

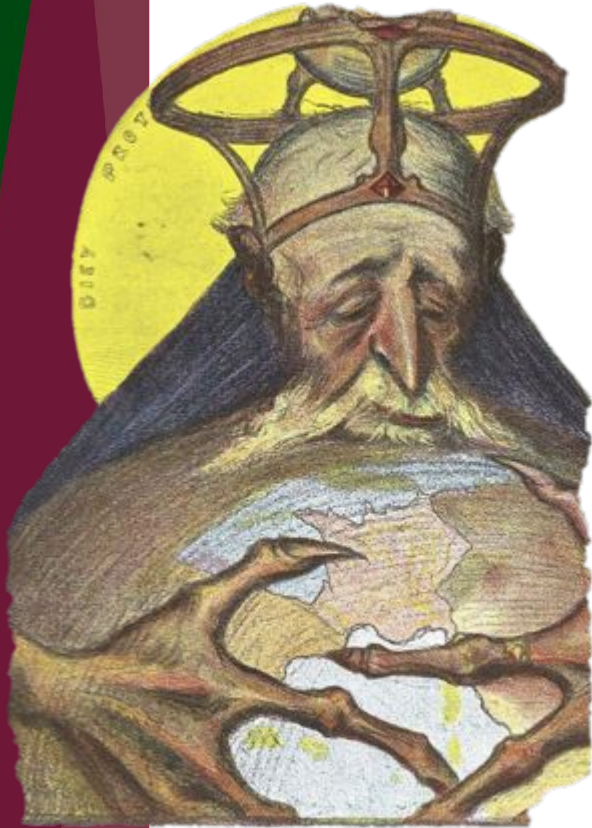
Course Outline

Class One: The History and Politics of Defining Antisemitism

Class Two: Israel and Antisemitism: Two definitions, two worldviews

Class Three: Definitions of Hate as Political Engagement: Antisemitism in the 21st Century





Course Goals

- To have a better understanding of history and politics of defining antisemitism.
- To consider the contemporary political situation informing efforts to define antisemitism.
- To encourage people to find ways to build interreligious coalitions to combat antisemitism (with & without a definition).

Agenda

- 7:00 pm Brief Review: Definitions as Political Engagement
- Definitions of Antisemitism and Public Policy
 - Definitions, Antisemitism, Zionism, and Jewish Identity
- 7:30 pm Breakout Room
- 7:45 pm A Palestinian Point of View
- 7:55 pm We all seem disagree. Now What?
- 8:00 pm Breakout Room
- 8:15 pm Plenary
- 8:25 pm Final Thoughts
- 8:30 pm Adjourn



The IHRA:

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

- It follows with eleven brief examples of antisemitism, seven which focus on Israel.
- It agrees with the premise of the New Antisemitism that “anti-Zionism is antisemitism.”

The Jerusalem Declaration:

“Antisemitism is discrimination, prejudice, hostility, or violence against Jews as Jew (or Jewish institutions as Jewish).”

- It follows with examples either affirming or opposing those of the IHRA.
- It disagrees with the premise of the “New Antisemitism.” For JDA, anti-Zionism is *not* antisemitism.

The salient difference between the two definitions:

- If you can plug in Rothschild or George Soros for Israel and the sentence or image still works, both definitions agree that this is antisemitism.
- This debate is about the role of antisemitism in anti-Israel or anti-Zionist rhetoric or critique.
- The difference is found in three examples from the IHRA definition: (a) the double standard, (b) calling Israel a racist state, and (c) denying that Jews constitute a nation. For the IHRA these are antisemitic critiques; for the JDA, they are not.



Responses to the JDA

“The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism is itself antisemitic... Their real objective is to use the fight against antisemitism as a weapon with which to vilify Israel.”

Dana Barnett, “The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism is Itself Antisemitic.”

“The JDA is an orientalist text that fails to produce true opposition to the core problem of the IHRA definition: the silencing and erasure of Palestine and Palestinians.”

