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Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: The Formation of a Secret

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Abstract: Kalmar traces a sort of dialectic of demonization, a kind of a noxious ping-pong game, in the cultural history of representing Jews and Muslims in the West. The image of both had been united in a joint construction with roots in medieval Christianity, and which in the nineteenth century was racialized with the label "Semites." This joint image of Jew and Muslim (now more specifically, Arab) included in contradictory ways and at the same time a "prophetic" and a "demonic" aspect. However, by the late nineteenth century anti-Semites robbed it of its prophetic dimension, and reduced to the demonic. At the same time, liberal Jews struggled to achieve the opposite: to discard the demonic and to stress the prophetic in Judaism and Jewish history and at first often also in the broader Semitic, Jewish-and-Arab character. Eventually, after World War II, liberal Jews, especially in America, distanced themselves from the Semitic connection, in order to better stress how similar they were to Christians. The term "Judeo-Christian tradition" came to refer to that alleged commonality and was interpreted as the foundation of American democracy and human rights. Directly related to the growing alliance between the United States and Israel, and more recently the "war on terror" in the Middle East, this de-demonization of the Judaic, however, left a residue. The demonic aspects of the Semitic image were projected onto the other Semite: the Arab and by extension the Muslim. The ping-pong game continued, however, when many Muslims began to demonize the Jews in ways that have no foundation in Muslim history. The specific nature of contemporary Muslim anti-Semitism betrays a debt to traditional, western anti-Semitic stereotypes and hate literature.

Edward Said suggested that Islamophobia was a "secret sharer" of anti-Semitism.[1] This was more than a passing nod to a subject outside of what he was writing about; on the contrary, long, detailed passages in *Orientalism* make it clear that the construction of the Semite was at the core of what Said was writing about.[2] That should hardly have surprised anyone who knows the history of how Jews and Muslims were imagined from the Middle Ages to the mid twentieth century: together, as two of an oriental kind. The real question is how it came about that Said could refer, correctly, to such an overwhelmingly obvious fact as having become a "secret." It was no such

[1] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Verso, 1978), 27-28.

[2] See especially pages 234-242 of *Orientalism*.

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thing to the people who started using the term "anti-Semite" in the late nineteenth century. That was roughly a hundred years after the term "Semite" was first used by German biblical scholars as a label for a language family, whose best-known members were Hebrew and Arabic.[3]

What I would like to do in this article is to ask what happens if we take anti-Semitism at its word, literally that is, as targeting all Semites and not only the Jews. I would like to explore anti-Semitism as one aspect of the long history of the joint construction of Jew and Muslim, and then ask how it is that in more recent times the commonality between Jew and Arab, which the term "anti-Semitism" displays unambiguously, could ever have become a "secret." I intend to stay with the very superficial, etymological issue of the "Semite" in "anti-Semitism." But I do so, of course, in the belief that this is an entry point that can take us much deeper.

"Semitism" was a term that was invented to refer to a language type and a type of human being: a race and what we would now call a culture. It referred above all to the Jews and their biblical Hebrew-speaking ancestors, and to the Arabs. It was a development of an old tradition in the Christian West of regarding Jews and Muslims as distinguishable but yet closely related species of the same religious genre, a tradition going back to the very beginnings of Islam itself.[4] The major changes were two.

First, the substitution of "Arab" for "Muslim" added a clear linguistic and "racial" dimension to the construction of Islam in the West. It was accompanied by a similar identification of the Jews, both biblical and contemporary, as carriers of a distinctive oriental, Hebrew culture and members of an equally distinctive, oriental Jewish race. Second, if the medieval habit was to imagine the Muslims as Judaizers and to compare them to the Jews, from the Renaissance on the tendency was on the increase to imagine the Jews on the pattern of what was becoming known of the Muslims.

