

# The Evil of Antisemitism

by Michael Curtis



**I spend my days in longing**, wondering why it's me you're wronging. I can't believe you have such a hatred.

The disease of antisemitism, a historic hatred, seems to have no end, as recent events in London, and in numerous countries including France, Italy, Belgium, and Norway, demonstrate.

It is saddening to recount once again the animosity, bigotry, and prejudice towards Jews as individuals, and as members of a collective people, expressed not only by pigmy minds, but also by the social media, universities, and engaged in the politically-correct hatred of Israel.

There may be confusion and controversy over the distinction between genuine criticism of the State of Israel and its leaders, and antisemitism. On December 3, 2019 the National Assembly in France approved a draft resolution that calls hatred of Israel a form of antisemitism. A working definition of the issue was proposed by Natan Sharansky, who suggested that the use of the three Ds: demonization, delegitimization,

and subjection of Israel to double standards, indicated the line to antisemitism had been crossed.

All antisemitic actions and utterances illustrate the toxic hatred of Jews. On the Friday evening, during Sabbath when Orthodox Jews do not use telephones, of November 29, 2019 at Clapton Common, Stamford Hill, in north London, an unnamed foreign rabbi, visiting London for a family wedding was assaulted, leaving him bleeding and dazed, by two men, young black men wearing hoods, shouting "Kill the Jews." Only five days earlier, on November 24, three Jewish children had been attacked on a bus in the same area of Stamford Hill. These were new instances of the exponential increase in antisemitic attacks in Britain.

A new report by Antisemitism Barometer Research, a study by Campaign Against Antisemitism aided by academics in King's College, London, revealed the features of the present nature of antisemitism in Britain. Antisemitism on the far left is now greater than on the far right. About 60% of the far left believe at least one antisemitic stereotype. Some 84% of British Jews feel that Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the Labour Party, is a threat to the Jewish community. Corbyn is now the candidate of choice for antisemites. Because of this, two fifths of British Jews have considered emigrating in the past two years.

Estimates are that even more French than British Jews have considered emigrating, and that over 10% of the French Jewish community, the largest in Europe, emigrated to Israel in 2000-2017. Paris was the scene of swastikas painted on post boxes decorated with portraits of the late Simone Veil, distinguished Jewish lawyer and politician, Holocaust survivor, president of the European Parliament, and a key figure in advancing women's rights in France.

North Eastern France, the area of Alsace, near the German border, as well as Paris, has been the target of recent

antisemitic manifestations. On December 2, 2019, in the town of Westhoffen, 15 miles from Strasbourg, 107 graves in the Jewish cemetery were sprayed with swastikas and other graffiti. This followed previous similar outrages in nearby areas. On February 15, 2019 in the small commune of Quatzenheim, 96 Jewish tombs were desecrated and Nazi slogans. President Emmanuel Macron visited the area, and expressed his "total determination to fight against antisemitism in all its forms." Nevertheless, antisemitic graffiti were displayed in the small village of Schaffhouse-sur-zorn, 15 miles from Westhoffen, and in Herrlisheim, north east of Strasbourg, where on December 2018 37 tombstones and a monument to Holocaust victims were damaged.

In the United States Brown is a university with 1,000 Jewish undergrads and 200 Jewish grads. On December 2, 2019 the Brown University committee on corporate responsibility voted 6-2-1 not to invest in companies identified as facilitating Israeli human rights violations in Palestine. Already in March 2019, students voted 69-31, calling on Brown to separate itself from companies that conduct business with Israel. That majority ought to have understood that the purpose of these resolutions and the BDS movement is not to improve human rights for Palestinians or to encourage peace, but to eliminate the State of Israel.