M. Muhannad Ayyash, “The Jerusalem Declaration is an Orientalist Text,” Aljazeera.

“... the smug Jewish academics and intellectuals [who signed the JDA] are seeking to incite Jewish hatred.... desperately longing to be regarded as ‘good Jews.’”

“ISGAP Scholars Support the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism,” Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy.

JEWISH INSIDER

DEFINITION DEFERRED

Facing pressure from activists, Maryland's Montgomery County Council postpones antisemitism vote

The council was set to vote on the adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism

By Gabby Deutch, Jacob Miller
August 1, 2022



THE JERUSALEM POST

More than 1,000 global entities adopted IHRA definition of antisemitism

In the United States, 18 new states in 2022 adopted it via legislation or executive actions, bringing the number of states adopting the definition to 30.

By ZVIKA KLEIN
JANUARY 17, 2023



Definitions: Antisemitism, Zionism, and Jewish Identity

Benjamin Netanyahu
And the State of Israel
Do Not Represent
World Jewry

www.nkusa.org

Existence of the
TERRORIST STATE OF ISRAEL
under Jewish Identity
is an
EMBARRASSMENT
for the Jewish religion
and a
Crime against Humanity
www.nkusa.org

FREE
PALESTINE

Palestine Forum in Britain
المنتدى الفلسطيني في بريطانيا
www.palestinianforum.org.uk

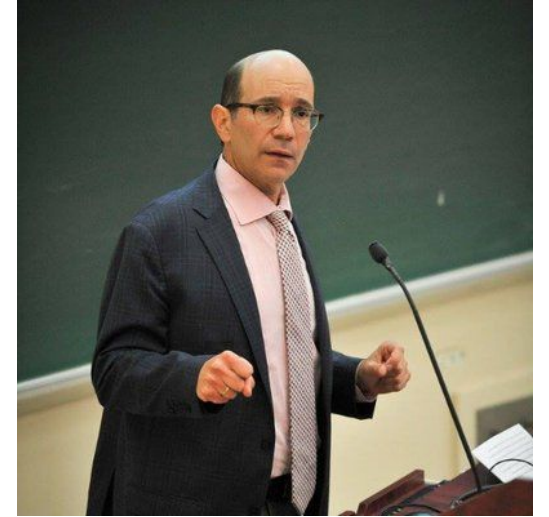


PFB

The Un-Jews, 2021 by Natan Sharansky and Gil Troy



“The anti-Zionists know exactly what they are doing, and what they are undoing. They are trying to disentangle Judaism from Jewish nationalism, the sense of Jewish peoplehood, while undoing decades of identity-building. In repudiating Israel and Zionism, hundreds of Jewish Google employees rejected what they call ‘the conflation of Israel with the Jewish people.’ The voices of inflamed Jewish opponents of Israel and Zionism are in turn amplified by a militant progressive superstructure that now has an ideological lock on the discourse in American academia, publishing, media, and the professions that formerly respected American Jewry’s Zionism-accented, peoplehood-centered constructions of Jewish identity.”



The Un-Jews continued...

“We call these critics ‘un-Jews’ because they believe the only way to fulfill the Jewish mission of saving the world with Jewish values is to *undo* the ways most actual Jews do Jewishness. They are not ex-Jews or non-Jews, because many of them are and remain deeply involved Jewishly, despite their harsh dissent. Many un-Jews are active in forms of Jewish leadership, running Jewish studies departments, speaking from rabbinic pulpits, hosting Shabbat dinners. For many of these un-Jews, the public and communal staging of their anti-Israeli and anti-Zionist beliefs appears to be the badge of a superior form of Judaism, stripped of its unsavory and unethical ‘ethnocentric’ and ‘colonialist’ baggage.”



The Un-Jews continued...



“In launching this attempt, these anti-Zionists join a long history of such un-Jews, who wormed their way deep into the tradition and tried to weaken Jewish identity ideologically from within by canceling a central pillar of contemporary Jewish identity, as part of what they imagine to be a wider commitment to world liberation. This phenomenon of the un-Jews has emerged most dramatically whenever Jews sought to join with non-Jews in advancing quintessentially Jewish ideas of brotherly love, equality, and social justice, unmoored from their Jewish context and their Jewish delivery systems (historically, the most successful of these un-Jewish movements being Christianity).”