There was a common message coming from scholars like the orientalist explorer Carsten Niehbuhr, who in 1772 compared Arab Bedouin to the biblical patriarchs, from Ludwig Schlözer, who in 1781 first used the term "Semitic," from the philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, who in about 1821 declared that Judaism was part of "overall Arab religion," from the writer-politician Benjamin Disraeli, who in 1847 wrote that "God never spoke except to an Arab," including under that label the Jew, and, unforeseen by all of them, from the pamphleteer politician Wilhelm Marr who, according to tradition, invented the term "anti-Semite" in 1879, when he founded an organization called the "Anti-Semites League."[5] That message was, "look, the Jews are like the Arabs." To philo-Semites, including many Jews, this just made the Jews even more interesting in a period of romantic orientalism.[6] But to

[3] The term *Semite* was first used by Ludwig Schlözer, in Johann Gottfried Eichhorn's *Repertorium*, vol. VIII (Leipzig, 1781), p. 161. Eichhorn then established the practice of using "Semitic" to label features of the biblical text that he considered indicative of a broadly Semitic as opposed to a more narrowly Jewish spirit (see his Introduction to the Old Testament, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (Leipzig, 1787), I, p. 45. In his "History of the New Philology," *Geschichte der neuen Sprachenkunde* (Göttingen, 1807) he used it as an established technical term.

[4] For one summary of this tradition, see the introduction to Ivan Davidson Kalmar and Derek J. Penslar, *Orientalism and the Jews*, Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2005.

[5] Niebuhr, Carsten. *Beschreibung Von Arabien Aus Eigenen Beobachtungen Und Im Lande Selbst Gesammelten Nachrichten* (Copenhagen: Müller, 1772); Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Georg Lasson, *Vorlesungen Über Die Philosophie Der Religion. Hrsg. Von Georg Lasson. Mit Einem Bibliographischen Anhang. (Nachdruck Der 1. Aufl. 1925-1927.)* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1966), 18; Ludwig Schlözer, in Johann Gottfried Eichhorn's *Repertorium*, vol. VIII (Leipzig, 1781), 161; Benjamin Disraeli, *Tancred, or the New Crusade* (1847).

the enemies of the Jews it gave intellectual support for claiming that the Jews were, as they liked to say, an "Asiatic" element unassimilable to Christian Europe and western civilization ("Palestinian" in fact was used to describe in a derogatory way the Jews of Germany by the proto-Nazi orientalist and pamphleteer, Paul de Lagarde).[7]

Orientalism was ambivalent: in some ways it feared or condemned the Orient and in others it loved and romanticized it. (This was clear to Said but was lost on some of his followers.) Consequently, the western Christian attitude not only to the Jews but to the Muslims and Arabs and to the Orient was always expressed in a complex variety of emotional modes. It is what one should expect, since the Orient is where the West's founding religion, Christianity, has its roots. In western Christian history orientalism is more the Mother than the Other.

Essentially, the image of the Jew in western Christendom was in many of its transformations always recognizably a mixture of what I would like to call the prophetic and the demonic. The prophetic is founded in the conception of Israel as the receiver of divine revelation, as God's Chosen People. The demonic comes from the biblical suggestion that the Jews betrayed this trust and murdered the Son of God. Though the Muslims were not directly associated with either biblical prophecy or deicide, it was widely believed that Islam represented a resurfacing of Old Testament religion. Harold Bloom has written that after the advent of Christianity "Yahweh … retreated to the remnants of Jewry, until he returned as the Allah of Islam."[8] Bloom accurately captures here a belief that was essential to both the medieval and the modern Christian view of Islam. In the Middle Ages, Islam as allegedly a Judaizing trend was already held guilty of the sins committed by the Jews.[9] In the modern period, as we shall see, it was rather that the sins of the Jews were explained retroactively as the sins of the Muslims.

Then, after long centuries, this dual construction of Jew and Muslim, later Jew and Arab, came unraveled. Jew and Muslim can today be loved and / or hated separately, as though they've always been the nemesis of one another. What happened?

