# ANTISEMITISM AFTER OCTOBER 7

## *An Age-Old Hatred and a Two-Year War*

ESSAYS BY COMPER CENTER SCHOLARS

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המרכז ע"ש אליזבת וטוני קומפר לחקר האנטישמיות והגזענות
The Elizabeth and Tony Comper Center
for the Study of Antisemitism and Racism
مركز إليزابيث وتوني كومبر لدراسة معاداة السامية والعنصرية
UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA אוניברסיטת חיפה

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Mina Kupfermann, Nova (2024), oil on linen. © Mina Kupfermann. In memory of Shiraz and Adir Tamam, Naji and Gal Abdoush, Shir Georgie, Sean Davitashvili Keshet Casarotti and Dvir Rahamim, who were among 364 Israeli civilians murdered at the Nova festival on 7th October 2023.

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# INTRODUCTION

October 7, 2023, was a seminal moment in modern Jewish history, in the history of the State of Israel, and in contemporary antisemitism. Hamas termed its onslaught into Israel the "al-Aqsa Flood." What was perhaps most astounding – but to scholars of antisemitism, unsurprising – was that the deluge of carnage in southern Israel opened the floodgates to the worst antisemitism in the West since the Holocaust. The levels of antisemitism have not receded since; in fact, they continue to grow worse.

The second anniversary of October 7 and two years of war in Gaza provide an important vantage point from which to assess the current level of hatred towards Jews.

This collection is an attempt to make an in-the-moment assessment of where we stand – and where we may be headed – through a range of perspectives. We examine the theoretical landscape: how October 7 transformed anti-Zionism into a "political theology" (Hussein Aboubakr Mansour); how the digital age accelerates this impulse for political-theological "redemption" (David Barak-Gorodetsky); and how antizionism, in the guise of intellectual critique, has hardened into an entrenched ideology (Balazs Berkovits). We also consider more practical implications. One essay shows how this wave of anti-Zionist – often antisemitic – propaganda is a

case of historical déjà vu – an assault that nevertheless shocks us each time we encounter it (Izabella Tabarovsky). Another essay introduces the concept of "Erasive Jew-Hate" (Ben M. Freeman). A third asks whether antisemitism has crossed a Rubicon and become the "new normal" (Jacob Dallal). We also look at specific trends: how October 7 was a boon for Holocaust deniers (Stephanie Share) and its implications for antisemitism in Greece (Neil Bar) and in India (Khinvraj Jangid). Throughout, we wrestle with the central issue of antizionism as a manifestation of antisemitism.

In this collection, scholars at the Comper Center at the University of Haifa approach the second anniversary of October 7 in the same way we approach all our research: honestly, thoughtfully, and in an intellectually vibrant and tolerant environment.

Jacob Dallal, ***Editor*** David Barak-Gorodetsky
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# TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF ANTIZIONIST PROPAGANDA, REMEMBER PREVIOUS ONES

BY IZABELLA TABAROVSKY

Since October 7, anti-Israel propaganda has been relentless. Wave after wave of manufactured images, fake news, and doctored statistics have swept through social and legacy media alike. The damage has been felt on many levels: it harms Israel directly and has had a demoralizing effect on Diaspora Jewry, many of whom feel compelled to join the chorus of Israel's accusers in order to remain welcome in their societies.

By many assessments, Israel has ceded the narrative battlefield altogether. We have yet to learn why this has happened, but let's set that question aside for now. Instead, let's ask another: Why were so many in Israel and the Diaspora shocked by the vicious nature of the anti-Israel information assault?

This shock is puzzling, given how long this propaganda playbook has been in use. Anti-Israel disinformation is an enduring enterprise, and its underlying strategy has remained largely constant over the years. It is grounded in reinforcing the notion of Zionist evil—an idea rooted in the much older and deeply entrenched conspiracy myth of Jewish evil and power. Tropes equating Zionism with fascism and Nazism spring from this foundation, as do the evergreen accusations that Israel is starving, ethnically cleansing, mass slaughtering, or committing genocide against the Palestinians.

From conflict to conflict, Israel's enemies continue to recycle and refine the same communication blueprint. The details—names of places and people, dates, times—change; the underlying framework remains the same. After decades of practice, they know exactly what works, and they keep using it. Yet each time we react as if we've never seen anything like this before, watching helplessly as one onslaught follows another: from "starvation," to alleged targeting of journalists, to "scholasticide" and finally back again to "ethnic cleansing"—a never-ending sequence calculated to keep the anti-Israel outrage alive.

Recognizing this dynamic is critical as we look ahead to the end of the war and begin to draw lessons for the next conflict Israel will inevitably have to fight. Analyzing these communication patterns will help Israel and the Diaspora learn not merely to react, but to anticipate and get ahead of them next time around.

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## STRATEGIES THAT NEVER CHANGE

The tropes themselves have scarcely changed. Zionism=Nazism, Zionism=racism, Israel as a genocidal,

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settler-colonial or apartheid state: all these have been deployed for decades.

Beyond tropes, the propaganda methods also repeat. One common tactic is the constant repetition of the mantra that antizionism and antisemitism are not the same—a rhetorical device that drags the public into endless arguing and frees the propagandist to deploy antisemitic speech at will.

Another is the use of mirroring and reversal: projecting one's own crimes onto the enemy and inverting victims and perpetrators. Using these techniques, anti-Israel propagandists inverted Hamas's mass rape of Israeli women into baseless claims that Israeli soldiers were raping Palestinians. The charge of Israel committing genocide was itself a reversal of Hamas's explicitly genocidal aims.[1] "False flag" conspiracy theories, claiming Israel orchestrated October 7 to justify the invasion and destruction of Gaza, served the same purpose: to confuse, deflect scrutiny from the real perpetrator, and create moral equivalence. These, too, have been a feature of anti-Israel propaganda for decades.

Public pressure campaigns are another tool. Various professional groups, celebrities, and public officials are easy targets to condemn Israel. The public got a rare glimpse of the machinery behind such campaigns when Alice Wairimu Nderitu, the UN's former special adviser on the prevention of genocide, revealed that she had been "bullied" and "hounded day in and day out" to declare that Israel was committing genocide. She displayed rare courage and refused.[2]

An overarching strategy is to keep the cycle of anti-Israel fury going. As soon as one prong of the campaign dies down or is exposed as fraudulent, another follows. Propagandists know that in information warfare, feelings matter more than

facts. No amount of post-factum fact-checking can erase the visceral impact of headlines painting Israel as a monstrous murderer. They exploit this ruthlessly.

## WE WERE WARNED

Antizionist tropes began to take root in the West in the wake of the Six-Day War, with the USSR and its Arab allies playing a leading role in inculcating them among left-wing groups and the Third World.

This was not lost on contemporary observers, who commented on the phenomenon in real time and warned about its dangers. A few examples illustrate the point.

### AN ARTICLE IN THE NEW YORK TIMES

On January 3, 1971, the *New York Times* published a 5,500-word essay by sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset titled "Socialism of Fools." Its subheading read: "The New Left calls it 'antizionism,' but it's no different from the antisemitism of the Old Right."

"The most important expression of anti-Jewish sentiment in the West," Lipset observed, now manifested itself in "attacks on 'Zionists' and the state of Israel." Every faction of the left, from anarchists to Maoists, Trotskyists, Black Panthers, and Communists, was unanimous in casting Arab terrorists as heroes, while portraying Israel and the US as villains.

In Germany, New Left students marched under the slogan, "Make the Near East Red; smash the Zionists dead." A French New Left journal in 1969 argued that being pro-Palestinian meant embracing rhetoric that sounded like *Mein Kampf*.

> *"All power to the people—death to the Zionist pigs," proclaimed a 1970 Black Panther article, referring to Jewish landlords. Another Panther piece urged that Jews be expelled from the radical movement. Their white comrades kept silent.*

*Already in 1970, Lipset was able to point out that the word "Zionism" had become "a code word for Jew." He also noted that the relentless anti-Zionist incitement on the left was boosting Christian and far-right antisemitism—a dynamic that is on display today as well.*

Their American counterparts made similar arguments, calling for violence against Israeli embassies, tourist offices, airlines, and "Zionist fund-raising and social affairs." They claimed Israel was built on the displacement of "thousands of people of color" and argued that Jews, being white, were not oppressed and therefore unworthy of the left's sympathy. "All power to the people—death to the Zionist pigs," proclaimed a 1970 Black Panther article, referring to Jewish landlords. Another Panther piece urged that Jews be expelled from the radical movement. Their white comrades kept silent.[3]

We can clearly see the same tropes at work in today's anti-Israel propaganda—including the framing of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through a neo-Marxist oppressor/oppressed binary defined by race. In the dehumanization of "Zionists" and open calls for violence against them by the previous generation of the left, we can see the precursor to Columbia University student Khymani James, who declared in spring 2024 that "Zionists don't deserve to live."[4]

Already in 1970, Lipset was able to point out that the word "Zionism" had become "a code word for Jew." He also noted that the relentless Antizionist incitement on the left was boosting Christian and far-right antisemitism—a dynamic that is on display today as well.

## BANNING JEWS PER UN RESOLUTION 3379

Accusations that Israel was committing genocide and practicing apartheid also began to take root during that period.[5] So did the view that "Zionism was a racist ideology."[6] The United Nations entrenched the latter with its infamous Resolution 3379 in November 1975, and the impact was felt far and wide.

In the UK, Jewish students came under pressure from Students' Unions to restrict the activities and funding of Jewish societies on campus, and even to ban them altogether. The British Anti-Zionist Organization called for "national campaigns that will ensure the demise of the Zionist ideology in our 'places of learning'" as part of wider efforts "to ensure the complete elimination of an effective Zionist base in Britain."[7]

The World Jewish Congress, which convened in Jerusalem in February 1976, was sufficiently alarmed to organize a workshop on antisemitism and antizionism. There, participants from Latin America reported that Jews, particularly students, were distancing themselves from Zionism under pressure from "certain groups sympathizing with the Third World." The situation was deemed so troubling that the conference adopted a resolution drawing attention "to the fact that antisemitism today frequently appears under the cloak of antizionism" and urging "all people to oppose antisemitism, whether appearing openly or in the guise of antizionism."[8]

In short, by the mid-1970s, antizionism was already embedded on campuses and exerting pressure on Jews to distance themselves from this critical aspect of their identity.

## MENACHEM BEGIN AS HITLER

During the 1982 Lebanon war, the British socialist press accused Israel of genocide, with one newspaper, edited[6]bones in Beirut.

British Jewish socialist Steve Cohen—himself an Antizionist—was "horrified" by what he saw in the left-wing press. In his 1984 classic That's Funny, You Don't Look Antisemitic, he dissected his comrades' conspiratorial

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antisemitic discourse masquerading as criticism of Israel, noting how closely it matched propaganda coming out of the USSR.

### "ZIONISM=NAZISM=RACISM" AT STONY BROOK

At the inaugural event for a Middle East institute launched by the Zionist Organization of America in 1984, Israel's ambassador to Washington, Meir Rosenne, warned that antizionism was "the most venomous manifestation of antisemitism in the postwar world" and called for a "great international political education campaign against this criminal and obscene denigration of Zionism."

At the same event, Morris Abram, then vice chair of the US Commission for Civil Rights, described how the "Zionism is racism" slogans had become entrenched in Africa, Latin America, and the UN. "It is no wonder," he concluded, "that at Stony Brook University, the lesson was assigned: Zionism is as much racism as Nazism was racism."[9]

Abrams's and Rosenne's talks, delivered before an audience of prominent Jewish and Christian leaders and later published in a pamphlet under the title "The Impact of Antizionism Throughout the World, show that by 1984, prominent leaders were already warning that Antizionist ideology had penetrated Western and non-Western societies alike, including within the academy.

## BREAKING THE GROUNDHOG DAY CYCLE

These examples show that the entrenchment of virulent anti-Israel and antizionist propaganda in the West was neither sudden nor hidden. It happened over decades. Scholars,

activists, and Jewish leaders recognized and documented it in real time, issued warnings, and called to educate and organize against it.