A new form of memorials for Jewish victims has emerged in recent years, though sometimes used unwillingly or reluctantly or even rejected. An example of this comes from a small Italian town. The mayor, Valter Orsi and the municipal council of Schio, a town near Vicenza, with population 40,000, rejected a proposal to honor its citizens who died in death camps during World War II. The proposal was to honor them by using fourteen Stolpersteine, memorial stones put in the pavement next to the residence where victims of Nazism lived.

The idea of the Stolpersteine (stumbling stone) was devised in 1992 by a German artist, Gunter Demnig, as a memorial to

victims of Nazi persecution, and he installed the first stone in Berlin in 1996. The project, in a sense substitutes for graves, can now be considered the world's largest decentralized memorial. The small brass stones are engraved with the name, year of birth, date of arrest, fate of person honored. About 70,000 stones have been placed in 22 countries in Europe and elsewhere.

Demnig cites the Talmud, "A person is only forgotten when his or her name is forgotten." His intention is clear, "Anyone who wants to read the inscription on the stone must bow to the victim first." In essence this was rejected by Mayor Orsi, opposing the 14 stones, "we do not support political exploitation." By his action Orsi in effect was legitimizing the policy of forgetting the crimes of the Holocaust.

Similar conclusion can be drawn from the fact that implementation of the stones has been rejected by a number of towns, including Munich, which in 2004 and again in 2015 rejected installation of the stones on private property, and Antwerp. Moreover, neo-Nazis have displayed their hatred by trampling with heavy boots over the stones, and essentially destroying them.

Dispute over displays of antisemitism has arisen over the well-known carnival parade in the Belgian town of Aalst, near Brussels. The parade, which usually draws an audience of 100,000 people a year, has always featured mockery, unbridled humor, and satire, of politicians, religious leaders, the rich and famous. But it has also featured an antisemitic float in the parade. In previous years some participants were dressed in Nazi SS uniforms, holding canisters labelled Zyklon B, the poison used by the Nazis to gas Jews. In May 2019 the parade featured caricatures of Orthodox Jews, hook nosed Jews, sitting on piles of money. The float was criticized by UNESCO which had put Aalst on its intangible cultural heritage list, and which was critical of the antisemitic imagery.

However, Mayor Christian D'Haese, a Flemish nationalist, said he was tired of attacks on the carnival, and said he would no longer seek UNESCO recognition for the carnival.

UNESCO then said that at its meeting on December 9-4 in Bogota, Columbia it would examine the possibility of removing the carnival from its cultural list. Thus, an interesting problem. Can the satirical spirit of the Carnival justify the manifestation of hatred?

The spirit of Christmas was also improperly invoked for prejudicial action in an area, the West Norwegian fjords, that was also inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List. The municipality of Stranda in Norway, the mayor Irene Heng Lauvsnes asked a Pentecostal church to replace its traditional Star of David Christmas decoration because it was too associated with Jews and Israel, and replace it with a traditional Christmas star. The reasoning, that Norway must remain neutral, conjures up the image that the Star Wars were being fought in this small town, now that a part of *James Bond 25* was filmed in Norway.

Though there are only 2,000 in the country, mainly in Oslo and Trondheim, Norway in fact is one of the worst countries in Europe at many levels of antisemitism including intellectuals. Notorious is Johan Galtung, professor of sociology, so called father of peace, studies, notorious for his remarks in lectures and his beliefs. He informed the world that the Jews control the U.S. media, and use it for the sake of Israel. He also pointed out the possible connection between the terrorist responsible for the massacre of children in Norway, and the Mossad, though the real perpetrator a local extremist was convicted and sentenced to 21 years in prison.

Other peoples have been persecuted or suffered discrimination, but the fate of the Jewish people, through time and space is unique. Even if there is no exact current replica of Adolf Hitler or Julius Streicher, it is appalling that a publication

such as the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, a Russian secret service forgery, should be read and quoted in many countries. Antisemitism is an inexplicable disease, perhaps the consequence of racism, xenophobia, and the search for a scapegoat to account for the existence of problems. But it is an evil, and one that should be eliminated.