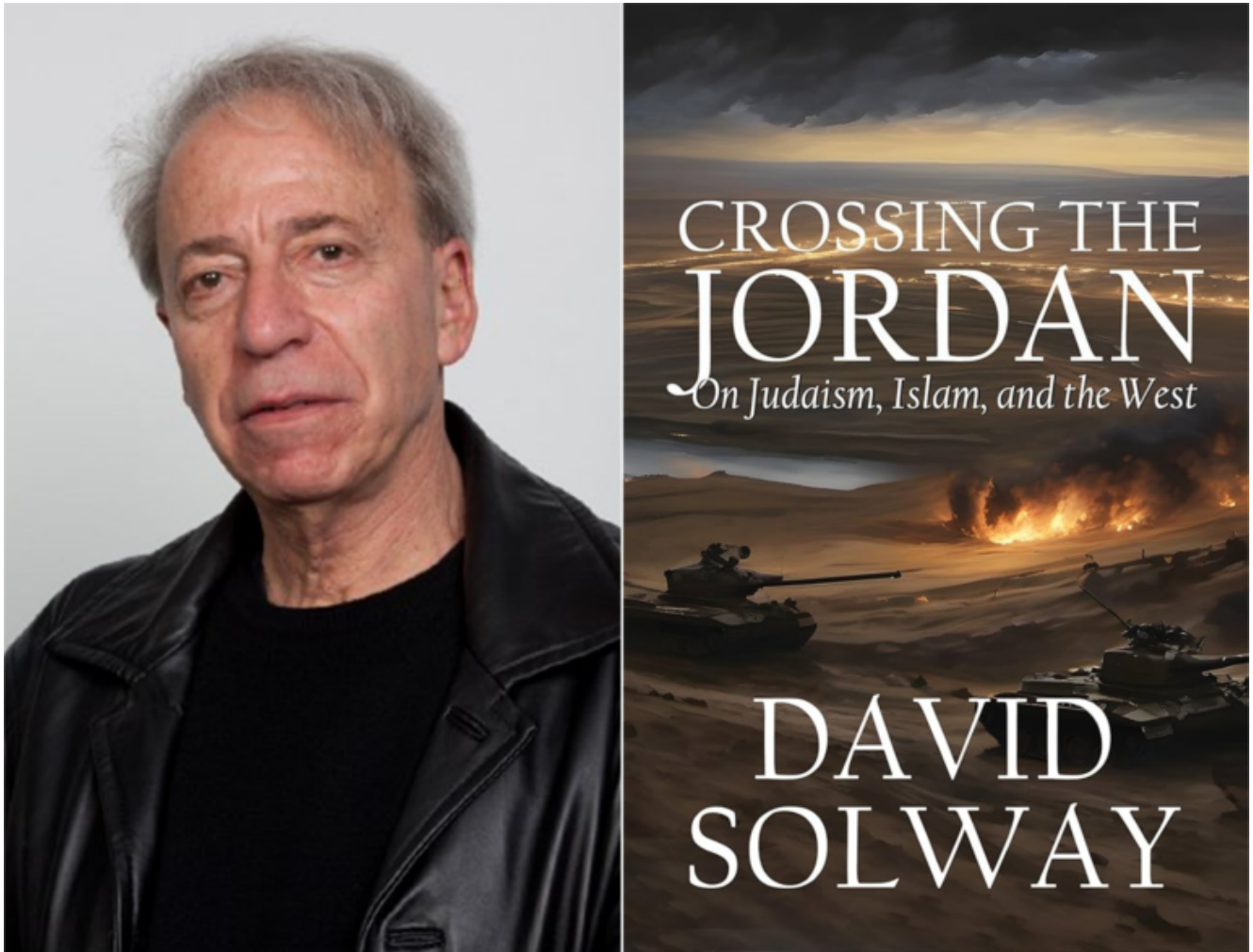


'Crossing the Jordan': Deeply considered essays on Judaism, Islam, the West



The 26 essays in David Solway's *Crossing the Jordan* cover the historical and current circumstances of the Jewish people; although written before Hamas's atrocity in Israel on October 7, 2023, the book presciently captures the growing international hostility surrounding Israel today. (Source of left photo: Conseils des arts et des lettres Quebec)

a review by Neville Teller in the [Jerusalem Post](#):

David Solway is something of a modern-day Renaissance man. On the back of his book *Crossing the Jordan*, he describes himself

as an essayist, songwriter, and poet, but then goes on to refer to over 30 books that he has published in areas ranging from poetry, travel, and education theory to translation and politics, rounding off his category of achievements with two CDs of original songs.