Yet the Jewish community and Israel largely failed to heed those warnings. It is beyond the scope of this piece to discuss the reasons, but the result has been a perpetual Groundhog Day: Jews around the world waking up to the same narrative warfare every time Israel finds itself in a war, blindsided again, and scrambling to improvise counterstrategies on the go.

It's time to break this cycle. Israel's enemies see themselves as waging a single, continuous war whose ultimate goal is the annihilation of the Jewish state. Each iteration of the conflict is simply another chapter in the same story and another chance to recycle and build on propaganda and disinformation formulas perfected over decades.

We must resist the temptation to relegate the propaganda campaign of the past two years to history. These tropes will not go away. Having been reinvigorated after October 7, they will return, along with communication strategies that further entrench them. We must invest resources in analyzing them and developing communication scenarios and solutions for the next round. For example, scholars are discovering that "pre-bunking"—exposing individuals to a misleading argument and explaining its manipulative techniques before they encounter it in real life—is an excellent tool to "inoculate" them against misinformation. But to deploy it effectively, one must plan for it in advance.[10] We will likely never make these tropes disappear: they are part of an age-old antisemitic matrix that humanity has shown little ability or desire to transcend. But if we name them, expose them, and anticipate their inevitable redeployment, we will be far better prepared the next time they return.

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# ERASIVE JEW-HATE

BY BEN M. FREEMAN

Since the early 2000s, the discourse surrounding the Israel–Palestinian conflict has undergone significant transformation. We have witnessed the mainstreaming of antizionist rhetoric, which specifically denies the Jews any connection to the Land of Israel, in order to delegitimize the Jewish state, the State of Israel.

The mainstream conversation surrounding the Israel Palestinian conflict during the peace processes of the 1990s was framed on the concept of the Two-State Solution and with it the tacit acknowledgement that Israel had a right to exist. Although this was not an explicit recognition of Jewish indigeneity, the very act of negotiating for a peace settlement alongside a Jewish state implicitly acknowledged the historical connection and enduring presence of Jews in the region.[1]

Such recognition was a dramatic shift for a movement that had long rejected the legitimacy of Jewish self-determination in the Southern Levant.[2] Einat Wilf coined the term "Palestinianism" to describe a worldview historically rooted in the rejection of a Jewish state.[3] Yet during the 1990s,

moments arose in which pragmatism seemed possible. Sadly, these were fleeting, but they indicated that a framework of compromise which recognizes the Jewish connection to the Land of Israel had, at times, shaped the mainstream discourse on the conflict.

In fact, the political extremes, particularly those on the Left, had long since been opposed to the very idea of a Jewish state. They had since the Cold War sought to delegitimize and demonize Israel. Soviet propaganda played a foundational role in this development, manufacturing antizionism, a post-Holocaust manifestation of Jew-hatred, and disseminating material that demonized the State of Israel, and framed traditional Jew-hatred as political critique of a sovereign state. Israel was framed as a white, settler-colonial entity with no authentic historical claim to the land, a narrative that deliberately erased Jewish continuity in the Levant. Zionism—the indigenous rights movement of the Jewish people—was framed as Nazism. The Soviet Union worked alongside the Arab states, whose Khartoum Resolution (1967) rejected peace, negotiation, or recognition of Israel.[4] In this scenario, the Jewish people possessed no right to sovereignty and Israel was cast as an illegitimate state destined for eradication.

Since the outbreak of the Second Intifada in 2000, the mainstream ideological milieu on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict began to shift. Antizionism, at one point restricted to the ideological margins, has now gained traction. The 2001 World Conference Against Racism in Durban was a significant moment in this shift. The earlier discourse of "two states" gave way to calls for a Palestinian state in place of Israel. Israel was further framed as an illegitimate colonial entity which must be destroyed. Over the subsequent two decades, this position gained momentum in the mainstream,

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assisted by the rise of figures such as Jeremy Corbyn, whose leadership helped mainstream antizionist discourse in both British and international contexts. [5] [6] In 2016, UNESCO passed a resolution aimed at the "safeguarding of the cultural heritage of Palestine and the distinctive character of East Jerusalem" but made absolutely no reference to the Jews' both historical and present, cultural and spiritual connection to Jerusalem.[7] This trajectory was further consolidated during the 2021 Israel-Palestine crisis, which intensified portrayals of Israel as a settler-colonial imposition and of Jews as foreign interlopers, oppressing the Palestinians, who were framed as the indigenous people of the Land.

In this context, across the past quarter-century, what I term Erasive Antisemitism, the denial or erasure of Jewish identity, history, and connection to the Land of Israel, has intensified. However, its most acute expression followed Hamas' genocidal assault on Israel on 7 October 2023. Even as the massacre was unfolding, public mobilizations against Israel were already being organized in Diaspora communities. In Britain, the Metropolitan Police recorded applications for anti-Israel demonstrations submitted by midday on the same day of the attacks.[8] In a demonstration of how fringe perspectives can be made mainstream, social media platforms, such as X (formerly Twitter), became immediate amplifiers, and producers of this discourse, with the erasure of Jewish indigeneity forming a recurring theme.[9]

Since October 7th, the erasure of Jewish indigeneity has taken on an increasingly mainstream face. The online sphere has amplified this phenomenon dramatically. Studies of TikTok and X discourse after October 7 demonstrate a sharp increase in antisemitic narratives, including those which erase or deny Jewish peoplehood and connection to

the Land of Israel.[10] One illuminating example appeared on X from British public figure Bushra Shaikh, who on 14 October 2024 declared: "One state solution. Palestine. And send this European problem back to fucking Europe."[11] The post achieved over half a million views, illustrating how quickly erasure narratives proliferate in digital contexts. Another widely shared example came from a smaller account with only 10,700 followers, whose claim that Israel "has terrible music, art and culture because they obviously do not have a native, original historical continuity of their own, as a settler-colony" generated more than 37,000 likes and two million views.[12] These cases demonstrate the capacity of social media to normalize rhetoric that strips Jews of their indigeneity and frames Israel as devoid of authentic cultural or historical continuity. Similarly, without fail, every December, the claim that Jesus was a Palestinian resurfaces on X like clockwork. In 2024, famed British adventurer, Bear Grylls, tweeted that Mary, Jesus' mother was a "young, poor and no doubt terrified Palestinian girl."[13] And in 2023 in Boston, a vandal spray-painted "Jesus was a Palestinian" below a nativity scene. [14]Even though some commentators online include Jesus' Jewishness in their rhetoric, they have also retroactively identified him as a Palestinian. On CNN in 2023, Catholic priest Father Edward Beck stated: "What I'm so struck by is that the story of Christmas is about a Palestinian Jew…"[15]This is a historic fallacy.

In speeches and statements, even those framed as solidarity with other Indigenous struggles, Jewish indigeneity is either ignored or explicitly denied. For example, in 2025, Anishinaabe lawyers Harry LaForme and Karen Restoule publicly criticized campus activism for its blindness to "the indigeneity of the Jewish people[16] in the region that is Israel."[17] Protest slogans and chants at demonstrations epitomize this intensification. Jewish students on British and European

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*By 1984, prominent leaders were already warning that anti-Zionist ideology had penetrated Western and non-Western societies alike, including within the academy.*

campuses have been told to "go back to Poland,"[18] a chant that not only denies Jewish ties to Israel but also undermines Jewish belonging in their current societies, erasing both their indigeneity and their integration.

Although a growing trend for years, post-October 7th Jewish students who understand the importance of Israel to their Jewish identities, and as such identify as Zionist, are now being demonized and demoralized. *Ynet* reported in December 2023 on the cancellation of menorah lightings and the removal of Jewish symbols from campus events, framing such developments as acts of cultural erasure,[19] while *Tablet Magazine* highlighted how Indigenous rights discourses are selectively deployed to deny Jewish claims.[20]

Taken together, these examples demonstrate how the post–October 7 context has ushered in a more aggressive erasure of Jewish indigeneity. Chants at rallies regularly deny Jews any homeland; online campaigns spread narratives of inauthenticity; Jewish symbols are suppressed in public spaces; and intellectual discourses increasingly situate Zionism not as a liberation movement but as colonization. This discursive shift has profound real-world consequences: it normalizes the exclusion of Jews from Indigenous frameworks and silences their historical experience in favor of narratives that cast them solely as perpetrators, thus justifying violence and hate-speech against Jews.

In order to resist this trajectory, it is imperative that the Jewish community reclaim its own narrative. For too long, Jewish identity has been defined by the non-Jewish majority, often reduced to the category of "religion" rather than recognized as a people whose culture contains religion. A central aspect of this reclamation is the assertion of Jewish indigeneity. As I argue in *The Jews: An Indigenous*

*People*,[21] the Jewish people meet the criteria for indigeneity established by the United Nations. Affirming this status not only deepens Jewish understanding of identity but also underscores the integral relationship between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel. While grounded in global concepts, the framework of indigeneity illuminates dimensions of Jewishness that have always existed within the tradition itself.

This approach lies at the heart of Jewish Pride, a movement dedicated to liberating Jews from the internalized shame imposed by antisemitism and freeing them from definitions constructed by outsiders.[23] Only by rejecting Erasive Antisemitism and engaging proactively with the authentic meaning of Jewish identity, particularly in relation to Israel, can the Jewish people flourish. The threat is not solely external: internalized anti-Jewishness corrodes Jewish self-perception and reinforces erasure.[23] As Theodore Lessing observed, "In order to change humans into dogs, all that is needed is to shout at them long enough, 'You dog!'"[24] For centuries, Jews have been subjected to precisely this dynamic. Today, particularly within parts of the contemporary Left, Jews are often forced to choose between affirming their authentic Jewish identities or maintaining membership in their chosen communities. In these contexts, many begin to internalize the negative stereotypes and narratives projected onto them.

To reclaim their humanity, Jews must assert, loudly and unapologetically, their right to self-definition. Only through such reclamation can the advances of Erasive Jew-hate be countered. Without it, the erasure of Jewish indigeneity will continue to accelerate, imperiling not only Jewish identity but also the perceived legitimacy of Israel as the Jewish state.

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# WILL THIS WAVE OF ANTISEMITISM CHANGE JEWISH LIFE IN THE WEST?

BY JACOB DALLAL

While the actions of sovereign Jews in the Land of Israel have historically impacted Jewish life in the Diaspora, the effect this time seems particularly intense. Particularly concerning is the correlation between the war in Gaza and the explosion of antisemitism in the West. It is tempting to attribute this to the war's duration, or perhaps isolated statements and actions of the Israeli government. But essentially, it reflects the misfortune of a war in the Jewish State coinciding with a Western societal zeitgeist that, at its core, relates to neither Jews nor Israel per se, but exacts a toll on them.

October 7 and its aftermath sparked a tinderbox that was already in place. Yet the dangerous convergence of these forces raises a difficult question: has the Rubicon been crossed—a critical mass of antipathy toward Jews and Israel

achieved that will calcify and become long-lasting, making today's heightened antisemitism the new normal? Or, as the war in Gaza ends and global attention shifts elsewhere, will antisemitism recede to its pre-October 7 levels?

## THE JEWISH STATE IMPACTING ALL JEWS

This is by no means the first time that events in Israel have deeply impacted Jews abroad.

As far back as Biblical times, the Prophet Ezekiel, living in Babylon, reacted furiously when Judean King Zedekiah rebelled against the Babylonian empire. Jerusalem had already surrendered, and many Jews were in exile there. When Zedekiah challenged the superpower, Ezekiel declared: "The word of the Lord came to me: 'Say to the rebellious house – you know not what these things mean?... my covenant he has broken, I will recompense him on his own head."[1]

In modern history, the State of Israel has had formative impact on Jews everywhere. Its declaration in 1948 marked the first time in two millennia that their people were again sovereign in their homeland. For Jews worldwide, this was both a huge spiritual uplift and a newfound—if precarious—safety net, especially for those reeling from the Holocaust. The Six-Day War in 1967 became a defining event that brought the Jewish state to the attention of the non-Jewish world. From the U.S. to the USSR, it reshaped how Jews were perceived. "It made me a foot taller and a different person with my non-Jewish friends," recalled Ohio-born entrepreneur Morton Mandel.[2] In the Soviet Union, Zionist activist Natan Sharansky described the impact of Israel's stunning victory: "Strangers, colleagues, and friends" were suddenly looking at him differently. "It filled me with a pride

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*Has the Rubicon been crossed—a critical mass of antipathy toward Jews and Israel achieved that will calcify and become long-lasting, making today's heightened antisemitism the new normal?*

*Previous events in Israel over the last 50 years temporarily soured Western opinion on Israel but they did not impact levels of antisemitism on Jews living in Western countries.*

and dignity I had never experienced."[3] Ironically, that same victory, while a boon for Soviet Jews personally, marked the beginning of the Soviet Union's full-throttled anti-Israel, anti-Zionist, and antisemitic stance.

