



The enemy within

Jews who break ranks when it comes to Israel have become convenient alibis for unabashed Jew haters

WE ALL know the shtick: Let a Jew offer up a spirited defense of the Jewish State and the next thing you know, he'll be pooh-pooed, scorned and slandered — in public discussions, on social media, in Internet comments sections — as a venal and obtuse partisan hack and a paid stooge of a sinister Israeli propaganda machine. Let him present an equally spirited critique of the Jewish State, however, and he'll be hailed as a valiant truth teller and a paragon of moral integrity.

Why?

If support for Israel by a Jew — however heartfelt, morally sound and well-argued — can be dismissed out of hand as a knee-jerk reaction of automatic partisanship, then why is fervid anti-Zionism by another Jew generally assumed to constitute the heights of principled morality that gives voice to honest, objective and disinterested views about the Arab-Israeli conflict?

Can't an Israel basher of Jewish descent be misinformed, disingenuous, pigheadedly wrong or, you know, plain bigoted? Are we to believe that members of *Natorei Karta* — an extremist ultra-Orthodox sect whose members are pining for an end to the Jewish State in anticipation of the Messiah and are so beloved by Iran's Judeocide-promoting mullahs — should be taken seriously as exemplars of enlightened opinion, and not just when it comes to the issue of Israel but about any subject at all?

Ought we to assume that the erstwhile professor of law Richard A. Falk, the UN's

special rapporteur for the Palestinian territories and a self-described "assimilationist Jew" who doesn't seem to have discovered a hyperbolic slander about the Jewish State that he hasn't relished recycling with the smug moral certitude of the demagogue (his latest insight offered Iran's Press TV: Israel is planning "a Palestinian holocaust"), is at heart motivated only by the purest of humanistic impulses?

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The cockeyed view that sees self-declared anti-Zionists of Jewish descent as honorable, brave souls derives its strength from the unspoken assumption, in a legacy of an old anti-Semitic trope, that Jews are an inherently cliquish lot who will rally to any Jewish cause at the drop of a rabbi's hat and will stick by one another through thick and thin.

Hence, any Jews who break ranks are widely viewed as righteous dissidents who have seen the light and aren't afraid to speak the truth, come what may, in light of the historic crimes of the repellent "Zionist en-

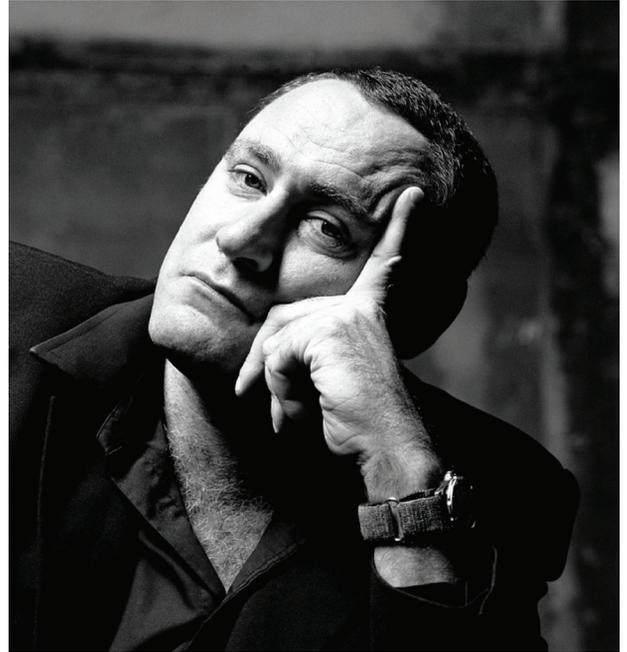
tity" — and they do so allegedly in the face of massive intimidation by a sinister "Jewish lobby."

Needless to say, such Jews are prized PR assets for Israel haters of myriad stripes (neo-Nazis, Marxists, left-wing ideologues, Islamists) in their relentless delegitimization of the Jewish State. After all, if a Jew agrees that Israel is an insufferable affront to modern sensibilities by virtue of being a neocolonialist outpost of European settlers with a racist, apartheid regime in charge of it, then surely "Israelhell" must be just that — case closed, dispute settled.

And so Jewish comrades-in-arms serve as convenient alibis for unabashed Jew baiters; after all, if you can boast of having a Jew or two endorse your cause of rabid anti-Zionism, it explicitly proves that you can't be an anti-Semite, thereby lending succor to the good old "I have Jewish friends" line of defense.

A case in point is Roger Waters, the erstwhile frontman of the seminal British rock band Pink Floyd. Waters, an irascible chap who split from his fellow musicians acrimoniously back in 1985, has of late found a new calling in being a frontman for the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement by actively campaigning to dissuade other musicians from performing in Israel.

