

## BEHIND THE HUMANITARIAN MASK

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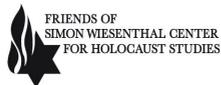
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BEHIND THE HUMANITARIAN MASK  
THE NORDIC COUNTRIES, ISRAEL, AND THE JEWS

Edited by Manfred Gerstenfeld



Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs  
Institute for Global Jewish Affairs



Friends of Simon Wiesenthal  
Center for Holocaust Studies

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Dedicated to Simon Wiesenthal: a witness for the victims, a  
voice for the survivors, a conscience for the world.

He combined humanity with being human, and became an  
inspiration to all who accepted that hatred and anti-Semitism  
must be fought.



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Manfred Gerstenfeld



Manfred Gerstenfeld

## Introduction

In recent years the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs has published several articles about the Nordic countries, Jews, and Israel in both the *Jewish Political Studies Review* and *Post-Holocaust and Anti-Semitism*. Gradually a picture has emerged of these countries that differs greatly from the often superficial friendliness the visiting tourist experiences, or the impressions one gains abroad from the few usually positive articles in international media. Little is known about the multiple negative events in the Nordic countries regarding Israel and the Jews.

The Jerusalem Center's collaboration with the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies has made it possible to group and update in this volume several earlier articles and interviews and to complement them with additional essays. This volume aims to provide a more strategic picture of the Nordic countries' attitudes toward Israel and the Jews than is available elsewhere in English.

Our research clarifies that in recent years part of the societal elites, particularly in Sweden and Norway, have been responsible for many pioneering efforts to demonize Israel. Prominent among the perpetrators are leading socialist and other leftist politicians, journalists, clergy, and employees of NGOs. This demonization is based on the classic motifs of anti-Semitism, which often also accompany its new mutation of anti-Israelism.

### **Darker Attitudes**

Behind the Nordic countries' righteous appearance and oft-proclaimed concern for human rights often lurk darker attitudes. This volume's main purpose is to lift their humanitarian mask as far as Israel and Jews are concerned. This disguise hides many ugly characteristics, including the financing of demonizers of Israel, a false morality, invented moral superiority, and "humanitarian racism."

Such humanitarian racists think—usually without expressing it explicitly, sometimes not even being conscious of it—that only white people can be fully responsible for their actions while nonwhites cannot (or can but only to a limited extent).

A journalist for the Norwegian conservative daily *Aftenposten* reacted to the republication of this author's essay on Norway in this volume, stating that its tone was "extraordinarily shrill." This was a bizarre remark in view of the tone

of the daily that employs him. Assuming that he was writing in good faith, it illustrates a major problem: being in denial about matters that occur in one's own environment.

In recent years *Aftenposten* has published a variety of extreme anti-Semitic cartoons, articles, and letters to the editor. Before World War II it also published anti-Semitic articles. No overview of twenty-first-century West European anti-Semitism can be complete without reference to this paper. The facts presented in this volume about this Norwegian "quality daily" demonstrate how hypocrisy and anti-Semitism converge.

When discussing the more general convergence of these two tendencies during the preparation of this volume, one example seemed to impress my conversation partners in particular. In Norway, Jewish ritual slaughter has been forbidden since well before World War II, under Nazi influence. On the other hand, except for Norway, Japan, and Iceland no countries allow whaling. The Norwegian quota for the 2008 season is the highest, with over one thousand whales to be killed.<sup>1</sup> These mammals are harpooned and die in an exceptionally cruel way.

### **Meeting Israel's Challenges?**

Arrogance and double standards toward Israel often go together. Would Norway and Sweden have remained democracies if they had had to cope with the kinds of challenges Israel has faced in the past decades? There are several indications that they would not have.

In May 2008, Håkan Syrén, commander of the Swedish Armed Forces, warned that if security conditions were to deteriorate the country would not have the protection it needed.<sup>2</sup> In the same month it became known that at the Oskarshamn nuclear plant safeguards were lacking "to ensure that security checks are performed on everybody entering the plant."<sup>3</sup> The facility's operating company OKG reacted by saying it hoped to remedy the situation by October 2008.

In Norway General Robert Mood, inspector-general of the army, "has described the army's current capability as only being able to defend perhaps one neighborhood in Oslo, much less the entire country."<sup>4</sup> In June, the Norwegian vice-admiral Jan Reksten, commander of the country's troops in Afghanistan said that the Norwegian base at Meymaneh is less secure than "similar bases" belonging to other NATO forces. Colonel Ivar Haisel, the base's future commander said that if the Taliban attacked as they had in May the Norwegians would no longer have weapons superiority.<sup>5</sup>

The opening essay of this volume offers more substantiation of the point: seemingly these countries would not fare well if they had to face Israel's challenges.

## The Future

It is likely that, because of future global developments, clearer perspectives will emerge on the double standards of many members of Nordic elites toward Israel and Jews. In rapidly changing times it is important to document situations at a given moment. Then, in the future, no one will be able to say “we did not know” about the extreme bias promoted in their name by some of the elites of these societies. As will be shown in this volume, the information on the significant anti-Semitism—to a large extent disguised as anti-Israelism—was there and could be gleaned largely from these countries’ media.

This book is dedicated to the memory of Simon Wiesenthal. No person better symbolizes the courage required to fight for decades, often alone, against huge odds to expose the executioners of World War II. The struggle against the anti-Jewish and anti-Israeli attitudes in the Nordic countries is likely to be a lengthy one as well.

## Notes

1. Alister Doyle, “Iceland and Norway Resume Whale Exports to Japan,” Reuters, 2 June 2008.
2. “Sweden Can No Longer Defend Itself,” *The Local*, 15 May 2008.
3. “Night Security Lacking at Nuke Plant,” *The Local*, 29 May 2008.
4. Sveinung Berg Bentzrød, “Army Forced to Sharpen Knife as Cost Cuts Loom,” *Aftenposten*, 30 May 2008.
5. Sverre Gull, “Norwegian Base Weakest in Afghanistan,” *Aftenposten*, 5 June 2008.



Gert Weisskirchen

## Foreword

The fight against anti-Semitism is still necessary. That is the conclusion I have had to draw as the Personal Representative of the OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) Chairman-in-Office on Combating Antisemitism. One of the central problems is the psychological and rhetorical entanglement of criticism of the state of Israel with anti-Semitism. Analyses show that the projection of anti-Israeli sentiments onto Jewish communities is a widespread pattern throughout Europe. This phenomenon clearly intensified during the Israel-Hizballah war in 2006 and was manifested in both organized and spontaneous violence against members of Jewish communities throughout Europe.

The Israel-Hizballah war was a key event that brought to the fore the despicable logic of using Israeli policy as a pretext for blatant anti-Semitic statements and sometimes even outbursts of violence against Jews. However, the problem is a prevalent one. Jews have been collectively blamed for the policies of the Israeli government ever since David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the founding of the modern state of Israel in 1948. But this phenomenon has become even more ubiquitous over the past decade and, unfortunately, the prospect of this mental linkage losing its attraction for a significant percentage of the European population remains bleak.

Jews living in Europe still have to endure being made the targets of anti-Israeli sentiments. In this context they are often confronted with direct references to the Third Reich and with Holocaust imagery, used both to threaten them and to equate them with the perpetrators of the Holocaust.

Another development is the politicization of Holocaust denial and the Shoah having become a major theme in anti-Semitism. The memory of the Holocaust is attacked time and again, both rhetorically and physically, with memorial sites being desecrated and demolished in various states throughout Europe.

Apart from these rather recent trends, adherence to elements of the traditional anti-Semitic worldview, traditional anti-Jewish stereotypes, and radical exclusionary nationalism have continued to motivate anti-Semitic incidents in the OSCE region.

In light of this continued prevalence of anti-Semitism in our societies, the OSCE has called attention to anti-Semitism as a distinct phenomenon threatening not only our Jewish fellow citizens but also our democratic and human rights values. As an outcome of the 2004 OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism in Berlin, the mandate of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-

Office on Combating Antisemitism was created alongside two similar positions: one on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims and another on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination.

What this arrangement underscores is the reality that anti-Semitism is a distinct phenomenon that requires a separate focus in OSCE programs. It is an important issue that should not be balanced against others. I understand my mandate as an opportunity to put the spotlight on anti-Semitism wherever it occurs and to emphasize the importance of this issue. Hence I go to great lengths to ensure that this problem is put into the right context but at the same time is not subsumed under other issues that would obscure the distinct features of—and thus distinct means of combating—anti-Semitism.

In more practical terms I engage political leaders directly whenever and wherever problems emerge. I see it as my duty to investigate anti-Semitic incidents when the need arises, no matter where they occur. I also actively advise the OSCE member states on ways to monitor anti-Semitic incidents and to effectively enforce their respective national laws so as to combat propagators of anti-Semitism.

Within the institutional framework of the OSCE, it is my goal to ensure that the promises of the past, among them the commitments the member states have made at various conferences, have a real and visible implementation. Last but not least, I promote and try to oversee coordination among the OSCE member states in their efforts to combat anti-Semitism since only a concerted cross-border approach will lay the foundation for the hoped-for success.

My experience over the past three years as Personal Representative has shown that fulfilling these expectations is often difficult. The mandate does not come with a scientific staff that can oversee all the developments in the area. Furthermore, when it comes to implementing strategies for combating anti-Semitism, OSCE institutions such as the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) are dependent on the commitment of the OSCE member states. Thus my role is often limited to efforts of raising awareness, pointing to best practices, and urging institutions and persons whose engagement can have a real impact to take action. Fortunately, some progress has been achieved over the past years. Noteworthy, among other things, are the adoption by ten countries of teaching materials on anti-Semitism that have been developed by ODIHR and the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, the implementation of ODIHR's Law Enforcement Officers Programme on Combating Hate Crime (LEOP), and the development of an OSCE working definition of anti-Semitism that brings us one step closer to tackling the issue on a transnational level.

Those combating anti-Semitism—politicians, international organizations, as well as civil society—confront two basic problems. First, manifestations of anti-Semitism are manifold. They can be blatant and easy to detect such as hateful expressions by extreme right-wing groups in all forms. But they can also be subtle as in, for instance, some elements of the academic discourse on the Middle

East conflict in which a clear pro-Palestinian bias is observable and anti-Semitic stereotypes are subtly, and on first look often indiscernibly, invoked. Second, anti-Semitism is prevalent—albeit to varying degrees—throughout the whole political spectrum.

It is not only the racist worldview of right-wing extremists and the fervent criticism of capitalism and globalization—which more often than not is closely linked to anti-Semitic stereotypes—that threaten our Jewish fellow citizens by singling them out as enemies of a better society. Anti-Semitic sentiments also constantly surface in the mainstream. Anti-Israeli and sometimes anti-Semitic expressions permeate the political discourse on Israel and the Middle East conflict even among liberal, democratic politicians and the mainstream press. Then-Swedish prime minister Olof Palme's labeling Israel a Nazi state was only one of the more obvious manifestations of this kind of new anti-Semitism.

This book deals specifically with anti-Israeli, and sometimes anti-Semitic occurrences within the political and societal discourse in the so-called Nordic countries in Europe. The case studies presented here take a closer look at such phenomena as officials evaluating Israeli policies from a standpoint of moral superiority, strongly biased news reporting on the Middle East conflict, the failure to adequately protect Israeli institutions, the reluctance to put war criminals on trial, and so on.

The incidents and patterns discussed here should be regarded as serious. It is the merit of this volume to put the spotlight on underreported phenomena that occur too close to what we see as our consensual political discourse for them to be ignored or trivialized.

Manfred Gerstenfeld

## Behind the Humanitarian Mask: The Nordic Countries, Israel, and the Jews

### Introduction

The Nordic countries rarely draw international attention. The five nations discussed in this book cover a large geographic area yet have a combined population of only about twenty-five million. Sweden is the largest with 9.2 million inhabitants. The two other Scandinavian countries, Denmark and Norway, have populations of 5.5 million and 4.6 million, respectively. Finland has 5.2 million inhabitants and Iceland 0.3 million.

Scandinavians comprehend each other's languages with more or less effort. Outside these three countries, the languages are understood by few people. Finnish is far less accessible.

These five countries are seen as a bulwark of democracy. They have constructed peaceful images with advanced welfare policies and major concern for human rights. On the Global Peace Index, for instance, Norway is ranked first, Denmark third, Finland sixth, and Sweden seventh among 121 nations.<sup>1</sup> These countries usually also rank high on other indices. According to Reporters without Borders, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, and Norway are equal among the eight nations having the greatest press freedom. Sweden is between eleventh and fourteenth.<sup>2</sup>

However, the Simon Wiesenthal Center's latest report on the investigation of Nazi war criminals yields a different picture. Both Norway and Sweden can be found in the F1 category—one of the worst—together with Syria. This category comprises “those countries which refuse in principle to investigate, let alone prosecute, suspected Nazi war criminals because of legal (statute of limitation) or ideological restrictions.”<sup>3</sup>

International knowledge about these nations is superficial. When university students who have never visited these countries are asked to write down all they know about them, only very few will reach a hundred words. In such experiments done by this author with North Americans about Norway, several of them could only come up with a sentence or two, which then often turned out to refer to Sweden or Denmark. Once I told this to a group of well-educated Americans who laughed. Then one of them said: “Hans Christian Andersen—was he Swedish?” No one reacted, so I had to say, “No, he was Danish.”

These countries are rarely mentioned internationally and, if so, it is often in

a positive context. This is the more so as few foreign journalists are based there. To the visiting tourist their populations frequently come across as polite, helpful, and soft-spoken.

### **Darker Attitudes**

Behind this appearance and the often proclaimed concern for human rights lurk darker attitudes. This book deals mainly with lifting these countries' humanitarian mask as far as Israel and Jews are concerned.

To avoid misunderstanding: these nations have also supported many initiatives that are positive for Jews and/or Israel in recent decades. Some examples should be mentioned in particular. A major one by Sweden was the international promotion of Holocaust education. Its Social Democratic prime minister Göran Persson launched this important process with a conference in Stockholm at the beginning of 2000.

Norway received positive publicity when it became the first county to make payments to Holocaust survivors when the restitution process was renewed at the end of the twentieth century. The country's ambivalent behavior during the process that preceded the decision on the payments, however, is barely known.

Yet anti-Semitism and in particular its more recent mutation, anti-Israelism—used here interchangeably with anti-Zionism—are widespread in these countries. In Norway and Sweden, anti-Israeli initiatives have been taken that are extreme even in a European context.

This cannot be disconnected from the fact that anti-Semitism is a deep-rooted, integral part of European culture and has been promoted systematically and intensely over many centuries, initially by large parts of Christianity and since the nineteenth century by nationalist movements. The infrastructure of this profound, irrational hate has thus existed, in varying guises, for much of Western history.

### **A Broad and Deep Base**

Lutheranism is the dominant Christian denomination in these countries. Its founder Martin Luther was among the most rabid Christian anti-Semites in European history. Several decades after the Holocaust, many Lutheran churches publicly denounced his anti-Semitic legacy and many Lutherans strongly oppose such attitudes. One wonders, however, whether for others the ancient hatred has mutated into anti-Israeli feelings. There are several significant examples of profound anti-Israeli bias among Scandinavian church leaders. Yet some observers of the Nordic scene think several leaders of the greatly weakened churches have joined the anti-Israeli bandwagon mainly because of its popularity.

The current anti-Semitism and anti-Israelism have been added to a long-existing, broad, and deep base of anti-Jewish stereotypes. These prejudices have

facilitated the considerable reemergence of these attitudes despite the impact of the mass murder of the Jews in the Holocaust. That is also why positive developments toward Jews and Israel in these countries do not compensate for the frequent expressions of anti-Israelism.

It now increasingly seems that the Holocaust's impact on European democracies may largely have been a temporary phenomenon. Its taboos are increasingly being broken. Likewise, the damage done by the discrimination and biased actions against Israel and often collaterally against the Jews by parts of the Western elites and some governments far exceeds the beneficial actions.

### **Significant Place in Post-Holocaust Anti-Semitism**

A variety of negative events concerning Israel and Jews over the past decades, particularly in Sweden and Norway, merit international attention. These include discriminatory policies toward Israel as well as acts of physical and verbal anti-Semitism. Many of the latter, but far from all, are committed by local Muslims. Other problem areas concern various post-Holocaust issues. The key matters involved, however, somewhat differ from country to country.

Despite their positive overall images and small population, both Sweden and Norway have a significant place in any systematic overview of major anti-Semitism in Western Europe since World War II. This does not only concern anti-Zionism, the newest variety of this millennia-old hatred. This is much less so for Denmark and Finland.

The stereotypes of the long-existing religious and ethnonational varieties of anti-Semitism are also substantially present in these countries. In recent decades they have been reactivated and adapted to the currently prevailing *Zeitgeist*. The anti-Semitic core motif is that the Jew is the absolute evil. The submotifs include Jewish vengefulness, the myth of Jewish power accompanied by conspiracy theories, supposed control of the media, as well as the main ancient Christian theme that Jews are responsible for the death of Jesus.<sup>4</sup> Mutations of all these accusations are manifest in the current Nordic discourse on Israel.

### **Anti-Zionism and Anti-Semitism**

Per Ahlmark, a former Swedish deputy prime minister and then leader of the Liberal Party, was one of the first non-Jewish politicians in Europe to publicly state that anti-Zionism is largely comparable to anti-Semitism. At Yad Vashem's International Conference on the Legacy of Holocaust Survivors in April 2002, he observed:

Criticism of Israel has become very similar to anti-Semitism. There exists in it a rejection of the Jewish people's right to express its identity in its state; and Israel isn't judged according to the same criteria that are applied to other

countries. If anti-Semites once aspired to live in a world rid of Jews, today anti-Semitism's goal is apparently a world cleansed of the Jewish state.<sup>5</sup>

Two years later, again speaking at Yad Vashem, Ahlmark was even more explicit:

anti-Zionism today has become very similar to anti-Semitism. Anti-Zionists accept the right of other peoples to have national feelings and a defensible state. But they reject the right of the *Jewish* people to have its national consciousness expressed in the State of Israel and to make that state secure. Thus, they are *not* judging Israel by the values and norms used to judge other countries. Such discrimination against Jews is called anti-Semitism.

Anti-Zionists question the very existence of Israel. This means that Israel should disappear in one way or the other; that millions of Israeli Jews have to be fought and probably killed. Deliberately suggesting mass murder of Jews—openly, disguised or in vague formulas—has always been the most extreme form of anti-Semitism. Anti-Zionists, who advocate the destruction of the Jewish state, should be put in a similar category.<sup>6</sup>

It should not come as a surprise that Ahlmark understood how similar anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism are.<sup>7</sup> Members of the Swedish Social Democratic governments—in power for most of the last century—have been among the pioneers of extreme demonization of Israel in the Western world.

In 2003, Irene Levin, a professor of social work at Oslo University College observed on the situation in Norway:

In the more distant past, the Jews were portrayed in the media as greedy and overly interested in money. This has been replaced by their portrayal as aggressors; however, the consequences are the same. Anti-Semitism is about scapegoating. The way to fight this is through showing the diversity and complexity of the situations. The Norwegian media, however, refuse to do this.<sup>8</sup>

### **The EUMC Working Definition of Anti-Semitism**

Before discussing anti-Semitic phenomena in the Nordic countries, it is worth more clearly characterizing anti-Semitism. This can best be done by analyzing such phenomena in terms of the most common definition of anti-Semitism, as formulated at the request of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), which has since become the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (EUAFR). This definition is now frequently used to assess whether texts or speeches are anti-Semitic. It was recommended for use, for instance, by the British All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism.<sup>9</sup>

This definition states: “Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which

may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.” The document notes that: “such manifestations could also target the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity.”

It goes on to say:

This document refers not only to matters such as calling for or justifying the killing of Jews, dehumanizing and demonizing them, accusing them of imagined wrongdoing, denying the Holocaust, and charging Jews with being like Nazis, but also with denying Jews the right to self-determination and applying double standards by requiring behavior of Israel that is not expected of any other democratic country.<sup>10</sup>

Many of the Nordic discriminatory acts or proposals against Israel and the Jews—as discussed in this book—are expressions of such double standards. They constitute anti-Semitic behavior according to the EUMC definition.

Negative attitudes, based on false morality, that Nordic elites frequently express concerning Israel appear elsewhere in Europe as well. German foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, a socialist, referred to this phenomenon: “A new form of anti-Semitism increasingly cloaked by expressions of moral superiority and anti-Israel statements is unacceptable and will not be allowed to permeate German society.” Steinmeier said he was more concerned by this new form of anti-Semitism and anti-Israeli remarks than by the “‘depressing’ persistence of the traditional form of anti-Semitism both in Europe generally and in Germany.” He added: “We will not tolerate anti-Semitism in any shape or form, even in some obscure guise.”<sup>11</sup>

## **Humanitarian Racism**

The attitudes of substantial sections of the Nordic elites are imbued with what might be called humanitarian racism. Several of their human rights organizations, as well, are riddled with such racists. A humanitarian racist is best defined as someone who attributes intrinsically reduced responsibility for their acts to people of certain ethnic or national groups.

This racism is a mirror image of the white-supremacist variety. Humanitarian racists consider—usually without saying so explicitly—that only white people can be fully responsible for their actions; nonwhites such as the Palestinians cannot (or can but only to a limited extent). Therefore, most misdeeds by nonwhites—who by definition are “victims”—are not their fault but those of whites, who can be held accountable. One of the many consequences of this distorted attitude is that nonwhites are falsely perceived as passive victims, never acting, only acted upon or reacting.

As humanitarian racism has hardly been investigated, the many ramifications

of this discriminatory attitude are also ignored. One of these is that by considering certain people unable to be fully responsible for their actions by nature, one implicitly degrades them to a subhuman status and ascribes to them characteristics found in animals. They cannot be held responsible because they cannot overcome their urges and are not expected to have rationality or morality.

One among many resulting distortions of humanitarian racism is the confusion of criminals and victims. Another is an inversion of perpetrator and victim. These scantily studied phenomena are related to other false beliefs such as that the problems caused by certain hooligans among non-Western immigrants in European societies are solely the result of socioeconomic factors. Very often criminal inclinations and antiwhite racist ideology are also at play. This, for instance, was the case during the fall 2005 riots in France.<sup>12</sup>

Ignoring minority racism is yet another collateral phenomenon of humanitarian racism. As the former Dutch parliamentarian of Somalian origin, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, put it:

I studied social work for a year in the Netherlands. Our teachers taught us to look with different eyes toward the immigrant and the foreigner. They thought racism was a phenomenon that only appears among whites. My family in Somalia, however, educated me as a racist and told me that we Muslims were very superior to the Christian Kenyans. My mother thinks they are half-monkeys.<sup>13</sup>

The idea that racism only occurs among whites is far from limited to the Netherlands. Jews in the Scandinavian countries have often found out otherwise. Local Muslims have been involved in extreme hate propaganda and in some of the most severe anti-Semitic incidents in numbers disproportionate to their percentage of the population.<sup>14</sup>

### **The Three Varieties of Anti-Semitism**

The three major varieties of anti-Semitism—meaning religious anti-Semitism, ethnic anti-Semitism, and anti-Israelism—have common stages, namely, demonization, exclusion, and expulsion or destruction of Jews. In these processes Sweden and Norway in particular, in recent years, have played a very negative role among Western democracies. Some examples of the pioneering impacts of Jew-hatred emanating from these countries are:

- The late Olof Palme, an internationally known Social Democratic prime minister of Sweden, was among the first European leaders to accuse Israelis of being like Nazis. He will go down in history as one of the first Western Holocaust inverters at government level.<sup>15</sup>
- In 2003, Archbishop Karl G. Hammar, then heading the Swedish Lutheran Church, was among the first Western Protestant leaders to call for a boycott

of goods from the disputed territories (West Bank and Gaza Strip), which he called “occupied” ones.<sup>16</sup>

- In summer 2006, a synagogue service had to be moved from the Malmö (Sweden) synagogue elsewhere for security reasons. This was a rare event in postwar Europe.<sup>17</sup>
- Some caricatures in mainstream Norwegian newspapers over the past decades are interchangeable with those of the worst Nazi papers.<sup>18</sup>
- A 2006 article in Norway’s leading conservative daily *Aftenposten* by the well-known writer Jostein Gaarder will have a prominent place in any anthology of recent anti-Semitic texts in Europe.<sup>19</sup>
- Kristin Halvorsen, leader of the Norwegian Socialist Left Party and finance minister, supported a consumer boycott of Israel in January 2006.<sup>20</sup> She was probably the first Western government minister to do so.
- Calls for boycotts of Israel by Norwegian and Danish trade unions in 2002 were among the first by such organizations in the Western world.<sup>21</sup>
- The decision in 2005 by the Sør Trøndelag region in Norway to boycott Israel was probably the first such instance in the Western world.<sup>22</sup> That it was abandoned after pressure from the Norwegian foreign minister, who claimed it was illegal, does not change its highly discriminatory character.<sup>23</sup>
- When the Hamas government was boycotted by the European Union, this terrorist organization’s representatives were given visas to Norway and Sweden.<sup>24</sup> This was particularly reprehensible as, under the Schengen Agreement, these visas made visits to other EU countries possible as well. Norway was the first Western government to recognize the short-lived Hamas-Fatah unity government of which the Hamas faction in its party platform calls for the murder of Jews. Norway’s Deputy Foreign Minister Raymond Johansen was the first high-ranking Western official to visit leaders of the Hamas movement including Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh.<sup>25</sup>
- Government-financed Scandinavian and Finnish NGOs provide funds to Palestinian NGOs that besides development work also promote the demonization of Israel.<sup>26</sup>

### **The 2006 Second Lebanon War**

Developments during the 2006 Second Lebanon War provided an important litmus test for anti-Semitism in the Nordic countries. Often in times of Middle Eastern tensions when Israel is portrayed particularly negatively by Western media, manifestations of anti-Semitism increase rapidly. In Norway, where members of the government and substantial segments of the elites demonstrate understanding for Palestinian terrorism—and thus try to whitewash, play down, or even exculpate it—attacks against the Jews were by far the strongest.<sup>27</sup>

Jews, including Jewish leadership, and certainly non-Jews abroad, are hardly familiar with these countries' attitudes toward Israel and the Jews. The anti-Israeli members of their elites keep up a humanitarian mask behind which they hide the greatly divergent standards by which they measure Israelis and Palestinians.

One example of the aforementioned humanitarian racism occurred in spring 2007 when Hamas "extremists" and Fatah "moderates" cruelly murdered each other and civilian bystanders in Gaza. Many humanitarian racists in the Western world assigned the blame, either fully or partially, to Israel and the United States.

During the Second Lebanon War another phenomenon strongly came to light, detailed analysis of which cannot be carried out in this framework. Many on the European Left—including several key members of socialist parties—showed greater affinity with Hizballah terrorists who have genocidal intentions than with the democratic Israeli state. Others take "evenhanded" positions between genocide promoters and democrats.

The problem is also one of a mixture of arrogance and ignorance. Norwegian foreign minister Jonas Gahr Støre was one of those who called Israel's military strikes against Lebanon totally unacceptable. According to *Aftenposten*, he said Israel was "on the verge of lashing out at Lebanon's civilian population to retaliate for the abductions." He also said Israel did not understand that Lebanon was not behind the abduction of the Israeli soldiers.<sup>28</sup>

The logical consequence of Støre's words is that Israel should never react unless there is no collateral damage on the Lebanese side. This is telling a democratic country that it should do very little to protect its citizens. It thus also means supporting terrorism. Støre's statement was a typical example of the arrogance of a politician of a small country.

It is doubtful that Norway, if it had had to deal with only part of the problems Israel has overcome in the past decades, could have survived as a democracy. One is usually challenged to bring some proof for this thesis.

Here, then, is food for thought. Oslo, with 90 reported crimes per 1,000 persons over the past year, has four times as much criminal activity as New York.<sup>29</sup> A report by Justice Minister Knut Storberget stated that over 99 percent of all serious robberies on the streets of Oslo were never solved.<sup>30</sup> How would a country that cannot solve even 1 percent of robberies ever withstand the waves of terrorism and suicide attacks Israel has had to cope with?

Admittedly the problem is of a greater nature than only the small Nordic nations. Jeffrey Gedmin, who in 2007 became president of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, noted in analyzing the hypocrisy of European condemnations of Israel: "One would expect the Europeans to say at least once: 'This is what we would do. Our proposal is credible for a number of sound reasons. We will support it in the following ways. If you accept it and it fails, we will protect you by taking a number of major actions.'" On that front, however, the Europeans are totally absent.<sup>31</sup> Støre's attitude is typical in this regard.

### **Discriminatory Regrets about the Nobel Prize**

Similar attitudes manifest themselves in many ways. In 2002, some members of the 1994 Norwegian Nobel Committee that had granted the Nobel Peace Prize to Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, and Yasser Arafat—Bishop Gunnar Stålsett, Sissel Rønbeck, and former Norwegian prime minister Odvar Nordli—expressed disappointment in Peres. A fourth member, Hanna Kvanmo, said she wished there was a possibility to take back the prize from Peres. She also said Peres was on the verge of being guilty of war crimes.<sup>32</sup> Only one member of the committee, Kåre Kristiansen, took a different view in 1994 and resigned from the committee because Arafat got the prize.

Then-Bishop of Oslo Stålsett described as absurd the involvement of a Nobel Laureate, Peres, in human rights abuses. This was a discriminatory remark as he remained silent about Arafat. At the same time the then chairman of the Nobel Committee, Geir Lundestad, “voiced the concern of several members that if Mr. Arafat were to be killed as a result of Israeli actions, one Nobel laureate might in effect be said to have killed the other.”<sup>33</sup>

The Nobel Committee members did not mention anything about Arafat’s Nobel Prize, despite the fact that he was probably the world’s leading terrorist during the last decades of the previous century and continued to order the murder of Israeli civilians after he had received the prize.

In 2004, ten years after the prize was awarded, the *Jerusalem Post* published an article noting that the members of the Nobel Committee still stood by their choice of Arafat.<sup>34</sup> By that time Israel had made public “a list of the terrorist operatives Arafat financed, and the request for payment from Marwan Barghouti, then head of Fatah in the West Bank. Arafat’s signature is on the page with the amounts paid to the murderers.”<sup>35</sup>

### **More Double Standards**

In Finland the anti-Israeli phenomena that have been described particularly for Sweden and Norway are far less widespread. Violent anti-Semitic acts have been rare in the new century. Yet anti-Israeli attitudes in the Finnish media are frequent.

The demonization of Israel by parts of the Scandinavian elites—and also others in Europe—cannot be primarily attributed to the return of deep-rooted prewar anti-Semitism. Nor can it just be characterized as “reflecting an identity crisis,” “decadence,” “perversity,” or alternatively as a “pathology,” “cancer,” or “virus” that would be rife mainly in three sectors of European society—the extreme Left and parts of the Social Democratic Left, the extreme Right, and significant parts of the Muslim communities. The phenomena that underlie the racist attitudes of these three segments of Western societies are not identical. Yet they all have, albeit different, ideological contents.

Anti-Israelism and anti-Semitism never operate in isolation. The underlying motivations of the perpetrators sooner or later lead to the targeting of others as well. This, however, is often visible only after they have caused damage to Jews. The problems caused by parts of the Muslim communities to Scandinavian societies have only become evident in recent years. One example is Malmö where some areas populated by minorities have become hotbeds of crime and agitation. Yet, while many perpetrators come from Muslim communities, other Muslims are also victims of this on top of discrimination by autochthonous people.

Although the Swedish and Norwegian Social Democratic parties include a large number of anti-Israelis, such attitudes are also widespread elsewhere. There is hardly a European country whose socialist parties do not include important figures who have frequently promoted anti-Israelism. Among the best known were the late prime ministers Bruno Kreisky of Austria<sup>36</sup> and Bettino Craxi of Italy,<sup>37</sup> but there are many others.

The problem also occurs from time to time in non-Left mainstream parties. In 2004, Jo Benkow, a former speaker of the Norwegian parliament and former leader of the Conservative Party, who is Jewish, called former Conservative Norwegian prime minister Kåre Willoch also in view of his opinions on Israel “the most biased person participating in the public debate in this country.”<sup>38</sup> Former Dutch Christian Democrat prime minister Dries van Agt is another example of a senior, right-of-center, extreme anti-Israeli (former) politician.

Rather than indicating much about Israel, anti-Semitism and anti-Israelism reflect problems in European society. Leading anti-Semitism scholar Robert Wistrich commented, paraphrasing *Hamlet*: “Something is rotten in the state of Europe. Anti-Semitism is a primary symptom of social pathology. Every society that becomes seriously infected by it is receiving a wakeup call about its social, cultural, and political health.”<sup>39</sup>

## Perspectives on the Perpetrators

Josef Joffe, editor of the German weekly *Die Zeit* remarked:

The new European dispensation is antipower, antiwar, antiracist—the *prise de conscience*, as the French call it, of “Never again!” It reflects Europe’s horrible past, with a lot more complicity in the Nazi project than some nations—say, Norway and Sweden, who are among the most anti-Israeli in Europe—are willing to own up to.

It reflects ancient guilt feelings and the unconscious need to project them onto somebody else. Israel makes such a good candidate because it is (a) the source of these guilt feelings and (b) refuses to behave like Sweden or Switzerland, mainly because it does not live in their neighborhood that looks like a permanently pacified Europe.<sup>40</sup>

American author Bruce Bawer noted an additional factor. Referring to the aforementioned extreme anti-Semitic article by Gaarder, he wrote:

Though Gaarder drew some criticism, he won strong support from leading intellectuals and Norwegians generally. People were still talking about the piece on September 17 when shots were fired at Norway's only synagogue by four young men who, it emerged, had also plotted to blow up the U.S. and Israeli embassies.

To walk the streets of Oslo today is to recall that this is a city where, within human memory, Jews were rounded up and shipped off to their deaths while their neighbors sat in their kitchens placidly consuming *kjøttkaker*<sup>41</sup> and boiled potatoes. There can be little doubt that Europeans' still largely suppressed guilt over the Holocaust, and over their enduring, irrational Jew-hatred, are significant factors in Europe's ongoing self-destruction.<sup>42</sup>

Sweden<sup>43</sup> and Norway are also among the countries that have poor records in dealing with World War II criminals. In Finland the issue of the deliverance of Russian Jewish prisoners of war to the Germans during World War II still needs much clarification.<sup>44</sup>

### **Anti-Zionism on the Left**

Another factor should not be overlooked. Germany, its allies, and the Nazi ideology were defeated in a long, bloody war in which tens of millions were murdered or died. Communism, if one takes into account not only the Soviet variety but also the Chinese one, killed even more people.

Communism's defeat, however, resulted from its withering away in the Soviet Union. The West did not have to confront it in a major war. There was thus in the Western world no purge of its adherents similar to that of Hitler's followers after World War II. This enables the extreme Left until today to enjoy a public image that is far better than that of the discredited extreme Right. Whereas white supremacism is generally and rightly considered despicable and socially unacceptable, the humanitarian-racism mirror phenomenon is rarely viewed similarly.

As the Soviet Union was not defeated on the battlefield and thus completely delegitimized the way Nazism was, part of its ideological legacy still persists. The highest levels of the Soviet Union consciously promoted anti-Zionism as part of expanding the country's influence in the Third World. It lives on in various ways in the European Left.

More than 250 Swedish academics protested when the Living History Forum, a state agency established by the Social Democrats that had focused on the Holocaust, was tasked by the current government to inform high school pupils about the crimes against humanity perpetrated by communist regimes.

Education Minister Jan Björklund of the Liberal Party reacted by saying

the basic assumption that the government should not influence history writing was correct. He added: “but among the signatories I notice several active communists. It is notable that they are reacting only when the remit is expanded to include communist mass murders. Nobody protested as long as it was about Nazis.”<sup>45</sup>

## **Muslims and Scandinavia**

Recent years have seen shifts in attitudes toward Muslims in Nordic countries. These may have secondary influences on their attitudes toward Israel. Developments concerning Denmark could possibly be a precursor for elsewhere in Europe. The 2006 eruptions in the Muslim world after the Muhammad cartoons were published in the Danish daily *Jyllands-Posten* gave the country an experience of extensive Arab hatred somewhat similar to the aggressions Israel suffers regularly. Attacks on embassies, the country’s demonization, and boycotts were some of the ways this hatred expressed itself. The Danish population showed greater understanding for Israel in the Second Lebanon War than those in most other EU countries, which may be related to the Danish experience during the cartoon-crisis riots.<sup>46</sup>

This raises two questions. Will the same happen elsewhere in democracies as knowledge about the significant—though not majority—violent trends in the Islamic world becomes more widespread? Or will this only happen if and when other countries have experiences somewhat similar to those Denmark underwent during the cartoon crisis?

The cartoon riots were a far lesser event than 9/11 and no Danes were killed. Nevertheless, the change in Danish attitudes toward radical Islam and to some extent toward Islam in general has been in a similar direction as in the United States.

In the meantime Norway, whose current government likewise regularly applies double standards to Israel, has also been exposed to some terrorist acts and threats. In January 2008, Foreign Minister Støre narrowly escaped being killed in an Afghani terrorist attack in a Kabul hotel while a Norwegian journalist was murdered and a diplomat wounded. At the end of February, Siv Jensen, leader of the Progress Party, which is the largest opposition party, was visiting the Israeli town of Sderot when rockets aimed at its civilian population fell there. These were fired by Palestinian terrorists probably belonging to the Palestinian Authority’s largest party, Hamas.<sup>47</sup>

Also in February 2008, the Norwegian embassy in Kabul was evacuated and closed for an indefinite time after terrorist threats. Newspapers reported there had been warnings that the embassy would be attacked by suicide bombers.<sup>48</sup>

Norway has also been specifically warned by an Iraqi insurgent group, the Front for Reform and Holy War, that it could face terrorist attacks if it extradites

a radical Muslim, Mullah Krekar, to Iraq. Krekar has been determined to be a threat to Norway's national security. He came to Norway seeking asylum in the early 1990s and from time to time has traveled back to northern Iraq so as to lead guerrilla activities. Norway's Supreme Court has agreed to his expulsion but it cannot be carried out because of a death threat against him in Iraq.<sup>49</sup>

In February 2008, Jørn Holme, who heads the Norwegian intelligence and security agency PST, confirmed that young Norwegian Muslims are targeted by recruiters to participate in terrorist attacks abroad. He said this goes "beyond extremists' efforts to gain support for terrorist activity abroad."<sup>50</sup> Later that month three people of Somali origin were arrested and charged with financing terrorist activities overseas.<sup>51</sup> This was on the same day that three Swedes also of Somali origin were arrested on similar charges in Stockholm.<sup>52</sup>

### **Small Jewish Communities**

The Nordic countries' Jewish communities are very small, altogether numbering about 25,000. The largest community is in Sweden with an estimated 15,000 Jews. There are about 7,400 Jews in Denmark, 1,300 in Norway, and 1,200 in Finland. Iceland has a few Jewish inhabitants but no organized Jewish community.<sup>53</sup>

This combined Jewish population of about twenty-five thousand would not rank among the thirty largest American Jewish communities. It is about the size of a small Israeli town. Sweden has a number of functioning Jewish communities. In Denmark, Norway, and Finland, the capitals—Copenhagen, Oslo, and Helsinki—account for almost all Jewish life.

The communities are not only small at present; they always have been. They have never greatly influenced any sectors of economic life or society. Such contributions have always been limited to individuals, some of whom became well known in their country.

Jewish communities in countries with a public discourse hostile to Israel are in a problematic position. In addition, up until today the traumas stemming from the Holocaust have not been superseded. Levin remarked that the Jews in Norway very much wanted to be inconspicuous.

"After what had happened they wanted to live in a way that nobody would see the difference between them and other Norwegians. I learned from my parents that I should be a person like everybody else. We Jews should be integrated so that nobody will say anything negative against us, they told me."<sup>54</sup>

This pertains not only to individuals. Jewish communities in Europe, particularly but not only small ones, often aim for a low profile.

As the situations in the Nordic countries differ, the four major ones will be addressed individually below. Sweden and Norway, where most of the anti-Israeli actions originated, are the main focus of the analysis.

## SWEDEN

Social Democrat governments have ruled Sweden for most of the time since Sweden became a true democracy in the 1920s. The premiership of Olof Palme, starting in 1969, gradually led to often hostile policies toward Israel. This was a reversal of the attitude of his predecessor Tage Erlander. Some change took place in fall 2006 when the Center and Conservative parties won the parliamentary elections and formed a government. Yet little has changed as far as the public anti-Israeli discourse is concerned.

Moshe Yegar, a former Israeli ambassador to Stockholm, has analyzed Swedish-Israeli relations in detail. He mentioned a long list of one-sided anti-Israeli statements, starting from Palme's time in office.

One example of Swedish double standards and demonization of Israel occurred in 1984 when Deputy Foreign Minister Pierre Schori<sup>55</sup> visited Israel and praised Arafat and his "flexible policy."<sup>56</sup> In an article he "claimed that the terrorist acts of the PLO were 'meaningless,' while Israel's retaliatory acts were 'despicable acts of terrorism.'"<sup>57</sup> The following years witnessed many other examples of this demonizing attitude in various gradations.

Although many media criticized Schori's discriminatory anti-Israeli statements, repetition of this same motif by government officials over the years illustrates the increasingly negative attitudes toward Israel in Sweden.

In November 1988, Foreign Minister Sten Andersson answered a question in parliament and said Israel planned to annex the territories and dispossess or expel the Palestinian population. Twenty years later the demonizing character of Andersson's statement is even clearer than it was at the time.<sup>58</sup> Israel had no such plans. It was the two intifadas that brought with them the steep decline in the Palestinians' economic position. Their belongings, however, remained intact. At the same time the Palestinian population has been growing.

The demonization of Israel has a strong element of contamination or contagion. Key personalities in a country's political, cultural, or media elite bring their anti-Zionist defamation into the mainstream. Although initially this may incur major resistance, their ideas eventually spread through society. A critical mass is reached and then their discourse becomes the dominant narrative. A substantial part of anti-Israelism in Europe today derives from such copycatting. In an anti-Israeli atmosphere many people who do not hold strong convictions accept the dominant narrative because doing so is convenient.

There is some indication that this has been the case with former Swedish foreign minister Laila Freivalds. Her predecessor as foreign minister had been the extremely anti-Israeli Anna Lindh. Zvi Mazel, former Israeli ambassador to Sweden, remarks: "When Freivalds became foreign minister she surprisingly said: 'I am a friend of Israel, though I am also a friend of Palestinians.' For being a friend of Israel, she was strongly attacked by many Social Democrats. It took her only a few weeks to adopt the party line and imitate Lindh's statements."<sup>59</sup>

## More Hostilities

As Ahlmark observed about Palme:

To compare the bombs over the capital of North Vietnam with the gas chambers in Treblinka was thus a false parallel.... It contributed to the trivialization of the Holocaust. If all killing is the same as Hitler's one conceals what is unique about the Nazi genocide. We should also note that Olof Palme during his time as party chairman twice made statements where he equated countries with Nazi Germany. One of those states was built by the people who were Hitler's primary victims. The other was the nation that came to decide the victory for the free countries over Nazism in World War II. And both—Israel and the United States—were and are democracies.<sup>60</sup>

Moshe Erel, Israel's ambassador to Sweden in the mid-1980s, wrote that Mauno Koivisto, then president of Finland, once replied to a journalist's question on the difference between Finnish and Swedish foreign policy: "Finland wants to be friendly with everyone; Sweden wants to quarrel with everyone."<sup>61</sup>

Erel also mentioned that once, during his term as ambassador, the leader of the Israeli Labor Party happened to be in Sweden on the first of May. Yet, whereas he was not invited to the May 1st parade, Arafat was received with great warmth and marched at its front.<sup>62</sup> At that time, it should be noted, the PLO was still officially claiming that its aim was to destroy Israel. When Palme was murdered, the then Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres said he would come to the funeral only on condition that Arafat would not be invited.<sup>63</sup> The Swedes accepted his condition. Under Palme's successors, the demonizing-Israel campaign continued to varying degrees.<sup>64</sup>

## Freivalds's Visit to Israel

Freivalds was hardly less biased than Lindh. She gave yet another demonstration of Swedish government hypocrisy during her visit to Israel in June 2004. Freivalds first visited Yad Vashem and thereafter heavily criticized Israel in a meeting at the Foreign Ministry. She remained silent, however, on current Swedish anti-Semitism. This approach of paying respect to dead Jews, criticizing Israel, and ignoring or downplaying one's own country's major delinquencies toward living Jews is a common European phenomenon.

On the occasion of her visit, four former chairmen of the Jewish community of Stockholm sent a letter to the editor of the Israeli daily *Haaretz* in which they summarized contemporary Swedish anti-Semitism. They praised Sweden for having received Jews fleeing the Holocaust during World War II, and Prime Minister Persson for initiating the Living History Project.

They then went on to say:

The number of verbal and physical attacks against Jews has increased in Sweden. Youngsters in schools give evidence of how they hide the fact of being Jews, as they are attacked both verbally and physically. Teachers testify that students refuse to participate in classes when Judaism is studied. Survivors report feelings of fear. The police stand passively by when extremists attack pro-Israel and anti-racist manifestations.

The authors added: “Over the last decades, Sweden has become a center of racist and anti-Semitic White Power music, and several anti-Semitic groups have established Swedish websites spreading anti-Semitic propaganda. The Swedish Church has just recently initiated a boycott campaign [against Israel], a reminder of the commercial boycott of Jews in various societies in the past.”<sup>65</sup>

Swedish incitement was sometimes also part of a wider EU framework of anti-Israelism. One example of this occurred on 15 April 2002 when Sweden, Austria, France, Belgium, Spain, and Portugal supported a resolution of the UN Commission on Human Rights that, in the words of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, “endorsed Palestinian terrorism and accused Israel of carrying out ‘mass killings’ in the disputed territories.”<sup>66</sup>

In 2006, Oded Eran, then the Israeli ambassador to the European Union, cited Sweden and Ireland as the two countries that most frequently raised their voice against Israel.<sup>67</sup>

### **Some Improvement in 2006**

On the government level the situation improved when the Center-Conservative coalition headed by Moderate Party leader Fredrik Reinfeldt won the parliamentary elections in September 2006. Thereafter excessive criticism of Israel ceased. Mazel says there are also some friends of Israel among the Social Democrats, but because of the party’s mood they are usually silent and prefer to stay outside the debate about Israel.<sup>68</sup>

Yet Foreign Minister Carl Bildt of the Moderate Party—a former prime minister—is considered anti-Israeli. An astute politician, he usually chooses his words carefully. In April he said, however, in response to an interviewer’s question on Swedish radio: “It is possible to make peace without Hamas the same way it is possible to make peace without Netanyahu on the Israeli side.”

An Israeli Foreign Ministry official told the *Jerusalem Post*: “It is a horrible and stupid statement that displays complete ignorance about the Middle East.” The official added: “He clearly does not understand the difference between the leader of an Israeli political party and a group that is engaging in the terror that threatens Europe as much as Israel.”<sup>69</sup>

### The Permeation of the Hatred of Israel

The profound hatred of Israel, promoted by Palme, has permeated deeply into segments of the Social Democrat Party. One example from 2008 demonstrated this again. During the spring Ingiberg Olafsson, an ombudsman for the Social Democratic Youth Organization (SSU), branded a parliamentarian a Nazi because of his support for Israel. On his blog Olafsson called Fredrick Federley of the Center Party “a ridiculous little pile of cow dung” and “a Nazi.” He illustrated the post with Federley’s photograph to which he had added a Hitler-style moustache.

Federley was involved in planning celebrations for Israel’s sixtieth anniversary. Olafsson quoted him as saying: “We are organizing a splendid party for Israel. In this country it’s controversial to support the only democracy in the Middle East.”<sup>70</sup>

When interviewed Olafsson said: “I think genocide is worse than calling someone a Nazi. With his statement, Federley defends the genocide that actually takes place in Palestine every day.” He added: “The Israeli regime is almost Nazi. I don’t mean in the ideological sense of having read *Mein Kampf*, but in the sense that they are exterminating people from day to day.” Olafsson is employed at the SSU’s central office in Stockholm, where he is responsible for the organization’s information material.<sup>71</sup>

An editorial by Per Gudmundson in the daily *Svenska Dagbladet* criticized Olafsson. He had expected him to apologize but as Olafsson persisted, Gudmundson called the ideological climate at the SSU central office into question.<sup>72</sup>

### Swedish Arrogance

Ahlmark, in 2004, pointed out that there is an element of arrogance in Swedish policies. “As a Swede I have heard this boasting all my life. And as we have not been at war for two centuries, it proves that Sweden is sort of a moral superpower. This type of bragging has now become part of the EU ideology. We are the moral continent. In a way we now experience the *Swedenization* of European attitudes to other regions.”<sup>73</sup>

There have been many cases of the great discrepancy between the frequent extremely critical judgments of Israel—based on considerations of pseudo-moral superiority while ignoring Middle Eastern realities—and the Swedes’ own overall performance when having to meet unexpected practical challenges.

For instance, this incompetence was exposed when, in the Southeast Asian tsunami disaster of December 2004, 543 Swedes were killed and many others were injured in Thailand. The Swedish Social Democratic government was very slow in providing assistance to its citizens in need. A 2007 report by the defense research institute FOI found that it took more than twenty-four hours until Prime Minister Persson was made aware of the situation. The initial Swedish reaction

was to treat the tsunami as a matter for Swedish foreign aid officials, who focused on Sri Lanka. FOI concluded that the failings in crisis management were greatest at the highest level of government.<sup>74</sup>

In the same disaster Israel performed far better. Extrapolating, presumably if Sweden were ever to confront practical challenges of the magnitude and frequency Israel is facing, its performance would fall far short of Israel's.

Subsequently, Freivalds's own failures elsewhere further highlighted her bias in judging Israel harshly in difficult situations. Freivalds, as a minister, was not only unable to deal adequately with the Swedish victims of the tsunami. Later she had to resign after falsely denying knowledge of her ministry's attempt to silence a Swedish website that had shown the Muhammad cartoons.

Erel wrote that during his stay he gained the impression that the Swedish left-wing parties had emulated certain attitudes of the communist countries. For example, he mentioned the stifling of discussions in branches of the Social Democratic Party and organized outbursts of protest that came from the top. Erel added that, in the years of his diplomatic service, he had never seen similar events in other democratic countries.<sup>75</sup>

There are also more recent indications that if Sweden had to meet challenges similar to those of Israel it would have substantial problems. In May 2008, Swedish Armed Forces commander Håkan Syrén presented a plan for downsizing military expenditure at the request of the government. He observed on that occasion: "The Armed Forces are being forced to lower their ambitions when it comes to their ability to repel extensive military operations which threaten Sweden." He warned that if security conditions were to deteriorate the country would not have the protection it needed.<sup>76</sup>

But also on smaller matters, even in the human rights field where Sweden is so proud of its performance, the country seems to fall rather short. For instance, in May 2008 the United Nations Committee against Torture criticized Sweden. During a peacekeeping mission in Congo its military "had waited four years before looking into allegations that Swedish troops had remained passive while a Congolese militia member was tortured by French troops." The committee said they should have launched an immediate probe.<sup>77</sup>

### **A Rarely Heard Opinion**

Around Israel's sixtieth birthday in spring 2008, journalist Thomas Gür expressed in *Svenska Dagbladet* an opinion rarely heard in Sweden:

It is obvious that Israel does not in all regards live up to the ideal image of how a democratic and open society should act. At the same time, we have no idea how any other democratic and open society would have developed and acted in the same situation as the one that Israel has found itself in since its establishment....

One can make an intellectual experiment about what Swedish society would look like if for the past 60 years we had been more or less continuously threatened and sometimes directly attacked by the neighboring countries—often in coalitions—with the goal to abrogate the existence of the Swedish state. Neighbors would also, in between the attacks, have encouraged acts of terror on Swedish soil and also trained and provided for these terrorists. How tolerant, open and free would Sweden as a country have been under such circumstances?

What is noteworthy about Israel is not its flaws, for which it deserves to be criticized, but that despite everything it has managed to keep its character of a democratic state and an open society through six decades.<sup>78</sup>

## The Media

Significant parts of the Swedish elites hold anti-Israeli positions. Mazel details the attitudes of various newspapers toward Israel.<sup>79</sup> Ahlmark noted that in 1968 not more than 3 percent of Swedish journalists sympathized with the Communist Party. This figure was identical to the percentage of votes the party obtained in that year's parliamentary election. By 1989, however, the number of pro-Communist journalists had increased to about 30 percent, whereas not more than 4-5 percent of the voters favored the party.<sup>80</sup>

The Swedish radio cited research showing that by 2006, 23 percent of Swedish journalists supported the Green Party and 14 percent the Left Party, which had replaced the Communist Party. These, again, are far larger percentages than among the general population. The largest group of journalists backed the Social Democrats.<sup>81</sup>

Swedish anti-Semitism expert Henrik Bachner quoted a report in the Swedish liberal daily *Dagens Nyheter* finding “that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during the years 1996-98 as a subject not only represented 23.5 percent of all articles dealing with international conflicts in that paper's cultural section, Israel was also ‘the largest country in the world measured by the level of indignation.’ Seventy-seven percent of all articles published on Israel were negative.”

He added: “It is not unlikely that we would find a similar pattern in much of the Swedish media, nor that the percentage of articles dealing with or criticizing Israel would have risen since 2000.”<sup>82</sup>

Erel had already noted in the early 1980s the biased attitude of the Swedish media. He attributed this to the anti-Israeli campaign during the 1982 Lebanon War and the encouragement the Swedish government had given to it at the time.

Erel wrote:

One of the big papers sent a journalist to Israel for a short stay. He was a communist and was hostile to Israel. He systematically interviewed, one

after the other, Arabs and Jews who were strongly opposed to every political position and act of the Israeli government. Whatever he published was gross and damaging. He could damage Israel's image as he wished and he exploited this to the fullest.

Erel told how he talked to the editor of the paper who brushed off his remark that the articles by the communist journalist constituted propaganda.<sup>83</sup>

In 2005, Bachner and Lars M. Andersson accused *Ordfront*, a Swedish left-wing magazine, of anti-Semitic inclinations. The author of one article in the magazine called the God of the Jewish Bible a "psychotic murderer, racist and full-blooded Nazi." He said "he could have been Hitler's teacher." The author pleaded for Christianity to reject the Old Testament.

Another *Ordfront* article in 2002 suggested that: "Maybe it is time to stop traveling to Auschwitz with Swedish students so as to teach them about the consequences of racism and ethnic cleansing. Maybe we should invite them to a Christmas tour of Bethlehem instead, so they can have a look at what the grandchildren of the Auschwitz victims in their turn do when they spend time on ethnic cleansing!"<sup>84</sup>

## NGOs

A particularly problematic subject concerns the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). In a February 2006 assessment of this organization, NGO Monitor wrote that SIDA's

overall goal is "to contribute to making it possible for poor people to improve their living conditions." In the West Bank and Gaza, SIDA's aim is: "to promote peace and the development of a democratic Palestinian state by mitigating the effects of the ongoing conflict, promoting the peace talks, facilitating democratic, economic and social development."<sup>85</sup>

However, significant funding is channeled through Diakonia—a Christian development organization—and highly politicized NGOs such as Al-Haq, the Palestinian Solidarity Association of Sweden (PGS), the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights (PICCR), and ICJ-Sweden. Their activities and publications abuse human rights rhetoric to delegitimize Israel, and as a result, undermine efforts toward a peaceful end to the conflict.<sup>86</sup>

Gerald Steinberg's article on SIDA in this volume analyzes the agency's biased attitude in more detail. It illustrates how SIDA contributes funds to bodies having a political agenda that includes demonizing Israel. Steinberg adds that SIDA's own statements also fuel the political conflict.

Not related to the Palestinians, the Swedish public auditors found evidence of irregularities while investigating fifteen SIDA-financed projects in Africa. In three out of four projects there were insufficient records to evaluate what kind

of work had been done. A representative of the national audit office said SIDA's internal checks were inadequate and measures to prevent irregularities were "almost non-existent." The agency's own auditors did not detect the irregularities either.<sup>87</sup>

### **The State Church**

The official Lutheran State Church is another source of anti-Israeli attitudes. In 2004, the so-called HOPP-kampanjen (Hope Campaign) was launched by a number of Swedish churches, including the Church of Sweden. Its goal was to end violence in general and the Israeli "occupation" through pressure on Israel, especially financially via a boycott. Then-Archbishop Hammar was a vocal supporter of the campaign.<sup>88</sup>

The campaign met with criticism both from external sources and from within the churches that were supposed to carry it out. For instance, the well-known television personality Siewert Öholm criticized it in the Christian paper *Dagen*.<sup>89</sup> Kyrkomötet, the highest decision-making council of the Church of Sweden, was asked by council members Joakim Svensson and Eva Nyman to drop out of the campaign but rejected the request.<sup>90</sup>

The Lutheran Church operates the Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem. Its former matron Margalit Israeli related:

The institute was founded in 1951. It taught about Judaism and the Jewish roots of Christianity and became an official part of the education of Lutheran priests for the Swedish State Church. Students visited for six months as part of obtaining a university degree. Over the years a gradual erosion toward a strong pro-Palestinian position took place. This came to a watershed when in 2001 a new executive director at the headquarters in Uppsala took over and started restructuring the institute's goals.

Today Judaism and the Shoah are still part of the courses. However, Israel is almost exclusively presented in the courses by the most extreme fringes of Israeli society, who are pro-Palestinian. The institute has a highly biased curriculum and spoonfeeds Palestinian propaganda to its students. People who come there from all over the world cannot make up their own mind as the institute does not put all the facts about Israel honestly on the table.<sup>91</sup>

### **Diakonia's Role Play**

In 2007, Diakonia launched a campaign focusing on the Middle East conflict. It presented Israel as the source of Palestinian suffering, ignoring violence emanating from the Palestinian Authority and society. Swedish European Parliamentarian Gunnar Hökmark exposed this in a newspaper article. He wrote that part of the

campaign was a role-playing game, probably for children of churches. Hökmark noted that some of them had to play Muslims and others Israelis, characterized as Jews by wearing a Star of David, and observed: “The placing of Stars of David on Jews, albeit only in role play, still passes all boundaries of decency.”

He added:

Pieces of bread are supposed to be handed out to the Jews, but not to the Palestinians. The Jews are supposed to be given a glass of water, but among the Palestinians only a pitcher of water should be placed on the floor, which they are not allowed to touch. By whom, one might ask. The Jews? At one stage the participants who play the roles of Jews are urged to look “angrily” at the participants who play the roles of Palestinians. It is as if Diakonia wants to foster anti-Semitism.

Hökmark also noted that the role play barely mentioned Palestinian terror attacks and not at all the genocidal aims of Hamas and Hizballah. He concluded: “Diakonia claims that in the campaign they take ‘the side of the human beings,’ a sneaky formulation that, whether Diakonia realizes it or not, connects to the anti-Semitic propaganda that claims Jews are not human beings.”<sup>92</sup>

This campaign represents a contemporary way of demonizing Israel. To illustrate how religious demonization of the Jews mutates through the centuries—reflecting the mood of the times—note that Martin Luther wrote: “What should we Christians do with this cursed and rejected race of the Jews? They live among us and we know that they lie, slander, and curse. We cannot support them if we do not want to share in their lies, curses, and slander. We must, full of prayer and respectful religiosity, exercise a merciful severity.”

Luther recommended: “In the first place the synagogue should be burned and what doesn’t burn must be covered with mud. This must be done in honor of God and Christianity so that God can see that we are Christians and we do not just have patience or approve that his Son and Christians will be publicly subjected to lies, curses, and slander.”

Luther went on to say that the Jews’ houses must be broken down and destroyed, after which they should be domiciled in stalls. He also asserted that their books should be confiscated and their rabbis forbidden to give lessons on punishment of death. He further suggested that Jews should not be allowed to move freely and should stay at home.<sup>93</sup>

## **Broderskap**

Another body involved in anti-Israeli propaganda is Broderskap (Brotherhood), the Christian association within the Swedish Social Democratic Party on whose board it is represented. One example of the way it distorts facts was a speech given by Broderskap president Peter Weiderud at a 2008 demonstration for the people of Gaza.

He called on Israel “to let the Palestinians have back the land that was occupied more than forty years ago.” It is likely that few of the demonstrators knew that the Palestinian territories are disputed areas. There was never a Palestinian state previously and if Israel is an occupier, then the territories have been occupied far longer because before that they were ruled by the Jordanian “occupier.” Before that they were under the control of the British and the Ottoman Turkish Empire. At the time Weiderud spoke there were no Israeli troops in Gaza, so even from that point of view it was false to call Israel an occupier.

Weiderud also said that “the violence affects the two sides in different ways. The Arab-Israeli conflict is not one between equal parties.” Implicit in these words is that, since Israel has an army, it should show more understanding for attacks by Palestinians. Extrapolating his double standards against Israel, the West should show understanding toward Islamist terrorists for the same reason.

Weiderud urged the Swedish government to act “through cooperation with the Palestinians both in the West Bank and Gaza, supporting Palestinian unity and possibilities for a new unity government; through renewal of all aid to the Palestinian people.”<sup>94</sup>

One should recall here that the dominant political force in the Palestinian territories is Hamas, a movement that in Article 7 of its charter lays the ideological groundwork for the murder of all Jews: “Hamas has been looking forward to implement Allah’s promise whatever time it might take. The prophet, prayer and peace be upon him, said: ‘The time will not come until Muslims will fight the Jews (and kill them); until the Jews hide behind rocks and trees, which will cry: O Muslim! There is a Jew hiding behind me, come on and kill him!’”<sup>95</sup>

### **A Pro-Israeli Employee Demoted**

Anti-Israeli bias in Swedish institutions sometimes manifests itself in incidents. A *Haaretz* story noted that Lennart Eriksson, a manager of the Swedish Migration Board, had been demoted in September 2007 because he had a private pro-Israeli website. In response to queries by Swedish papers, the Migration Board had confirmed that Eriksson had to leave his job because of the opinions he expressed on his site.