Other events in Israel over the last 50 years temporarily soured Western opinion on Israel. The First Intifada, the First Lebanon War—especially the Sabra and Shatila massacre—and Israel's policies in the West Bank and Gaza undermined Israel's reputation in the West. But in all these cases, Israel eventually recovered. Crucially, none of these events had a direct impact on levels of antisemitism on Jews living in Western countries.

## OCTOBER 7TH: THE DAY THAT CHANGED JEWISH HISTORY

That one of the worst massacres in Jewish history—outside of the Holocaust—and the subsequent war against its perpetrators would deeply affect Jews everywhere is hardly surprising. What was shocking, however, was the huge spike in antisemitism in the West immediately after October 7, long before the IDF's ground invasion of Gaza began. It was as if the genie had been let out of the bottle. Jews began to realize that the genie was in the bottle all along.

This is not the place to elaborate on the underlying factors behind today's resurgence of this antisemitism. To do historical justice, the current wave can be traced as far back as Karl Marx, Nihilism, and the anti-Western sentiment that permeated—and eventually consumed—progressive thinkers and activists. In the years prior to October 7, Jews were increasingly categorized in progressive circles as white and privileged, part of the "oppressor" class in the matrix of

oppression. And if being successful (especially in America) did not put them squarely in that class, their assumed affiliation with the Jewish state—the contemporary exemplar of colonialism in this worldview— sealed their fate. "Zionist" as a stand-in for "Jew," was deployed ironically by both the far left and the far right. This trend was already well established before October 7 and was already translating into a rise in antisemitic incidents in Western countries, particularly in the United States. The conditions and trajectory were already set; the Hamas massacre was the spark that triggered combustion.

## WHAT THE FUTURE MAY HOLD

This time is different. Unlike many other Israel-related events of the past decades, this one is more significant in both scope and impact. Its intensity and duration, the scale of casualties, and the sustained shock and strain, will make it difficult—perhaps impossible—–for people to relate to Israel as they once did. In this generation, events in Israel and Jewish life in the Diaspora had been only loosely connected—especially for Jews who avoided politics or for whom Israel was not central to their Jewish identity.

That bifurcated existence ended on October 7. While antisemites had long conflated Jews with the Jewish state, the massacre and its aftermath are now directly impacting Jews everywhere. Antisemitism spiked and remained elevated throughout 2024, and early 2025 figures suggest the trend may be worsening.[4] This may be the end of the post–World War II hiatus in antisemitism in the West.

One reason to suspect this is a long-term trend is that, internationally, the group most hostile to both Israel and Jews is young adults, ages 18–34.[5] In the U.S., this age group is

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*People will move on from both "Jews are part of the oppressor class" and "Israel committed genocide in Gaza."*

the least sympathetic to Israelis and the most sympathetic to Palestinians.[6] For young people—especially those on campus during the spring of 2024—the war in Gaza was a formative international event. Terms like "starvation," and "genocide" use in association with Israel are no longer confined to the fringe. By the summer of 2025, they entered the mainstream. These associations, and the prejudice that comes with them, may prove difficult to erode.

In Europe, under the added pressure of large Muslim minorities, boycotting Israel is no longer a fringe activity; in some countries, it's state sponsored. As of this writing, Israel may even be barred from the Eurovision Song Contest, one of the most-watched cultural events in the world. Several countries, including the Netherlands, Ireland, and Spain, have announced they would boycott if Israel were allowed to participate.[7] All of this will take its toll not only on Israel but on Jews worldwide in the long term.

The antisemitic onslaught comes from both the far left and the far right. Ironically, the far right has embraced the anti-Israel bandwagon not out of sympathy for Palestinians, but as an easy way to spread antisemitism. Online attacks against Israel and Jews for "starving Gazans" come as readily from the extreme right as from the extreme left. (A decade ago, a few extremists on the right could even be found citing grudging respect for Israel as a nation-state.[8])

## CONCLUSION

For better or worse, there is an inexorable link between world Jewry and Israel. October 7 and its aftermath demonstrated this in the most dismal way. It was a perfect storm: underlying antisemitism was already rising, and then the Jewish state—

attack notwithstanding—found itself accused of intentional starvation and genocide.

No trend lasts forever. These conspiracies will eventually fizzle out. People will move on from both "Jews are part of the oppressor class" and "Israel committed genocide in Gaza."

The question is how long that will take, and at what cost to Jews living in the West. The damage may already be too deep, and the sources of disaffection with Jews too entrenched in the zeitgeist to avoid long-term—perhaps permanent—consequences.

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## ENDNOTES

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3. Izabella Tabarovsky, "The American Jewish Soviet Experience," Tablet, October 29,2020

4. From January 1 to August 31, 2025, a total of 4,574 incidents were recorded, 10.2% higher than the 4,150 incidents tallied from January 1 to August 31, 2024, according the Combat Antisemitism Movement, https://www.adl.org/resources/press-release/46-adults-worldwide-hold-significant-antisemitic-beliefs-adl-poll-finds

5. In its January 2025 Global 100 survey, the ADL found 40% of those under age 35 say that "Jews are responsible for most of the world's wars" 11 percentage point more than adults over 50. 29% of respondents younger than 35 express favorable opinions toward the Palestinian terror group Hamas (compared to 23% for all age groups. https://www.adl.org/resources/press-release/46-adults-worldwide-hold-significant-antisemitic-beliefs-adl-poll-finds

6. Gallup Poll, February 2025 https://news.gallup.com/file/poll/657467/2025_02_28%20Middle%20East%20Topline%20and%20Tabs.pdf A Pew poll found "younger Americans are more likely to sympathize with the Palestinian people than the Israeli people" see https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/04/02/younger-americans-stand-out-in-their-views-of-the-israel-hamas-war/

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# REDEMPTIVE ANTISEMITISM IN THE AGE OF ACCELERATION

BY DAVID BARAK-GORODETSKY

*"And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way". (2 Thessalonians 2:6–7)*

Antisemitism has never been only a prejudice. It is a worldview that assigns Jews a symbolic role in history – the obstacle to redemption, the blockage that must be removed for others to be saved. Across centuries, the language has changed, but the structure has endured, from medieval accusations to modern ideologies that cast the "Jew" as the hinge between catastrophe and salvation.

The twenty-first century has given this old grammar a new engine: the acceleration of time and technology. Digital platforms compress events into moments, emotions into memes, and complex conflicts into slogans. Wars are livestreamed, mobilizations ignite within hours, and the

rush of images outpaces reflection. In this hyper-speed environment, impatient theologies of redemption thrive. They do not wait; they demand. In that demand, the Jew – often through the metonym of Israel – is once again positioned as the final obstruction between a broken present and a redeemed future, ushering in what Ilan Gur-Zeev had called the new antisemitism's "re-crucifixion of the Jews" that crystallized at the turn of the twenty-first century.

The massacre of October 7, 2023, and the global reaction that followed, exposed how combustion-ready this framework has become. Islamist movements framed the violence in explicitly eschatological terms, epitomized by the chosen name of the assault: *Taufan al-Aqsa*–the Flood of al-Aqsa; parts of the Western left translated the same structure into a secular idiom of decolonization and justice. In both cases, political theology bled into ordinary politics. To understand why, one must look beneath policies and toward the stories people tell about history, redemption, and time.

## POLITICAL THEOLOGY, OLD MOTIFS AND NEW LANGUAGES

Political theology is the manifest or implicit conviction that history carries sacred meaning, and to that end – that worldly enemies embody cosmic obstructions. Its language can be explicitly religious or fully secular; the structure is the same. As Carl Schmitt argued, many modern political concepts are secularized theological ones–so the logic of salvation and obstacle reappears even in avowedly secular projects. There is a promise of a universal order – the kingdom, the republic of humanity, the liberated world – and there are a figure, an ideology, or a people said to block its arrival. Remove the obstacle and redemption can begin.

> *October 7 was not only a horrific terror attack. It was staged and narrated as an ecstatic rupture in time.*

*Traditional messianic visions deferred fulfillment; they trained civic muscles for a long wait inside an imperfect world. Hyper-speed culture reverses the expectation. If justice is imaginable, it must be immediate. If the future is available, it must be accessible now.*

For centuries, Jews have been fitted to that role. Christian supersessionism turned Judaism into the emblem of stubborn particularity; modern ideologies secularized the script, making Jews stand for capitalism, communism, cosmopolitanism, or cultural decay depending on the hour. In the twentieth century, the logic assumed its most lethal expression – in what Saul Friedländer called "redemptive antisemitism:" the fantasy of national and human renewal through the erasure of Jews.

The twenty-first century iteration, "as argued also by Gur-Zeev," recycles the same template in three overlapping ways. First, in Islamist political theology, "Jew," "Zionist," and "Israeli" are merged into a single demonic category whose elimination is cast as sacred duty. Second, in parts of the Western intellectual left, Israel becomes the condensed symbol of colonial domination, the last, most conspicuous residue of Western violence. Third, in accelerationist and post-humanist imaginaries, Jewish insistence on limits is treated as sabotage of a boundless future.

## OCTOBER 7 AND THE RETURN OF APOCALYPTIC POLITICS

October 7 was not only a horrific terror attack. It was staged and narrated as an ecstatic rupture in time. Videos, chants, and manifestos coded the killings as eschatological theater. The theological vocabulary was explicit on the perpetrators' side. But what followed internationally demonstrated how quickly the same structure can be translated into secular speech: for a segment of liberal-progressive discourse, the massacre was reinterpreted as a necessary shock within a broader liberation narrative, anticipated in Frantz Fanon's postcolonial blueprint.

On campuses and in street protests across Western cities, a familiar inversion advanced at remarkable speed: the aggressor became rebel, the victim became perpetrator, and the demand for justice merged with a fantasy of cleansing violence. This was not merely moral confusion in the first days of chaos. It was a political-theological reflex shaped by years of intellectual framing that casts Israel as the sum of all western evils. Within that frame, any catastrophic blow can be imagined as the gateway to renewal, and redemption.

The rapidity mattered. Platforms rewarded outrage and certainty; snippets displaced context; virality conferred authority. Accusations and denials of atrocity – including barbaric and sadistic sexual violence – were processed as content. The result was less a debate than a liturgy of acceleration: an impatience with evidence, a craving for world-remaking gestures, and the return of a very old idea – that redemption begins with the removal of Jews, whether named directly or by proxy.

## ACCELERATION: FROM TEMPO TO THEOLOGY

Acceleration is not only a tempo; it is a theology of time. When the next feed refresh is the horizon, patience appears like complicity and compromise like betrayal. Traditional messianic visions deferred fulfillment; they trained civic muscles for a long wait inside an imperfect world. Hyper-speed culture reverses the expectation. If justice is imaginable, it must be immediate. If the future is available, it must be accessible now.

That shift elevates purifying violence. If history's obstacle is an institution, it must be toppled; if it is a people, it must be dissolved. The figure of the Jew fits too easily

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*Antisemitism today is not a relic accidentally revived by turbulence. It is the most adaptable myth of the modern world, able to speak in scripture and in code, in pulpits and on platforms.*

into this schema because Judaism ties hope to limits: It prioritizes law over ecstasy, particular bonds over abstract humanity, traditions remembered over the intoxication of progressive erasure. A politics drunk on immediacy, fueled by theological redemptive motifs, experiences such limits as intolerable. Antisemitism, recoded as antizionism, then presents itself as a shortcut to a universal dawn.