In response to accusations by the Simon Wiesenthal Center that he was an anti-Semite over a string of public comments, Waters, who likes to bash the State of Israel



Gilad Atzmon: Sternly pensive

any chance he gets, has stressed in a Facebook riposte that “I have many very close Jewish friends, one of whom, interestingly enough, is the nephew of the late Simon Wiesenthal.”

As evidence of the accuracy of his claims about Israel, the rock star has repeatedly cited an unimpeachable source — a Jew, namely Max Blumenthal, an American journalist who, in his new book “Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel,” portrays the Jewish state as — surprise — a racist, neo-colonialist, apartheid regime and offers up the exact same bombastic libels that Waters has endorsed. “‘Goliath’ [is a] journalistic portrait of the real Israel that has been whitewashed and covered up by the mainstream American media,” Blumenthal explained in an interview.

Par for the course, this child of privilege, who is the son of high-powered former Clinton aide Sydney Blumenthal, professes, too, to being a victim of an all-powerful “Israel lobby.” He laments that he even had to face the cancellation of some scheduled events to promote his book owing to pressure from militant Zionists. Such cancellations, for an author, clearly pose mortal danger, so one can sympathize.

ACROSS THE pond, Blumenthal’s ideological counterpart, British journalist Mira Bar-Hillel, pens provocative op-eds for *The Independent* about her devious coreligionists while bemoaning their penchant for cry-

ing “anti-Semitism” at the slightest excuse. Bar-Hillel, a daughter of the late Israeli philosopher Yehoshua Bar-Hillel and the Property and Planning correspondent of Britain’s *Evening Standard*, brags about her contempt for her fellow Jews (“Am I prejudiced against Jews? Alas, yes”), while chiding them for treating the *goyim* “with ill-concealed contempt, yet [passing themselves off as] victims.”

“The Jews of today scare me,” she explains, “and I find it almost impossible to talk to most of them, including relatives.”

And so it goes. No matter how slapdash, morally suspect, factually challenged, or plain risible your reasoning is, you have earned yourself immunity, or so you think, from being justly labeled an anti-Jewish and/or anti-Israel bigot so long as you are a Jew yourself, or can cite a Jewish source or “friend” who buttresses your prejudices with his own.

And the latter, as should be clear by now, isn’t that difficult. Jews, a famously emotive and argumentative people, will embrace just about any cause under the sun, regularly in strident opposition to one another. Anti-Zionism is no exception. Contrary to their stereotypical image as a clannish folk of undivided loyalties, Jews have been a fractious lot right from the get-go.

No sooner had King Solomon ascended to the heavenly realm than his successors split his kingdom into two warring rump states, both of them now even more at the mer-

cy of invading powers. By the era of King Herod in the 1st century BCE, Sadducees, Pharisees, Zealots, Essenes, Hellenizers and myriad apocalyptic sectarians now lost to history were bickering, recriminating and frequently murdering one another over theological differences.

Come the Middle Ages, it was the turn of the *tzadikim* against the traditionalists to be at loggerheads, just as later eras saw ultra-Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Jews battle it out in heated exchanges, occasionally seeking to solve their doctrinal quarrels in fisticuffs. Meanwhile, on the secular side, Jewish Marxists, Leninists, Stalinists, Trotskyites, socialists and liberal democrats were in the jolly habit of despising one another with a passion.

The split itself between staunch Zionists and leftist anti-Zionists goes back a long way, right to the very first stirrings of political Zionism in the late 19th century. Jewish Marxists sought to break Jews out of their centuries-long marginalization by assimilating them into the classless, homogeneous mass of the proletariat, with a good socialist identified as someone who refused to place tribal loyalties above solidarity for the downtrodden of the world, in the service of what they saw as a holistic universalism.

Among their ranks was German internationalist Rosa Luxemburg, who conceded in 1917, “I have no room in my heart for Jewish suffering: I am at home in the entire world, where there are clouds and birds and human

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tears” — a laissez-faire sentiment, which is rather suspect in its sweeping generalization yet is still very much in vogue among her ideological heirs. Ruth Fischer, a leader of Weimar-era Germany’s Communist Party, went a step further and called on German nationalists to “shoot down the Jew-capitalist; hang them from the lampposts; crush them.”

Offering a rival project for Jewish emancipation were the Zionists, many of them ardent socialists themselves. They dismissed full-blown assimilation as a pipe dream and would soon be vindicated by the Holocaust, during which assimilated Jews were butchered with just as much homicidal abandon as ultra-Orthodox Jews from self-segregating communities.