“The Enforcers,” 2021 Shaul Magid



“...To be fair, the enforcers are not saying non- or anti-Zionists are *not* Jews. It’s even worse than that. What they are arguing is that they are essentially anti-Jews, or counter-Jews, because for the enforcers, Zionism, meaning support of the State of Israel as a Jewish state, has become a more important marker of identity than Jewish practice or any other kind of identification. In a sense, this is an exercise in marking modern-day heretics, Jews who, while still inside the orbit of the Jewish people, are forces that are undermining them.”

“The Enforcers” continued...

“The Talmud teaches that the heretic is actually worse than the idolater. To those who would write them out of the Jewish community, what matters is the approved final destination: support of Zionism as the national Jewish project, which includes at its center support for the State of Israel as a Jewish state. Anything outside that is taken to be a form of Jewish heresy...”

מאימתי קרין - לא קרין ערובין - אפנה סכסכה מנכסין לבלב ערובותין - סכסכה משפחה ובלב הרבנות שנתן ארבעה סכסכה לבלב ערובותין - סכסכה משפחה ובלב הרבנות סכסכה משפחה ובלב הרבנות - סכסכה משפחה ובלב הרבנות

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“The Enforcers” continued...

“What the Zionist ideological enforcers suggest is a radical reassessment of Jewishness no longer based on Halacha, or religion (however defined), or even ethnicity. For them, legitimate Jewishness pivots instead on identification with, and fidelity to, a national political project. To be clear, this line of thinking arguably seems to take a higher view of completely secular, assimilated, non-practicing Jews who love Israel than of faithful, observant Jews who do not. Perhaps this is the true heresy. In his provocative and brilliant work *Knesset Yisrael and the Gentile Wars*, a response to World War I, the ultra-Orthodox pacifist Aaron Shmuel Tamares (1869-1931) called ‘*erez moledet*,’ by which I think he likely meant ‘territorial nationalism,’ the ‘modern idolatry.’ This included, for him, political Zionism. But for our enforcers, matters of practice and belief have been replaced by national affiliation, exercised through support of a territorial state, an *erez moledet*, as the quintessence of Jewishness, from which the very boundaries of legitimacy are drawn. Can this be a form of idolatry?”



Aaron Shmuel Tamares

“The Enforcers” continued...

“The notion of Zionism as the only possible way to be properly Jewish ironically grounds Zionism in an antisemitic premise. In pre- and then post-emancipation Europe, antisemites often argued that Jews were not fit for membership in society in part because they were a sick and cultureless people. Josef Stalin once said that the Jews are not a nation because they lack two essential national attributes: language and territory. Many Zionists agreed! In some ways the Zionist project was founded on the antisemitic assumption that the Jews in the diaspora were a flawed and even diseased people, who had had no meaningful culture of their own.”



Breakout Room

Please take a minute and collect your thoughts.