Technology intensifies the pull. Social network crowds bend toward simplicity, and complex pluralism is suppressed by the algorithm. Every context becomes an alibi; every hesitation looks like bad faith. In that flattened world, the person who calls for restraint sounds archaic, while those who promises redemption through rupture commands attention. The theology of acceleration is biased toward the latter, and antisemitism attaches itself to its promise.

## THE SECULAR LEFT'S MILLENARIAN TURN

The secular left's version of this theology arrives dressed in emancipatory language. Zionism is reduced to a master-metaphor for oppression; Israel becomes an emblem for everything that must end. There are serious critiques of Israeli policies that do not cross this line, but when the argument denies the legitimacy of any Jewish nationhood, when it treats Jewish particularity as a betrayal of the utopian promise of universalism – the discourse slips from politics into myth.

That slip can be identified by its outcomes. Jewish suffering is ruled inadmissible unless it fits a prefabricated narrative–hence the counter-slogan: "me too – unless you're a Jew". It treats Jewish memory as suspect, Jewish speech as manipulation, Jewish self-defense as aggression. It insists that the world can start again the morning after

the Jewish obstacle is removed. The vocabulary may be resolutely secular, like "decolonization" or a coded dog whistle, such as "from the river to the sea" – yet the plot remains millenarian: a universal dawn that arrives only after a sacrificial offering of the Jew.

## POST-HUMAN HORIZONS AND THE ALLURE OF ERASING LIMITS

A different but related current flows through accelerationist and post-humanist dreams, fueled by advances in Artificial Intelligence and technological utopianism. In that imaginary the future belongs to the boundless: to data that outruns memory, to biologies that outgrow their constraints (as demonstrated also by contemporary gender discourse), and to intelligences that transcend the human. Limits look like relics, and the sacred – any claim that not everything is permissible – looks like a superstition left over from slower, pre-redemptive times.

Within that context, the Jewish insistence on law as sacred, on the timely unfolding of sanctified time, on nationalized geographies and on peoplehood of the flesh, becomes a provocation. Particularity looks like sabotage. The most ancient people, now a reemergence of a redemption-delaying "katechon" outlined in Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians, become the last obstacle to a world purified of the human's stubborn imperfections. When that fantasy meets politics, antisemitism reappears not as a reactionary fever but as a futuristic crusade.

## CONCLUSION

Antisemitism today is not a relic accidentally revived by

> *In an age that glorifies rupture, the most radical act may be to protect what binds: law over chaos, persons over symbols, traditions over deconstruction and lives over myths.*

turbulence. It is the most adaptable myth of the modern world, able to speak in scripture and in code, in pulpits and on platforms. Its newest form draws strength from acceleration: from the thrill of immediacy, the disdain for limits, and the intoxicating promise that the world can be remade if only the last obstacle is removed.

The task is to break the spell. That means recognizing how political theology fuels the reemergence of antisemitic discourse, and how technology has quickened its appetite for redemption without remainder. It means defending the legitimacy of Jewish life – diasporic and national – not as an exception to universality but as a reminder that universality worth having is built from particulars that thrive, construct meaning, cooperate and respect each other's worth. It means recovering the civic virtues that acceleration erodes patience, distinction, memory, and responsibility.

There is no algorithm for that work. There is only the deliberate pace of institutions, the imperfect craft of politics, and the recognition that the human future will not be improved by erasing the people long cast as its obstacle. In an age that glorifies rupture, the most radical act may be to protect what binds: law over chaos, persons over symbols, traditions over deconstruction and lives over myths.

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# ANTISEMITIC DISCOURSE AS CRITIQUE

BY BALÁZS BERKOVITS

Contemporary antizionism is primarily an entrenched ideology -- a comprehensive worldview and expression of a shallow yet universally professed "anti-hegemonic" stance which derives its perceived legitimacy and "truth value" from certain academic disciplines. In this ideological sense, antizionism bears little relation to the empirically existing State of Israel or to the historical evolution of Zionism; it is not a genuine critique of Israeli policies, past or present. Rather, it functions as a moral and political idiom that has come to epitomize opposition to "hegemony" itself. Having acquired the status of the dominant critical language of our time, it serves as the rallying point for a remarkably successful social movement.

Through the discourse of antizionism, individuals articulate their opposition to "the West," construed as the symbol of global domination and imperialism; they affirm their moral virtue by denouncing racism, apartheid, genocide, and conquest, thereby situating themselves "on the right side of

history." For the radical left – and increasingly, for parts of the moderate left as well – Israel has become the embodiment of absolute evil: an allegedly apartheid, genocidal state. This tendency has intensified in the aftermath of the October 7 massacre, as reflected in public declarations, academic statements, and opinion pieces, as well as in the resurgence of campus antisemitism and demonstrations openly sympathetic to Hamas.

Attempting to reintroduce factual inquiry into this atmosphere of moral absolutism appears futile. To suggest that the assessment of the Gaza war requires careful investigation, or to recall that terms like "genocide" and "apartheid" have precise definitions in international law, is to speak into a void. In the realm of contemporary social critique, such terms have become ideological weapons rather than analytical tools. Their application to Israel does not merely distort reality—it cancels it, replacing empirical verification with moral posturing.

This distortion has long been nurtured within sections of academia that have provided scientific validation for such "critical" language. Yet the consequences of this ideological framework extend far beyond discourse: antizionism, as an intellectual and political formation, generates manifestly antisemitic effects. The escalation of antisemitic rhetoric and the recent terrorist attacks in Washington, Boulder, and Manchester are but the most extreme expressions of a hostility that has migrated from theory and speech into violent practice.

What must be emphasized more forcefully is that contemporary antizionist ideology, although presented as a self-evident and even necessary form of political critique, not only produces antisemitic effects but is itself grounded in an

> *Having acquired the status of the dominant critical language of our time, antizionism serves as the rallying point for a remarkably successful social movement.*

*Jews are reconstituted as the embodiment of counter intersectionality-a group imagined to occupy all positions of dominance within their respective societies. In this schema, Jews appear as a once-persecuted minority transformed into a component of the hegemonic majority, complicit in the oppression of "authentic" minorities who are rightfully placed on the intersectional scale.*

antisemitic conceptual structure—or, at the very least, in the latest reformulation of the "Jewish question." Antizionism as a mode of "social critique" operates primarily through the categories of *settler colonialism* and *whiteness*. The pervasive critique of "white Jews" within Western societies is frequently articulated in an accusatory register; the critique of the Jewish state thus emerges as an extension of this primordial indictment of diaspora Jews, whose minority status is simultaneously denied and delegitimized. Yet, following the model of antizionism's self-justification, such accusations present themselves as neutral political and moral critiques, ostensibly free of prejudice or animus.

This configuration has become possible through a sequence of conceptual reversals that collectively reconstitute Jews as the embodiment of *counter-intersectionality*—a group imagined to occupy all positions of dominance within their respective societies. In this schema, Jews appear as a once-persecuted minority transformed into a component of the hegemonic majority, complicit in the oppression of "authentic" minorities who are rightfully placed on the intersectional scale.

Let us begin with the first conceptual reversal: Jews are increasingly perceived as dominant actors, occupying privileged social positions. Within contemporary leftist and "woke" discourses on race and identity, they are categorized as "white," a classification theoretically grounded in current frameworks of race and whiteness studies. The notion of "white" itself is inherently double-faced. On one level, it functions as an interpretive, quasi-sociological category that reflects historical shifts in social status, integration, and mobility; on another, it retains its perceptual association with skin color. Yet this doubleness extends further: "white" operates simultaneously as an analytic and a critical term.

"Whitening" denotes the process of assimilation—of becoming middle class or blending into the indistinguishable majority within multicultural societies. It metaphorically captures an empirically observable socio-historical process, while temporarily suspending the literal, visual dimension of skin color. In this interpretive framework, "white" signifies membership in the dominant majority, which entails the symbolic erasure of Jews as a minority. Here the critical dimension of whiteness becomes decisive: what does it mean when Jews are labeled as white?

Four overlapping stages of "Jewish whiteness" can be discerned in contemporary discourse. In the first, the "white" label neutralizes Jewish distinctiveness -- Jews cease to be recognized as a minority group. Because they are seen as white, and antisemitism cannot be conceptualized in terms of race, color, or structural discrimination; it is therefore dismissed as insignificant or obsolete. In the second stage, "white" acquires an explicitly critical charge: Jewish social success and assimilation are reinterpreted as unearned privilege. Jews are now positioned as fully integrated members of the white, racist majority, beneficiaries of their newly acquired whiteness. As middle-class status itself becomes racialized in the context of intensified identity politics – where the color line and discourses of white privilege gain ever greater prominence – Jews' social mobility is reframed as betrayal. For theorists of whiteness and spokespeople of intersectional activism, this ascent signals a renunciation of authentic minority status, a complicity with capitalism, and an identification with white America, the West, and even with anti-Black and anti-Muslim racism.

The whiteness framework simultaneously serves to demonstrate that Jews are no longer a minority, portraying them as devoid of "color" and thereby erasing both Jewish

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*Zionism and Israel are thus conflated with the supposed racialized essence of "whitened" Jews—portrayed as Western dominators who continue the project of European colonialism, obscure their actions, and exploit Holocaust memory as a shield against moral accountability.*

group identity and antisemitism itself—rendering them obsolete or nearly nonexistent. In a more accusatory mode, it recasts Jews as the paradigmatic oppressors, attributing to them an emphatically "white" identity. At a further stage, Jews are even depicted as the ideological architects of white, racist, capitalist society, a role that is further exacerbated by their identification with Zionism.

Through a retrospective projection of this logic onto the entire history of Zionism, Jews come to be viewed as white colonizers—marking the fourth stage in the construction of Jewish whiteness. *Consequently, the ideological traits of contemporary antizionism reveal a shared foundation with this newly reframed "Jewish question."* The depiction of Jews as Western, white, privileged oppressors revives familiar antisemitic imagery, distinguished only by the ostensibly subversive use of "white" as an anti-hegemonic qualifier. Thus, it becomes clear that the core issue lies in the problematization of Jews and their ascribed attributes. By means of the "white" label, this discourse designates Israel as a colonial entity and legitimizes its exceptional targeting—underscoring the need to analyze the categories of "whiteness" and "coloniality" in conjunction.

This brings us to the second conceptual inversion: Zionist Jews are cast as European white settlers in the Middle East – a framing that presupposes their colonial status from the outset. In this view, the defining traits of Zionist settlers are derived less from historical or empirical realities than from the social and ideological characteristics they are said to have acquired after the Holocaust, when they allegedly "became white." From that moment, interpretations of Zionism and Israel become governed by stereotypes associated with whiteness, racism, and the notion of an "ethnic state," while serious inquiry into the actual history and complexity of Israeli

society largely disappears. *The purportedly colonial attributes of Zionism and Israel are thus conflated with the supposed racialized essence of "whitened" Jews—portrayed as Western dominators who continue the project of European colonialism, obscure their actions, and exploit Holocaust memory as a shield against moral accountability.* Once a state is defined as colonial on the interpretative level, it follows, within this framework, that it becomes illegitimate on the normative one – destined for deconstruction or dissolution.

Jewishness, once reframed through the intersecting lenses of whiteness and colonialism, comes to represent a form of *counter-intersectionality* – the convergence of dominant positions allegedly embodied by "white Jews." In this logic, Jews are simultaneously erased as a minority and elevated as a collective of oppressors. They are imagined as concentrating within themselves all attributes of domination, whereas intersectional theory traditionally builds upon the accumulation of structural disadvantages. *Counter-intersectionality* thus designates a theoretically defined enemy: every favorable or successful social position occupied by Jews is interpreted as illegitimate, undeserved, and injurious to both minorities and society at large. At the same time, any expression of Jewish grievance – whether recalling past persecution or present antisemitism – is dismissed as artificial or manipulative, to be exposed and deconstructed as a privileged discourse. The notion of "Jewish privilege in suffering," referring to Holocaust remembrance or the alleged overemphasis on antisemitism relative to other racisms, is recast as a mere reflection of Jews' supposed socio-cultural advantage and thereby endowed with a negative moral value. In contrast, for other minorities, the emotive grammar of grievance – historical or contemporary – remains fundamental to the articulation of oppression and to the legitimacy of demands for recognition and redress.