Eriksson, who is not Jewish, considered this political persecution as his site did not contain hateful ideas. The Migration Board had told Swedish media that Eriksson’s “transfer” was because of opinions expressed on his site. Eriksson responded that one of his former colleagues in the position from which he had been removed was a pro-Palestinian activist, against whom no measures were taken.<sup>96</sup>

Ilya Meyer, vice-chair of the Sweden-Israel Friendship Society, commented on the Eriksson case: “If someone from another country had suffered the treatment to which Eriksson has been subjected, the victim would be granted political asylum in Sweden on the grounds of political persecution.”<sup>97</sup>

## An Anti-Jewish Tradition

Bachner pointed out that Swedish anti-Semitism goes back to the Middle Ages and was not very different ideologically from the Christian anti-Jewish tradition that was prevalent at the time. He mentioned that, according to studies, until World War II the traditional religious and secular anti-Jewish prejudices remained an integral part of Swedish culture: “The negative perceptions of the Jews have also influenced the popular attitude as well as the restrictive policies of the government toward Jewish refugees who fled Nazi Germany in the ’30s.”<sup>98</sup>

Bachner added that, while the Holocaust led to a decline in anti-Semitism, it reemerged in extreme left-wing anti-Zionism in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Subsequently it also became part of the mainstream. During the 1982 Lebanon War, many ancient anti-Semitic motifs resurfaced.

Bachner also observed that despite Sweden being one of the most secular countries in Europe, the anti-Israeli mood during the 1982 war raised anti-Semitic motifs that were fostered by Christianity. One was that the vengeful spirit of the Old Testament characterized Israeli behavior. Moreover, there was a return of the myth of Jewish dominance of world finance, politics, and the media, as well as conspiracy theories. Also Holocaust inversion—claiming that Jews behave like Nazis—made its entry.<sup>99</sup>

Parts of local Muslim communities are another important source of anti-Semitism in Sweden. On 18 April 2002, “a group of pro-Palestinian protesters attacked a group of demonstrators against anti-Semitism and Islamophobia that had been organized by the Organization of Young Liberals (LUF). Several participants in the antiracist manifestation, some of whom were Holocaust survivors, were attacked and one could hear shouts of ‘Jewish pigs.’”<sup>100</sup>

Radio Islam, operated by the Moroccan-born Ahmed Rami, has been one of the most hateful anti-Semitic sources in Europe. Having been outlawed, it now broadcasts via the Internet.

## The Second Lebanon War

A European Jewish Congress (EJC) report notes that on 24 July 2006, during the Second Lebanon War, a large demonstration was held in Malmö that included members of the Left Party. Calls were heard such as: “*Allemlom Alrashhash: Teach them to use automatic weapons. Allemlom Qatl Al Yahud: Teach them to kill Jews. Shabon Wahed Lan Yamout: A united people that won’t die. Qattel, Qattel Tel Abib: Take the war, take the war to Tel Aviv.*”<sup>101</sup>

At a demonstration in Stockholm, arranged by the Green Party and the youth organization of the Social Democrats among others, “the leader of the Left Party, Lars Ohly, declared that he thought the war was a genocide. Also at the demonstration, Ehud Olmert and Israel were declared synonymous with Hitler and Nazi Germany, and the Star of David synonymous with the Swastika.

Among the chants heard at this march were ‘Dear, dear Nasrallah—bomb Tel Aviv.’”<sup>102</sup>

Dror Feiler, an extreme-Left Israeli living in Sweden, was also among the speakers. He claimed that “what is now happening to the Lebanese and Palestinians is comparable to the extermination of the Jews during the Second World War.” Yet another speaker was Helén Benouda of the Swedish Muslim Council, one of the main Muslim organizations in Sweden.<sup>103</sup>

At a demonstration in Malmö, a poster featured a Star of David shown as equivalent to a swastika. The case was investigated as to whether it was punishable under Swedish law on “harassment against a population group.” It was, however, dismissed as not being against the law.<sup>104</sup>

The EJC report also noted that no Swedish government members officially supported Israel’s campaign. On the other hand, “Foreign Minister Jan Eliasson, stated in a number of articles that he was afraid that the actions taken by Israel would lead to a radicalization of the counterpart [i.e., Hizballah].” This was yet another illustration of the distorted attitude prevalent among Swedish Social Democrats toward democracies and terrorism.

Although most anti-Israeli demonstrations during the war were by left-wing activists, neo-Nazis also demonstrated in Göteborg on 22 July. A service scheduled to be held in the Malmö synagogue during the war was relocated for security reasons. This is one of the rare occasions in which such a move was necessary in postwar Europe.<sup>105</sup>

## **Holocaust Issues**

In 1999, Social Democrat Göran Persson became the prime minister of Sweden. Showing his intention to improve relations with Israel, he visited it in one of his first trips abroad. Persson later took a major step by convening an international conference on Holocaust education, dubbed the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust, in January 2000.

This was unexpected even for Prof. Yehuda Bauer, former director of the International Institute for Holocaust Research at Yad Vashem, who had suggested this conference. He said that “Persson’s initiative was due to serious problems of neo-Nazism among youngsters and the influence of Holocaust deniers in Sweden. This endangered the values Sweden wished to represent, those of a cultured social democracy. At the same time, there are Swedish government ministers who do not agree with his attitude.”

Bauer added:

When I had suggested this meeting, I thought there was a one in a million chance of it happening, yet it did and it was successful. The Stockholm conference was important for the Jews, as they need allies in their battle against anti-Semitism. It was the first time in history that politicians, among

them many heads of state, met to discuss education. The subject of that unique event was the Holocaust.

Bauer summed up: “Although various national leaders tried to cover up their countries’ pasts, more significant, all these leaders signed the conference’s concluding document.”<sup>106</sup>

Avi Beker, then secretary-general of the World Jewish Congress, said Persson opted for this universal challenge because of Sweden’s dubious war past: “At the conference, Persson discussed Sweden’s role during the Second World War, which he apologized for, saying he hoped Sweden would take the initiative for Holocaust history to be taught worldwide. If one observes what Sweden teaches, it appears to be very close to what Jews would like to be taught.”<sup>107</sup>

A few years later, however, the prime minister’s determination had weakened. Mazel says:

In the following years Persson, however, strayed from the centrality of the Holocaust in various other directions. We had major discussions with Swedish diplomats to keep the 2004 conference on Preventing Genocide from becoming highly politicized, focused on contemporary issues, and anti-Israeli. Also Persson’s speech at that conference was rather ambivalent.<sup>108</sup>

There are many negative aspects of Sweden’s World War II history. While Nazi Germany was dominating Europe, Sweden collaborated with it. After the war the country became a haven for Nazi war criminals, none of whom was brought to trial.<sup>109</sup> Nor did Sweden investigate any Swedish perpetrators even though hundreds of Swedes were SS volunteers. Baltic war criminals found ready refuge in Sweden from 1944 onward, with the knowledge of the Swedish government. However, Swedish archives on these matters remain closed.<sup>110</sup> Efraim Zuroff elaborates on several of these issues in an essay in this volume.

### **The Changed Perception of Raoul Wallenberg**

Another war-related issue concerns the changed perception of Raoul Wallenberg into its current one as a Swedish national hero. Beker said:

Sweden itself underwent major soul-searching. We Jews have turned Raoul Wallenberg into a symbol. He is now considered a moral hero of the Second World War to whose memory almost the entire world pays honor. For a long time he did not receive the same acclaim in Sweden, which distanced itself somewhat from him, because his two uncles, Jacob and Marcus Wallenberg, had collaborated with the Nazis. Indeed, their family business, through its trading activities, provided major economic assistance to them.

Beker added: “The Wallenberg family became the symbol of the problematic

nature of Sweden's so-called neutrality during the Second World War. Raoul Wallenberg, however, who was not typical of the Swedish attitude in the Second World War, became the icon of a universalistic attitude."<sup>111</sup>

Two Dutch authors, Gerard Aalders and Cees Wiebes, have studied in great detail the many services Sweden and several of its leading industrialists provided to Nazi Germany. They summed up their view of the Wallenbergs: "while Raoul did everything he could to save as many Jews as possible from the gas chambers, his families were the receivers of debentures the Nazis had stolen from Jews they deported."<sup>112</sup>

When the Russian-Swedish working group investigating Raoul Wallenberg's fate presented its report in January 2001, Persson commented:

Of course, the main responsibility for Raoul Wallenberg's fate rests with the Soviet Government, which ordered and implemented Wallenberg's disappearance from Hungary. Nonetheless it is now clear that more energetic and purposeful action on the part of Sweden during the 1940s could have led to a more successful outcome for Raoul Wallenberg and his relatives. I should like today, on my own behalf and on behalf of the Swedish Government, to extend our deepest regrets to his relatives for these mistakes.<sup>113</sup>

### **The Commission on Jewish Assets**

As mentioned earlier, for many years Swedish foreign ministers have expressed severe criticism of Israel's policies and supported extremely discriminatory anti-Israeli resolutions of UN bodies. This behavior should be compared with Sweden's performance as described, for instance, in the conclusions of the Commission on Jewish Assets in Sweden at the Time of the Second World War: "One finds that Sweden's policy toward the belligerent parties for most of the war was based on power politics. Moral issues were excessively disregarded and actions were taken with the overriding purpose of keeping Sweden out of the war and maintaining essential supplies. Today of course, such an attitude can seem deplorable."<sup>114</sup>

The commission advised further study. One of the major issues concerned "The importance of Sweden's trade with Nazi Germany, as regards the ability of the latter to continue its persecution of Jews and others, until as late as 1945. This research field is made relevant not least by the latter-day debate on whether Sweden's trade with Germany prolonged the war and with it the sufferings of the Jewish people."<sup>115</sup>

The commission also deplored the fact that the moral questions involved in the business relations with Nazi Germany were never raised in parliamentary or governmental discussions.<sup>116</sup> If the Swedish Social Democratic governments' double standards of the last decades as expressed in anti-Israeli statements ever become subject to similar public inquiry, future findings may duplicate those of

the past in terms of the excessive disregarding of moral issues. In the Middle East conflict, Social Democrat governments have often sided with a murderous party.

Analyzing Swedish attitudes toward Israel brings many other matters to light. It also discloses a wide range of anti-Jewish behavior. The country's collaboration with the Nazis during World War II, subsequently becoming a haven for war criminals, and the lengthy neglect of anti-Semitism are all manifestations of a mindset that will have many negative consequences, and not only for Israel and Jews.

The interview with Mazel in this volume recounts many examples of Swedish discriminatory behavior toward Israel during his term as ambassador. In an essay, anti-Semitism expert Mikael Tossavainen details the development of anti-Semitism in Sweden over the past decades and outlines the ongoing denial of the problem in the new century. Gerald Steinberg discusses, among other things, the negative aspects of SIDA's role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Efraim Zuroff points out how postwar Social Democratic Sweden became a haven for Nazi war criminals.

## NORWAY

After the fall 2006 electoral defeat of the Social Democratic government in Sweden, Norway's leftist coalition now stands out among Western governments for its frequent anti-Israeli statements. Some of Europe's most anti-Israeli politicians, trade unionists, journalists, and church leaders can be found in Norway. On various occasions their criticisms reflect anti-Semitic sentiment.

One attempt to rationalize part of the Norwegian government's anti-Israelism is to attribute it to the country's disappointment at the failure of the Oslo peace process. Its leaders had imagined their small country would go into history as the one where an intractable problem had found the beginning of its solution.

Levin said they saw the Oslo accords as "our Norwegian agreement." She added:

Norway would like to be viewed favorably and help make peace in the Middle East. They thought Oslo would enable them to play a major role and to bask in its glory. They like conflicts which are presented in black and white. The Balkan wars were too complicated. It was hard to decide whom to support and whom to oppose. In Norway, the Middle East conflict is presented very simply: there is an occupier and there is a victim.<sup>117</sup>

After World War II, Norwegian socialists had often been pro-Israeli. The radical erosion of this position had begun, however, many years before the failure of the Oslo agreements. Today support for Israel is primarily found in the Progress Party and various—though far from all—Christian circles.

## The Media

Norwegian media have played a major role in the demonization of Israel. As Levin noted:

The Norwegian public associates the word “occupation” with Germany’s occupation of Norway. The semantics are identical, but the content differs. Norwegians have no idea why Israel rules over the Palestinians; for them, one occupation equals another.

Consequently, many Norwegians have accepted the Palestinian version of the conflict as illustrated by the media. Whatever happens is interpreted within this framework. Norwegians are also naïve about Israel’s difficult neighbors, since for them a neighboring country means Sweden.<sup>118</sup>

For a very superficial impression of how to rapidly create a “do it yourself” negative image of a country, see, for instance, the small English website of the Norwegian daily *Aftenposten*, which every day has a few news articles in English. By selecting only items that give an unfavorable picture of Norway and writing these down, within a few weeks one will have a negative view of the country, if that remains one’s only source of information. Yet the picture thus obtained is only a minor distortion compared to the longstanding, biased stream of hatred against Israel in many Norwegian media.

As in many other Western countries, the Norwegian media are dominated by left-of-center journalists. A 2005 poll by the Norsk Respons firm found that 67 percent of Norwegian journalists voted for the Labor Party, the Socialist Left Party, or the far-Left Red Election Alliance (RV). Only 3 percent of the journalists voted for the rightist Progress Party, which represents about 20 percent of the voters in general opinion polls.<sup>119</sup>

One case of extreme anti-Israeli attitudes of the Norwegian Broadcasting Authority (NRK) is analyzed in this book by Odd Sverre Hove. He tells how, in 2000 after the Second Intifada broke out, its most important news program *Dagsrevyen* over two months “demonstrated a strong and systematic trend of biased news reporting.”

## Calls for Boycotts

Anti-Israeli views sometimes find expression in calls for boycotts. The current Norwegian finance minister and leader of the Socialist Left Party, Kristin Halvorsen, is a pioneer at the government level in attempts at exclusion of Israel. In January 2006, she supported a consumer boycott of the Jewish state.

*Aftenposten* reported that thereupon the U.S. secretary of state threatened Norway with “serious political consequences.” The paper said this was conveyed to the Norwegian embassy in Washington. Foreign Minister Støre then wrote

to the Israeli government that Halvorsen's position did not represent his own government's stance.<sup>120</sup>

In 2002, another current Norwegian cabinet minister, Åslaug Haga, said concerning the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that "if we end up with ongoing acts of war we must evaluate all methods including economic boycott."<sup>121</sup> She became the leader of the Center Party in 2003. In 2004, she hinted at the possibility of an arms embargo against Israel under certain circumstances. In 2006, however, she came out against Halvorsen's call for a boycott.

### **More Boycott Calls**

Norway also has a prominent place in other attempts at discriminatory exclusion of Israel. In May 2002, Gerd-Liv Valla, leader of the prominent Norwegian Labor Union, was among the first important trade-union figures in the Western world to call for a boycott of Israel.<sup>122</sup> At the end of 2005, the region of Sør Trøndelag, which includes Norway's third largest city Trondheim, decided in favor of a boycott of Israel. However, the Norwegian government informed them that this decision was illegal.<sup>123</sup>

Shimon Samuels, the Simon Wiesenthal Center's director for international relations, described in a letter to Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg the proposed boycott of Israeli products by the region as:

- an act of anti-Semitism in the spirit of Hitler's "Kaufem nicht bei Juden" [Don't buy from Jews] campaign of the 1930s
- a continuation of Norway's collaborationist history under its own Nazi leader, Vidkun Quisling
- in violation of the freedom of commerce provisions of the European Union and the World Trade Organization
- an embarrassment to the Norwegian foreign policy as it places Oslo in the camp of the rejectionists of the Middle East peace process and of the forces of terrorism.<sup>124</sup>

As mentioned earlier, Norwegian organizations and individuals have been in the forefront of anti-Israeli boycott attempts for some time. Usually, as often the case with such calls in other countries as well, these have not led to concrete actions. Their initiators often know that the boycotts will not succeed but see them as an opportunity to damage Israel's image.

These boycott attempts continue. When, after thousands of rocket attacks on Israel from Gaza, Israel increased its defensive actions at the beginning of 2008, the Labor Party's youth organization AUF demonstrated outside the Israeli embassy in Oslo. AUF leader Martin Henriksen placed roses on the stage in memory of the Palestinians who had died. Many of them were terrorists. He repeated the AUF's 2006 demand to boycott Israel.<sup>125</sup>

## Academic Boycott

From an international perspective Norway has not played a significant role in the various academic boycott attempts against Israel and Israeli academics. There are persistent rumors, however, that in one part of Oslo University a list has been circulated asking academics to sign that they will not collaborate with Israeli academics. No concrete proof of this has been found. That would only occur if someone who is asked to sign photocopies the list and makes it publicly available. In another anti-Israeli action, Tromsø University granted an honorary doctorate to the Israeli nuclear spy Mordechai Vanunu.<sup>126</sup>

Yael Beck, a former student at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim, related that all students there have to belong to a student organization, Studentsamskipaden i Trondheim (SIT), which takes care of their welfare. In April 2005, SIT decided on a boycott of Israel. Students at the university are obliged to pay a semester fee so as to be allowed to take exams, which includes an obligatory payment to SIT. It was only in February 2006 that SIT decided to cancel the boycott because it did not fit the ethical guidelines, which instructed it to allow students to make their own decisions.<sup>127</sup>

One early boycott case in Norwegian academia, however, made international headlines. In the 7 June 2002 issue of *Science*, the world's leading general-interest magazine in the scientific field, its editor Donald Kennedy criticized an academic scholar without mentioning a name. For political reasons this scholar had refused to supply cell lines and other genetic materials from her laboratory to Israeli scholars who wished to pursue this line of research. Kennedy said that in the future he would take an active stand against such scholars if they submitted articles to his journal.

It later became known that the scientist concerned was Dr. Ingrid Harbitz of Oslo University. She had refused a request for a clone by a scholar from Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem. Eitan Galun, head of the Hadassah laboratory in question, said "there was 'something racist and prejudicial in the fact that the Norwegian institute simply applied a blanket standard.'"<sup>128</sup>

Later Harbitz changed her mind and made the clone available to the Israeli scientist. The rector of Oslo University, who at the request of an Israeli scholar had been contacted by another Norwegian academic, replied that there was no reason to boycott Israeli scientists.<sup>129</sup>

## NGOs

On several occasions NGO Monitor has analyzed Norwegian aid to the Palestinians. It concluded that

while some of Norway's aid to NGOs is channeled to development and

humanitarian assistance, significant funding goes to NGOs engaged in political campaigning and advocacy against Israel, and in support of extreme Palestinian demands. This NGO activity often contradicts or works against the goals of the Norwegian government to “promot[e] democracy, human rights and good governance” and to help “lay the foundation for resuming peace negotiations.”<sup>130</sup>

One major Norwegian NGO is Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA), which receives major funding from the Norwegian government. Although it does support humanitarian projects among the Palestinians, it also, according to NGO Monitor, finances Palestinian NGOs that employ politicized rhetoric to attack Israel and are active in the divestment and boycott movement against Israel. For example, the “Stop the Wall Campaign” in Norway lists NPA as one of its most important affiliates in the country. NPA helped promote the campaign’s Autumn 2004 conference entitled “The Apartheid Wall and the Future for a Palestinian State.”

NPA also funds the Palestinian Association for Cultural Exchange (PACE). This body is a signatory to a petition calling for the academic boycott of Israel. Yet another NGO supported by NPA is the Maan Development Center, which has also signed a petition calling for the academic boycott of Israel.<sup>131</sup>

More detailed data on Norwegian NGOs’ indirect support for hate campaigns against Israel can be found on the NGO Monitor website.<sup>132</sup>

The Norwegian government also blatantly interferes in the internal politics of Israel, another democracy. Together with EU countries and Canada, it funds a project run by Peace Now that monitors the expansion of settlements in Judea and Samaria. Peace Now reports on construction at settlements, and this information is then used to pressure the Israeli government to dismantle outposts and stop further construction work.

The Norwegian Foreign Office has supported this project financially since 2001. According to their own figures, they gave Peace Now approximately 6.25 million Norwegian kroners (over \$1 million) from 2001 to 2007.<sup>133</sup>

## **From 1983 to the Second Lebanon War**

Israeli former cabinet minister Michael Melchior, who is Danish-born, said:

In 1983 I helped organize an international hearing in Oslo against anti-Semitism, which dealt with the anti-Semitic outburst at the time of the Israeli-Lebanese war. The main anti-Semitic expressions which we find now were already in use then. It was the first time European anti-Semitism had targeted the Israeli national identity.

One could take the speeches from that meeting, without changing a word, and print these anew. All what was is unfortunately still valid. What always happens in such collective hatred is that, if one does not react appropriately,

the anti-Semites raise the volume. In each wave of anti-Semitic outbursts, both the violence and verbal attacks become stronger.

Melchior added that at that meeting

Professor Leo Eitinger, an Auschwitz survivor, spoke. A Norwegian psychiatrist, he had been among the first to investigate the Holocaust syndrome. He analyzed what the Norwegian newspapers wrote about the 1982 Lebanese war and interpreted it as an effort to cover up the guilt of Europe. Many Europeans had collaborated with the Nazis or stood passively by when the Jews were being murdered. Now Europeans tried to claim that the Jews were doing something somewhat similar. This implied that apparently what had happened to the Jews was deserved or not so terrible.<sup>134</sup>

In his books Eitinger had shown great early insight into how anti-Semitism and anti-Israelism overlap. Much of what he said can be applied to substantial parts of today's Norwegian elites. A few quotations will illustrate this.

One can read both in the Eastern and the Western press that nobody wants to be an anti-Semite. Yes, even the PLO claim that they have nothing against Jews, only against Zionists. Thus, one finds oneself in the paradoxical situation that nobody wishes to be an anti-Semite, and at the same time not only the Jewish State, but also Jewish institutions outside of Israel's borders are subjected to attacks and Jews become victims of bomb attacks.<sup>135</sup>

It is... absolutely illogical and devoid of meaning to claim that one is not discriminating against the Jews, in other words anti-Semitic, and at the same time not allow them to regard themselves as a people, and oppose Israel's right to decide its own immigration policy.<sup>136</sup>

Eitinger continued that this is "a Jew-hating, anti-Semitic attitude and acts to support the destruction of the Jewish state. Extensive documentation exists to prove that the word 'Jew' has simply been exchanged with 'Zionist' in numerous official, anti-Semitic speeches and publications."<sup>137</sup>

An anecdote illustrates how similar anti-Semitism and anti-Israelism are. The third stage of anti-Semitism, elimination of the Jewish state, has also permeated some parts of Norwegian society. Levin related, "A cousin of mine went to a dentist and casually said, 'I haven't been here for a long time.' The dentist replied, 'A lot of things have happened.' They then discussed the Middle East and Israel. The dentist said that if Israel did not exist, there would be no problem."<sup>138</sup> One only has to replace the word Israel with "Jews" to identify this person's Quisling-like mentality.

### **Forbidding Ritual Slaughter, Keen on Hunting**

One key element of anti-Semitism in Norway is the longstanding prohibition of Jewish ritual slaughter. It was introduced there a few years even before that was the case in Germany with Hitler's accession to power. It is presented as concern for animal welfare but is yet another example of masking more profound discriminatory attitudes. Hunting, where there is no control at all on how painfully an animal dies, is not only permitted but even popular in the circles of the current Socialist-led government. The number of animals killed by hunters in Norway is also far larger than the animals required for kosher meat in the country.

Hunting received some attention because of parliamentary questions in spring 2008, as two ministers had taken time off to get hunting licenses at the height of a terrorist crisis in January. Justice Minister Knut Storberget and Defense Minister Anne-Grete Strøm-Erichsen were criticized because they had passed the test for such a license at the same time their colleague Foreign Minister Støre was hiding in the cellar of a Kabul hotel after the abovementioned terrorist attack there that had killed one person of his entourage and wounded another.

"It also became known that instruction tied to the studies needed for hunting licenses had earlier taken place in the office of the prime minister himself, Jens Stoltenberg, with several ministers taking part."<sup>139</sup>

Norway, Japan and, to a much lesser extent, Iceland are the only countries in the world that allow whaling. The number of these mammals cruelly killed annually by the Norwegian fleet is tens of times that of the few cows necessary to provide the annual kosher-meat requirements for all the Jews of Norway who want it. This is a prime example of the combination of Norway's anti-Semitism and hypocrisy.

### **The Second Lebanon War**

Anti-Semitic reactions in Norway during the Second Lebanon War were among the worst in Europe. The European Jewish Congress report summarized this:

For Anne Sender, President of Det Mosaiske Trossamfund, the Jewish community's representative organization, the shooting [at Oslo's synagogue on 17 September]—was the culmination of a series of incidents which created a considerable atmosphere of intimidation and fear for the country's Jews. Coinciding with the outbreak of hostilities in the Middle East, an outbreak of desecrations, verbal attacks and insults as well as physical attacks and threats forced the community to take additional security measures and to heavily reinforce the police presence around Jewish buildings.<sup>140</sup>

After Gaarder published his anti-Semitic article in *Aftenposten*, Shimon Samuels wrote an open letter to Norway to protest. On 14 August he advised the newspaper's editor that he had received 700 replies of which 446 decried

Gaarder's positions. He added: "Of the negative third, 42 are almost word for word copies pointing to a form-letter campaign of manipulation. Others are unrepeatable racist obscenity."<sup>141</sup>

Hili Hansen, a student at Hebrew University, has in a seminar paper investigated the talkbacks to eleven articles concerning Israel in 2006 and 2007. These articles were published in *Aftenposten* and the left-of-center daily tabloid *Dagbladet*. They included the article by Gaarder. The main finding was that the debate was extremely polarized.

Hansen analyzed six hundred negative talkbacks. She observed that the worst talkbacks might have been deleted by the moderator. Yet several of those that did appear contained clearly anti-Semitic content. Fifteen percent of these talkbacks compared Israel to a terror state or said it committed terrorism; 12.5 percent said it killed or attacked innocent civilians; 12.5 percent said it was driven by religion or the belief that Jews are the "chosen people." Ten percent said Israel violates international law. Among the others, 8.5 percent said Israel is itself to blame for terrorism and the hatred against it.<sup>142</sup>

### Norway and the Cartoon Riots

Although the cartoon riots focused mainly on Denmark, Norway was also involved. On 10 January 2006, the small Norwegian Christian weekly *Magazinet* reprinted the cartoons. It soon apologized. In February, however, together with the Danish, Swedish, and Chilean embassies that were in the same building, the Norwegian embassy in Damascus was also burned down.

Although much international attention was given to the Danish government's reaction to the cartoon riots, the Norwegian government's position was hardly mentioned. The website Dhimmi Watch notes the content of an email that Foreign Minister Støre sent out to Norwegian embassies. In it he said he fully understood that the cartoons in *Magazinet* were seen as offensive by Muslims worldwide. "Islam is a spiritual reference point for a large part of the world. Your faith has the right to be respected by us."

Another quote from that email merits particular attention: "Let it be clear that the Norwegian government condemns every expression or act which expresses contempt for people on the basis of their religion or ethnic origin."<sup>143</sup> Whoever reads this can only wonder why Norway is a prime source of extreme anti-Semitic cartoons in Europe and at the same time is not in the forefront of the battle against the major current of racism and anti-Semitism coming from the Muslim world. This hypocritical and humanitarian-racist attitude of part of its elites typifies the country's mask behind which one must look.

As if to demonstrate even more its attitude regarding respect for other nations, the Norwegian parliament unanimously agreed in February 2008 to decriminalize the burning of other countries' flags in Norway. Before that only burning the Norwegian flag was legal. *Aftenposten* quoted the well-known

political scientist Prof. Frank Aarebrot saying “he could understand how the parliament found it difficult to reconcile a law against flag-burning with freedom of expression.”<sup>144</sup>

American columnist Dennis Prager wrote about the rioting Muslims during the cartoon riots: “But like the earlier Nazis, our generation’s fascists hate anything good, not merely Jews and Americans. And now the Damascus embassy of Norway, a leading anti-Israel peace at any price country, has been torched.”<sup>145</sup>

After the Muhammad cartoons were reprinted in Denmark in February 2008, a children’s program on Hamas TV showed a rabbit named Assud calling on the audience to kill Danes and specifically one of the Danish cartoonists who had drawn the cartoons. Deputy Minister Johansen said that “this is shocking and a form of brainwashing of children which is completely unacceptable.”<sup>146</sup> One rarely, if ever, hears such statements from his Socialist Left Party about the frequent similar or worse brainwashing of Palestinian children with murderous hatred against Israel.

Anti-Semitic cartoons have been published regularly over the past decades in the major Norwegian media. One of the main cartoonists is Finn Graff, who published a caricature depicting Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert as a sadistic Nazi camp commander. In March 2007, Graff was made a knight in the prestigious Royal Norwegian Order of St. Olav by the Norwegian king Harald V for his contribution as an artist.<sup>147</sup> The Council of the Order, in its evaluation, emphasized that Graff’s drawings engaged readers and art audiences both domestically and internationally. It also declared that his drawings were an inspiration for all who draw and illustrate.

Around the time he received the prize, Graff said his drawing of Olmert had come out “totally wrong.” Yet he said he did not want to appear as someone who regretted it.<sup>148</sup> It is obvious, though, that what came out of Graff’s hands reflected what was in his head.

In March 2008, Julius Paltiel, one of the few Norwegian Auschwitz survivors, died and was buried in Trondheim. King Harald V attended the funeral. The public role of the king in Norway is symbolic and this was a symbolic act. The juxtaposition is also symbolic: honoring a dead Jew as well as a living inciter to the hatred of Jews, one of the leading designers of anti-Semitic cartoons in Europe.<sup>149</sup>

During the cartoon riots *Magazinet*—since merged with *Dagen*—wrote that a Norwegian cartoonist had received death threats for his drawings of Muslim religious leaders. The article also quoted Finn Graff saying that, because of threats of violence against cartoonists or of having his throat cut, he had no intention of drawing Muhammad. He added that this was not only out of fear but also out of respect for the religious beliefs of Muslims.<sup>150</sup>

In February 2008, three people were arrested in Denmark and accused of plotting to kill the Danish cartoonist Kurt Westergaard, who had drawn a picture of Muhammad wearing a bomb-shaped turban. In response, eleven Danish dailies

reprinted the cartoon. Norwegian papers decided not to do so. On that occasion *Aftenposten* editor in chief Hans Erik Matre said, “We have always been cautious about our use of text, pictures and photos.”<sup>151</sup> The fact that his paper had published the extremely anti-Semitic article by Gaarder indicates yet another facet of the Norwegian media’s double standards toward Israel.

### **Restitution of Jewish Property**

Norway’s deep anti-Semitic past and widespread anti-Israeli present point to the need to reinvestigate the Norwegian wartime myth. It is also important to analyze how the Norwegian democratic authorities behaved toward the Jews after the country’s liberation.

For many years Norway has tried to project an image of its wartime role as a small courageous nation with few Nazi collaborators and one that, after its independence was restored, became a beacon of morality and humanism. This false picture was further punctured when information on the major failures of the postwar restitution process in Norway was revealed by the journalist Bjørn Westlie, who wrote an article on the topic in 1995 on the occasion of fifty years since the end of World War II.

Westlie noted that the German occupation of Norway during 1940-1945 is the subject most studied by Norwegian historians, hundreds of books having been published on it. Yet the financial aspects of the persecution of Norway’s Jews had been largely ignored. He concluded: “It represents one of the most dramatic and brutal episodes in Norwegian history.”<sup>152</sup> Before the Jews were sent to their deaths, all their possessions were confiscated by the Norwegian police and government officials.

After the war, Norway’s democratic government established a reparations office for confiscated properties. Westlie concluded that the Norwegian authorities had done very little to help the Jews recover their property after the war, despite the fact that significant amounts of money were found in bank accounts. Restitution was paid, though how much is not known. For example, the wartime Liquidation Board for Confiscated Jewish Assets, which dealt with stolen Jewish properties, used 32 percent of their value for its own administration. These sums were deducted from the restitution payments to the Jews! Westlie wrote that many applicants retrieved only small parts of their possessions—one particular family, to his knowledge, received less than 1 percent.<sup>153</sup>

The reparations office also transferred some private Jewish property to the War Indemnity Fund, a state-run welfare scheme. Only Norwegian citizens could apply for it. Of the thousand surviving Norwegian Jews, several hundred were not citizens and thus not eligible for any indemnity. During the war the Norwegian government had promised the World Jewish Congress (WJC) that it would take measures to help the Norwegian Jews, but it did not do so.

Westlie added:

Although [during the war] the Jews in Norway were treated differently in every respect from all other Norwegian groups, this was not taken into consideration during the post-war settlement.... A directorate was established to help Norwegian seamen as a group with particular problems after the war. The inhabitants of the northern region of Finnmark, too, were viewed and treated as a special group after their homes and workplaces had been burned and plundered by the Germans. Special measures for the Jews, on the other hand, were not taken into consideration. This was a historic injustice.<sup>154</sup>

### **A New Round of Restitution**

In the 1990s, largely thanks to the efforts of the WJC, the major shortcomings in restituting Jewish property after the war by many European countries—both democratic and communist—came to international attention.

Norway was the first country where the postwar restitution failures were investigated in detail. The government's proposal for restitution was ultimately supported by the entire parliament and considered generous. Thereafter the country has been highly praised, since it was the first European government to offer terms in the new round of restitution. This favorable impression was largely because the decision to make these payments was the item that generated the most international interest. Yet, given that payments to a rather small number of survivors were involved, the costs to Norway of this belated justice were relatively minor, while preventing major damage to its image abroad.

A look, however, at the process that preceded this decision gives a very different perspective. After Westlie's article was published, the Norwegian justice minister promised to establish a commission of inquiry. Not long afterward the Jewish community received a thesis written by a non-Jewish student, Bjarte Bruland, on the issue of restitution. Berit Reisel, a psychologist and deputy chairperson of the Jewish community in Oslo, had become interested in this matter. She then asked Westlie and Bruland to form a team with her to follow up on the subject.<sup>155</sup>

### **Government Obstruction**

Two years later, after the settlement had been announced, Reisel gave an interview to the Dutch Jewish weekly *NIW*. She said that by fall 1995, she and her colleagues had realized that no commission of inquiry had been established at the ministry. The team now started to investigate the matter and discovered that there had indeed been problems with the postwar restitution. They informed the Justice Ministry about their findings.

In January 1996, the WJC had released information on the Norwegian

government's shortcomings in postwar restitution. The spokesperson of the Justice Ministry asked Reisel, before they jointly appeared on a radio program, to lie and say that her team and the Justice Ministry had already been collaborating for a year. She promised that this would mark the beginning of good collaboration. Reisel agreed to her request.<sup>156</sup>

When, two days later, Reisel met a top official at the Justice Ministry, he said the Jews had received all they were entitled to after the war. He added that she could not be a member of the commission as she was prejudiced and unreliable. He told her the same regarding Bruland.

Reisel told the journalist from the Dutch paper that, at a further meeting at the Justice Ministry chaired by this top official,

there were a professor of history, a professor of law, two accountants and a representative of the National Archive. They were all very aggressive against the Jews and said the issue of the restitution had been a simple administrative matter that one should not judge ethically or morally. A representative of the Foreign Ministry was the only one who did not agree with that and a quarrel ensued.<sup>157</sup>

A few weeks later a commission was established and the Jewish communities of Oslo and Trondheim were each entitled to name a member. They chose Reisel and Bruland. Reisel recounts that in the first meeting, the chairman Oluf Skarpnes said he could not find in the law that the Jews had to give up their property before they were murdered. Regarding the Holocaust, he also said the Jews to whom this had happened must have done something terrible. Being a lawyer he considered that "one could not kill people and take their property unless they had done something wrong."<sup>158</sup>

Bruland observed, "I had the feeling Skarpnes was mandated by the bureaucrats of the ministry to silence this problem. I cannot prove it and he certainly never told me about it; yet it seemed clear to me. Skarpnes had no understanding of Jews and couldn't imagine what it meant to be a Jew after the war."<sup>159</sup>

### **Bias in the National Archive**

When the members of the Skarpnes Commission were to be appointed, the representatives of the Jewish communities opposed the naming of an official of the National Archive who showed a preconceived opinion in meetings so that he could not be considered neutral.<sup>160</sup> Instead his wife was appointed. When this was discovered she withdrew and thereupon her best friend was appointed.

In her newspaper interview, Reisel said that in a meeting where many commission members were present, the latter had said: "We will help the Justice Department with this issue and see to it that the Jews will not receive a penny. The miserly Jews must keep their trap shut."

During the summer vacation of 1996, Reisel found that Skarpnes had concluded a contract with the National Archive without the knowledge of the commission members. The contract stated that the two women against whom the Jewish representatives had objected would be the researchers. This caused the atmosphere in the commission to become very unpleasant. It was clear that the authorities were continuing to obstruct the process.

Skarpnes told Reisel that if she did not sign the text of the report he supported, it would cost her dearly as far as her life and health was concerned. A few days later she was physically attacked. Her impression is that the two events were linked. Her phone was also tapped. On a number of occasions when she picked up the phone to make a call, she heard playbacks of an earlier conversation of hers.<sup>161</sup>

Ultimately the two representatives of the Jewish community decided to write a minority report. This was unprecedented in Norway for members of an official commission. When this became known, the media devoted major attention to it. This led to a government decision that Reisel and Bruland's minority report should serve as the basis for the evaluations in the restitution process. The Norwegian parliament accepted this proposal.

## **An Unrepentant Nazi**

Reisel described to American journalist Richard Z. Chesnoff her 1994 visit to Rolf Svindal. He had, during the war, been the head of Oslo's Liquidation Board for Confiscated Jewish Assets, established by the Quisling government to loot Jewish property. Reisel needed books and files still in his possession. Svindal, then ninety-six years old, introduced himself by saying, "My name is Rolf Svindal and I am a Nazi." He unrepentantly told Reisel that his large apartment contained furniture and paintings taken from Jews. That somebody was willing to admit this in a conversation further illustrates the failure of restitution in Norway.

There was only one matter Svindal was sorry about. As Reisel reported, "He was angry that, after the war, the Norwegian authorities had mixed up the property files for the Jews and non-Jews. That's what bothered him the most. He was a very good clerk, and he had done everything right with a system down to the last centimeter. And then someone had made a mess of his beautiful orderly system. It was awful to hear."<sup>162</sup>

In an interview in this volume, Bruland tells the story of the confiscation of Jewish property during the war and the subsequent discrimination against the Jews after it had ended. He also notes the government's adoption of the Skarpnes Commission minority position and how the restitution money decided upon was allocated.

### **Choosing Norway as a Target**

The WJC played a substantial role in the Norwegian restitution battle. From time to time the WJC published information on the issue internationally, sometimes to the regret of the Norwegian Jewish community.<sup>163</sup>

The then WJC secretary-general Israel Singer explained in an interview why his organization targeted Norway first among West European countries:

In 1996 we organized a conference on all restitution subjects. To fix our restitution roadmap, we looked at the documents of the 1942 Wannsee Conference in which the Germans had made detailed plans for murdering eleven million Jews. They managed to kill six million. There were so many perpetrators and collaborators in so many different countries, we couldn't tackle them all at once.

In that year we chose Norway as our first target among the occupied countries. When we started complaining about the Norwegian government's behavior, Michael Melchior, the country's chief rabbi, told us more about what had happened during the rule of the Quisling government and after the war.

Singer observed that the WJC wanted

to start with a nation where we were reasonably sure we would win. We thus chose Norway not for moral or justice reasons, but strategic ones. It was a guilty country with a small number of Jews.

As far as money was concerned, the problem there was easily manageable. Norway is rich and has abundant oil reserves. Whatever payment the Norwegians were to make to the Jewish community or to individuals would not affect their well-being. Paying out some money to Holocaust survivors would not mean their children would have to make any sacrifices.<sup>164</sup>

### **Quisling's Norway**

Beker has pointed out that in Norway also, renewed attention to wartime history—which accompanied the new restitution process—has damaged the national resistance myths. He said:

In Norway's wartime history there is the problematic, important and symbolic figure of Vidkun Quisling, whose name will forever retain an unwanted association with that country. The Norwegians want to distance themselves from their wartime government, which they try to present as something which is not truly part of their past.

After the war Quisling was executed, yet many Norwegians had similar ideas, including intellectuals who openly preached anti-Semitism. Quisling

was also supported by very senior Norwegian officials. A Norwegian Supreme Court judge headed the Liquidation Board of Confiscated Jewish Assets. The Norwegian wartime authorities played an important role in the deportations. Others were silent and benefited from Jewish properties.

Beker added: “Though Quisling’s Norway was very different from Vichy France, the two fall within similar categories. I assume that after the war—both in Norway and France—there were heavy guilt feelings among some people. Does it go too far to say that, as a compensatory act, both countries have supplied important parts of Israel’s nuclear reactor?”<sup>165</sup>

In 2006, a new Center for Studies of Holocaust and Religious Minorities was created. It is located in Villa Grande, Quisling’s former home in Oslo. Its director Odd-Bjørn Fure mentioned the center’s research on the eagerness of the Norwegian National Socialist regime to deport Jews to Germany.

Fure stated that, for the first time, his center had found that it was “exclusively Norwegian Nazis that rounded up Jews, while the German SS went after Norwegian students, police and military officers.” He concluded that countries such as Vichy France, Bulgaria, and fascist Italy “did not go as far in deportation as Nazi Norway.”<sup>166</sup>

Norway’s anti-Israelism and anti-Semitism are analyzed in a more detailed article in this volume by this author. Erez Uriely surveys anti-Semitic cartoons in Norwegian mainstream papers. Odd Sverre Hove discusses Norwegian state television’s bias during the Second Intifada. In an interview, Bjarte Bruland recounts the Norwegian restitution process during the previous decade.

## DENMARK

Denmark has been ruled since 2001 by a right-of-center government headed by Anders Fogh Rasmussen. It has not been in the forefront of the European attacks on Israel.

Some Danish organizations, however, have been among the pioneers of anti-Israeli actions. In 2002, the General Workers Union in Denmark (SiD) was among the first European bodies to call for a boycott of Israeli goods. The union canceled a preliminary order for products from the Israeli company Radix.<sup>167</sup>

In October 2001, Israeli tourism minister Rehavam Ze’evi was assassinated by Palestinian terrorists. Then-Danish foreign minister Mogens Lykketoft, who later would become leader of the Social Democrats, said on television that there was no difference between this assassination and Israel’s targeted killing of terrorists.<sup>168</sup>

Incitement against Danish Jews has also come from mainstream politicians. In May 2004,

The chairman of the Danish Social Democrats in the European Parliament,

Torben Lund, wrote an article in *Politiken* (3 May). Proposing a complete economic boycott of Israel, he stressed the responsibility of the Jews for the policies of the Israeli government and argued that if criticism of murder was anti-Semitism, “then call me an anti-Semite.” Chief Rabbi Emeritus Bent Melchior responded with an article in *Politiken* (8 May), entitled “Congratulations Lund, You Are an Antisemite.”<sup>169</sup>

### **Denmark Funding Terror Glorification**

In April 2008, Palestinian Media Watch (PMW) reported that Ma’an News, “a Palestinian news agency [that] receives financial support from the governments of The Netherlands and Denmark glorifies terrorists, releases news stories using hate language and is a highly politicized, hate-promoting news organization.”

PMW noted that Ma’an had glorified several Palestinian suicide bombers and other murderers,

elevating them to the status of “*Shahids*” or “*Martyrs for Allah*.” According to the accepted Palestinian interpretation of Islam, there is no higher status that a Muslim can achieve today than that of *Shahid*. In defining terrorist murderers as “*Shahids*,” Ma’an is by definition sending its readers a straightforward message of honor for the killers, and approval for the many murders. Negative or dishonorable actions could not elevate an individual to *Shahid* status.

PMW then presented a number of examples where the agency did not use the promurder language in its English news version. Thus, in Arabic it said “two of the operatives died as *Shahids*” while in English it said “Two Palestinians killed by gunfire.” On another occasion Ma’an translated two suicide bombers as *Shahada-Seekers* in its Arabic version while in English they were neutrally called “bombers.”<sup>170</sup>

### **Media and Muslims**

The Danish daily *Politiken* has been considered anti-Israeli for many years now. At the end of 2002, a full-page ad signed by many hundreds of Jews and non-Jews criticized the paper’s coverage of the Middle East conflict. It said, among other things:

*Politiken* has, for a long period, been a partner to creating a more intense atmosphere and attitude regarding Israel and Jews. This has been seen in editorials and readers’ letters. By comparing the Israeli presence in the Palestinian areas to the Holocaust and Nazi crimes during the war, they

demonize Israel. They show the Palestinians as the only symbols of suffering. Readers' letters printed in the newspaper have claimed that "threats against Danish Jews collectively are understandable since not all Jews expressed disagreement with Israeli policy."

The ad said that by allowing such expressions the paper was "giving Jew-haters free space."<sup>171</sup>

In September 2006, the daily *Berlingske Tidende* (*BT*) observed that

Jews in Denmark are exposed to hatred. They cannot travel freely and suffer death threats and harassment on the streets. A young Jew, who has since moved to Israel, interviewed in the *BT* article, said that when he walked on the street (in an immigrant area), wearing his skullcap, he was threatened with death and harassed daily, not only by immigrant youth but by families with babies and even elderly women. We will kill you, they said. This is our area, you Jewish pig. In another *BT* article, a police officer on duty in Aarhus said it was an unnecessary provocation to wear a skullcap in certain (immigrant) neighborhoods of the city.<sup>172</sup>

Muslims, who account for less than 5 percent of the Danish population, are involved in many of the incidents of physical aggression, vandalism, and threats against Jews.<sup>173</sup>

### **An Attack of Anti-Danish Hatred**

In 2005, Denmark briefly experienced a widespread attack of hatred from the Arab and Muslim world. It shows how experiences similar to the ones regularly undergone by Israel and Jews befall others as well in the long run.<sup>174</sup> As mentioned earlier, in September that year the daily *Jyllands-Posten* published twelve cartoons showing the Prophet Muhammad. It did so in reaction to the fact that a Danish children's author could not find anybody to illustrate his biography of Muhammad.<sup>175</sup>

The Arab ambassadors in Copenhagen protested the cartoons. A debate began in Denmark, but it faded rapidly and the matter seemed closed. The cartoon conflict was rekindled, however, by several Danish imams who traveled to Arab countries to agitate. These visits led to calls from various Muslim sources to boycott Denmark.<sup>176</sup>

On 26 January 2006, Saudi Arabia recalled its ambassador from Denmark and a widespread boycott of Danish products began. On 30 January, *Jyllands-Posten* declared that, while the cartoons had insulted many Muslims, they were not against Danish law. Early in February, papers in a number of European countries published some of the cartoons to underline their support for freedom of the press.<sup>177</sup>

## **The Cartoon Riots**

Throughout February, these cartoons sparked anti-Western violence in many Muslim and several other countries. By the end of the month the disturbances had mostly dissipated. The Danish and Norwegian embassies in Damascus were burned down, as were the Swedish and Chilean embassies, which were in the same building. The Danish mission in Beirut was gutted as well. Demonstrators in Tehran attacked the Danish, French, and Austrian embassies with stones and firebombs, and threw rocks at the British mission.<sup>178</sup>

Due to intimidation, the European Union closed its offices in Gaza City and ordered its staff to leave. Gunmen of Fatah and Islamic Jihad came to the offices and said they would remain closed until the Norwegian and Danish governments apologized for insulting Muslims.

The Associated Press reported that five hundred children from a Hamas-affiliated school in Hebron in the Palestinian territories stomped on a Danish flag and shouted anti-Danish slogans.<sup>179</sup> Unarmed European observers of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron fled after crowds overpowered the Palestinian police, smashed windows, and threw stones at the observers' building.<sup>180</sup>

By the end of February the disturbances over the Danish cartoons had taken close to two hundred lives in Afghanistan, Lebanon, Kenya, Somalia, Libya, Pakistan, and Nigeria. Most of the dead were Muslims, many of them killed by other Muslims. Others, particularly in Nigeria, were Christians. Burning Danish flags became almost a ritual, but other flags such as the American, French, German, and Israeli ones were torched as well.<sup>181</sup>

## **Little European Solidarity**

A widespread boycott of Danish products in the Arab Middle East, and to a lesser extent elsewhere in the Muslim world, greatly diminished exports to these areas for some time. As a result some workers in Denmark and the Middle East were laid off.

The Danish government temporarily withdrew its embassy personnel from Syria, Iran, and Indonesia and advised its citizens to leave these countries.<sup>182</sup>

It also closed its consulates in Lebanon and Tunisia.<sup>183</sup> The Danish government stated that it had not intended to offend anybody, but also pointed out that free speech prevails in Denmark and a government is not responsible for what its citizens do within the limits of the law.

The European governments were initially in disarray and slow to show solidarity with Denmark. EU foreign policy coordinator Javier Solana went to the Middle East to express solidarity with Muslims without stressing the European value of press freedom. Most experts agree that the anticartoon turmoil in the Muslim world was to a large extent organized and not spontaneous.

The Muslim boycott of the Danish firms sparked a movement to “buy Danish” in the Western world. However, the American columnist Debbie Schluskel wrote that she would not participate in sympathy buying since Danish firms had been boycotting Israel in recent years:

Sorry, but we are NOT all Danes now.... Denmark—and ALL of its media, *Jyllands Posten* included—has long been consistent with the other Scandinavian countries in being a harsh critic of Israel and its meek attempts to respond to Islamic terrorism and Arab anti-Semitism.... Denmark’s Channel 2 broadcast a “documentary” about the Israeli “raid” on Jenin that was full of lies and completely defamatory. The “raid” on this terror stronghold (in which less than 25 died) was in response to the blowing up of many Jews peacefully celebrating Passover (the “Passover Massacre”). Denmark re-broadcast this phony “documentary” within the LAST MONTH!<sup>184</sup>

As aforementioned, in February 2008 the debate about these cartoons was rekindled when three people were arrested in Denmark and accused of plotting to kill the cartoonist Kurt Westergaard, who had drawn a picture of the Prophet Muhammad wearing a bomb-shaped turban. As a reaction to the planned attack, a number of Danish dailies reprinted the cartoon. This led to some renewed anti-Danish actions in various Muslim countries.

### **Boycott of Danish Food Companies**

The Danish trade union that supported boycotting Israel had the occasion a few years later to understand how their discriminatory approach can be applied by others against Denmark as well. In 2006, during the cartoon riots in the Muslim world, there was a boycott of Danish products by Middle Eastern consumers.

The company probably hardest hit was the Swedish-Danish dairy group Arla Foods. It suffered a loss of earnings of approximately 450 million kroner or about \$100 million. The consumer boycott began anew after the republication of the cartoons in February 2008. A spokesman for Arla said, at the beginning of April, that turnover was about half the level budgeted for the year in the region.

At the same time, according to its chairman Niels Bruun, the sales of Saedager—another Danish dairy producer—had practically come to a standstill in the Middle East. During the 2006 crisis its turnover there had declined by 70 percent.<sup>185</sup>

### **The Second Lebanon War**

The Second Lebanon War had less of an impact on attitudes toward Israel in Denmark than in other Scandinavian countries. Nor was there a marked increase in anti-Semitic acts.

The Jewish community reported, however, that there had already been a rise

in Muslim anti-Semitism in Denmark. An article in *Kristeligt Dagblad*, quoted by the European Jewish Congress, said that in the first half of 2006, that is, before the war started, there had already been as many attacks on Danish Jews as in all of 2005. “Most attacks have been aimed at people going to synagogue or at children on their way to school, and some have been of a grave nature, according to the newspaper.”<sup>186</sup>

The same report noted that

a Gallup poll taken on August 5th showed that 48% of those polled supported Israel’s action, while 7% supported Hizbollah.... There were many demonstrations that could be termed “anti-Israeli” in Denmark during the summer, primarily organized by left-wing groups in cooperation with Muslim groups. Such marches and events were sparsely attended, and barely received any media attention.<sup>187</sup>

The attitude toward Israel during the war was thus far more positive in Denmark than in most other West European countries. The country’s experience with the violent anti-Danish attacks during the cartoon crisis may have contributed to that attitude. It is too early to say whether, if terrorist attempts by radical Muslims in Europe continue, a similar shift in opinion will occur in some other countries. Given cultural differences, reactions may vary.

## **Holocaust Issues**

Denmark is often praised for the help it extended during World War II to its Jews who escaped to Sweden. However, this very commendable activity was carried out by only a small part of its population. It is also far from the only relevant issue concerning Denmark’s attitude toward persecuted Jews.

Denmark has a more checkered Holocaust history than many realize. Vilhjálmur Örn Vilhjálmsson has revealed that Denmark deported twenty-one German Jews to Nazi Germany, where most presumably perished. Efraim Zuroff wrote in *Berlingske Tidende*:

The articles published recently in this paper reveal that Denmark implemented a restrictive anti-Jewish refugee policy in the ’30s and ’40s and, on its own initiative, sent German Jewish refugees back into the Nazi inferno. We also know now that at least one Danish company exploited slave labor in Estonia and that the negative attitude toward stateless Jews persisted even after World War II. If we add up the decades-long cover-up of these issues, the refusal of some agencies to allow research into these questions, and the failure of the Danish authorities to prosecute Danes who committed Nazi war crimes, the picture is far bleaker than we ever imagined.<sup>188</sup>

The issue of Denmark’s wartime collaboration with the Nazis may be much more substantial than has been acknowledged until now. Unopened archives may

contain the names of about three hundred thousand Nazis or Nazi sympathizers collected by a Nazi opponent. Claus Bryld, a professor of modern history at Roskilde University, claimed that much of Denmark's industry and agriculture collaborated with the Nazis, and that twelve thousand Danes actually fought with the Germans against the Russians.

Bryld also stated that once these archives are opened,

Big business figures may be compromised by their release and there may be revealing information in the files on the royal family. There were very intimate relations between leading German officials and leading Danish ones. They made no political considerations. They traded with the Germans as if they were normal people. A moral perspective was totally absent.<sup>189</sup>

## Holocaust Deniers

There have also occasionally been publications by Danish Holocaust deniers. In July 2007, Shimon Samuels, director of international relations of the Simon Wiesenthal Center (SWC), wrote to Denmark's prime minister protesting a monetary award to Erik Haaest.

The letter said: "Haaest reportedly received this prize for his work on 'The Danish Friekorps on the Eastern Front 1941-1965' [this was a Danish volunteer unit of the Waffen-SS], hardly a symbol of Danish national pride," adding, "Haaest's citations from Holocaust denial literature go back to the 1959 volume of the *Journal of Historical Review* published by the institute of the same name, frequented by neo-Nazis worldwide."

Samuels continued, "your government's award to Haaest violated the commitments of Denmark to the European Commission and to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe." The SWC asked the Danish government "to immediately withdraw this outrageous award, to investigate its circumstances and publicly dismiss those responsible."<sup>190</sup>

Danish culture minister Brian Mikkelsen replied that these grants had been awarded by the Arts Council and that its former chairman on the literary committee had publicly stated that "no grants would have been given if such statements had surfaced while Erik Haaest's applications were being processed." The minister pointed out that the Arts Council was independent and not under the ministry's control, and that grants made by the council could not be revoked.<sup>191</sup>

Arthur Arnheim's article in this volume summarizes Danish anti-Semitism. Vilhjálmur Örn Vilhjálmsson and Bent Blüdnikow note in their essay that in the fifty years after World War II, no one investigated in detail the fate of the Jewish refugees who sought asylum in Denmark in the 1930s and 1940s. They assert that Danish historians averted their gaze from darker aspects of Denmark's policy that

continued after the war. They also mention findings that Danish firms used Jewish slave laborers during the war.

## FINLAND

Finland is a scarcely heard actor on the international scene. In recent years, one exception was during the Second Lebanon War when the Finnish presidency of the European Union gave it an international voice. At that time the Social Democrats were part of the government and Erkki Tuomioja, a member of their left wing, was foreign minister.

The initial statement that Finland made indicated that it identified more with the Lebanese Hizballah terrorists than with the Israeli democracy. On 13 July 2006, Finland, which then held the EU's rotating presidency, issued a statement on the EU's behalf: "The European Union is greatly concerned about the disproportionate use of force by Israel in Lebanon in response to attacks by Hizballah on Israel. The presidency deplores the loss of civilian lives and the destruction of civilian infrastructure. The imposition of an air and sea blockade on Lebanon cannot be justified."<sup>192</sup> The EU softened its statement somewhat after the G8 meeting in St. Petersburg the following weekend.<sup>193</sup>

Tuomioja's statement should not have come as a surprise. A year earlier British scholar Efraim Karsh had drawn attention to his positions on the Middle East conflict: "Tuomioja's views are representative of a deeper undercurrent in contemporary European criticism of Israel, one that combines factual ignorance and misconceptions about the Arab-Israeli conflict with latent animosity borne out of the Continent's millenarian legacy of anti-Semitism."<sup>194</sup>

### A Holocaust Inverter

Karsh noted that, in an interview with the news magazine *Suomen Kuvalehti* in August 2001, Tuomioja denounced Israel's attempts to protect its citizens from the terror war launched by Arafat's Palestinian Authority in September 2000. Tuomioja compared Israeli defensive measures to the Nazi persecution of European Jewry: "It is quite shocking that some implement the same kind of policy toward the Palestinians which they themselves were victims of in the 1930s." This position is one of several examples of Nordic socialist politicians inverting the Holocaust, thus manipulating the genocide of the Jews for their current political aims.<sup>195</sup>

Tuomioja, whose party is no longer part of the Finnish government, distorted facts on more occasions. In an interview with the same paper on 3 June 2005, he said that after the election of Mahmoud Abbas as Palestinian Authority president at the beginning of the year, "There are approximately as many roadblocks as before and all political prisoners that were promised to be freed have not been freed...."

Karsh commented: "There are no political prisoners in Israeli jails. All

Palestinian prisoners whose release is demanded by the PA are either convicted terrorists, or suspected terrorists awaiting trial, or planners and perpetrators of other acts of violence. Of these, 500 were released on 21 February 2005, while another 400 were released four months later, on 2 June 2005.”<sup>196</sup>

### **Supporting Hatred of Israel**

Also connected to anti-Israeli activities is the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs Development Corporation (FDC). NGO Monitor, in a detailed analysis, points to a variety of NGOs supported by the FDC that engage in anti-Israeli political activity, use language of demonization and incitement as well as apartheid rhetoric against Israel, and accuse it of ethnic cleansing while remaining silent about Palestinian terrorism.

NGO Monitor concludes that: “while a number of the NGOs supported by the FDC perform humanitarian development work, some recipients of Finnish government funding abuse their status for political campaigning and demonization of Israel.”<sup>197</sup>

Finland has also been subsidizing Palestinian textbooks that contain incitement. Former Dutch member of the European Parliament Rijk van Dam related how he and some colleagues approached EU commissioner Chris Patten, saying: “It cannot be that you send large amounts of money to the Palestinians who use school materials containing texts that are criminal under European laws.”

Patten replied, among other things, that “The EU does not pay for these books, you have to go to the member states who subsidize these.” Van Dam said: “Patten was right insofar as some member states indeed pay directly for the textbooks. Finland, for instance, contributes about seven million euros per year.”<sup>198</sup>

### **David and Goliath**

Serah Beizer observed:

In the minds of many Finns the fate of Israel was often compared to the fate of Finland. A small state, surrounded by larger and stronger neighboring states, still succeeded to gain and retain independence—Israel as David. As in other countries, the Six Day War slowly but surely turned the image of Israel around 180 degrees. Israel became Goliath and the negative media reports on Israel the same as reports in the rest of Scandinavia.

She added: “As Mikael Enckell points out, the news items from Israel are reported in a distorted order. First the journalist tells how Israel ‘responded’ to the terror act, then about the terror act itself, thus creating an image that it is all Israel’s fault. Somewhat similar to the answer the young boy gives when scolded for biting his brother: ‘I bit him, because then he’ll hit me.’”<sup>199</sup>

Dr. Eero Kuparinen noted in a 2004 article in *Turun Sanomat*: “Anti-Semitism has gained from anti-Zionism, from opposition to Israel. The hatred of Jews has more and more also become the hatred of Israel. The state of Israel has been turned into the collective Jew of the world.”<sup>200</sup>

Enckell wrote: “Traditionally, many Lutheran priests opposed granting citizenship to Jews and still find it hard to come to terms with Israel. Archbishop Jukka Paarma said in 2002, that ‘our brothers in faith are first of all among the Palestinians’ and that ‘Israel’s deeds force the Christians in Finland to reconsider their traditional pro-Israeli stand.’”<sup>201</sup>

Beizer observed:

The official Church in Finland has not been too pro-Israel but there are indeed Lutheran Christians who openly sympathize with Israel and the Jews. As early as 1908, a “Friends of Israel” organization was established. According to its members, the fate of the Jews and later, the establishment of the state of Israel, were seen as the fulfillment of the words of the prophets.

Some of their members are indeed missionaries, believing that Jews have to convert to Christianity before the second coming of the Messiah, but the majority see the state of Israel as a miracle and as an important milestone in the history of mankind. Many Finnish Christian volunteers came to Israel in the 1960’s to volunteer on kibbutzim.

In 1971, a co-operative moshav (farming village) called Yad Hashmona was established in the Jerusalem Corridor by Finnish volunteers. The name of the moshav is in memory of eight Jewish refugees who were handed over to the Nazis in late 1942.<sup>202</sup> During the Second Intifada in Israel, Finnish tourists, mostly believing Christians, continued to visit Israel in spite of warnings and terrorism. Many joined Finnish Jews in a large demonstration in support of Israel in the summer of 2006 during the Second Lebanon War.<sup>203</sup>

Beizer said Finnish Jews have indeed integrated, mentioning that in a report to the European Union on “Mapping Minorities and Their Media—Finland,” the authors described the minorities currently in Finland: “This introduction shortly presents the other so-called old minorities of Finland, the Jews, the Romany, the Tatars and the so-called ‘Old Russians.’... These three [*sic*] are the old migrant minorities.... We have included the media of the Romany and the Tatars in this mapping. The Jews are such an integrated minority that we have not included their media.”<sup>204</sup>

### **Anti-Semitic Incidents**

Despite the rather quiet general situation for Jews in Finland, some anti-Semitic incidents have occurred over the years. In the late fall of 1992, windows of the synagogue in Turku were broken. This act was followed in July 1993 by

vandalism at the Jewish graveyard in the same town. This incident was reported in the main papers.

A conclusion in the press stated: “A lone neo-Nazi did this and explained that ‘as a Nazi I should hate Jews.’” The reported added that: “Seemingly he has never had contacts with Jews.”<sup>205</sup> The perpetrator was sent to prison for a year; later the punishment was suspended. In this case the Jewish community suggested giving the incident maximum coverage so as to stop the threats by a gang of young neo-Nazis.