The Zionists envisioned an independent Jewish State in the ancestral homeland of Jews that would best guarantee their rights and safety. To most Marxists and leftist intellectuals, that idea smacked of neocolonialism and “bourgeois nationalism” — and still does. Revolutionary Russian Jews, a young Chaim Weizmann reported bitterly to Theodor Herzl in 1903, showed “antipathy, swelling at times to fanatical hatred,” toward the Zionist enterprise.

That sort of implacable loathing remains undimmed among Jewish anti-Zionists like Blumenthal. So what’s new?

Here is what’s relatively new: A reflexive attitude of blaming Israel exclusively for the sorry state of Palestinian society and the lack of peace in the Middle East has largely gravitated, especially in Europe, from the fringes of mainstream opinion — populated by “anti-colonialist and anti-racist” Marxists and Jew-baiting right-wingers alike — and has become a mainstay of conventional wisdom.

Israel, a nation state for the Jews, has come to be widely regarded not only as an embarrassing anachronism, but as a dangerous atavism, where the sins of European-style chauvinism, nationalism and colonialism have gained a new lease on life in Israeli Jews’ treatment of Palestinians.

The Jewish State, by their lights, embod-

ies all the crimes of the West’s own past — racism, colonialism, oppression. And naturally enough, these “blame-Israel-firsters,” to modify a phrase beloved by anti-Jewish demagogues for insinuating dual loyalties among American Jews, comprise a myriad of Jews, many of them, no doubt, well-intentioned people.

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The op-ed pages of The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times and numerous other mainstream media outlets regularly host Jewish academics who declaim on the merits of dismantling the Jewish State, the need for a one-state solution (i.e. the dismantling of the Jewish State by “peaceful” means), and the virtues of supporting economic and academic boycotts against Israel, alone among the nations.

MORE FLAMBOYANTLY, they argue, as did Sarah Schulman, a professor of humanities at the Big Apple’s City University, in an op-ed for The New York Times in 2011, that the flourishing of gay rights and freedoms in the Jewish State is in fact a barefaced attempt by Israelis to try to disguise their abysmal human rights record — in so-called “pinkwashing.” (Presumably then, the Iranian regime’s habitual execution of gays is merely a regrettable blemish on an otherwise excellent human rights record.)

The mere thought of an Israel that was not born in sin and is therefore not congenitally, irredeemably racist, barbaric and oppressive seems to cause these commentators acute discomfort. They fudge, prevar-

icate and pontificate — anything to ignore reality. And when they’ve duly exploited all the usual canards of neocolonialism, racism and discrimination, they opportunistically begin adding new crimes to their indictment of the Jewish State, creating whole moral categories in the process.

Take pinkwashing itself. Has any country but Israel ever been accused of it? Their verdict, implicitly or explicitly, is invariably the same. Israel as a state for the Jews needs to be euthanized for the sake of a long-suffering humanity, of which they’re the self-anointed moral guardians. The various boycott and divestment campaigns serve to speed up that process of euthanasia.

And when the hated Zionist entity (a flawed, yes, yet vibrant multicultural society with a booming economy and a raucous media) refuses to conform to their shrill assessment of it — that it’s a latter-day Third Reich and a reincarnation of apartheid-era South Africa rolled into one — they carry on undaunted by playing up its flaws, failings and shortcomings ad nauseam.

Thus we are forever reminded by commentators like Blumenthal, Noam Chomsky and pro-Palestinian scholar Norman Finkelstein of the massacre of Palestinians in Sabra and Shatila (committed, one should point out, not by Israeli soldiers but by Christian Arabs), the death tolls of retaliatory strikes against Hamas terrorists in Gaza (unfailingly deemed “disproportionate”), and the wanton murder of 107 Arabs by Jewish militants in the village of Dir Yassin on April 9, 1948, during Israel’s War of Independence.

Yet their memory, or knowledge of history, seems to fail when it comes to Jewish victims of decades-long terror attacks. Menachem Begin’s militants went on a rampage in Dir Yassin — not that they should have — after an indiscriminate terror attack by Arabs claimed the lives of 58 Jews on Ben Yehuda Street in Jerusalem a few weeks prior. Meanwhile, four days later, on April 13, Arab attackers retaliated by massacring 78 doctors and nurses in a

medical convoy on their way to Hadassah Hospital on Mount Scopus.

Through their selective memory, Israel's enemies, Jewish or otherwise, paint Israel as the sole aggressor in a pattern that has been with us since 1948. Quite a few even prefer to view Palestinian suicide bombings — those ultimate acts of religious narcissism whereby “martyrs” seek to exult themselves and earn a place in paradise with Allah by murdering scores of loathed infidels at random — as merely the plaintive cries of the oppressed lashing out in justified, righteous anger at their oppressors.