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*In contrast, for other minorities, the emotive grammar of grievance – historical or contemporary – remains fundamental to the articulation of oppression and to the legitimacy of demands for recognition and redress.*

The discursive and practical consequences that have become unmistakable since October 7 are by now evident. The antizionist movement and its so-called theoretical foundations depict not only Israelis but Jews at large as bearing an intrinsic and collective guilt—one supposedly rooted in Jewish "power," "domination," and "oppression," and even extending to "genocide." This framing draws directly upon classic antisemitic imagery while presenting itself as critical analysis. Within this perspective, Jews are stripped of their humanity and cast as the paradigmatic agents of oppression, incapable by definition of victimhood. This logic reveals itself most clearly in the systematic denial or relativization of the October 7 atrocities, and in the trivialization – or even celebration – of subsequent terrorist assaults targeting Jews worldwide.

The outlook is grim, and no rapid reversal appears in sight. Countering the growing influence of antisemitic antizionism requires a dual effort: first, a rigorous theoretical intervention capable of exposing the pseudo-critical assumptions that have lent legitimacy to this ideology; and second, the formation of an organized counter-movement of *anti-antizionism*, equipped with a coherent intellectual and strategic framework. Ultimately, such an endeavor must not merely respond to the ideological distortions of antizionism but reclaim the very terrain of critique itself – restoring its ethical and empirical foundations.

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# ANTIZIONISM AS POLITICAL THEOLOGY

BY HUSSEIN ABOUBAKR MANSOUR

The Hamas massacre of October 7, 2023, and the global response it provoked revealed something profound about the structure of contemporary political discourse and culture. Within hours of the attack, protests erupted across university campuses, celebrating the violence in what amounted to an act of solidarity with the massacres themselves. Social media platforms were flooded with justifications, if not outright celebrations, for mass murder as liberation. Many politicians and intellectuals rushed to contextualize, rationalize, or minimize atrocities that would have been universally condemned if committed by any other actor against any other people. The speed and coordination of these responses suggested something more significant than a spontaneous moral confusion: they revealed the existence of a pre-established interpretive framework that had been quietly organizing political consciousness across ostensibly diverse movements and institutions.

This framework is what we might call the epistemic

dimension of contemporary antisemitism— not merely a prejudice against Jews as individuals, but antisemitism as a comprehensive symbolic system that structures how the world's political reality itself is understood and interpreted. October 7 did not create this system but revealed its wide proliferation. The massacre served as a kind of philosophical stress test, exposing the degree to which antisemitic logic had become embedded in the moral grammar of the contemporary academy and a vast array of political movements, from revolutionary leftism to mainstream progressivism to various forms of populist reaction.

Within this symbolic order, politics, morality, and identity are arranged around a single negative absolute. Israel is more than just an object of hostility but a metaphysical category—the embodiment of evil itself, against which a newly imagined global "humanity" can prove its innocence and assert its revolutionary virtue and primordial innocence. Israel becomes the indispensable obstacle to the long-promised fulfillment of Enlightenment humanism and its post-Enlightenment, anti-humanist heirs. In this way, antisemitism functions not only as hostility to actual Jews—though it never excludes that—but as a political theology. It organizes the world into a cosmic drama of oppression and liberation, authenticity and corruption, the natural and the artificial. "Israel" becomes a floating signifier, capable of attaching itself to whatever phenomenon is deemed to stand in the way of redemption: modernity, capitalism, globalization, cultural decay, intellectual complexity, or political disorder.

This new antisemitism has become the unifying moral grammar of the fragmented tribes of a postmodern, godless age. It functions as a counterfeit covenant, binding together unlikely allies:

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the post-Christian radical of the West, the postcolonial theorist of the university, the Islamist militant of the Middle East, and the disinherited populist of the West. However disparate their utopian projects, they converge in a shared sacrificial logic—the symbolic, and increasingly literal, destruction of Israel as the precondition for the world's purification. How did we get here?

It is important at the outset to mark the discontinuity between the medieval and the modern. Religious Jew-hatred provided a long reservoir of hostile imagery, but what now prevails should not be mistaken for a simple continuation of the old theology. Medieval animus was doctrinal: it condemned the Jew for rejecting the true doctrine, thereby placing him outside the circle of salvation. Yet, even within this hostility, the Jew remained a creature of God, whose soul could, at least in principle if not always in practice, be redeemed.

The Enlightenment altered this theology at its root. In rebelling against revelation, it displaced the categories of sin and salvation with a new secular anthropology or rather a self-deifying anthro-theology. The ideal was no longer eternal life in a deity but "Humanity"—an abstract universality defined by Reason, Freedom, and Love. From Kant through Hegel and Feuerbach, this new philosophical religion reinterpreted Judaism as the complete negation of the human ideal itself, the negative image of mankind: a faith of unreason, a slavish obedience to heteronomous law, a loveless egoism bound to the material and the particular. The radical activist Wilhelm Marr, who in 1879 coined the very term antisemitism, gave the indictment its starkest form: "Judaism must cease if you desire humanity to begin." One could be a Jew, or one could be human—but not both.

This modern indictment of the Jew was not merely a matter

of abstract philosophy. It was consecrated within a new secular metanarrative that replaced the Judeo-Christian history of salvation—History. With God expelled from His role as the judge of nations, "History" itself was enthroned as an absolute: a tribunal that rewarded civilizations that advanced and condemned those that appeared stagnant. In this narrative drama, History assumed the role of the judge and the Jew assumed the role of villain.

German thinkers gave this theology its most elaborate form treating Judaism, the context of German Idealism and its consequences, as metaphysical pathology. Judaism was portrayed not simply as a mistaken creed as it was once by premodern Christians and Muslims but as the very principle of negation within human development—a refusal of universality, a betrayal of the natural bonds of love and community a hatred of mankind and their unity, a judgment that the postcolonial afterlife of German Idealism, like Edward Said, would later transfer unto Zionism as, "an epistemology of forcible separation between things for the sake of separation itself."[1] For the new theologians of mankind, the Hebrew God was nothing more than a projection of tribal arrogance. From Hegel to Feuerbach to beyond, eager to provide this indictment with a "scientific" spirit, contrasted the Greeks, who opened their senses to the beauty of nature, with the Israelites, who perceived nature only through the palate, reducing the cosmos to appetite.

Karl Marx radicalized this Hegelian inheritance by fusing it with modern social critique, putting on "it's feet" as the saying goes. In his analysis, the "Jewish spirit"—egoism, calculation, huckstering—was indistinguishable from the spirit of capitalism itself. Indeed, capitalism itself, which in Marxist terms means alienation and dehumanization, is nothing but Judaism writ large, absolutized and universalized. Human

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emancipation, therefore, required emancipation from money, and which is "the emancipation of society from Judaism."[2] With this move, the conceptual transformation was complete. The Jew was no longer simply the "metaphysical" enemy of reason or a relic of the past; he became the "scientific" embodiment of the world's modern ills. To destroy "Judaism" thus was not merely to overcome religious superstition but to liberate Germany and later mankind. The first critical theory thus revealed itself as a transfigured antisemitism: humanism defined by the negation of the Jew.

This metaphysical war reached its racial and material apotheosis in National Socialism. With the move from Idealism to materialism, what had been conceived in philosophical systems was given biological form. No longer simply a conceptual obstacle to a mystical history or an epochal spirit of greed and hatred, the Jew became an ontological pollutant in the body of the Aryan race and mankind. The Holocaust was the terminal logic of this transformation: the attempt to annihilate the metaphysical enemy through modern industrial precision. What Enlightenment humanism had once demanded as the "euthanasia of Judaism" was now carried out as physical extermination.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the revelation of the death camps generated a powerful—though ultimately fragile—consensus in the West against overt antisemitism. Racial Jew-hatred was cast out as a pariah ideology, formally condemned in law and stigmatized in public life. Yet this consensus was perilously shallow. It repudiated the biological racism of the Nazis but left intact the philosophical scaffolding that had made Nazism possible and even imported it, with much fanfare and prestige, into the American most elite universities. The critical rationality of antisemitism—the method of dissolving particularity in the name of a higher

universal—was not abandoned. It was merely refined and transposed. Cleansed of its racial vocabulary, it found a new, respectable home in the emerging disciplines of cultural critique, postcolonial theory, and critical theory, where the old indictment was repurposed: no longer to deconstruct Judaism, but to deconstruct the West itself.

In the Arab world, meanwhile, no such reckoning ever took place. The revolutionary regimes of the 1950s and 1960s—from Nasser's Egypt to the Ba'athist states in Syria and Iraq—were built upon the same nineteenth-century European ideologies that had once underwritten Nazism and communism. These societies absorbed, almost wholesale, the German philosophy of History with its redemptive and totalizing promise. Nazi propaganda, disseminated widely during the war, had already saturated the cultural imagination with a heroic narrative of resistance against a global Jewish conspiracy. In the decades that followed, this metaphysical antisemitism— repudiated in Europe—was preserved, cultivated, and intensified in newly born postcolonial Arab mass societies, insulated from the West's moment of shame and self-interrogation. And thus, in a moment of historical irony, that very moment of contrition also left the West peculiarly receptive to voices from the formerly colonized world, especially those critiques that seemed to carry forward, and even complete, the work of moral reckoning that the Holocaust had begun which effectively meant the importation of later developments of the old critical "secular humanism."

By the late 1960s, thus, these two trajectories converged, or rather reconverged. A new generation of Third World intellectuals, steeped in the inherited rhetoric of revolutionary struggle for the sake of liberation, re-symbolized this worldview for the postmodern academy.

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*By the 2010s, muchof this academic hostile takeover was complete giving way to new academic consensus, an institutionalized factory of anti-Western and anti-Zionist radicalism. The humanities were eroded and replaced with a program of deconstruction that saw all Western culture as a storehouse of imperial dominion. This new orthodoxy is the primary engine of the new philosophical antisemitism in Western societies.*

Antisemitism was reborn as yet another new form of humanism seeking liberation, authenticity, and decolonization.

The epistemic ground shifted only aesthetically but not structurally, and the antagonist remained the same. Where the Jew had once stood as the negation of "Humanity," the Zionist was now cast as the negation of the "Colonized" re-symbolizing the old 19th epistemology in a way in which the subaltern colonized became the new representatives of humanity and Zionism became humanity's total other. Hence, the metaphysical function of Judaism—as the great obstruction to history's fulfillment—was preserved, though now baptized in the waters of postcolonial victimology, for Israel. This ideology, incubated in post-independence Arab societies and fueled by Soviet propaganda, was re-imported into Western institutions that had forgotten the genealogy of their own critical methods and were welcomed as the authentic voice of the Global South. Thus, the cycle was completed: the West's most destructive philosophical export, having been nursed abroad, returned home disguised as its opposite, ready to complete the work of deconstruction it had begun a century earlier.

The post-Holocaust consensus in the West had meanwhile elevated the Jew to a peculiar symbolic throne. In a post-Christian world struggling to come to terms with its own capacity for evil, the Jewish victim was transformed into a secular Christ—an icon of suffering through whom civilization might seek absolution and moral renewal. The Jew was enthroned as the quintessential "Other," his historical agony instrumentalized as the foundation of a new liberal humanism.

With the rise of postcolonial theory to institutional dominance, it posed itself as a rival theology to Jewish

Otherness, staging a war of position against the fragile moral order of the post-war West. In truth, it was less a war than a blitzkrieg—an intellectual onslaught that swept aside older modes of thought and enthroned a new obsession: the occult virtue of the subaltern. As Ilan Gur-Ze'ev observed, postcoloniality entered into a "life-and-death struggle" over a single question: who is the true Other?