In 2002, the Jewish community buildings in the center of Helsinki, where the kindergarten, school, synagogue, offices, and old-age home are located, had to be evacuated because of an anonymous telephone threat.<sup>206</sup>

## **The Second Lebanon War**

The aforementioned report of the European Jewish Congress on anti-Semitic incidents during the Second Lebanon War contained several items about Finland. The report quoted Dan Kantor, executive secretary of the Central Council of Jewish Communities in Finland, saying that the atmosphere in the country did not exude aggression toward Finnish Jews. Parts of the Finnish population, however, manifested an anti-Israeli attitude.

The report noted:

Kantor also points out that most of the rhetoric and discourse observed was distinctly “anti-Israel,” but not “anti-Semitic.” Nevertheless, the community did track isolated anti-Semitic events and acts, mostly in the form of hate mails and phone calls directed to the Central Council itself. A major newspaper published a reader’s letter stating that Hitler should have finished his work—the Central Council of Jewish Communities immediately took legal action against this individual.<sup>207</sup>

The report also mentioned that “the Israel embassy received a number of letters, some of them anti-Semitic, attacking Jews directly for the death of children in Lebanon.” It further quoted Kantor:

a march in support of Israel in Helsinki gathered thousands, while marches in support of Lebanon were no larger than 400. Marginal extreme-left groups, often in cooperation with Islamic groups in a so-called “Peace Movement” held weekly small marches, where signs were observed equating the Star of David with Nazi symbols. Such groups make little distinction between Israel and local Finnish Jews.

Kantor added that this is “nothing new.”<sup>208</sup>

In 2007, the Helsinki Jewish community reported an incident of anti-Semitic content in a reader’s letter in two daily papers. The complaint reached the court and the offenders were punished.<sup>209</sup>

This volume contains two chapters on Finland. An interview with Serah Beizer deals with an issue that has reemerged in recent years: the treatment of Russian Jewish prisoners of war during World War II. A yet unknown number were handed over to the Germans. An essay by Gerald Steinberg analyzes Finnish support for Palestinian NGOs, including those that demonize Israel.

## Conclusion

The aspects of the Nordic countries highlighted in this essay, particularly Sweden and Norway, give a very different picture from the common humanitarian image their public diplomacy tries to convey. It is difficult to explain this discrepancy, which has been documented here and illustrated with many examples.

Why are parts of the Nordic elites sensitive to the needs of the Palestinians and blind to the profound, longstanding, and widespread genocidal intentions in their society? The more so as Palestinian leaders' support for mass murder goes back at least seventy-five years, well before the Palestinians even claimed to be a nation. What makes governments ignore the demonizing character of Palestinian NGOs that they indirectly support? To what extent are these governments accomplices to the hate campaigns of these perpetrators?

What makes a significant number of important individuals and organizations in these countries pioneers of racist discriminatory actions that are contemporary mutations of the now more than two-millennia-old anti-Semitism? Societal elites in Sweden and Norway are far from alone in Europe in this regard, yet they are often ahead of other countries.

It is meaningless to be ranked among the leading countries for press freedom while voluntary biased reporting is rife. Informing without context, or simply deleting essential information or mixing ideology with news, can occur despite freedom of the press. One does not need government-controlled media dominated by official propaganda in order to intentionally present distorted coverage.

The past centuries have taught that demonization of the Jews cannot occur in isolation. Media cannot be biased only against Israel. Much of the journalism in these countries must have many other deep flaws that will come to the fore in other ways. The hatred and discrimination propagated by important actors tell much more about them and the countries in which they flourish than about the Jews and Israel.

We live in dynamic societies and it will not take many years before more people will start seeing through the holes in these countries' humanitarian masks. Many of the above-cited "isolated incidents" concerning Israel and the Jews will then more accurately be seen in a much larger framework of false morality, invented moral superiority, and humanitarian racism.

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ESSAYS AND INTERVIEWS ON  
INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES



## An Interview with Zvi Mazel

### Anti-Israelism and Anti-Semitism in Sweden

“Sweden claims to be a superdemocracy, an example of enlightenment and openness. People with such pretensions should be a little more knowledgeable about Israel, another democracy after all. And yet the average Swedish citizen does not know more than what the country’s shallow media tells him. This is often anti-Israeli, and the public is influenced by it.”

Zvi Mazel was the Israeli ambassador to Sweden from December 2002 to April 2004. “Before, I had been for five years ambassador to Egypt, where massive hatred of Israel was promoted on a daily basis. We were regularly accused of all that was wrong everywhere in the world. I did not expect to find a somewhat similar atmosphere in a democratic country such as Sweden.”

During his stay in Stockholm, Mazel developed a critical view of Sweden. Among large parts of the society’s elite he encountered a discriminatory attitude and hostility to Israel as well as pseudo-morality and arrogance. Sweden’s apparent tolerance for rabid anti-Semitism has reinforced his opinion of the country’s ruling classes.

#### **Often Hostile Media**

“The unabated Swedish attack on Israel, which already began to gather force in the 1980s, reached its summit during the Second Intifada. It promoted and implanted a spirit of anti-Zionism and anti-Israelism that found major expression in the Swedish media.

“Most media managed to present Israel on every occasion as the evil party in the Middle East. For a long time it was hard to find, if at all, even one single editorial in favor of Israel. In this hostile climate, extreme right-wing anti-Semitism by neo-Nazi groups could also flourish. Even more so, fertile ground was laid for the Islamic anti-Semitism that was supported by extreme left-wing organizations.

“The Swedish media have hardly any investigative function. In that regard their performance, compared to the Israeli media, is poor. Issues, including domestic ones, rapidly arise and disappear. Their frequent hostility to Israel can partly be explained by the disproportionately large number of journalists who belong or are supporters of the Green and Left parties or the Social Democrats.”

### **Cowards like Others**

Mazel observes: “Nowadays among the Swedish dailies, the biggest, *Aftonbladet*, is the most anti-Israeli. Its editor in chief, Helle Klein, is a descendant of a well-known rabbi but she can find nothing good in Israel and her paper attacks us regularly. During the worst Arab terrorist acts of the intifada, the paper still said Israel was an oppressive colonialist state that behaved entirely unjustly.

“*Dagens Nyheter*, the more intellectual daily, is also consistently anti-Israeli. It published the worst anti-Semitic article I ever read in a Swedish paper. It was titled ‘It Is Permitted to Hate Jews.’ The author, Jan Samuelson, who presented himself as an Islam expert, wrote that as long as Israel occupies territories, the Muslim hatred against all Jews is justified. This view entails that any Muslim is entitled to hate a newborn Jewish child anywhere in the world. He did not refer to the genocidal hatred of Jews that existed among Muslims long before the Six Day War.

“*Svenska Dagbladet*, the other quality newspaper, is also critical of Israel but not as much as the other two. A fourth daily, *Expressen*, rather a tabloid paper, is usually more balanced. Yet during my stay in Sweden they let an imam of the Stockholm Great Mosque publish a weekly column on Friday. Its text was very different from the violent sermons of the imams in the same mosque.

“To be fair it must be pointed out that the Swedish media are not alone in being cowards. If the European media had more courage, they would constantly expose Muslim violence all over the world. The perpetrators draw motivation directly from Muslim culture. The ongoing mass murders in Iraq demonstrate how widespread violence can be in contemporary Muslim societies. If the European press were really as enlightened as it pretends to be, its editorials would continuously castigate this culture of violence.”

### **The Social Democrats**

Mazel mentions that the Social Democratic Party ruled the country from 1932 until 2006 except for two short interludes. “Since Olof Palme became the Social Democratic leader in 1969 the party has been following an anti-Israeli line, which continues till today. Israel has very few friends in the Social Democratic Party, which still remains Sweden’s largest with 130 out of 349 seats in parliament.

“However, the former Social Democratic Prime Minister Göran Persson gained much positive publicity when he organized a major international conference on Holocaust education—the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust in January 2000.

“In anticipation of this conference, which was very successful, he had set up a research institute called Living History whose task was and still is to investigate the various aspects of the Holocaust, and which published a book on the Shoah. This excellent work has been translated into many languages and

became a textbook for high schools. One of the results of the conference was the formation of a task force of teachers from various countries that would be sent to Yad Vashem for training in Holocaust education.

“In the following years Persson, however, strayed from the centrality of the Holocaust in various other directions. We had major discussions with Swedish diplomats to keep the 2004 conference on Preventing Genocide from becoming highly politicized, focused on contemporary issues, and anti-Israeli. Also Persson’s speech at that conference was rather ambivalent.

“Despite Persson’s personal attitude he has to carry part of the blame for his party’s discriminatory stance toward Israel. For decades the Social Democrats helped create the country’s anti-Israeli atmosphere. He also has to take responsibility for the behavior of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), which blames Israel for all the many wrongs in Palestinian society.

“Another leading socialist, the late foreign minister Anna Lindh usually made the most vicious attacks on Israel. Her hatred of Israel can only be described as almost pathological. Under her leadership Sweden published the greatest number of one-sided condemnations of Israel of any EU country. Lindh was stabbed to death in 2003 by a mentally disturbed Swede of Serbian origin.

“The Social Democrats’ anti-Israeli campaign expressed itself not only in the frequent one-sided official condemnations of Israel’s activities against Palestinian terror. It also allowed party activists at various levels to attack Israel and accuse it of oppressing the Palestinians while the Palestinians benefited from the Social Democrats’ understanding for their terrorist acts.”

## **The Rise of Swedish Neo-Nazis**

“I wonder why Persson had initiated the research into the Holocaust. His main reason seems to have been his worry about the rise of neo-Nazi groups. During World War II there were strong Nazi sympathies in Sweden. Hundreds of Swedes volunteered for the Nazi army in Germany.

“After the war these sympathies did not vanish but were less out in the open. Since the 1960s, Swedish pro-Nazi movements have been on the rise and increasingly problematic. Persson was looking for a way to counter their activities. Someone suggested to him to focus on the Holocaust and arrange a major international conference. He also was advised that this would give him international stature.

“Despite all Persson’s efforts the neo-Nazis continued with their gatherings and activities. Rumors are that their number is increasing. There are laws against Nazi incitement and if done openly one can be brought to court. Yet from time to time neo-Nazis demonstrate in the streets of Stockholm and Malmö. On Holocaust Memorial Day in 2003, neo-Nazis demonstrated close to the Stockholm synagogue where the remembrance ceremony was held. The police did not prevent that.

“At the beginning of 2006, the Swedish pro-Palestinian organizations held their annual meeting and discussed how to develop their strategy toward Israel. Also Lindh’s successor as foreign minister Laila Freivalds spoke at this hate gathering, and was criticized by the press for one day.

“In the Left Party with twenty-two seats and the Green Party with nineteen seats there is a universal anti-Israeli attitude. When there is a debate on the Middle East they express an abysmal hatred, which one also finds in their papers. One Green parliamentarian came to Israel together with people from the International Solidarity Movement (ISM). He threw stones at the security fence together with Palestinians and was finally evicted from Israel. Initially the Swedish media criticized Israel but later they were more understanding.”

### **The New Government**

In the 2006 parliamentary elections the Left was defeated by a coalition of the four parties of the Center and Right: the Moderates, Liberals, Christian Democrats, and the Center Party. Mazel remarks: “The first three support Israel. The Center Party is more reserved. Together they have 178 seats in parliament.

“A new government was thereupon formed under Prime Minister Frederik Reinfeldt, chairman of the Moderate Party. This led to a significant change in the atmosphere concerning Israel. While these parties were in opposition, they more than once came to Israel’s defense during the hostile campaign against it by the Social Democratic government.

“The new government has stopped making extreme anti-Israeli statements. Simultaneously public anti-Semitic attacks have declined substantially.

“Beneath the surface, however, anti-Israelism and anti-Semitism continue to thrive, waiting for a new occasion to erupt. This encompasses all the anti-Israeli bodies such as the Swedish Lutheran Church, its charitable organization Diakonia, and Brotherhood, which is the Christian wing of the Social Democratic Party.

“The extreme left-wing organizations cooperate with the ISM organization, which continues to send youth from Sweden and other countries to the territories. They act against the Israel Defense Forces, which protect those constructing the security fence. In 2006 a number of Swedes were wounded in a confrontation with the army near Hebron.”

### **Irregularities at SIDA**

“SIDA also continues its anti-Israeli activities. There have been criticisms that the agency works according to leftist principles instead of true needs. In autumn 2007 Sweden’s public auditors stated that they had found irregularities in various SIDA projects abroad.

“SIDA is one of the greatest contributors of aid to the Palestinians, which by

now has reached many hundreds of millions of euros. This is disproportionately large compared to the aid Sweden gives to the African states, which are desperately in need of help in areas such as agriculture, food, community development, and health services.

“Earlier SIDA was often criticized for transferring money to the Palestinian Authority without any valid supervision regarding its efficient use or waste, or even its diversion to terrorist activities.”

## **NGOs**

“Many NGOs collaborate with the extreme Left and march with the pro-Palestinians. They would regularly organize demonstrations in front of the Israeli embassy. They would even throw excrement at the building. In Sweden that is apparently permissible. The police let them advance almost to the wall of the embassy. This is the common police attitude.

“In March 2004, I attended a gala evening of the Keren Hayesod that opened the fundraising season. It was held in Nalen Hall, one of the nicer ones in Stockholm. Suddenly the security officer of the Israeli embassy entered. Hundreds of protesters, Muslims and extreme leftists, were demonstrating outside and trying to break into the hall and the police did not seem able to block them.

“I told him that I could not leave the audience alone, most of whom were non-Jewish friends of Israel. It also seemed to me that the police would not let matters get totally out of hand. Later the public was made to leave through a side door. The following year the owners of the hall refused to rent it again to Keren Hayesod. The violence had intimidated them.”

## **The Lutheran Church**

“For about a decade the Lutheran Church has no longer been the state church. Its former head, Archbishop Hammar, is a well-known Israel-hater. In January 2003, he gathered seventy Swedish intellectuals to sign a petition to boycott Israeli goods, particularly those that come from the territories. They also wanted to suspend the EU’s association agreement with Israel. Even Anna Lindh was not ready to go that far and did not want to boycott Israel.

“Among the signatories was Carl Tham, the Swedish ambassador to Germany. A diplomat is an official of his country, whose policy he has to represent. The Jewish community protested against the boycott effort and a media debate resulted. Lindh later said she had told the ambassador her opinion. When asked what she had said, she refused to tell. The ambassador stayed in his post.

“The Lutheran Church also has a theological institute in Jerusalem that is led by a pro-Palestinian director. When a delegation of all parliamentary parties

came to Israel earlier in 2006, I was invited to address them. It turned out the director had arranged matters so that, besides me, they would only meet with Palestinians and extreme-Left Israeli organizations. They visited Ramallah but not Tel Aviv.

“The church has been sending Swedish youth to the Palestinian Authority with the aim of accompanying Palestinians to school or work so as to ‘document infringements of international law.’ These youngsters do not document the Palestinian Authority’s infringements of international law or the crimes against humanity by Hamas in Gaza.

“The activists of the Christian branch of the Social Democratic Party continue to strengthen their links with the Palestinians and Israeli left-wing organizations. Their representatives visit the Palestinian territories regularly and their impressions are published in their newspaper, which is characterized by defamation of Israel.

“In autumn 2007 the daily *Göteborgs-Posten* published four articles by journalists who had visited Israel and the territories under the sponsorship of the Swedish church. They harshly attacked Israel, portraying it as a colonial state and its inhabitants as a race of rulers operating an apartheid system.

“A study by a researcher at Lund University notes that from 1937, well before World War II, Swedish Lutheran pastors would not perform marriages between Germans of Aryan blood and anyone with a Jewish grandparent. This racist position was adopted on the advice of the Swedish Foreign Ministry.”<sup>1</sup>

## **Wrecking a Work of Art**

Often people do many things in their life but become famous only for one minor act. On 16 January 2004, Mazel became internationally known by disconnecting the electricity of what was supposedly a work of art. Exhibited in a Stockholm museum, it glorified Palestinian suicide bombings. The artist was an Israeli living in Sweden who belonged to an extreme-Left party.

Mazel comments: “This exhibit was the culmination of dozens of anti-Israeli and anti-Jewish events in Sweden. When you do not protest, the situation gets worse and worse. It had to be stopped even if in an unconventional way for a diplomat. Afterward I got a phone call from Prime Minister Sharon that expressed the support of the Israeli cabinet.

“The reactions in the Swedish press did not surprise me: the great majority of the editorials condemned my act. Some support came from letters to the editor. What is important to note is the readers’ reactions: in the informal Internet polls by the three leading papers they were more or less balanced for and against my act. In two of the dailies I even had a slight majority.

“Before my intervention at the museum it was almost taboo in the Swedish press to speak about anti-Semitism even though it is widespread. In recent

years it has become a subject for the newspapers. There is, though, great fear of mentioning that it has a substantial Muslim component.”

### **Calling to Kill Jews Is Permitted**

“In the 1980s a Swedish Muslim, Ahmed Rami, opened Radio Islam where he virulently attacked Jews, Israel, and its supporters. It took years of complaints until the authorities closed his station. Thereafter he opened a website that continues to incite against the Jews in Sweden and in Israel.

“The influence of the Muslim community has grown. Mosques exist or are being built in the major cities. Hamas activists from the Muslim Brotherhood circles are at work in Sweden and their publications can also be found in mosques.

“From friends I used to receive Hamas anti-Semitic material, which is regularly distributed in Stockholm’s Great Mosque. Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, an Egyptian Muslim hate-preacher based in Qatar and considered the main theologian of the Muslim Brotherhood, spoke there in 2004. His speech was tantamount to calling for the murder of Israelis. I had complained to the Swedish government even before he came, asking why they let such a well-known hatemonger speak there. I did not even get a reply.

“On this matter the Swedish media initially remained silent. After extracts of Qaradawi’s talks were published, I wrote to many people in Sweden and distributed his texts. It took some time until one of the leading members of the Liberal Party’s young guard wrote an article against the hate preacher. That finally led to some discussion in the Swedish press.”

### **Widespread Anti-Semitism**

“The situation with respect to anti-Semitism in Sweden got even worse at the beginning of 2006. Göran Lambertz, the chancellor of justice—the government’s counselor on legal matters—discontinued an investigation of the Grand Mosque of Sweden. Cassettes sold there had a highly anti-Semitic content, calling for jihad and the killing of Jews. The chancellor said these were part of the everyday occurrences in the conflict in the Middle East.

“If one chooses the right context one can now call for the mass murder of Jews without any consequences. That is Swedish democracy, which also considers itself entitled to teach Israel morality.

“A major survey in 2005 revealed the widespread anti-Semitism in Sweden. Out of a sample of three thousand Swedes aged sixteen to seventy-five, 41 percent declared themselves anti-Semites, 5 percent strongly so. Twenty-five percent did not consider a Jewish prime minister in Sweden acceptable, 26 percent believed Israel dealt with the Palestinians similarly to how the Nazis dealt with the Jews,

and 26 percent thought the Israelis operated according to the biblical concept of an eye for eye.”

### **Notes**

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Mikael Tossavainen

## Arab and Muslim Anti-Semitism in Sweden

In the wake of the breakdown of the Oslo process and the renewed intifada in 2000, a wave of anti-Semitic violence swept over Europe. Most attention has been paid to the arsons and other violent attacks in France and other countries such as Germany and Belgium. But Swedish Jewry, too, has felt this phenomenon.

As a consequence, interest in anti-Semitism has started to grow over the past few years, and the increasing awareness has affected the public debate. The discourse on anti-Semitism in Sweden, however, has been rather politicized with members of the left-wing intelligentsia and academia trying to trivialize or exculpate expressions of anti-Semitism. For instance, the journalist and bestselling author Jan Guillou has used his column in Sweden's largest newspaper, the Social Democratic *Aftonbladet*, to argue that while anti-Semitism used to be a problem in Swedish society, any talk of it in today's Sweden is only a strategy to build sympathy for Israel and an indirect defense of the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.<sup>1</sup>

One of the reasons that the existence of contemporary Swedish anti-Semitism is debated is a longstanding almost total lack of research on the phenomenon, let alone its current forms.<sup>2</sup> To rectify this situation, Henrik Bachner and Jonas Ring carried out a study of current anti-Semitism in Sweden in 2005. They conducted their research on behalf of the Living History Forum and the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention. This was the first quantitative study of anti-Semitism ever performed in Sweden. Statistical in nature, it was based on questionnaires sent to a representative sample of the population. These probed how prevalent anti-Semitic attitudes are in Sweden today, how anti-Semitism is manifested, and to what extent it correlates with certain social, political, or other background factors.

### **Current Anti-Semitism in Sweden**

Bachner and Ring had the participants react to statements reflecting various anti-Semitic opinions or stereotypes ranging from traditional, religiously inspired anti-Jewish sentiments to modern-day anti-Semitism clad in anti-Zionist rhetoric. The results of the study indicated that some 5 percent of Swedes can be characterized as anti-Semites since they "harbor strong and consistent anti-Semitic views." Another 36 percent of the participants expressed ambivalent opinions about Jews, agreeing with some anti-Semitic statements while rejecting others. Fifty-nine

percent of the participants systematically rejected anti-Semitic statements and attitudes altogether.<sup>3</sup>

One age-old anti-Semitic myth is the idea of a Jewish cabal, or a world conspiracy through which Jews control everything that happens and manipulate the Gentiles to act in accordance with a perceived common Jewish interest. The infamous forgery *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, written by the Czar's secret police but purporting to be the minutes from secret meetings held by Jews planning to take over the world, is probably the best-known document derived from the anti-Semitic myth of hidden Jewish power. Touching on this topic, Bachner and Ring found that some 15 percent of the Swedish population believe that "the Jews have too much influence in the world today." Seven percent of the study participants responded that they thought the state of Israel was involved in the 9/11 terror attack. Forty-seven percent rejected the statement but no less than 46 percent expressed no opinion.<sup>4</sup>

Modern anti-Semitism sometimes expresses itself in connection to the Holocaust. Bachner and Ring detected such anti-Jewish sentiments as well. Seventeen percent of the study participants agreed completely or partly with the statement that "the Jews believe they are the only ones who have suffered," and 14 percent thought the Jews exploit the Holocaust for their own economic and political purposes. Swedes are apparently not loath to trivialize the Holocaust either, as a quarter of the participants also thought Israel's treatment of the Palestinians is similar to the Nazi treatment of the Jews.<sup>5</sup>

As in many other countries, Israel is a target for anti-Semitic sentiments in Sweden. A quarter of the participants thought Israeli politics was characterized by a vengefulness rooted in the Old Testament. This is an ancient Christian stereotype, based on the idea that the Jewish religion is cruel and vengeful whereas Christianity is a loving and merciful creed. Smaller proportions agreed with the following statements: "Israel has no right to exist" (3 percent), "Peace on earth is not possible as long as Israel exists" (9 percent), "Because of Israeli politics, I dislike Jews even more" (8 percent), and "Israeli politics is what causes hatred of Jews" (14 percent).<sup>6</sup>

Even though, as noted, the issue of anti-Semitism in Sweden is politically sensitive, the sensitivity is probably most tangible regarding anti-Semitism that is focused on Israel. Those segments of Swedish society that are particularly anti-Israeli are also mostly unwilling to admit that criticism of Israel sometimes vents anti-Semitic attitudes, and that some of the extreme anti-Israeli positions are indeed anti-Semitic. Instead, they—like Jan Guillou in the article quoted earlier—regard any discussion of anti-Semitism as an attempt to smother debate on the Middle East conflict.

This has been a much-abbreviated outline of anti-Semitism in Sweden today, and an indication of its extent. The question remains, however: who are these 41 percent of the Swedish population that express some affinity for anti-Semitism—5 percent of whom can be described as full-fledged anti-Semites?

### **Who Are the Swedish Anti-Semites?**

When the answers in the study are broken down and related to several different background factors, it turns out that age, gender, education, and class all have some minor influence on the propensity to express anti-Semitic views. Older people seem to be slightly more anti-Semitic than those in younger generations, men more than women, and the longer their education the less anti-Semitic the participants seemed to be. But all in all, the difference with regard to these factors is small, and others were even less significant. It did not, for instance, seem to matter where in the country the participants lived, or whether they were urban or rural dwellers. Neither did party allegiance make any noticeable difference, with the obvious exception that self-proclaimed Nazis were consistently more anti-Semitic than people who voted for other parties.<sup>7</sup>

The participants' ethnic background seemed to have some influence on their level of anti-Semitism, as people with a foreign background were more prone to express anti-Semitic views, especially if they came from a non-European country. The study suggests that 11 percent of Swedes with foreign backgrounds harbor consistent anti-Semitic views, as opposed to 5 percent of the population as a whole.<sup>8</sup>

However, the single most important factor that correlated with anti-Semitism was religious background: fully 39 percent of those who responded that they were Muslims expressed systematic anti-Semitic views. In other words, the study indicates that Muslims in Sweden are eight times more prone to anti-Semitism than the population in general. The study also found that 56 percent of participants who claimed to have anti-Semitic acquaintances expressed systematic anti-Semitic views themselves.<sup>9</sup>

The total number of participants who claimed to be Muslims was seventy-four, or 2.5 percent of the total number of respondents.<sup>10</sup> This means that almost a quarter of all those who expressed systematic anti-Semitism were Muslims. Since the number of participants who identified themselves as Muslims was relatively small, one should be cautious about drawing overly extensive conclusions. Furthermore, one should keep in mind that the majority of the Muslim participants in the study did not hold systematic anti-Semitic positions.

Nevertheless, the results indicate that anti-Semitism is significantly more widespread among Muslims than the population in general. Bachner and Ring discuss a possible reason:

One important explanation for the comparatively major prevalence of anti-Semitism among Muslims is probably the political culture that shapes major parts of the Arab world and some other Islamic countries. This is a political culture where anti-Semitism has been legitimated to a significant degree, and for decades has been openly propagated by regimes in some cases, and by media and influential religious leaders and groups in repeated cases. This message is now spread to Muslim and Arab groups in Sweden and Europe

via TV broadcasts, the Internet and other media, and via propaganda spread by radical Islamists. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as segregation and alienation, probably increase the susceptibility of Muslim groups to anti-Semitism.<sup>11</sup>

What, then, can be said about Muslim anti-Semitism in Sweden? In the country at large, the tendency of growing Arab and Muslim anti-Semitism has been almost completely ignored, and to this day most Swedes are unaware of the anti-Jewish sentiments among immigrants from Arab and Muslim countries and their descendants. This is no doubt partly because the general Swedish public takes very little interest in the immigrant population, including the three hundred thousand or so Muslims living in Sweden. However, an additional factor concerns the issue of immigration policy and the general understanding of what anti-Semitism is.

Judging by Swedish public discourse over the past decades, anti-Semitism no longer belongs exclusively to neo-Nazis on the extreme Right. This impression is also supported by Bachner and Ring's study. Yet Swedes have been socialized into treating anti-Semitism as a branch of racism among ultranationalist groups, and connecting hatred of Jews with Nazism and World War II exclusively. Although it is no doubt important to be aware of the anti-Semitism of Nazi Germany and of neo-Nazi groups in today's world, it can lead to a situation where anti-Semitism among other sectors—such as the extreme Left, Arabs, and Muslims—is largely unknown.<sup>12</sup> Thus, this strong conceptual connection between Nazism and anti-Semitism, obfuscating anti-Semitism among other groups in society, further contributes to the difficulties of discussing Muslim anti-Semitism in Swedish society.

This lack of awareness is often coupled with a lack of information. Hence, any discussion of Muslim anti-Semitism must start with a brief exposé of its nature as opposed to the more familiar Nazi kind.

### **Arab and Muslim Anti-Semitism**

Despite the term itself, anti-Semitism has nothing to do with dislike of Semitic peoples in general; by definition, anti-Semitism can only be directed at Jews. Bernard Lewis notes that a common defense of Arab anti-Semites is that they cannot be anti-Semites because they themselves are Semites. As he points out, this would mean that a copy of *Mein Kampf* published in German in Berlin or in Spanish in Buenos Aires would be anti-Semitic, but an Arabic version of the same book published in Cairo would not be since Arabic and Hebrew are related languages.<sup>13</sup>

Anti-Semitism is the hatred or dislike of Jews qua Jews, nothing more and nothing less. The term was coined in the 1870s by Wilhelm Marr, partly to dress his anti-Jewish sentiment in a new, modern, ostensibly scientific vocabulary

and partly to distance it from Christian anti-Judaism.<sup>14</sup> It is hard to give an all-encompassing definition of anti-Semitism beyond the fact that it always involves some elements of negative attitudes or notions about Jews. Helen Fein defines it as a lasting, latent structure of beliefs about Jews as a collective. On the individual level, it manifests itself as sentiments; on the cultural level, as myths, ideology, and popular traditions; and on the practical level as social or legal discrimination, political mobilization against Jews, and collective or even governmental violence against them aiming to expel or even kill them for being Jews.<sup>15</sup>

Similarly, anti-Semitism in the Arab and Muslim world has an Islamic and a secular-nationalist dimension.<sup>16</sup> The latter is more or less identical with the secular forms of anti-Semitism that developed in nineteenth-century Europe. With the growth of European influence in the Middle East, the Arabs imported not only cheap goods and political ideas but also anti-Semitism in this modern, racist form. The first to embrace it were often the local Christian communities, which had closer ties with European Christians than their Muslim neighbors. With the rise of Arab nationalism, an ideology that Christian Arab intellectuals were often among the first to adopt, the Jews were increasingly seen as an alien body in the Arab world, distinct from the Arab Muslims and Christians.<sup>17</sup>

Religious Muslim anti-Semitism differs from Christian anti-Semitism. Traditionally, Islam does not have the same kind of problematic relationship to Judaism as Christianity has, since Jews in the Muslim tradition were perceived as a vanquished people that did not pose any threat to Islam. So long as Jews recognized Muslims' superior status and paid the *jizyah*, the special tax on non-Muslims, they were usually left alone. Some verses in the Koran and examples from the religious tradition show hostility toward Jews, but compared to their brethren in the Christian world, Jews in Muslim countries were usually treated relatively well and only rarely subjected to outright persecution.<sup>18</sup>

This situation changed in the last century. Unlike in Europe, where the Holocaust made publicly endorsing anti-Semitism taboo, Jew-hatred has always been acceptable in the modern Arab and Muslim world. Owing both to political developments and the growth of radical Islam, more recently it has only intensified. The establishment of the state of Israel is doubly problematic in this regard, since it not only is seen as a colonial project of an alien, non-Arab people but also defies the Muslim idea of Dar al-Islam, the Muslim world where infidels are not allowed to rule believers.<sup>19</sup> The anti-Semitic elements in the religious tradition that were largely ignored or played only a minor part in Muslim discourse are now salient, and in today's Arab and Muslim world anti-Semitism is widespread.<sup>20</sup> It is propagated both by governments and religious authorities, spread via state-controlled media, the Internet, mosques, schools, and universities.<sup>21</sup>

This anti-Semitism has also emerged among Arabs and Muslims in Europe. In today's globalized world, the same satellite television channels and websites can be viewed in Europe as in Egypt or Malaysia. Moreover, the segregation of immigrant neighborhoods contributes to a situation where Arabs and Muslims

in Europe remain part of the cultural discourse of their countries of origin. Radical Islamists in the Middle East have learned to exploit modern technology in their attempts to gain cultural and political power and influence, and they do what they can to spread their message also to European Muslims. By feeding their adherents with a version of history where the Western world aims to undermine, corrupt, and overthrow Muslim society, these Islamists marginalize more moderate voices within Islam, including in Europe. The imagined Jewish conspiracy often plays a central role in their worldview, and anti-Semitism is widespread.

This worldview has won adherents within segments of the Arab and Muslim populations in Europe. This phenomenon is well known in Paris, London, and other metropolitan areas in Europe for years. Until lately, it was virtually unknown that it also existed in Sweden—not least in the suburbs of Sweden's three largest cities: Stockholm (population one million), Göteborg (500,000), and Malmö (250,000).

However, the nature of the anti-Semitism among some Muslims and Arabs living in Sweden was studied in a 2003 report called “Det förnekade hatet” (The Denied Hatred). It focused on how Muslim anti-Semitism is manifested in three main areas: schools, the Internet, and anti-Semitic attacks.

### **Suburban Schools**

In Swedish schools, religious studies are a mandatory subject. Pupils are taught not only Christianity but also other religions such as Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. The purpose of these classes is not, as when Protestant Christianity was the only religion in the curriculum, to spread a certain creed but to provide a deeper understanding of other cultures and worldviews and foster tolerance. Some suburban schools, however, have a majority of Arab and Muslim pupils, and they object to the teaching of one specific religion—Judaism. Some of them decline to participate in the classes on this subject, some actively sabotage them, and others do not show up at all. Such pupils may refuse to do their homework or take tests on Judaism, or go on field trips to local synagogues.<sup>22</sup>

Sometimes pupils react very strongly when Islam is described as a religion that grew out of a tradition largely inspired by Judaism, rejecting the notion that there could be any connection between the two religions. As a consequence, these pupils' knowledge of Judaism is usually very limited and their prejudices are rife. They may “learn” about Judaism only in the mosques, where apparently they are mostly told that Jews are infidels who will burn in hell.<sup>23</sup>

Another subject that sometimes causes trouble in these schools is the Holocaust. The Arab and Muslim pupils often express either some form of Holocaust denial, or appreciation for the genocide of European Jewry. Sometimes they profess both opinions simultaneously. While saying on the one hand that the Holocaust is a lie, or at least has been largely exaggerated by Jews to extort

reparations or build sympathy for Israeli policies, they also state that it was a pity that Hitler did not kill more Jews.

One Holocaust survivor, who gives lectures at schools all over the country about his experiences during the Shoah, tells of Arab and Muslim pupils who stay away from his talks, sometimes at their parents' request. Pupils, he says, who do attend rarely express hostility, but those who do are exclusively "of Middle Eastern origin." After his lectures he asks for the listeners' evaluations, and once a pupil from an Iraqi family wrote:

That, which happened in the Second World War I think it was a good thing of Hitler to treat the Jews that way because I hate Jews. After the war they tried to get a country because they didn't have a country and so they took a part of Palestine and they created little Israel because Hitler threw them out of every country and that thing today [the lecture by the survivor] was only crap. The film was bad and I think what Hitler did to the Jews served them right and I don't care what you [the survivor] talked about and I wish that the Palestinian people kill all the Jews. Jews are the most disgusting people in the world and the biggest cowards and because of what happened today I wasn't going to come to school because an ugly Jew comes to school.<sup>24</sup>

Other lecturers and teachers have similar experiences, with pupils expressing their hatred of Jews in the same kind of terms. They rarely make any distinction among Jews, Israelis, or Zionists, and have very clear opinions about Jewish behavior or characteristics despite having had little or no interaction with Jews.

Teachers tend to point to the home environment as explaining these pupils' attitudes. In the segregated suburbs, immigrants live isolated from Swedish society, culture, and values while staying in touch with the discourse of their countries of origin. Hence, Iraqi, Lebanese, and Palestinian pupils tend to be more anti-Semitic than those from Bosnia or Turkey, for example.<sup>25</sup>

## The Internet

Like others of the ilk, Arab and Muslim anti-Semites long since discovered the advantages of the Internet. There are a number of Muslim anti-Semitic websites in Swedish, the best known of which is that of Radio Islam. Already as a radio station in the 1980s, it broadcast Nazi-like anti-Semitism.<sup>26</sup> The content could have been taken from *Der Stürmer* or *Mein Kampf*, with the Jews accused of being sexually perverted, brazen, and greedy, committing ritual murders, having great influence over the media, and organizing a world conspiracy aimed at enslaving all other peoples.<sup>27</sup>

Ahmed Rami, the man behind Radio Islam, was convicted of anti-Semitic hate crimes in 1989 and again in a court of appeals the following year. Nevertheless, influential journalists and politicians supported him and even denied or exculpated his anti-Semitism.<sup>28</sup> Jan Bergman, professor of theology at Uppsala University,

testified in Rami's defense and claimed, among other things, that for Jews it was indeed a religious duty to kill Gentiles.<sup>29</sup>

Although Radio Islam has Sweden's most aggressively and systematically anti-Semitic Muslim website, it is not the only one. Other sites run by Swedish Muslims on themes such as Islam, Arab and Muslim culture, and Middle Eastern politics disseminate anti-Semitism. While they do so less relentlessly than Radio Islam, the content of their anti-Semitism is little different.<sup>30</sup>

The idea that Jews all behave in a certain way and have specific character traits is common on these sites. Jews are portrayed as cruel and bloodthirsty, greedy and cheap, power-hungry and arrogant, cowardly and duplicitous. They are also regularly accused of sexual perversion. On one site, which describes "Jewish capital" as controlling pedophilia and child pornography, Jews are charged with sexual misconduct and racism toward Gentiles:

If a Jew attacks a woman's honor, it doesn't matter. This is not his fault, since a non-Jewish woman is no more than an animal and with animals there is no need for a marriage contract. Between Jews he is not allowed to act that way. The Jews are allowed to rape non-Jewish women.... No Jewish woman may complain if her husband commits adultery with a non-Jewish woman.<sup>31</sup>

Both biblical and modern instances are adduced, from distorted accounts of King David to propaganda stories about the Israel Defense Forces. For example, Joseph becoming viceroy of Egypt is cited as an example of Jews' striving for political and economic control in their countries of residence, with Joseph being compared to Mussolini.<sup>32</sup>

These sites present Judaism as a perverted or evil religion. An article called "The Truth behind the Animosity between Muslims and Jews" calls on Muslims to hate Jews: "We hate them for the sake of our Lord, we hate them for Allah's sake because they slandered Allah and slandered and killed His Prophets." Later, it describes the Talmud as teaching that Gentiles are pigs, their souls worth less in God's eyes than those of animals, and that Jews must fight Muslims. "The Jews" are also accused of "criminal behavior against the House of Allah," that is, the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, by trying to destroy it and dig tunnels to undermine it.<sup>33</sup>

A classic anti-Semitic theme found on some Swedish Muslim websites is that of a Jewish world conspiracy. It is blamed for virtually all problems, from poverty, drug trade, and prostitution to every present-day war and the 9/11 attack. From this viewpoint, the fact that a public person is Jewish is proof of his or her membership in the conspiracy.

Several Swedish institutions such as Uppsala University, the Swedish Bar Association, and Amnesty International are said to be in the conspiracy's hands. Some of these websites, including Islamiskaforum and Radio Islam, have also

published the “Jew List.” Originating in Nazi circles, it contains the names of Swedes who are accused of belonging to the Swedish branch of the Jewish conspiracy. The editor of a large Swedish newspaper is called a “propaganda producer, Jewish whore who chose to work her way up through the Social Democratic Party.” A former governor is described as a “typical thief, a Jew.” A cabinet minister is dubbed a “Jewish midget...Sweden’s Jewish trade minister.” A well-known journalist is referred to as a “Jewish charlatan, a propagandist with a Polish-Jewish background.”<sup>34</sup> The list contains hundreds more names.

### **Anti-Semitic Attacks**

It is impossible to fully assess how common anti-Semitic sentiments are among Arabs and Muslims in Sweden. One indication may be the number of anti-Semitic attacks and other crimes with anti-Semitic motives that occur in the country. Because of the relatively large number of such acts that go unreported and the method of registration used by the police, the frequency of these events cannot be ascertained.<sup>35</sup> It is clear, however, that they increased sharply in 2000 after the breakdown of the Oslo process and the renewal of the intifada.

The most common form of anti-Semitic crime is harassment in the street by Arab and Muslim youths who identify passersby as Jewish. Such verbal or physical attacks are especially common during Jewish holidays, when more Jews than usual are visible close to synagogues and community centers. For instance, three men identified as Arabs walked by the Great Synagogue in Stockholm on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, 2002, and shouted, “I’ll kill you, Zionists!” A young man was attacked on his way home from synagogue in Malmö by a group of Arab youths on Yom Kippur, 2004. In a slightly different incident in 2002, a Muslim taxi driver refused to drive two elderly women to the synagogue in Stockholm and forced them out of his car when he identified them as Jewish.<sup>36</sup>

A major anti-Semitic incident took place in Stockholm on 18 April 2002, when a rally against anti-Semitism and Islamophobia organized by the Liberal Youth Movement was stormed. Some sixty individuals, mostly of Middle Eastern background, physically attacked participants, destroyed signs, and shouted epithets like “Jewish swine!” and “Allahu Akbar!” Many of those at the rally, including some Holocaust survivors, suffered injury and shock before the police intervened after fifteen to twenty minutes. Similar attacks have taken place in Malmö and Göteborg.<sup>37</sup>

Later, during the Second Lebanon War in 2006, a threat to the synagogue in Malmö forced the community to relocate a prayer service. Much like the attacks during the Second Intifada, this was yet another reminder that tension in the Middle East is sometimes translated into aggression against Diaspora Jews, and rage against the state of Israel is projected onto Jews everywhere.

## What Can Be Done?

Although anti-Semitism was suppressed in the public discourse after World War II, it did not disappear. It did, however, remain a marginal phenomenon that did not reenter the mainstream media, and the general impression was that it had disappeared altogether. This may have contributed to many Swedes' difficulties in realizing that anti-Semitism indeed still exists in the substrata of public debate, and among certain population groups in Sweden. The unwillingness to acknowledge the problem has led to a lack of awareness of it, manifested, for instance, in the virtual absence of scholarly research on the topic.

Bachner and Ring's pioneering quantitative study of anti-Semitism in Sweden in 2005 showed that although almost 60 percent of Swedes reject anti-Semitism, some 35 percent are ambivalent toward Jews and about 5 percent are anti-Semitic. Among these 5 percent, Muslim Swedes were overrepresented—a result that concurred with earlier research pointing to anti-Semitism among certain Arabs and Muslims in Sweden.

The Arab and Muslim communities in Sweden are large and heterogeneous. Obviously, not all their members are anti-Semites, and only a small handful attack Jews. Still, the anti-Semitism is real and Jews in Sweden feel threatened, few daring to wear a kippa or Magen David pendant in public.

To deal with the situation, the Swedish government and society at large must first cease their denial and acknowledge that it exists. Second, there must be a will to tackle it. The past few years have seen a growing awareness of the problem of anti-Semitism in the Middle East and among people in Sweden of Middle Eastern descent. However, debates on this sensitive issue tend to become politicized quickly, and participants in the public debate who point to the problem are not rarely accused of Islamophobia, lobbying for Israel, or both. Among those who do acknowledge this anti-Semitism, not all perceive it as a problem, or at least not as one that can be confronted. Jan Samuelsson, professor of the history of religions at Stockholm University, says Arab and Muslim anti-Semitism in Sweden is “understandable, reasonable, and justified.”<sup>38</sup> Although he is an exception, many others are willing to exculpate the phenomenon as regrettable but inevitable as long as Israel occupies Palestinian territory.

Such tolerance for intolerance is a recipe for catastrophe and in the end may have grave consequences not only for Swedish Jewry. To cease making excuses for the phenomenon and realize that it is part of a global trend is the first step in battling it. This must, however, be part of a broader strategy of counteracting segregation in the suburbs of Sweden's larger cities. Socially, culturally, and economically integrating the Arab and Muslim immigrants is something from which everyone, not only the Jews, would benefit.

## Notes

1. Jan Guillou, "Okupationen är omöjlig att försvara," *Aftonbladet*, 15 April 2002, 10 [Swedish]. Guillou is not the only *Aftonbladet* columnist to hold this view. See, e.g., Johanne Hildebrandt, "Trötta generaliseringar spår bara på misstron," *Aftonbladet*, 26 October 2003, 56 [Swedish]; Mats K. G. Johansson, "Hela arabvärlden demoniseras," *Svenska Dagbladet*, 25 February 2004, 56. [Swedish]
2. Two notable exceptions are Henrik Bachner, *Återkomsten—Antisemitism i Sverige efter 1945* (Stockholm: Natur och Kultur, 1999) [Swedish] and Lars M. Andersson, *En jude är en jude är en jude...Representationer av "juden" i svensk skämtpress 1900-1930* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2000). [Swedish]
3. Henrik Bachner and Jonas Ring, *Antisemitiska attityder och föreställningar i Sverige* (Stockholm: Forum för levande historia, 2005), 129. [Swedish]
4. *Ibid.*, 130.
5. *Ibid.*, 130.
6. *Ibid.*, 131.
7. *Ibid.*, 132.
8. *Ibid.*, 132.
9. *Ibid.*, 133.
10. *Ibid.*, 76.
11. *Ibid.*, 137-38.
12. There are only a few works dealing with anti-Semitism on the Swedish Left. See, e.g., Per Ahlmark, *Vänstern och tyranniet—Det galna kvartsseklet* (Stockholm: Timbro, 1994) [Swedish]; Henrik Bachner, *Återkomsten—Antisemitism i Sverige efter 1945* (Stockholm: Natur och Kultur, 1999). [Swedish]
13. Bernard Lewis, *Semites and Anti-Semites: An Inquiry into Conflict and Prejudice* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1986), 16.
14. *Ibid.*, 49. See also Moshe Zimmermann, *Wilhelm Marr: The Patriarch of Antisemitism* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).
15. Helen Fein, "Dimensions of Antisemitism: Attitudes, Collective Accusations, and Actions," in Helen Fein, ed., *The Persisting Question: Sociological Perspectives and Social Contexts of Modern Antisemitism*, Current Research on Antisemitism, Vol. 1 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1987).
16. Raphael Israeli, "Anti-Jewish Attitudes in the Arabic Media, 1975-1981," in Robert S. Wistrich, ed., *From Anti-Zionism to Anti-Semitism in the Contemporary World* (Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, and London: Macmillan, 1990), 102.
17. Robert S. Wistrich, *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1991), 206.
18. Lewis, *Semites and Anti-Semites*, 121; Wistrich, *Antisemitism*, 196.
19. Wistrich, *Antisemitism*, 224.
20. Lewis, *Semites and Anti-Semites*, 196.
21. See, e.g., Arnon Groiss, *The West, Christians and Jews in Saudi Arabian Schoolbooks* (New York and Jerusalem: Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace, 2003); Daniel J. Wakin, "Anti-Semitic 'Elders of Zion' Gets New Life on Egypt TV," *New York Times*, 26 October 2002; Fouad Ajami, "What the Muslim World Is Watching," *New York Times Magazine*, 18 November 2001.
22. Mikael Tossavainen, "Det förnekade hatet—Antisemitism bland araber och muslimer i Sverige," Svenska Kommittén Mot Antisemitism, Stockholm, 2003, 22. [Swedish]
23. Jackie Jakubowski, "'Judarna kommer att brinna i helvetet,' förklarar en elev. Det fick han lära sig i en Koran-skola," *Judisk Krönika*, 2, 2001. [Swedish]

24. The letter is quoted in Tossavainen, "Det förnekade hatet," 24. The peculiarities in the grammar and orthography reflect the Swedish original. The translation from Swedish is this author's.
25. *Ibid.*, 26.
26. Ahlmark, *Vänstern och tyranniet*, 85.
27. *Ibid.*, 100.
28. See, e.g., Dennis Zachrisson in *FiB-Kulturfront*, 16, 1988 [Swedish]; Claes-Adam Wachtmeister in *Expressen*, 26 September 1990 [Swedish]; Sven Öste in *Dagens Nyheter*, 23 September 1990 [Swedish].
29. Ahlmark, *Vänstern och tyranniet*, 249.
30. Many of these websites have changed their addresses after their anti-Semitic content was analyzed in Tossavainen, "Det förnekade hatet."
31. See [www.islamiskaforum.com](http://www.islamiskaforum.com). The translation from Swedish is this author's.
32. "Abûl-A'lâ al-Mawdûdî kritiserar Allåhs profeter," at [www.darulhadith.com](http://www.darulhadith.com). [Swedish]
33. "Sanningen bakom fiendskapen mellan Muslimer o Judar," [www.islamiskaforum.com](http://www.islamiskaforum.com) [Swedish]. The translation from Swedish is this author's.
34. See, e.g., [www.islamiskaforum.com](http://www.islamiskaforum.com).
35. See the annual report by the Secret Police (SÄPO), "Brottslighet kopplad till rikets säkerhet 2002," Stockholm, 2003, 30, 82. [Swedish]
36. For more examples, see Tossavainen, "Det förnekade hatet," 36.
37. See, e.g., Per Svensson, "Det brinner på Möllevångstorget," *Judisk Krönika*, 2, 2001, 30 [Swedish]; Eva Hermelius, "Farligt med kippa på stan," *ibid.*, 35. [Swedish]
38. Jan Samuelsson, "'Muslimers hat mot judar är befogat,'" *Dagens Nyheter*, 25 October 2003. [Swedish]

Gerald Steinberg

## The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency's Support for NGO Campaigns against Israel\*

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) is the Swedish Foreign Ministry's primary agency for global development and cooperation.<sup>1</sup> It administered approximately SEK 14 billion (\$1.8 billion) in 2005, 63 percent of Sweden's total contribution to international development cooperation.<sup>2</sup> In 2004, SIDA invested a total of SEK 273 million (\$34 million) in the West Bank and Gaza. Of that, SEK 72 million (\$9.1 million) went toward "human rights and democratization" programs, SEK 147 million (\$19 million) toward the social sectors, and SEK 42.5 million (\$5.5 million) toward infrastructure, commerce, and urban development. SIDA channels substantial funds through local NGOs, thereby providing significant support for their agendas.

SIDA's projects in the West Bank and Gaza aim to improve the situation of the Palestinian people. However, its approach is highly unbalanced and its promotion of the Palestinian narrative contributes to the conflict. SIDA's website states that: "Palestinian society is in a deep crisis and the conflict is leaving deep scars: human rights are being violated every day, unemployment is rife and the destruction of the infrastructure continues."<sup>3</sup> Following the standard Palestinian narrative, SIDA attributes this situation entirely to Israeli policy:

The Israeli blockades and the prolonged curfews have severely restricted people's chances of earning a living and their access to schools and hospitals. The wall, or "separation barrier," that Israel has built on the West Bank prevents Palestinians from moving freely, even within and between the Palestinian controlled areas on the West Bank and in Gaza. Israel's military air and ground operations have had a devastating effect on people's physical and mental health as well as on crops, buildings and roads in the Palestinian areas.<sup>4</sup>

In enumerating the causes of Palestinian poverty, SIDA fails to mention the history of the conflict, the terrorism that these measures seek to prevent, and the widespread corruption within the Palestinian Authority that explains the ineffectiveness of international aid.

## A Politicized Approach

Since 2000, SIDA has increased its humanitarian aid to the West Bank and Gaza from SEK 20 million (\$2.5 million) to almost SEK 100 million (\$13 million) per year. The stated objective is to ease suffering caused by the conflict through food aid, job creation, repairing homes, support for the health sector, transport, and promoting dialogue and peace.<sup>5</sup> However, some of its activities and the organizations through which it channels funding are systematically political in nature, and promote external agendas—against Israel—rather than internal Palestinian development.

In 2005, as part of the ongoing support for specific Palestinian human rights NGOs, SIDA donated \$58,734 to the Palestinian group Al-Haq.<sup>6</sup> Al-Haq was an active participant in the infamous 2001 World Conference against Racism in Durban, which adopted a campaign of anti-Israeli demonization through boycotts and divestment while exploiting the rhetoric of human rights. This NGO frequently distorts international law in its publications and regularly submits politically motivated reports to the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR).<sup>7</sup>

For example, in a submission to the UNCHR on 13 February 2006, Al-Haq reports that “Israel’s extrajudicial killing of Palestinian civilians has continued unabated.... Such killings fly in the face of the fundamental right to life and other associated rights such as that to due process, as upheld in international human rights and humanitarian law.”<sup>8</sup> In its analysis of Israel’s international legal obligations, Al-Haq completely erases the context of terrorism and the need for defense against it.

Together with the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and the Ford Foundation, SIDA also funds the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN).<sup>9</sup> EMHRN provides money, legitimacy, and publicity for the work of NGOs such as the Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR) and Al-Mezan, which selectively exploit human rights terminology for partisan political objectives.<sup>10</sup>

SIDA’s development program also aims to address the health needs of the Palestinian people through its support for the Palestinian Solidarity Association of Sweden (PGS). PGS, which describes itself as “a politically and religiously independent non-profit and non-governmental organization,”<sup>11</sup> supports the campaign to boycott Israeli goods<sup>12</sup> and programs run by the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees (UPMRC).<sup>13</sup> UPMRC’s systematic condemnation of Israeli actions ignores the context of Palestinian terrorism. For example, on 25 February 2004 its website reported that Israeli armed forces had entered Ramallah so as to “raid” and “attack” specific banks, holding staff hostage and clearing the surrounding buildings while doing so.<sup>14</sup> It failed to explain that the purpose of the operation was to dismantle the financial infrastructure of terrorism and that over \$2 million was confiscated from fictitious accounts used to funnel

funding to Hamas directly from Hizballah and the Iranian, Syrian, and Libyan governments.<sup>15</sup>

### **Support for Vilification**

SIDA also channels donations through the Swedish group Diakonia, which describes itself as “a Christian development organization working together with local partners for a sustainable change for the most exposed people of the world.” Beginning in 2004, Diakonia focused on a program in international humanitarian law that aims “to improve respect for, and implementation of, international humanitarian law in Israel and the West Bank and Gaza Strip.”<sup>16</sup>

However, Diakonia’s support for highly political NGOs such as Physicians for Human Rights-Israel (PHR-I)<sup>17</sup> undermines its credibility as an NGO committed to promoting the universal application of international law. PHR-I’s examination of the impact of the separation barrier in February 2005 ignored the context of Palestinian terror,<sup>18</sup> and Diakonia’s 2004 annual report<sup>19</sup> reflected this theme by neglecting to mention the barrier’s role in preventing suicide bombers from entering Israel. Christian Lagerlof, the regional representative of Diakonia, participated in a conference organized by the Palestinian Counseling Center (PCC), held on 26 September 2005, which discussed “the psychological implications of the construction of Israel’s Annexation and Expansion Wall on the residents in five villages in the Qalqilya district.”<sup>20</sup>

This rhetoric and the accompanying campaign is part of the Durban strategy of demonization and is far from the objectives claimed by SIDA and Diakonia. The conference report also failed to mention the close proximity of Qalqilya to the Israeli town of Kfar Saba and the terrorist attacks emanating from Qalqilya, which claimed the lives of twenty-eight Israelis before the barrier’s construction.<sup>21</sup> Despite PCC’s involvement in rejectionist political activities including boycott and divestment campaigns,<sup>22</sup> it has been one of Diakonia’s strategic partners for the past eight years.<sup>23</sup>

Support is also channeled to NGOs through the Swedish section of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ-S),<sup>24</sup> whose Palestinian affiliates include the above-discussed Al-Haq and the Palestinian Center for Human Rights. ICJ’s website does not list any Israeli affiliates.<sup>25</sup>

Other human rights support is given to the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens’ Rights (PICCR),<sup>26</sup> an organization established by Yasser Arafat in 1993 “to follow up and ensure that the different Palestinian laws, by-laws and regulations, and the work of the various departments, agencies and institutions of the State of Palestine and the Palestine Liberation Organization meet the requirements for safeguarding human rights.”<sup>27</sup> Although the PICCR provides an important check on the Palestinian Authority, it frequently digresses from its mandate, using human rights rhetoric to engage in one-sided criticism of Israeli actions.

For example, in its 2004 annual report, the PICCR documents Israel's targeted assassinations of Hamas leaders Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi without mentioning their role in organizing terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, in its account of the construction of Israel's separation barrier, it enumerates the wall's effects on Palestinian education, health, water resources, and social life without mentioning the context of terror.<sup>29</sup>

SIDA's funding for the Palestinian Negotiation Support Unit (NSU) is also highly problematic. The NSU is a political framework established in 1998 to "provide highly professional legal, policy and communications advice to the [Palestinian] Negotiations Affairs Department and Palestinian negotiators in preparation for, and during Permanent Status negotiations with Israel."<sup>30</sup> However, since the cessation of formal peace talks, the NSU has focused on advocacy activities. The NSU was instrumental in bringing the issue of the security barrier to the International Court of Justice at The Hague and it is an integral part of Palestinian propaganda.<sup>31</sup> The extreme bias and vilification of Israel on the NSU website<sup>32</sup> demonstrates that SIDA's overall contribution of SEK 20 million (\$2.7 million)<sup>33</sup> is being spent on political campaigning to promote demonization, rather than development and compromise.

In summary, SIDA uses funding for groups that fuel the political conflict and fail to meet SIDA's declared goals of promoting development. This agenda is also apparent within SIDA's own statements and publications. To achieve its stated objective of facilitating democratic, economic, and social development in the West Bank and Gaza, SIDA should establish and implement guidelines designed to ensure that it only funds NGOs that comply strictly with this mandate.

## Notes

\* The NGO Monitor research team contributed to this analysis. It was sent to the following people for comment, but as of 31 December 2007 no response was received: SIDA, the Swedish ambassador in Tel Aviv, the Swedish embassy in Tel Aviv, the Swedish General Consulate in Jerusalem, and Staffan Duhs and Erika Ferrer at the Swedish Foreign Ministry, [www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/3102](http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/3102).

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2. [www.SIDA.se/SIDA/jsp/SIDA.jsp?d=1230&language=en\\_US](http://www.SIDA.se/SIDA/jsp/SIDA.jsp?d=1230&language=en_US).
3. [www.SIDA.se/SIDA/jsp/SIDA.jsp?d=1230&language=en\\_US](http://www.SIDA.se/SIDA/jsp/SIDA.jsp?d=1230&language=en_US).
4. [www.SIDA.se/SIDA/jsp/SIDA.jsp?d=1230&a=18117&language=en\\_US](http://www.SIDA.se/SIDA/jsp/SIDA.jsp?d=1230&a=18117&language=en_US).
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7. <http://asp.alhaq.org/zalhaq/site/templates/viewArticle.aspx?fname=../ePublications/233.htm>.
8. "EMHRN Executive Committee Meeting," London, 4-6 February 2005 (Word document).
9. [www.ngo-monitor.org/article.php?id=780](http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article.php?id=780).
10. [www.palestinagrupperna.se/english.htm](http://www.palestinagrupperna.se/english.htm).
11. [www.palestinagrupperna.se/index.htm](http://www.palestinagrupperna.se/index.htm).
12. [www.ngo-monitor.org/archives/infofile.htm#upmrc](http://www.ngo-monitor.org/archives/infofile.htm#upmrc).

13. [www.upmrc.org/content/publications/press\\_popup053.html](http://www.upmrc.org/content/publications/press_popup053.html).
14. <http://mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH0ofg0>.
15. [www.diakonia.se/main\\_eng.htm](http://www.diakonia.se/main_eng.htm).
16. [www.phr.org.il/phr/article.asp?articleid=193&catid=41&pcat=5](http://www.phr.org.il/phr/article.asp?articleid=193&catid=41&pcat=5).
17. [www.ngo-monitor.org/editions/v3n06/MDMPHRISecBarrierReportNotCredible.htm](http://www.ngo-monitor.org/editions/v3n06/MDMPHRISecBarrierReportNotCredible.htm).
18. [www.diakonia.se/main\\_eng.htm](http://www.diakonia.se/main_eng.htm), 2004 Annual Report, 42-45.
19. [www.pcc-jer.org/impactofisraeliwall.htm](http://www.pcc-jer.org/impactofisraeliwall.htm).
20. "Anti-Terror Fence," Ministry of Foreign Affairs (PowerPoint presentation).
21. [www.badil.org/Boycott-Statement.htm](http://www.badil.org/Boycott-Statement.htm).
22. [www.pcc-jer.org/impactofisraeliwall.htm](http://www.pcc-jer.org/impactofisraeliwall.htm).
23. [www.swedenabroad.com/pages/general\\_\\_\\_6401.asp](http://www.swedenabroad.com/pages/general___6401.asp).
24. [www.icj.org/world\\_pays.php3?id\\_mot=24&lang=en](http://www.icj.org/world_pays.php3?id_mot=24&lang=en).
25. [www.swedenabroad.com/pages/general\\_\\_\\_6401.asp](http://www.swedenabroad.com/pages/general___6401.asp).
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Efraim Zuroff

## Sweden's Refusal to Prosecute Nazi War Criminals, 1986-2007

In the fall of 1986, the Simon Wiesenthal Center began to intensify its efforts to help facilitate the prosecution of Nazi war criminals in various countries all over the world, focusing primarily on Western democracies that had afforded a refuge to escaped Holocaust perpetrators in the immediate aftermath of World War II. The center's efforts were based on a discovery made by its Jerusalem office, which revealed that the files of the International Tracing Service (ITS)—founded by the Red Cross and located in Arolson, West Germany—which were available on microfilm in the Yad Vashem Archives, contained extremely valuable information on the postwar emigration of numerous suspected Nazi war criminals. By cross-referencing master lists of Holocaust perpetrators with the files of the ITS, the center's researchers were able in a relatively short time to identify the postwar emigration destinations of numerous East European collaborators who were alleged to have actively participated in the implementation of the Final Solution.

Since many of these suspected criminals had emigrated to countries that were democracies, but that had no legal mechanism to deal with crimes that had been committed in a different land at a time when the perpetrator was neither a resident nor a citizen of his current country of residence, the center hoped that the revelation of the presence of numerous suspected Nazis would help influence these governments to investigate the Nazis' entry and take legal action against them. In this regard, the center's hopes were based, to a certain extent, on the experience of the United States, where revelations regarding the presence of numerous Nazi war criminals and collaborators, who had entered the country as refugees during the years 1947-1952, had prompted the establishment in 1979—in the framework of the Department of Justice—of the Office of Special Investigations (OSI), a special agency whose primary purpose was to take legal action against the Nazi war criminals residing in the United States. OSI's relative success in prosecuting such cases—which were dealt with as civil rather than criminal cases for a variety of legal reasons<sup>1</sup>—were the basis and the model for the center's efforts, which, it was hoped, would induce additional countries to take similar or equivalent legal measures.

It is also important to note that the successful efforts of the American government to prosecute the Nazi war criminals residing in the United States had an added impact because they focused attention on the highly significant role

played by local collaborators in the implementation of the Final Solution. This was the result of the fact that with a few exceptions, all the war criminals prosecuted by the Americans were East European collaborators, rather than Germans or Austrians. The trials of these perpetrators in the United States focused public attention on the active involvement of local collaborators in the mass murder of European Jewry, primarily in the areas in which the Einsatzgruppen had operated, and raised critical questions regarding the current whereabouts of war criminals who had escaped to countries other than the United States.