I trace a sort of dialectic of demonization, a kind of a noxious ping-pong game. First the construction of the Semite is robbed by late nineteenth century anti-Semites of its prophetic dimension and reduced to the demonic. At the same time liberal Jews and their friends struggle to achieve the opposite: to discard the demonic and to stress the prophetic in Judaism and Jewish history and at first often also in the broader Semitic, Jewish and Arab character. After World War II, however, liberal Jews, especially in America, distance themselves from the Semitic connection, in order to better stress how similar they are to Christians. The term "Judeo-Christian tradition" comes to refer to that alleged commonality and is interpreted as the foundation of American democracy and human rights. Directly related to the growing alliance between the United States and Israel, and more recently the "war on terror" in the Middle East, this de-demonization of the Judaic, however, leaves a residue. The demonic aspects of the Semitic image are projected onto the other Semite: the Arab and by extension the Muslim. It is at this point, which Said recognized as far back as the late nineteen seventies, that the

[6] Ivan Davidson Kalmar, "Moorish Style: Orientalism, the Jews, and Synagogue Architecture," *Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, and Society* 7(3): 68-100, 2001.

[7] Paul de Lagarde, *Deutsche Schriften* (Jena : Diederichs, 1944), 409, 411 and *passim*.

[8] Harold Bloom, *Jesus and Yahweh: the names divine* (New York, 2005), 98.

[9] For a list of relevant titles in the literature see Suzanne Conklin Akbari, "The Placing the Jews in Late Medieval English Literature, in Ivan Davidson Kalmar and Derek J. Penslar, eds., *Orientalism and the Jews* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2005), 32-50.

Jews seem to free themselves of the burden of Semitism and anti-Semitism.[10] The Arabs and Muslims remain as the only Semites, demonized in much the same ways that the Jews had been before.

The ping-pong game continues, however, when many Muslims begin to demonize the Jews in ways that have no foundation in Muslim history. Not that there was never anti-Jewish prejudice or discrimination in the Muslim world before,[11] but the specific nature of contemporary Muslim anti-Semitism betrays a clear debt to traditional, western anti-Semitic stereotypes and hate literature. Finally, to make things even worse, even in America the old Christian demonizations have not been entirely repressed by the formula of a Judeo-Christian tradition. Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* shocked people in part because it demonstrated that there is still much vitality in the old Christian image of the fanatical, bloodthirsty, deicidal Pharisee, the founding trope, as I believe, of all demonizing orientalism. It would be very naïve to separate the resurrection of this zombie from the growing frustration in America with American policy in the Middle East and the strategic alliance with Israel.

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The Pharisee is in my view the foundational trope of orientalism, the prototype of both intransigent Jew and fanatical Arab. In Christian art he is almost always shown wearing a Muslim-style turban,[12] though Mel Gibson judiciously chose to portray his Pharisees in a garb inspired by an extinct Semite, the Assyrian. The Pharisees were accused of preferring the Law to the Spirit, and a God who is a jealous Master, contrasting with the humble, compassionate Christ. This tradition of contrasting Jehovah with the Christian God goes back to St. Paul and was particularly important in the development of Protestant thought. In the nineteenth century, new orientalist formulations of it became part of both popular and academic theology. The most thoroughgoing reworking of the old theme is, however, probably that of the great philosopher of the Spirit, Hegel.

Hegel systematically expanded the basic Christian critique of Judaism to what he called "Arab" religion. He suggested that the proposition that there is only one God and that "he is a jealous God who will have no other gods before him" is "the great thesis of the Jewish, of overall Arab religion of the western Orient and Africa."[13] Other examples where Hegel identifies Jews with Arabs *or* Muslims include the following passage: "Now the fear of the Lord is, doubtless, the beginning, but only the beginning, of wisdom. To look at God in this light, as the Lord, and the Lord alone, is especially characteristic of Judaism and also of Mohammedanism."[14] The theological consequence of looking at God as only the

[10] Said, *Orientalism*, 286.

[11] Bernard Lewis, especially in his book *Semites and Anti-Semites: An Inquiry into Conflict and Prejudice* (New York: Norton, 1986) is perhaps the founder of a movement by Jewish writers attempting to reverse the earlier idealization by Jewish scholars of the history of Jewish life under Muslim rule. Prejudiced as Lewis is to the point of ignoring the difference I am making here between medieval and modern anti-Jewish feeling among Muslims, many of his historical data are beyond dispute.

[12] Ivan Davidson Kalmar, ""Jesus Did Not Wear a Turban: Orientalism, the Jews, and Christian Art," *in* Ivan Davidson Kalmar and Derek J. Penslar, eds., *Orientalism and the Jews* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England), 3-31, 2005.

