

# Why are Jews Against Israel?



We have been an admirer of David Isaac's commendable documentary series, ["Zionism 101"](#). It is a beautiful constructed graphic Baedeker and comprehensive guide to the origins and evolution of religious and political Zionism. We count him among the leading defenders of Israel, the Jewish nation and the Diaspora, the 'galut'. Thus, I found it in character for him to publish a review of a new book of withering essays by University of Washington scholar, Edward Alexander, ["Jews Against Themselves"](#). Isaac's review of Alexander's collection of jeremiads, ["The Enemy Within"](#) published in today's *Washington Free Beacon* excoriates these diverse 'shadtlanim' beyond the usual suspects. Isaac pays tribute to Alexander withering and acerbic wit in these essays. He writes:

Alexander describes "the new forms taken by Jewish apostasy in an age when Jewish existence is threatened more starkly and immediately than at any time since the Nazi war against the Jews." He notes that there are always readers astonished to learn that Israel-bashing Jews exist. But precisely these home-grown haters are the ones who "play a disproportionate role in basic

Isaac notes Alexander's theme threading his oeuvre defending Israel against the usual and not so usual suspects::

Alexander is a staunch defender of Israel, the foundation of which he calls one of the "few redeeming events in a century of blood and shame, one of the greatest affirmations of the will to live ever made by a martyred people, and a uniquely hopeful sign for humanity itself." As an English professor at the University of Washington,

he wrote books on moral exemplars of the Victorian period like Matthew Arnold. He could have remained in his ivory tower, but instead he has delved into the muck. With pen in hand—happily Alexander is a superb writer and wields a very sharp pen—he has taken apart Israel’s enemies in books ranging from *The Jewish Idea and Its Enemies* to *The Jewish Wars* to *The State of the Jews* and *The Jewish Divide Against Israel*.

Alexander is not out to create a “systemic taxonomy” of the many species of anti-Israel Jews but he does give the reader a brief, dizzying list of them: “Jewish progressives against Israel; Jewish queers against Israel; *Haredim* against Israel; Holocaust survivors against Israel; children of Holocaust survivors against Israel; Jewish Voice for Peace; grandchildren of Holocaust survivors against Israel ... and so on and on, *ad infinitum*, *ad nauseam*.”



Anti-semitic cartoon posted by Richard Falk on his blog.

One of the worst Isaac cites in his review of Alexander’s book for particular scorn is Princeton Professor Richard Falk, a former special rapporteur on Palestine for the oxymoronic UN Human Rights Commission:

Unfortunately, Jewish defamers of Israel often occupy positions of influence. Take Richard Falk, a Princeton professor for 40 years, who served for six years as the UN’s special rapporteur “on human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967.” In 2008 Falk issued a statement condemning Israel (which had finally reacted to years of missiles lobbed into its territory) for “war crimes” in Gaza. Alexander writes of him: “From his UN post Falk has relentlessly described Israel as Satan’s lair, called for ‘a legitimacy war against

Israel,' blamed the Boston Marathon bombings on 'Tel Aviv,' and then—in the summer of 2011—having exhausted his own store of verbal eloquence on the topic, posted on his 'blog' site a cartoon of a dog wearing a yarmulke urinating on a blindfolded female figure of Justice. If any single figure ever embodied the image of the UN as the center of the world's evil, it is Richard Falk."

Then there is J Street that we have conducted our own withering campaign against:

J Street is another example of the real-world impact of these internal enemies. The group boasts a "Rabbinic Cabinet," Alexander writes, "whose members include supporters of Hamas's relentless bombing of Sderot." In lobbying to oppose Israeli policies, J Street has proven a useful tool in the hands of the Obama administration, which sends its highest officials to attend its conferences, presumably because it sees in the group a kindred spirit and hopes that the group will provide cover, as a self-styled "Zionist" organization, against charges of being anti-Israel.

Isaac condemns the obscenity of Jewish descendents of Holocaust survivors misappropriating their memories in squabbling debates within the same family, as in the case of the Petos:

Such a one is Jennifer Peto, whose anti-Israel master's thesis (briefly the focus of a 2010 media controversy in Canada) was dedicated to her grandmother, a Holocaust survivor: "If she were alive today, she would be right there with me protesting against Israeli apartheid." Fortunately, her brother, David Peto, a Houston physician, sent an open letter to the press describing their real grandmother, a teacher at a Jewish orphanage in Budapest "who saved countless children from death at the hands of the Nazis." She was "an ardent supporter of the state of

Israel ... [and] I cannot in good conscience allow my sister to misappropriate our grandmother's memory to suit her political ideology."

Then there are Israel-bashing Israelis that Alexander takes particular exception to:

One of the biggest surprises in Alexander's book—at least to the uninitiated—is that there are Israelis who join in the defamation. One would think terrorist bombs and missiles would act as a reality check, but this is far from the case. Alexander quotes the Israeli writer Aharon Megged saying in 1993 that "Since the Six Day War, and at an increasing pace, we have witnessed a phenomenon which probably has no parallel in history: an emotional and moral identification by the majority of Israel's intelligentsia with people openly committed to our annihilation." Alexander observes that when the Labor Party took back the reins of government in 1992, they had absorbed the ideas of this intelligentsia. The result was the Oslo Accords, which gave the PLO's Yasser Arafat a launching pad for attacks on Israel.

Along these lines, Isaac asks why the Israel government mindlessly awards the Israel Prize to Israeli Jewish self haters:

While Alexander does not talk about this, the Israeli government itself is guilty of precisely such "honors, flattery and oily sycophancy." The Israel Prize, the highest bestowed by the Israel government, has gone to some of Israel's worst defamers: men like Yeshayahu Leibowitz who repeatedly referred to Israel's government and soldiers as "Judeo-Nazis"; Natan Zach, a supporter of boycotts against Jewish communities outside the armistice borders of 1949; Ze'ev Sternhell, "only he who is willing to storm Ofra [a Jewish community between Jerusalem and Nablus] with tanks will be able to block the fascist

danger”; Arik Shapira, who said his musical composition was dedicated to the destruction of Ofra , and a number of others of that ilk. What happens when the state gives its highest honor to those who call Israelis Nazis, justify Arab terrorism and advocate civil war among Jews? The prizes say that these people are the most cultivated; the highest achievers Israel has to offer. In giving these prizes to those who despise the state, Israel becomes an enabler and megaphone for its defamers.

Isaac ends his review of Alexander’s collection of 18 essays by reaching back into ancient history to show that despite massive repeated existential threats, Israel and the Jewish people have survived :

Israel is ringed by enemies, excoriated by “the world community,” and has to endure so many enemies within the Jewish world, it is helpful to end on a positive note. Alexander reminds us that “the first elegist to crow over the demise of Zion was a fellow named Merneptah, a ruler of Egypt who announced that ‘Israel is desolated; its seed is no more.’ That was in the year 1215 BCE.”

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✘ David Isaac is an editor at NewsMax.com and the founder of a Zionist history site, Zionism101.org.