In this context, it should be noted that in two countries—Canada and Australia—the presence of numerous Nazi war criminals, who had entered as refugees, had already been revealed before the center began its campaign, but those governments had still not decided what, if any, legal action to take against them. In that regard, the submission of lists of suspected Nazi war criminals who had immigrated to those countries was designed to increase the pressure upon these governments to take action against Nazi perpetrators. The center's working assumption in this regard was that the suspects it had discovered were the proverbial "tip of the iceberg" and that only a full-scale, adequately-funded governmental inquiry could reveal the scope of the postwar entry of Nazi war criminals under the guise of refugees in each of the countries in question. In all, a total of ten lists were submitted during the period from 1 October 1986 to 1 March 1987 to eight countries: Australia (3 lists—65 suspects); United Kingdom (1 list—17 suspects); Canada (1 list—26 suspects); Venezuela (1 list—3 suspects); Brazil (1 list—1 suspect); Sweden (1 list—12 suspects); West Germany (1 list—44 suspects); United States (1 list—74 suspects).<sup>2</sup>

### **The Swedish List**

During the fall of 1986, the center obtained information on twenty-one Latvian and Estonian suspected Nazi war criminals who had escaped to Sweden after World War II and were thought to still be residing in that country. The individuals in question ranged from national leaders who actively collaborated with the Nazis on a variety of key issues including security affairs and/or the murder of the Jews, to local officials who assisted the Nazi regime and participated in measures against the Jewish population in a specific geographic area, to journalists who worked for collaborationist newspapers.

Among the most prominent Latvian collaborators were: Aleksanders Plesners who headed the Latvian SS-Legion; Karlis Lobe who organized the Latvian police battalions in Riga and later served as chief of police in Ventspils; Arvids Ose who was actively involved in the persecution of Jews in Riga; and Alfreds Vadzemnieks who headed the Latvian Security Service (SD) in the Ventspils district and was alleged to have participated in the murder of civilians.<sup>3</sup> Among the Estonians the most important suspects were Oskar Angelus, who headed the Estonian Department of Internal Affairs and organized the Estonian Political

Police, which carried out the murder of Estonian Jewry, Hugo Okasmaa and Leonid Laid who both served as officers in the Political Police in the Tallinn-Harju Prefecture, and Vladimir Tiit and Arkadi Visnapuu who served as officers of the Estonian Security Police.<sup>4</sup>

Unlike the other lists presented to Western governments in the fall of 1986, the Swedish list was based primarily on allegations that appeared in Soviet publications published during the 1960s. And although there was a certain risk in presenting charges based on Soviet sources, the center decided to submit the material for two major reasons. The first was that quite a few of the allegations that had appeared in similar Soviet publications had been confirmed independently, including some in Western courts.<sup>5</sup> The second was that the center believed that a Swedish governmental investigation would most probably find numerous additional suspected Nazi war criminals living in the country and would hopefully prompt legal action by the government against these criminals, a course of action that the authorities would never have initiated on their own without externally-produced evidence of the existence in the country of at least several Nazi war criminals. Although the center was fairly certain that there were indeed numerous, additional, unknown suspects living in Sweden, it lacked the resources to carry out the kind of comprehensive investigation that can only be performed by a government, and therefore decided to submit the material despite the fact that it might be perceived as ostensibly less convincing than documents culled from Western sources.

On 18 November 1986, Rabbis Marvin Hier and Abraham Cooper, the dean and associate dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, met in Washington, DC, at the Swedish embassy with Swedish diplomat Ulf Hjertonsson and submitted a list of twelve<sup>6</sup> suspected Latvian and Estonian Nazi war criminals who the center had reason to believe were residing in Sweden.<sup>7</sup> In an accompanying letter to Swedish prime minister Ingvar Carlsson, the rabbis asked the Swedish government to “fully investigate these individuals and the overall question of how many Nazi war criminals may have made their way to Sweden after World War II.” After adding some details regarding the nature of the crimes committed by the suspects, the rabbis expressed their optimism regarding the response they expected from the Swedish authorities: “While we are very much aware of Sweden’s unique position in the world as a center of neutrality and asylum, we are certain that your democracy will want to act to help bring to justice those guilty of participating in the most heinous crime, the Holocaust.”<sup>8</sup>

As could be expected, the submission of the list, which was reported on briefly in Israel<sup>9</sup> and the United States,<sup>10</sup> became a major story in Sweden. In fact, coverage of the issue actually preceded the submission of the list by almost a month and helped build public interest even before the meeting in Washington.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the submission of the names of the suspects marked the culmination of extensive local coverage on the presence in Sweden of escaped Baltic Nazi war criminals.<sup>12</sup>

While it was clear from the outset that the Swedish government would not respond immediately to the issues raised by the Wiesenthal Center, within hours after the list of suspects was submitted, there were already indications that the Swedes had no intention of taking any legal action against the Nazi war criminals residing in the country. Although Prime Minister Carlsson said that the government “will definitely look into it,” Justice Ministry spokesman Johan Munck said quite clearly that regardless of whatever crimes the individuals might have committed, no legal action whatsoever could be taken against them due to Sweden’s twenty-five year statute of limitations. According to Munch, “Under existing Swedish law they [the suspects] cannot be prosecuted and they cannot be deported to any other state. The only thing that can happen is that they could lodge a civil lawsuit for slander if their names were published in a newspaper.”<sup>13</sup>

This sad state of affairs was officially confirmed about three months later in Prime Minister Carlsson’s response to Rabbis Hier and Cooper. In a letter dated 12 February 1987, the Swedish prime minister informed the rabbis that all of the suspects were or had been residents of Sweden, that eight of the twelve were deceased, and that the government had decided that day at its cabinet meeting not to take any action in response to the Wiesenthal Center’s request, primarily because of the existence in Sweden since 1926 of a statute of limitations of twenty-five years on the prosecution of the crimes alleged. Carlsson explained that the decision had been made following the presentation of an in-depth investigation of the legal status of the issues under consideration by a special committee composed of three undersecretaries for legal affairs: Johan Hirschfeldt of the Cabinet Office, Johan Munck of the Ministry of Justice, and Hans Corell of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He added, moreover, that “The idea of legislation that would retroactively change the legal position for the war criminals of the Second World War was strongly repudiated by Sweden as early as during the period of limitation. The three lawyers have therefore come to the conclusion that a change in this position must be regarded as out of the question.”

Carlsson was obviously aware of the problematic nature of his response and therefore asserted that Sweden’s refusal to take legal action against local Nazi war criminals should under no circumstances be misconstrued as a lack of concern regarding war crimes in general and those of the Holocaust in particular. In Carlsson’s words:

Finally, I should like to add this. The war crimes which were committed during the Second World War constitute one of the darkest chapters in the history of mankind. It is important that these war crimes do not fall into oblivion. Knowledge of what happened in the shadow of the Second World War must be an important lodestar for existing and coming generations. Such events must be condemned and must not be repeated. The fact that the Swedish Government has now decided not to take any action in regard to your request must, therefore, under no circumstances give the

impression that the Government does not fervently oppose all kinds of war crimes. However, the rule of law must be upheld. I am convinced that you understand that an amendment of the Swedish law would be contrary to fundamental principles which have been of guidance in legislation in our country for a long time.<sup>14</sup>

### **A Dismissive Attitude**

A careful reading of the report prepared for the government by the three undersecretaries for legal affairs affords interesting insights into the basis for the refusal of the Swedish government to take action against Nazi war criminals. And in fact, it reveals Swedish officials who are oblivious to the trials of Nazi war criminals being held elsewhere in the world, ignorant of the history of the Holocaust in the Baltics, and basically dismissive of the moral significance of the prosecution of Holocaust perpetrators. Thus, for example, they consider the prospect of being able to conduct a “meaningful” trial of the suspects “unlikely” even though they openly admit that they were unable to verify the accuracy of the allegations against the suspects. In the same vein, despite the plethora of historical documentation on the active participation of Baltic Nazi collaborators in the persecution and murder of Latvian and Estonian Jewry,<sup>15</sup> the authors write that “It is impossible to judge from the sources available how far native collaborators participated in the German genocidal actions and deportations.”

Given this attitude it is hardly surprising that the report not only advocates a negative response to the center's request for legal action against the suspects, but even rejects the possibility of establishing a commission of inquiry, and advises against the initiation of a governmental investigation into the question of how many Nazi war criminals ever entered Sweden. “To initiate an inquiry into the matter in the present situation would be dubious from the standpoint of principle and from the material point of view hardly meaningful.”<sup>16</sup>

The unequivocally negative response of the Swedish government and its refusal to even consider, let alone pass, legislation of any sort to enable the prosecution of Nazi war criminals, dealt a harsh blow to the efforts to initiate legal action against Holocaust perpetrators living in Sweden. The fact that the basis for the decision was legal in essence thwarted whatever efforts might have been undertaken to induce a change in government policy, and practically paralyzed the Wiesenthal Center's initiatives vis-à-vis Sweden. Finding additional suspects against whom there were more convincing documentation and witnesses would not make a difference since regardless of the evidence Sweden had decided that it could not prosecute Nazi war criminals.

Thus, in the aftermath of the February 1987 decision, the Wiesenthal Center was reduced to attempting to publicize Sweden's refusal in principle to prosecute and thinking of ways to convince the Swedish government to change its policies. Opportunities to do so during the following decade and a half were few and

far between, and with Swedish Jewry a relatively small and not particularly influential community,<sup>17</sup> and with little public interest elsewhere in the issue, Nazi war criminals living in Sweden had no reason to fear for their future. In fact, the situation appeared so hopeless in this regard, that the center did not even submit the names of additional suspected Baltic Nazi war criminals who escaped to Sweden toward the end of World War II that it uncovered in early 1989,<sup>18</sup> because it was clear that the government had no intention of even investigating, let alone prosecuting, these cases. During this period, apart from a lecture by the author of this article that focused on Sweden's failure to prosecute, which was delivered at the First International Jerusalem Conference of Children of Holocaust Survivors and received a fair amount of media coverage,<sup>19</sup> little was done—either publicly or behind the scenes—to attempt to alter the situation.

While the speech in question did succeed in arousing the ire of the Swedish ambassador to Israel who protested its contents, and expressed his government's condemnation of "all kinds of war crimes,"<sup>20</sup> nothing, of course, changed. Even worse, nothing happened in the wake of revelations by Swedish historian Helene Lööw that in the immediate aftermath of World War II the Swedish authorities had refused to extradite Nazi collaborators to their countries of origin. This because they feared that they might be subjected to summary trials and face a death sentence. In addition, Lööw exposed the fact that although the Swedish authorities investigated all the arriving refugees, they adopted a lenient attitude toward escaped Baltic Nazi war criminals, who were regarded as having cooperated with the Nazis out of patriotism, and whose heinous participation in the murder of Jews was generally overlooked or ignored. In such cases, the Swedish authorities tended to regard evidence concerning war crimes in the Baltics from communist—and even to some extent from Jewish sources—as questionable or motivated by "personal enmity."

Under such circumstances, it is hardly surprising that not a single Baltic war criminal was ever prosecuted in Sweden and that at least several others whose wartime activities were revealed during the investigations were allowed to freely emigrate elsewhere.<sup>21</sup> In fact, the only legal cases in Sweden that related to crimes committed during World War II were civil cases, including one in the wake of an effort by Simon Wiesenthal to convince the Swedish authorities to take legal action against Latvian police commander Karlis Lobe who was accused of participating in the murder of Jews in the Ventspils district, among other crimes.<sup>22</sup>

More than an entire decade passed from the time that the Swedish authorities refused to take action in response to the Wiesenthal Center's list of suspected Nazi war criminals until a serious opportunity presented itself to attempt to change Swedish policy on this issue. That opportunity arose in the wake of a very surprising development. Sweden, which during its entire history had never played a significant role in any global Jewish issue, assumed a leadership role in worldwide Holocaust education. This development created an opportunity to force Sweden to reassess its position under the spotlight of international attention,

which had hereto never been the case. Thus, already at a preparatory conference held in Stockholm in early May 1998 to coordinate efforts to promote Holocaust education all over the world, the author of this article called upon the Swedish government to change its existent policy and investigate Nazi war criminals and establish a legal mechanism to enable their prosecution. Although this appeal was presented as a means to enhance and reinforce Holocaust educational activities in Sweden,<sup>23</sup> it found no specific expression in the conference resolutions,<sup>24</sup> nor was the author ever invited again—in any capacity—to subsequent meetings and conferences of the task force for international cooperation to spread knowledge about the Holocaust.

### **New Revelations**

A year and a half later, however, as preparations were in high gear for the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust, which was to be attended by numerous heads of state and international leaders, new revelations regarding Nazi war criminals in Sweden finally forced the Swedish government to reexamine its position. The man behind the exposé was a Swedish journalist named Bosse Schön who revealed that at least 260 Swedes had served in the Waffen-SS, among them several who, late in the war, guarded Hitler in his bunker in Berlin and at least one (Harald Sundin), who served in Treblinka, participated in executions and was still alive and living in Sweden.<sup>25</sup>

The information that Schön published in a book titled *Svenskarna Som Stred För Hitler* (Swedes Who Fought for Hitler)<sup>26</sup> also served as the basis for a three-part documentary film of the same name (produced by Rolf Wrangnert) that was broadcast on Sweden's TV4 in late December 1999 and led to a serious political furor. Swedish MP Alf Svensson, leader of the opposition Christian Democrats, for example, said that his country had “to own up to its links to Nazi Germany and the Holocaust,” and demanded that Prime Minister Göran Persson deal with this issue before the international conference convened in Stockholm, lest Sweden's ties to the Third Reich and its failure to prosecute Nazi war criminals overshadow its efforts to promote Holocaust education.<sup>27</sup> Most important, five of Sweden's seven parliamentary parties supported his call for action.<sup>28</sup>

On 4 January 2000, the director of the Jerusalem office of the Wiesenthal Center called upon Persson to initiate an official governmental inquiry to investigate those Nazi war criminals living in Sweden, to take measures to ensure that those found guilty could be brought to trial, and to establish a historical commission to fully examine Sweden's role in the Holocaust. In Zuroff's words, “how can Sweden lead such a worthy educational initiative if a Swede who served in the infamous Treblinka death camp has never been investigated, let alone prosecuted by the Swedish authorities, and the same applies to numerous other Nazi war criminals.”<sup>29</sup>

This time, the response of the Swedish government was practically

immediate, with Prime Minister Persson announcing on Swedish television that he would consider appointing “a commission, research project or some other method to find out exactly what the Swedish Nazis did.” With four hundred delegates from forty-five countries due to attend the Stockholm Conference, among them German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, French prime minister Lionel Jospin, and Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak,<sup>30</sup> the issue could obviously not be ignored as it had been in the past. Thus the stage was set not only for a thorough evaluation of Sweden’s history during the Holocaust but even for a reappraisal of Swedish policy on Nazi war criminals, with the media full of news and analysis of the issues, including reexaminations of the Wiesenthal Center’s 1986 list of suspected Nazi war criminals.<sup>31</sup>

On 19 January 2000, a week before the Stockholm Conference was set to begin, Prime Minister Persson addressed the Swedish parliament and expressed his embarrassment that Swedes who had committed crimes against humanity had never been brought to justice. According to Persson:

The Swedish Security Service is in possession of documents containing information about Swedes who collaborated with Nazi Germany during the war, as well as information about suspected war criminals who fled to Sweden. Researchers already have access to this type of historical material. However, as a result of recent discussions, the question of how long documents should be classified has arisen. The Government is prepared to examine this matter once again.

Just like many other people, I too am tormented by the thought that Swedes who have been a party to Nazi Germany’s crimes against humanity have been able to go free in our country without the competent judicial authorities taking steps. The shame of our past is something that we Swedes must bear together.

The Government is well aware of the very difficult legal problems and matters of principle that are involved when instituting legal proceedings for crimes that fall under the statute of limitations, but will nevertheless reconsider the matter as and when the occasion arises. In addition, the Government will shortly be appointing a committee of inquiry assigned with the task of abolishing the period of limitation for *inter alia* war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.<sup>32</sup>

Although Persson’s comments appear to indicate a possible change in Swedish policy vis-à-vis Nazi war criminals, a careful reading of his statement makes clear that there was little room for optimism. If Bosse Schön’s revelations regarding Swedes who fought alongside the Nazis were not sufficient reason to reexamine the statute of limitations, it was extremely doubtful whether such a reason actually existed. And, indeed, once the Stockholm Conference was successfully completed, and the international focus on Sweden ended, there was no serious pressure on the government to change its policy.

This was clearly borne out in July 2000 when Prime Minister Persson notified the author of this article that the Swedish government had ruled out any possibility of changing the statute of limitations for crimes committed during World War II. According to Persson:

The periods of limitations for the crimes that the accused are said to have committed expired a long time ago. The longest period of limitation in Sweden is twenty-five years. The idea of introducing legislation that would retroactively change the legal position for the war criminals of the Second World War was repudiated by Sweden already during the European debate on this issue in the 1960s. However, many other European countries decided to prolong the current period of limitation concerning these crimes. Sweden took the position that a prolongation would be in conflict with general legal principles. Today, I can only regret this stand-point and lament the fact that nothing was done at that stage when it, in retrospective, should have been possible.

The Swedish Government has also thoroughly considered the possibility of reintroducing criminal responsibility for the crimes under the Second World War, for which the periods of limitations have expired in some cases more than thirty years ago. Any legislation reintroducing the criminal responsibility would come in conflict with general principles of the Swedish judicial system. It is not possible for the Government to suggest such legislation.

Since Sweden has no possibility of reintroducing the criminal responsibility for these crimes, no accusations against individuals can be tried by the Swedish judicial bodies. Any official investigation, established by the Government, could be said to evade the current legislation and to risk a conflict with the purpose behind the law on this point.

The Government has therefore decided not to take further action in response to your request to establish an official governmental investigation concerning crimes against humanity during the Second World War.

It is my hope that you will understand the situation in which we find ourselves. I want to stress that it is my opinion that an opportunity to change the statute of limitations existed during the 1960s. I deeply regret that a different decision was not made at that time.

However, during this year the Government will establish a commission with the task to deliberate the Swedish legislation as to war-crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. The commission will also be charged with the issue of abolishing the statute of limitations for the future for these very serious crimes.<sup>33</sup>

The decision of the Swedish government to refrain from altering the existing statute of limitations—as expressed in Persson's letter—in effect “closed the book” once and for all on any hope of achieving the prosecution of Nazi war criminals in that country. Under these circumstances, the only option available to

those opposed to this decision was protest and indignation, which found frequent expression in the Swedish<sup>34</sup> and international<sup>35</sup> media in the immediate aftermath of the government's decision. Yet, as powerful and as incisive as these responses may have been, they did not achieve any concrete result and thus it is almost one hundred percent certain that no Holocaust perpetrator living in Sweden will ever be held accountable for their crimes.

## Postscript

On 19 April 2001, the Simon Wiesenthal Center issued its first Annual Status Report on the Worldwide Investigation and Prosecution of Nazi War Criminals, which graded the performances regarding this issue over the past few years of eighteen different countries that were either the site of Holocaust crimes or the current domicile of suspected perpetrators. The grades ranged from A for the best performance to F for "total failure." While the U.S. Office of Special Investigations was awarded the former grade for its outstanding successes, Sweden and Syria were the only two countries to receive a failing grade.<sup>36</sup> The fact that Sweden's record was assessed so negatively, to the extent that it was grouped together with a notorious violator of human rights like Syria, aroused considerable public attention,<sup>37</sup> as well as the ire of Swedish officials including Prime Minister Persson. "I am a bit shocked by the tone and the attack which continues although one must know what we have done and what we stand for,"<sup>38</sup> he noted. In a statement to Swedish news agency TT, the Swedish leader explained that what was required in this matter was retroactive legislation, which was simply out of the question because it completely conflicted with Swedish legal principles.

Six weeks later the author of this article utilized the publication of a report by an international commission of historians appointed by Estonian president Lennart Meri to investigate the crimes committed during the Nazi—and communist—occupation of Estonia that named Oskar Angelus, who escaped to Sweden and lived there for many years, as one of those personally responsible for the murder of Estonian Jewry<sup>39</sup> to once again raise the issue of unprosecuted Nazis in Sweden.<sup>40</sup> A month later, Swedish journalist Maj Wechselmann who, over the years, has been one of the most outspoken advocates of Swedish action against Holocaust perpetrators,<sup>41</sup> also wrote about the Estonian war criminals who escaped to Sweden after World War II.<sup>42</sup>

In early September 2001, Bosse Schön published another book on the war crimes perpetrated and/or witnessed by Swedes who fought with the Nazis.<sup>43</sup> While it received extensive coverage in the Swedish media,<sup>44</sup> it, like all of the abovementioned initiatives, did not produce any change in Swedish policy. Thus, by the time the Wiesenthal Center's second Annual Status Report appeared in April 2002, and again awarded Sweden an F for its failure to investigate, let alone prosecute, suspected Holocaust perpetrators living in the country—this time together with Venezuela, Colombia, and Syria<sup>45</sup>—that fact received wider

coverage in Israel than it did in Sweden.<sup>46</sup> The publication in August 2002 of a book listing the names of all the members of the Swedish Nazi Party before and during World War II<sup>47</sup> likewise failed to bring about a change in Swedish policy.

In summation, Sweden remains one of the few countries in the world that refuse, in principle, to investigate suspected Holocaust perpetrators, regardless of their being Swedish citizens or not, and the places where they are suspected of having committed their wartime crimes. By comparison, three of the other countries to which the Simon Wiesenthal Center submitted lists of suspected Nazi war criminals in the fall of 1986 passed special legislation to enable the prosecution of the Holocaust perpetrators living in those countries: Canada in 1987, Australia in 1989, and Great Britain in 1991. (The United States opted for denaturalization and deportation, which did not require the passage of any legislation.) All four countries submitted indictments and conducted trials with varying degrees of success,<sup>48</sup> and the United States and Canada are continuing to do so to this day. Faced with a similar—albeit not exactly identical—legal obstacle to prosecution, Sweden opted to ignore the problem, thereby granting a safe haven to those who least deserve such largesse.

An undertaking by Swedish prime minister Göran Persson to establish a commission to abolish the existing statute of limitations on genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity—see his letter of 11 July 2000 to the author below—had in 2007 still not yielded a change in Swedish law, but even if and when such legislation is passed, it will not be retroactive and therefore will have no effect on any potential prosecutions of Holocaust perpetrators. Thus Sweden's failure in this regard is consistent and permanent, to the benefit of those Nazi war criminals who were granted a haven in that country.

## Notes

1. For an account of American efforts to identify and prosecute Nazi war criminals resident in the United States, see Allan A. Ryan, Jr., *Quiet Neighbors; Prosecuting Nazi War Criminals in America* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984).
2. The Wiesenthal Center's campaign to help facilitate the prosecution of Holocaust perpetrators in various Western democracies is described in Efraim Zuroff, *Occupation: Nazi-Hunter; The Continuing Search for the Perpetrators of the Holocaust* (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV, 1994).
3. "Suspected Nazi War Criminals in Sweden—List #1," memo of Efraim Zuroff to Rabbi Marvin Hier, 10 October 1986, Simon Wiesenthal Center—Jerusalem Office Archives (henceforth, SWC-JOA), Sweden, file I (10 October 1986-10 December 1990); E. Avotins, J. Dzirkalis, and V. Petersons, *Daugas Vanagi; Who Are They?* (Riga: Latvian State Publishing, House 1963), 14, 50, 54, 76-81, 142, 148; J. Silabriedis and B. Arklans, *Political Refugees Unmasked* (Riga: Latvian State Publishing House, 1965), 17, 20-21, 62, 67-69, 133, 134, 137-138, 156, 192, 194.
4. "Suspected Nazi War Criminals in Sweden—List #2," memo of Efraim Zuroff to Rabbi Marvin Hier, 12 November 1986, SWC-JOA, Sweden; I. Raul Kruus, *People Be Watchful* (Tallinn: Estonian State Publishing House, 1962).

5. See, for example, E. Rozauskas, ed. (comp. B. Baranauskas and K. Rukenas), *Documents Accuse* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1970), 136-39, 246-47. Among the Nazi war criminals mentioned are Helmut Rauca, who was extradited from Canada to West Germany and Kaunas (Lithuania) mayor Kazys Palciauskas, who was stripped of his American citizenship in the United States.
6. Nine names were removed from the list prior to its submission at the insistence of the center's Washington counsel Martin Mendelsohn because based on their dates of birth, they were most probably no longer alive or because one of the persons was a Nazi sympathizer who did not commit war crimes. Fax of Rabbi Abraham Cooper to Efraim Zuroff, 17 November 1986, SWC-JOA, Sweden, file I.
7. Don Shannon, "Nazi Hunters Give Sweden 12 Names from Data Bank," *Los Angeles Times*, 19 November 1986.
8. Letter of Rabbis Marvin Hier and Abraham Cooper to Swedish prime minister Ingvar Carlsson, 18 November 1986, SWC-JOA, Sweden, file I.
9. See, for example, Eliyahu Zehavi, "Shvedya: Lo Nasgir Poshim Natzim," *Haaretz*, 20 November 1986. [Hebrew]
10. See, for example, "Nazi Hunters Give Sweden List of Names," *Sun* (Las Vegas), 19 November 1986.
11. The journalist who broke the story was Arne Lapidus, the Israeli correspondent of the Swedish daily *Expressen*. See his article, "Nazistiska massmördare bor i Sverige," *Expressen*, 23 October 1986 [Swedish]. According to Lapidus the list contained fourteen names—our original list of Latvian suspects—but we subsequently uncovered the names of seven Estonian suspects and removed the names of those who were obviously already dead. The appearance of the article by Lapidus prompted numerous additional stories. See, for example, Ann-Katrin Hagberg, "Nazist Jägarna Har Fel," *Folket* (Eskilstuna), 25 October 1986, 1. [Swedish]
12. See, for example, the 19 November 1986 issue of *Svenska Dagbladet*, which devoted all of page 6 to articles regarding the list and the issue of suspected Baltic Nazi war criminals. See also Rolf Stengard, "Utpekade säkra i sverige," *Dagens Nyheter*, 19 November 1986. [Swedish]
13. "Sweden Says It Cannot Act on Suspected Nazis," *Los Angeles Times*, 20 November 1986.
14. Letter of Swedish prime minister Ingvar Carlsson to Rabbis Marvin Hier and Abraham Cooper, 12 February 1987, SWC-JOA, Sweden, file I.
15. See, for example, Yad Vashem Archives TR-10/994, 1140; M-21/476; Wiener Library Archives 539/22; Dov Levin, *Im ha-Gav el ha-Kir* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1978), 158-59. [Hebrew]
16. "Certain Allegations of War Crimes—A General Review," 11 February 1987, SWC-JOA, Sweden, file I.
17. According to community spokesperson Lena Posner-Korosi, there were about twenty thousand Jews living in Sweden. "...it is a small community, mainly consisting of survivors and children of survivors." Mordechai Spektor, "Stockholm Conference Puts Spotlight on Sweden's Jews," *American Jewish World* (Internet), January 2000.
18. "List of Suspected Nazi War Criminals—Sweden List #2," undated, approximately February 1989, SWC-JOA, Sweden, file I.
19. See, for example, Charles Hoffman, "Jerusalem Conference Told 'Sweden Sheltering Nazi War Criminals,'" *Jerusalem Post*, 21 December 1988; Natan Roi, "Shvedya Misarevet 'Mi-Sibot Humaniteriyot' Lachkor Posh'im Natzim bi-Tchuma," *Davar*, 21 December 1988. [Hebrew]
20. Letters of Swedish ambassador to Israel, Mats Bergquist, to Efraim Zuroff, 5 January and

6 March 1989; response of Efraim Zuroff, 12 January 1989, SWC-JOA. Interestingly, Bergquist stressed the importance of the crimes committed during World War II while defending Sweden's refusal to prosecute such cases. Thus in his initial letter he quoted from Carlsson's above-quoted letter of 12 February 1987 to Rabbis Hier and Cooper:

Finally, I should like to add this. The war crimes, which were committed during the Second World War, constitute one of the darkest chapters in the history of mankind. It is important that these war crimes do not fall into oblivion. Knowledge of what happened in the shadow of the Second World War must be an important lodestar for existing and coming generations. Such events must be condemned and must not be repeated. The fact that the Swedish Government has now decided not to take any action in regard to your request must, therefore, under no circumstances give the impression that the Government does not fervently oppose all kinds of war crimes. However, the rule of law must be upheld. I am convinced that you understand that an amendment of the Swedish law would be contrary to fundamental principles which have been of guidance in legislation in our country for a long time.

21. Helene Lööw, "Swedish Policy towards Suspected War Criminals 1945-1987," *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 14 (1989): 135-53.
22. *Ibid.*; see letters of Simon Wiesenthal to Swedish justice minister Erik Kleng, 4 March 1969 and to Efraim Zuroff, 11 September 2002, both SWC-JOA, Sweden, file VI.
23. Shortly before the conference, Swedish radio journalist Bosse Lindquist broadcast a documentary report on the complicity of Swedish officials in the escape from Sweden of Estonian Nazi war criminal Evald Mikson. See Efraim Zuroff, "The Impact of Contemporary Political Issues on Holocaust Education," speech delivered at "Tell Ye Your Children," conference on the Holocaust, Stockholm, May 1998, 32-33.
24. "Conclusions" of the Stockholm meeting on the Holocaust; letter of Helene Lindstrand to Dr. Efraim Zuroff, 8 May 1998, SWC-JOA, Sweden, file III.
25. Ulle Lene Österhom, "Svenskar försvarade Hitler's liv i bundern," *Aftonbladet*, 19 December 1999; Britt Peruzzi, "Hitlers Svenska Soldater," *Aftonbladet*, 20 December 1999. [Swedish]
26. Bosse Schön, *Svenskarna Som Stred För Hitler* (Stockholm: BokförlägetDN., 1999) [Swedish]. Tobias Hübner did much of the research for the book.
27. Belinda Goldsmith, "Sweden Urged to Admit Links to Nazi Germany," Reuters, 4 January 2000.
28. Belinda Goldsmith, "Swedish PM Promises Probe into Nazi Germany Links," Reuters, 6 January 2000.
29. Letter of Dr. Efraim Zuroff to Prime Minister Göran Persson, 4 January 2000, SWC-JOA, Sweden, file IV. Arne Lapidus, "Nazistjägare tiill attack mot Göran Persson," *Expressen*, 3 January 2000. [Swedish]
30. See note 27.
31. See, for example, Richard Aschberg and Ulf Wallin, "Sverige—detta är skandal," *Aftonbladet*, 12 January 2000, 14-15 [Swedish]; Belinda Goldsmith, "Sweden Accused of Double Morals on Holocaust," Reuters, 19 January 2000.
32. "Extract from Göran Persson's Statement during Today's Debate between Party Leaders," Press Release, Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust, 19 January 2000, SWC-JOA, Sweden, file IV.
33. Letter of Prime Minister Göran Persson to Dr. Efraim Zuroff, 11 July 2000, SWC-JOA, Sweden, file V.
34. See, for example, Arne Lapidus, "Nazist-jagaren till attack mot Göran Persson," *Expressen*, 15 July 2000 [Swedish]; Karl Viktor Olsen, "Wiesenthal Center Vill Att

- Persson Tänker Om Stockholm,” TT (Tidningarnas Telegrambyra), the Swedish News Agency, 18 July 2000. [Swedish]
35. See, for example, Anne Pandolfi, “Swedish Statute of Limitations Can’t Be Changed to Bring War Crimes Suspect to Trial,” Associated Press, 13 July 2000.
  36. “Nazi War Criminals Prosecution—Annual Status Report—April 2001,” SWC-JOA, Sweden, file V.
  37. See, for example, Elli Wohlgelernter, “USA Gets A, Sweden F on Nazi Prosecution,” *Jerusalem Post*, 19 April 2001; Ramit Plushnik-Masti, “Nazi-Hunting Group Points Finger at Sweden, Syria,” Reuters, 19 April 2001.
  38. Owe Nilsson, “Sverige och Syrien Sämst På Att Jaga Nazister,” TT, 19 April 2001 [Swedish]; see also Arne Lapidus, “Sverige sämst på att utreda nazistiska krigsförbrytelser” (Sweden Worst at Prosecuting Nazis), *Expressen*, 20 April 2001. [Swedish]
  39. “The German Occupation of Estonia,” *Report of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity*, www.historycommission.ee, 4-7.
  40. Efraim Zuroff, “Sverige blev en fristad för Förintelsens bödlar” (Sweden Became a Haven for the Hangmen of the Holocaust), *Expressen*, 2 June 2001. [Swedish]
  41. See, for example, Maj Wechseltmann, “Judeutrotare mitt ibland oss,” *Aftonbladet*, 26 January 2000. [Swedish]
  42. Maj Wechseltmann, “Esterna som hjälpte Hitler,” *Aftonbladet*, 19 July 2001. [Swedish]
  43. Bosse Schön, *Dar järnkorsen växer* (Stockholm: Bokförlaget DN., 2001) [Swedish]. Swedish researcher Tobias Hübnette assisted in collecting the material for this book.
  44. See, for example, “Ondskans ögonvittnen” (Eyewitnesses of the Evil), *Café*, September 2001, 72-78, 198-200. [Swedish]
  45. Efraim Zuroff, *Worldwide Investigation and Prosecution of Nazi War Criminals: An Annual Status Report*, Jerusalem, 2002.
  46. Haim Shapiro, “Sweden Cited for Failure to Prosecute Nazis,” *Jerusalem Post*, 8 April 2002; “Nazistjägare dömer åter ut Sverige,” *Aftonbladet*, 9 April 2002 [Swedish]; Fredrik Engström, “Inrikes,” *Svenska Dagbladet*, 9 April 2002. [Swedish]
  47. Tobias Hübnette, *Den Svenska Nationalsocialismen; Medlemmar Och Sympatisörer 1931-1945* (Swedish National Socialists; Members and Sympathizers 1931-1945) (Stockholm: Carlssons, 2002). [Swedish]
  48. For details on the passage of special laws to enable prosecution in Canada, Australia, and Britain, see Zuroff, *Occupation: Nazi-Hunter*, 237-340.

## Appendix

### Correspondence between Simon Wiesenthal Center Officials and Swedish Prime Ministers on the Nazi War Criminals Issue (1986-2000)

1. 18 November 1986—Letter of Rabbis Marvin Hier and Abraham Cooper to Swedish PM Ingvar Carlsson
2. 12 February 1987—Letter of Swedish PM Ingvar Carlsson to Rabbis Hier and Cooper
3. 4 January 2000—Letter of Dr. Efraim Zuroff to Swedish PM Göran Persson
4. 6 January 2000—Letter of Dr. Efraim Zuroff to Swedish PM Göran Persson

5. 11 July 2000—Letter of Swedish PM Göran Persson to Dr. Efraim Zuroff
6. 17 July 2000—Letter of Dr. Efraim Zuroff to Swedish PM Göran Persson



November 18, 1986

His Excellency Mr. Ingvar Carlsson  
Prime Minister of Sweden  
Statsradsberedningen  
S-10333  
Stockholm, Sweden

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

The Simon Wiesenthal Center has intensified its worldwide hunt for suspected Nazi war criminals. As a result of our investigations, our Jerusalem office headed by Efraim Zuroff, a Holocaust historian and formerly with the Office of Special Investigations U.S. Justice Dept., has found material which has enabled us to put together a list of suspected Nazi war criminals, murderers and collaborators who, based on our research, are believed to be living in Sweden.

Enclosed is a preliminary list of twelve suspected Nazi war criminals who, based on archives drawn from various places of the world, are suspected of having committed crimes against Jews in Latvia and Estonia during the Nazi occupation. This list of suspects contains varying degrees of culpability ranging from crimes against humanity, mass murder and torture, collaborators and those aiding the Nazi cause. For some suspects on the list, we have supplied important immigration data which, in some cases, indicates the individual's last known address in Sweden.

During the period in question, of a population of 95,000 Latvian Jews only a few hundred managed to survive the brutal genocide carried out by Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian collaborators and supervised by the Germans.

We trust that your Government will fully investigate these individuals and the overall question of how many Nazi war criminals may have made their way to Sweden after World War II. While we are very much aware of Sweden's unique position in the world as a center of neutrality and asylum, we are certain that your democracy will want to act to help bring to justice those guilty of participating in the most heinous crime, the Holocaust.

The biological clock is running out on Nazi war criminals and the record of history should not read that those who committed unspeakable crimes against humanity had the final victory by depriving justice of its due course. Future generations must learn that the crime of genocide has no time limit and that even forty-five years after the event, governments will overcome any impediment in

exercising their responsibility to bring those who committed such crimes before the bar of justice.

We look forward to hearing from you on the contents of this letter at your earliest convenience.

Cordially,

Rabbi Marvin Hier, Rabbi Abraham Cooper  
Dean, Associate Dean  
RMH/cf



Enclosure Stockholm, 12 February 1987

Simon Wiesenthal Center  
9760 West Pico Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90035-4792  
U.S.A.

Dear Rabbi Marvin Hier and Rabbi Abraham Cooper,

Your letter of 18 November 1986, in which you requested that the Swedish Government should investigate suspected war crimes in Estonia and Latvia during the Second World War has now been dealt with by the Government, and I would like to inform you of the Government's decision in this matter.

The Government immediately charged a group of lawyers (the Under-Secretaries for Legal Affairs, Mr. Johan Hirschfeldt, at the Cabinet Office, Mr. Johan Munck, at the Ministry of Justice and Mr. Hans Corell, at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs) to examine the material submitted to the Government and to review the legal position with regard to war crimes.

The group has now completed its work and submitted a memorandum to the Government. The Swedish version of this memorandum is attached to this letter. An English translation of the summary is also appended. The memorandum is presently being translated into English, and you will be provided with a copy of this translation as soon as possible.

As far as the findings of the group are concerned, I refer to the attached material. I should just like to add the following. The examination concerning the persons named has proven that all of them have been, or are resident in Sweden and that eight of them are deceased. The crimes that the accused persons are said to have committed came under the statute of limitations in Sweden a long time ago. Since 1926 the longest period of limitation in Swedish law has been

twenty-five years. The idea of legislation that would retroactively change the legal position for the war criminals of the Second World War was strongly repudiated by Sweden as early as during the period of limitation. The three lawyers have therefore come to the conclusion that a change in this position must be regarded as out of the question.

At today's Cabinet Meeting the Government decided not to take further action in response to your request.

Finally, I should like to add this. The war crimes which were committed during the Second World War constitute one of the darkest chapters in the history of mankind. It is important that these war crimes do not fall into oblivion. Knowledge of what happened in the shadow of the Second World War must be an important lodestar for existing and coming generations. Such events must be condemned and must not be repeated. The fact that the Swedish Government has now decided not to take any action in regard to your request must, therefore, under no circumstances give the impression that the Government does not fervently oppose all kinds of war crimes. However, the rule of law must be upheld. I am convinced that you understand that an amendment of the Swedish law would be contrary to fundamental principles which have been of guidance in legislation in our country for a long time.

With kind regards,

Ingvar Carlsson



January 4, 2000

H.E. Prime Minister Göran Persson  
Prime Minister's Office  
Rosenbad 4  
Stockholm  
Sweden

Dear Prime Minister Persson,

This letter is being written to you out of respect and admiration for your efforts to initiate and promote Holocaust education in Sweden and throughout the world. At the same time, I cannot refrain from drawing your attention to the total failure of successive Swedish governments to investigate Swedes who participated in the crimes of the Holocaust, as well as Nazi war criminals who were granted a refuge in Sweden after World War II.

Yesterday's documentary "Swedes Who Fought for Hitler" by Bosse Schön screened on TV4 clearly showed that individuals who actively participated in the

persecution and murder of innocent civilians are currently living in Sweden. It would be unthinkable not to initiate legal measures against such individuals who openly admitted their complicity in the crimes of the Holocaust. At the same time we must remind you that the postwar entry into Sweden of Nazi war criminals has also never been investigated, nor have any legal steps ever been taken against any of these individuals.

Under these circumstances, we respectfully urge you to immediately take the following steps:

1. Establish an official governmental inquiry to investigate the crimes.
2. Take legal measures to ensure that those found guilty of crimes against humanity can be brought to trial (despite the existent statute of limitations which should not apply to genocide and crimes against humanity).
3. Establish a historical commission to fully investigate Sweden's role in the Holocaust beginning with its refugee policy in the thirties and continuing with its actions once the implementation of the Final Solution began in 1941.

Later this month experts from all over the world will gather in Stockholm to discuss the future of Holocaust education. But how can Sweden lead such a worthy educational initiative if a Swede who served in the infamous Treblinka death camp has never been investigated, let alone prosecuted by the Swedish authorities, and the same applies to numerous other Nazi war criminals?

I would welcome an opportunity to discuss this issue with you in person and look forward to your response.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Efraim Zuroff  
Director



January 6, 2000

H.E. Prime Minister Göran Persson  
Prime Minister's Office  
Rosenbad 4  
Stockholm  
Sweden

Dear Prime Minister Persson,

Allow me to congratulate you on your wise and courageous decision to call for an investigation of the Nazi war criminals currently living in Sweden. Even decades

after these crimes were committed, the need to bring those responsible for them to justice remains as strong as ever.

For this reason it is imperative that the Swedish reaction to the recent revelations regarding crimes against humanity will include a practical, judicial component which will allow the prosecution of those who committed these terrible crimes. This subject cannot be relegated to the history books, while those responsible remain alive and are able to be brought to trial.

One of the major lessons of Holocaust education is personal responsibility and the role that each individual plays in society. The best way to reinforce that important message is to ensure that those who betrayed their civic duty and committed such crimes will ultimately be held accountable and we therefore urge you to ensure that Sweden will take the necessary measures so that a measure of justice, even if delayed, will finally be achieved.

We wish you much strength in your important educational endeavors and hope that the forthcoming conference will be a resounding success. With best wishes.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Efraim Zuroff  
Director



11 July 2000

Dr. Efraim Zuroff  
Simon Wiesenthal Centre  
1 Mendele Street  
Jerusalem 92147  
Israel

Dear Dr. Efraim Zuroff,

I refer to your letters of 4 and 6 January 2000, in which you have requested that the Swedish Government should establish an official governmental inquiry to investigate the participation in the crimes of the Holocaust by Swedish citizens and other persons currently living in Sweden and that legal measures should be taken to ensure that those found guilty of crimes against humanity can be brought to trial. Further you have requested that the Swedish Government should establish a historical commission to fully investigate Sweden's role during the Holocaust.

I would like to inform you of the Government decision in this matter. Lawyers

at the Ministry of Justice have considered the Swedish legal position with regard to war crimes and especially the regulations on the statute of limitation. The Government has also studied the memorandum on this issue that was written in 1986 by three Directors General charged *inter alia* with the task to consider whether certain alleged war criminals in Sweden could be prosecuted. This memorandum was sent to the Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Los Angeles in 1987.

The periods of limitations for the crimes that the accused are said to have committed expired a long time ago. The longest period of limitation in Sweden is twenty-five years. The idea of introducing legislation that would retroactively change the legal position for the war criminals of the Second World War was repudiated by Sweden already during the European debate on this issue in the 1960s. However, many other European countries decided to prolong the current period of limitation concerning these crimes. Sweden took the position that a prolongation would be in conflict with general legal principles. Today, I can only regret this stand-point and lament the fact that nothing was done at that stage when it, in retrospective, should have been possible.

The Swedish Government has also thoroughly considered the possibility of reintroducing criminal responsibility for the crimes under the Second World War, for which the periods of limitations have expired in some cases more than thirty years ago. Any legislation reintroducing the criminal responsibility would come in conflict with general principles of the Swedish judicial system. It is not possible for the Government to suggest such legislation.

Since Sweden has no possibility of reintroducing the criminal responsibility for these crimes, no accusations against individuals can be tried by the Swedish judicial bodies. Any official investigation, established by the Government, could be said to evade the current legislation and to risk a conflict with the purpose behind the law on this point.

The Government has therefore decided not to take further action in response to your request to establish an official governmental investigation concerning crimes against humanity during the Second World War.

It is my hope that you will understand the situation in which we find ourselves. I want to stress that it is my opinion that an opportunity to change the statute of limitations existed during the 1960s. I deeply regret that a different decision was not made at that time.

However, during this year the Government will establish a commission with the task to deliberate the Swedish legislation as to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. The commission will also be charged with the issue of abolishing the statute of limitation for the future for these very serious crimes.

Concerning your request that the Swedish Government should establish a historical commission to fully investigate Sweden's role during the Holocaust I am happy to inform you that we have started an extensive work in this field.

The Government has initiated a discussion to consider the need of a certain research program. The 28th of February a meeting was held between the

Government and researchers from all over the country to discuss what we know today, the need for further research and what the Government can do to contribute to and facilitate such research. The Government will give financial support to such research.

This initiative is partly also an answer to some of the proposals made by the Swedish Government Commission on Jewish Assets in Sweden at the time of the Second World War. This Commission was set up by the Government in 1997 with the task of examining questions of looted gold and other assets which had belonged to Jews and which had ended up in Sweden because of the Holocaust. In its final report in March 1999 the Commission clearly states that its report is not the final answer to the complicated and intractable historical issues raised. The Commission views the report as a platform for continuing work and suggests that further research must be carried out concerning Swedish business relations with Nazi Germany.

But it is my firm belief that the research shall be carried out by independent researchers, not bound by any instructions from the Government. That is why I am not ready to establish a commission as you have requested.

Like you, I want to see a total disclosure of the Swedish public relations to Nazi-Germany. Research has been done to a large extent, but a lot of questions still remain unanswered and I can assure you that we do our utmost to seek the answers.

The Swedish project Living History started in the summer of 1997. The idea was to spread knowledge about the Holocaust, but also to generate an active dialogue between the generations on democratic and humanistic values. In Sweden, Living History was just the beginning. Now we seek greater knowledge and understanding of our own history. The 27th of January will be the official Swedish Remembrance Day for the Holocaust. We also prepare the establishment of a permanent Forum for Living History in Sweden. The Forum will serve as a permanent centre for remembrance, research and dialogue about the many atrocities of the Holocaust. The Stockholm Conference will be a recurring event and thus a yearly conference on the theme "Conscience and Humanity" will be held in Sweden.

Furthermore, in this context I am happy to tell you that 40 million SEK has been reserved to support Jewish culture in Sweden.

Information, education and research are not the only ways to be used in the fight against Nazism. The Government also considers possible ways to strengthen the legislation against Nazi-related crimes. In the current Penal Code we already today consider it an aggravating circumstance whenever a crime is committed with racial or ethical motives. As I mentioned earlier we will also deliberate our legislation concerning war crimes and our intention is to abolish the statute of limitations for this crime and others. Another commission has also been established the task of which is to consider whether it should be made a criminal offence to participate actively in an organisation, for example a racist

organisation, whose operations involve criminal activities on a significant scale. Active participation could, according to the Commission's terms of reference, include financing or supporting the organisation in other ways. In this connection the Commission was also instructed to consider whether the provision concerning agitation against an ethnic group is sufficient to prevent racist organisations from functioning. The Commission is expected to present its report in October 2000.

As stated above the Government today decided not to take any further actions in response to your request. However, I can assure you that we are doing our very utmost to take other measures within our power to secure that the atrocities of the war will never be forgotten and to prevent these horrible events from ever occurring in the future.

I want to underline that we much appreciate the dialogue with the knowledgeable experts from the Simon Wiesenthal Centre and that we look forward to continue the discussions from the first constituting meeting with the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust and Research in which you participated.

Yours sincerely,

Göran Persson



July 17, 2000

Prime Minister Göran Persson  
Regeringskansliet  
SW-103 Stockholm  
Sweden

Dear Prime Minister Persson,

It was with extremely mixed emotions that I read your letter of July 11, 2000, which was brought to my attention by AP reporter Anne Pandolfi, and later faxed to my office by your spokesperson.

On the one hand, I was very pleased to learn that the Swedish government intends to establish a commission to examine its policy regarding war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide and that it will consider the abolition of the statute of limitations on such crimes. If such a step will indeed be taken, it will be an important victory for justice, one which will have important implications on the future efforts to bring genocidists to the bar of justice.

On the other hand, I was very saddened by the government's decision to reject the request by the Simon Wiesenthal Center to undertake legal action against Holocaust perpetrators currently living in Sweden. It is a decision which effectively grants total immunity to all those who committed crimes during the Holocaust, and gives a priceless reward to those who have hereto eluded justice, a reward they certainly do not deserve. In addition, it creates a situation in which Nazi war criminals might turn your country into a refuge from judicial prosecution.

Such a decision, moreover, sends the worst possible message to Sweden's neighbors, particularly in the Baltics, where newly-independent former Soviet republics are struggling with the issue of the prosecution of local Nazi collaborators. In these states there is widespread opposition to the prosecution of locals who participated in the mass murders and Sweden's refusal to even investigate, let alone prosecute, Nazi criminals will only encourage those opposed to this critically-important process. Thus instead of leading by example in the prosecution of those who actively participated in the worst mass murder in the annals of mankind, Sweden has chosen to refrain from doing so, thereby squandering an excellent opportunity not only to achieve a measure of justice but to encourage neighboring fledgling democracies to do the same.

Think back for a moment to the shameful speeches delivered at the Stockholm Living History Conference in January of this year by Lithuanian Prime Minister Kubilius and Latvian President Vike-Freiberga. Both tried to deny or drastically minimize the extensive participation of their countrymen in the crimes of the Holocaust. Both are currently facing a concrete decision regarding the prosecution of their nationals for the crimes of the Holocaust. What effect do you think Sweden's decision last week not to prosecute such criminals will have on Latvia and Lithuania? Such a decision will obviously hardly encourage them to undertake the difficult, but morally imperative, decisions that I assume you yourself would want them to take.

While I very much share the deep regret you express in your letter that Sweden did not change its statute of limitations on war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide in the sixties, I believe that there are remedies available in international law which could help solve the problem. In fact, there are distinguished jurists, such as Prof. Irvin Cotler, who is currently a member of the Canadian parliament and was recently appointed special advisor to the Canadian Foreign Minister on matters of international criminal law who are of the opinion that in the case of genocide, international law takes precedence over national law, thereby ensuring the possibility of prosecution of Nazi war criminals, even in Sweden. I again urge you to reexamine this issue and will be happy to put your experts in contact with Prof. Cotler.

In this context, it is important to note, moreover, that in recent years, several governments, most notably Canada (1987), Australia (1989) and Great Britain (1991) have passed special laws to enable the prosecution of Nazi war criminals

and the United States had utilized immigration and naturalization laws to be able to take legal action against Holocaust perpetrators. Sweden's failure to do so, underscores the lack of political will in Stockholm to tackle this difficult subject.

As far as the government's efforts to fully investigate Sweden's role during the Holocaust, I was very pleased to learn that extensive work has already been initiated in this regard. Your decision to entrust this project to independent researchers is certainly understandable and acceptable and we can only hope that their work will be carried out comprehensively and effectively in as brief a period as possible. In that regard, the Wiesenthal Center did not consider the government's involvement in such a commission as absolutely necessary, although we assumed that governmental resources would be required for a thorough examination of the entire Nazi period to be carried out properly.

The other steps mentioned in your letter, whether it be support for Jewish culture in Sweden or strengthening current legislation against Nazi-related crimes, clearly manifest your grave concern that the lessons of the Holocaust never be forgotten and that they will reach—and be internalized by—as wide a public as possible. We fully support these steps and offer the Center's fullest cooperation with Swedish officials and experts regarding these matters.

In closing, allow me again to express the Center's support for the positive steps being taken by your government, but also to reiterate our call that justice be made part of Sweden's otherwise excellent program in relation to the Holocaust. A failure to do so, not only rewards those least deserving of our sympathy, but also weakens the impact of the excellent work being done to commemorate the Holocaust and ensure that such tragedies never take place again.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Efraim Zuroff  
Director

Manfred Gerstenfeld

## Norway: Extreme Expressions of Anti-Israeli and Anti-Semitic Attitudes

The few mentions of Norway in the international media give the impression that its 4.6 million inhabitants represent much of what is good in the world. The Global Peace Index rates Norway as the most peaceful country.<sup>1</sup> Together with seven other countries it is at the top of the Press Freedom Index of Reporters without Borders.<sup>2</sup> It is number nine among the least corrupt countries in the world according to the 2007 Corruption Perceptions Index of Transparency International.<sup>3</sup> It ranks fourth on the Commitment to Development Index, which “rates 21 rich countries on how much they help poor countries build prosperity, good government and security.”<sup>4</sup>

There is also, however, a different, rather ugly Norway. As is so often the case, its elites’ attitudes toward Israel and the Jews give an indication of this. Few people outside the country are familiar with the extreme anti-Israeli expressions among these elites. There also have been a number of anti-Semitic incidents in recent years. The Simon Wiesenthal Center cites Norway as one of the few countries that has consistently been given a failing grade on the investigation and prosecution of Nazi criminals.<sup>5</sup>

According to the current Israeli ambassador to Norway, Miryam Shomrat, Norway is well known to be the most difficult country in Europe for Israel because of its media’s extreme and unfair criticism of Israel and its politicized academic Middle East experts.<sup>6</sup>

Hate cartoons published in leading Norwegian dailies and weeklies attest to how profoundly certain anti-Israeli attitudes have permeated the country’s mainstream.<sup>7</sup> Some are similar in message and venom to the worst anti-Semitic caricatures published in Nazi Germany. With the exception of Greece it is difficult to find a similar array of anti-Israeli cartoons in mainstream papers anywhere in Europe.

### **Olmert and Sharon as Nazis**

A caricature published in the cultural weekly *Morgenbladet* showed an ultra-Orthodox Jew shooting Arabs whom he accuses of stealing fuel. This image drew harsh reactions from several public figures. “When I saw this, I didn’t think I was in Norway in 2006, I felt displaced to Hitler-Germany in the ’30s and ’40s. This was a pure *Stürmer* caricature,” said Jahn Otto Johansen, a former editor of the third largest paper *Dagbladet* and an author who comments on Jewish life and culture.<sup>8</sup>

A caricature in Norway's largest daily *Verdens Gang* shows Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, while shaving, looking in the mirror and seeing Hizballah leader Hasan Nasrallah; Olmert's feet are those of an animal.<sup>9</sup> This expresses the classic anti-Semitic motif of the Jew as subhuman. The conservative *Aftenposten* is Norway's second largest daily and most influential paper. One cartoon it published showed the Israeli flag with three bands: the upper and lower ones were red with dripping blood while the middle one was white with a Star of David.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Jews as the Main Evil**

Anti-Semitism's core approach over two millennia has been to present Jews as the absolute evil in line with how that was perceived in the particular period. In older times this was the killing of Jesus, God's son according to Christian belief. In the days of the Nazis, Jews were characterized as vermin. Nowadays absolute evil is embodied by Nazism, and anti-Semites commonly use the motif of Holocaust inversion. The many anti-Israeli cartoons in a variety of papers show how Norwegian anti-Israelism and anti-Semitism overlap.<sup>11</sup>

The hate cartoons are not a phenomenon of the past few years. One anti-Israeli cartoon using anti-Semitic motifs was published in 1992 by *Aftenposten* under the title "A Better Species of Human Being." Showing a rat eating the Star of David, it raised associations with the Nazi propaganda that often portrayed Jews as rodents or insects.<sup>12</sup>

The frequency of these cartoons illustrates the permeation of Norwegian society and particularly its elite with anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic motifs. Such images are the tip of the iceberg of racist stereotypes in a society. Had these caricatures been considered shocking, there already would have been a huge outcry against them years ago. This is the more problematic because this hatred is displayed in a country that is falsely presented as a model democracy.

### **The Norwegian Government**

The present Norwegian government consists of a coalition of the Labor Party headed by Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg; the Left-Socialist Party (SV), which broke off from Labor in 1975 in protest against Norwegian NATO membership; and the Center Party. These three, respectively, have 61, 15, and 11 of the 169 seats in the Norwegian parliament.

Janne Haaland Matlary, a professor of political science at the University of Oslo and former administrative head of the Foreign Office, has analyzed how this government has redirected its foreign policy to the left.<sup>13</sup> For example, Deputy Foreign Minister Raymond Johansen of SV visited Cuba without meeting representatives from the opposition there. In earlier Norwegian visits that had been the usual procedure.

To put this in perspective, it should be mentioned that Cuba was again rated by Freedom House in 2007 as one of the most unfree countries in the world. It was in the lowest category (category 7) for both civil liberties and political rights. This includes issues such as freedom of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, the rule of law, as well as personal autonomy and individual rights. Other countries at this lowest level are Burma and Uzbekistan. Even Belarus, Zimbabwe, and Saudi Arabia are more free than Cuba.<sup>14</sup>

Another example of this leftward shift was the positive attitude toward the now-defunct Palestinian Hamas-Fatah government. Norway's government was the first European one to reestablish contacts with it and also resumed aid. Norway has probably taken the most accommodating position in Western Europe toward Hamas, which in its charter calls for the killing of all Jews.<sup>15</sup>

When the European Union decided to boycott the initial Hamas government, Norway followed this policy as well. In May 2006, Hamas minister Atef Adwan met in Norway with Gerd-Liv Valla, head of the Norwegian Labor Union (LO) and Kåre Willoch, a former prime minister who had headed the Conservative Party. However, government officials did not want to meet Adwan and the Foreign Ministry was reportedly annoyed by the visit.<sup>16</sup>

Later visas were granted to two Hamas parliamentarians who were invited by the Norwegian Palestinian Committee.<sup>17</sup> Raymond Johansen became in April 2007 the first senior European official to hold talks with Hamas prime minister Ismail Haniyeh after the short-lived Hamas-Fatah government was established.<sup>18</sup> When murderous fighting broke out between Hamas and Fatah in Gaza in June 2007, Norwegian foreign minister Jonas Gahr Støre said Israel was partly to blame.<sup>19</sup> This was yet another manipulative statement and also expressed double standards as he remained silent about Egypt allowing large quantities of weapons to be funneled to Hamas.

Although the Norwegian government will claim that it acts out of humanitarian considerations, its mindset on the Arab-Israeli conflict is often in fact closer to that of the Arab dictatorships and terrorist movements than to democratic Israel. The previous, center-right government also sometimes applied double standards to Israel in its statements.<sup>20</sup>

## The Gaarder Debate

In a societal environment where the government and most media are deeply immersed in what at best may be called moral relativism—if not racist bias—the most extreme anti-Semitic views, disguised as anti-Israelism, can also be voiced in the mainstream. One example of this that drew much international attention occurred when *Aftenposten* published an article by the internationally known author Jostein Gaarder during the Second Lebanon War in 2006.

He wrote: “Israel is history. We do not recognize the state of Israel. There is no way back. The state of Israel has raped the recognition of the world and does

not get peace before it lays down its weapons. The state of Israel in its present form is history.”<sup>21</sup>

In his rage over the war Gaarder accused Israel of numerous atrocities. When criticized, he claimed the aim of his article was to wake Israel up because it was doomed if it did not follow the “law of nations” and the framework established by the world society.<sup>22</sup>

While claiming repeatedly that he is not an anti-Semite and did not intend to offend Jews, Gaarder used strong anti-Semitic rhetoric:

We laugh at this people’s whims, and cry over its misdeeds. To act as God’s chosen people is not only foolish and arrogant; it is a crime against humanity. We call it racism.... There are limits to our patience and there are limits to our tolerance. We do not believe in divine promises as a rationale for occupation and apartheid. We have left the Middle Ages behind. We laugh with embarrassment at those who still believe that the god of the flora, fauna and galaxies has chosen one particular people as his favorite, and given them amusing stone tablets, burning bushes and a *license to kill*.

Mona Levin, a cultural journalist, was one of the most high-profile critics of Gaarder’s article: “This is the worst piece I have read since *Mein Kampf*.... He proceeds from talking about Israel in one paragraph to attacking the Jewish people in the next paragraph.”<sup>23</sup>

Shimon Samuels of the Wiesenthal Center in Paris wrote in a reaction in *Aftenposten* that Gaarder had “exposed his shallow Biblical knowledge and the Judeophobic paranoia that haunts his nightmares.... Obsessed with the Jews as ‘God’s Chosen People,’ Gaarder regurgitates this concept’s classic anti-Semitic definition as ‘arrogant and domineering.’”<sup>24</sup>

It turned out, however, that Gaarder had wide support for his anti-Semitic views. *Aftenposten* gave more space to negative than to positive reactions. In Internet talkbacks, however, where the authors are generally anonymous, the majority was in favor of Gaarder. This is yet further proof of how the anti-Israeli mutation of severe anti-Semitism has permeated Norwegian society.

### **Anti-Semitic Incidents**

An anti-Israeli mood often generates an upsurge in anti-Semitism. The 2006 report of the European Jewish Congress (EJC) points out that anti-Semitic attacks often occur in countries where media reporting is harshly critical of Israel.<sup>25</sup> Publisher and writer Håkon Harket, coauthor of a book on anti-Semitism, noted regarding the increased anti-Semitic acts in Norway during the summer of 2006: “The same happened after the previous war in Lebanon in 1982, when we saw a major increase in anti-Jewish acts. This is nonlogical linking, but still it is not surprising that the attacks against Jews increased since we saw the intense war

reporting such as we had this summer, images that are interpreted in an anti-Jewish way.”<sup>26</sup>

In 2002, Martin Bodd, a representative of the Jewish community of Oslo, at an international conference of the Anti-Defamation League, gave a country report on anti-Semitic incidents in Norway. He noted that there had been more harassment of Jews there in the preceding two years than at any time since 1945.

Bodd mentioned that “most of the incitement and harassments against Jews have not been reported. Hardly any of the children or the adults offended by anti-Semitic statements or alike, have been willing to come forward publicly.” He said there were approximately fifteen incidents in which ten children had been harassed.<sup>27</sup> This is a significant percentage of all the children in the small Jewish community. An equivalent would be the harassment of many tens of thousands of Jewish children in the United States.

Bodd added that: “No Jews have been physically hurt during the last 24 months because of anti-Semitism. In certain parts of the big cities in Norway, it is not recommended to wear symbols, letters, etc. that link one person to Israel. Muslims dominate these areas. Yet, in the perspective of the conflict in the Middle East and the reactions around the world, our statement is that Jews are safe in Norway.”