[13] That, in any case, is the most literal translation; the German reads *großer Satz der jüdischen, überhaupt arabischen Religion des westlichen Morgenlandes und Afrikas*. Peter C. Hodgson translates it as "the great thesis of Jewish and of Arab religion generally ([the religion of] the Near East and Africa. …) the eastern Orient."

[14] *Hegel's Logic, Being Part I of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830)*, transl. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), section 112, p. 117.

fearsome Lord results in a radical separation of the One God from the world. Even the pantheistic philosophy of Spinoza is interpreted, rather surprisingly, by Hegel as a Jewish separation of a purely abstract God from the concrete world. In the *Philosophy of Religion* Hegel speaks more generally of "Judaism or Islam, where God is comprehended only under the abstract category of the one …."[15]

Hegel dubbed this Judeo-Islamic religion the "religion of the sublime." Bringing in the concept of sublimity, which had been widely discussed earlier by such authors as Lowth, Burke, and Kant, helped Hegel to unite two strands of imagining Jews and Muslims which had previously been relatively separate: a theological strand and a political one.

Gil Anidjar, in *The Jew, the Arab: A History of the Enemy*, a book where he develops Jacques Derrida's thoughts on the relation between Jew and Arab-Muslim, posits a distinction in the western imagination between the Jew as the theological enemy and the Arab as the political one.[16] The distinction is not meant to be a rigid one at all; rather it refers to two poles of a gradation, just like the political and the theological are part of a joint formation that Anidjar calls, in an idiosyncratic adaptation of Carl Schmitt, the politico-theological.

If the theological matter of God's election of the Jews as a chosen people is what in the Christian and Jewish mind differentiates the Jews from their "Semitic cousins," it is the political matter of the oriental despot that distinguishes the Arabs and Muslims from the Jews. The ancient prototype of the oriental despot was the Greek image of the autocratic rulers of Persia, but the immediate model was the Ottoman Sultan. Alain Grosrichard has written brilliantly on the use of the oriental despot figure by Montesquieu and his contemporaries during an age when absolute monarchy exercised political thought in Europe and America.[17]

The use of the oriental despot as a trope in arguments about western government and the western economy persisted into the nineteenth century. In Hegel it is assimilated fully to that of the Judaic and the Islamic God. Both The God of the religion of the sublime and the oriental despot are radically removed from their subjects, who obey them with unquestioning fanaticism. Both level distinctions among their subjects, and present a simple opposition between the One ruler and an interchangeable crowd of slavish worshippers. This splendid isolation in a worshipped sphere beyond human understanding is what makes the despot, no less than Jehovah or Allah, sublime. Oriental despotism, in sum, is the political expression of the theology of the sublime. (No wonder that "the Sublime Porte" was one of the most popular expressions used in the West to refer to the Ottoman government.)

Hegel was not anti-Jewish; on the contrary, he supported granting equal rights to Jews at a time when that was still a controversial issue.[18] However, his systematic contrast between Judaism and Islam on one hand and Christianity on the other de-emphasized the Jewish element in western Christian history and could be mobilized to externalize the Jew as an incompatible alien. That was exactly the agenda of the anti-Semites. Amidst the labor unrest and stock market crashes of the so-called Long Depression that began in the eighteen sev-

[15] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Peter Crafts Hodgson, *Lectures on the philosophy of religion, 3 vols., vol. 2 (Berkeley, 1987). 156.* Emphasis added.

[16] Gil Anidjar, *The Jew, the Arab: A History of the Enemy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).

[17] Alain Grosrichard, *The Sultan's Court: European Fantasies of the East* (London and New York: Verso, 1998).

[18] The definitive work on Hegel and the Jews is Yirimyahu Yovel, *Dark Riddle: Hegel, Nietzsche, and the Jews* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1998).

enties, those among the petite bourgeoisie who blamed the Jews were building on vaguely Hegelian ideas as well as social Darwinist theories of race war (Patrick Tort long ago called this complex of ideas *Hegelo-Darwinisme*)[19]. In the label "anti-Semitic" they hit on a powerful image to depict themselves as defenders of Europe against parasitical "Asiatics" doomed by racial heritage to always remain outsiders to the Aryan continent.