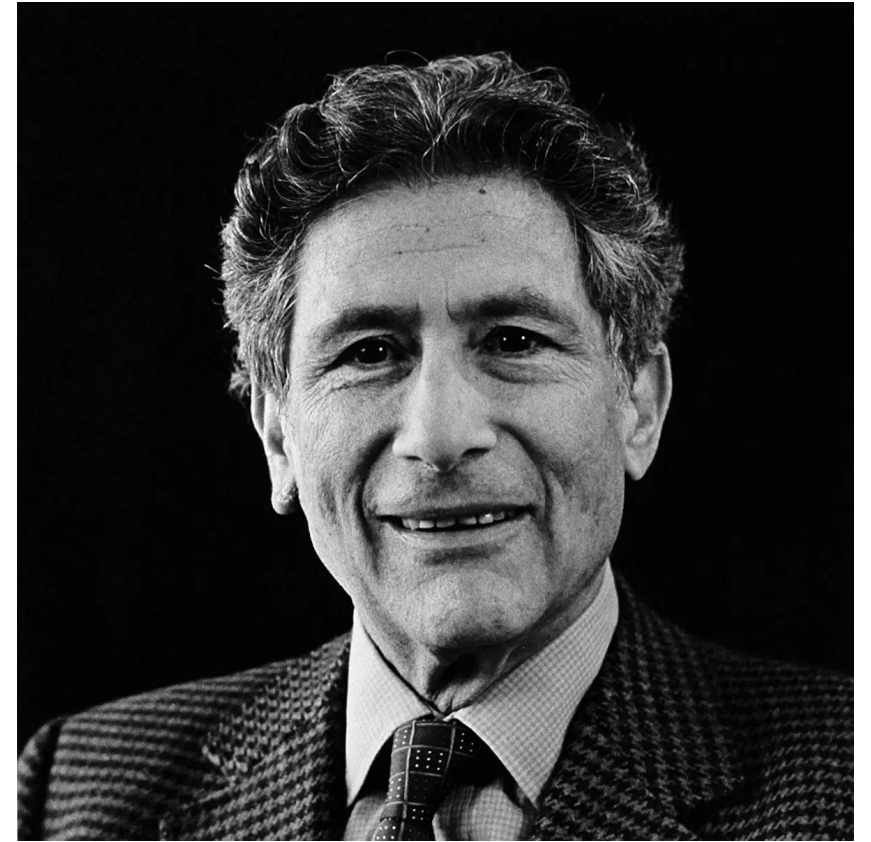
This will first be an exercise in listening.

- Assign a timekeeper.
- Each person take 1 minute to share what's on their mind. No responding. Just share.
- Speak only about your thoughts and emotions.

After everyone has said something, kindly answer the following question: **Is a definition of antisemitism necessary?**

“Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims,” (1979)

“...Zionism has had a large number of successes. There is no doubt in my mind, for example, that most Jews do regard Zionism and Israel as urgently important facts for Jewish life, particularly because of what happened to the Jews in this century. Then too, Israel has some remarkable political and cultural achievements to its credit, quite apart from its spectacular military successes until recently.”



Edward Said, 1935-2003

“Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims,” continued...



“Yet there is no getting around the formidable historical reality that in trying to deal with what Zionism has suppressed about the Palestinian people, one also abuts the entire disastrous problem of anti-Semitism on the one hand, and on the other, the complex interrelationship between the Palestinians and the Arab states.”

"Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims," continued...

"...To write critically about Zionism in Palestine has therefore never meant, and does not mean now, being anti-Semitic; conversely, the struggle for Palestinian rights and self-determination does not mean support for the Saudi royal family, nor for the antiquated and oppressive state structures of most of the Arab nations."



“Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims,” continued...



“One must admit, however, that all liberals and even most ‘radicals’ have been unable to overcome the Zionist habit of equating anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism. Any well-meaning person can thus oppose South African or American racism and at the same time tacitly support Zionist racial discrimination against non-Jews in Palestine.”

"Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims," continued...

"The almost total absence of any handily available historical knowledge from non-Zionist sources, the dissemination by the media of malicious simplifications (e.g., Jews vs. Arabs), the cynical opportunism of various Zionist pressure groups, the tendency endemic to university intellectuals uncritically to repeat cant phrases and political clichés (this is the role Gramsci assigned to traditional intellectuals, that of being 'experts in legitimation'), the fear of treading upon the highly sensitive terrain of what Jews did to their victims, in an age of genocidal extermination of Jews—all this contributes to the dulling, regulated enforcement of almost unanimous support for Israel."



"Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims," continued...



“...On the other hand, it would be totally unjust to neglect the power of Zionism as an idea for Jews, or to minimize the complex internal debates characterizing Zionism, its true meaning, its messianic destiny, etc. Even to speak about this subject, much less than attempting to ‘define’ Zionism, is for an Arab quite a difficult matter, but it must honestly be looked at.”

**We all seem to disagree:
Now what?**



Breakout Room



Can we build interreligious coalitions to combat antisemitism without an agreed upon definition?