Anonymous death threats have been sent to prominent Norwegian Jews.<sup>28</sup> Irene Levin, professor of social work at Oslo University College, said in 2003:

Some Jewish children were told they would not be allowed to attend a birthday party because of Israeli actions. When there were anti-Semitic incidents at school, Jewish parents discussed this with some school principals who supported the aggression. One told a Jewish girl to remove her “provocative” Magen David. These incidents are important, but at present remain exceptions.<sup>29</sup>

Former prime minister Kjell Magne Bondevik launched a conference about harassment of schoolchildren, mentioning offenses against Jewish children in particular.<sup>30</sup> As an act of solidarity he went to visit the Jewish community.<sup>31</sup>

Bodd also cited several other incidents. On 20 April 2002, Stoltenberg, who had been prime minister till 2001 and in 2005 would again obtain this position, requested during a demonstration the removal of posters equating the Star of David and the swastika. He continued his speech, however, in front of posters with the words in Arabic “Death to the Jews.” The demonstration was organized by the Norwegian left-wing parties including Labor and took place in front of the parliament building in Oslo.

Bodd also said that for debates, the media invited extreme anti-Israeli individuals “and pass them on as neutral, objective participants, failing to mention their backgrounds. For instance, the Director of the Institute for Human Rights Butenschion, who has been active in the Palestinian Committee in Norway; Lars Gule, leader of the Humanitarian Ethics Association, responsible for attempting to carry out a terrorist attack in Jerusalem in 1982.”<sup>32</sup>

He furthermore pointed out that the Norwegian media often confused Israel and Jews. Bodd quoted expressions such as: “The Jewish War machine is crushing our Oslo Peace accord; the Jewish State instead of Israel; Jewish settlers and extremists.”<sup>33</sup>

### **Jews Keeping a Low Profile**

There also were other incidents. A visitor to a parliamentarian was told to leave his jacket by the parliament’s entrance because it bore an Israeli flag.<sup>34</sup> In 2004, a municipality-employed teacher in the town of Kristiansand was asked to take off his Star of David necklace. His employer thought the symbol might be a provocation to the many Muslims in the school where he worked teaching Norwegian to immigrants.<sup>35</sup>

In such an atmosphere Norwegian Jews often prefer to keep a low profile about the anti-Semitic incidents. One example occurred at the opening of an exhibition in 2003 titled “Jewish Life and Culture in Norway,” which was shown in Scandinavia House in New York. The keynote address was given by Jo Benkow, the Jewish former speaker of the Norwegian parliament. He praised Norway excessively for its much-belated restitution payments and concluded: “All in all Jews have few problems in present-day Norway and many of us are grateful for that.”<sup>36</sup>

This gave an embellished picture of the reality. The next day at a symposium in which Benkow participated, one of the board members of the Jewish Congregation of Oslo, Sidsel Levin said: “As a direct consequence of the Norwegian media presentation of the Middle East conflict, there has been an increase of incitement and harassment toward Jews during the last two years.”<sup>37</sup> Several Norwegians have confirmed to this author that at a later date two prominent members of the Jewish community received mailed envelopes containing bullets. Thereafter these persons lowered their public profile. None of the sources, however, was willing to state so publicly.

Although anti-Semitic incidents have increased in the new century, they were already occurring well before. A retired Israeli diplomat, stationed in the early 1980s at the Israeli embassy in Oslo, told how he had been invited to speak on Israel’s military strategy at the General Headquarters of the Norwegian army. During question time one of the generals asked why the Jews had “crucified our Lord.”

The Israeli diplomat asked the questioner what that had to do with the topic. The general replied that he had taken this opportunity for the question because the diplomat was the first Jew he had ever met and presumably could give an answer, since his ancestors were probably responsible. The diplomat then suggested that he call upon the ambassador of Italy as he was likely to be a descendant of the Romans who had pronounced the verdict.<sup>38</sup>

## Recent Developments

By now a question mark has to be put next to Bodd's 2002 statement that Jews are safe in Norway. DMT, the organized Jewish community, is very small at around 700 members out of the estimated 1300 Jews in Norway, not including Israelis. In the summer of 2006 this community witnessed a series of serious anti-Semitic incidents. The synagogue cantor of the Oslo Jewish community was attacked, "Free Lebanon, Free Palestine" was sprayed outside its synagogue in July, graves at the community's cemetery were desecrated, stones were thrown at its synagogue, someone defecated on the stairs in front of the same synagogue and subsequently smashed two windows, and there were several anti-Semitic threats by phone and email.

The most dramatic event, however, occurred on 17 September 2006 when the sole Oslo synagogue was fired at. The head of the Jewish community, Anne Sender said, "We have crossed a border." She added, "But on the other hand, we have got very much support this autumn from the municipality, government, churches, and other religious societies and neighbors."<sup>39</sup>

In the aftermath of the shooting incident the government decided to make available five million kroners for security measures for the two synagogues in Oslo and Trondheim, the only ones in the country. Statements by the most important of the four suspects indicate that he had been influenced by Gaarder's article and the subsequent debate.<sup>40</sup> Charges have been filed against three people; the main one is of Pakistani origin, the others of Turkish and Norwegian origin. In addition to shooting at the synagogue, the charges include planned terror acts against the American and Israeli embassies in Oslo.<sup>41</sup>

Tore Tvedt, probably the best-known Norwegian neo-Nazi, was prosecuted for an interview with *Verdens Gang* in which he claimed that "the Jews are the main enemy," "they killed our people," "they are evil murderers," and "they are not human beings but should be uprooted...." In 2007 the district court—the second level in the court system—found him not guilty of anti-Jewish harassment.<sup>42</sup> The previous head of the Jewish community, Rolf Kirschner said that "the verdict shows that minorities have no protection according to Norwegian law." In December 2007, the Supreme Court overturned the verdict.<sup>43</sup>

Norwegian courts have tended to be lenient toward extreme anti-Semites. In 2000, at a march in an Oslo suburb in memory of the German Nazi Rudolf Hess, Terje Sjolie, leader of the "Bootboys" group said that communists, Jew-lovers, and immigrants "rape and murder Norwegians, while the country is being destroyed by the Jews." He promised that the marchers would follow in the footsteps of Hitler and Hess. The matter came before the Supreme Court, which found Sjolie not guilty on the ground that Norway grants freedom of expression.<sup>44</sup>

Jewish representatives and the Norwegian Antiracist Center filed a complaint with the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination of the United Nations. In 2005, the committee concluded that Sjolie's words

violated the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, to which Norway is a signatory. It recommended that the Norwegian state take measures “to ensure that statements such as those made by Mr. Sjolie in the course of his speech are not protected by the right to freedom of speech under Norwegian law.” It requested Norway to give wide publicity to this opinion.<sup>45</sup>

### **Boycotting Israel**

Norwegian left-wing organizations have been at the forefront of boycott attempts against Israel. Bodd noted that on 1 May 2002—in the midst of the Second Intifada—the leader of the Labor Union (LO), which counts seven hundred thousand members, called for a boycott of Israel.<sup>46</sup>

Few of the many Norwegian initiatives for implementing boycotts against Israel have succeeded. Among the best-known attempts was such a decision—taken with a slim majority—by the county of Sør-Trøndelag, which includes Norway’s third largest city Trondheim. Although Sør-Trøndelag hardly buys anything from Israel, the boycott call was seen as an important step in shaping consumers’ attitudes.<sup>47</sup>

The boycott initiative came from the far-Left Red Election-Alliance (RV), which equated Israel with the South African apartheid regime.<sup>48</sup> Two student organizations in Trondheim—Studentersamfundet and Studentsamskipnaden—joined in as well. Sør-Trøndelag was one of the first public entities in Europe to decide on such a boycott. However, after pressure from the Foreign Ministry that claimed the boycott was illegal according to international law, Norwegian law, and the EU and WTO agreements the county decided to abandon it.<sup>49</sup>

Several leftist political movements have made an issue of boycotting Israel. For instance, the SV Party has called for a boycott on various occasions. At its general assembly in 2005 it was discovered that the oranges served on the fruit plates were Israeli Jaffas. These were ordered to be removed immediately.<sup>50</sup>

In January 2006, Finance Minister Kristin Halvorsen of SV called on Norwegian consumers to boycott products from Israel. This came as a surprise to the Norwegian government, which considers boycotts an obstacle to dialogue—which is important for Norway’s reputation in the Middle East, according to Raymond Johansen.<sup>51</sup> The Norwegian foreign minister immediately sent letters to the American and Israeli foreign ministers expressing regret for Halvorsen’s boycott call and stating that this was not the policy of the Norwegian government.<sup>52</sup>

### **The Christian Community**

Norway is a largely secular country. Although the majority of Norwegians belong to the Lutheran State Church, a large number of them do not practice. The official

church often takes rather anti-Israeli positions. It has, for instance, sharply criticized the “separation wall.” Although recognizing the threat of terrorism against Israel, the church demands that the wall be dismantled and the previous situation on the ground be restored. “The wall which Israel is building *speaks of hostility.... The wall creates hostility.*”<sup>53</sup> Several Norwegian heads of churches expressed indignation after a trip to the Palestinian territories, concurring that Israel was systematically oppressing the Palestinians.<sup>54</sup>

Yet particularly among Norwegian Christian laymen of the older generation, there is a pro-Israeli movement. Odd Sverre Hove, editor of the daily *Dagen* remarks, however: “To judge from my pro-Israeli speeches at different high schools around the country, there are many young Christians with similar feelings.”<sup>55</sup>

One indication of the pro-Israeli sentiments in these circles is that during the annual Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem, Norwegian delegations often are among the largest even though they come from a small country. Their pro-Israeli position does not add to their popularity in a country with considerable antireligiosity. More precisely, antibiblical feelings are strong; anti-Koran sentiments are much weaker.

The late Kåre Kristiansen, a minister and twice leader of the Christian People’s Party, resigned from the Nobel Committee because he did not want to take part in awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to the then Palestinian Authority chairman Yasser Arafat.<sup>56</sup> Kristiansen said he could not in good conscience bestow such a prize on someone with such a record of terrorism.

## History

Understanding Norway’s present attitude toward Israel requires understanding its checkered history toward the Jews. In 1814, Norway promulgated its own constitution. While otherwise progressive and tolerant, this document continued the prohibition against Jews entering Norway based on classical anti-Semitic stereotypes. When a ship on its way to England sank outside the Norwegian coast in 1817, the only Jew aboard was immediately handed over to the police and sent out of the country.<sup>57</sup> Norway’s historical attitude also must be seen in the context of its religion: Martin Luther, the founder of Lutheranism, was a rabid anti-Semite.

In 1851, after several years of heated debate, Norway finally became one of the last European countries to admit Jews. The country’s foremost poet Henrik Wergeland played a major role in this shift. Every 17 May, on Norway’s national day, the Norwegian Jewish community holds a ceremony at his gravesite.

Norway never attracted many Jews. At its highest point the community numbered about two thousand, which was less than one-tenth of a percent of the population. However, anti-Semitic expressions were frequent. Vebjorn Selbekk in his work on Norwegian anti-Semitism cites various examples from popular books describing Jews in very unfavorable ways.<sup>58</sup>

The Russian Revolution of 1917 spurred the fear of communism, which often was associated with the Jews. When a Norwegian Jew was arrested after a Communist Party meeting, *Aftenposten* referred to him as “the disgusting Bolshevik Jew” who gave a “cunning and shameless impression.”<sup>59</sup> Norwegian traders also were worried that Jewish traders would destroy the Norwegian market through pricing policies and lawbreaking.

More than any other case, the controversy over *shechita* (Jewish ritual slaughter) contributed to a growth in anti-Semitism. It began as a struggle for animal rights and ended with evident anti-Semitic aspects. After a heated debate in the parliament in 1929, it was decided to ban *shechita* by an 88-21 vote. In this Norway preceded Nazi Germany by four years. Jens Hunsheid, the leader of the peasant party (the present Center Party) who later became a prime minister in 1932-1933 said: “We have made no commitments to hand over our animals to the cruelties of the Jews, we have not invited the Jews to our country, and we have no commitments to provide animals for their religious orgies.”<sup>60</sup>

## Quisling

Vidkun Quisling served as defense minister in Hunsheid’s cabinet. In 1933, the year Hitler came to power in Germany, Quisling founded the Norwegian Nazi party Nasjonal Samling (National Union). In the Storting (parliamentary) elections that year, it received 2 percent of the votes. In the 1934 local elections its percentage of the votes increased substantially. However, in the 1937 elections the party almost became extinct.

Norway was attacked by Germany on 9 April 1940 and surrendered shortly afterward. The government and King Haakon VII fled to Britain, and the Germans appointed Quisling as head of a new government. He played a major role in the process of robbing the Norwegian Jews of their property and in the preparatory process of sending them to the death camps. In all, close to 750 Norwegian Jews were murdered during the war.

Quisling became prime minister of Norway on 1 February 1942. Shortly thereafter the article of the Norwegian constitution barring Jews from entering the country was reinstated. Previously several measures already had been taken and Jewish men had been arrested. When Jewish property was confiscated, much of it went to the anti-Jewish Norwegian state. About two thousand Norwegian volunteers joined the Waffen SS.

Quisling is one of the few Norwegians who are known outside the country, his name having entered several languages as the archetype of the traitor. For instance, the Oxford dictionary uses the word *quisling* as a generic term for “person cooperating with an enemy who has occupied his country.”

Looking back, taking into account the Holocaust, there has been a relatively short interval of positive attitudes toward both Jews and Israel in Norway. These attitudes have diminished but still exist. At the same time, significant

anti-Semitism manifests itself. Anti-Israelism, that is, discrimination against the Jewish collectivity, has become its most important mutation.

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Erez Uriely

## Jew-Hatred in Contemporary Norwegian Caricatures\*

The notion of anti-Semitism in today's Norway may seem strange. The country is often portrayed as a calm and universally friendly corner of the European continent. Although Norway may have a record as a humanitarian peacemaker, mainly due to the Nobel Peace Prize that the Swede Alfred Nobel financed and Norway awards, many of its journalists and leaders espouse traditional mainstream European anti-Jewish attitudes. Norwegian anti-Semitism does not come from the grassroots but from the leadership—politicians, organization leaders, church leaders, and senior journalists. It does not come mainly from Norwegian Muslims but from part of the European-Christian society.

Anti-Semitism appeared early in Norway. Around 1000 CE, centuries before Jews came to Norway, Christianity was introduced there along with the concomitant theological anti-Semitism.<sup>1</sup> That suggests that the reason for anti-Semitism was not anything the Jews did, but Christianity. Although Jews and Judaism were not directly outlawed at that time, in 1025 King Olav introduced a law requiring the people in the kingdom to be Christians. In 1436, Archbishop Aslak Bolt forbade the practice of Shabbat in a Jewish manner.<sup>2</sup> In 1569, the Danish king Fredrik II, who also ruled Norway, introduced a law demanding that all subjects either follow the Evangelical Lutheran faith or leave the country within three days; otherwise their property would be confiscated and they would be executed.

In 1620, the first Jews were allowed to reside in Norway. In 1651, however, Jews were forbidden to travel in the kingdom.<sup>3</sup>

Although the attitude toward Jews varied over time, it was never the same as toward Christians. In 1670, Jews were allowed entrance to the kingdom if they paid enough money and proved able to improve its economy. This was true for Denmark and Sweden as well.

### **A Ban on Jews**

When the Norwegian National Assembly in 1814 drafted its modern constitution ostensibly based on the principles of the French and American revolutions, a clause was inserted stating that Jews and Jesuits were not to be admitted to the country. This was stipulated in the second paragraph of the document. This so-called "Jewish paragraph" was annulled in 1851 after a long struggle led by the national poet, Henrik Wergeland.

As European anti-Semitism intensified during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Norwegians were quick to learn from it and put it into practice. The country's newspapers actively propagandized against the Jews. For example, in 1933 editor Johannes Nesse of *Aftenposten*, Norway's most important daily, wrote an article titled "Jew-Hatred" (*Jødehat*) on its editorial pages. In it he defended the discriminatory treatment to which Jews were subjected. He wrote that "the Jew was sucking through his drinking straw into the nation's glass." Thus already seven years before the Germans occupied Norway, *Aftenposten* expressed its understanding for the Nazi attitude toward the Jews and asked "not to show them exaggerated sympathy."<sup>4</sup>

### Ritual Slaughter Forbidden

Getting rid of the Jews was not an alien notion to the Norwegians, who heard their parliamentarians and ministers propounding racist theory and expressing anti-Semitic ideas. In 1929, Member of Parliament Jens Hundseid told the parliament that: "We haven't invited the Jews to our land and we have no obligation to hand over animals to them for their religious orgies."<sup>5</sup> Soon after, the Jewish ritual slaughter (*shechita*) of animals was forbidden.

In principle, the Norwegian law and constitution grant freedom of religion to everyone. In practice, the one exception is the Jews. Norway is one of the few countries in the world where *shechita* is banned. In Germany, it was prohibited only during the Nazi period. In Norway, however, the ban was introduced three years before the Nazis took power in Germany and continues till today, whereas Muslim ceremonial slaughter (*halla*) is permitted. Compassion for animals does not explain the ban on *shechita*, since hunting is permitted and popular in Norway. About 150,000 people—three percent of the population—are registered hunters;<sup>6</sup> hunted prey often suffers a much slower and more painful death than in Jewish ritual slaughter.

When Hundseid became prime minister (1932-1933), he stated in a speech in the parliament: "Many of those foreigners who come to our country are of an inferior race. Their heredity is bad, but their reproduction is very virile and fast. Our race suffers because of this immigration."<sup>7</sup> Hundseid was intensely anti-Semitic and clearly directed these words at the Jews. This anti-Judaism was a part of a broader Norwegian racism. In 1934, his party member Erling Bjørnson proposed and led the parliamentary debate on a new law of forced sterilization,<sup>8</sup> which was practiced by the Norwegian government during the years 1934-1977.

Forced sterilization was part of the plan to improve the Norwegian race, which was Germanic and Aryan. At that time, racial theory and hygiene were common in European culture. The Gypsies were considered to be inferior and in Norway, to prevent the "contamination of the race," they were subjected to forced sterilizations. So were "mentally weak" ethnic Norwegians. The Norwegian government and church also implemented an "assimilation policy" aimed at

creating a single, “healthy” Norwegian people. Minorities such as the Gypsies and the Sámi (Lapps) suffered oppression, and their children were forcibly separated from their families and sent to be raised “as Norwegians.”<sup>9</sup>

It was in Hundseid’s government that Vidkun Quisling was appointed defense minister. He later founded the Norwegian Nazi Party, Nasjonal Samling, in which Hundseid also became a member until 1945. After the war Quisling became the scapegoat for treason and with his trial and execution, Norway was supposedly “cleansed.”

### **Contemporary Recycling of Anti-Semitism**

Many anti-Semitic caricatures that have flourished in recent years in all the major Norwegian newspapers recycle traditional anti-Jewish motifs. In some cases the link between past and present goes deeper. When the bells of the Oslo Cathedral ring, not everyone can enjoy the sound because the bell chime was financed by a Norwegian Nazi veteran, Ørnulf Myklestad,<sup>10</sup> who apparently never changed his mind about the Jews. He also contributed to publishing *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in Norwegian.<sup>11</sup>

In April 2002, the Simon Wiesenthal Center listed Norway as one of the countries that did little to investigate, let alone prosecute, the Nazi war criminals.<sup>12</sup> The Norwegian Defense Ministry authorized in 1988 the obliteration of an archive containing information on the Norwegian people and organizations sympathizing with communists or Nazis.<sup>13</sup> The archive was erased in 1994 when the World Jewish Congress and Bjørn Westlie, a journalist for the Norwegian business daily *Dagens Næringsliv*, were gathering information on Nazism and the Jewish property plundered in Norway.

As the issue of Nazism was covered up, the Norwegian media continued to criticize Israel. The assertion that criticism of Israel differs from anti-Semitism is largely used as an excuse to avoid recognizing anti-Semitism and defend its continued practice. In reality, much criticism of Israel has an anti-Semitic character.<sup>14</sup>

Common Norwegian citizens should not be allowed to evade their responsibility with the claim that they cannot control the media. Had enough Norwegians complained to the newspapers about anti-Semitic expressions, the phenomenon would have vanished in a short time. Many Norwegians, however, agree with the anti-Semitic message in the anti-Israeli caricatures.

### **Caricatures and Mass Communication**

After World War II, Jew-hatred receded in Norway. It resurfaced in the 1970s when the Norwegian media spread propaganda about the Jews’ alleged atrocities against the Palestinian Arabs.

Over the past thirty years, Norwegian media caricatures have sustained a

high level of demonization of Jews and the state of Israel. Although usually not as crude as Arab ones,<sup>15</sup> Norwegian caricatures use many of the same motifs. These originated in Europe and include portraying Jews as heartless, peace-hating, enemies of humanity, Nazi, bloodthirsty, child-killers, and controllers of the world.<sup>16</sup> Only a small sample of these depictions will be mentioned below.

No other means of conveying a message to the public works more swiftly and effectively than pictures, drawings, and caricatures. Christian Europe has used them to demonize Jews for centuries.<sup>17</sup> The technique was perfected by German ingenuity, helping to lay the groundwork for the Holocaust. Jews were depicted as scoundrels, parasites, and vermin who threatened Germany and the civilized world, and could be dealt with only by destroying them.

The Holocaust revealed that centuries of Christian<sup>18</sup> anti-Semitism had mentally prepared almost every country of Europe, including Norway, for the task of collecting their Jews to have them robbed, looted, deported, and killed. Many people actively contributed to the endeavor; the masses generally remained passive and did not protest.

### **Rejecting the Holocaust through Silence**

After the Holocaust, the Germans took some important measures to fight anti-Semitism. But in Norway, both the government and the citizens have tried to reject their responsibility for the Holocaust. As a result, many Norwegian Jews are apprehensive about today's anti-Semitism, remembering how it built up in the past. Most Jews maintain a low profile, and some feel the need to join the critics of Israel.

Before World War II, some Norwegians would paint the words "Palestine calling" on Jewish-owned shops. The Nazi occupiers were assisted even by ordinary citizens in locating the Norwegian Jews to be sent to the extermination camps. Today, Norwegians in demonstrations chant "Jews out of Palestine"—the ostensibly moral demand to "end the Israeli occupation."

After the war, some Norwegian politicians, especially from the Labor movement, supported Israel's fight for existence. Israel's victory in the 1967 Six Day War made the Jews of Israel popular in Norway. Soon, however, the situation began to deteriorate as pro-Arab sentiment grew. More recently, Norway has granted billions of kroners—more than half a billion USD until 2005—to the Palestinian Authority (PA). It has supported it politically, among other things, by bestowing the Nobel Peace Prize on its then leader Yasser Arafat.

On 21 July 2006, while Hizballah was firing at Jewish civilians from the north and Hamas from the south, Norwegian prime minister Jens Stoltenberg declared that Norway would give 100 million kroners each—approximately 160 million USD—to Lebanon and the PA, amounting to a total of about 100 million USD since the beginning of 2006.<sup>19</sup> Such pronouncements and measures send

a signal to the people, from the highest level, about who the victims and the aggressors are.

After the Holocaust, Jews both in Israel and the Diaspora believed the establishment of a Jewish state would put an end to anti-Semitism. Instead, to a large extent Israel became its target, facilitating even more intensified allegations. In addition, criticism of the Jews no longer comes exclusively from the church or individuals but also from governments, Norway's being a prominent case.

The contempt for the Jews that led to the Holocaust is still very much alive in Norway. To justify their hatred, some now argue that the "Zionists" actually behave worse than the Nazis did: they "occupy Palestinian land," "oppress the Palestinians," and "kill children," just as the Nazis did in Norway and the rest of Europe. Such comparisons flourish and serve to cleanse the conscience of Norwegians and other Europeans, who today support the Arabs even as many of them strive to fulfill Europe's unfinished Holocaust.

### **Caricatures as a Means of Hatred**<sup>20</sup>

Examples of Norwegian anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli caricatures have been divided into groups according to their message. Very often the two categories overlap.

#### *1. The Problem Is Judaism*

Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and Nazi propaganda encouraged hatred of Judaism and declared total war on it. *Mein Kampf* was swiftly translated and distributed in the Arab world, long before the Holocaust. Even today, many Arabs regard Hitler's ideas as the ideal solution to the "Jewish problem." In television, books, newspapers, and speeches, Arab leaders often claim that the problem with Jews stems from their traditional texts.

"Murder, kill, liquidate, execute" and so on are, according to a cartoon published in the Labor movement's newspaper *Dagsavisen*, a contemporary mutation of the Ten Commandments.<sup>21</sup> The Norwegian media often use the Bible against Israel and its religious-Christian supporters. Although the means are sophisticated and subtle, the message is clear: it is Judaism that causes Israelis to murder Palestinians.

#### *2. The Jews Rule the World*

In many Norwegian caricatures the Jew rules the world and the victims have no choice but to obey. Such anti-Semitic cartoons were common before World War II. In current anti-Semitic caricatures the Jew often manipulates the Christians like puppets and turns them against the Muslims.

In a caricature by Herbjørn Skogstad in the *Oppland Arbeiderblad*, Israeli

prime minister Ariel Sharon rules the world. The Jew's "invisible hand" (marked "Sharon" and with a Star of David) controls Norwegian foreign minister Jan Petersen (i.e., the Christians). Being under Jewish control, the Europeans can only oppress the Palestinian Arabs (i.e., the Muslims). The motif in the caricature is religious, portraying Christians and Muslims as weak and frail before the powerful Jewish giant.<sup>22</sup>

Jews controlling the world is an old hate motif and is central to *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. In Norway, a new edition of the book has been published by the Bergman Publishing House.

### 3. *The Jew: A Robber and a Parasite*

A parasite is an organism that utilizes resources gathered and possessed by others. Known examples of parasites are viruses, ticks, rats, and in the human sphere, thieves and robbers.

*Verdens Gang* has the largest circulation of the Norwegian newspapers. In one of his cartoons, its well-known caricaturist Morten M. Kristiansen portrays the Jews of Israel as parasites who stole land from the Arabs and still want every last grain of sand. The Jew's greed does not leave room for others—reminiscent of the Nazis' justification for needing *Lebensraum*.<sup>23</sup> In 1940, the Nazi film *The Eternal Jew* likened Jews to rats, presenting both as aggressive, parasitic agents that use their genetic advantages to spread all over the world.

*Aftenposten's* article "A Better Species of Human Being?" described how the Israelis allegedly used their sense of superiority to allow the massacres in the Sabra and Shatilah refugee camps in Lebanon in 1982. The author, Magne Skjæraasen, presents himself as a "friend of Jews."<sup>24</sup> He ignores, however, an atrocity such as the Syrian massacre of at least twenty thousand Syrian civilians in Hama on 2 February 1982.

Skjæraasen and others like him do not criticize the PLO, the Palestinian Authority, and other Arab and Muslim bodies for killing thousands of Jews and seeking the destruction of Israel. The common claim by Norwegians and others that "we have nothing against Jews—we just oppose Israeli aggression" is exposed by such selectivity and hypocrisy.

### 4. *The Jew as Satan*

The faces of the "satanic Jew" are nearly identical in two caricatures. One is from the Nazi paper *Der Stürmer* and was published in 1943.<sup>25</sup> The other is by Oddmund Mikkelsen in the *Hamar Arbeiderblad* and was published in 2003.<sup>26</sup> Both show the long "Jewish nose," the frowning forehead symbolizing deceit, the narrow cunning eyes looking askance, perhaps at his next victim? The wrinkles seem to indicate evil thoughts toward both the Christians and the Muslims, represented by Norway's then Christian prime minister Bondevik and PLO

chairman Arafat, respectively. In the 1943 caricature, the Jews were shown as if they were threatening only the Christians.

During the Nazi era, *Der Stürmer* became the most virulently anti-Semitic publication in Germany. The Norwegian portrayal of the Israeli prime minister in Mikkelsen's caricature, however, is even coarser and surpasses *Der Stürmer* in depicting results of the Jew's actions: a sea of blood and a graveyard with crosses seems to indicate that the victims are Christians.<sup>27</sup> The message of these caricatures is again religious: the Jew kills both Christians and Muslims. The Jewish Satan, represented by Sharon, is a frightening ghoul whom Christians must fight.

### 5. *The Jew as a Monster*

In a caricature in the Austrian *Kikeriki* at the beginning of the twentieth century—considered one of the most anti-Jewish in history—the Jew is shown as a mythological monster that endangers the world. *Kikeriki* was the first publication known to focus on anti-Jewish caricatures. It was published in Vienna and was probably the inspiration for *Der Stürmer*, which began to appear in Germany in 1923.<sup>28</sup>

In a 2003 caricature by Siri Dokken in *Dagsavisen*, Israeli prime minister Sharon is shown as a monster.<sup>29</sup> Dokken says that “a political caricature does not show what a person looks like. It is rather my personal perception of how he or she does the job or of the situation that person is in.”<sup>30</sup>

Did this caricature express Dokken's and *Dagsavisen*'s opinion that the Israelis were endangering peace in the Middle East and perhaps the rest of the world? Or was it an eruption of a more traditional attitude?

### 6. *The Jew Hinders Peace*

In a caricature from Germany under Nazi rule a cartoon was published titled “The Jew: The Initiator and Prolonger of War.”<sup>31</sup> In a 2003 caricature titled “With a Roadmap for Peace,” stone tablets are to be smashed by a small man on the giant Sharon's nose.<sup>32</sup>

These caricatures are so similar that it is difficult to imagine the second could have been drawn without a sidelong glance at the first. In both, the Jew is a giant who cares little about peace or his neighbors. In the former, the word Jew is written large. In the latter, the Jewish kippa is placed on the former Israeli prime minister's head, although he seldom wore a kippa. Also, the nose helps to identify the “typical Jew.”

The Jew in these caricatures, with his half-closed, drowsy eyes, has no semblance of decency or emotions. He wields colossal power; even the mighty United States, like Europe in the past, cannot cope with the Jewish problem.

The common message of these two caricatures is that the Jew is the sole

obstacle to peace and the cause of war. This was frequently said by anti-Semites in regard to both of the world wars.

Nowadays many Norwegian and other European leaders seem to assume that the threat of war could be avoided if only the Jewish state would stop being arrogant, oppressive, and expansionist. Caricatures such as the above incite against Jews. The Nazis' Final Solution was passively accepted and implemented in Europe after generations of brainwashing. Today there are efforts to create a similar climate.

### *7. Secular Media Propagating Religious Ideas*

A 2002 caricature by Inge Grødum in *Aftenposten* shows a Star of David over Bethlehem and three men riding camels. The (Jewish) Star of David, by replacing the (Christian) Star of Bethlehem, informs the reader that Jewry has converted Bethlehem into a Jewish place. Hence the Jews are acting against the Christians, who regard Bethlehem as a holy city. The three camel riders symbolize the Three Wise Men who, according to Christian tradition, foresaw Jesus' birth and came to visit him in Bethlehem, over which the Star of Bethlehem shone.<sup>33</sup> The caricature insinuates that Christians have to stop Jewish violence but fail to do so.

In another 2002 cartoon by the same artist Israeli tanks fire at the Star of Bethlehem.<sup>34</sup> This conveys the idea that the Jews are at war with Christianity. The symbolic number three appears in several caricatures.

An earlier caricature around Christmas 2001 titled "Christmas in Bethlehem" suggests, by showing a light from a high watchtower, how the Jews oversee and control the Christian town of Bethlehem. Again an impression is created that the Jews control the Christians, a message to be remembered by the readers during the Christmas holiday.<sup>35</sup>

A year later, Grødum drew a cartoon which shows how, while the (good) Christian reader celebrates the New Year, the (evil) Jew Sharon plans to kill the Muslim Arafat. The hanging rope is made of an Arab keffiyeh. This image in Christian Europe reminds the Christians not to forget their duties toward the Jews: not only to celebrate New Year but also, in the name of love, to protect the Muslims from the Jews.<sup>36</sup>

At the beginning of 2002, Finn Graff drew a caricature about Jewish wickedness, symbolized by a Star of David trapping Arafat. It is meant to arouse Christian anger. The Three Wise Men abandon their religious duties and ride away on their camels. The message is obvious: the Muslims are victims of the Jews, and the Christians must not neglect their moral and religious duty to thwart the Jews.<sup>37</sup>

Although the Norwegian media is largely secular, it shows a fixation with religious anti-Jewish motifs, many of which have age-old roots. Caricatures and articles create the impression that the Jews are combating Christianity for world domination. Although many journalists present Israel as the world's worst

problem, most know that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is just a fraction of both the radical Muslims' war against all other ethnic groups and the numerous Muslim internal wars. In many conversations this author had with Norwegian journalists, not one continued to deny these realities after a number of places were mentioned where Muslims attack other Muslims as well as non-Muslims.

It seems that while some journalists hate Jews, many more are simply afraid to deal with a difficult problem and prefer an easy solution. Instead of the frightening global jihad, they prefer to concentrate on a smaller issue, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, that supposedly can be easily solved.

Journalists cannot just express any opinion. The media that employs them decides on guidelines and terminology to be used.<sup>38</sup> Two journalists even told this author that they were pressured by colleagues for being "too positive toward Israel." A clear factor is the common fear of Muslims; it is much safer to blame Israel.

Anti-Israelism in the Norwegian media uses sophisticated propaganda techniques to arouse anti-Jewish sentiments among the public, who are subtly told that they are also part of the conflict. Since the Jews are against Christianity, the Christians must stand together with the Muslim Palestinian Arabs against the Jews.

Most Norwegian media kept silent, however, when terrorists seized the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem in April and May 2002 and held nuns and priests as hostages. These terrorists belonged to organizations collaborating with the PA including the PLO, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, and Hamas. Several of them had earlier participated in murderous attacks on Jewish civilians. The Norwegian media also kept silent while Christians were persecuted in Bethlehem after Arafat and the PA took control there. Bethlehem's Christian population has declined from at least 60 percent in 1990 to 20 percent in 2001.<sup>39</sup> But when Israeli forces surrounded the church and tried to liberate the kidnapped church people and arrest the terrorists, the Norwegian media suddenly took interest.

The caricatures in this group distort what actually happened. The Jews are shown to have supplanted the Star of Bethlehem with their own symbol, the Star of David. The media cynically exploits the sanctity of Bethlehem and Christmas to stir feelings of hatred against the Jews. For centuries, incitement of this sort led to bloody attacks on the Jews of Europe.

Arafat, who had *Mein Kampf* published in Ramallah,<sup>40</sup> was responsible for the murder of many Jews. Nevertheless, many in the Norwegian media celebrated him as a hero and as a victim of the Jews. Norway's economic support per inhabitant to the PA is far greater than that of any other country.<sup>41</sup> The fact that Hamas took control of the Palestinian government in January 2006 has not led Norway to stop the funding. On 10 April 2006, Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre declared that "Norway remains a major donor to the Palestinian people. We provide about half a billion kroners a year."<sup>42</sup>

### 8. *The Jew as Nazi*

In 2002, *Dagbladet* published a cartoon by Finn Graff showing Sharon as a Nazi.<sup>43</sup>

The former secretary-general of the Norwegian Labor Party, Haakon Lie, wrote in his autobiography: “The Labor Party conducted serious attacks against Israel; it used caricatures of Finn Graff, which evoked in detail the anti-Semitic illustrations of *Der Stürmer* in Hitler’s days and of *The Crocodile* in Moscow.”<sup>44</sup>

Graff, a left-wing caricaturist, was born in Germany in 1938 and moved to Norway, where his images evoke a positive response. They suggest that the evil in the world originates from two sources, the United States and Israel. Several of his caricatures show the Jews controlling the United States.

### 9. *Jews Should Not Defend Themselves*

In 2006, Graff drew a cartoon of Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert as a Nazi.<sup>45</sup> Israel’s prime minister is the commandant of a death camp.<sup>46</sup> Olmert is dressed in a Nazi uniform within the camp, which is connoted by a high wall, watchtowers, and barbed wire. Above the gate can be read “Jedem Das Seine,” which means “Each one gets what he deserves.” Outside the barracks in front of Olmert lie many Arab corpses. Olmert stands in Nazi boots, laughing and pleased, holding a sniper gun while an Arab he deliberately shot in the head is bleeding. The title of the article describing Olmert and Israel is “Successful,” adding further demonization. The newspaper refused to publish a reaction by this author, stating that it “refuses to allow reprimanding in the newspaper.”

In July 2006, after Hamas and Hizballah attacks on Israel including kidnappings, murders, and the shelling of civilians, Israel’s government finally ordered the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to fight back. Thereupon Inge Grødem published a cartoon in *Aftenposten* of Olmert on a tank titled “The Extremists’ War.”<sup>47</sup> Some Norwegian politicians, and to a much greater extent the journalists, reacted immediately with criticism of Israel but not of the terrorists. The state of Israel, its government, and especially Prime Minister Olmert were condemned in every conceivable forum.

Some Arab journalists criticized Hizballah and its Iranian patron. Yet most of the Norwegian journalists did not even mention this Arab criticism.<sup>48</sup>

The severe Norwegian attacks on Israel cannot be explained by concern for the Arabs. Such concern for the Arabs only arises when Jews can be blamed for their suffering. Criticism of Israel is never as rapid and harsh as when Jews defend themselves. This occurred when Israel decided to build a security barrier, engaged in targeted assassinations of terrorist leaders, and when Olmert ordered the campaign against Hizballah in 2006. In true European tradition, Jews are expected to suffer but not to defend themselves.

The right to self-defense is far from consistently accepted in modern Europe.

Norwegian soldiers fight in Afghanistan against terrorists who do not directly threaten Norway, but Israel is vilified for retaliating against terrorists actively engaged in murderous attacks on Israelis.

In Grødum's cartoon, the mighty Olmert tramples tiny Lebanon leaving bloody traces. In the background is Iran's president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Iran, presented as a dwarf compared to Israel, can only watch helplessly from the sidelines while Israel destroys peaceful Lebanon.

### 10. *The Jew Likes to Kill*

In a 1907 Russian caricature titled "The Radical" a Jew is shown with one eye closed or covered, the other eye aiming to kill.<sup>49</sup> The subliminal message is: the Jew turns a blind eye to moral feelings; the Jew is callous and inhuman. He displays no feelings before he shoots, and he shoots children. The Jewish arrogance is evident even in the weaponry: the old "rascal" is armed with a pistol and a dagger; the modern Jew uses a machinegun against children.

In a 2003 caricature by Grødum in *Aftenposten*, Sharon's face is long-nosed and ugly; such images were seen by children in Nazi Germany, and they influence Norwegian children today. According to the many articles and caricatures published in *Aftenposten*, the Jews continue to behave in a brutal, primitive manner that arouses indignation in civilized people. Unlike *Der Stürmer*, *Aftenposten* is a mainstream newspaper, Norway's most influential as noted, and is considered moderate.<sup>50</sup>

That caricature illustrated an anti-Semitic article by the journalist Cordelia Edvardson, whom *Aftenposten* makes full use of in conveying crude anti-Israeli allegations. Edvardson is Jewish, was rescued from Auschwitz, and now lives in Israel. In several of her articles in *Aftenposten* and other newspapers, she has compared Israelis to Nazis.

The centuries-old blood libel, which claims that Jews kill Christian children as part of their religious rituals—particularly at Passover—has now been turned into the myth of Jews intentionally killing Palestinian children. In both caricatures the Jew is bloodthirsty and murderous. Jewishness is represented by the kippa in the first caricature and by the Star of David in the second.

## Conclusion

There are striking similarities between Nazi-era and contemporary anti-Jewish caricatures, as seen in many Norwegian examples. Then as now, the artists use sophisticated methods to incite emotions. Common motifs include:

- Jews rule and exploit the world.
- Jews are evil and inhuman.
- Jews hate peace and propagate wars.

- Jews are unlike other people.
- Judaism is against other religions.

Recent caricatures convey that Jews are fighting Christians, who must therefore ally with the Muslim Palestinian Arabs.

There is no doubt that Jew-hatred is alive in today's Norway. The situation is deteriorating with Jews under increasing attacks. This hatred is spread by the leaders of the society—journalists, intellectuals, church and state leaders, including bishops and prime ministers. They belittle the Holocaust while providing political and economic support to elements striving to exterminate world Jewry, first and foremost the Jews of Israel.

The situation, however, is not hopeless. Despite Norway's history of anti-Semitism, several factors suggest that it is possible to counter the current trend and foster a better attitude toward Jews and Israel. To begin with, the most virulent and effective anti-Semitism originates in a very small, albeit active, elite part of the population.

Second, the Jew-hatred spread by these circles can be confronted because these people are generally sensitive about their image. To be effective, such confrontation must be massive and should come from well-known bodies such as the Israeli government and organizations that fight anti-Semitism. Examples of such efforts are the complaints made by the Simon Wiesenthal Center against the Norwegian caricatures and against the proposal for an amendment to eliminate tax deductions for donations to Israel.<sup>51</sup>

The few cases in which the Israeli Foreign Ministry did protest against anti-Semitism, and the even fewer cases where the Norwegian Jewish community did so, achieved several positive results.<sup>52</sup> Since the Norwegian-based Center against Antisemitism began to criticize the use of anti-Semitic caricatures publicly, there have been less of them. Yet one cannot be sure that this is due to these actions.

Indeed, Norwegians in general are concerned about their reputation. The Norwegian media often cites how Norway is described abroad. Criticism of Norway and possible damage to its reputation are taken seriously. Leaders often respond the next day to complaints that appear in the media.

A decisive Jewish and Israeli policy against Norwegian anti-Semitism could also improve relations between Norway and Jews and Israel. Fifty years ago Norwegian schools used maps of "Jødeland" (The Jews' Land), portraying Israel positively as the Jewish state; thirty years ago Norwegian schoolchildren learned to sing the Israeli song "Hava Nagila" and were taught to relate positively to Jews. Today, schoolchildren learn about Israeli soldiers who kill innocent Arab youngsters and aggressive Zionists who forcibly occupy other people's land. Instead of letting the situation deteriorate even further, it must be improved. It is impossible to eradicate anti-Semitism in Norway and Europe generally, but Jews must work to reduce it to "tolerable" levels.

## Appendix: Who Is behind the Caricatures?

### 1. *The Caricaturists and Journalists*

- Ulf Aas has been a caricaturist for *Aftenposten* since 1948. His caricatures were purchased by the Norwegian National Gallery and other important galleries. He has received many prizes, and in 1999 was awarded Norway's most prestigious Knight First Class of St. Olav's Order for his contribution to Norwegian art and culture.
- Dave Coverly is a freelance caricaturist. He sells his work through Creators Syndicate, Los Angeles.<sup>53</sup>
- Siri Dokken has worked since 1995 for *Dagsavisen* where her caricatures appear almost daily. She previously worked for the newspaper *Dag og Tid*.
- Finn Graff was born in Germany in 1938 and immigrated to Norway in 1946. He previously worked for *Morgenposten* and *Arbeiderbladet* and has worked for *Dagbladet* since 1988. The well-known Graff caricatures have been exhibited in Norway, including the National Gallery, and abroad, and have received prizes in Norway and elsewhere. In 2000 and 2005, the Norwegian Media Businesses' Association awarded him the Newspaper Caricaturist of the Year award. Graff's caricatures are extremely violent and grotesque by Norwegian standards, commonly attacking the United States, Israel, and the Norwegian Right. No other caricaturist so extensively compares Jews to Nazis as Graff has done.
- Inge Grødum is one of the most renowned caricaturists in Norway. His cartoons appear almost daily in *Aftenposten*. He earlier worked for the newspaper *Nationen* and his drawings have been exhibited in Norway and abroad.
- Roar Hagen has worked for *Verdens Gang* since 1986, previously working for *Sunnmørsposten* and *Stavanger Aftenblad*. His caricatures have also been published in *Die Zeit*, the *International Herald Tribune*, *Der Spiegel*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and elsewhere.<sup>54</sup>
- Morten M. Kristiansen works for *Verdens Gang* but has also published caricatures in *Dagbladet*. He is also a political commentator, furniture designer, and inventor.
- Oddmund Mikkelsen has worked for *Hamar Arbeiderblad* since 1988.
- Magne Skjæraasen is a journalist who became best known as a columnist for *Aftenposten's* culture section. The Jews of Oslo consider him Jew-friendly; several of them, like him, reject Jew-hatred outside Israel but criticize Israel for its self-defense against terrorism and support external pressure against it. Skjæraasen's attitude toward the Jews is an interesting example of certain aspects of the new anti-Semitism: he has been positive toward the small Jewish minority of Norway but negative toward the large number of Jews in Israel.

- Herbjørn Skogstad currently works for the local newspaper *Oppland Arbeiderblad*, and earlier for the newspaper *Bergensavisen*.

## 2. *The Newspapers*

Many local newspapers are published in Norway because of the great distances as well as the social structure, which is characterized by numerous small communities. In 2004, 166 newspapers had a total daily circulation of 2,855,071.<sup>55</sup> Many local newspapers depend on generous government subsidies.

The newspapers mentioned in the text include:

- *Aftenposten*: The Oslo region, where power is concentrated, is the country's most important one, and Oslo's newspaper *Aftenposten* is the most influential. It is conservative and the second largest paper in Norway with a circulation of 250,000 in 2004. *Aftenposten* is owned by Schibsted, a leading media group in Scandinavia. Schibsted is apparently a purely economic interest group and not a political actor.
- *Dagbladet*: With a circulation of 183,000 in 2004, *Dagbladet* is Norway's third largest newspaper. Published in tabloid format, it is not sold to subscribers but can be bought in gas stations, shops, and kiosks. *Dagbladet's* shares are owned by various companies. It seems the owners' interest in the newspaper is economic and not political.<sup>56</sup>
- *Dagsavisen's* circulation is 33,000. It has always been associated with the Labor movement, and in 1894 became the main organ of the Norwegian Labor Party. In 1996 and 1999, it changed owners. It is now owned by the Dagsavisen Foundation.<sup>57</sup> Its political affiliation, however, has not changed.
- *Hamar Arbeiderblad* was established by local branches of the Labor Party in 1925. Its circulation is 28,500. Today, it is the largest newspaper of the Hedmark region. Formally, it is now a nonpartisan newspaper.<sup>58</sup>
- *Oppland Arbeiderblad*, a local newspaper with a circulation of 28,500, was established in 1924 as a Labor Party local newspaper. Today it is owned by the A-pressen, a left-wing concern (see below).<sup>59</sup>
- *Verdens Gang* (VG) is Norway's largest paper with a circulation of 365,000. It is a tabloid available in gas stations, shops and kiosks. It too is owned by Schibsted.

The A-pressen concern was established in 1948 as Norsk Arbeiderpresse (Norwegian Labor Press). Its history began earlier with the founding of the first workers' newspaper, *Vort Arbeid* (Our Work) in 1884. *Vort Arbeid* had a crucial influence on the formation of the Labor Party. In 1989, Norsk Arbeiderpresse merged with another company to form A-pressen. Its board was headed in 2005 by Gerd-Liv Valla, a former Stalin supporter who was the then leader of the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO). On 1 May 2002 (Labor Day), Valla's and the LO's main agenda was a call to boycott Israel.

## Notes

- \* The author thanks the many Christian Norwegians who are devoted to supporting the Jews and Israel. Without their activities, funding, and constant encouragement, the Center against Antisemitism's work against anti-Semitism in Norway would be impossible.
1. Malcolm Hay, *The Foot of Pride: The Pressure of Christendom on the People of Israel for 1900 Years* (Boston: Beacon, 1950). (Also published in 1975 as *Thy Brother's Blood: The Roots of Christian Anti-Semitism.*)
  2. *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, 5 (1436), 469-73. Cited in Oskar Mendelsohn, *Jødenes historie i Norge gjennom 300 år* (Three Hundred Years of Jewish History in Norway), Vol. 1 (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1969/1987), 10. [Norwegian]
  3. Mendelsohn, *Jødenes historie*, 11.
  4. Vebjørn Selbekk, *Jødehat på norsk* (Jew-Hatred in Norwegian) (Skjetten: Hermon, 2001), 55. [Norwegian]
  5. Selbekk, *Jødehat*, 42.
  6. The figures are for 2003/04, [www.ssb.no/english/subjects/10/04/10/jeja\\_en](http://www.ssb.no/english/subjects/10/04/10/jeja_en).
  7. Selbekk, *Jødehat*, 49.
  8. *Ibid.*, 50.
  9. *Forskning*, 5 (1998); *Forskning*, 1 August 2000: Kirurgi på rasemessig grunnlag, <http://tinylink.com/?64E9g57cpg>. [Norwegian]
  10. *Aftenposten*, 7 October 2003, [www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/oslo/article641877.ece](http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/oslo/article641877.ece). [Norwegian]
  11. *Monitor*, 3 December 2003, [www.oslodomkirke.no](http://www.oslodomkirke.no). [Norwegian]
  12. Efraim Zuroff, "Worldwide Investigation and Prosecution of Nazi War Criminals: An Annual Status Report," Simon Wiesenthal Center, 2002, <http://tinylink.com/?4ZzezOpXvK>.
  13. Defense Minister Dag Jostein Fjærvoll confirmed the details. Defense Ministry Press Release 054/98, 7 September 1998. [Norwegian]
  14. Manfred Gerstenfeld, "Anti-Semitic Motifs in Anti-Israelism," *Post-Holocaust and Anti-Semitism*, 2, 1 November 2002, [www.jcpa.org/phas/phas-2.htm](http://www.jcpa.org/phas/phas-2.htm).
  15. See the analysis of Arieh Stav, *Peace: The Arabian Caricature—A Study of Anti-Semitic Imagery* (Jerusalem: Gefen, 1999). The book contains an important overview and reference list.
  16. Manfred Gerstenfeld, interview with Joël Kotek, "Major Anti-Semitic Motifs in Arab Cartoons," *Post-Holocaust and Anti-Semitism*, 20, 1 June 2004, [www.jcpa.org/phas/phas-21.htm](http://www.jcpa.org/phas/phas-21.htm).
  17. Stav, *Peace*.
  18. The term Christian is used here to include believers as well as secular persons in countries that for generations have been under the influence of the Christian churches.
  19. Prime Minister's Office, Press Release 99/2006. [Norwegian]
  20. The caricatures mentioned in this essay can be seen at [www.jcpa.org/phas/phas-50.htm](http://www.jcpa.org/phas/phas-50.htm).
  21. "The Seven Synonyms of Death," caricature by Dave Coverly, *Dagsavisen*, 7 January 2004.
  22. "Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon Rules the World," caricature by Herbjørn Skogstad, *Oppland Arbeiderblad*, 18 September 2003.
  23. "Land-Robbers Grab Every Single Bit" (with an untranslatable pun on "Semite"), caricature by Morten M. Kristiansen, *Verdens Gang*, 25 March 2004.
  24. "A Better Species of Human Being?" caricature by Ulf Aas; the title belongs to the article by Magne Skjæraasen, *Aftenposten*, 6 June 1992. [Norwegian]
  25. "Satan," *Der Stürmer*, 9, 1943.

26. "The Devil and the Jew," caricature by Oddmund Mikkelsen, *Hamar Arbeiderblad*, 12 July 2003.
27. It is also possible that the crosses were used because they are the common symbol for a grave in Christian Europe. But since journalists and Norwegian leaders have often accused Israeli Jews of fighting against Christians (as in Bethlehem or Beit Jalla), the first explanation is highly probable.
28. Arieh Stav, personal conversation, 23 August 2006.
29. "The Middle East Not Quite before the Storm," caricature by Siri Dokken, *Dagsavisen*, 4 March 2003.
30. Siri Dokken, interview in *Dagsavisen*, 29 December 2004, [www.dagsavisen.no/kultur/article1389791.ece](http://www.dagsavisen.no/kultur/article1389791.ece). [Norwegian]
31. Germany, 1933–1945, "The Jew: The Initiator and Prolonger of War" (German Federal Archives, Koblenz, 1933-1945).
32. "With a Roadmap for Peace," caricature by Roar Hagen, *Verdens Gang*, 30 May 2003.
33. "The Star of David over Bethlehem," caricature by Inge Grødum, *Aftenposten*, 18 May 2002.
34. "Israeli Tanks Firing at the Star of Bethlehem," caricature by Inge Grødum, *Aftenposten*, 5 April 2002.
35. "Christmas in Bethlehem," caricature by Inge Grødum, editorial, *Aftenposten*, 27 December 2001.
36. "The Jewish Plan on the Christian New Year's Eve: Kill a Muslim," caricature by Inge Grødum, *Aftenposten*, 31 December 2002.
37. "Christmas Eve 2002: The Star of Bethlehem and the Three Wise Men from the East," caricature by Finn Graff, *Dagbladet*, 24 January 2002.
38. Several journalists confirmed this in private conversations.
39. Yoram Ettinger, "The Islamization of Bethlehem by Arafat," 25 December 2001, [www.acpr.org.il/cloakrm/clk117.html](http://www.acpr.org.il/cloakrm/clk117.html).
40. It was published by Al-Shuruq, based in Ramallah. The book became a bestseller in the Palestinian Authority in 1999. See: [www.israelnationalnews.com/news.php3?id=78801](http://www.israelnationalnews.com/news.php3?id=78801).
41. Norwegian Foreign Ministry, Press Release, 8 December 2003, 207/03. [Norwegian]
42. "Support to the Palestinians," Norwegian Foreign Ministry, Press Release, 10 April 2006. [Norwegian]
43. "Sharon the Nazi," caricature by Finn Graff, *Dagbladet*, 4 April 2002.
44. Haakon Lie, *Slik jeg ser det* (As I See It), Part 2 (Oslo: Tiden Norsk forlag, 1983), 132. [Norwegian]
45. "Olmert the Nazi," caricature by Finn Graff, *Dagbladet*, 10 July 2006.
46. Note the copying of a scene from Steven Spielberg's film *Schindler's List*.
47. "The Extremists' War," caricature by Inge Grødum, *Aftenposten*, 15 July 2006.
48. Ahmed al-Jarallah, "No to Syrian, Iran Agents," editorial in *Arab Times* (Kuwait), 15 July 2006, [www.arabtimesonline.com/arabtimes/opinion/view.asp?msgID=1242](http://www.arabtimesonline.com/arabtimes/opinion/view.asp?msgID=1242).
49. Russia, 1907—"The Radical" (*Pluvium*, St. Petersburg).
50. "Dance Macabre," caricature by Inge Grødum, *Aftenposten*, 13 April 2003; Sharon says: "Who dares to throw the last stone?"
51. <http://antisemittisme.no/engl>.
52. The Jewish community in Oslo protested only against attacks on Norwegian Jews.
53. [www.speedbump.com/contact.html](http://www.speedbump.com/contact.html).
54. *Verdens Gang's* annual report for 2004, [www.vg.no/vginform/vg2004.pdf](http://www.vg.no/vginform/vg2004.pdf). [Norwegian]
55. Norwegian Media Businesses' Association, [www.mediebedriftene.no](http://www.mediebedriftene.no). [Norwegian]
56. *Dagbladet's* annual report for 2003, [www.dagbladet.no/avishuset/pdf/aarsrapport2003.pdf](http://www.dagbladet.no/avishuset/pdf/aarsrapport2003.pdf). [Norwegian]

57. [www.dagsavisen.no/omdagsavisen/historie](http://www.dagsavisen.no/omdagsavisen/historie).
58. <http://service.h-a.no/index.asp?menuItem=23>.
59. Arne Næss, news editor of *Oppland Arbeiderblad*, telephone conversation, 9 September 2005.

Odd Sverre Hove

## The Cut-and-Omit TV News: Norway

On Friday night, 29 September 2000, this author was watching the evening news on Norway's most important TV news program, the NRK (Norwegian Broadcasting Authority) channel's *Dagsrevyen*. The Second Intifada was just breaking out. In Israel it was the eve of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. Before the violence erupted, the Arabs of Jerusalem held Friday prayer services in the Temple Mount Mosque. Many Israelis had been praying at the Western Wall before sundown.

The anchor announced: "Violent clashes in Jerusalem and Bethlehem between Palestinian demonstrators and Israeli soldiers" (hasty images of Arab teenagers throwing stones, Israeli soldiers shooting). "Riots started after Ariel Sharon yesterday visited a place in Jerusalem that is holy to both Palestinians and Jews." A report by Middle East correspondent Lars Sigurd Sunnanaa is aired. Again there are images of Palestinian boys and teenagers throwing stones; Israeli soldiers taking cover behind military vehicles, aiming, and firing; Palestinians carrying wounded children to ambulances; Palestinian doctors in hospitals; clips from Ariel Sharon's walk on the Temple Mount. Sunnanaa's voice seems to suppress anger as he describes how the Palestinian "children" only demonstrated whereas the Israeli soldiers fired.

The next evening, Rosh Hashanah in Israel, the anchor introduces the news: "The new unrest in the Middle East is putting the peace process in danger." Sunnanaa reports on "clashes between Palestinian youngsters and Israeli soldiers." Images: Arab youngsters throwing stones, Israeli soldiers shooting. Throughout his lengthy report Sunnanaa calls the Arabs "demonstrating youngsters." "The Palestinians are throwing tons of stones. Israeli soldiers respond with tear gas and rubber-coated steel bullets."

On the third evening, the second day of Rosh Hashanah in Israel, the news begins with the announcement: "Shooting in the Middle East." Sunnanaa intones that there are "clashes between demonstrators and soldiers" in Israel. "But strong emotions erupt after an Israeli rainstorm of bullets killed a twelve-year-old in Gaza." This is the first showing on this news program (out of several) of the Muhammad al-Dura clip. "Sharon," says Sunnanaa, "started the conflict with his provocative visit to the Holiest of Holy for both Jews and Arabs." Sunnanaa describes "the Koran story" about Muhammad and his spiritual visit to Jerusalem. This is "one of the most important stories in the Koran." The Palestinians are once again only youthful "demonstrators"; Israeli soldiers are shooting at them.

Such reporting continued every evening for weeks. On 2 October, *Dagsrevyen* announced "a situation of war in the Middle East" and gave a second showing of

the Muhammad al-Dura clip (this time he was thirteen years old). The next day the show announced that Nazareth had become a ghost town because Israelis were shooting at Arabs there. The following day Israeli soldiers were said to have shot at a ten-year-old boy who had only been demonstrating. On 5 October the focus was on a wounded Palestinian teenager, with Palestinians the underdog against “Israeli battle helicopters, rockets, heavy guns, and other advanced war equipment.” But “wave after wave of unarmed Palestinian youngsters continue to demonstrate.”

On 6 October the situation in the Middle East “worsens dramatically” with an Arab Day of Rage and “ten thousand demonstrators in Nablus.” It was not until 20 October that the news did not include an intifada report. But, if not as intensively as in the first three weeks, the loaded and selective reporting continued in the weeks to follow.<sup>1</sup>

### **Distorted Coverage**

This author is editor in chief of a Christian daily newspaper, *Dagen*. It is published in Bergen and has about ten thousand subscribers throughout Norway. Most subscribers presumably share the Evangelical Protestant faith, belonging either to the Lutheran (state) Church of Norway or to smaller Protestant churches. One of *Dagen*’s priorities has always been to present alternative Middle East news.

On 29 September 2000, the frustration was double. Since it was Friday evening, there would not be a new edition of *Dagen* to compete with the TV news before Monday. And since it was the start of the High Holiday season in Israel, during most weeks for more than a month there would be several consecutive days without Israeli newspapers to supply alternative versions of events.

The next week *Dagen* reported the story of Tuvia Grossman, an American Jewish yeshiva student in Israel who was almost lynched in Jerusalem by an Arab mob on 29 September.<sup>2</sup> Thus *Dagen* readers were given a first alternative impression of the nature of the intifada. But as the biased TV news continued, *Dagen* readers demanded further alternative information. So one day a decision was reached: this author’s colleagues at *Dagen* would take over his usual responsibilities for a few weeks so he could work on a more in-depth report on the “Media War against Israel.”

It had been done once before in Norway. In 1982-1983, Carl Chr. Hauge produced a TV video on *Dagsrevyen*’s news coverage of the First Lebanon War.<sup>3</sup> This effort prompted a more official investigation by a Middle East scholar, which was heavily critical.<sup>4</sup> But both these reports were buried and forgotten as quickly as possible by those responsible within NRK.

This author decided on a different method. I spent a week in the studio of a media watch organization, Kristelig Kringkastingsslag (Christian Media Watch),<sup>5</sup> working my way through their complete video recordings of *Dagsrevyen* during

the eight weeks from 27 September to 21 November 2000. I made extensive notes of everything verbal in the news reports and supplemented them with descriptions of the images shown. All these notes were organized chronologically according to the TV reports.

I then worked my way through the same eight weeks, date by date, in all the Israeli and international news sources available in *Dagen*. From Israel this included *Yediot Aharonot*, *Maariv*, *Hatsofeh*, IBA (Israel Broadcasting Authority) 7 a.m. radio news, Israel Military Radio 10 a.m. news,<sup>6</sup> as well as the *Jerusalem Post*, *Haaretz*, *Israel National News*, the *Jerusalem Report*, and David Dolan's Internet-distributed "Crisis Update" from CFI (Christian Friends of Israel).<sup>7</sup> Also surveyed were international sources such as *USA Today*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *International Herald Tribune*, the *Telegraph*, and so on. From all these sources, day-by-day comparisons yielded a "Normal News Picture" for each particular date.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, a day-by-day comparison between "The Middle East News According to NRK *Dagsrevyen*" and "The Middle East News According to the Normal Daily News Picture" demonstrated a strong and systematic trend of biased news reporting by *Dagsrevyen* throughout the selected eight weeks.

## A Pattern of Falsehood

During those weeks *Dagsrevyen* gave a total of twenty-nine reports from the Middle East, lasting from ninety seconds to fifteen minutes. Most of these were by Middle East correspondent Lars Sigurd Sunnanaa; a few were by other correspondents. Some of the videos seem to have been filmed exclusively for NRK but most were probably bought from Reuters TV News or AP TV News.

The most striking finding was a pattern of constantly repeating a particular sentence with only minor variations in wording. An example is "Israel has been shooting today at Palestinian children and teenagers who demonstrated and threw stones." In the twenty-nine news reports, this sentence was repeated without images forty-seven times, and augmented with images another thirty-three times, for a total of eighty instances. The sentence occurred, then, an average of 2.8 times per news story.

When watching TV news, one receives information and forms an ethical judgment based on preexisting norms. This is a rapid, implicit process. But if, in the first step, one has been falsely informed, the ethical judgment also is likely to be false.

*Dagsrevyen*'s repeated sentence, sometimes accompanied by images, basically contains two pieces of information (version a+b):

- a. Israel has been shooting today at Palestinian children and teenagers.
- b. Palestinian children and teenagers have been demonstrating and throwing stones today.