Some of the anti-Semitism of the late nineteenth century was in direct response to romantic Semitism, which stressed the debt that Christian religion and civilization owed to the oriental civilization of the Semites and most relevantly the European Semites, the Jews. The anti-Semitic orientalist scholar Paul de Lagarde quite explicitly declared that the purpose of anti-Semitism was "to fully eliminate the romantic from the study of the historical relations between East and West."[20]

One of the material expressions of romantic Semitism were the large, centrally located synagogues built by liberal Jewish communities, mainly in Central and Western Europe and North America, in an Islamic-inspired style, which featured horseshoe windows and other Islamic ornamentation including even minarets, recalled in a picturesque way what period architects explicitly referred to as the Semitic racial relationship. (The idea that these synagogues referred to the alleged glories of Jewish life in Moorish Spain came much later, along with the term "Moorish style synagogue" used to label such buildings.[21])

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This picturesque architectural nod to the oriental character of the Jews was matched, however, by a determined erosion among liberal Jews of anything else that might radically differentiate them from Christians. The outward reforms of Jewish worship— large synagogues with organs, rabbis preaching sermons in the vernacular from pulpits, a general sense of decorum replacing the unsupervised and undisciplined chanting of the Orthodox *shul*, matched reforms in the liturgy and theology. Eager to stress the similarity between Christianity and Judaism, liberal Jews in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries learned to stress the Prophets over the Torah and the Talmud, though the latter were and are the mainstay of Orthodox Jewish theology.

Because liberal Jews emphasized the place of the Jews within the community that they were living in, most of them were at first passionately opposed to Zionism.[22] However, when liberal Judaism, now known as Reform, was transplanted to and eventually took its strongest roots in America, it confronted the fact that an increasing and eventually dominating proportion of American Jews came from or traced their origins in the Russian Empire, and that the anti-Jewish atrocities committed there had combined with other factors to convince this public of the need for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. But what was even more important is that, in spite of what the liberal, mostly "German"-American[23] Jews had feared, Zionism did not make most

[19] Patrick Tort, *Evolutionnisme et linguistique* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1980).

[20] Adolf Wahrmund, in *Das Gesetz des Nomadenthums und die heutige Judenherrschaft* (Karlsruhe and Leipzig, H. Reuther, 1887), p. viii gives the reference as coming from Paul de Lagarde, *Deutsche Schriften*, p. 89. I have not been able to locate the passage on that or any other page of any edition of Lagarde's book available to me.

[21] Ivan Davidson Kalmar, "Moorish Style: Orientalism, the Jews, and Synagogue Architecture," *Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, and Society* 7(3): 68-100, 2001.

[22] This fact is far too well known to need a set of references, but one recent contribution to the relevant debate is Yakov M. Rybkin, *A threat from within: a century of Jewish opposition to Zionism* (Black Point, N.S.: Fernwood Publications, 2006).

Americans hostile to American Jews at all.

Historically, Protestant Messianism has combined in the United States with the powerful trope of Americans as the latter day Children of Israel conquering a promised land. Benjamin Franklin had even proposed Moses and the Israelites crossing the sea as the seal of the Union.[24] Approval by Jews, the original chosen people, has always had a certain legitimizing value for gentiles receiving divine inspiration: both Luther and Muhammad sought Jewish converts to buttress their supersessionist claims, and when most Jews refused to join them they spoke angrily of Jewish intransigence. But lately American gentiles stopped requiring the Jews to convert to Christianity, and have instead suggested that they and the Jews are *already* of the same religion: the American civic religion called "the Judeo-Christian tradition." Even most secular Jews in America have religiously embraced the offer. In turn, the enthusiastic participation in the national community of the Jews as the original chosen people is probably part of what gives America, in the eyes of many Christians, its legitimation as a global moral force.

This moral force is buttressed among other things by America's assumption of the role of protector of the memory of the Holocaust. The national Holocaust Memorial Museum in the heart of the Washington cityscape stands where a Moorish style synagogue would have stood in pre-Nazi Germany: close to the civic center, though admittedly still just a little to the side.

