

Those Funny Anti-Semites

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ANTI-SEMITES MAKE ME LAUGH. They are so funny.

I know that many will consider this statement frivolous, if not obnoxious, considering all the terrible things committed by anti-Semites throughout the ages, including the Holocaust. But nowadays, they are just ridiculous.

The things they believe in. The things they say. Ridiculous.

TAKE THE ex-mayor of London, Ken Livingstone. The things he says are ridiculous indeed. Even for a politician.

For example, he said the Adolf Hitler was a Zionist, or a lover of Zionists.

Hitler? Zionist?

Adolf Hitler was a pathological hater of Jews and everything Jewish. Indeed, his anti-Semitism was so central to his beliefs, that it overcame everything else.

Staring into the face of final military defeat, he still diverted trains from essential military tasks in order to transport Jews to the annihilation camps.

Some believe that he lost the war (and world domination) because of his anti-Semitism. If the Jewish scientists—like Albert Einstein—had remained in Germany as German patriots, Hitler may well have got the atomic bomb before the Americans. This would have changed world history.

No one knows where his hatred for Jews came from. He liked the Jewish doctor of his adored mother. When he was nursing his dream of becoming a great painter, he had a Jewish friend and visited him at his home. Somewhere on his way he became an abysmal Jew-hater. Theories abound, but there is no definitive answer. But it happened early on, when he was still in Vienna.

The idea that this person could, at any stage, be a lover of Zionist Jews is absurd beyond imagination.

LIKE MANY absurdities, this one contains a kernel of truth.

Before the Holocaust, anti-Semites wanted to drive the Jews out of Europe. The essence of Zionism is to get the Jews from all over the world to Eretz Israel (Palestine). So these two extremely opposite movements had something in common.

Theodor Herzl, the founder of the Zionist movement, realized this right from the beginning. He went to anti-Semitic Czarist Russia to convince leading politicians there to help him, promising to relieve them of their Jews.

In the course of time, many such efforts were made. A little-known one was made on the eve of World War II, when the right-wing Zionist Irgun underground (full name: National Military Organization) came to an agreement with the anti-Semitic leadership of the Polish army. Military training centers for young Jews were set up in Poland, with the idea of preparing them for an invasion of Palestine, so that Polish Jews could go there. The war cut these efforts short.

At the same time, the notorious Adolf Eichmann was busy in Vienna “solving the Jewish Question”. He robbed the Jews of all their property and allowed them to emigrate. Later, near the end of the war, he made the absurd offer to Zionist leaders in Budapest: if the Allies send ten thousand trucks to Nazi Germany, he would stop the extermination of Hungarian Jews (ten thousand Jews a day). My opinion is that this was in reality a part of a camouflaged effort by Heinrich Himmler to make a separate peace with the Western allies.

After he was kidnapped in Argentina, Eichmann sat in his Israeli prison and wrote a fascinating autobiography, in which he said that he had always preferred the Zionists to other Jews, because they represented the more positive biological substance of the Jews.

The most direct connection between Nazis and Zionists came about very early on. When the Nazis came to power in Germany, in early 1933, American Jews declared a boycott of German goods. The Nazis responded with a day-long boycott of Jewish businesses in Germany. (I remember it, because my father kept me home that day.)

At the same time, an official treaty was signed between Nazi Germany and the Zionist leadership. It was called “Transfer” (Ha'avara in Hebrew). Under it, wealthy German Jews were allowed to “transfer” part of their money to Palestine in the form of German goods. This broke the anti-German boycott, but was a big boost for the struggling Jewish economy in Palestine.

This remains a controversial historical chapter to this very day. Right-wing Zionists condemned the agreement,

though they themselves were called “fascists” by the left-wing leaders who ruled Zionist society in Palestine. The agreement certainly helped the Zionist economy to survive, until World War II broke out and the large British army in Egypt desperately needed all the products we could produce.

ALL THESE events did not come close to a conciliation between the Zionists and the Nazis. The very idea is, well, ridiculous.

Until world-war II, Hitler could not dream of killing the Jews en masse. It was unthinkable. He had to be satisfied with driving the Jews out of Germany, or out of Europe, as had happened several times before—in Spain, in England and in many other places.

The obvious destination was Palestine, but Palestine was ruled by Great Britain, which let only a handful of Jews in, for fear of Arab reactions.

At the time another possibility gained popularity with the Nazi leadership: transport all the Jews to Madagascar, which was part of the French empire. Nothing came of that.

All this changed completely when the war broke out. A new reality took over. With the invasion of the Soviet Union by Nazi Germany in 1941, life became cheap. The Geneva Conventions about civilized warfare were thrown overboard. Hundreds of thousands, and then millions, slaughtered each other.

For Hitler, this created an opportunity which perhaps he had not dared to think about before. Don't transfer the Jews, kill them. That was the beginning of the Holocaust by mass shootings, starvation, disease, and then the gas chambers.

He did not need the urging of anyone. The story floated recently that Hitler was prompted by the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Hadj Amin al-Husseini, an honest-to-Allah Semite, is as ridiculous as all the others.

HITLER HAD no original mind. There was nothing really new in his outlook.

Anti-Semitism is as old as Christianity. It was for long an integral part of it, and perhaps it still is.

Jeshua Ben-Josef, known as Jesus, was a Jew. When he was crucified for blasphemy, a small group of followers in Jerusalem held on to his teachings. They were persecuted by the Jewish establishment in Jerusalem, and a fanatical hatred between the two sides was born.

This would have remained a historic bagatelle, if something extraordinary had not happened. With the help of an-

other Jewish rabbi, Saul, who changed his name to Paulus, the followers of Jesus became a world religion. The old culture of many gods was breaking down. The abstract Jewish religion attracted many patricians, but the masses of slaves and proletarians were enchanted by the story of the crucified son of God and his virgin mother. Christianity won out, and with it the hatred of the Jews.

It is my belief that no Christian boy and girl who has been exposed in his or her childhood to the blood-curdling story of the Jews crying out for the blood of the gentle Jesus can ever completely rid themselves of their hatred of the Jews.

And indeed, Jew-hatred has been a mark of Christianity throughout the ages. Mass expulsions, the slaughter of Jews by the crusaders in Germany and Palestine, the Spanish inquisition, the Russian pogroms, the Holocaust and innumerable other manifestations accompany Jewish history.¹

I want to stress again that nothing of this sort happened in Muslim countries. When I mentioned this recently, some professors of Oriental Jewish origin attacked me furiously. They brought up some half a dozen instances of Muslim rulers mistreating Jews—half a dozen in 1400 years! It seems that some Orientals envy the European Jews for their suffering and want to compete with them in this, too.

Pogrom is not an Arabic word. It is Russian.

BACK TO today's anti-Semites.

One could have hoped that after the Holocaust, they would just disappear. But now they are here again, in several guises and disguises.

It is not so much what they say. It's the tone which makes their music.

One can argue with their arguments. Sure. There are some unpleasant facts around. Sure. But it's the music that matters. Ah, the music.

One can be anti-Israeli. Why not? One can condemn the policy of successive Israeli governments. I do. One can be anti-Zionist. Though one has to make clear what sort of Zionism one dislikes. But all that has nothing to do with real, honest-to-God, anti-Semitism.

Somebody endowed with a genuine conspiratorial turn of mind—which I sadly lack—could argue that today's anti-Semites are financed by the devious Zionists, in order to drive the Jews from where they are to Israel.

From hearing French today on Tel Aviv's seashore, I guess they must be succeeding.

¹Sadly, they did not make the Jews in modern Israel immune from manifesting hatred against others.