Out of all the information available each day, *Dagsrevyen* decided to choose these two bits and give them a sort of monopoly with 2.8 iterations per news story.

The falsity of this account is one of omission. During the period of the study, an alternative, daily pattern of information emerged (version a+b+c):

- a. Palestinian children and teenagers have been demonstrating and throwing stones today at seventy-two locations (the daily average) in Israel and the territories.
- b. At twenty-four of these locations (the daily average) they also threw Molotov cocktails and/or were supported by Tanzim terrorists firing at Israeli soldiers from within the midst of the youngsters.
- c. Israeli soldiers were ordered to return fire at most of these twenty-four locations, sometimes unintentionally hitting the teenagers and children.<sup>9</sup>

The main difference between version a+b and version a+b+c is the additional information in the latter. Throughout the first eight weeks of the intifada in 2000, this additional information never found its way into the *Dagsrevyen* reports.

If one is informed only by version a+b, one's ethical judgment is to condemn Israel: "They are shooting children and teenagers for no good reason!" Version a+b+c, however, leads to an opposite judgment: "The Israeli soldiers are defending themselves in an ethically just way."<sup>10</sup>

*Dagsrevyen's* main method of biasing the TV news, then, was a systematic falsification of information via omission.

## Response and Nonresponse

The study was completed early in March 2001 and was published, in feature-journalism style, in the magazine section of *Dagen* on 8 and 9 March. It went to all ten thousand subscribers, reaching an average of three readers per copy. The bulk of the study was the day-to-day comparison between *Dagsrevyen* and the Normal News Picture, printed in a continuous margin column.

In addition, different observations and special findings were presented in separate articles: "The Omission Method," "The Tuvia Grossmann Example," "The Doubts about Muhammad al-Dura," "The Ramallah Lynch Omissions," "The Never-Filmed Palestinian Shooting," "The Riccardo Christiano Scandal," and so on. In total the study filled nineteen newspaper pages (tabloid size).

Before printing, the whole study was sent to Sunnanaa in Amman for comment. His answer after two days: "No comment." It was then sent to his boss, Catherine Loechstoer; her reply after another two days: "No comment." The study was then sent to the director of NRK, who never responded at all. So the study was published, including the "No comment" replies and mention of the nonreply.

Readers responded with a flood of requests for additional copies. The usual

supply of about a thousand extra copies proved inadequate, and an extra ten thousand copies were printed in a separate twenty-page magazine. This was advertised so that congregations and other groups could make their own local distributions. After several weeks all the copies were gone, and another eight thousand were reprinted. The pro-Israeli organization MIFF then requested, and was granted, permission to print their own ten thousand copies and include them in their newsletter.<sup>11</sup>

A total of thirty-eight thousand copies of the study, then, were distributed, almost four times the normal circulation figure for *Dagen*.

### Lynching the Truth

Another striking example of Norwegian TV's reporting on the Middle East occurred on 12 October 2000, the day two off-duty Israeli reserve soldiers were lynched in Ramallah.

*Dagsrevyen's* report began with the studio headline: "Harsh Israeli attacks on the Palestinians. . . Israeli revenge following the killing of two Israeli soldiers today." Sunnanaa then stated: "After the killing of two Israeli soldiers in Ramallah this morning, Israel attacked the home of Palestinian president Yasser Arafat in Gaza, hit the Palestinian radio station, and perpetrated five rocket attacks against targets in Ramallah."

The TV film of the lynch, however, was not shown.

Sunnanaa reported: "The four [*sic*] Israeli soldiers are said to have taken a wrong turn and ended up in the center of Ramallah. Furious youngsters set fire to their car. Palestinian police rescued them by taking them into the police station. But youngsters gathered outside, and the police were unable to keep the mob away. The furious gangs entered, lynched the two soldiers, and left the fate of the remaining two soldiers unclear."

Most of this is erroneous. There were only two soldiers; they were beaten by the police upon their arrest; and the killers were the policemen themselves.

According to Sunnanaa: "When the two lynched soldiers were thrown out of the window, Ramallah residents knew what would ensue. In the Middle East the rule is 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,' and Ramallah turned into a ghost town. People sought shelter in their homes, waiting for the Israeli revenge."

There was nothing here about the hate-filled chants of the Arab mobs, or the mutilation and subsequent burning of the bodies. Instead there was the repeated focus on "Israeli revenge," including the traditional distorted version of Leviticus 24:20.

Sunnanaa stated: "It was just an error that brought the soldiers into Ramallah. They took a wrong turn. Palestinian soldiers tried in vain to save them. But the Palestinian people got a new reminder of the Israeli power-lust."

This sort of biased, pro-Arab coverage is often the normal state of affairs in Norwegian Middle East news reporting.<sup>12</sup>

## Notes

1. The Norwegian originals for all quotations in this section may be found under each date in the appendix of Odd Sverre Hove, *Mediekampen om Israel* (The Media War on Israel) (Bergen: Sambaandet forlag, 2002), 178-94. [Norwegian]
2. On 29 September 2000, an Arab mob attempted to lynch Tuvia Grossmann but he managed to run away. He was saved by an approaching Israeli policeman. On 30 September, however, the *New York Times* printed a photo of his bleeding face and the policeman with a text describing him as a Palestinian victim of Israeli police violence.
3. Carl Chr. Hauge, *Mediamakt*, a video documentation of *Dagsrevyen*'s biased reporting during the First Lebanon War in 1982. For a report on the controversy that then erupted in Norway, see Odd Sverre Hove, "Criticizing TV" and "Norwegian TV Reporting," in Julian J. Landau, ed., *The Media: Freedom or Responsibility? The War in Lebanon 1982, A Case Study* (Jerusalem: B.A.L. Mass Communications, 1984) (author's contributions were originally published in the *Jerusalem Post*).
4. Daniel Heradstveit, *Mediakrigen i Libanon: Var NRK balansert?* (The Media War in Lebanon: Was the NRK Balanced?) (Oslo: NUPI, 1983) [Norwegian]. See also Hove, "Norwegian TV Reporting."
5. Kristelig Krignkastingsslag later changed its name to Familie and Medier and moved its headquarters from Oslo to Bergen. It is a membership-based media-watch think tank.
6. All these Hebrew sources are available to Internet subscribers in English every morning from Israel News Today (a newspaper-translation service located at Beit Agron, Jerusalem).
7. CFI is a small Jerusalem-based evangelical information service, and David Dolan is a Jerusalem-based former CBS journalist.
8. Norwegian newspaper journalism begins every day with a survey of available news stories called the "morning news picture." This does not refer to a totality of news stories but to what is practical and relevant for each day's work.
9. The statistics of version a+b+c were later slightly modified by the Mitchell Commission, but the main picture was confirmed.
10. The *justum bellum* (just-war) doctrine is found in mainstream Jewish and Christian ethics.
11. MIFF also made the whole study available at their website, [www.miff.no](http://www.miff.no).
12. On *Dagsrevyen*, 18 November 2007, current NRK Middle East correspondent Sidsel Wold took viewers to Hebron to meet "the settlers." She did not say a word about the Arab massacre and eviction of all Jews from Hebron in 1929 but eagerly focused on the grave of Baruch Goldstein.

## An Interview with Bjarte Bruland

# Norway: The Courage of a Small Jewish Community; Holocaust Restitution and Anti-Semitism

In recent years Norway's image has been tarnished by a variety of anti-Israeli and anti-Jewish actions as well as statements from several leading Norwegian institutions, the media, and various personalities.

At the end of the previous century Norway's small Jewish community, however, took a courageous—but little-known—public stand on another issue where discrimination against Jews was involved. This occurred within the context of the government-appointed commission of inquiry into postwar restitution. Flying in the face of traditional procedures, the community's representatives established an important national precedent by presenting a comprehensive alternative report that radically disagreed with the commission's majority opinion. The Norwegian government and parliament subsequently adopted the minority's recommendations.

Bjarte Bruland is a non-Jewish historian who played a key role in the restitution process. He is now the chief curator at the Jewish Museum in Oslo.

### **Little Postwar Attention to Looted Jewish Assets**

Says Bruland: "The looting of Jewish assets during World War II received very little attention in Norway until 1995. In May of that year, Bjørn Westlie, journalist for the Norwegian business daily *Dagens Næringsliv*, published an article about the fate of Norwegian Jewry during World War II. His much-quoted exposé was part of a series commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the war."

Westlie reported that the Norwegian authorities had done very little to help the Jews recover their property after the war, despite the fact that significant amounts of money were found in bank accounts.<sup>1</sup>

Bruland had already been interested in this subject as a student at Bergen University a few years earlier. "I watched Claude Lanzmann's movie *Shoah* a number of times. Then with great difficulty I managed to get Raul Hilberg's book, *The Destruction of the European Jews*. There was only one copy in the entire Norwegian library system.

"After that, I thought it would be worthwhile to write my master's thesis on how the Norwegian bureaucracy had behaved toward the Jews during the war. It seemed particularly interesting to look at the economic liquidation of the Jews. In

1992 when I began my thesis, I was, however, discouraged by my supervisor, who didn't think it had potential—especially since Oskar Mendelsohn had worked for forty years on his two-volume history in Norwegian entitled *The History of the Jews in Norway*.<sup>2</sup> The first part was published in 1967, the second in 1986.

“It wasn't expected that anything new on the subject would be discovered or that any significant additional analyses could be made. I disagreed and started work on the subject, though I had no idea why I couldn't accept my teacher's judgment. Then when I scrutinized it, I found Mendelsohn's book hardly dealt with economic issues, as well as that there were archival sources not yet covered.”

### **Committee of Inquiry Established**

Bruland completed his thesis a few weeks before Westlie published his article. As a result of its critique, some parliamentarians showed interest in the subject. However, only after international pressure began to mount—partly through the efforts of the World Jewish Congress—awareness increased that the Norwegian Jews had been mistreated not only during but also after the war. In January 1996, after a Reuters report on the theft of the property of Jews during the war, the Norwegian authorities started to react.<sup>3</sup>

Says Bruland: “The Norwegian justice minister established a government committee to investigate what had happened to Jewish-owned property during and after the war. Oluf Skarpnes, a county governor from the south of Norway, was appointed chairman. He had worked at the Justice Ministry in the past, was a former justice minister, and also had chaired other committees of inquiry concerning difficult issues.

“I had the feeling Skarpnes was mandated by the bureaucrats of the ministry to silence this problem. I cannot prove it and he certainly never told me about it; yet it seemed clear to me. Skarpnes had no understanding of Jews and couldn't imagine what it meant to be a Jew after the war.

“The Jewish community was entitled to appoint two of the committee's seven members. One was Berit Reisel, a Jewish psychologist, who had undertaken research into the fate of Jewish property on behalf of the Oslo Jewish community almost a year before she was appointed. I was the other member the community suggested.”

### **Quisling's Confiscation of Jewish Property**

“We started to study general source material on the liquidation of Jewish property. We investigated its registration in estate files and reviewed the administration of estates after the war. It soon became clear that much of the material we required was available.

“By 1940 when the Germans conquered Norway, about 2,100 Jews lived in

the country, of which 1,500 to 1,600 held Norwegian citizenship. There were two small Jewish communities: one in Oslo and a smaller one in Trondheim. There were also Jews living in more than fifty other locations.

“On 26 October 1942, an act was passed that called for the confiscation of all property belonging to Jews. The law was enacted by the Norwegian Nazi regime, headed by Vidkun Quisling. On the same day, male Jews over the age of fifteen were arrested by Norwegian police and brought to an internment camp near Tonsberg. Women and children were arrested one month later, and on that day the first transport of Jews to Germany took place. In four major transports, 771 Norwegian Jews were deported. Only thirty-four survived. Twenty-one Jews were killed or committed suicide in Norway.”

### **Liquidation Board and Distribution of Jewish Assets**

“In that same month, the Quisling regime appointed a Liquidation Board of Confiscated Jewish Assets. Jewish households and businesses were treated as bankrupt, thus enabling their assets to be sold. The Jewish estates were liquidated but continued to exist as legal entities, thus permitting expenses to continue to be levied against them. This practice remained in effect even after the war, when a democratic government was established again in Norway.

“The belongings of the estates were distributed according to the interests of the Quisling regime. All gold and silver objects and wristwatches were given to the German security police. The assets of Jews originally from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia were given to the German authorities. By the end of the war, the Liquidation Board had used approximately 30 percent of the value of the Jewish properties for its own administration.

“One might say that after the war there were three categories of Jews who were received in Norway in different ways. First of all, there was the small group of camp survivors, not all of whom returned to Norway. The second group consisted of the stateless Jews who had fled to Sweden, some of whom had lived as long as fifty years in Norway before the war. The Norwegian government initially refused their return to the country, a position that only later changed. (They probably looked upon these people as a burden—which was not true—so they wanted Sweden to assume responsibility for them.) The third group, Jewish refugees with Norwegian nationality, returned together with the other Norwegians from Sweden. Most returning Jews had worked in their own businesses and opened these up again as soon as they could.”

### **Postwar Discrimination**

“After the war, the Jews were treated like everyone else. That was a major problem because their experience had been so different. It is difficult to assess whether this was intentional or not. If one were to answer this question positively, it would be

tantamount to saying that the democratic postwar Norwegian government had anti-Semitic inclinations.

“A non-Jewish Norwegian refugee in Sweden usually had many family members who had taken care of his assets, and thus it was easy for him to reconstruct what he had had. Norwegian groups who had suffered particularly—including seamen and inhabitants of the northern region of Finnmark—were helped by special laws and offices.

“However, no such arrangements were made for the Jews. The only special law made for them was the law of missing persons, i.e., those who had not returned from Auschwitz were declared dead. Even that took two and a half years to legislate. Whenever there were calculations as to how much reparation people should receive, these were done in ways unfavorable to the survivors.”

### **The Lenient Punishment of War Criminals**

Bruland adds: “The lack of compensation and restitution after the war must be seen as part of a larger picture. After the war many key perpetrators in the destruction of the Jews were either not convicted, or they received greatly reduced sentences. In autumn 1942, a Jewish couple, Jacob and Rakel Feldmann—carrying valuables and money—were killed by two Resistance members while trying to escape to Sweden. In 1947, the two murderers admitted their crime but claimed it was to avoid detection of a refugee route to Sweden. They were not convicted.

“The German Wilhelm Wagner, Eichmann’s representative with the head of the German Security Police in Oslo, was first condemned to death, which was later commuted to a life sentence. Then in 1951 he was expelled and returned to Germany where he worked for a bank. There he was very popular, as he wrote wedding songs for the employees.

“In the late 1950s, Norway held talks with the Federal Republic of Germany about compensation for former prisoners in German concentration camps. In these negotiations the Norwegian government used the number of Jewish deaths from Norway as a means of increasing the sum paid by Germany.

“Later however, parliament denied compensation to many Jews for several reasons. One was that a number were not Norwegian citizens. Others were denied because of how the authorities assumed the order of deaths among Jews during the war, which was unfavorable to the survivors. Also, sisters were not allowed to receive the compensation due their brothers and vice versa. The small Jewish communities argued that either the law should be changed or the communities should receive the compensation, but to no avail.

“For many decades, the subject of the Holocaust was not included in the curriculum at Norwegian universities. Hardly any research into the fate of the Jews during the war was undertaken until the mid-1990s. In Norwegian public opinion, the memory of what happened to the Jews is connected to the Germans.

The Norwegians were portrayed as innocent bystanders, though it was the Norwegian police that hunted down Jews, including children.”

### **Pressure in the Skarpnes Committee**

In the Skarpnes Committee the two representatives of the Jewish community were in the minority and under great pressure. Each time they opposed a position, the majority believed that they only wanted to increase the amount to be paid out. Says Bruland: “When we opposed something, the reactions often were: ‘So what do you suggest? Should we increase the amount to be paid?’ I wanted to state principles. I had done the necessary research to prove that the Jews were discriminated against after the war, and I felt that this should be stated clearly.

“After we had argued for a very long time about our views, Reisel and I decided the division between the majority and ourselves was so vast that the gap could not be bridged. We reached that conclusion by February 1997 and decided to write a full minority report; this had never been done before in Norway. The normal procedure in a committee of inquiry is that if you disagree, a small comment on each chapter is written, explaining the points to which there are objections.

“In my view, Skarpnes initially interpreted our silence as a sign that he had won. Later he started to worry. He had instructions that under no circumstances should the representatives of the Jewish community leave the committee. At one point, I did threaten to do so because I couldn’t go along with the way he was handling things. However, resigning would have been the wrong thing to do, because if we had quit, we would have had no further access to the material.

“When individual chapters had to be written, Skarpnes always asked other committee members without ever proposing our names. He did not mind if we complained, but he wanted to write a report that did not include any argument we had made. We understood that whatever remarks we made helped the majority put our arguments in a wrong context.”

### **Writing a Minority Report**

“Reisel and I couldn’t tell him we had started writing an alternative report, much larger than his, more advanced, and more documented. We had worked on this report for a number of months without Skarpnes knowing about it. Then at a certain moment we sent our minority report to him, telling him to include it in the printed report. Thereafter, we were not given any additional information. The members of the majority held a number of meetings to which we were no longer invited. This was normal procedure.

“Skarpnes couldn’t exclude our report because the procedure dictates that if those in the minority want to say something, they have the right to do so. The

reactions of the other members were initially very confused. Then they became angry.

“Shortly thereafter, the Norwegian prime minister—the Social Democrat Torbjorn Jagland—visited New York. In a radio interview there, he said his government would accept the minority position. In 1998, this decision was transformed into a proposal of law. By March 1999 it was unanimously accepted by the Norwegian parliament.

“Part of the money was given to individuals who had lived in Norway in 1942, or their heirs. Non-Jews in mixed marriages were also included. There were about six hundred people who received funds. Some funds were also given to the Jewish communities, which used them partly to create a Holocaust Center in Oslo, opened in April 2001. On its board are four members of the University of Oslo, three representatives of the Jewish community, and a director.”

The Norwegian position on restitution was very well received by the international Jewish community. Even though, previously, the country’s behavior had stood out rather poorly if compared with some other Western countries, the World Jewish Congress wrote very favorably about Norway’s belated handling of the restitution process.<sup>4</sup>

## Notes

1. Bjørn Westlie, “Coming to Terms with the Past: The Process of Restitution of Jewish Property in Norway,” *Policy Forum*, 12, November 1996 (Institute of the World Jewish Congress).
2. *Jødernes historie I Norge gjennom 300 år*. (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1969/1987). [Norwegian]
3. Westlie, “Coming to Terms.”
4. Avi Beker, “Unmasking National Myths,” 18, in Avi Beker, ed., *The Plunder of Jewish Property during the Holocaust: Confronting European History* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001).

Arthur Arnheim

## Anti-Semitism after the Holocaust: Also in Denmark

The phenomenon of anti-Semitism has been the object of study and research for almost one hundred years. Yet nobody has, apparently, offered an unambiguous definition of it.

A widespread explanation can be found in a thesis that anti-Semitism is a psychological undercurrent—latently present everywhere and anytime—that is ready to flare up when special economic and social conditions call for it. The usual definition of an anti-Semite is simple: it is a person who hates Jews.

Anti-Semitism has a structure—contrary to ordinary xenophobia. It reveals itself in most anti-Semitic waves, past and present. Its starting point is the presentation of a produced myth, false accusations, or fabricated lies depicting Jews as a danger to society, religion, regime, or culture and civilization. As a matter of logic, the next step would be to introduce laws or regulations to limit or eliminate the danger Jews allegedly represent. The Jews thereby become isolated and outlawed. From this point on, it is “legal” to attack them and loot their possessions. The development from *defamation* to *discrimination* and further to *destruction* is the backbone of anti-Semitism and defines it as a special phenomenon.

The usual definition of an anti-Semite as a person who hates Jews can be misleading. From the Holocaust period we know of many examples of people who participated in the persecutions motivated by other reasons than hatred against Jews (career, greed, oath of allegiance, etc.). A workable definition could be: a person who participates in any stage of the anti-Semitic process.

### **Post-Holocaust Anti-Semitism**

Denmark has been considered an exception in the history of the Holocaust. In most other countries occupied by the Germans during World War II, governments, administrations, and people helped the Nazis persecute, seize, and transport Jews to the death camps. This was not the case in Denmark. Here the government tried to protect the Jews, and when the German raid on the Danish Jews started, the population stood up and helped most of the Jews escape to neutral Sweden.

After the war many, therefore, expected the Danish population to be immune to anti-Semitism. However, traces of anti-Semitism already emerged soon after the Danish Jews returned from exile in Sweden to start their reintegration into society. The late chief rabbi of Denmark, Dr. Marcus Melchior, described the phenomenon

in a publication of the Danish resistance movement.<sup>1</sup> He explained it in social and cultural terms and warned about its dangers. This kind of anti-Semitism—which is very similar to regular xenophobia—has not been characteristic of the anti-Semitism that has grown steadily during the last half-century in Denmark. The new kind of anti-Semitism could be termed political anti-Semitism. It works by using the usual anti-Semitic techniques—depicting Jews as an enemy, a danger to society and the world—but places it in a political or ideological framework. The deliberately produced image of the Jews as enemies is built into the theory of the ideology or the political program of a regime.

When studying this kind of anti-Semitism another observation has to be kept in mind: admitting to being anti-Semitic after the Holocaust would immediately destroy one's credibility. Consequently, the new kind of anti-Semitism had to find another word than *Jew* for its propaganda. It chose *Zionist* or *Israel*, thereby throwing up a smokescreen. This trick has been successful as many have accepted that it is possible to be anti-Israeli without being an anti-Semite.

This trend initially appeared in public Danish debate in 1953 after the Doctors' Plot in the Soviet Union. *Land og Folk*, the mouthpiece of the Danish Communist Party (DKP), wrote: "It has been proven that animals in human shape have violated scientific duties and have been paid agents of foreign intelligence services...they were connected to the international Jewish bourgeois-nationalistic organization—Joint."<sup>2</sup>

The event created a certain stir in Danish public debate. Most papers described it as outright anti-Semitic. An overcrowded meeting in a Copenhagen theater discussed the matter. Jewish as well as non-Jewish communists and their sympathizers defended the Soviet regime. One of the most prominent communists, Prof. Mogens Fog, who had been a leading figure in the Danish resistance and a minister in the first Danish government after the war, defended the Soviet Union. He was quoted saying: "In all probability Zionist spies have been in action."<sup>3</sup> As a result of the affair, a leading communist who had previously been a member of the central committee of the DKP, Peter P. Rohde, left the party, and his wife, Ina Rohde, was banned from the party after publicly accusing it of anti-Semitism.

Shortly after the Six Day War, one of the most promising young Danish authors, Klaus Rifbjerg, published a poem "The Boots" in the leading liberal newspaper *Politiken*.<sup>4</sup> Preceding the poem was a photograph of boots thrown away in the Sinai desert by Egyptian soldiers fleeing the advancing Israeli army. Apparently this was an antiwar poem expressing compassion for the victims of war, but seen in the context of some liberal and left-wing voices that branded the war "Blitzkrieg—German style" it appeared to be supporting this view. Klaus Rifbjerg could not be considered an anti-Semite, but the image he created could and would be used by political forces practicing anti-Semitism to promote their cause.

The poem could not have been produced as an act of pure antiwar feelings. If it had, there had been ample opportunity to show compassion only two weeks

earlier when the whole world not only knew that President Nasser was going to put into effect his intentions “to throw the Jews into the sea” in an Arab-style final solution, but the world also believed that he would most likely succeed in doing so. Seen in retrospect, Rifbjerg’s poem was a forerunner for the later and more aggressive images produced in the 1980s and 1990s to defame Israel and the Jews.

### **Left-Wing Anti-Semitism**

As early as 1970, extreme left-wing movements in Denmark explained—and defended—hijacking and terror against Israeli and Jewish targets in their publications. One of them wrote: “The hijackings by the PFLP has its starting point in the strategy: fight the enemy where you can find him.”<sup>5</sup> The readers of the publication were left in no doubt about what was the aim of the PFLP and who was “the enemy.”

The Danish public and politicians generally condemned the terror actions of the 1970s. The liberation of the hostages in Entebbe in 1976 by the Israeli air force was applauded by Danish prime minister Anker Jørgensen.<sup>6</sup> Actions of this kind against Israeli and Jewish targets by Palestinian and international terror groups were not considered anti-Semitic, but rather viewed as a consequence of the Arab-Israeli conflict. At that time, nevertheless, voices were raised defending the terrorists and condemning actions to counter their activities. Typically, terrorists would be described as “people who had no other means to express their desperate situation.” As far as the Entebbe operation was concerned, it was described by a commentator of the Danish Broadcasting Service as “a violation of a sovereign African state.”<sup>7</sup>

It was the first example of the technique by which perpetrators of anti-Semitic violence and their protectors were depicted as victims—and those who tried to help the actual victims were called aggressors. This trick of turning terrorists into victims has since been frequently used in the Danish public debate about attacks by terrorists on Jewish targets.

### **The Extreme Left and Anti-Semitism**

The student and youth revolutions in France and Germany in 1968 deeply influenced a whole generation of Danish intellectuals. As a result, the political Center moved to the Left and the Left moved toward the extreme Left. New political parties emerged with agendas based on leftovers from stiff Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist ideology with all its anti-Semitic implications. “Venstre-Socialisterne” (VS)—the Left Socialists, the most important among them, eventually had elected representatives in the Danish parliament. The chief ideologist of the party was Anne Grethe Holmsgaard. In several publications she denounced Zionism and portrayed its activities as a worldwide conspiracy. The words were followed

by deeds. In 1978, the central committee of the VS concluded an agreement of cooperation with the PFLP. This event was preceded four years earlier by seventy-two Danish intellectuals and cultural celebrities signing a manifesto of “unconditional support” for the PFLP.<sup>8</sup> It should be kept in mind that nobody at the time was unaware of the fact that the PFLP had perpetrated acts of terror against both Jewish and Israeli targets. “Unconditional support” of the PFLP, therefore, would be very difficult to interpret otherwise than as support of active anti-Semitism.

Why did VS choose to present the Arab-Israeli conflict as the most important issue on its international agenda? From its start the movement took much inspiration from the student revolutions in Paris and Berlin in 1968. At that time one could watch revolutionary youth carrying banners with the slogan: “Schlagt die Zionisten tot, macht den nahen Osten rot” (Kill the Jews—paint the Middle East red). In other words: Jews were *the* obstacle to a socialistic/red Middle East. Jew-hate was taken up there and used as a tool to promote an ideological cause. There was nothing new in this. Other fanatic political movements have used this tactic before; painting a fabricated image of Jews as the enemy of their ideology. It is obvious that the VS in Denmark had taken to using these proven tactics to gain support.

The Lebanon War in 1982 triggered further anti-Semitic manifestations in Denmark. The accusations that Israel was responsible for alleged atrocities not only caused demonstrations in front of Israel’s embassy in Copenhagen, but also separate demonstrations in front of the Jewish Community Center. Thus, in stressing and placing a collective guilt on Danish Jews, a typical anti-Semitic technique was again applied.

The abovementioned agreement between the VS and the PFLP led a group of extremists to rob a post office, presumably to benefit the PFLP. The so-called Blekingegade gang performed the robbery, killing a Danish policeman in the process.

The criminal investigation of the activities of the gang found it in possession of a specific list containing the names and addresses of a number of Danish Jews.<sup>9</sup> The investigation found no explanation as to why the gang registered the Jews. It would not be too farfetched to connect it to the frequent anonymous threats received by leading members of the community.

### **Christian Anti-Semitism**

State and church are not separated in Denmark. The status of the Danish Christian Church is defined in the constitution. Over the last one hundred years the official Danish Church has been very friendly to Jews. It came as a surprise, therefore, when Anders Gadegaard, who holds a leading position in the church, on 30 December 2001 gave a sermon in Copenhagen’s main church that had a clear anti-Semitic tendency. It was later transmitted to the official website of the

church under the headline: “Children are still killed in Bethlehem by the authorities who fear the demands for justice and freedom by the oppressed population.” The sermon took as its starting point the episode related in the New Testament about King Herod, who ordered all children below the age of two to be killed in order to prevent the emergence of the Messiah, who the three wise men had said was born in Bethlehem. From here Gadegaard went straight to modern events with the words: “On TV we watched the terrible pictures, which went around the world, of a little boy and his father in Ramallah [*sic!*] who was caught in an Israeli [!] crossfire, and defenseless people begging for their lives but shot in cold blood.”

Not only did the priest give an untrue and distorted picture of the death of Muhammad al-Dura in Gaza on 30 September 2000, he supplemented it with further invented details, thereby strengthening the defamation of Israel. He linked it to the story from the Gospels about the wicked Jewish king Herod, thereby reviving centuries-old Christian anti-Semitism that had been forgotten in Denmark.

It is no wonder that the leaders of the Jewish community in Copenhagen protested vehemently. In all fairness it has to be said that a number of priests and Christian lay persons also opposed Gadegaard’s sermon.<sup>10</sup>

There is another aspect to the debate about Gadegaard’s sermon. Normally it would have passed unnoticed, as sermons often do when heard only by the relatively few people who attend the main church—and the media generally take no interest in church affairs. It was therefore remarkable that the daily newspaper *Information* published the text of the sermon on its front page.<sup>11</sup> It was not only remarkable, but also thought-provoking, as this newspaper has constantly highlighted anti-Israeli views that since about 1970 have been close to the views of the Danish extreme Left mentioned above.

As could be expected the priest—and even his bishop—denied he was an anti-Semite. But who is an anti-Semite? Certainly anybody who generally defames Jews and instigates hate toward them could hardly expect not to be called an anti-Semite.

### **Muslim Anti-Semitism**

There are 150,000-190,000 Muslims in Denmark (in a population of roughly five million). Most of them have been peaceful. From the 1990s, however, groups and organizations formed by extremist Muslims have presented a serious threat to the Danish Jewish community.

In the spring of 2001, an anonymous poster in Arabic was pinned up on the notice board at the Niels Brock College in Copenhagen. It promised a reward of 250,000 kroners (approximately \$35,000) to anybody who would kill a Jew. A police investigation was not successful in finding the conspirator(s). Later a journalist drew attention to the existence of a list of twelve members of the

Jewish community picked out for attacks, but it was also impossible to find the instigator(s) in this case.<sup>12</sup>

In the autumn of 2002, a leader of the organization Hizb-ut-Tahrir in Denmark was brought to court accused of incitement and calls for violence. He had called for the assassination of Jews and got a suspended sentence of sixty days in prison. Although this organization has been banned in Germany it is still active in Denmark—but now keeps the press away from its activities.<sup>13</sup>

The Danish police considered the threats of violence against Jews as serious. In the summer of 2002, a pro-Israeli demonstration took place in Copenhagen. After this demonstration the police demanded that the chief rabbi and the president of the Jewish community, who participated, be brought home under police protection. Hardly anyone remembers a Danish politician, trade-union leader, or community leader who participated in a demonstration that needed police protection on similar occasions.

### **“Now, It’s Enough”**

By the end of 2002, a violent campaign by a number of Danish media and politicians against Israel and Jews reached its peak. Many felt it especially painful that the *Politiken* newspaper took part in the slandering, because for decades *Politiken* had been seen as a leading protagonist of liberal ideas and tolerant views on public affairs.

Now it appeared that the paper had changed its course as far as Israel and the Jews were concerned. A full-page paid advertisement with more than seven hundred signatures—by Jews as well as non-Jews—was placed in the paper with a sharp protest under the headline: “Nu er det nok” (Now, it’s enough). A few quotations from it will explain what triggered the reaction:

Over a period of time *Politiken* has contributed to aggravating moods and attitudes toward Israel and the Jews. This is apparent from editorials, articles, and letters to the editor. By comparing Israel’s occupation to the Holocaust and Nazi atrocities during the war, Israel is demonized and the Palestinians raised to a symbol of suffering.

Articles in the paper have stressed that public and collective threats to Danish Jews are pardonable as long as not all Jews dissociate themselves from Israel’s policy....We oppose that the one and only democracy in the Middle East is made an object of hatred and described as an evil empire and the root of all evil in the Middle East and the world.

*Politiken* mixes political attitudes together with the conception of Jews as a minority. This fact represents a derailing of the debate and opens an opportunity to single Jews out and attack them in a way not seen in Europe since the Nazi and Communist campaigns against the Jews...it opens gates and gives free opportunities to Jew haters.<sup>14</sup>

The response from *Politiken* appeared the same day in an editorial. If the seven hundred who signed the protest had expected a reaction of understanding or perhaps even remorse by the editors they were disappointed. Nothing of the kind was expressed in the reply.

## Conclusion

There is a difference between how anti-Semitism was publicly discussed in Denmark in the 1930s and how the emergence of the new anti-Semitism after the Holocaust has been dealt with in Denmark. Although Denmark feared Hitler Germany before World War II and tried to avoid official criticism of the dangerous neighbor at its southern border, condemnation of German anti-Semitism was aired in Danish papers and publications. But now, when new anti-Semitic waves have washed Danish shores, criticism has been absent. At a conference held in March 2001 by the Danish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies under the title: "Anti-Semitism in Denmark?" a participant, Danish journalist Bent Blüdnikow, told about the reluctance he had met among his colleagues when they were asked to comment on the subject of current anti-Semitism. This is a new trend, which should not be overlooked when analyzing anti-Semitism in Denmark after the Holocaust.

Seen in perspective, anti-Semitism in Denmark during the last fifty years has followed the international development of the so-called new anti-Semitism. This phenomenon is built on myths and fabricated stories about Jews and Israel and stirs up a hatred used to promote ideologies or specific political aims. As a small nation, the Danes have always been influenced by cultural and political developments coming from abroad. The modern communication revolution and globalization have strengthened this influence. The new international Jew-hatred has, therefore, also left its mark on Denmark.

## Notes

1. Marcus Melchior, "Jødiske problemer" (Jewish Problems), *Frit Danmark* (publication of the Danish resistance movement), IV (1946), No. 13. [Danish]
2. *Land og Folk*, 14 January 1953. [Danish]
3. *Jødisk Samfund* (monthly of the Jewish community in Copenhagen), January 1953, 9. [Danish]
4. "Støvlerne af Klaus Ribbjerg," *Politiken*, 12 June 1967. [Danish]
5. *Palæstinakomiteens blad*, 1970, 5-6. [Danish]
6. Anker Jørgensen's speech at Rebild, 4 July 1975. [Danish]
7. Jørgen E. Pedersen, "Orientering," Danmarks Radio, 6 July 1975. [Danish]
8. For a number of years Bent Blüdnikow has researched the politics and the tactics of the Danish left-wing political groups. At a conference arranged by the Danish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, he gave a lecture: "The Left Wing and Anti-Semitism." It was later published as Working Paper No. 5 of the Center, Copenhagen, 2002.
9. Working Paper No. 5, 129.

10. *Berlingske Tidende*, letters to the editor, 15 February 2002. [Danish]
11. *Information*, 2 January 2002. [Danish]
12. Information provided by the Jewish community, Copenhagen. [Danish]
13. *Politiken*, 2 March 2002. [Danish]
14. *Politiken*, 14 December 2002. [Danish]

Vilhjálmur Örn Vilhjálmsson and Bent Blüdnikow

## Rescue, Expulsion, and Collaboration: Denmark's Difficulties with Its World War II Past

The Danish World War II legacy is ostensibly a pleasant one. In most international presentations to date, the Danish chapter of World War II history has been positive. On the international level, the Danish rescue of nearly seven thousand Jews to Sweden in 1943 is probably the most important factor in this favorable assessment. Because of the policy that Denmark adopted immediately after the Nazi invasion in April 1940, Denmark also had fewer losses in lives and treasure than most occupied countries in Europe.

Within Denmark, its approach during the war has gradually come to be called the “cooperation policy” (*Samarbejdspolitik*) or “negotiations policy” (*Forhandlingspolitik*). More critically, it has been termed a “collaboration policy” (*Kollaborationspolitik*). In recent years, however, the negative definition “collaboration policy” has been disappearing from works by Danish historians on the occupation, whereas the cooperation policy has been receiving a status as the “only right solution” for Denmark. Sixty years after the liberation, a new generation of Danish historians is glorifying the cooperation policy with the Nazis as a necessity, and even arguing that other European nations should have adopted the same approach.

Nevertheless, new findings over the past decade have revealed problematic aspects of Denmark's World War II legacy. Having been neglected for various reasons, these are finally emerging and being addressed.

Many of the new findings are not easy to accept for many Danes, especially those who esteem the cooperation policy. One reaction to the new findings is to define the historians who have explored the bleaker aspects of Denmark's World War II history as moralists. They have, it is charged, only a black-and-white vision of that era, are cut off from the realities of the 1940s because they were born in the 1950s or later, and are only seeking to create sensations and bestsellers.

This can also be viewed as the reaction by an older generation of historians and their followers to newcomers with fresh ideas and approaches. In the history departments of Danish universities, there is rarely debate on new hypotheses contradicting those of the regnant professors. Works by authors who praise Danish collaboration with the Germans as an ingenious solution, resulting, for instance, in the 1943 rescue of Jews, are the bestsellers, the stories that most Danes still want to hear.

The focus here will be on less-known aspects of World War II Denmark that have recently emerged, particularly in the Jewish sphere.

### **The Danish Policy toward Jewish Refugees, 1940-1943**

Internationally and nationally, the positive view of Danish World War II history mainly stems from the rescue of the Danish Jews. Danes, as well as the international public, know that most of the Danish Jews were smuggled across the narrow straits between Denmark and Sweden during the first weeks of October 1943. On this basis, Denmark has become a model among the occupied countries of Europe.

It was much less well known, however, that the Danish authorities expelled twenty-one stateless Jewish refugees to Germany during 1940-1943, and that this number could have been much greater if the supporters of accommodation with Germany had had their way. Most of the victims of these expulsions, which were neither ordered nor demanded by the German occupiers, were refugees who had been in Denmark for several years. They were later murdered in concentration- and extermination camps in Germany and Poland.

During the 1930s, Denmark's refugee policy and treatment of Jewish refugees were similar to those of other West European countries. Denmark's borders were gradually closed. Its policy toward the Jewish refugee problem was synchronized at every turn with other European states, and for the most part Denmark closed its door to Jewish refugees. Jews in Denmark were never given refugee status according to international treaties. For Jews on the run from Nazi Germany, Denmark was merely a transit station, and those who made it there awaited possibilities to get to more friendly countries. While in Denmark, they had neither rights as refugees nor fundamental civil rights and means of making a living, often depending on handouts from mostly Jewish organizations and social benefits.

In the 1970s and 1980s, historians researched the Danish refugee policy of the 1930s. Like their colleagues in the communist regimes of Eastern Europe, these scholars had a political bias and mainly studied the fate of socialist and communist refugees. The Holocaust and Jewish victims did not really exist in their "nomenclature"; instead, they viewed all refugees as victims of "Hitler's war against the proletariat."

This view, however, suffered a severe blow with the publication of the book *As If They Didn't Exist at All (Som om de slet ikke eksisterede)* by Bent Blüdnikow in 1992.<sup>1</sup> It was the first work since 1945 to focus on Jewish refugees in Denmark. The book clarified that most of these refugees were treated harshly, that Jews had not sought asylum in Denmark because of their political views, and that there was more to the story than the rescue in 1943.

At the time Blüdnikow's book was published, Danish historians already

viewed the cooperation policy as an inevitable response to reality. Danish historian Kristian Hvidt said in an interview to the *Jerusalem Report*:

Bludnikow claims that Denmark has been so busy polishing its halo for having rescued its Jews in 1943 that it has obscured the fact that it turned a deaf ear to the cries of horror of other Jews when the noose was tightening in the 30s.... This point of view is indeed convincing. But it is being offered by someone who didn't personally experience this period, and who finds it hard to grasp the whole picture. The Danish people, including the Jewish community, were in full agreement to pursue a cautious policy vis-à-vis the regime of horror in Germany.<sup>2</sup>

This view was supported by Leni Yahil, who in 1966 published *The Rescue of Danish Jewry: Test of a Democracy*,<sup>3</sup> the first important work on the topic. Although Danish archives and authorities made many sources available to Yahil, far from everything was exposed. Partly because she lacked the whole truth, Yahil was mainly critical of the Jewish leadership, which, however, was under grave pressure from the Danish authorities. If, for instance, she had known of the expulsions of stateless Jews and other aspects of Jewish history in Denmark during the war, Yahil would undoubtedly have depicted the Danish authorities less positively. A vast majority of the Danish public, including the Danish Jews and their leadership, did not agree to a policy that led to the expulsion of Jews. Jewish organizations and individuals worked ardently for the rights and welfare of the Jewish refugees, including those who were expelled to Germany.

The expulsion of Jews from Denmark during World War II was discovered somewhat by chance in 1997, in the process of research on Jewish refugees in Iceland.<sup>4</sup> The expulsion of seventy non-Jewish German socialist and communist refugees in 1943 was also described for the first time in 1997.<sup>5</sup> Previously, Danish historians either had shown no real interest in refugee expulsions during the war or had attributed them solely to German orders and arrests.

It was considered impossible that Denmark, like other occupied countries, could have expelled Jews. Danish historians viewed the situation of Jewish refugees and of Danish Jews in general as secure before October 1943,<sup>6</sup> sufficiently protected under the auspices of the Danish Jewish community. The reality was profoundly different. Relief work for refugees by the Danish Jewish community was forbidden in 1941. Jewish officials protested the state's policy toward the Jewish refugees. Many Jews went underground, and some tried to flee to Sweden before October 1943.

In the postwar years there was no interest in the expulsion victims. The official postwar commission on the collaboration with the Nazis only produced one and a half pages of information about World War II expulsions of foreign nationals or stateless persons from Denmark in a fifteen-volume report, which was published from 1946 to 1958. Nothing at all was included about the expelled Jews, and all expulsions were incorrectly blamed on the German occupiers.

The immediate reaction to the discovery of the expulsion of Jews was mostly one of great interest. One Danish historian, however, tried to trivialize the findings and dismiss them as an error, arguing that the expelled Jews had been spies for the Russians.<sup>7</sup> Now the facts have been published in a book titled *The Other Side of the Coin: The Fate of Jewish Refugees in Denmark 1933-1945*,<sup>8</sup> which offers detailed accounts of the fate of all the victims, none of whom were spies and three of whom were children.

One of the families expelled to Germany was that of Brandla Wassermann and her three children. They had been helped by a young Danish man, who had volunteered for labor in Berlin, to travel all the way from Berlin to Copenhagen in October 1942. Soon after, they were expelled by the Danish authorities and escorted to the German border. Soon after their return to Berlin, they were all transported to Auschwitz. The young children, Ursula, Jacky Siegfried, and Denny, were killed upon arrival and Brandla Wassermann was murdered in December 1942. A police officer and Nazi sympathizer of the Department of Immigration of the Danish State Police wrote about her in a report the day before the family was deported to Germany: "She is a pure Jew, also of religion."<sup>9</sup>

It was not until the late 1990s and in the new millennium that the issue of twentieth-century Danish anti-Semitism was genuinely addressed in a series of studies. It is difficult to measure Danish anti-Semitism of the 1930s against that in other European countries. However, it is striking that the rescue of the Jews in 1943, in which only a small percentage of Danes participated, is still adduced as proof that Danes could not possibly have been anti-Semitic. One of the main reasons for the Danish treatment of Jews during the 1930s and the expulsions during World War II was anti-Semitism or xenophobia among the officials responsible for refugee matters.

### **Danish SS Volunteers and Danish War Criminals**

Another less-known aspect of Danish World War II history is that about six thousand Danish men joined and fought with the Waffen-SS, partly encouraged by the Danish authorities. Here, too, it took an exceptionally long time for this information to reach the Danish public.

Apart from fighting for their new masters on various war fronts, Danish SS volunteers also participated in the murder of Jews in Eastern Europe and served in concentration- and extermination camps. Information on these volunteers was not accessible until 1999, when three young historians published an excellent study.<sup>10</sup> Yet, surprisingly, the book did not discuss the issue of possible war crimes by Danes. The volunteers' motives are described in terms of their being "ordinary men," even more so than other nationals in the SS. Finally in 2003 the three authors published a few examples of Danish participation in war crimes, but without explicit details.<sup>11</sup>

Danish SS soldiers were not different from others; they participated in the

Holocaust. In July 1941 in Galicia, units from the Waffen-SS division Wiking, which consisted of Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, and later Icelandic members—the alleged finest of the “Aryan race”—perpetrated together with Ukrainians the horrific massacres of six hundred Jews in Ternopol and of two to three thousand in Zloczow. The latter massacre was stopped by a German Wehrmacht officer who was shocked by the cruelty and the methods of execution used by the Ukrainians and the Scandinavians. According to a message dated 3-4 July 1941 from the chief of the Third Army squadron in the area, members of Wiking blocked the escape routs from Zloczow and some went “hunting for Jews” and plundering.<sup>12</sup>

In a recent study called *Criminals without Punishment: The Nazis Who Got Away*,<sup>13</sup> journalist Erik Hoegh-Soerensen brings together information about wanted Danish war criminals who have escaped prosecution in Denmark. The book was condemned by a Danish historian who characterized it as sensational and the work of an intolerant fanatic, and who compared Nazi war crimes to Danish resistance fighters’ killing of Nazi collaborators.<sup>14</sup>

Even Danish historians who have studied Danish SS volunteers have been reluctant to expose Danish war crimes. Other Danish experts have suggested that possible Danish war criminals would not, in the prevailing climate, “risk anything” if their atrocities were to be publicized.<sup>15</sup> Danish historians have, for instance, withheld the identity of a Danish SS volunteer who witnessed war crimes and later recounted to the historians: “A Jew in a greasy caftan walks up to beg some bread, a couple of comrades get a hold of him and drag him behind a building and a moment later he comes to an end. There isn’t any room for Jews in the new Europe, they’ve brought too much misery to the European people.”<sup>16</sup>

Finally in January 2005, the Danish public was for the first time—partly because of strict archival laws and partly because of a lack of interest by historians—given details about one of the Danes who committed the most severe war crimes against Jews and other prisoners during World War II. This Danish citizen’s name, picture, and crimes were published in an extensive article in a Danish weekly.<sup>17</sup> The immediate reaction was criticism of the author for defining Gustav Alfred Jepsen as a Dane.

Jepsen was, in fact, born in a part of Denmark that from 1864 to 1920 had been German. Yet he chose to be a Danish subject and held a Danish passport. When he joined the Waffen-SS he also belonged to the “German minority” in southern Denmark, where his bilingual family had chosen to live after the Danish-German border was determined in 1920. Jepsen, who was hanged in 1947 after being sentenced to death by the Allied War Crimes Tribunals in Germany, defined himself as a Dane and insisted on speaking Danish at his defense in war-crime courts during 1945-1947.

In 2005, two Danish historians denied Jepsen’s Danish identity and ascribed his crimes to his belonging to the German minority in southern Denmark.<sup>18</sup> According to one of the critics, Danes were simply incapable of the sort of crimes that Jepsen committed. But in fact other Danes who were not part of the German

minority also committed war crimes. A Danish SS doctor, Carl Vaernet, conducted experiments on homosexuals in Buchenwald. He escaped prosecution and fled to Argentina, partly with help from friends and authorities in Denmark. Facts about him in Danish did not become widely available until 2002.<sup>19</sup>

Probably the main reason that Danish war crimes during World War II did not become publicly known, and were not dealt with in the investigations and court proceedings commissioned after World War II in Denmark, was the Danish authorities' deliberate attempt to conceal these crimes as they concealed the Danish expulsion of Jews. In the case of Jepsen, for instance, the Danish postwar authorities, who in fact perceived him as a Dane, managed to shield all information about the crimes, court proceedings, and Jepsen's execution in Germany from the Danish public's awareness until 2005. In 2001, the Danish Justice Ministry denied the existence of a file on Jepsen, which in fact was found in the ministry's archive in the Danish State Archive.<sup>20</sup>

### **Danish Industries' Nazi Collaboration during the War**

During the war, Danish industries and entrepreneurs carried out tasks for the Nazi occupiers in Denmark as well as assignments in other occupied countries.<sup>21</sup> With the encouragement of the Danish government, Danish exporters and entrepreneurs profited greatly compared to other occupied European countries, and entrepreneurs used slave labor including Jewish prisoners provided by the Germans. The German war enterprise had Danish participants on all levels in Denmark, Germany, and elsewhere.

During the 1930s, the most important export markets for Danish food were in Britain. When Denmark was occupied on 9 April 1940, this export was totally redirected to Nazi Germany. This increased export to neighboring Germany was, however, a policy that was advantageous to Danish authorities, and a goal espoused by many political parties well before the German occupation. In the 1930s, Danish wishes to remain neutral led to increased contacts with Nazi Germany. Some Danish politicians saw this as a way of pacifying the powerful neighbour. Many Danes expected Germany to emerge from a possible war as the ruler of Europe.

Danish bacon, butter, fish, and other commodities flowed into Germany during the war. Most of Denmark's food exports went to the Wehrmacht. The profits streamed back to the Danish industries but were of little benefit to the citizens.

Two groundbreaking volumes on Danish industries' taking advantage of the Nazi occupation were published in Denmark by historians Joachim Lund and Steen Andersen.<sup>22</sup> These books detail the activities of numerous Danish contractors and especially of large firms such as Hoejgaard & Schultz, F. L. Smidth, and Kampsax, which still flourish today.<sup>23</sup>

In 1936, Hoejgaard & Schultz and other Danish firms joined forces and

created a daughter company, Hoejgaard & Schultz and Wright, Thomsen & Kier, that was active in Poland. During the war, the firm used Jewish slave labor to build dikes, fortifications, and roads for the Germans. Hoejgaard & Schultz also engaged in building ports and producing asphalt for the Germans in Poland during the war.<sup>24</sup>

In the late 1990s, it was reported that F. L. Smidth used Jewish slave labor in Estonia during the war. On the initiative of the then Danish transportation minister, Gunnar Larsen, F. L. Smidth and other Danish firms engaged actively in the Ostraum (the Nazi term for areas east of Germany, often identified as part of the Lebensraum). F. L. Smidth's cement plant in Port Kunda, Estonia, which was built in the early 1930s, was nationalized by the communists in 1940 but after the German invasion in 1941 was restored to F. L. Smidth. From that moment it had one customer, Germany, which needed cement badly for building airfields in the warfare against the Soviet Union. To assist the Danish cement plant in 1943, the SS sent Jewish and Roma prisoners from one of the concentration camps in Vaivara, Estonia, to Port Kunda to work in the coal mines there, which provided fuel for the cement production.<sup>25</sup>

Hoejgaard & Schultz and Kampsax (merged as Groupe Danois) were contracted for building the concrete fundamentals of the Prinz Eugen Bridge over the Sava River near Belgrade. Forced labor<sup>26</sup> was used to build the bridge, which was crucial for German mobility in the area when completed in September 1942.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, FLS Industries—formerly F. L. Smidth—demanded compensation for the factory in Port Kunda, which they lost after the Soviet annexation of Estonia. In 1992, the firm renewed the claims, but this time against the present Estonian owners, Kunda Nordic Tsement. The Danish claims were finally abandoned in 2000 after the Danish media announced Lund's findings that Jews and Roma were used as slave labor in Kunda. FLS Industries set up a fund to grant “financial support to persons now living who were forced to take part in cement production at Port Kunda, Estonia, and Kursachsen, Germany, during the period of World War II, when FLS was in charge of the operation of the two plants.”<sup>27</sup> Twelve Jewish and Roma survivors of Port Kunda have so far been located, but have received only symbolic compensation from the fund.<sup>28</sup>

The Danish trade and contracting tasks for Nazi Germany were seen as an important part of the cooperation policy that allegedly benefited Denmark. It clearly did not benefit Jews and other victims of Nazism. Domestically, Danish Nazi collaboration and servility also directly affected Danish Jews. Although the small Danish Jewish population played only a minor role in Danish businesses and industries, Danish firms began aryanizing their boards in 1940. Danish export and import firms fired or voted their Jewish board members out of the boards. When this was brought to the attention of the Danish authorities, they found no reason to intervene.<sup>29</sup>

Danish unions and trade organizations also played their part in making life impossible for Jewish refugees in the 1930s and during the occupation. Most of the Jewish refugees in Denmark were unable to work at all. For many that situation continued for several years after the war.<sup>30</sup> Many of these refugees were forced to pay back the social benefits they had received during World War II, whereas Danish Waffen-SS veterans received monthly tax-free pensions from Germany for years.<sup>31</sup>

### **Postwar Hardships**

After Denmark's cooperation policy with the Nazis resulted in minimal casualties and maximal profit, as well as expulsions of Jewish refugees, Denmark continued to behave harshly toward people in need. Although the rescue of the Jews put Denmark in good standing with the Allies, this did not soften Denmark's attitude toward Jewish refugees. After returning in 1945, even Jewish refugees who had made it to Sweden or been caught and deported to Theresienstadt in 1943 received letters from the Danish authorities giving them short notice to leave the country.<sup>32</sup>

Many non-Danish Jewish refugees who had fled to Sweden in 1943 encountered difficulties on returning. They had to sign forms stating that they had not been members of Nazi organizations, and some even had to prove that they were Jewish because they had not been stripped of German or Austrian citizenship by the Nazis. Others had to prove their Jewishness because their physical appearance did not correspond to the Jewish stereotype apparently held by many Danish police officials. In some cases these measures were no more than chicanery.

After the war it could take eight to ten years, sometimes even more, for refugees who had fled to Denmark during the 1930s to obtain Danish citizenship. Some gave up because of restrictions on work permits and other difficulties created by the Danish authorities. The continuing restrictive policy toward Jewish refugees in postwar Denmark indicates that such practices did not result just from German pressure but were rooted in Danish attitudes.<sup>33</sup>

In 1947, some 4,400 Jewish refugees on the ship *Exodus* were denied entry to Denmark. After also being denied entry to Palestine and pursued by British warships, the refugees rejected French offers to settle and work in France. The idea to invite the Jews from the *Exodus* to Denmark came from Bonde Henriksen, editor in chief of the Danish daily *Berlingske Tidende*. He suggested that concurrently, the British should take 4,400 German refugees from the British Zone in Germany to Britain—Germans who eventually might have ended up in Danish refugee camps. Danish Zionists also encouraged the Jews on the *Exodus* to come to Denmark. The Jewish Agency asked Danish chief rabbi Marcus Melchior to ask the Danish government to give the refugees preliminary safe haven there. Rabbi Melchior said that if the request was granted, Danish Jewry should “mend

the wounds” of these refugees and “their material welfare should be taken care of by the whole of the Danish nation.”<sup>34</sup>

The Danish authorities, however, refused, partly attributing this to the eighty-five thousand German refugees who were already in Denmark. The Danish daily *Jyllands-Posten*, which reflected the government’s policy in 1947, was downright opposed to admitting the *Exodus* refugees.<sup>35</sup> They ended up in camps in Germany until later moving to Cyprus and Israel. Although many Danes protested these Jews’ confinement in Germany, they had no knowledge of their own government’s refusal to assist them.

### **Why Now, and Not Earlier?**

Why did it take so long for these bleak facts about World War II Denmark to come to light?

One reason is that from 1943 to 1998 the responsible Danish authorities concealed the expulsion of the Jews from Denmark. Expulsion lists published after the war for internal use by police and immigration authorities omitted some of the Jewish expellees’ names. They were now both expelled and erased from the statistics. The postwar commission that prosecuted various forms of collaboration and crimes during the German occupation never dealt with nor revealed the nature of these expulsions. Those inquiring into the expellees’ fate usually received inaccurate or misleading responses from the police or the Justice Ministry.<sup>36</sup>

Most likely, some of the officials did not view the refugees’ expulsion to Nazi Germany as criminal, but as an economic necessity. The authorities’ argument for not allowing Jews into Denmark in the late 1930s concerned national economic interests. Some of the officials involved in the expulsion later obtained some of the highest positions in the Danish judicial system. Some of them also helped prepare additions to the Danish penal code for the postwar judicial procedures. One paragraph in these additions prescribes the death sentence for anyone directly involved in the transport to Nazi Germany of persons who subsequently lost their lives in concentration- and extermination camps.<sup>37</sup> No one, however, was ever tried for that offense in Denmark.

When in 1998 one of the present authors published initial findings on the refugee expulsions,<sup>38</sup> the authority that administered access to the files of the Division of Immigration of Danish State Police, which had relevant information on the expelled Jewish refugees, denied access to these files. The reason given was that the files contained material of a delicate, private nature. Not until the media, politicians, and international organizations took an interest in the case were these files released for research.<sup>39</sup>

Regarding the expulsion of Jews and others, the strict Danish archive laws concerning matters of World War II in Denmark were among the main reasons for the tardy publication of the facts. According to the laws and regulations, in some cases it will take seventy to eighty years from the end of the war or postwar

judicial proceedings before important information about Danish wartime history is released. To this day it is impossible to access information from the *Bovrup Index*, a book published in 1946 disclosing the names of twenty-eight thousand members of the Danish Nazi Party (DNSAP). The Danish authorities banned both access and possession of this list in 1946. It seems that all things reprehensible in Denmark were to be concealed as long as possible.

One might ask why the fate of twenty-one expelled Jews, or the activities of Danish industrialists in the Baltic countries, should necessarily have been known earlier than 1998. Indeed, there is a huge quantity of Danish research on the occupation years. Danish historians were, however, more interested in national aspects than in the fate of Jews and other refugees, or the misdeeds of Danish firms abroad.

There were also many preconceived notions. Most Danish historians assumed that those Jews who were not rescued to Sweden in 1943 were deported to Theresienstadt by the Germans, and had little interest in the fate of Danish Jews in Sweden or in Theresienstadt. Jews deported to Theresienstadt mainly wrote about their experiences themselves, whereas Danish historians focused on the German Nazis' action against the Jews in Denmark of 2 October 1943 and predominantly on one of the rescuers, German Nazi diplomat George Ferdinand Duckwitz, with little interest in the experiences of individuals and victims. Hence, the publication of historian Michael Mogensen's preliminary findings in 2001 caused a stir. They show that Danes in Swedish exile, especially members of the Danish resistance movement, were often hateful or anti-Semitic toward the Jewish refugees there.<sup>40</sup>

The political and ideological agenda of Danish historical research has also had its effects. Danish researchers on twentieth-century refugees in Denmark focused mostly on politically active refugees, including communists and Social Democrats. When they came upon the name of Brandla Wassermann and her three children who, as mentioned, were expelled from Copenhagen in 1942, available to them on expulsion lists in the archive of the Danish State Police, these historians did not find any match in the East German archives, which constituted their main reference.

"Holocaust fatigue," the weariness of hearing or learning about the Holocaust, may also have contributed to the delay of information on the Danish expulsion of Jews. Some Danes assert that it is more important to focus on ongoing genocides, among them "the genocide of the Palestinians by Israel,"<sup>41</sup> than to dwell on the fate of twenty-one Jews expelled from Denmark. Indeed, the observation of Denmark's Auschwitz Day has seen a gradual decline in discussion and information on the Holocaust and the Danish victims of the Holocaust. The first such day was observed on 27 January 2003 and, as in subsequent commemorations, the organizers rejected suggestions by one of the present authors to mention the expulsion of Jews from Denmark even though most of these Jews were eventually killed in Auschwitz. In response to the apparent absence of the remembrance of

the Jewish Holocaust at the Auschwitz Day ceremony in 2004 and 2005, Danish Jews decided to commemorate this day in the Copenhagen Synagogue and in 2005 to boycott the official event in Copenhagen.

The meager interest of many Danish historians in Holocaust-related matters was evident, for example, in remarks by Hans Kirchhoff, one of the most prominent Danish historians of World War II. Asked in 2001 whether he could be considered a “new moralist,” he expressed a dismissive attitude toward morally charged issues:

The spirit of the times has changed in recent years, and moralism influences many other areas than historical interpretation. Take, for instance, politics, where moralism played a large role when the European countries chose to boycott Austria [because of statements by far-Right leader Joerg Haider]. They were inspired by the Holocaust conference in Stockholm, which was a gala performance for statesmen.... The debate and the perception of the occupation [of Denmark] is today ahistoric, because interpretations are influenced by . . . new moralism. For example, one can point to the erroneous liquidations [of innocent people by the Danish resistance movement] and the story about the German [i.e., Jewish] refugees whom the Danish authorities expelled.... Apologies are offered in east and west for passivity and for collaboration with the Nazis—the latest one being the apology for the Catholic Church’s role as a bystander during the Holocaust.<sup>42</sup>

Still another reason for the late emergence of unpleasant aspects of Danish World War II history is the fact that a small number of Danish historians, including Kirchhoff, monopolized the research and nearly all relevant sources. Less than a month after Denmark’s liberation in 1945, it became clear that there was an ongoing political struggle over research on the war, and that the authorities and various groups sought to prevent disclosures about certain people. In 1951, the DNH (Association for Publishing the Contemporary History of Denmark)<sup>43</sup> was founded, its members mostly historians connected to Danish universities. For decades, this small organization of historians had sole access to information in Danish archives concerning the Nazi occupation of Denmark. The DNH gained little popularity among foreign, and younger Danish historians, and were called “historical hairdressers.”

In 1995, at a conference to evaluate the achievements and failures of Danish research on the occupation years, a DNH member stated: “Behind the project was the intention of the grant-awarding authorities that there should be a focus—and a positive one—on the cooperation policy and the politicians’ efforts to enable the country to survive the occupation, an intention that also was fulfilled to a certain degree.”<sup>44</sup>

As late as 2000, members of this privileged group of historians, which had by then dissolved, still tried to prevent or appropriate other researchers’ discoveries. When the discovery that Jews had been expelled to Germany in 1940-1943 was

announced, two former members of the group proposed forming a historical commission, led by themselves, to explore the topic.<sup>45</sup>

To some extent, as noted earlier, this is also a clash between generations. An older generation of government-authorized researchers and their disciples, expected to uphold national interests and pride, dismiss scholars with new approaches as “moralists” and their research as “subjective.”

### **White Buses and the Red Cross**

The rescue of Jews to Sweden in 1943 was not the sole factor in the positive postwar perception of Denmark; there were also the White Bus relief convoys in 1945. Although Sweden officially credits the Swedish Red Cross and Count Folke Bernadotte for the convoys,<sup>46</sup> Norwegian and primarily Danish participation were also crucial to transporting Scandinavian prisoners, and later other groups of prisoners, from German camps through Denmark to Sweden during the last months of the war.