The overlap between Holocaust guardianship and the Israeli-American alliance is too overwhelming to be overlooked. Indeed, the very term "Holocaust" came into widespread use as a label for the Nazi murder of millions of Jews when American television aired the special series, "Holocaust," in 1978. The highly popular series was presented in the midst of a slow but definite change in American attitudes on supporting Israel militarily, which culminated in 1981 with the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement on Strategic Cooperation by Caspar Weinberger and Ariel Sharon, during the administrations of Reagan and Begin.

The 9/11 attacks only intensified that process. The demonic aspects of Islamism: the despotism and fanatical obedience to a strict God and his uncompromising legal code, the murderous hostility to western civilization play back the demonic aspects of the classic construction of the Semite. Islamism, and for the less sophisticated or politically correct, Islam itself, is now the abject, to use Julia Kristeva's term,[25] of the demonizing aspects of Semitism, of which the Jews have more or less managed to free themselves. Anti-Islamism is the new anti-Semitism. From the beginning this military cooperation was in the minds of many Americans, both religious and secular, associated with the messianic ideal of America's role as a global power fighting for freedom and democracy. This moral strategic alliance was greatly strengthened when the leader of a group of turbaned fanatics in Afghanistan ordered an attack, as theatrical as it was murderous, on the prime visual symbols of global capitalism, the World Trade Center towers in New York. The im-

[23] In Germany and Austria-Hungary, German language and culture dominated Jewish communities well beyond what is Germany today, especially in Bohemia and Moravia and parts of Hungary including Budapest. The "German"-American Jews often had roots there, or were descended from Germanized Jews who had recently immigrated to Germany or the German-speaking parts of Austria-Hungary.

[24] Franklin, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson sat on a committee in 1776, tasked to develop a device for the seal of the United States. Franklin's proposal was not adopted, but his suggestion, in the form of a note in his own hand-writing, is said to have been preserved (http://www.greatseal.com/committees/firstcomm/index.html, accessed October 29, 2007).

[25] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

age of Osama bin Ladin, in his deliberately designed "traditional" outfit and headwear, perpetua[26]tes the classic image of the Semite of which the western Jews have just about managed to get themselves rid of, especially in America. Said noticed the process at work during the oil crisis of the 1970s. He referred to anti-Arab cartoons of oil sheiks that appeared in the press then. Their bearded faces with hooked noses, and their hands clutching money bags, drew heavily on anti-Semitic stereotypes. "The transference," Said wrote, "of a popular anti-Semitic animus from a Jewish to an Arab target was made smoothly, since the figure was essentially the same."

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But we cannot end there. I am not sure if Hegel was right that every thesis in the history of ideas engenders its antithesis, but it does appear to be so in the case we are investigating. Redirecting anti-Semitism to target Muslims alone has been followed by some Muslims turning it back on the Jews. When such Muslims embrace today the classic tenets of western anti-Semitism, they are doing something that they learned from the West, not from their own tradition. The most important examples are Holocaust denial and the embracement of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, both of which Edward Said had so vigorously condemned long ago.[27] King Hussein of Jordan referred to the ancient kinship between the children of Abraham at the time of signing a peace treaty with the Jewish State, and on many other occasions. Muammar Gaddafi, the Libyan leader, suggested a one-state solution in Palestine in terms of recognizing that same kinship. In such a unitary state, he said, "We don't care who will win the election, Palestinian or Israeli. We don't care; at the end of the day they are all Semitic, they are Semitic and they are cousins."[28]

Such statements might have some foundation in Muslim tradition: if we go by the commonly accepted view that the Arabs are the descendants of Ishmael and the Jews of Isaac then the Qur'an and the Bible agree that they are cousins. But the term "Semite" derives from Sem, a son of Noah who is not mentioned in the Qur'an or in any significant Islamic tradition. It is most likely that Hussein and Gaddafi were deliberately using an essentially western concept to address a western audience. (They might have pleased Joe Lieberman, the senator from Connecticut and a Jew, who suggested to a largely hostile group of Arab-Americans in 2003: "We are Americans. We are children of the same God and of the same father, Abraham. We are quite literally brothers and sisters."[29]) But when Arabs talk to Arabs, it appears, references to Jewish cousins, if any, are rarely serious. Anti-Jewish references are not.