This new intellectual regime did not merely seek to add new victims to the pantheon of the oppressed; it sought to displace the Jew entirely. The postcolonial subject, the Palestinian, the refugee, was now presented as the eschatological heir to the role of history's ultimate victim, demanding not just recognition but liturgical primacy. The postcolonial intellectual became, in turn the heir to the Enlightenment's emancipatory promises of the Enlightenment and even to the tradition of radical Jewish intellectualism. It is Edward Said who is the heir to Adorno, Trotsky, Deutscher, Freud, Marx, Heine, and Spinoza speaking up on behalf of the new Jews against the new Nazis, the New Jerusalem against the new Rome. In this new post-liberal symbolic economy, the symbolic Jew was no longer the sacred Other who could redeem the West and offer it absolution but was resemanticized as the incarnation of Western sin—the colonizer, the oppressor, the embodiment of "whiteness". Or to look at it from the other side, the symbolic Jew indeed maintained its sacred Otherness yet was surrendered by Zionism to the Palestinians making them the redemptive Jews. It is an endless play of signifiers whose apparent inversions conceal a deeper continuity: the same theology of guilt and innocence.

It is important to emphasize this new intellectual composition is not the product of my excellent analytical acumen. I only had to read the books. These ideas stand, articulated without disguise, in the very texts that inaugurated postcolonial

*"States like Qatar invested heavily in Western universities, underwriting the very centers that propagated this worldview. The result was to transform a radical academic discourse into an instrument of global soft power, a resource for ambitious statesmen seeking both prestige and leverage, and a means of sowing disorder in Western democracies, all beneath the guise of progressive virtue.*

*What is unveiled in our present crisis is nothing less than the West's loss of meaning—its dissolution of stability, boundary, and truth. We inhabit a world in which all is in hopeless flux, a world unmoored from any anchor of permanence.*

thought. In Edward Said's writings, for instance, Zionism and Israel are indeed used and insisted upon as the concentrated symbols, or rather reservoirs, of all that the postmodern and postcolonial age has sworn to resist: boundary, separation, heteronomous self-authorship, fixity, stability of meaning, legitimacy derived from anything other than sheer will, and a promise of redemption that leaves those outside it unredeemed. Israel does not appear as one nation among others; indeed, it ceases to be a nation at all. It rather becomes a condensed symbol that signifies the very principle against which the new metaphysics of liberation, of "secular humanism," defines itself.

By the 2010s, much of this academic hostile takeover was complete giving way to new academic consensus, an institutionalized factory of anti-Western and anti-Zionist radicalism. The humanities were eroded and replaced with a program of deconstruction that saw all Western culture as a storehouse of imperial dominion. This new orthodoxy is the primary engine of the new philosophical antisemitism in Western societies, providing it with the intellectual legitimacy and moral fervor that allows it to flourish as a sophisticated expression of "social justice."

This academic consensus produced a new and surreal moral syntax, where it became not only common but intellectually respectable for Western professors to issue apocalyptic pronouncements against Israel. The line between analysis and incantation dissolved entirely. It became possible to seriously declare that "The Destruction of Palestine Is the Destruction of the Earth,"3 or to define Israel's uniqueness as a, and in the words of one academic true believer, "condensation of Western colonial and imperial power, a world-wide symbol of Western perfidy, a state which physically cleaves Africa and Asia, a merchant and mercenary of globally counterinsurgence, all

melded in a manticore of death and destruction."4 Such statements are not hyperbole; they are the all-too-common liturgical expressions of this new antisemitism in which Israel must be inflated into a cosmic evil to justify its annihilation.

Yet this new symbolic order is no longer confined to the university. It proved immediately useful to political actors who recognized its potency in an era of fragmentation. States like Qatar invested heavily in Western universities, underwriting the very centers that propagated this worldview. The result was to transform a radical academic discourse into an instrument of global soft power, a resource for ambitious statesmen seeking both prestige and leverage, and a means of sowing disorder in Western democracies, all beneath the guise of progressive virtue.

Nevertheless, it remains crucial to see this new antisemitism for what it is: an intellectual product. It was conceived in seminars and intellectual publications before it spilled into the internet. The university, having abandoned its mission to transmit cultural inheritance, became a factory of radicalism—mass-producing a moral grammar that journalists, activists, and

educators would soon disseminate through the wider culture. What we face, therefore, is not merely a political crisis but an apokalypsis in the original sense: an unveiling.

What is unveiled in our present crisis is nothing less than the West's loss of meaning—its dissolution of stability, boundary, and truth. We inhabit a world in which all is in hopeless flux, a world unmoored from any anchor of permanence. In such a wilderness, and intensified by economic and political crises, the hunger for foundation reasserts itself with desperation.

*"This is the grim utility of the new antisemitism. It is the last idol still standing in the ruins of post-Christian culture. It gives meaning where none exists, sanctifies nihilistic rage as virtue, and legitimizes a politics whose end is destruction.*

In this desolation, hatred of Israel has become the final, terrible rock of stability. For a generation trained in the acid of permanent critique of negative postmodernity, anti-Zionism offers what nothing else does: certainty, communion, redemption. It offers a counterfeit theology for a post-Christian age: a perverse system of meaning that supplies what our culture can no longer provide.

### MORAL CERTAINTY.

It imposes a simple Manichaean drama: oppressed against oppressor, innocence against evil. No nuance is required, no complexity endured, only emotional allegiance.

### COMMUNION.

It furnishes a common enemy capable of binding together the fractured tribes of identity politics into a single congregation, a liturgy of negation.

### REDEMPTION.

It promises absolution: the destruction of Israel as the purifying act by which the West may cleanse itself of its colonial sins and inaugurate a new age of justice.

This is the grim utility of the new antisemitism. It is the last idol still standing in the ruins of post-Christian culture. It gives meaning where none exists, sanctifies nihilistic rage as virtue, and legitimizes a politics whose end is destruction. And because it gives meaning, states and statesmen are finding it useful.

## ENDNOTES

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# HOLOCAUST DISTORTION AND ANTI-ISRAEL PROPAGANDA MERGE IN OCTOBER 7 DENIAL

BY STEPHANIE SHARE

The Hamas attack of October 7, 2023, unprecedented in its brutality -- more than 1,200 people killed in a single day, the deadliest massacre of Jews since 1945 – immediately triggered a collective trauma. References to the Holocaust became almost inevitable in the collective unconscious as well as in media outlets worldwide, because of the magnitude and the horror of the attack. Yet these analogies, by assimilating the Holocaust to the Hamas massacres—whose target was explicitly Jews—diluted its uniqueness and obscured the specific nature of the event: a terrorist assault carried out by an armed Islamist organization, and not a systematic extermination project comparable to Nazism.

Unlike the Nazis, who concealed the scale of their mass crimes behind coded language and bureaucratic machinery,

Hamas terrorists openly claimed their violence, massacred and raped without restraint, and filmed their atrocities to broadcast them, following a macabre strategy already employed by contemporary Islamist jihadists. And yet, despite this abundance of evidence, the massacres and rapes of October 7 were immediately denied, using the same methods as Holocaust deniers. In turn, the denial of October 7 reinforced and even fueled the denial of the Holocaust itself.

The subsequent war in Gaza with the stated objective of dismantling Hamas and freeing the hostages, gave rise to a proliferation of analogies with the Holocaust, which amplified its distortion—that is, its deformation, instrumentalization, or trivialization. Comparisons with the Holocaust reached an unprecedented scale on social media, in the press, and even in the discourse of intellectuals, political figures, and associations.

The underlying issue is therefore clear: whether through denying the massacres of October 7, contesting the Holocaust, or multiplying abusive analogies, we are confronted with the same logic of inversion of roles. Yesterday the Jews, today the Israelis—and at times both—cease to be perceived as victims and are recast as perpetrators: manipulators, liars, and dominators. Circulating on both the far right and the far left, this logic belongs to a long tradition of antisemitic tropes. It feeds on the systematic use of the Holocaust as a singular reference point and ultimate yardstick of tragedy. Yet this constant recourse to the Holocaust not only prevents us from understanding contemporary conflicts in their own specificity but also fuels the very logics of hatred and delegitimization.

One more point must be clarified regarding the use of the

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terms "Jews" and "Israelis." This is not to deny the distinction between antisemitism—hatred of Jews, extending to the desire for their annihilation—and anti-Zionism—hatred of Israelis or of Israel, aiming at their/its destruction. Yet in the extremist discourses analyzed here, this distinction is deliberately blurred. Accusations directed against Israel reactivate age-old anti-Jewish representations, projected onto the Jewish state as the contemporary incarnation of the "eternal Jew." This slippage is not an innocent confusion but a discursive strategy that recycles anti-Jewish hatred in modern political or humanitarian language. As the working definition adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) in 2016 specifies, "Antisemitism may target the State of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity."[1] It is within this framework that the terms "Jews" and "Israelis" will at times be used here in close proximity.

## FROM OCTOBER 7 DENIAL TO THE INTENSIFICATION OF HOLOCAUST DENIAL

From the very day after the Hamas attacks, conspiratorial narratives sought to deny or relativize the massacres.

Roger Waters, former Pink Floyd bassist followed by millions on social media, has become notorious for his anti-Zionist positions. In a televised interview, he ignored the question of Israeli hostages and accused Israel of having fabricated events. When pressed by the host, who reminded him that rapes had indeed taken place, Waters persisted: "There is no evidence of that."[2] This example shows how denialist rhetoric can escape extremist circles and enter the discourse of influential public figures. In neo-Nazi and conspiratorial milieus, the rhetoric is even more brutal. Lucas Gage, a rising figure of the American far right, described October 7

in these terms: "Sounds about right: Get Hollywood Jëws on board to push Israeli propaganda and lies."[3]

These narratives rely on a central trope: if Jews—or/and Israelis—are lying today, then they have always lied. The rhetoric mirrors, point by point, the classic mechanisms of Holocaust denial: denial of victimhood (Jews allegedly provoked World War II, just as Israelis are said to be responsible for their own massacre); denial of intent (Hitler supposedly never wanted to exterminate the Jews, just as the Hamas charter would prove no genocidal intent); denial of scale (the six million would be a "myth," just as Israeli civilian losses are claimed to be exaggerated); and denial of methods (the gas chambers supposedly did not exist, just as the beheadings or rapes of October 7 are said to be fabricated).[4] The sexual violence of October 7, documented by forensic investigations and survivor testimonies,[5] is similarly denied or mocked, in the same way Holocaust evidence was long dismissed as "propaganda."

The aim is not merely to dispute facts but to construct an inverted counter-narrative—a distortion of history. Thus, Stew Peters, a personality of the American "alt-right," propagates false flag theories, accusing Israel of provoking or allowing the attack to occur in order to reap political gain.

The denial of October 7 does not simply recycle the arguments of Holocaust denial: it extends and reinforces them. As Lucas Gage bluntly stated: "If Jews are lying about Hamas right in your face, what makes you think they didn't lie about their greatest enemies before them?"[6] The trope of the "Jew responsible for war," applied by Holocaust deniers to 1939, is now transposed to the Israel–Hamas conflict, with Israel accused of having engineered the chaos.

> *"Jews are no longer perceived as victims of the Holocaust – or of other tragedies – largely due to antisemitism, reinforced by decades of Holocaust denial that has portrayed them as manipulators, liars, warmongers, responsible for their own misfortunes, and aspiring to world domination.*

Stew Peters illustrates these connections on his platforms, followed by thousands of users, by denying the October 7 massacre while also hosting Fred Leuchter, a pseudo-expert on gas chambers and a central figure in Holocaust denial.[7] In his speeches, Peters goes even further, openly calling for a "final solution" for American Jews[8] — a rhetoric that not only denies present-day violence but also glorifies Nazism and incites murder. In this way, the doubt cast on October 7 becomes a lever to undermine the entire Jewish historical narrative. Through a mirror-like mechanism, by projecting suspicion onto the present, such discourse seeks to delegitimize the Holocaust — and conversely, by relativizing the Holocaust, it justifies and normalizes contemporary denial. This process also nourishes the traditional Holocaust denial allegation: figures such as Germar Rudolf, who has taken up and expanded Leuchter's work, are now developing pseudo-academic projects such as a "Holocaust Encyclopedia" or an "Academy," attempting to provide Holocaust falsification with a façade of scientific legitimacy.