Recently the Danish historian Hans Sode-Madsen, who has fervently extolled the cooperation policy, published a study on the White Buses.<sup>47</sup> His book has been criticized by historians as well as surviving Danish resistance fighters as a deficient treatment that very selectively discusses Danish aspects of the White Bus endeavor while mostly ignoring the new international research on the topic.<sup>48</sup> One of Sode-Madsen's main aims was to demonstrate that this relief action was a beneficial consequence of Denmark's cooperation policy.

Among the eleven thousand rescued by the White Buses were Danish and Norwegian resistance fighters, Danish policemen, and Danish Jews deported to Theresienstadt in 1943. Later, the buses took prisoners who were in worse condition to Sweden for treatment. The initial plans, however, did not include rescuing Jews even though they were the most in need. The action also ignored international regulations on aid to prisoners of war.

This and much else is ignored in Sode-Madsen's book. According to him, were it not for the cooperation policy, all Jews in Denmark would have been deported and killed. Adolf Eichmann and Werner Best, the Third Reich's plenipotentiary in Denmark, would not have agreed to a “lenient” alternative of deporting Jews to Theresienstadt. Danish Jews, Sode-Madsen asserts, should have been grateful for the cooperation policy.<sup>49</sup>

Yet Sode-Madsen omits much available information that contradicts his positive view of the cooperation and its alleged importance for the White Bus effort. His book, for instance, makes no mention of the Scandinavian buses being used for transports of non-Scandinavian prisoners between camps. Swedish historian Inger Lomfors has recently shown that many French and other nationals lost their lives because the patrons of the White Buses yielded these services to the Nazis in 1945.<sup>50</sup>

Sode-Madsen also argues that there is no proof that the cooperation policy

was harmful. That may be why the book mentions neither Denmark's expulsion of stateless Jews to Germany nor the lack of effort by the Danish organizers of the White Bus convoys, who included the Red Cross and numerous officials, to rescue Danish Jews in camps other than Theresienstadt in 1944-1945. Neither Danish authorities nor the White Buses helped Louis Lichtenstein, who was killed in Dachau in February 1945. No efforts were made to help Jacob Thalmay, who was killed on 9 March 1945 during a death march.

Isaak Edelmann also did not get a seat on the buses; deported in 1944, he survived a death march from Auschwitz to Mauthausen. Although Danish authorities knew he had last been registered in Mauthausen, they made no effort to locate him when collecting Scandinavians for the White Buses. When Edelmann returned to Denmark late in 1945, he could read his own obituaries in Danish dailies.<sup>51</sup> Kurt Bolz, a German Jew who was expelled from Denmark in 1943 and one of two who survived the expulsions, managed to get a fare on the White Buses under a false Swedish name. When he arrived in Copenhagen he was arrested by the same authorities who had expelled him, and held for one year in prison isolation and a prison camp. He fled to Sweden in 1946.<sup>52</sup>

Sode-Madsen's book has no room for these victims of the Danish World War II policy. It also leaves out information on the Nazi contacts with Count Folke Bernadotte. It does not mention how Bernadotte, who did not originally plan to rescue Jews on the White Buses, hurried to testify in favor of his friend, the SS general Walter Schellenberg, at the Nuremberg proceedings.

Although ordinary Danes, members of the resistance, and others helped Jews flee to Sweden in 1943, the Danish Red Cross did not contribute. In 1942, under pressure from their wives, the Danish Red Cross sent parcels to Danish communists who had been transported to the Stutthof concentration camp in Germany. The director of the Danish Red Cross, Helmer Rosting, was a member of the Danish Nazi Party and frequented Werner Best's offices. On 29 September 1943, Rosting proposed to Best that Danish Jews be interned in return for a gradual release of Danish soldiers held by the Germans. Rosting also suggested that the interned Jews be used as hostages, to be deported if the acts of sabotage against the Germans did not cease. Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop rejected these ideas.<sup>53</sup>

Rosting was not the only one who favored interning Denmark's Jews; Danish officials discussed the possibility in September 1943. Another group of Danes also made use of the idea. The New York-based Friends of Danish Freedom and Democracy, a branch of the National America Denmark Association (NADA), worked to promote a better image of Denmark among the Allies. On 8 February 1942, the Friends released to the press a fabricated story that the Danish Jews had offered to the Danish king to let themselves be interned. They had supposedly stated: "We have always been well treated in this country and we understand that our being here is one of the difficulties between you and the German Government. If we can make things easier for you by being interned, please intern us."<sup>54</sup>

A delegation of the International Red Cross visited Theresienstadt on 23 June 1944. After the war the two Danish delegates, Frants Hvass of the Foreign Ministry and Eigil Juel Henningsen of the National Board of Health, were reluctant to discuss this visit. It consisted of a few hours of inspection of the camp, where the Danish and other delegates were fooled by a theatrical scene that the Nazis had created for the occasion, followed by several days' stay in Prague with dining out and concerts on the Nazis' invitation. In 1979, Juel Henningsen declined to comment, in statements on the television series *Holocaust*, that the Danish delegates had been fooled at Theresienstadt.<sup>55</sup> Even today, the Danish public is shielded from such information by Sode-Madsen's tribute to the cooperation policy.

When wives and fiancées of Danish communists in Stutthof visited Frants Hvass in the Foreign Ministry on 11 July 1944, Hvass proudly told them what he had experienced at Theresienstadt. One of the wives wrote: "The visit to Theresienstadt had been much better than expected. There were 40,000 Jews in the camp, but only 15 Germans. We were shown photos from there. The children looked both well dressed and well fed. There were photographs from a classroom. They had their own teachers, their orchestra, fire engines, Jewish police etc."<sup>56</sup>

### **A Case of Deception**

In their reports, Hvass and Juel Henningsen show how badly the Nazis deceived them in their visit to Theresienstadt on 23 June 1944. No such information is available in Sode-Madsen's allegedly instructive book about the rescue of the Danish Jews from Theresienstadt. On 10 July 1944, Hvass wrote about the few Danish Jews he had seen in Theresienstadt: "They are clean and well groomed and must be said to wear better clothes than what is the average in a German village."<sup>57</sup>

Juel Henningsen wrote in his unpublished postwar memoirs:

Many arrangements and improvements were evidently made hastily. Hvass and I were of course aware that they tried to give us an idealized picture—but at the same time had to admit that the picture was far better than the descriptions from other camps we had knowledge of. The sanitary situation of the Danish Jews, judging from appearances, state of nutrition, skin complexion etc. exceeded our expectations.... In the same way I, in my report to the Foreign Ministry, draw a relatively favorable picture of the conditions—I of course had to expect that the report sooner or later was going to be read by the Germans. [This] is not a rationalization. Hvass and I discussed these things thoroughly during our mission and agreed fully on the importance of personally behaving moderately and as the representatives of the Danish authorities. On the other hand, we didn't feel that we had to show any sort of humbleness or outspoken goodwill. We emphasized acting

as equals. In the evening we were “compulsorily committed” to a dinner with the German Gauleiter, [Hans] Frank. We were treated with exquisite politeness by the relatively large German company. Also here it was evident that we were to be charmed. I sat at the left hand of the Gauleiter, who tried to force flattering comments about the camp from me. I resisted by presenting moderately critical comments. Music was discussed by the way, and a Ukrainian violinist was fetched from the town. He arrived in white tie and tails and received orders on what to play. When he asked me what I wanted to hear I suggested certain Danish tunes, but we ended up with Grieg....<sup>58</sup>

After the Theresienstadt inspection and an unexplained stay in Prague, Hvass went directly to Berlin to arrange for a visit to Stutthof. He did not get permission to see the camp, only to speak to a selected group of its Danish prisoners outside of it. Apparently, though, that meeting did not come about because of Hvass’s “moderate” attitude toward the Nazis.<sup>59</sup>

Sode-Madsen’s book also makes no mention of this visit to Berlin, though it could have been important if Hvass could have told Danish officials about conditions in Stutthof. Such information could also have had an impact on alleged plans of the Danish Red Cross to visit Birkenau and other camps during the same mission as the visit to Theresienstadt.<sup>60</sup> In a visit to Stockholm in August 1944, Hvass continued to tell his story about the good conditions for the Jews in Theresienstadt.<sup>61</sup> In Stockholm at that stage, there was probably no reason for him to worry about how the Nazis would react to critical reports.

The role of the Danish authorities and the Danish Red Cross in the relocation of wanted Nazi war criminals to South America and other places has often been debated.<sup>62</sup> Although it is clear that Danish war criminals such as Carl Vaernet left Europe with the help of Danish doctor colleagues and Red Cross documents,<sup>63</sup> no research has been done on this subject in Denmark. The Danish Red Cross was also involved for decades in transferring monthly payments of invalid pensions to Danish SS veterans.<sup>64</sup> Although in 1999 the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) declared an open-door policy toward researchers examining its role during World War II and its aftermath, the archives of the Danish Red Cross are in practice inaccessible when the subject is the Nazi occupation of Denmark.

Danish officials who visited Theresienstadt in 1944 could have transmitted honest assessments of the situation there to governments of nonoccupied countries or international organizations. But Danish officials during the war were not really interested in the non-Danish Jews who were deported from Denmark to Theresienstadt in 1943, nor, for that matter, in the fate of Jews elsewhere in Nazi Europe. In his book on Eichmann, David Cesarani states that the ICRC representatives’ visit to Theresienstadt in 1944 was cowardly and forestalled negative publicity for the Nazis. He notes: “On the contrary, the official statement

by the visitors reinforced the lie that Theresienstadt was a final destination for Jews rather than a transit camp for Auschwitz-Birkenau.”<sup>65</sup>

### **An Official Danish Apology to the Jewish People**

On 4 May 2005, at the celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of Denmark's liberation, Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen of the Danish Liberal Party did something that would have been unthinkable a few years ago. He presented an official apology to the Jewish people for the Danish expulsions of Jewish refugees to Germany from 1940 to 1943. Thus Fogh Rasmussen became the first Danish head of state to directly address this matter, which contrasts so greatly with the rescue of Jews in 1943 and the alleged advantages of the cooperation policy.

In 1999, the question of an official apology was publicly debated after the initial reports on the expulsions and the fate of the Jewish refugees involved. Fogh Rasmussen's predecessor Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, a Social Democrat, was reluctant about an apology but ordered an official investigation of the claims about expulsions. Earlier prime ministers, many of whom may also have known about the expulsions, kept their silence. No prime minister before Fogh Rasmussen admitted that Denmark during the war was an accomplice in the murder of Jewish refugees.

The official apology was presented in the National Memorial Park in Copenhagen on 4 May 2005. Fogh Rasmussen stated:

What was worse, as we know today, is that Danish authorities in some instances were involved in expelling people to suffering and death in the concentration camps. There were persons who sought safe haven in this country from the Nazi persecutors of the Jewish people. The Danish authorities expelled these people to the Nazis.

Also other innocent people were, with the active assistance of the Danish authorities, left to an uncertain fate at the hands of the Nazi regime. These are shameful incidents. A stain on Denmark's otherwise good reputation in this area.

The remembrance of the dark aspects of the occupation era is unfortunately also a part of the celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of Denmark. Thus I would very much like—on this very occasion and in this location—on behalf of the government and thus the Danish state, to express regret and apologize for these acts.

An apology cannot alter history. But it can contribute to the recognition of historic mistakes. So that present and future generations will hopefully avoid similar mistakes in the future.<sup>66</sup>

The apology was presented a few weeks after the book *Medaljens Bagside*, which tells the stories of the expelled Jews, was published in Denmark. One of Fogh Rasmussen's comments on the book was: “It is significant that it was a foreign

researcher who managed to lance this inflamed boil.”<sup>67</sup> Fogh Rasmussen was aware that Danish historians tended to praise the Danish policy toward the Nazi occupiers.

The fact that the discovery was made by a non-Danish national has indeed been difficult to accept for many Danes. The author received hate mail, including a statement that “such a discovery is not credible when presented by foreigners.” The Danish Institute for International Studies, in its annual report *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook 2005*, indeed credits the discovery to Danish historians, stating:

In reaction to the revelation by Danish historians [*sic*] that one of the results of the policy of collaboration during the occupation—officially called the politics of negotiations or cooperation—was the expulsion on Danish initiative of 21 Jewish refugees to be exterminated in German camps, [Prime Minister Fogh Rasmussen] did not rule out a formal apology. In his own words, “An apology may be at hand. Of course we cannot change the course of history by acknowledging, regretting and excusing on behalf of the past. But it is important for a nation to take this step.”<sup>68</sup>

Apparently, this misattribution of the discovery was written and published shortly before the prime minister actually decided to present the official apology.

The official apology was welcomed by the few relatives and descendants of the expelled Jews, who are presently living in Israel, Britain, and Sweden. Some of these still await compensation for the assets that Denmark confiscated from the Jews before they were expelled.

An American think tank also welcomed the apology in a statement shortly after it was presented. Director Helle C. Dale of the Washington-based Heritage Foundation remarked that the apology would be seen internationally as indicating that Denmark sets a high moral standard.<sup>69</sup> Radek Sikorski, resident fellow of another Washington-based think tank, the American Enterprise Institute, said: “No nations were totally innocent. Good things happened and bad things happened, and it is wise and instructive to admit one’s errors. But the total Danish effort to rescue Jews to safety is still a great achievement in your history.”<sup>70</sup>

Many Danes also welcomed the apology. But that view was overwhelmed by critics of the prime minister, who voiced their dismay in the spring of 2005. Danish historians, as they had done in 2003 when the prime minister criticized the acolytes of the cooperation policy, characterized his words as nonsense. Historian Aage Trommer was quoted as saying: “For research the apology doesn’t mean anything. For a historian the primary goal is to become wiser. And it seems strange to me that later generations should apologize for what the ancestors did.”<sup>71</sup> Trommer himself did not live up to that goal when in the 1960s he engaged in “positive research” evidently aimed at protecting Denmark from the shadows of its past.

Another senior historian, Henrik S. Nissen, stated: “The expulsion of the Jewish refugees is a black spot on the history of Denmark. But an apology is

nonsense. It is a large philosophical problem, whether guilt should be collective, and whether one can apologize on behalf of others. It should be those responsible who apologize, and for that it is of course too late."<sup>72</sup> Many Danes also claimed that the apology was a kind of exoneration for Denmark's participation in peacekeeping in the war in Iraq.<sup>73</sup>

A few weeks after the apology was presented, the Danish Institute for International Studies published a state-commissioned, 2,350-page report on the Cold War era in Denmark.<sup>74</sup> The report found no evidence that Danish Social Democrats and other left-wing politicians had, as often argued, collaborated with the Warsaw Pact nations, and showed that other NATO countries had considered Denmark a committed ally. In reaction, left-wing politicians of the opposition demanded apologies from the present government, which it typically blamed. Member of Parliament Villy Soevndal of the Socialist People's Party even demanded an apology from the prime minister, "like the one he had given to the Jewish people."<sup>75</sup>

### **"Pharisees" vs. the "Only Danish Solution"**

Among the increasingly large numbers of Danish historians who extol the cooperation policy during the Nazi occupation, terms such as "outrageous," "ahistorical," "subjective," "moralistic," and "pharisaism" have been used in reaction to the historical discoveries that call their view into question. Many of these discoveries point to grave humanitarian failures by the Danish authorities and industrial sector during the war. Clearly, facing the truth about Denmark's wartime history is still difficult.

The dogma concerning the cooperation policy has also acquired political significance. Members of the Danish Social-Liberal Party (Radikale Venstre) now attribute the allegedly unique policy to one of their party's early members, the most hated twentieth-century Danish political figure, Erik Scavenius (1877-1962). In November 1941 as foreign minister, Scavenius went to Berlin to—among other duties—sign the Anti-Komintern Pact and meet with Nazi leader Hermann Goering. Scavenius also paid a courtesy visit to Hitler. According to Scavenius himself, Goering told him that in the long run Denmark could not avoid the "Jewish question," and Scavenius responded that there "was no Jewish question in Denmark."<sup>76</sup>

Scavenius, however, must have been poorly briefed about what was happening in the shadows of his cooperation policy back home in Denmark, where Danish authorities were expelling stateless Jews and other refugees to certain death in German camps. Such officials were indeed concerned about the "Jewish question."

To point out that if all countries had behaved like Denmark during World War II, Europe would today be a Nazi continent, arouses contempt from many Danish historians. These scholars work hard to reconcile Denmark's Nazi collaboration

during the war with the rehabilitation of Danish politicians who, though not Nazis, harmed the Danes as much as Quisling harmed the Norwegians. What is actually objectionable is to claim that Eric Scavenius with his cooperation policy rescued the Danish Jews.

Danish historical research on World War II and Denmark's occupation has until recently been nearly totally confined to national topics, lacking a wider context. Historians have tended to ignore or overlook archives and important sources outside Denmark that have significance for Danish history. The Swedish Canadian scholar Gunnar S. Paulsson, author of numerous books on the Holocaust, noted that Danish research on World War II generally, and the rescue of the Jews to Sweden specifically, has been problematic and suffered from blind spots. He saw a need for assessments by foreign scholars, and remarked that in Denmark "national myths . . . have created an unbalanced national perception."<sup>77</sup>

The spokesmen for the cooperation policy seem nationalistically motivated when they ignore the condemnation of the policy that most Danes expressed after the war. For instance, historian Bo Lidegaard has argued that even the Jews in Denmark supported the policy that resulted in Jews being rejected at the borders or expelled from the country. He grossly simplifies when stating:

The [Danish] government had long since given up on reacting to the unfortunate events south of the border and solely concentrated on the survival of the Danish nation. This policy was reflected in the Danish Jewish community, which supported the restrictive refugee policy and never engaged in political support for the minority of activists who tried to obtain immigration permits for more German and Austrian Jews.<sup>78</sup>

In a book on the Danish Foreign Ministry from 1914 to 1945, Lidegaard lauds the cooperation policy. Although the book is titled *The Survivor*,<sup>79</sup> it is not about the victims of the Foreign Ministry, which participated in the expulsion of Jews during the war and, in the 1930s, helped introduce strict limitations on the admission of Jewish refugees. Furthermore, Lidegaard argues that the Danish population's reaction to the action against the Jews in 1943 was not a response to the cooperation policy but to "sorting out a certain group in society and removing that group's civil rights. In this case the most central nerve of democracy and the constitutional state was under attack, and the population stood up, not only in solidarity with those who were threatened, but also in defense of the society and values, which still evoked national unity."<sup>80</sup>

Thus, Lidegaard's omission in his books of any information about World War II expulsions of Jews and other groups from Denmark is understandable. Their fate does not jibe with his uncritical praise of Danish values.

Kirchhoff has also maintained that the Danish Jews' upholding of the cooperation policy was what rescued them.<sup>81</sup> Many other historians have repeated this claim. What is clear, however, is the opposite—that the cooperation policy caused the expulsion. Are scholars who espouse such views capable

of recognizing research that reveals great failures in Denmark's World War II conduct?

At the beginning of the Nazi occupation of Holland, the Dutch seemed well disposed toward the Jews there, but the eventual outcome was disastrous. This, clearly, is not an analogy that would suit the Danes who praise cooperation. Nor is the case of the four hundred thousand Hungarian Jews who were murdered despite Hungary's cooperation with the Nazis. Were the Danish population, officials, and even the Danish SS volunteers indeed better people and less anti-Semitic than the rest of the Europeans? Did the Danes show genius in adapting to the Nazis' wishes instead of fighting back?

The resurgent positive view of the cooperation policy and the intolerance toward new, contradictory findings do not necessarily reflect a generational feud between historians in Denmark—a sort of late Danish equivalent of the controversy in German historical research in the 1980s. The opposing assessments of the cooperation involve less complexity than Germany's controversy over its past.

Another factor behind the present focus on the cooperation policy as “the only solution for Denmark” is purely political. Left-wing historians who, until the 1990s, produced research that was ideologically mainstream, now need to take up new issues. Some turn to doctrines that, a few decades ago, they could not possibly have espoused in the name of their ideologies. When a right-wing prime minister like Fogh Rasmussen, like many Danes, sees the cooperation with the Nazis as the saddest chapter of Danish history, some left-wing scholars find a new fad in becoming ardent advocates of the cooperation policy.

A political explanation can certainly be given to the interpretations of Claus Bryld, a Danish professor of contemporary history who has studied the Nazi occupation in the collective memory of the Danish people. His method is allegedly that of the “politically conscious” radical of the 1970s. Bryld is troubled by new views of the “moralists” and the “Pharisees,” who, he says, “condemn and curse” whatever they “happen to dislike in the manner of the Old Testament prophets.”<sup>82</sup> Although failing to make clear who these moralists are, Bryld asserts that history, for them, is

a never-ending dialogue, and there will be none if the voice of the past is constantly being drowned by loudspeaking [*sic*] moralists. Furthermore these moralists are often fakes; they have their own hidden agenda and slyly consider how they can profit here and now if a certain version of the past favours them rather than their opponents. A genuine engagement built on knowledge of the past must be individually appropriated and is closely related to active citizenship in contemporary society. In the 1970's, a decade now subjected to regular denunciations, “political consciousness” was seen as something positive which built on a sympathetic attitude to the past and present events and included a call to commit oneself to a change in society

for the better. Does today's shrill, ahistoric moralism imply that if the past is truly "historicized," the result will be a political commitment, and more often than not on the left? Maybe so. Anyway, some of those campaigns which specialize in wrenching events and conditions from their historical context reveal a glaring lack of historical consciousness which entails the risk of sliding into the world of propaganda.<sup>83</sup>

Yet another reason for the harsh reactions to the questioning of the cooperation policy and its implications for Jews is the increasing indifference toward Holocaust victims. Certain Danish historians and political factions, for instance, recommend that the annual Auschwitz Day should focus on the "genocide of the Palestinians." As noted earlier, the state-run Department for Holocaust and Genocide of the Danish Institute for International Studies decided, regarding the annual Auschwitz Day ceremony, not to commemorate or even mention the Jewish victims of Danish expulsions.

It is not surprising, then, that Danish historians who are greatly upset by criticism of the Vatican for not dealing with its own World War II issues, and who call their own opponents Pharisees and moralists, are not keen to accept new discoveries such as Danish expulsions of Jewish refugees. Some of these historians may miss the "political consciousness" of the 1970s with its alleged sympathetic attitude toward the past and present. But most Danes of the 1970s were not aware of the murder and other evils to which Danish society subjected Jews during World War II. Then again, even in the 1970s there were politically conscious Danes who called for the destruction of Israel and the expulsion of Jews from Denmark.<sup>84</sup>

## Notes

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- Mikkelsen, "Historikerne strides om 21 udviste jøder," *Jyllands-Posten*, 10 February 2000. [Danish]
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  10. Claus Bundgaard Christensen, Niels Bo Poulsen, and Peter Scharff Smith, *Under hagekors og Dannebrog : Danskere i Waffen SS*. (Copenhagen: Aschehoug, 1998). [Danish]
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  14. Book review by Kristian Hvidt, *Berlingske Tidende*, 24 July 2004. [Danish]
  15. *Jyllands-Posten*, 16 January 2000, section 1, 5 (Danish professor of history Claus Bryld is quoted for this view).
  16. Christensen, Poulsen, and Smith, "Danish Volunteers."
  17. Vilhjálmur Örn Vilhjálmsón, "En dansk krigsforbryder," *Weekendavisen*, 28 January-3 February 2005. [Danish]
  18. René Rasmussen, "En tysker," letter to the editor of *Weekendavisen*, 4-10 February 2005 [Danish]; René Rasmussen, "Vores sindelag bestemmer vi selv," *Weekendavisen*, 18-24 February 2005 [Danish]; Stig Woermer, "Hjemmetysk," *Weekendavisen*, 18-24 February 2005 [Danish]; René Rasmussen, "Sindelag," *Weekendavisen*, 11-17 March 2005 [Danish]; Vilhjálmur Örn Vilhjálmsón, "Vi er langt fra sindelagsfrihed," *Weekendavisen*, 18-23 March 2005 [Danish].
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  22. *Ibid.*
  23. See: [www.flschmidt.com](http://www.flschmidt.com); [www.kampsax.com](http://www.kampsax.com); [www.mthojgaard.dk](http://www.mthojgaard.dk).
  24. Lund, *Hitlers Spisekammer*, 250.
  25. *Ibid.*, 225-26.
  26. Expert opinion, written by Christopher R. Browning, Professor of History at Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, Washington, on Instructions of Davenport Lyons and Mishcon de Reya, Solicitors, for the Purposes of Assisting the Queen's Bench Division in the High Court in London in the Case between David John Cawdell Irving, Plaintiff, and Penguin Books Limited and Deborah E. Lipstadt, Defendants. Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, Washington; letter by SS-Gruppenführer Harald Turner to SS-Obergruppenführer Karl Wolff, head of the personal staff of the Reichsführer SS (RFSS)

- [head of the SS, Heinrich Himmler], dated 11 April 1942, StA Muenchen II, Az.10a Js 39/60, bill of indictment/accusation (ZSL, Az. Sammelakte 137, Bl.164-167). [German]
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  28. Lund, *Hitlers Spisekammer*, 227.
  29. Vilhjálmur Örn Vilhjálmsson, "Vi har ikke brug for 70.000 joeder," *Rambam*, 7, Tidsskrift for joedisk kultur og forskning, Udgivet af Selskabet for Dansk Joedisk Historie, 1998, 41-56, 47. [Danish]
  30. Vilhjálmsson, *Medaljens Bagside*, 318 ff.
  31. Bent Blüdnikow and Vilhjálmur Örn Vilhjálmsson, "Skeletter efter 1945," *Weekendavisen*, 19-25 September 1997. [Danish]
  32. Vilhjálmsson, "Vi har ikke brug," 52; Vilhjálmsson, *Medaljens Bagside*, 320.
  33. See Blüdnikow and Vilhjálmsson, "Skeletter efter 1945"; Vilhjálmsson, *Medaljens Bagside*, 317 ff.
  34. Vilhjálmsson, *Medaljens Bagside*, 336-37; "Danes Consider Offer of Haven," *Palestine Post*, 27 August 1947.
  35. "Joeder i noed," *Jyllands-Posten*, 27 August 1947 [Danish]. The same page in *Jyllands-Posten* reports about a Danish physician in the town of Skive who obviously had the editors' full sympathy. The authorities only allowed him to buy a European car though he preferred an American one. In his distress he had received two tires and three tubes for his dilapidated German car, while the local sheriff was buying a brand-new American Ford from the local car dealer.
  36. Vilhjálmsson, *Medaljens Bagside*, 135-36, 318-29.
  37. *Ibid.*, 302-09.
  38. Vilhjálmsson, "Vi har ikke brug"; Vilhjálmur Örn Vilhjálmsson, "Danmark foraadte ogsaa joederne," *Berlingske Tidende*, 26 December 1998. [Danish]
  39. *Ibid.*, 358-59.
  40. Michael Mogensen, "Antisemitisme i den danske flygtningesamfund i Sverige 1943-45," in Michael Mogensen, ed., *Antisemitisme i Danmark? Arbejdsrapporter fra DCHF 5*, Dansk Center for Holocaust-og Folkedrabsstudier, 2001. [Danish]
  41. "Maerkedag: Auschwitz-dag moedt af kritik," *Jyllands-Posten*, 25 January 2003. [Danish]
  42. "Vi mangler graatonerne," interview with Hans Kirchhoff, *Weekendavisen*, 14 December 2001. [Danish]
  43. Udgiverselskabet for Nyere Tids Historie.
  44. Knud J. V. Jespersen and Thomas Pedersen, eds., *Besaettelsen i perspektiv: Bidrag til konference om besaettelsen 1940-1945* (Odense: Odense Universitetsforlag, 1995) [Danish]. The quotation is from an article by Prof. Aage Trommer, "Hvad har vi naet og hvad mangler vi?"
  45. Miriam Katz, "Forskere vil bevilge penge til sig selv," 15 February 2000, "Holocaustcenter er gaet i taenkeboks," 16 February 2000, *Berlingske Tidende*. [Danish]
  46. See: [www.sweden.se/templates/cs/BasicFactsheet\\_4198.aspx#1](http://www.sweden.se/templates/cs/BasicFactsheet_4198.aspx#1).
  47. Hans Sode-Madsen, *Reddet fra Hitlers helvede: Danmark og de Hvide Busser 1941-45* (Copenhagen: Aschehoug, 2005). [Danish]
  48. Bent Blüdnikow, "Theresienstadt-delegationen stod paa taersklen til helvedet," *Berlingske Tidende*, 10 September 2005 [Danish]; Joergen H. Barfod, "Bogannmeldelser: Beretningen om de danske KZ-fanger," *FV: Frihedskampens Veteraner*, 183, December 2005, 30-31. [Danish]

49. Letter to the editor by Hans Sode-Madsen, *Berlingske Tidende*, 27 September 2005. [Danish]
50. Ingrid Lomfors, *Blind fläck: Minne och glömska kring svenska röda korsets hjälpsats i nazityskland 1945* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2005), 51-97. [Swedish]
51. Vilhjálmsen, *Medaljens Bagside*, 282-84.
52. *Ibid.*, 220-55.
53. Vilhjálmur Örn Vilhjálmsen, "The King and the Star," in Jensen and Jensen, *Denmark and the Holocaust*, 114. See also: [www.diis.dk/graphics/CVer/Personlige\\_CVer/Holocaust\\_and\\_Genocide/Publikationer/holocaust\\_DK\\_kap\\_5.pdf](http://www.diis.dk/graphics/CVer/Personlige_CVer/Holocaust_and_Genocide/Publikationer/holocaust_DK_kap_5.pdf).
54. *Ibid.*, 111-13.
55. Danish State Archive, Copenhagen: Eigil Juel Henningsen's private archive (No. 6880): Letter from journalist Erik A. Larsen to E. J. Henningsen, 8 March 1979, E. J. Henningsen's response, 11 March 1979. [Danish]
56. Per Ulrich, *De roede enker* (n.p.: Tiden, 1982 ), 48-49. [Danish]
57. Danish State Archive, Copenhagen: Eigil Juel Henningsen's private archive (No. 6880): Frants Hvass's report of 11 July 1944, 5. [Danish]
58. Danish State Archive, Copenhagen: Eigil Juel Henningsen's private archive (No. 6880), *ibid.*; E. J. Henningsen's unpublished memoirs, 20. [Danish]
59. Ulrich, *De roede enker*, 49.
60. See: Blüdnikow, "Theresienstadt-delegationen."
61. Sode-Madsen, *Reddet fra Hitlers helvede*, 164.
62. See: Davidsen-Nielsen, Hoeiby, Danielsen, and Rubin, *Vaernet*; Uki Goñi, *The Real Odessa: How Perón Brought the Nazi War Criminals to Argentina*, rev. ed. (London: Granta, 2002).
63. Davidsen-Nielsen, Hoeiby, Danielsen, and Rubin, *ibid.*; see also: [www.users.cybercity.dk/~dko12530/hunt\\_for\\_danish\\_kz.htm](http://www.users.cybercity.dk/~dko12530/hunt_for_danish_kz.htm).
64. Blüdnikow and Vilhjálmsen, "Skeletter efter 1945."
65. David Cesarani, *Eichmann: His Life and Crimes* (London: William Heinemann, 2004), 137.
66. The entire speech was published in *Berlingske Tidende*, 5 May 2005. [Danish]
67. Interview to *Berlingske Tidende*, 1 May 2005. [Danish]
68. Uffe Oestergaard, "Denmark and the New International Politics of Morality and Remembrance," *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook 2005* [English], 67; see: [www.diis.dk/sw13006.asp](http://www.diis.dk/sw13006.asp). Oestergaard has not been willing to explain his opinion that the official apology was given after revelations made by Danish historians.
69. Oestergaard, "Denmark and the New International Politics."
70. "Amerikansk ros til Fogh," *Berlingske Tidende*, 6 May 2005. [Danish]
71. "Undskyldning er vroevl," *Berlingske Tidende*, 6 May 2005. [Danish]
72. *Ibid.*
73. Many articles in the Danish daily *Politiken* (8 May 2005) presented the apology to Jews as an apology for the participation of Danish forces in Iraq. Historian Bo Lidegaard also draws that conclusion in a press release published in *Politiken*, 10 April 2005. [Danish]
74. See the highlights of the report, *Denmark during the Cold War*, on: [www.diis.dk/graphics/Publications/Books2005/Koldkrig/KK\\_highlights2.pdf](http://www.diis.dk/graphics/Publications/Books2005/Koldkrig/KK_highlights2.pdf).
75. *Politiken*, 30 June 2005, article on its website titled "Venstrefloejen kraever undskyldning af statsministeren" [Danish]; "Den Kolde Krig: Politisk opgoer om kold krig," *Politiken*, 1 July 2005. [Danish]
76. See Vilhjálmur Örn Vilhjálmsen, "'Ich weiss, was ich zu tun habe': En kildekritisk belysning af Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz' rolle i redningen af joederne i 1943," *Rambam*, 15, 2006, 72-93 [Danish]; see: <http://postdoc.blog.is/users/3d/postdoc/files/Ducky/>

- ich\_weiss\_2244.pdf; Bo Lidegaard, *Overleveren 1914-1945*, Dansk Udenrigspolitisk Historie 4 (Copenhagen: Danmarks Nationalleksikon, 2003), 540. [Danish]
77. Gunnar S. Paulsson, "Danmarks besættelse set med fremmede øjne," *Berlingske Tidende*, 30 April 2005.
  78. Bo Lidegaard, *Kampen om Danmark* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2005), 115-16. [Danish]
  79. Lidegaard, *Overleveren 1914-1945*.
  80. *Ibid.*, 546.
  81. Hans Kirchhoff, "Forsvar for historikerne," *Politiken*, 18 May 2005.
  82. Claus Bryld, "Occupied Denmark as Mirror: Danish Attitudes to War and Occupation 55 Years after the Event," lecture presented at the seminar on European Research on Nazism, Nazi Germany and the Holocaust: State of Research and New Perspectives, Stockholm, 14-16 March 2002 (manuscript dated June 2000), 15. The article, which was originally presented at the seminar, was kindly provided by Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie in Amsterdam.
  83. *Ibid.*, 16.
  84. See Vilhjálmsson, *Medaljens Bagside*, 355; Arthur Arnheim, "Anti-Semitism after the Holocaust—Also in Denmark," *Jewish Political Studies Review*, Vol. 15, Nos. 3-4 (Fall 2003); Bent Blüdnikow, "Venstrefloej og antisemitisme," in Michael Mogensen, ed., *Antisemitisme i Danmark? Arbejdsrapporter fra DCHF 5*, Dansk Center for Holocaust- og Folkedrabsstudier, 2001, 199-36. [Danish]

Gerald Steinberg

## Finnish State Funds Support Palestinian NGO Campaigns against Israel\*

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs Development Corporation (FDC) of the Finnish government distributes governmental funds for the “promotion of global security, [a] reduction of widespread poverty [and the] promotion of human rights and democracy” in developing countries.<sup>1</sup> In 2005, the FDC disbursed over €600 million for development projects and organizations around the world.<sup>2</sup> Since 2000, the Palestinian-administered areas have been among the top sixteen recipients of Finnish development funds and have received roughly €28 million in bilateral funds from Finland overall.<sup>3</sup>

At a local level, funds destined for NGOs are channeled through the Fund for Local Cooperation, a subsection of the FDC, which functions through Finland’s embassies and Representative Offices. For the years 2003-2006, €715,000 was allocated for Palestinian development projects and organizations supported by the Finnish government and disbursed through the fund.<sup>4</sup>

### **Demonizing Israel**

Although some of the NGOs supported by the FDC perform humanitarian development work, some recipients of Finnish government funding abuse their status for political campaigning that often includes false or unverifiable claims, biased condemnations, and the demonization of Israel. These have included HaMoked, the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), the World Organization against Torture, the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group (PHRMG), and many others.

PHRMG claims to document “human rights violations committed against Palestinians...regardless of who is responsible” but also emphasizes “the need to denounce Israeli human rights abuses.”<sup>5</sup> In implementing this agenda, PHRMG criticizes the Palestinian Authority on issues such as freedom of expression, internal corruption, weapons proliferation in the territories, and civil-society issues such as honor killings.<sup>6</sup> However, the organization also pursues externally focused political and lobbying activities, exploiting human rights rhetoric to attack Israeli self-defense measures against terrorism.

For example, in a letter to the then United Nations secretary-general Kofi Annan, PHRMG quotes statistics of the number of Palestinians killed since the beginning of the intifada and accuses Israel of “violence [*sic*] to the International Humanitarian Law, which constitute war crimes.”<sup>7</sup> The letter does not

acknowledge Palestinian terror as a causative factor in IDF operations, disregards the military dilemmas posed by Palestinian terrorists operating amid civilians in an urban environment, and makes no mention of Israeli victims. In another press release, PHRMG also “laments” the “assassination” of Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, in part because of his “moderation” within the movement.<sup>8</sup> The statement goes on to promote the Palestinian narrative, asserting that: “Assassination is an internationally condemned action, violating several human right laws.... Violence begets more violence, and Hamas has stated that retaliation attacks will follow. By such acts of violence, Israel is bringing disaster to its own people.”

The declared mission of another FDC-supported NGO, the International Center of Bethlehem (ICB), is to promote the building of Palestinian civil society by “equipping the local community to assume a proactive role in shaping their future..., cultivating artistic talents, and facilitating intercultural encounters.”<sup>9</sup> In reality, the center also engages in political activities and promotes Sabeel, a radical NGO that supports the “one-state solution,” employs classical anti-Semitic theological themes,<sup>10</sup> and has been very active in promoting the anti-Israeli divestment campaign. The head of Sabeel, Rev. Naim Ateek, was on a panel of an ICB conference titled “Shaping Communities in Times of Crisis: Narratives of Land, Peoples and Identities” in November 2005.<sup>11</sup>

ICB’s activities include a letter to U.S. Senator Hillary Clinton calling on her to reconsider her support for the Israeli security fence.<sup>12</sup> The letter argues that to justify the fence as a defense against terrorism is “offensive” and states that “the Wall is less about security than it is about colonizing land and controlling its indigenous population.” The NGO claims that the fence renders Bethlehem an open-air prison and “is illegal and violates our rights to land, jobs, family, free movement, dignity, and self-determination,” again erasing the context of terror. In this way ICB, using Finnish government funds, contributes to the NGO network campaign to brand Israeli antiterror measures as illegitimate.

### **Promoting Hatred**

World Vision-Finland, directly funded by the FDC and a global partner of World Vision International, is a Christian relief and development organization that “through emergency relief, education, health care, economic development and promotion of justice...helps communities help themselves.”<sup>13</sup> World Vision does indeed carry out positive humanitarian work in Palestinian society, implementing vocational training programs and providing health care for malnourished children.<sup>14</sup> However, the World Vision regional webpage is highly politicized and blames Israel for social problems within the West Bank and Gaza, as documented in detail by NGO Monitor.<sup>15</sup>

In November 2007, the World Vision representative in Geneva, Thomas Getman, spoke at an event marking the sixtieth anniversary of UN Resolution 181,

which called for the creation of two states, one Arab and one Jewish. According to UN Watch, Getman “sought to promote hatred of Israel among the delegates.” His speech failed to mention ongoing Palestinian terrorist and missile attacks against Israel, and he used highly manipulative, emotionally charged rhetoric. He called on his audience to think about “that suffering child that first crossed our path in Palestine” and made only passing reference to the situation of Israeli children subject to mass terror attacks.

UN Watch noted that in 2006, during a UN debate on Syrian human rights violations, Getman published an open letter siding with Syria. World Vision also released a statement at the inaugural session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in June 2006 that exploited the suffering of Palestinian children to launch a political attack on Israel.<sup>16</sup>

### **The Accountability Gap**

In 2006, the FDC gave €900,000 to KIOS, a Finnish foundation claiming to “promote human rights in developing countries.”<sup>17</sup> KIOS supports four NGOs in the region: the Public Committee against Torture in Israel (PCATI), the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), and the Jerusalem Center for Social and Economic Rights (JCSER). ACRI is a highly controversial NGO that campaigns among the Israeli population in support of the Palestinian narrative. Finnish government funding for this politicized Israeli NGO, and for others such as Machsom Watch, constitutes a blatant and patronizing effort to manipulate Israeli democracy.

In 2001, KIOS joined with the highly politicized ICJ and Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) when it awarded a grant of 20,000 FIM (\$4,140) to PCHR to carry out a joint fact-finding mission in the Palestinian territories “in order to make an independent, objective and expert assessment of the human rights situation on the ground.”<sup>18</sup> PCHR regularly uses the language of demonization and exploits legal terminology in its allegations of Israeli human rights abuses. For example, in a memorandum submitted to the consul-generals of the European Union in April 2004, PCHR claimed that “the Israeli military has continued to commit grave breaches of the Convention, namely war crimes, which include but are not restricted to: willful killings; torture or inhuman treatment...”<sup>19</sup> The FDC’s support of PCHR is inconsistent with the proclaimed goal of using development funding to promote “greater prosperity...political stability and security” and “reduce[e] the threat of crisis and war.”<sup>20</sup>

KIOS also provides funding for JCSER, an NGO that uses rhetoric of apartheid and accuses Israel of “ethnic cleansing.”<sup>21</sup> The example of JCSER highlights the accountability gap when governments channel development funding via NGOs such as KIOS. The FDC is the sole source of income for KIOS, which acts as an independent NGO and awards grants entirely at the

discretion of its board (which includes representatives from Amnesty International and UNICEF).<sup>22</sup> As a result, the FDC's ability to supervise the activities of organizations that receive government money is very limited.

The NGO calling itself "Psychologists for Social Responsibility" (PSR), based in Washington, DC, is also funded directly by the FDC. Its mission, it states, is to "facilitate positive changes for victims and survivors of personal, community, and civil violence" but its actions are often political, and it is far removed from the region. For example, PSR has lobbied President Bush "to rethink America's stand on missile defense and to reconsider the sale of Apache Attack helicopters to Israel."<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, this NGO has joined and supported the political campaign to exaggerate the effects of sonic booms caused by Israeli aircraft attempting to disrupt Palestinian missile attacks from Gaza, while ignoring the attacks on Israeli civilians.<sup>24</sup>

Another organization supported by the FDC is the Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA), whose work includes lectures to international study groups presenting a revisionist history of Jerusalem, reports on "Israeli Occupation Policies" devoid of any reference to Palestinian terror,<sup>25</sup> and support of the Boycott Israeli Goods (BIG) campaign.<sup>26</sup> These activities are outside the terms set by the Finnish Representative Office for its development funds, which state that "aid is directed towards improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people and reforming the Palestinian administration."<sup>27</sup>

In summary, while some of the NGOs supported by the FDC *do* carry out valuable development work in Palestinian society, there are a number of organizations that receive money from Finland whose work is inconsistent with the official goals. Such NGOs also contribute to misinformation and hostile and rejectionist attitudes toward the state of Israel among the international media, diplomatic, and development-organization communities.

## Notes

\* Information for this report was provided by the Finnish Representative Office in Ramallah. The NGO Monitor research team contributed to the analysis presented.

1. Global Finland—Ministry for Foreign Affairs Development Corporation.
2. "Finland's Official Development Assistance in Statistics," Global Finland.
3. Representative Office of Finland, Ramallah.
4. *Ibid.*
5. "State of Human Rights in Palestine," Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group (PHRMG).
6. See "The Chaos of Corruption: Challenges for the Improvement of the Palestinian Society," "The 'Intra'fada," and "The State of Human Rights in Palestine."
7. "An Open Letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Mr. Kofi Annan," 12 September 2005, Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group.
8. "PHRMG Condemns the Assassination of Hamas Spiritual Leader, Ahmed Yassin," 22 March 2004, Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group.

9. See “The International Center of Bethlehem” and “About the International Center of Bethlehem.”
10. NGO Monitor’s Submission to the Parliamentary Committee against Antisemitism, 27 December 2005 (pdf).
11. “Shaping Communities in Times of Crisis: Narratives of Land, Peoples and Identities,” 6-12 November 2005, ICB.
12. A letter to Senator Rodham Clinton from Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb, ICB. Note that Sarah Leah Whitson of HRW sent a similar letter to Senator Clinton.
13. “Who We Are,” World Vision International.
14. See “Jerusalem-West Bank-Gaza—Country Profile,” WorldVision International.
15. World Vision International, NGO Monitor Infofile.
16. [www.ngo-monitor.org/article/world\\_vision\\_representative\\_in\\_un\\_geneva\\_promoting\\_hatred\\_of\\_israel\\_](http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/world_vision_representative_in_un_geneva_promoting_hatred_of_israel_).
17. “A Brief History of KIOS,” KIOS—The Finnish NGO Foundation for Human Rights.
18. “Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, Human Rights Monitoring,” grant awarded in 2001 for “A joint fact finding mission of FIDH, the ICJ and the EMHRN to visit Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories in order to make an independent, objective and expert assessment of the human rights situation on the ground. Approved 20,000 FIM to a fact finding mission.”
19. “The EU’s Failure to Act: Israeli Violations of International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law in the OPTs,” April 2004, PCHR (pdf).
20. “Decision [*sic*]-in-Principle on Finland’s Development Cooperation,” Department for International Development Cooperation.
21. “Annual Report 2000,” JC SER.
22. “A Brief History of KIOS,” KIOS—The Finnish NGO Foundation for Human Rights. This information was confirmed in a telephone conversation with KIOS.
23. “Global Violence and Security Action Committee,” Psychologists for Social Responsibility.
24. See “Psychologists for Social Responsibility Launch Campaign against Israel for Engaging in Psychological Warfare against Palestinians—Protest to White House: SPME Responds,” 16 November 2005 (pdf), and *NGO Monitor Digest*, Vol. 4, No. 4, December 2005.
25. See “The Question of Jerusalem,” 10 July 2000, PASSIA, and “Israeli Occupation Policies,” PASSIA (pdf).
26. “Boycott Israeli Goods,” Zaytoun Olive Oil.
27. See “Palestinian Territories,” Representative Office of Finland, Ramallah, and “Boycott Israeli Goods.”

## An Interview with Serah Beizer

### Finland's Tarnished Holocaust Record\*

“A few years ago, it became known that Finland had handed over Soviet prisoners of war—among them a number of Jews—to the Germans during World War II. Finland's wartime past regarding the Jews is worse than usually portrayed. Until then, it had the reputation of a country that protected all its Jews except for eight Central European Jewish refugees who were handed over in November 1942 to the Gestapo in Estonia. Seven of them perished in concentration camps.

“Almost fifty-eight years after the deportation, in 2000, a monument to their memory was set up in Helsinki harbor. The then prime minister, Paavo Lipponen, apologized to the Jewish community. It also took until 2000 for the Evangelical Lutheran Church to make an official statement on this matter. This text, approved by its synod, stated: ‘The church admits to having remained silent about the persecution of the Jews and wishes to apologize to the Jewish community for this.... The handover, even of one single Jew was a sin...more instruction on Judaism and the common roots of Judaism and Christianity...should be given in the parishes.’ The church also declared that Luther's attitude toward Judaism ‘should be reexamined.’”

Serah Beizer, a part-time researcher on the history of the Jews in Finland and the fate of Jewish POWs in World War II, is affiliated with the Yad Vashem International School for Holocaust Studies and works as the coordinator of the Jewish Agency Resource Center. Her MA thesis at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem was on the Hehalutz (pioneering-Zionist) movement in Sweden during World War II.

She points out that Finland is a country where, until today, very few foreigners live and that its language is an extremely difficult one, inaccessible to most foreign readers. Beizer cites this as one major reason why Finland's wartime misbehavior is not publicly known.

#### **Elina Sana's Research**

“The initial information about the eight Jewish refugees extradited to the Gestapo was documented by the Finnish author Elina Suominen (Sana) in her 1979 book *Death Ship S/S Hohenhorn*.<sup>1</sup> This German ship took the refugees to be handed over to the German-occupied Tallinn in Estonia. For her research she examined German archives as well as those of the Red Cross in Switzerland. It has since become known that more Jewish refugees were handed over to the Gestapo during the war.

“Sana found the sole Jewish survivor, Mr. Georg Kollman, in Israel. From him she heard that the eight refugees had ended up in Auschwitz. Sana went to Auschwitz and asked to see lists of inmates, but was told that the data were not organized. She insisted and within a few days the administration found the list with the names of the refugees who in November 1942 had been deported from Finland.

“When Sana published what had happened to the refugees and an interview with Kollman’s brother, who lived in Finland, the response from Finnish historians was very critical. They countered that she was a journalist and her work lacked footnotes. On that point they were right, but she cites her sources at the end of the book and I have not yet read one critic who has properly confronted her facts.

“Before the war, mainly in 1938, some five hundred Jewish refugees passed through Finland, most of them continuing elsewhere. Thereafter the Finnish authorities refused to accept any more. Sylvi-Kyllikki Kilpi, a member of the Finnish parliament and active on behalf of the refugees, heard that the reason was that ‘there are anyway more than enough Jewish refugees’ in Finland. In late August 1938, Jewish refugees on the ship *Adriane* were sent back to the harbor of Stettin in Germany, which is now Szczecin in Poland.”

### **Finland’s Wartime Deportations to Nazi Germany**

“Sana revealed in 2003 in another book that some three thousand non-Finnish citizens—POWs—were handed over to the German army, security service, and secret police or Gestapo. In that book, *The Extradited: Finland’s Extraditions to the Gestapo*, she speculated that many of the approximately five hundred so-called political prisoners may have been Jews.<sup>2</sup> Her book was awarded the prestigious Tieto-Finlandia Prize for nonfiction.

“Sana claims that the handing over was a systematic practice of both the Finnish police and the military. Part of the deportations was a population exchange: the Finns were interested to receive Finnish-related POWs and citizens so as to settle them in Eastern Karelia, and in return, the Germans received POWs captured by Finland. After the war, Valpo, the Finnish national police force, destroyed large parts of its archives. Nevertheless, Sana, in other archives in Finland and Germany, managed to find documents that directly involved Valpo head Arno Anthoni and Gestapo chief Heinrich Müller.

“When the transfer of Soviet POWs to the Gestapo became known, Efraim Zuroff, director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Israel, wrote a letter to the president of Finland, Tarja Halonen, requesting information on the deportation of Jews from Finland to Germany during the war:

I am writing to you in the wake of recent revelations by Finnish researcher Elina Sana, that Finland turned over approximately three thousand foreigners

to Nazi Germany during World War II, among them a considerable number of political officers of the Red Army and Soviet Jewish prisoners of war. They were thereby, in effect, sentenced to almost certain death.... I am certain that you would agree that such revelations require a forthright response by the Finnish authorities and appropriate measures to acknowledge the wrongdoing and if possible, hold those responsible accountable for their misdeeds.

“Surprisingly, within twenty-four hours President Halonen replied: ‘I accept your letter and I have appointed a professor at Helsinki University to prepare for me a portfolio on the subject and we will indeed do research on the subject.’ The professor in question is the legal historian, Prof. Emeritus Heikki Ylikangas.”<sup>3</sup>

### **Historical Background**

Serah Beizer underlines that Finland’s wartime background is a very singular one. Understanding it requires going back in history. “Until 1809 Finland was under Swedish rule. Then it became an autonomy called the Grand Duchy of Finland, and as such part of Russia. In 1812, the Finnish capital was moved from Turku on the western coast close to the Swedish sphere of influence, to Helsinki, much closer to St. Petersburg, then the Russian capital. The Russians saw Finland’s strategic role as guarding their capital.

“The first Jews came to Finland during the nineteenth century. One often hears that these were so-called cantonists, young Jewish boys forcefully conscripted to military service at an early age and, starting when they were eighteen, made to serve twenty-five years in the army. These boys had to be stripped of their religious and national identity. That only pertains, however, to a few of the early Finnish Jews. Most were soldiers, drafted during the reign of Tsar Nikolai I, who were based in Finland and in 1858, as discharged soldiers, were allowed to stay in Finland. They were known as ‘Nikolai’s soldiers.’

“In 1917, the Finnish parliament declared independence. Lenin and his government, who by then were in power in the Soviet Union, announced their agreement. Thus on 6 December 1917, the Republic of Finland was born. One of the first things the Finnish parliament decided was to give the Jews citizenship. It was the penultimate country in Europe—before Romania—to do so. The Finns claim they were not independent before, and hence could not have given the Jews citizenship. The truth is rather different. Already in the nineteenth century, there were bitter debates on the issue and hard-line positions against granting the Jews citizenship. Opponents said they did not want Polish or Russian Jews but would accept Western ones.

“Finnish independence was followed by a civil war between the Reds, backed by Russia, and the Whites, backed by Germany. The war involved a contest between Russia and Germany over spheres of interest. Only in the 1920s could Finland begin building itself as a modern independent state.

“In the 1930s, like elsewhere in Europe, several right-wing parties emerged. These published a great deal of anti-Semitic material. In 2006, Jari Hanski's doctoral thesis was published analyzing the anti-Semitic writings in Finland in that period. The author read 433 Finnish periodicals and textbooks covering the years 1918-1944, and concluded that 16.4 percent of them contained at least one instance of anti-Semitism.

“He remarked: ‘One can see a distinct foreign and especially German influence in the subjects and phraseology of Finnish anti-Semitic writings from 1918 to 1944. Several known Finnish anti-Semitic writers had some kind of link with Germany. [The Germans’] effect [on the Finns] can also be seen in the quantity of writing, as there was a peak in Finnish [anti-Semitic] writings in 1933. There was, however, nothing in the Finnish material that openly encouraged violence against Jews.’”<sup>4</sup>

### **The 1939 War with Russia**

“In autumn 1939, the USSR attacked Finland in what has become known as the Winter War. It lasted from 30 November 1939 to 13 March 1940. Most of the fighting occurred on the Karelian Isthmus, a territory between Finland and Russia that the Finns considered Finnish. Although the Russians fought with all their power, Finland, which fought alone, held out very well. But in the peace treaty concluded in March 1940, it had to cede Karelia.

“Finland was now looking for German help. There had already been many visits to Germany by Finnish politicians, military leaders, and the secret police before the war. On 22 June 1941, Germany attacked the Soviet Union through Finnish territory. Four days later Finland was bombed by the Russians and entered what would become known as the Continuation War. It lasted from 25 June 1941 to 19 September 1944.

“After an initial advance by the Germans and the Finns until December 1941, there followed a long period of stalemate. After months of tough fighting in summer and autumn 1944, the war ended. Thereafter a third war, in 1944-1945, was fought by the Finns against the Germans, their aim being to drive the Germans out of Lapland and remain independent.

“Late in 2006, the Finnish attitude during the Continuation War again became the subject of controversy. The Swedish journalist Henrik Arnstad, in a book about the Swedish wartime foreign minister Christian Günther, claims that Finland has lied about its relationship with Germany during that war. He wrote that Finland was the only Western democracy that voluntarily joined forces with Nazi Germany and is keeping quiet about it.

“Arnstad's book was criticized by Pertti Torstila, secretary of state in the Finnish Foreign Ministry. He argued that the Swedish author lacked historical perspective. Arnstad reacted by saying it was highly unusual that a foreign ministry would attack a foreign author.<sup>5</sup>

“The earlier-mentioned Finnish professor emeritus Heikki Ylikangas gave an important lecture in October 2004 titled, ‘What if We Were to Take the Skeletons out of the Closet?’ He observed: ‘The writing of history is always an interpretation of what happened, nothing more.... Why did our writing of history circumvent the transfers of people to Germany?’ Ylikangas claims that, first, many war veterans are still alive and the memory of the ninety thousand war fatalities has to be honored; second, history-writing since the war has largely been a continuation of the sort of research conducted shortly after the war.

“Ylikangas notes: ‘researchers in history are more or less tied up with [political] power. They cannot just break away and write history that argues against the line adopted at the beginning. Almost everyone...has to make certain compromises because of pressures from society and conclusions drawn about the topic they are researching.’ Ylikangas, for his part, maintains that Finland was not an ally of Germany but was dependent on it. I think the writing of history would be more objective and meaningful with more historians such as Heikki Ylikangas.”<sup>6</sup>

Serah Beizer points out that the Swedes also have skeletons in their closet. “Their neutrality during World War II has rightfully been challenged. In 1989, two Dutch historians, Gerard Aalders and Cees Wiebes, published a book accusing banks and companies in Sweden of collaboration and cooperation with Nazi Germany. Recently, two new books were published in Sweden about the Swedish king Gustaf V during the war. In an October 1941 letter from Gustaf V to Hitler, addressed to ‘Mein Lieber Reichskanzler,’ the king thanks Hitler warmly for having decided to attack Bolshevism everywhere.”<sup>7</sup>

## **An Unwritten Agreement**

“When the Finns fought together with the Germans, the latter did not touch the Jews who served in the Finnish army. There was an unwritten agreement about that. The Germans knew that in the Scandinavian countries, when one is a citizen, one belongs. The Finns treated the Jews who were of their nationality equally during the war. The Jewish soldiers found themselves in a position where they were fighting on the side of Germany, even if they did not fight together with the Germans. A film titled *David* documents the experiences of these soldiers.<sup>8</sup> The refugees, however, were unsafe; this was even worse if one was a Russian POW.

“It seems that in the latter half of 1942, the Germans began insisting that Finnish Jews be handed over to them. The Finns, in order not to do so, replied that they would raise the matter in parliament, which they did not convene for a few months.

“These were bloody wars. At the time Finland had a population of slightly over four million, and as mentioned, ninety thousand of its soldiers were killed.

Jews served in all these wars. On a personal note, my father fought on the Finnish side, against my husband's father, who was from Leningrad."

### **Maltreatment of Prisoners of War**

Serah Beizer observes: "Finnish historians have devoted very little attention to the issue of the POWs. Testimonies and a documentary film titled *A Heaven for POWs*, made by Finnish television about what happened to the Jewish POWs, suggest that they were treated better than the others captured by the Finns. Considering the case of the seventy or more Jews handed over to the Gestapo, this is an unrepresentative picture.

"Finland captured sixty-four thousand Russian prisoners in the Continuation War. Twenty-nine percent died in Finnish POW camps. This is an extremely high percentage, surpassed in Europe only by the number of Soviet POWs who died in German camps and of German POWs in the hands of the Soviets. In Lapland there was much cooperation between Germans, Norwegians working for the Germans, and the Finns. POWs captured there often say that the Finns were the worst of the three.

"The high number of POW deaths became known only more than forty years after the war, when the Finnish journalist Eino Pietola published a book on the POW issue in 1987.<sup>9</sup> He felt he could no longer remain silent after reading a newspaper article that claimed it was well known that Finland had in no way mistreated its POWs, and none were killed. Pietola came under severe criticism from historians who said he was not an academic and did not give footnotes. Yet we now know that he was right."

### **The Follow-Up to Zuroff's Letter**

Serah Beizer returns to the Finnish follow-up to the Zuroff letter. "Prof. Ylikangas confirmed many facts Pietola had written. There had indeed been sixty-four thousand POWs. Twenty-nine percent of them indeed died in Finnish concentration camps. There is some argument about the number of those transferred to the Germans.

"Some historians say 'only' two thousand were handed over, while others give a figure of 2,500. Several historians claim that those handed over were all Bolsheviks and hence should be considered political prisoners.

"Since then, a commission has been appointed to investigate the subject and is scheduled to work until 2008. It received a budget of some 2 million euros. At least six researchers are currently engaged in this project, working in an old building belonging to the national archives in central Helsinki. Although this is positive, it has come rather late. Most surviving POWs are very old, having been captured sixty-two to sixty-four years ago, and the research is mostly archival

work and much less based on interviews. However, some other countries have not even done this much.”

### **The Deported Jews**

“Finding out about the Jews is not easy. Those Finns who interrogated the Soviet soldiers during the Continuation War found that there were eighty-nine different ethnicities in the Red Army. Many Jews called themselves Russian, White Russian, and so on because they wanted to hide their Jewishness, as the Finns were allies of the Germans. The Jewish POWs who fought directly against the Germans remained alive only if they lied about their ethnicity, claiming to be Russians or Ukrainians.

“I have heard from these Finns that one soldier who was handed over to the Germans named Vladimir Borisovitch Levin was not Jewish but Russian. That was what he officially claimed to be. I had a very moving interview with a Jewish POW, Mr. Abram Bakman, who lives near Beersheba. Having been wounded in the war, he was taken to a Finnish military hospital. When asked about his ethnicity, he said he was Jewish. The Finnish interrogator who received him was stunned and told him he was the first Jew he had ever seen.

“Bakman saw two other Jews before him and felt he had been a fool to say he was a Jew. I went to the archives, and indeed three or four names before his there are other Jewish names. These were the people Bakman had seen.”

### **At Least Seventy Jews Handed Over to the Gestapo**

Serah Beizer says: “I suppose, on the basis of my research, that some five hundred to six hundred Jewish soldiers were captured by the Finns of whom at least seventy were transferred to the Gestapo. The historians’ claim is that these people were not handed over to the Germans because they were Jews but as political prisoners. However, among these Jews were barbers, carpenters, a photographer, postal workers, a decorator, and a musician. These are not the sorts of people you turn into political commissars. At least eighteen of the Jews handed over were under age twenty-five, which also makes it unlikely that they were political commissars or agitators.

“At the War Archives in Helsinki, I examined lists of POWs handed over to the SS. The first time this happened was in October 1941 in the northern town of Salla. These included a twenty-eight-year-old barber and ‘agitator’ Zalman Kuznetsov, a professor of Marxism-Leninism named Alexandr Malkis, and a tailor and ‘agitator’ Haim Osherovitch Lev, as well as four other Jews. On 4 March 1942, at least seventeen of the sixty prisoners handed over were Jews. This is a very high percentage if one takes into account that Jews were about 1 percent of all Russian POWs.

“In 2004, Jukka Lindstedt, a doctor of law, wrote an article about the

transfer of Jewish POWs claiming that forty-seven Jews were handed over to the Gestapo.<sup>10</sup> This was at the very beginning of the commission's work, while Lindstedt headed it. He later resigned after being appointed to another important position and was replaced by the historian Dr. Lars Westerlund. Lindstedt says thirty-three of them were officers. Jews often had academic degrees and were drafted after completing their studies. These Red Army officers were not all what would be called military commanders. Neither could they all have been political prisoners/communists/agitators.

"In Finland where Bolshevism was hated, no one asked if it was proper to hand over communists to the Nazis. It was, however, against international law. In the modern Finnish mind, it is still acceptable to have handed over Bolsheviks. I have little doubt that the Finnish authorities who themselves extradited Jews to the Germans were fully aware at the time what their fate would be.