One is not surprised to hear Nazi-style outbursts from Arab and Muslim leaders, or from resistance fighters in Iraq, both local and foreign, who angrily declare that they are fighting "the Jews." Such sentiments cannot be disconnected from opposition to the alliance between the United States and Israel. In this Muslim and Arab version of demonizing the Jews, anti-Semitism is virtually indistinguishable from anti-Americanism, though apparently opinion differs as to whether Israel is primarily a puppet of the American Great Satan or America primarily a puppet of the

[26] Said, *Orientalism*, 286.

[27] Edward Said, "A Desolation, and They Called it Peace" in *Those Who Forget the Past: The Question of Anti-Semitism*, ed. by Ron Rosenbaum (New York: Random House, 2004), 518.

[28] Colonel Muammar Ghadafi, satellite interview with an audience at the Oxford Union, broadcast on BBC's "Have Your Say," May 20, 2007.

[29] "Andrew Wyatt, "Lieberman Heckled During Speech to Arab-American Group," *The New York Times*, October 18, 2003.

Jews. More often it seems that in this form of prejudice the puppeteer and the puppet are the same.

One thing that many Muslim anti-Semites share with many Jewish Americans is a belief in a deep-reaching, indeed eschatological alliance between America and Israel and its foundation in a Judeo-Christian tradition that can be opposed to Islam. Yet those American friends of Israel who look at things this way should not grow too complacent. The odd couple of Jew and fundamentalist Christian may not be quite the *Match Made in Heaven* that Zev Chafets calls it somewhat sarcastically in the title of his recent book.[30] The demonizing streak in Christian supersessionism may not be as easy to eject onto a new enemy as it may seem. John Paul II said that Mel Gibson's *Passion* showed it just like "it was;" but what the film most faithfully revived was the traditional, medieval to baroque image of the wounded, suffering Christ. There was no doubt in the Middle Ages about who his murderers were.

The most poignant example of a contemporary crime leveled at Semites is "9/11." The culprits are, evidently, Arabs. Yet there is an uncanny feeling abroad that it might have been the other Semites. I am not as concerned by the theory according to which the attack was orchestrated by the CIA and the Mossad; though I believe that the accusation is unsubstantiated it is at least within the realm of the possible. What is far more shocking is the rumor that 4,000 Israelis, or in a later version 4,000 Jews, stayed away on 9/11 in order to save their lives. Such large-scale complicity requires that 4,000 people participate in a network that is capable of warning them of an impending terrorist act, without a single one of them betraying the conspirators. I imagine myself as a New York Jew getting a phone call from the plotters, "We are going to blow up the World Trade Center, don't go in today." And I and 3,999 other New York Jews stay home, and none of us alerts their gentile colleagues or the authorities. Who but a nation of fanatics unquestioningly obedient to their leader (in this case not a sultan or sheik but the Israeli government and/or the Mossad), could act so treacherously to their colleagues and neighbors? A nation of demons, not a single of one them feeling any compassion for victims other than their own: surely that is just what the worst Islamophobes believe about Muslims. *Now* there are Muslims who believe it about Jews.

Not only Muslims. I am not aware of such a poll, but imagine what would happen if you could get non-Jewish Americans of all backgrounds to search their hearts and honestly rate on a scale of 1 to 10 how believable the Jews-blew-up-the-Twin-Towers story sounds to them. With 1 for "I do not believe it at all" and 10 for "I fully believe it," who among us can doubt that quite a few otherwise reasonable people would find their answer lying somewhere in the 2 to 3 area, if not higher?

This irrational suspiciousness towards the Jews, though still rather subterranean, is directly related to the very rational perception that America's and Israel's Middle East policies are identical, and that they are both and in identical ways misinformed, misguided, and misanthropic.

That does not make it justified. Anti-Semitism, the socialism of the fools, is now also the anti-Zionism, anti-Americanism, and anti-colonialism of the fools. For those of us who are on the left, anti-colonialist, and also Jewish, the situation is almost too much to bear.

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[30] Zev Chafets, *A Match Made in Heaven: American Jews, Christian Zionists, and One Man's Exploration of the Weird and Wonderful Judeo-Evangelical Alliance* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2008).