It is, however, significant that he refers to himself first as an essayist, for *Crossing the Jordan* consists in large measure of deeply considered essays that he has published on issues affecting Israel and its relationship to the world in general, and to [Islam and the West](#) in particular.

The validity of Solway's insights into his three basic themes – Judaism, Islam, and the West – and the factors affecting the relationship between them is all the more striking because so much of the material in this collection was originally published before the massacre perpetrated by Hamas inside Israel on Oct. 7.

The first chapter of *Crossing the Jordan* was written to mark the 75th anniversary of the foundation of the State of Israel, celebrated in May 2023. However, in the light of subsequent events, his words have a chilling prescience about them.

How Israel and the West interact with the Muslim world

Israel's Muslim neighbors, he writes, "particularly in the West Bank and Gaza, have vowed to physically erase Israel from the map of the world, launching terrorist attacks... and pursuing their version of the [Final Solution](#)."

In a media interview after Oct. 7, Solway said that the tensions between the three global entities he has placed under his microscope have become even more toxic, their political ramifications increasingly incendiary. He notes the upsurge in Jew-hatred coupled with what he calls "Hamaphilia" across

the "faux-democratic West."

In the first essay, Solway explores the age-old conundrum of why antisemitism persists century after century.

The Jewish people, he writes, are regarded by their enemies as engaged in a vast conspiracy "to pursue the gradual conquest of the world... This conviction is obviously nonsense if not sheer madness, but it serves a time-dishonored purpose: the justification of an aversion to things Jewish."

Turning to the contemporary scene, Solway writes: "What Jews cannot be forgiven by their enemies is the rebuilding of a national home... broadly regarded as a colonial incursion into the Middle East."

Solway refutes accusations of colonialism and similar tropes, citing chapter and verse to demonstrate the historical connection of the Jewish people to the Holy Land. However, he does so without any faith that his cogent arguments will affect the persistence of the "oldest hatred."

In *Crossing the Jordan*, Solway leads his readers on an intellectual journey that incorporates a series of intriguing byways, such as "the paradox of the Jewish mind," "the Jewish intellectual predicament," and "the scourge of Jewish self-division." On these excursions, he has no qualms about uncovering what he perceives as plain foolishness within the Jewish world.

"I write this as a Jew who is utterly mortified by the self-injurious imbecility I see escalating throughout the community to which I presumably belong," he writes.

"The propagation of foolish ideas, lunatic affiliations, and galloping myopia among an otherwise accomplished people has left me... resentful. With too few exceptions, the "peaceniks" march toward a calamity of their own devising; Jewish organizations naively succumb to the "charm offensives" of

their deceptive adversaries.”

Solway is, clearly, a man impatient with what he might term wishy-washy liberal thinking – woke philosophies, in current terminology. He pulls no punches. He believes the West and its democratic way of life is under a multi-pronged attack from the zealous followers of the Muslim faith, and that the West is especially vulnerable to infiltration by its enemies.

Pointing out that “Muslim voting blocs can determine the outcome of elections, as conniving politicians are well aware,” he says: “The threat which Islam poses to the life of the West should be obvious to anyone who is not complicit, gullible or mentally defective.”

Having considered the dangers that surround Israel, in Chapter 24 Solway asks, “Can Israel Survive?”

He sees the biggest threat to the nation coming not from external sources but from within. “Everywhere we look,” he writes, “we see these broken Jews who have embraced left-wing causes, or assimilationist fatuities, or the temptations of social prestige, or the fashionable bromides of the zeitgeist that promise peace and understanding with veritable antisemites in a pluralistic [New World Order](#).”

Solway’s conclusion is that “If Israel is to survive it must be defended, or at the very least not undermined, by its ethnic compatriots in the Diaspora and the influential cadre of its fractious and deluded left-oriented citizens. It must, as a minimal condition, be allowed to fight its wars in peace.”

Readers looking for hard-hitting opinions from a writer certain in his convictions and unafraid to express them will relish *Crossing the Jordan*.