"The lists of those handed over to the German authorities include people with obviously Jewish names whom the researchers, and especially Lindstedt, consider non-Jews. Some examples are: Josef Jakovlevitsh Kirshbaum, Semjon Isakovitsh Kuper, Naum Borisovitsh Smoljak, and Grigory Jakovlevitsh Slisinger.

"Even today, the commission maintains that the Jews were not handed over because they were Jews. As they cannot find out what happened to POWs, nobody can prove that they were killed. So this part of Jewish war history remains very unclear."

### **Finland Needs a Truth Commission**

"Elina Sana says Finland needs a truth commission. It needs to learn from its mistakes. The present commission employs excellent researchers, generates a lot of information, but reveals very little. The Data Protection Board of Finland, to which the commission is obliged to turn in matters of publication, decided that 'in order to protect the privacy of the registered [person],... action has to be taken so that data on a certain individual shall not be revealed to outsiders.' The data on POWs extradited sixty to sixty-five years ago will thus not be published.

"An important issue is how high the Finnish responsibility for the transfer of the POWs goes. It is documented that Field Marshall Carl Gustav Mannerheim, the Finnish wartime chief of staff, who in 1944 became president, knew about the exchange of POWs between the Finns and the Germans. Here one is on very sensitive territory because Mannerheim is a sacred name in Finland, remembered by everybody only in positive terms.

"Mannerheim had refused to attack St. Petersburg together with the Germans." In Serah Beizer's view: "Thus, paying off the Germans with a few thousand POWs was small change for him. I am quite sure that he knew about the POW exchanges. We have found documents that indicate this, but this matter the Finns will never touch, even if it would constitute the truth."

## Concentrating Jewish Prisoners of War

Beizer adds: “There is another matter that raises great suspicion. At the end of 1942, Jewish POWs were concentrated at a location in central Finland, in work camps close to the Second Central POW camp in Naarajärvi. This might have been to protect them. In Sana’s opinion, however, it was to prepare them for transfer to the Nazis. This did not happen because Mannerheim and his inner circle had decided already by autumn 1942 that Germany was going to lose the war. Hence they considered it was not worthwhile to create problems about the Jews.

“Mannerheim was a highly intelligent person. This was evident when, in 1944, he went to the Helsinki synagogue to show his appreciation for the Jewish community that fought together with the other Finns against the Russians.

“The Finns were very lucky that the Soviets, after the war, did not want to find out too much about their POWs. The Russians are still not interested. One cannot freely visit their archives to find out what happened to their captured soldiers.

“There was little punishment for war criminals in Finland. After the war the Finns were forced to put eight senior politicians on trial, but this was a quite random exercise. For instance, the Russians insisted on the Social Democrat, former foreign minister Väino Tanner being brought to trial and he was given a prison sentence. Many others, including the pro-Nazi Toivo Horelli, who was interior minister during the beginning of the war, were not touched. This was despite the fact that he was the person who decided to hand over the Jewish refugees. It seems that much of Finland’s tarnished war record will never be revealed.”

## Notes

- \* Translations from Finnish and Swedish to English are by Serah Beizer.
- 1. Elina Suominen, *Kuoleman laiva s/s Hohenhörn* (Death Ship S/S Hohenhörn) (Helsinki: WSOY, 1979) [Finnish]. She later changed her surname to Sana.
- 2. Elina Sana, *Luovutetut: Suomen ihmislouvutukset Gestapolle* (The Extradited: Finland’s Extraditions to the Gestapo) (Helsinki: WSOY, 2003). [Finnish]
- 3. The story of this exchange was covered by the press in Finland and Russia and also by the Associated Press.
- 4. Jari Hanski, *Juutalaisvastaisuus suomalaisissa aikakauslehdissä ja kirjallisuudessa 1918-1944* (Opposition to Jews in the Finnish Press and Literature, 1918-1944), doctoral dissertation, Helsinki University, 2006. [Finnish]
- 5. “Finns Resentful over Swedish Author’s Claims of Nazi Sympathies in War,” *Helsingin Sanomat International Edition*, 4 December 2006.
- 6. Heikki Ylikangas, “What if We Were to Take the Skeletons out of the Closet?” lecture presented in Helsinki, October 2004.
- 7. See “Tillgivet brev från kungen till Hitler,” *Göteborgs-Posten*, 18 September 2006, 32. [Swedish]
- 8. *David: Stories of Honour and Shame*, short film produced by Lasse Saarinen, Real Productions, Helsinki, 1997.

9. Eino Pietola, *Sotavangit Suomessa 1941-1944* (The POWs in Finland 1941-1944) (Jyväskylä: Gummerus, 1987) [Finnish]. See the new database by the commission: <http://kronos.narc.fi>.
10. Jukka Lindstedt, "Juutalaisten sotavankien luovutukset" (The Extradition of Jewish Prisoners of War), *Historiallinen Aikakausikirja*, 2 (2004): 144-65. [Finnish]

## Additional Sources

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### *English*

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Vilhjálmur Örn Vilhjálmsson

## Iceland, the Jews, and Anti-Semitism, 1625-2004\*

### **Vikings and Jews**

For nearly 1100 years, Iceland—a rather large island in the North Atlantic with only one religion and one people, who allegedly descended from chieftains and kings in Norway—was a country without minorities. Thanks to archeology and anthropology, we now know that the first settlers, who arrived in Iceland at the end of the ninth century, derived from different locations in Scandinavia and the northern British Isles. They were descended from a more heterogeneous group than the selection of noblemen from southwest Norway who authors of the medieval Icelandic *Sagas*, and other books, tried to convince themselves and others were their ancestry.<sup>1</sup>

A poor society of farmers inhabited this isolated island. The settlements consisted of scattered farms, and there were no towns or urban settlements. Losing their independence to Norwegian rule in the mid-thirteenth century, then becoming a Danish colony in the fifteenth century, the inhabitants tried their best to survive under harsh conditions. Natural catastrophes such as volcanic eruptions and soil erosion, followed by famines and plagues, made life even more difficult and the population was often on the brink of extinction. A Jewish community in the European sense would never have been possible in Iceland before the nineteenth century, and even then it was absent. It was not until the 1930s that Jewish refugees started arriving in Iceland, and Icelanders began encountering Jews in the flesh. They were called Gyðingar, and most Icelanders only knew them from the Bible. In a country whose language has remained nearly the same for centuries, most foreign terms have been substituted with an Icelandic word. The word Gyðingar, which has existed in the language since the eleventh century, has been the most widely used term for Jews in the Icelandic language, and is actually a diminutive form of the word Guð (God). The monks who wrote the Icelandic *Sagas* probably invented this word for the Chosen People. They even wrote a *Gyðinga Saga*, the Saga of the Jews, a colloquium of translations from the *First Book of Maccabees* and fragments from the writings of Flavius Josephus.<sup>2</sup>

The word Júði (plur. Júðar) was another word for Jews in the Icelandic language, deriving from the “south Germanic” languages. In the seventeenth century, both forms were given a negative connotation in Icelandic religious poetry. The Passion Psalms (Passíusálmur) were composed by the clergyman

Hallgrímur Pétursson (1616-1674). There are fifty hymns in all, and Júðar and Gyðingar are mentioned at least fifty times and only for their perfidy, falseness, wickedness, and other malice. These hymns were, of course, written in the spirit of the day and reflected the contemporary trends in the religious poetry of Northern Europe. A typical passage is:

The righteous Law of Moses  
The Jews here misapplied,  
Which their deceit exposes,  
Their hatred and their pride.  
The judgment is the Lord's.  
When by falsification  
The foe makes accusation,  
It's His to make awards.<sup>3</sup>

The very first documented information about a Jew in Iceland dates from the mid-1620s. Actually, the first Jew in Iceland was no longer a Jew when he arrived; he had converted to Christianity in Our Lady's Church in Copenhagen in the presence of the chancellor and the State Council. In 1620, Daniel Salomon was baptized and his name changed to Johannes Salomon. Having been a poor Jew from Poland, the baptism gained him a career and respect. Later, in 1625, he received six rixdollars (equaling thirty marks in 1625) to travel "up to Iceland."<sup>4</sup> What he was supposed to do there, and how well he managed, we do not know.

In 1704, Jacob Franco, a Dutch Jew of Portuguese origin who had been allowed to settle in Copenhagen, was appointed to prepare and export all the tobacco that was to be sold to merchants in Iceland and on the Faeroe Isles. In 1710, Abraham Levin and his companion Abraham Cantor of Copenhagen were given similar responsibilities. Isak, the son of Abraham Cantor, held these same responsibilities from 1731.<sup>5</sup>

In 1815 the first "Jewish ship," the *Ulricha*, arrived in Iceland.<sup>6</sup> It was rented by a merchant, Ruben Moses Henriques of Copenhagen, who sold all sorts of fabrics, hats, and paper at a small trading post in North Iceland.<sup>7</sup>

In 1853, the Icelandic parliament, the Althing (Alþingi), rejected a request by the Danish king for an implementation of the law of 5 April 1850 on "The access for Foreign Jews to reside here in the State." The Danish law was not found suitable for Iceland. Two years later, the Icelandic parliament suddenly changed its position and announced to the king that the legislation should also apply to Iceland and that Danish Jews as well as foreign ones were welcome. In its letter to the king, the Althing explained its change of mind by the fact that the Jews were enterprising merchants who did not try to lure others to their religion. As far as we know, no Jews, either Danish or foreign, accepted this offer to settle in Iceland.<sup>8</sup>

In the nineteenth century there were very few Jews in Iceland; they were probably outnumbered by anti-Semites. One of the anti-Semites was the first president of the University of Iceland, Prof. Björn M. Ólsen (1850-1919). As

a young scholar at the University of Copenhagen, he submitted an essay to an Icelandic journal called *Þjóðólfur* (*Thyotholfer*), the first periodical in Iceland. In it he wrote about a trading firm in the county of Húnavatnssýsla in North Iceland, which he referred to as the “Jewish congregation of merchants.” He commented: “It is noteworthy that this firm has chosen a Hebrew name, and the Jewishness radiates from all of their activities....This firm wears various disguises, but Jews are always easily recognizable by their voice.” Ólsen refers to this essay in a letter to an Icelandic professor in Cambridge, Eiríkur Magnússon: “I have, between ourselves, written an essay on a trading company in the county of Húnavatnssýsla, which I can imagine the Danish merchants will not be happy to read. I am interested in the company and their activities because I descend from Húnavatnssýsla. The essay will be distributed for free back home and is now in print.”<sup>9</sup> The “Jewish merchants” whom Ólsen wrote about were, however, no more Jewish than he himself was.

There were also some nineteenth-century Icelandic cosmopolitans who wrote favorably about Jews. The poet Benedikt Gröndal stayed for nine years in the house of the Hartvigsen (Hartvigsohn) family in Copenhagen and had a pleasant time. He wrote: “The food is precisely like the food of the Christians, but they never ate any other meat than that prepared by a Jewish butcher. One is not allowed to fry in butter, but in some different form of fat.” The poet and prefect Bjarni Thorarensen (1786-1841) was also an outspoken philo-Semite. He wrote to his countryman in Denmark, Prof. Finnur Magnússon (1781-1847): “It is good that the Greeks become independent, although they are, and always have been scoundrels, because Europe has much to thank this nation for. But I say that the entire world has more reason to be grateful to the Jews.” Thorarensen went on to quote the Danish author Johan Ludvig Heiberg from his play, *King Salomon and Jørgen the Hatter*: “Well, why don’t they buy Palestine for them?”<sup>10</sup>

In the late nineteenth century, about 80 percent of the trade in Iceland was run by native Icelanders. A small number of the foreign trading agents and wholesale firms that were active in Iceland were owned by Danish Jews. Among them were the Arnhejms, agents from the firm of Albert Cohn, a merchant by the name of Gryn, and agents from the firm of A. Henriques & Zøylner.<sup>11</sup>

The Hungarian physician, journalist, and Zionist, Max Nordau (Simon Maximilian Südfeld, 1834-1923), came to Iceland in 1874, where he was supposed to cover the thousand-year jubilee for the settlement of Iceland. The country was a huge disappointment to Nordau, who wrote briefly about his visit in his book *From the Kremlin to Alhambra* (1880). In a letter to his family, he wrote that he would rather be a dog in Pest (a section of Budapest) than a traveler in Iceland.<sup>12</sup>

In 1906, a Danish shopkeeper named Fritz Heymann Nathan (1883-1942) arrived in Iceland. He quickly became a prosperous merchant. In 1913, Fritz Nathan, together with a Danish companion, founded the firm Nathan & Olsen in Reykjavík. After Fritz Nathan married in 1917, he quickly realized that because Iceland lacked the means for conducting a Jewish life, he could not keep living

there with his family. He settled in Copenhagen, and traveled to and from Iceland and around Europe as an agent for the firm in Iceland. The firm was highly successful until the Icelandic government introduced trade restrictions in the 1930s. Back in 1916-1917, Fritz Nathan built the then-largest building in Iceland, which to this day is still somewhat majestic and continental in appearance. With its five stories it was for a while one of the wonders of Iceland.<sup>13</sup>

Another lone Jew who settled in Iceland was Poul O. Bernburg, a violinist who converted by marriage to a woman from one of the Danish families in Reykjavík. He, too, arrived in Reykjavík in 1906. In a cold country where musical instruments were rare, he and his music were welcomed by the bourgeoisie of Reykjavík. However, music was not a breadwinning profession in Iceland and Bernburg had to work at the Petroleum Company in Reykjavík. An Icelandic author, Jón Trausti, gave this description of Bernburg:

For years I have seen him up next to the organ in the cathedral, where he strengthens the ongoing ceremony by playing his violin. And approximately one hour later he was on duty in his workman's clothes in toil with the petroleum. But wherever you see Bernburg, he is always happy and smiling and is nice to everyone. One never detects any signs of rooted bitterness and weariness. And wherever he goes it shows that he comes from a finer background than that of a common worker and that he has received a better upbringing. Even in his dirty workman's clothes, there is some kind of an elegance surrounding this man.<sup>14</sup>

Poul O. Bernburg was the son of a wealthy Danish merchant named Julius Isaac Liepman, who changed his name to Bernburg. Julius Bernburg held many positions in Danish commerce and cultural life. The younger Bernburg, who turned his back on his Jewish family in Denmark, received a yearly allowance from his father. The money was channeled through the Jewish Community Council in Copenhagen, and a minister in a Reykjavík church delivered it to Bernburg.<sup>15</sup>

### **The Arrival and Rejection of the Refugees**

The fear that Icelanders showed toward foreigners in the nineteenth century did not wane during the first decades of the twentieth century, despite the fact that the majority of merchants and other alleged suppressors now were Icelanders. An increase in Icelandic nationalism in the early twentieth century may have fostered more xenophobia in the society. After 1918, when the country got home rule (it was hereafter still a part of the Danish kingdom with limited autonomy), Iceland's immigration policy mostly followed the legislation in Denmark. For instance, when Denmark shut its gates to the Austrian Jews in May 1938, the authorities in Reykjavík did the same a few weeks later. The situation for Jewish refugees in 1930s Iceland was generally worse than for other foreigners. During the Depression years it was much easier for non-Jewish immigrants, mostly

Germans and Scandinavians, to obtain work and residence permits than for Jewish immigrants.<sup>16</sup>

While Iceland was closing its harbors and restricting certain professions to Icelandic citizens, many Icelanders also viewed Hitler and Nazism as a possible key to gaining their independence. In 1939, three pro-Nazi Icelanders visited a German prince, Friedrich Christian zu Schaumburg-Lippe, and asked him to become the King of Iceland in case their hoped-for German takeover of Iceland materialized. The prince, a member of the Nazi Party since 1929 and an official of the Third Reich, took this request seriously and brought it to Joseph Goebbels. According to the prince's autobiography published in 1952, Goebbels liked the idea but Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop dismissed it.<sup>17</sup>

In 1933, a small Nazi Party was founded in Iceland. In 1934, it became a National Socialist Party, Flokkur Þjóðernissinna (the Nationalist Party) with connections to the German Nazi Party. The party never gained enough popularity to obtain seats in the parliament, and it gradually dissolved and mixed with other political parties in 1938. Like many other Icelandic politicians, the leading Nazis of Iceland wanted to preserve the alleged purity of the Icelandic race. Although the party could not make Icelandic Jews their archenemies, since there were so few Jews in Iceland, they saw Jews and Jewish conspiracies everywhere. In one of the Nazis' pamphlets, the politician Ólafur Thors was called "an honorable rabbi." His father, Thor Jensen, had risen from poverty as an orphan in Copenhagen to become the wealthiest man in Iceland. It was not, and still is not, uncommon in Iceland to hear and see the terms *Gyðingar* and *Júðar* attached to wealthy individuals with negative connotations.

Although the few Jewish refugees in Iceland had no significant problems with the Icelandic Nazis, they had a basic problem with the nationalistic Icelandic authorities. The Jews were simply not welcome in this country.

### **"A Pure Nordic Country, Free of Jews"**

In the late 1930s, the *Hilfsverein der Juden in Deutschland* (the Aid Association of German Jews) monitored the situation in Iceland just as in other countries. With most European countries now in the process of totally closing their doors to Jewish refugees, the aim was to find what refuge was available. In a circular sent by the *Hilfsverein* in February 1939 to the *Auswanderberater in Reich* (the Emigration Consultant of the German Reich), there is a report on the situation for Jews in Iceland. The *Hilfsverein* concluded that a large emigration of Jews to Iceland was impossible. The information on the situation there came from Hans Mann, a young Jew from Berlin who had fled to Iceland with his mother. Hans Mann wrote:

Hereby I notify the *Hilfsverein* that Hans R. [Hans Rottberger, his brother-in-law], who came here last year in June has received a rejection of his request

for a residence permit, and has been expelled from Iceland. I am still here with my mother. We have no residence permit.... We really want to get away from this unfriendly and inhospitable polar county, if only we could.

The officials create all kinds of difficulties to prevent further immigration of foreigners. A foreigner only receives a residence permit if he has gained a recommendation from an Icelander as a semiskilled worker, whose skills are not already available in the country. Unemployment and poverty in the country force the authorities to take these measures.

I support myself and my mother as a farmhand, but I cannot recommend for anyone to work with farming here. The way of living and the hardship in the countryside is in the long run unbearable for European people. The main food intake consists of fish and salted meat; vegetables are completely lacking. The frightful polar storms make that impossible. I am ill from my last occupation and have arrived in Reykjavík, where my mother is staying in a small room. I am blind in one of my eyes (detached retina) and have a rash all over my body (metabolic disorder). I aim at going to a more friendly country. This isolation from all Jewish life is nearly unbearable. I know only two Jews here. Both have married Icelanders in order not to get expelled.<sup>18</sup>

The reality was even worse than what Hans Mann described. In November 1937, his brother-in-law Hans Rottberger contacted the Danish legation in Reykjavík and asked for assistance because he and his family were threatened with expulsion. He had been reported to the police by an Icelander who claimed that Rottberger was robbing him of his market for leather goods. The first secretary of the Danish legation in Reykjavík, C.A.C. Brun, who on other occasions had helped Jews in Iceland, tried to do what he could. He wrote in his diary: "Although the Jewish policy of the Nazis might be necessary in principle, one is shocked when one is confronted with real cases and Nordic countries should not be inhumane." The minister of the legation gave Brun permission to plead the case of the Jewish family to the Icelandic prime minister, Hermann Jónasson. Brun wrote in his diary about his discussion with the prime minister at a dinner in the Danish legation:

After dinner I approached the prime minister. He showed extraordinary understanding for my arguments and authorizes me to announce to the little Jew that he definitely has to leave—it is a principle in Iceland; Iceland has always been a pure Nordic country, free of Jews, and those who have entered in the last years must leave—but: Rottberger can get a respite until spring to complete his affairs. Fair enough!<sup>19</sup>

Before the Rottberger family was to leave Denmark in May 1938, the largest Icelandic newspaper wrote in its lead article: "It must be welcomed that the authorities have shown firmness in dealing with these vagabonds.... Hopefully the authorities will ensure...that foreigners, who are still here without a residence permit will be sent out of the country immediately."<sup>20</sup>

A young Jew from Leipzig was also poorly treated in Iceland. Alfred Kempner came to Iceland already in 1935, after having stayed in Copenhagen, where he had moved in the hope of getting a job in his uncle's firm. But restrictions on Jewish refugees in Denmark made that impossible. In Iceland he quickly found a job on a farm, but the wages were meager. By January 1938, he was unemployed. He tried to earn a little by giving private German lessons, but the income was insufficient to cover the rent at the small guesthouse where he was staying in Reykjavík. The owner of the guesthouse eventually contacted the police, who apprehended Kempner for being without means. He was sent on the first boat to Bergen in Norway. There the Norwegian authorities refused to admit him and sent him back. Back in Reykjavík, Kempner explained that he had family in Copenhagen.

Alfred Kempner sat in a Reykjavík prison while the police authorities decided what to do with him. In May 1938, he was expelled and sent to Copenhagen, with instructions written by the director of the Division of Immigration of the Chief of Police in Reykjavík, and an attached translation in German. These documents state:

A German citizen, Mr. Alfred Kempner, is being sent to Copenhagen on board the steamship *Briarfoss*. Mr. Kempner has been expelled from Iceland because he was without means. In accordance with specific wishes he is being transferred to Copenhagen, as he has declared that he plans to apply for a residence permit there. I take the liberty to ask the police authorities to take care of his further transfer to Germany in case he does not get a residence permit in Denmark. All expenses related to that will of course be covered by Icelandic authorities. Attached you will find his passport, the report of the police authorities in Bergen, as well as a German translation of a report that the police authorities here have written on his case.<sup>21</sup>

Thus the Icelandic authorities were willing to cover all expenses related to expelling Kempner to Germany in case Denmark was not willing to accept him. Upon his arrival in Copenhagen, the message from the Icelandic authorities was delivered to the Immigration Department of the Danish State Police. The police officer who wrote the report on the case was clearly somewhat resentful of the Icelandic procedure. In a note to the Justice Ministry he wrote: "It should result in a reprimand that the Icelandic authorities execute expulsions in such a manner without any approval from Danish authorities." A young official in the Justice Ministry, Erik Hastrup, who actively participated in expelling stateless Jews from Denmark to Germany during World War II, wrote the following, which alludes to the Rottberger family, who had been expelled to Denmark somewhat earlier than Kempner: "Isn't it possible now for the police to establish with the Icelanders that they must send their Germans directly off to their native country, because we are not interested in them?"<sup>22</sup> Kempner was, however, just barely, allowed to stay in Denmark, while several other Jews who were expelled or rejected by the

Icelandic authorities had to return to Germany and Austria and were murdered in extermination camps.

Only a small number of Icelanders pleaded the case of the Jewish refugees in Iceland. They include the doctors Katrín Thoroddsen and Jónas Sveinsson, the author Hendrik Ottósson, the publisher and manufacturer Ragnar Jónsson, as well as the aforementioned secretary of the Danish legation in Reykjavík, C.A.C. Brun. Generally, however, Icelandic spiritual leaders, ministers, bishops, academics, and authors did not lend support to the refugees. Icelandic authors who did not espouse romantic nationalism, or even National Socialism, were often acolytes of Stalin and the Soviet empire.

The greatest Icelandic author of the twentieth century, Halldór Kiljan Laxness, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1955, was in Berlin in 1936 during the Olympics. At that stage he was a convinced socialist if not a communist. A “Jewish girl with a hooky nose,” as Laxness described the daughter of an alleged Jewish acquaintance, provided him with tickets for the games at the Reichsstadion in Berlin on 9 June 1936.<sup>23</sup> However, Laxness did not tell his readers about a second trip he made to Berlin in 1936. He made this trip after having defended Stalin at a PEN conference in Rio de Janeiro. This time the purpose of the author’s visit to Nazi Germany was to collect the royalties that the Austrian publishing house Zinnen owed him and his agent Steen Hasselbalch in Denmark.<sup>24</sup> Laxness eventually wrote in one of his memoirs that he had problems with the publishing house’s offices in Germany because of rumors that he had a hostile attitude toward Nazi Germany.<sup>25</sup> More likely the publishing firm, which was owned by Jewish families in Austria and not by Social Democrats as Laxness claimed, had difficulties paying the authors whose work the branch in Germany published. The Danish Foreign Ministry hurriedly sent a letter to the Danish legation in Berlin that was supposed to assure the German authorities that Laxness was totally nonpolitical—or possibly a Social Democrat at most.<sup>26</sup>

## **World War II and Iceland**

On a cold day in the fall of 1940, Yom Kippur was observed for the first time in Iceland. In fact, this marked both the first Jewish and the first non-Christian service in the country since the Icelanders embraced Christianity in the year 1000. On 10 May 1940, British forces (whom some Icelanders considered British occupiers) had arrived in Reykjavík, and more kept coming in the following months. Among them were Jewish servicemen, who immediately sought coreligionists and a synagogue. There was no synagogue to be found, but eventually they found some refugees who had arrived a few years earlier and been allowed to stay.

One of these was a Jewish woman from Berlin, Henny Goldstein Ottósson (born Rosenthal). She married an Icelander by the name of Hendrik Ottósson. By marrying her and adopting her twelve-year-old son, Ottósson saved the two of them from expulsion. Henny’s mother, Minna Lippmann, had also against

all odds been allowed to stay in Reykjavík. She greatly missed Jewish life, and her Icelandic son-in-law contacted the British forces to find out if there were any Jews among them. The result was the first non-Christian religious service in Iceland in 940 years. About twenty-five Jewish soldiers from England, Scotland, and Canada gathered together with eight Jewish refugees and Hendrik Ottósson, who had studied Hebrew, as their *shames* (sexton).

The Icelandic authorities offered the chief of the British military chaplains, Chaplain Hood, that the Jews could borrow a chapel in Reykjavík's old cemetery to conduct their services. Hendrik Ottósson found this proposition insulting and instead rented the hall of the Good Templars' Lodge for the services. He and his wife improvised interior changes to make the hall look like a synagogue, and with some help from a librarian they borrowed the only Torah available in town.

Without a rabbi, with only two prayer shawls and one skullcap, the new congregation's services went well. Alfred Conway, a cantor from Leeds, sang the Kol Nidre prayer. Chaplain Hood gave a speech and talked about British soccer and long jump. The audience was not impressed. After the full day of fasting and services, followed by a photographing session, the hungry people gathered for a meal at a nearby Reykjavík hotel, and the first Jewish congregation in Iceland was officially founded. Arnold Zeisel, an elderly manufacturer of leather goods from Vienna, became the first head of the community. In the following years this group gathered regularly, until American forces took over from the British. The first bar mitzvah in Iceland took place on the Shabbat of Passover, 1941, though the matzos arrived too late for that Passover. And the community persevered during that year even though the British forces were unwilling to send a rabbi to Iceland.

After the American forces succeeded the British army in 1941-1942, Jewish life in Reykjavík and on nearby military bases became more active. Late in 1941 an American field rabbi arrived in Iceland, and the congregation had grown so large that a new building had to be found for the services. Apart from the congregation of American soldiers, which some of the Jewish refugees were members of, there was also an Orthodox congregation that had a synagogue in a corrugated-iron hut, opposite the building where the larger community held their services. The American rabbis who were stationed in Iceland during the war maintained contacts with the refugee Jews. The German-speaking Jews liked the modern, fresh approach of the young American rabbis, unlike what they had experienced in Germany or Austria. Some of them were shocked, however, to learn that some of the Reform rabbis excluded prayers such as Kol Nidre.<sup>27</sup>

At the Rosh Hashanah service in 1944 at the Keflavík airbase, there were five hundred Jews present and a Torah scroll was flown in from the United States. From that point till the mid-1950s there were two Jewish congregations in Iceland. In 1944, the number of Jewish servicemen in Iceland was estimated at two thousand out of a total of seventy thousand, and for a few years a rabbi was stationed in Keflavík.

The world first heard about Jews in Iceland when the journalist and author Alfred Joachim Fischer<sup>28</sup> wrote about Jewish life there after his visit in 1955.<sup>29</sup> A Jewish refugee from Germany who eventually settled in London and Berlin, Fischer's account was based on Hendrik Ottósson's description of the first Jewish service in Reykjavík in 1940. Fischer mentioned that nearly all Jews who had come to Iceland and been naturalized had taken Icelandic names, as the law demanded. Harry Rosenthal became Höskuldur Markússon, Hans Mann became Hans Jacobsson, Heinz Karl Friedländer became Hjörtur Haraldsson (although his father's first name was Josef and not Haraldur), and Otto Weg became Ottó Arnaldur Magnússon.

### God's Chosen Nation

The Republic of Iceland was founded in 1944. The ties to Denmark were finally severed while Denmark was occupied by Germany. In the new republic, which boasted the oldest parliament in the world, anti-Semitism did not disappear. Jónas Guðmundsson (1898-1973), head of a department in the Social Affairs Ministry and a Social Democrat member of parliament,<sup>30</sup> was obsessed with the "Jewish and Zionist plans for world domination." During 1946-1958 he published a journal that focused mainly on the "dangerous Jews." In 1951, he published an Icelandic translation of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Guðmundsson was a great follower of a British eccentric named Adam Rutherford, who in 1939 published a book maintaining that the Icelanders were the descendants of the "real" Jews<sup>31</sup>—specifically, the lost tribe of the Benjaminites.

About the war, Guðmundsson had this to say in his journal: "World War II was also their [the communists'] invention and the Zionists organized a fabulous plan to destroy Germany, the bulwark of the free states of Europe. They created and supported the Nazi Party and introduced Hitler as its leader. The quest for the destruction of the Jews was only a propaganda trick, created in order to fool the opponents."<sup>32</sup> Only five years after World War II, a Social Democrat in Iceland could express himself thus without any consequences.<sup>33</sup>

Jónas Guðmundsson was only an extreme case of the widespread Icelandic xenophobia. Like Prime Minister Jónasson in 1938, people wanted to keep Iceland "racially pure." From World War II till the 1960s, several Icelandic cabinets led by different political parties asked the U.S. military authorities not to send black soldiers to the NATO bases in Iceland, and the U.S. government complied. This became more difficult after the human rights legislation of 1964.<sup>34</sup>

### Becoming an Icelander

The small Icelandic Jewish population has never played a role in Icelandic-Israeli relations. Iceland was, however, one of the thirty-three states that voted in favor of Israel's establishment in the UN Partition Resolution of 29 November 1947.

That day an Icelandic diplomat, Thor Thors, gave the first speech at the United Nations.<sup>35</sup>

Meanwhile, the Jews in Iceland kept a low profile during the postwar period, preoccupied with becoming “good Icelandic citizens.” Most of them wanted to attract as little attention as possible to their background and religion, preferring to adopt a new Icelandic identity. With their new, Icelandic, “Viking” names, new lives, and often a new religion, they sought to avoid further unpleasant experiences, having already endured so much as Jews in prewar Europe and during the Holocaust.

There was hardly any basis for Jewish life in Iceland after World War II. Many of the Jews were not religious and kept to themselves, avoiding contacts with other Jews. As noted, trends in Icelandic society made Jews want to conceal their Jewish background.

One of the Jewish refugees allowed to stay in Iceland during the war was Ottó Arnaldur Magnússon, formerly Otto Weg (1893-1984). He was born in Leipzig and had a doctorate in geology as well as mathematics. In November 1938, Otto Weg and his brother Franz were transported together with 148 other Jewish men from Leipzig to the Buchenwald concentration camp. On 9 December 1938, Otto Weg was released. The next day he was notified that his brother had been killed in the camp.<sup>36</sup>

Otto Weg never received an academic post in Iceland despite being, for a long time, the best-qualified geologist in the country. He made a living from construction work and later from giving private lessons and publishing small pamphlets with solutions to problems in the algebra and Latin books of the Icelandic high schools. His solutions were an invaluable pedagogical aid to a few generations of Icelandic students, who struggled with hopelessly outdated books. Everyone knew that Otto Weg’s solutions could be purchased in a certain secondhand bookstore in Reykjavík. Otto always stressed to this author the importance of putting one’s old life behind if one wanted to become an Icelander. For him Judaism had vanished in the Holocaust, like most of his family, and he constantly warned this author against Zionism. Whether Otto Weg was ever looked upon as a true Icelander in his new country, as he desired, is doubtful.

In other cases, Jews tried to protect their nearest ones from any knowledge about their origins and past. In September 1983, this author met an Israeli named Eliahu Arbel (née Elemer Günsberger) in London. When Mr. Arbel heard that the author was from Iceland, he asked whether the author knew a Jewish woman there from Slovakia. Although the answer was negative, it turned out that Mr. Arbel and the woman were distantly related and that he wanted to get in touch with her again since they came from the same town in Slovakia, Ruzomberok. She had married an Icelander in England.

The author was able to establish contact between these two people, and did not hear further from Mr. Arbel until the latter located the author in Copenhagen

in 1998. It turned out that the woman in Iceland died a few years after the contacts were established, and Mr. Arbel and her relatives in Israel wanted very much to get in touch with her children. The author was able to locate her oldest son, a businessman in Reykjavík who had just turned fifty. The news that his mother had been Jewish obviously came as a shock to him. Upset, he claimed there must be a misunderstanding; his mother had, to his knowledge, been a Christian and there were no Jews in the family. He wrote: "It is certain that my mother was born and raised in the Christian faith and as such she was both baptized and confirmed. Both her parents were, according to my best information, of the Christian faith."<sup>37</sup>

Skeptical about the whole situation, this author translated the response for Mr. Arbel, who immediately wrote back and explained every detail about the woman's background, enclosing letters and proofs from her relatives in Israel. It seemed she came from distinguished Jewish families on both her father's and mother's sides, and among their ancestry was a well-known rabbi from Utrecht in Holland.

After receiving the documents, the oldest son concluded about his mother: "She seems according to everything to have been a Jew on both sides of her parents' families. If she, herself, was of the Jewish faith, then she succeeded completely to conceal this from us, her children."<sup>38</sup> Now the family is at ease with their newly discovered background and are in touch with their relatives in Hungary and Israel.

Why did the woman hide and repress her background, like so many other Jews in Iceland? Mr. Arbel had an explanation: "From her letters I learned that Icelanders are not very sympathetic toward Jews. She asked me never to mention her Jewish descent and contacts with Jews, and if I remember properly, I sent my letters through London, where I visited from time to time on my business trips and where a family from our town in Slovakia lived since 1939.... I used to send my letters to her with their help and vice versa."<sup>39</sup>

### **Iceland and the Holocaust**

With regard to the Holocaust, Iceland is not a blank page. A few Icelandic members of the Waffen-SS fought for Nazi Germany, and a few Icelanders served in concentration camps in 1943-1944, including one who served as a guard at the notorious Dora-Mittelbau camp in Germany, also known as Dora-Nordhausen.<sup>40</sup> The son of Sveinn Björnsson, the first president of the Republic of Iceland, was a member of the SS. He was rescued from prosecution in Denmark by the Icelandic authorities and later lived in Argentina. There were also non-Jewish Icelanders living abroad who were killed in concentration camps because their Nazi countrymen in, for instance, Norway and Germany had informed on them regarding their political views. Most Icelanders who served in the Third Reich were treated with contempt after the war.<sup>41</sup> However, there was a lapse of memory when it came to the former members of Iceland's own Nazi Party. After the war,

some of them quickly attained high positions in society, including a couple of chiefs of police, a bank director, and some doctors.

In 1997, it did not make headlines in Iceland when it became known that in the late 1930s the Icelandic authorities had offered to pay for the further expulsion of Jews to Germany, if the Danish authorities would not take care of them after they had been expelled from Iceland (as in the above-described case of Alfred Kempner).<sup>42</sup> In 2000, Iceland participated in a Holocaust conference in Stockholm, and it has signed a declaration of the European Council that obliges the member states to teach the Holocaust in their schools. In reality, this has not meant increased instruction on the Holocaust and genocide in Iceland's educational system.<sup>43</sup> However, there seems to be a great need for such information about the Holocaust. In 1994-1995, the Icelandic daily *Morgunblaðið* published a series of letters to the editor by an Icelandic Holocaust denier. An Icelandic neo-Nazi participated in the ensuing debate, and wrote in response to one of the few critics of the Holocaust denier: "the goal of [his] article is to destroy the Icelandic nation, because he doubts the importance of the Icelandic language, our beautiful mother tongue. It is barbaric to want to destroy one's nation, and not wish for the success of the Aryan race. The truth will be revealed, this discussion is just beginning."<sup>44</sup>

Such views are not rare in Iceland, and should possibly be seen as ultimate manifestations of a bizarre form of Icelandic ethnocentrism that was quite widespread in the late twentieth century. As the director of the Icelandic Language Center, Íslensk Málstöð, remarked in 1994: "I dread that the Icelanders have neglected education about themselves. There is a danger that foreigners can fill us with lies if we are not ready with arguments. Those among us who lack knowledge cannot contradict the arguments of ignorant people."<sup>45</sup>

## A War Criminal in Iceland

Evald Mikson, an Estonian war criminal who was assisted by Swedish authorities to escape prosecution, ended up in Iceland when the ship that was carrying him from Sweden to the United States ran aground there. He was, like many other foreigners in Iceland, never fully accepted as an Icelander, even with his brand new Icelandic name, Eðvald Hinriksson. It helped, however, that his sons were members of Iceland's national soccer team and, later, successful professional players for famous teams abroad. Many Icelanders were ready to believe the lies Mikson told in his biography, published in Iceland in 1988,<sup>46</sup> about his role in World War II Estonia. A request by the Israeli branch of the Simon Wiesenthal Center that the Icelandic authorities investigate Mikson's case sparked sharply negative responses. The state of Israel, which was not involved in the request for an investigation, was blamed for attacking a good Icelandic citizen.

During a debate in the Althing, many members of the parliament related the request to Middle Eastern politics. Among them was Dr. Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson,

leader of a left-wing party in the Althing, who in 1996 was elected president of Iceland. Dr. Grímsson criticized the Israeli government and reminded it of the “murder” of Hizballah leader Abbas Musawi and of Israeli attacks on southern Lebanese towns. The mayor of Reykjavík, Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, claimed that “the Israeli authorities were no special representatives of justice despite the terrible Holocaust of the Jews during World War II.”<sup>47</sup> The mayor also argued in an op-ed that Nazi hunters make it “easier for the military State of Israel to define itself as a victim that can claim the sympathy of the world community, and not as an aggressor that violently attacks other nations [in the Middle East].”<sup>48</sup>

The entire Icelandic media, except for one weekly, kept silent because of political pressure and published no information about the case apart from a few initial reports. Efraim Zuroff, director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Jerusalem, was proclaimed one of the main enemies of Iceland because of his wish to have Mikson prosecuted.<sup>49</sup> *Íþróttastjörnur* (Stars of Sport), a book published in 1992, contains nearly as much information about Evald Mikson as about his son, one of the book’s athletic heroes. Atli Edvaldsson, the son, is quoted as saying:

[My father] is persecuted and defamed by a foreign group of fanatics, and has to tolerate the worst...accusations that have been published about an Icelandic citizen.... By attacking the Estonians and accusing them of war crimes against the Jews, the Wiesenthal Center will do the Russians a great favor. At the same time, the Center once more gains worldwide sympathy for the Jews. If the Center could find many Estonians who could be accused of war crimes against the Jews, that would undoubtedly give a bad name to the Estonian nation. In that way the Simon Wiesenthal Center would simultaneously help the Russians to strengthen their position in Estonia. Possibly there is some collaboration going on. Although dad is persecuted by a fanatic organization, which thinks it is working in the name of the Jewish people, my view on the Jews has not been changed. I have nothing against them, because most of them have nothing to do with this organization.<sup>50</sup>

Evald Mikson died in 1993, shortly after the Icelandic government and the state prosecutor finally decided to take into account all the evidence they had received from the Wiesenthal Center and Estonian archives.

On 3 October 1999, the daily *Morgunblaðið* published an interview with Edvaldsson titled “The Devil Never Sleeps.” Edvaldsson told about the last time he saw his father alive: “dad said to me: Dear Atli, remember to finish my case. And he also said: The Devil never sleeps. He wanted me to remember that although Communism had collapsed, the Soviet Union had crashed, and even though he was dead and gone, the persecution would not stop.” In a sinister response to Zuroff’s reaction<sup>51</sup> to this interview with Edvaldsson and the incorrect information it contained, the editors of *Morgunblaðið* claimed that the evidence against Mikson was not reliable because some of it originated with the KGB.<sup>52</sup> The editors also

argued that the Wiesenthal Center possessed no confession from Mikson, nor a verdict to back up its charges against him.<sup>53</sup> Yet *Morgunblaðið*, which in 1992 decided not to report on the evidence supplied by the Wiesenthal Center, paid little if any attention to the conclusion of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity, published in 2001, that Evald Mikson had committed war crimes and engaged in the murder of Jews.<sup>54</sup> Some individuals in Iceland continued to defend Mikson and even blamed Israel for the results of the Estonian report.<sup>55</sup>

### **Anti-Semitism on the Rise**

As already mentioned, Jews in Iceland experienced open anti-Semitism before the issue of Israel and the Middle East conflict emerged. Today, in a country with so few Jews, the sentiments toward the state of Israel are probably the best way of measuring anti-Semitism.

Trends tend to come quickly to Iceland, and the resurgent European anti-Semitism is no exception. In October 2003, the chairman of the Icelandic Palestinian Association posted on the group's website a message called "Israel, Israel, über alles." Support for the Palestinians in Iceland is now characterized by repeated comparisons of Israel to Nazi Germany. At the same time, the Israelis are condemned for "misusing the Holocaust."

The following message was posted on the website of the Icelandic state telephone company, SÍMI, on 30 May 2004:

I have nothing against the Jews but I cannot tolerate the Israelis. The goals of the Israelis are simple. Their aim is that only Jews can live in their state. They suppress the Palestinians and kill them with the lousy excuse that they are preventing terrorism. If you take a look at the Israeli flag, you can see two blue lines and between them the star. The blue lines in the flag symbolize the Nile and Euphrates rivers and the star between them means that only Jews are supposed to live between these rivers. As I said, their goals are obvious.<sup>56</sup>

### **The Icelandic Jews Today**

News about Jews in Iceland is scant. In one instance, a news agency reported that a rabbi had scalded some bystanders when he accidentally poured boiling water on them while performing a ritual cleansing at a fish factory, which aimed to begin exporting the renowned Icelandic fish to kosher consumers in the United States. There have also been singles tours for young Jews to Iceland, with a Shabbat service in a geothermal lagoon as the main event.<sup>57</sup> A recent Canadian documentary argued that Jews are buried in the old cemetery in Reykjavík and that their headstones are engraved with the Star of David.<sup>58</sup> There is, however, a different and much simpler explanation for the Star of David that is found on

some Icelandic headstones and as an ornament on a few houses in Reykjavík: it was used as a motif by the relatively numerous Freemasons in Iceland. A Jewish-Icelandic connection was, however, confirmed when the abovementioned president of Iceland, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, married the Israeli citizen Dorrit Mousaieff on 14 May 2003, making her the world's first Jewish First Lady and first Israeli one outside Israel. Grímsson won a third term in the June 2004 presidential election and the couple continued to occupy the presidential manor.

Nowadays, a new generation of Icelandic Jews gather on the Jewish holidays. Religious observance is very liberal. The community uses a printed Torah scroll that was donated by Hans Mann before he died. In recent years there have been four bar- and bat mitzvahs in Reykjavík.<sup>59</sup> The Jewish community has discussed applying for registration as a religious organization, but there has never been sufficient interest to do so. Amid the strong support for the Palestinian cause, most Icelandic Jews have not wanted to attract attention to themselves as Jews. Most Icelanders are still unaware that there are Jews in the country, and the handful of Jews would rather not change that perception because of the anti-Semitic climate.

On the former American NATO base in Keflavík, there had been a Jewish congregation since World War II. A decade ago, the multireligious Temple of Light was built on the base; one of its halls could be transformed into a synagogue. That was also the case in the 1970s. The temple was then in an old, military, corrugated-iron hut. During Jewish services, Catholic figurines were kept in closed chests on the wall, ready to be taken out for the Catholic mass the following day, after the menorahs had been removed and the *bima* (podium) and Ark of the Torah slid behind a curtain. The base was closed, however, in 2006 and subsequently Jewish life in Iceland has diminished.

The Jews in Iceland are but a small number of the newcomers who have made Icelandic life more varied and interesting in recent decades. Increasing immigration to Iceland demands greater tolerance by the Icelanders. The attitude that there is only room for one "minority" in Iceland, the Icelanders themselves, should be abandoned. It is not likely that the Icelandic Jews will be the touchstones for this nation's tolerance. However, the history of the Jews in Iceland could function as a guide so that past mistakes will not be repeated with other immigrants and religions in Icelandic society.

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## Notes

- \* In memory of Eliahu Arbel, z"l.
- A slightly shorter version of this article with illustrations first appeared in *Rambam* (12, 2003), a journal published by the Society for Danish Jewish History. The author wishes to thank Michael Levin (Reykjavík) and Eva Fischer (Berlin).
1. In the first settlement population in Iceland there were elements of Sami (Lappish) people as well as people from the British Isles, but the community was predominantly from Norway; see Vilhjálmsón (1990). Studies undertaken by Hans Christian Petersen (University of South Denmark, Odense) on the oldest skeletal remains in the National Museum of Iceland show great metric variations in the skeletal remains of the earliest population of Iceland, indicating admixture of different ethnic groups.
  2. *Kulturhistorisk Leksikon for Nordisk Middelalder*, Vol. 5, cols. 603-604. [Icelandic]
  3. Pétursson (1978), hymn 25, verse 4. The hymns are read every evening on Icelandic National Radio for fifty days before Easter.
  4. *Rigsarkivet* [Danish National Archive], Archive of the University of Copenhagen: 85, *Acta consistorii 1619-26*, fol. 96 [Danish]; *ibid. Acta consistorii 1619-26*, fol. 415 (entry of 9 February 1625) [Danish]; Katz (1981), 59; Weitemeyer (1919), 338.
  5. Salomon and Fischer (1914), 31, 129-131.
  6. Espólin (1855), Vol. 4, Ch. 79.
  7. The information was kindly provided by the Icelandic historian Snorri G. Bergsson. For information about Ruben Moses Henriques (b. 1787) and the important Henriques family in Denmark, see Metzón (1989), Henriques (1994).
  8. *Tíðindi frá Alþingi Íslendinga 1853*, 46-49; 214-225, 260-261, 350-353, 615-625, 635-641, 840-851, 1032-1034 [Icelandic]; Bergsson (1995) has argued that Iceland witnessed a settlement of "Jewish conversos" in Reykjavík after the trade restrictions were lifted in Iceland in 1855. That, however, is wishful thinking, which simply relates to speculations about the origins of some of the Danish merchants in Iceland. Most merchants were in fact of Danish or German, not Jewish, origin. For two decades after 1855, 50-60 percent of all merchants in Iceland were either Danish or of other non-Icelandic nationality.
  9. Pétursson (2003), 21.
  10. Helgason 1943), 186, 298; *Rigsarkivet* [Danish National Archives], Private archive No.

- 5943, A.I. 5 [Danish]. Thorarensen's letter was written to Prof. Finnur Magnússon on 2 March 1830; Pétursson (2003), 20.
11. The owner was Gustav Henriques (1859-1939); Metzson (1989), 93, Henriques (1994), 56-62.
  12. Nordau (1881); see Bergsson (1995). Later in life Nordau was better known as the president of the first World Zionist Congresses.
  13. Nathan (1993), 83-87; Hammerich (1992), 279-282; interview (11 September 1997) with Prof. Ove Nathan, son of Fritz Heyman Nathan, at the Niels Bohr Institute in Copenhagen. The company still uses the old name Nathan & Olsen, and is one of the largest food import concerns in Iceland.
  14. Here in the translation of the author; see Pétursson (2000), 25.
  15. Pétursson (2000), 24-25.
  16. Bergsson (1994), 28-29. According to a law passed on 31 May 1927 on restrictions on employment, managing industries, and so on, the rights for foreigners seeking employment in Iceland were limited. Foreigners could only be employed as farmhands or as crew members in the Icelandic fleet. A law of 23 June 1936 set even stricter regulations for foreigners; a departmental order of 16 October 1937 introduced various restrictions that mainly affected Jews.
  17. Helgason (1992), 85. Prince Friedrich Christian zu Schaumburg-Lippe's book (Wiesbaden, 1952) was titled *Zwischen Krone und Kerker*.
  18. A translation from the German by the author from: "Rundschreiben B Nr. 378 an alle Auswanderberater im Reich und die Sachbearbeiter im Hause. Beitrag: Einwanderung nach Island," which includes a transcript of Hans Mann's letter to the *Hilfsverein* of 28 January 1939; U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, USHMM Archives, RG-11.001M.01. *Reichssicherheitshauptamt CRSHAJ-SD Berlin* (Osoby; Fond 500, Opis 1; Folder 686) [German]. (This material originates from *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* in Berlin, and was microfilmed for the USHMM in Russian archives in 1993.)
  19. C.A.C. Brun's personal diary for 1937, entry for 17 November 1937 (yet to be published).
  20. For more on the Rottberger family's continuing problems in Denmark, see Blüdnikow and Vilhjálmsson (1997), 4.
  21. *Rigsarkivet* [Danish National Archive], Archive of the Danish State Police, Division of Immigration, Foreigner's file 39.222: The Chief of Police in Reykjavík, Division of Immigration to the Passport Control Office in Copenhagen: (a) "*Abschrift nach dem Verhandlungsprotokolle Ausländer betreffend*," signed by Ragnar Jónsson of the office of the Chief of the Reykjavík Police, translated into German by Prof. Guðbrandur Jónsson; (b) the director of the Division of Immigration of the Chief of Police in Reykjavík, Jónatan Hallvarðsson, to his Danish colleagues, 28 May 1938. Hallvarsson (1930-1970) later became a justice on the Icelandic Supreme Court. He was a trainee at the Criminal Police of the Gestapo in Berlin in 1933-1934.
  22. *Rigsarkivet* [Danish National Archive], Archive of the State Police, Division of Immigration, Foreigners' file 39.222 [Danish]; see Vilhjálmsson (1997), 4-6.
  23. Laxness (1962), 267-69.
  24. *Rigsarkivet* [Danish National Archive], Archive of the Foreign Ministry, the Legation in Berlin (delivered in 1951): "81.A. 91: Icelandic writer Halldor Laxness." The letters are from the period 17 October 1936 to 24 March 1937, as well as March 1938.
  25. Laxness (1942), 282-89.
  26. *Rigsarkivet* [Danish National Archive], Archive of the Foreign Ministry, the Legation in Berlin (delivered in 1951): "81.A. 91, Icelandic writer Halldor Laxness": The Foreign Ministry (J. Krabbe) to the Danish envoy in Berlin, Chamberlain Zahle, 20 October 1936.

27. Ottósson (1951), 165-69; Vilhjálmsón (1994), 39; idem (1998), 3-5; Fischer (1958a, 1958b).
28. Alfred Joachim Fischer (1909-1992) fled to Turkey from Nazi Germany. After World War II, when not traveling and reporting from all over the world, he had a base in London and after 1959 in Berlin. He came to Denmark in the 1930s. His autobiography was published in Fischer (1991).
29. The article was titled “Judens in Island” (Fischer, 1957). It was kindly provided by Eva Fischer (b. Haas) in Berlin, who is the widow of Alfred Fischer. Later, similar articles were published under the titles “Jews in Iceland” (Fischer, 1958a) in the journal of the Association of Jewish Refugees in London, and “Die Juedischen Gemeinden in Island” in the German version of *Jediot Aharonot* (Fischer, 1958b); Wiener Library, London, press cuttings, Denmark (Iceland).
30. Jónas Guðmundsson was chairman of the National Association of Municipalities in Iceland for a number of years, a member of and chairman of the Icelandic ILO (International Labour Organisation) delegation, and chairman of numerous committees and boards on social welfare in Iceland and abroad.
31. Adam Rutherford, *Israel-Britain: An Explanation of the Origin, Function and Destiny of the Norse-Anglo-Celto-Saxon Race in the British Empire, USA, Holland, Scandinavia and Iceland* (London, 1939).
32. *Dagrenning*, June 1950 [Icelandic]; Sigurðsson (1993). The website of the Icelandic parliament does not mention a word about Jónas Guðmundsson’s literary production in an otherwise detailed biography of him.
33. In 1995, when living in Reykjavík, this author received a pamphlet in the mail. It was titled “A Jubilee for Iceland” and originated from a postbox address in Calhoun, Georgia, USA. This pamphlet, which was sent to all Icelandic addresses, contained claims such as: “Since these Khazar-Aschkenaz Jews of today trace their own lineage back to their forefather Japhet—the progenitor of the Gentiles—then the term ‘anti-Semitic’ has no foundation whatsoever.” It also claims that the modern Jews are really Khazars who have stolen the true Jewish identity from the Icelanders among others.
34. Whitehead (1974), 6.
35. Eban (1977), 97-99.
36. *Thüringischen Hauptstaatsarchiv*, Weimar: “Geldkarte der Geldverwaltung des Lagers Buchenwalds für Otto Weg” (Häftlings, No. 24497), and “Frantz Weg” (Häftlings, No. 30535); a list containing the names of the Weg brothers from Leipzig is titled: “Überführung festgenommener Juden nach dem Konzentrationslager Buchenwald”; also informative was a letter from the Gestapo *Staatspolizeistelle Leipzig* to *Das Kommandantur des Konzentrationslagers Buchenwalds* of 11 November 1938 [German]. The information was kindly provided by Gedenkstätte Buchenwald in a letter of 23 September 1997.
37. According to wishes of the family of the woman from Rozumberok, her name is not mentioned.
38. The son of the woman from Rozumberok, in a letter to the author of 15 July 1998.
39. Information provided by Eliahu Arbel (Ramat Gan, Israel) in a letter to the author of 18 May 1998.
40. Dora-Mittelbau was originally a subcamp of Buchenwald. Prisoners from Buchenwald were sent to the area in 1943 to begin construction of a large industrial complex. In October 1944, the SS made Dora-Mittelbau an independent concentration camp with more than thirty subcamps of its own. In 1943, prisoners at Dora-Mittelbau began construction of large underground factories and development facilities for the V-2 missile program and other experimental weapons.
41. See Guðmundsson (1996).

42. Vilhjálmsson (1997).
43. Information provided by Sólrún Jensdóttir, head of the international section of the Icelandic Education Ministry, in an email of 7 January 2003. Iceland has agreed to hold a “Day of Remembrance” in the schools from 2003, in accordance with a decision reached in a seminar on “Teaching about the Holocaust and Artistic Creation,” Strasbourg, 17-19 October 2002.
44. A letter to the editor by I. Sigurðsson, “Um kynþætti” (On Races), *Morgunblaðið*, 25 February 1995, 49 [Icelandic].
45. The author’s translation from Icelandic from an interview with Baldur Jónsson, director of Íslensk Málstöð (the Icelandic Language Institute), titled “*Allt er í húfi*” (Everything at Stake), published in *Morgunblaðið*, 8 May 1994, 24-25. [Icelandic]
46. Mikson’s biography was published in 1988 in Einar Sanden, *Úr eldinum til Íslands* (From the Fire to Iceland) (Reykjavík: Almenna Bókafélagið) [Icelandic].
47. *Morgunblaðið*, 26 February 1992, 26 [Icelandic]. See also *Haaretz*, Friday Magazine, Letters to the Editor, 30 January 2004, by V.Ö. Vilhjálmsson titled “Marital Compromise.”
48. *Morgunblaðið*, 10 February 1993, 16. [Icelandic]
49. Vilhjálmsson (2000). An independent commission has concluded that Evald Mikson was guilty of war crimes in Estonia. See the commission’s report at [www.historycommission.ee/temp/conclusions-frame.htm](http://www.historycommission.ee/temp/conclusions-frame.htm).
50. Heimir Karlsson, *Íþróttastjörnur* (Stars of Sport) (Reykjavík: Almenna Bókafélagið, 1992), 66-67. [Icelandic]
51. “Bréf til Morgunblaðsins frádr. Efraim Zuroff” (a letter to the editors of *Morgunblaðið* from Dr. Efraim Zuroff), *Morgunblaðið*, 5 November 1999, 62. [Icelandic]
52. “Evald Hinriksson ekki sekur um neina glæpi” (Edvald Hinriksson Is Not Guilty of Any Crimes), statement by the editors of *Morgunblaðið*, 5 November 1999, 63. [Icelandic].
53. “Ásakanir” (Allegations), response of the editors of *Morgunblaðið*, 17 November 1999, to a comment in the same volume by Efraim Zuroff, in which he reacts to a judgment on the innocence of Evald Mikson made by *Morgunblaðið* on 5 November 1999 (see *ibid.*).
54. The report can be read at [www.historycommission.ee/temp/conclusions-frame.htm](http://www.historycommission.ee/temp/conclusions-frame.htm).
55. See Vilhjálmsson (2001), 14.
56. A statement in Icelandic about Jews, translated by this author, on [www.hugi.is](http://www.hugi.is).
57. The following notice appeared on the website of the Amsterdam office of Icelandair in 2002:
 

Jewish Singles Festival in Iceland—October 24-27, 2002. Head north for a fun-filled weekend in Iceland, Europe’s “hottest” country! Meet other Jewish singles and enjoy sightseeing, night-life, hot springs and shopping in Reykjavik Iceland. You’ll also enjoy the world’s most exotic Shabbat service, held at the amazing Blue Lagoon geothermal springs.
58. Documentary filmmaker Nikila Cole of Vancouver has produced a television documentary called *Wanderings* that describes her and her daughter’s cultural tour to Jewish locations around the world, among them “Jewish Reykjavik.”
59. Information provided by Michael Levin, Reykjavík.



## Contributors and Interviewees

**Arthur Arnheim**, former director of the Union of Danish PhDs, MAs, and MScs, is a historian who received his MA from Copenhagen University. He has researched the history of Danish Jews and the Jews of northern Germany. He has published studies and articles on the Danish Jewish community leadership and the Holocaust, and on the rescue of most Danish Jews from German persecution. Now retired, he is doing research work in Jerusalem.

**Serah Beizer**, a part-time researcher on the history of the Jews in Finland and the fate of Jewish POWs in World War II, is affiliated with the Yad Vashem International School for Holocaust Studies and works as the coordinator of the Jewish Agency Resource Center. Her MA thesis at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem was on the Hehalutz (pioneering-Zionist) movement in Sweden during World War II.

**Bent Blüdnikow** worked at the Danish National Archives from 1983 to 1993. He then became opinion editor of the weekly *Weekendavisen*. Since 1998 he has been a journalist with the conservative daily *Berlingske Tidende*, where he started out as opinion editor. He has published several books on Danish Jewish history and eighteenth-century Danish history. Among them are *Immigranter: Østeuropæiske jøder i København 1904-1920* (Copenhagen, 1986) and *Som om de slet ikke eksisterede: Hugo Rothenberg og kampen for de tyske jøder* (Copenhagen, 1991).

**Bjarte Bruland** earned his MA in 1995 with a thesis titled “The Attempt to Destroy the Jews of Norway, 1940-1945.” During 1996-1997 he was a member of the government committee that investigated the fate of Jewish property during and after the war. From 1997 to 1999 he worked for the Oslo city archives, and from 1999 to 2001 he was employed as webmaster for the Directorate of Public Management. Thereafter, he was hired by the Oslo Jewish community to organize their historical archives. He is now the chief curator at the Jewish Museum in Oslo and has begun his doctoral dissertation, “Norway and the Holocaust, 1925-1950,” at Bergen University.

**Odd Sverre Hove** is editor in chief of the Norwegian Christian daily newspaper *Dagen*. He was formerly rural dean in the Church of Norway, secretary-general of the Norwegian Fishermen’s Mission, and a member of the Board of Governors at Shaare Zedek Medical Center in Jerusalem.

**Zvi Mazel** was born in Israel in 1939. He obtained his BA and MA at the Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris. He has been with the Israeli Foreign Ministry for thirty-nine years, and has served as Israel's ambassador to Romania, Egypt, and Sweden. The many other positions he has held include that of the ministry's deputy director-general for Africa. He has studied the Muslim world extensively.

**Prof. Gerald Steinberg** is the founder and executive director of NGO Monitor, and professor of political studies at Bar-Ilan University. He specializes in Middle Eastern diplomatic and security issues and in "soft power" in the form of the political use of international law and human rights. He is also a columnist for the *Jerusalem Post*, and his articles appear in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *International Herald Tribune*, and others.

**Dr. Mikael Tossavainen** obtained his PhD in history at Lund University (Sweden). His doctoral dissertation, "Heroes and Victims," deals with the role of the Holocaust in Israeli historical consciousness. Tossavainen's earlier research focused on anti-Semitism, historiography, and the connection between nationalism and religion. He is currently research director of the Post-Holocaust and Anti-Semitism Project at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs.

**Erez Uriely** is founder and director of the Norwegian Center against Anti-Semitism, a nongovernmental organization focusing on hostile expressions against Jews and Israel in the Norwegian media and public institutions. He holds an MS degree and has published many articles in Norwegian newspapers.

**Dr. Vilhjálmur Örn Vilhjálmsón** was employed as an archeologist and curator at the National Museum of Iceland (1993-1997) and as senior researcher at the Danish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies (2000-2002). He is the author of *Medaljens Bagside* (Copenhagen, 2005), which reveals the Danish expulsion of Jewish refugees to Germany during 1940-1943. He is completing a book about Stefan Glücksman, a Warsaw historian who was expelled from Denmark in 1941. He is a member of the board of the Danish Jewish Historical Society.

**Prof. Gert Weisskirchen** is a member of the German parliament. He serves as spokesman of the SPD parliamentary working group on foreign affairs and is Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE on Combating Anti-Semitism. He is also chairman of the German-Russian Parliamentary Group. He is professor of higher education and Honorary Professor of Applied Cultural Sciences at Potsdam School of Higher Education. In addition to these positions, Prof. Weisskirchen has led and served on numerous key parliamentary committees. Since the mid-1990s he has been a member of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

**Dr. Efraim Zuroff** is director of the Israel office of the Simon Wiesenthal Center and coordinator of Nazi war crimes research for the center worldwide. From 1980 to 1986 he worked as a researcher in Israel for the U.S. Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations. The author of *Occupation: Nazi-Hunter: The Continuing Search for the Perpetrators of the Holocaust* (1994), Zuroff has written extensively about the efforts to bring Holocaust perpetrators to justice throughout the world and played a key role in facilitating the prosecution of numerous Nazi war criminals. Since 2001 he has published the Wiesenthal Center's Annual Status Report on the Worldwide Investigation and Prosecution of Nazi War Criminals.



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