## THE TRIVIALIZATION OF THE HOLOCAUST THROUGH THE AVALANCHE OF COMPARISONS

From October 8, 2023, with the outbreak of the war in Gaza, references to the Holocaust multiplied exponentially. On social media, in international media outlets, and in the speeches of intellectuals, politicians, and associations, such analogies continue to proliferate today: Israel is compared to Nazi Germany, Gaza to ghettos or concentration camps, and the expression "Gaza Genocide" has become a militant slogan, amplified by the massive circulation of hashtags such as #HolocaustGaza[9] This inflation of comparisons has established a framework in which every contemporary event seems to be evaluated against the yardstick of the

Holocaust—a dynamic that, two years later, continues to intensify.

This phenomenon extends a process of trivialization already visible during the Covid-19 pandemic, when slogans such as HoloCovid or the use of yellow stars during anti-vaccine protests reduced the Holocaust to a mere metaphor of oppression.[10] By erecting the genocide of the Jews as a universal reference point for all forms of suffering or violence, its historical singularity is undermined. The Holocaust ceases to be perceived as an unprecedented crime and instead becomes a rhetorical instrument available for every cause.

Such trivialization is not without consequences. If the Holocaust is reduced to an interchangeable comparison, Jews cease to be recognized as specific victims, and the memory of their extermination loses its ability to illuminate the structural nature of antisemitism. At the same time, contemporary antisemitic violence—whether physical or discursive—is relativized. Thus, Ione Belarra, leader of the far-left Podemos party in Spain, publicly compared Israel's actions in Gaza to Nazi gas chambers in the Spanish parliament[11]—an especially striking example of the radicalization of these analogies and their Holocaust denial/distortion character.

This logic illustrates how porous the boundary between distortion and denial truly is. All deniers are first distorters: to deny the Holocaust, they must construct a counter-narrative that deforms its meaning, history and memory. Conversely, repeated distortion, even if it does not immediately amount to outright denial, tends to slide toward full-fledged negation, and even toward the rehabilitation of Nazism.[12] To reduce the Holocaust to a metaphor or to deny its specificity is already to exonerate Hitler and his accomplices, and to offer antisemites of yesterday and today a renewed legitimacy.

*"The alleged Hitlerite 'gas chambers' and the alleged 'genocide' of the Jews form one and the same historical lie, which has allowed a gigantic politico-financial fraud whose main beneficiaries are the State of Israel and international Zionism, and whose principal victims are the German people — though not their leaders — and the Palestinian people as a whole."*

## INVERSION AND CONVERGENCE

October 7 acted as a stark revelation of an increasingly systematic conflation between Jews and Israelis. Since then, the Holocaust itself has become an object of exponential contestation and derision: Holocaust memorial sites have been vandalized with graffiti calling for "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free,"[13] while Jews in the diaspora are targeted under the same slogan. The waves of antisemitic assaults that accompany every outbreak of violence in the Middle East bear witness to this shift: synagogues, schools, and community centers are attacked as if Jews and Israelis were now indistinguishable in the same hatred. This reality has been particularly blatant since October 7.[14]

Added to this confusion is now central inversion of victimhood. Jews are no longer perceived as victims of the Holocaust – or of other tragedies – largely due to antisemitism, reinforced by decades of Holocaust denial that has portrayed them as manipulators, liars, warmongers, responsible for their own misfortunes, and aspiring to world domination. As the French denier Robert Faurisson declared in a 1980 prime-time radio broadcast: "The alleged Hitlerite 'gas chambers' and the alleged 'genocide' of the Jews form one and the same historical lie, which has allowed a gigantic politico-financial fraud whose main beneficiaries are the State of Israel and international Zionism, and whose principal victims are the German people — though not their leaders — and the Palestinian people as a whole."[15]

In Faurisson's rhetoric, "international Zionism" implied that Jews themselves were the instigators, fabricating a false narrative of the past to serve political interests.

This inversion of victimhood also comes with an ideological

convergence that is far from new. As early as the 1980s, Faurisson was supported by ultra-left intellectuals such as Serge Thion and Noam Chomsky, while simultaneously addressing neo-Nazi circles in the United States — clear evidence that far-right Holocaust denial and radical leftist networks could already intersect. October 7, however, showed how these logics now circulate in real time across social media, granting them unprecedented visibility and impact. The German far-right journalist Jürgen Elsässer, for example, amplifies the content of American conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, who in turn expressed support for Greta Thunberg's involvement in the pro-Gaza flotillas — a striking illustration of how narratives from very different ideological backgrounds converge on the terrain of radical anti-Zionism. In an academic context, Israeli historian Ilan Pappé, a vehement critic of Zionism, has allowed the translated edition of one of his books to carry a preface by Youssef Hindi, a French conspiracist ideologue close to the national-socialist movement "Égalité & Réconciliation".

These circulations are not merely the borrowing of arguments: they reveal the constitution of a shared language. October 7 did not invent these tropes, but it offered them a global stage on which they combine, expand, and spread. Victimhood inversion has thus become a rallying point for a transnational discourse that recycles antisemitism in renewed but deeply entrenched forms.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of post-October 7 discourse highlights the continuity between Holocaust distortion and denial, and their entanglement with renewed forms of antisemitism and anti-Zionism. In this perverted memory, victims become the

> *Distortionist tropes were not invented on October 7. But it offered them a global stage on which they combine, expand, and spread.*

accused, perpetrators are exonerated, and hatred is justified through falsified narratives.

The case of Stephen Balliet, the perpetrator of the 2019 antisemitic attack in Halle, Germany, who declared during his assault, "I am anon and the Holocaust never happened," illustrates the direct passage from conspiracy thinking to Holocaust denial and terrorist violence. This continuum demonstrates the danger of this rhetoric circulating unchecked.

In the face of this new wave of denial and distortion, the responsibility of institutions, scholars, and civil society is immense: to safeguard the integrity of Holocaust memory, to expose the logic of inversion, and to reaffirm that historical truth remains an essential bulwark against hatred.

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# THE INDIAN CONTEXT

BY KHINVRAJ JANGID

The October 7, 2023, attack by Hamas on Israel and the subsequent Gaza war marked a defining moment in contemporary geopolitics. It was one of the deadliest days for Jews since the Holocaust, reigniting global debates about Israel, Zionism, and the legitimacy of Jewish self-determination. One of the most significant and unexpected consequences has been the worldwide surge in antisemitism, documented across Europe, North America, and the Middle East. The reverberations of this trend extend far beyond the immediate conflict zone. India, though geographically distant, is deeply implicated through its evolving relationship with Israel, its pluralist historical experience with Jewish communities, and its internal ideological divides.

This essay examines the impact of the October 7 war on antisemitic discourses and political alignments in India. It argues that while India has historically been free of antisemitism, global ideological currents—both Islamist and leftist—are increasingly shaping domestic narratives in ways that blur the line between antizionism and antisemitism. The essay proceeds in four sections: first, it reviews India's historical relationship with Jews and the relative absence of

antisemitism; second, it explores how the October 7 events reshaped public opinion and discourse in India; third, it analyses the specific ways in which antisemitism may manifest in the Indian context; and finally, it offers a forward-looking assessment of the trends and what they might mean for India's political, academic, and strategic landscapes.

## INDIA'S HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE WITH JEWS AND ANTISEMITISM

Unlike Europe and the Middle East, where Jews faced centuries of exclusion, persecution, ghettoisation and pogroms, India's history with Jewish communities is often narrated as one of peaceful coexistence. Jewish communities in Cochin, Mumbai, and Kolkata—ranging from the ancient Cochin Jews to the later Baghdadi Jews—were generally well integrated and respected. They were never targeted for systematic exclusion, and they maintained their religious identity while participating in broader Indian society.

This narrative of tolerance has become a part of India's self-image: a civilizational ethos that offered refuge not only to Jews but also to Parsis, Armenians, and large minorities of Muslims. As a result, antisemitism never became embedded in India's cultural or political structures.

However, antisemitic tropes have not been entirely absent. With the advent of colonial modernity and later the circulation of Islamist and some other ideological discourses, imported forms of antisemitism began to find a foothold. European conspiracy theories such as "Jews control the world money", "Jews control US foreign policy in the Middle East", or the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, found readers in certain circles, particularly in Urdu and Arabic translations. Islamist networks in India sometimes incorporated anti-Jewish

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*This pro-Israel sentiment draws strength from civilizational narratives. Hindu nationalist discourse often situates Hindus and Jews as kindred civilisations, both long persecuted yet resilient, and now aligned against a common threat of terrorism and radical Islamism.*

rhetoric tied to the broader Palestinian struggle.1 Similarly, strands of the Indian left adopted anti-Zionist frameworks that occasionally slipped into Antisemitic overtones, framing Jews and Zionists as indistinguishable or labelling Israel a shadow imperial-colonial power in the region, called a "settler-colonial state." Still, these currents remained marginal compared to the mainstream pluralist ethos.

## POST-OCTOBER 7 TRENDS IN INDIA

The October 7 attacks and Israel's military response triggered a new phase of debate in India. Unlike in Europe or the United States, where the Jewish diaspora is sizable, India's Jewish population is tiny—less than 5,000 today. Thus, the issue does not play out through direct minority-majority relations but rather through foreign policy alignments, ideological affiliations, and symbolic politics.

### TWO BROAD TRENDS ARE NOTABLE:

A. **Consolidation of pro-Israel sentiment.** The Indian government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi responded to the October 7 attack with strong expressions of solidarity with Israel, framing the Hamas attack as terrorism. This official stance was widely amplified in pro-government media and on social media platforms aligned with Hindu nationalist networks. Israel is increasingly perceived as a natural ally in India's fight against Islamist militancy, jihadism and radicalisation. This pro-Israel sentiment draws strength from civilizational narratives. Hindu nationalist discourse often situates Hindus and Jews as kindred civilisations, both long persecuted yet resilient, and now aligned against a

common threat of terrorism and radical Islamism. This framework casts support for Israel not only as strategic but as moral and cultural solidarity.

**B. Intensification of anti-Israel narratives.** At the same time, significant pockets of Indian society—particularly among leftist student organisations, intellectuals, and Muslim groups—framed the Gaza war as an anti-colonial struggle. Protests on campuses and public statements by activist groups cast Israel as an apartheid state and accused it of genocide. These discourses closely mirror Western leftist critiques, drawing on concepts of settler-colonialism, imperialism, and global capitalism. While much of this criticism is directed at Israeli state policy, it often bleeds into antisemitic undertones. Slogans like "Zionists control global politics" or "Zionist lobbies manipulate the media," which appeared in Indian social media discussions post-October 7, reproduce global antisemitic tropes. The absence of significant Jewish communities in India paradoxically makes it easier for such rhetoric to gain traction, since it remains abstract and unchallenged by lived relationships with Jews.

## ANTISEMITISM, ANTIZIONISM, AND THE INDIAN DILEMMA

The central dilemma in India lies in distinguishing between legitimate criticism of Israeli state policy and antisemitism. This distinction is blurred in practice, particularly as Indian activists and intellectuals increasingly draw upon global leftist vocabularies. In this transnational circulation of ideas, critiques of Israel often become totalizing—Israel wasn't a victim of terrorism on October 7, rapes didn't happen, Hamas' rockets are rockets of resistance, etc. This conflation has two manifestations in India.

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*Indian social media increasingly circulates memes and posts about "Zionist control" of finance, Hollywood, or Washington. These narratives, imported from Western far-right and Islamist sources, find surprising resonance among Indian youth.*

**Academic Discourses:** In universities, courses and seminars often frame Israel exclusively through colonial and apartheid lenses, leaving little room for Jewish self-determination as a legitimate political project. Antisemitism is rarely acknowledged as a distinct problem in these spaces.

**Conspiracy theories online:** Indian social media increasingly circulates memes and posts about "Zionist control" of finance, Hollywood, or Washington. These narratives, imported from Western far-right and Islamist sources, find surprising resonance among Indian youth, partly because they fit into broader anxieties about globalisation and inequality.[2]

## WHAT'S AHEAD

India's trajectory on antisemitism and Israel after October 7 can be anticipated along three axes:

1. The India-Israel partnership will continue to deepen, particularly in defence, counterterrorism, and technology. This will normalise Israel as a strategic ally and reduce the salience of antisemitic rhetoric in mainstream politics. State-led narratives will emphasise solidarity against terrorism, casting India and Israel as democracies struggling with radicalisation.