Then, when they are condemned for their views by other Jews, these critics conveniently paint themselves as much-harassed victims of a menacing Zionist backlash against them. Not only do several high-profile Jews making careers out of their virulent anti-Zionism portray themselves as fearless truth tellers and admirable contrarians, but they also prefer to posture as plucky rebels — and that, despite the comfortable trappings of elite privilege that derive from having tenure at leading universities and penning op-eds for the world's most influential newspapers that many of them enjoy.

“Here in the US, students and faculty who challenge the dominant view of Israel risk baseless accusations of anti-Semitism, arrest, blacklisting or denial of tenure, promotion or academic positions,” opined Carolyn Karcher, a Jewish American professor emerita of English at Temple University in Philadelphia, in an op-ed she wrote last December for *The Los Angeles Times*.

Karcher came out in defense of the American Studies Association's academic boycott of Israeli scholars, while accusing Israel of inflicting “unimaginable brutality” on Palestinians and running a Jim Crow-style apartheid system against Arab Israelis and Palestinians alike (talk about painting with a broad brush). “There are dozens of known incidents and likely hundreds that go unreported,” she added ominously.

The academic bristles at being labeled an anti-Semite, and rightly so. She is merely an uninformed commentator on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Nor do her charges challenge “the dominant view of Israel,” despite what she would have us believe. Her hyperbolic condemnations of the Jewish state, as anyone familiar with the quality of discourse on the matter well knows, are perfectly ordinary these days, especially in the insular bubble of “progressive” academia she inhabits. But there's a thrill to be had in preaching to the choir even while masquerading as a heroic dissident.

IN HER defense, pro-Zionist Jews are not helping their case by ceaselessly branding their most fiercely censorious coreligionists as “self-hating Jews”— a misnomer, if ever there was one. Going by all discernible evidence, these latter-day sons and daughters of Judah do not hate themselves one bit; if anything, they routinely evince a measure of narcissism that bespeaks almost obsessively cultivated self-love.

For evidence, let us submit the publicity photo of Gilad Atzmon. There, the rabidly anti-Jewish Israeli saxophonist, who styles himself as a “philosopher,” stares back at us in the customary pose of the cerebral narcissist — sternly pensive mien complete with a forefinger-on-temple hand prop for further effect.

What Jews like Falk, Bar-Hillel, Blumenthal, and Atzmon hate is not themselves but Israel — and often other Jews. Hold on, you might be objecting, such promiscuously disloyal members of the tribe hate the “Jew” in themselves? Perhaps. Few of us, however, are blessed with the gift of mind-reading, so such speculation must remain purely conjectural.

To many Jews, their pugnaciously anti-Israel fellows remain a puzzle. They should not. A fact invariably overlooked is that relentlessly decrying Israel can bring very tangible benefits for Jews. In an age when opposition to Israel has become a lynchpin of “acceptable” opinion across much of the West, and is a routine

feature of life across the Arab-Muslim world, Jewish anti-Zionists are often feted as minor celebrities by adoring crowds of BDS-minded groupies and “postmodernist” academic types who are conducting a vendetta against Israel with a cavalier disregard for the truth and the facts.

After all, you don't become a special rapporteur for the UN by being openly pro-Israel. Nor do you get invited to pen op-eds for a variety of mainstream newspapers in order to sing the praises of the Jewish State.

And Gilad Atzmon would be no more than an obscure Israeli saxophonist, if not for his fiercely nonconformist views about Jews and Israelis. Yet here he is hailed by reviewers in Britain's *Guardian*, a bastion of anti-Israel advocacy, as “a jazz giant” and “a great musician making an extraordinarily brave attempt to live in the modern world” (whatever that means).

We are speaking here about a man who loves spouting hackneyed, old anti-Semitic tropes, which he regularly does as a columnist for *Veterans Today*, a US-based website of conspiracy nuts, Jew-haters and right-wing extremists.

Atzmon argues that Jews had the Holocaust coming to them over their incorrigible treachery (though in the next breath he may well downplay or deny the Holocaust without any apparent sense of irony). “With Fagin and Shylock in mind,” he opines, “Israeli barbarism and organ trafficking seem to be just other events in an endless hellish continuum [of Jewish brutality and mendacity].”

And here we are. A professor of English, a UN human rights “expert,” the son of a Washington insider, a newspaper columnist, and a flamboyantly slanderous saxophonist find common cause in decrying Jews, and their state, over their treachery, cliquishness and “barbarism.”

But given that they are all Jews themselves, they are impeccably informed, objective and fair-minded observers, and thus they should be taken seriously.

Or so we're expected to believe. ■