2. The divide between pro-Israel Hindu nationalist constituencies and anti-Israel left or Islamist groups will widen. On one side, Israel will be valorised as a model of security and resilience; on the other, it will be vilified as the embodiment of settler colonialism.

3. Social media will remain the key vector for the spread of antisemitism in India. Conspiracies about Zionist power,

framed within larger critiques of global inequality, could gain momentum. Given India's massive online population and the global circulation of memes, this trend poses a risk of normalising antisemitic discourse among youth who lack direct knowledge of Jewish history, Israel or the Israel-Palestine conflict.

## CONCLUSION

The October 7 war has had far-reaching implications not only for Israel and Palestine but also for the global discourse on Jews and antisemitism. India, historically free of systemic antisemitism, now faces the challenge of navigating imported ideological frameworks that blur the line between legitimate political critique and prejudice. On one side, India's strong partnership with Israel and its civilizational narratives of tolerance offer resilience against antisemitism. On the other hand, the transnational circulation of anti-Zionist rhetoric risks embedding Antisemitic tropes in academic, activist, and digital spaces.

The future of this dynamic will hinge on India's ability to balance strategic partnership with Israel, maintain its pluralist traditions, and cultivate critical literacy among its intellectual and youth communities. If successful, India could emerge as a model of how to support Palestinian rights while rejecting antisemitism, and how to maintain solidarity with Israel without conflating it with uncritical support. If unsuccessful, India risks importing the very forms of prejudice that its historical ethos long resisted.

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*India, historically free of systemic antisemitism, now faces the challenge of navigating imported ideological frameworks that blur the line between legitimate political critique and prejudice.*

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# ANTISEMITISM WANES AS GREECE REINVENTS ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL

BY NEIL BAR

Historically, Greece was one of the most hostile European countries to Israel. While recognizing Israel *de facto* in 1949, Greece maintained a pro-Palestinian stance and close ties with Arab states from the 1950s and into the 1980s. This position was largely influenced by Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou's government, which held power from 1981 to 1989 and actively supported the PLO.

Greece holds the distinction of being actually the last country in the European bloc to establish full, *de jure* diplomatic relations with Israel. This historic step only occurred in 1990, under Prime Minister Konstantinos Mitsotakis, who is the father of the current Prime Minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis. It was under the elder Mitsotakis that embassies were finally opened in Athens and Tel-Aviv. Still, even after this diplomatic breakthrough, relations largely

remained cold due to Greece's traditional relationships with Middle Eastern countries that have opposed Israel, and largely due to Israel's strong ties with Turkey, which Greece considers its nemesis.

This long-standing diplomatic frost took a sharp turn in the opposite direction after the Mavi Marmara incident in 2010, where the Israeli-Turkish relationship came to a crushing halt. The incident created a unique opportunity for both nations. Israel, which had started looking for alternative partnerships in the eastern Mediterranean, and Greece, which had looked to improve its standing with the United States as a counterweight to Turkey's influence in the region, had found each other.

The diplomatic warming that followed escalated with remarkable speed. Barely two months after the Marmara incident, in July 2010, Greek PM George Papandreou visited Israel, marking the first such trip in 20 years. Just a month later, Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu made the first-ever visit to Greece by an Israeli prime minister.

Still, for several years following these initial breakthroughs, the relationship stayed more as a strategic partnership, based primarily on growing hostility toward Erdogan's Turkey rather than true bilateral friendship. This strategic, rather than genuine, nature of the relationship was very evident on the Greek side, especially. During this period, an openly neo-Nazi political party, the Golden Dawn, has become the third largest party in the Greek parliament. The ruling party during much of this period, SYRIZA, a self-defined radical left-wing movement, was no less hostile to Israel. The Greek street reflected these political trends and was no different in its attitudes. An Anti-Defamation League report from 2020 has found that Greece is by far the most

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antisemitic country in Europe, with approximately 69% of the population holding somewhat antisemitic beliefs. For comparison, the country in second place was France, with 37% of the population holding such views.

This strategic partnership has slowly started transforming into genuine affinity under Kyriakos Mitsotakis' prime ministership and his center-right ruling party, *Nea Demokratia*. This transformation was especially evident after the events of October 7, 2023. Greece was one of the first countries in the world to fly the Israeli flag over its town halls and government buildings in a show of solidarity. The Israeli flag was also screened over the parliament building in Athens. Mitsotakis himself was one of the first world leaders to fly to Israel following the attacks and was the first foreign leader to meet with families of hostages, stating that he had "come here not just as an ally but as a true friend." This precedent of solidarity was followed by the former Greek president, Katerina Sakellaropoulou, who became the first foreign president to invite hostages' families to her presidential palace in an official visit.

Even now, when world criticism has feverishly intensified over Israel's conduct regarding its war in Gaza, Greece did not flinch in its support. Mitsotakis was one of the only Western leaders to dare fly to Israel in March 2025, against the backdrop of the International Criminal Court arrest warrant against Netanyahu and his former security minister, Yoav Gallant. During this visit, he gave a press conference standing next to Netanyahu and spoke about the Israeli-Greek alliance and the strong friendship between the nations. His government also hinted that Greece would not enforce the ICC warrant if Netanyahu or Gallant ever set foot on Greek soil. Mitsotakis has also refused to join the French initiative to recognize the Palestinian state.

Maya Solomou, the Greek ambassador to Israel, has conducted the Greek Day of Independence celebration in Kibbutz Be'eri, the scene of one of the most horrific massacres of the events of October 7. "We wanted to send a message of support and solidarity to show that we have not forgotten," she said to the Israeli-Greek audience gathered there, "We want to be next to you as hope and light will eventually replace the darkness. Better days lie ahead and you will be able to dance again. And when you do that we will dance with you."

Not for no reason has Israel transferred its civilian aircraft fleet to Greek airports on the eve of the 12-day war with Iran. Greece has become, in recent years, not just one of Israel's closest allies in the eastern Mediterranean, but in fact in the entire world.

This transformation in the relationship has also profoundly affected the political spectrum in Greece, particularly on the right side of Greek politics. In the past, those political parties positioned to the right of the current ruling party were characterized by their antisemitic positions. Parties such as LAOS and the infamous Golden Dawn were not just quietly hostile but were outspokenly antisemitic in their platforms and rhetoric.

Today, however, these antisemitic voices have been ousted from positions of influence. They have been replaced by a new generation of politicians who take the opposite approach, such as Afroditi Latinopoulou and the current health minister, Adonis Georgiadis. Both Latinopoulou and Georgiadis are not merely tolerant of Israel but are explicit Israel enthusiasts who have made their support for the Jewish state a prominent part of their political identity. This remarkable political shift on the right has happened

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*Among political parties on the right, antisemitic voices have been ousted from positions of influence.*

simultaneously as the Greek left, which continues to harbor resentment toward Israel and maintains its traditional pro-Palestinian positions, has been broken into pieces and has lost its political grip on power.

This developing alliance is not without setbacks, and this last summer was full of them. The outcry against the war in Gaza, especially by far-left organizations, manifested in various ways. The Holocaust memorial in Larissa was defaced; Jewish cemeteries in Volos and Thessaloniki were desecrated. Men in black shirts bearing Palestinian flags were seen patrolling tourist areas in Athens like Monastiraki and the Plaka, threatening Israeli and Jewish visitors who came to these popular destinations.

One of the most significant incidents took place in late July, when a tourist ship carrying hundreds of Israeli tourists was prevented from docking at the Hermoupolis port on the island of Syros. A group of pro-Palestinian protesters blocked its entry, holding signs with slogans calling to stop the genocide in Gaza and claiming that the Israeli tourists aboard the ship were in fact Israeli soldiers. The protestors escalated the situation by threatening violence if the tourists were allowed to unload from the ship and enter Greek territory.

While the protestors have seen this action as a victory for their cause and a successful act of resistance, the Greek authorities were horrified by the incident and its implications for Greece's reputation as a tourist destination and its relationship with Israel.

The Greek government's response was swift, unequivocal, and came from the highest levels of authority. The government's spokesperson, Pavlos Marinakis, was quick to respond to the Syros incident with a strong and detailed condemnation.

"The incident in Syros is horrifying," he declared publicly. "Antisemitism and any form of fascism and racism will not be accepted in Greece […] There are no other words to describe it. This is an incident, that I must say, as a representative of the Greek government, is unique and isolated." He concluded with a pledge for future action: "The authorities must do everything to ensure that in any future case this does not repeat itself."

Health Minister Adonis Georgiadis joined the condemnation with equally forceful language. Speaking from the parliament podium, Georgiadis declared that preventing the docking of Israelis is unthinkable, unacceptable, and "constitutes a direct insult to Greece." He went further in that same parliamentary speech, saying that he "apologizes to Israel for the incident and seeks to convey a message of friendship and strong alliance to Israel. Israelis are welcome in Greece," he emphatically declared to the parliament, and he pledged that the blockers would be brought to justice for their actions.

Indeed, the government's words were backed by concrete action. Later attempts by the Communist Party and various left-wing workers' unions to organize protests against the docking of Israeli ships were foiled thanks to quick and decisive responses by the local riot police. The authorities had clearly learned from the Syros incident and were determined not to allow a repeat.

The response was not limited to police action alone. Notably, on the island of Rhodes, when protestors attempted to prevent Israeli tourists from landing, not only did the police welcome and protect the Israeli tourists, but the city mayor of Rhodes personally came to the port to welcome the Israelis. Local business owners also mobilized, coming out to counter-protest against the anti-Israeli demonstrators. These

*"Despite all these demonstrations of support and friendship, it seems that the Israeli-Greek alliance, while strong and built on real foundations of mutual respect, friendship and sympathy, faces certain realities and limitations.*

*The transformation of Greece from one of Israel's most hostile European critics to perhaps its closest global ally represents one of the most remarkable diplomatic reversals in recent history.*

Greek citizens held their own demonstrations, with their message being clear: Israelis are most welcome in Greece.

This grassroots support from ordinary Greek citizens and local officials demonstrated that the government's pro-Israel position had significant backing beyond just the political elite.

Despite all these demonstrations of support and friendship, it seems that the Israeli-Greek alliance, while strong and built on real foundations of mutual respect, friendship and sympathy, faces certain realities and limitations. Israelis are not immune to criticism, even from their closest allies. As Mitsotakis himself had once said, expressing the delicate balance Greece must maintain: "I'm speaking as a friend of Israel, and I think that sometimes friends have to speak hard truths to friends." This statement encapsulates the mature nature of the relationship, where support does not mean unconditional agreement with every action.

The reality of the ongoing conflict cannot be ignored indefinitely. The terrible images coming out of Gaza also reach Greek television screens and social media feeds, and it is very difficult for Greek viewers to remain indifferent to them. The humanitarian situation creates pressure on Greek politicians who must balance their strategic alliance with Israel against international humanitarian concerns. As the war continues to drag on, the willingness of its major allies, including Greece among them, to refrain from criticism and response will inevitably diminish over time.

The transformation of Greece from one of Israel's most hostile European critics to perhaps its closest global ally represents one of the most remarkable diplomatic reversals in recent history. This shift, catalyzed by the rupture in Israeli-Turkish

relations and accelerated by changing geopolitical dynamics in the eastern Mediterranean, has evolved from pure strategic calculation into something deeper. Yet this alliance, like all international relationships, exists within a complex web of competing pressures and moral considerations that both nations must continue to navigate carefully.

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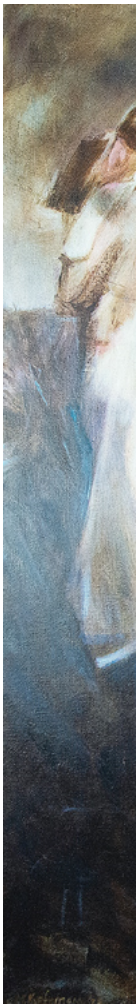

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