

steaming from the outside. Israel-bashing is the current manifestation of centuries-old Jew-hatred.

As discussed, historically, the evolution of Judaism was not dictated organically by the Jews, as much as in the Jewish response to actions by outside actors, such as the decisions by the Babylonians and Romans to expel the Jews from Judea, or by the Persians to allow exiled nations in their empire to return.

Jews do not control the nature of the threat to their existence. For example, in 20th-century Europe, a Jew could not have converted out of the threat, nor claimed that he is a proud German or a proud French who has long left Judaism.

When most Jews were in Europe, the anti-Semitism ideology became a potent threat. It was an ideology that was developed in response to the Jews' emancipation and success. Indeed, this ideology matured into the systematic genocide of European Jewry.

Now that Jews are out of Europe, the same underlying hatred has followed them to Israel. A new ideology has emerged. Like anti-Semitism that preceded it, after a few years of brewing, Israel-bashing is gaining popularity and acceptability in mainstream European circles and around the world, in particular with young audiences.

The threat does not just put the State of Israel in danger. Israel is merely the vehicle that the Israel-bashing movement uses to direct its frustration against the Jews. On the individual level, the Israel-bashing ideology puts every Jew in danger, regardless of his views about Israel. This is especially true since the Israel-bashing movement has both a retail component and an institutional arm that can serve as effective mechanisms to destroy Israel.

The strengthening of those mechanisms over the past decades that could in theory be deployed towards Israel's destruction, such as the UN, the International Criminal Court, and other multinational organizations and coalitions, makes this threat a tangible one.

Such mechanisms were instrumental in destroying other "pariah" states such as South Africa and Baathist Iraq.<sup>4</sup>

While it is true that strong allies of the Jewish state are found in mainstream European leadership, the increasing mainstreaming of the Israel-bashing movement in Europe should be worrisome. Moreover,

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4 – Apartheid South Africa collapsed in 1994 and was forced to dismantle its nuclear weapons after intense international pressure. Baathist Iraq collapsed in 2003 after international pressure that was followed by international military action.

one of the key lessons of the 1973 Yom Kippur war, when Israel faced the threat of military destruction, is that one must not analyze the enemy's intentions, but assess its capabilities. As the arsenal of mechanisms, such as international sanctions and binding multinational resolutions are strengthening, the danger of political destruction of the Jewish state becomes more viable.

Political destruction through outside institutions is not the only ammunition of the Israel-bashing movement. Demoralization and attrition can be equally lethal. As the Israel-bashing movement gains popularity and penetrates Jewish society, and Israel itself, the higher the risk becomes that some Israelis would "give up" and opt to move elsewhere, or alternatively, defend their country with less vigor.

*(iii) Relation between the magnitude of the threat and likelihood of materialization*

The three existential threats to Judaism progress in inverse order: the most immediate threat is the least damaging, and the most far-fetched is the most lethal.

- The threat of evaporation of American Jewry is the least potent threat to the survival of Judaism, since it merely affects half of the Jewish nation. This threat, though, is already in the process of being materialized. The core of the American Jewish community is on a path towards evaporation. If this threat fully materializes, then by default, Judaism would turn to Judaism 3.0, since nearly all Jews would live in Israel, where Zionism is the connecting thread. The most imminent threat to Judaism is one that Judaism can sustain.
- In the middle, post-Zionism is a fringe movement affecting only those on the outskirts of Israeli Jewish society. But undercurrents in Israel and its aggressive promotion from outside make this latent threat real and viable.
- The threat of Israel-bashing is the most lethal threat to Judaism. Just like previous episodes of popular institutional Jew-hatred, if this threat materializes in its full potency, it could lead to the eradication of Judaism. The vehicle for the fulfillment of this threat is powerful – the political extinction of the state of the Jews. The third exile may be even more lethal than previous ones, since Jews in the first two exiles were able to survive by remaining as a distinct community in exile – something that is less likely today in an integrated global environment. Yet, the strength of Israel and of the Zionist ideology, as well as the solid support it gets from those countries who currently control those lethal mechanisms, makes this threat the least likely to be fulfilled.

and indeed with greater global support – the longing for Zion would be the longing for Zionism.

#### 4. JUDAISM 3.0 ROBS THE ISRAEL-BASHING MOVEMENT OF ITS STARTING POINT

Key to the Israel-bashing movement's success is the fortification of the Judaism 2.0 narrative: Judaism's organizing principle is its religious aspect, and moreover, Judaism is merely a religion. Since Israel-bashers are attacking Israel and not the Jewish religion, the logic goes, their efforts are legitimate and do not represent Jew-hatred or any sort of hatred.

The argument that anti-Israel attacks are not anti-Jewish attacks are accepted not just by the attackers, but also by a meaningful portion of the defenders, not to mention observers. The more it becomes accepted that Judaism is merely a religion and not a nation, the stronger the legitimacy of the Israel-bashing movement is. Or in reverse, if it is made clear that Judaism's anchor is its national aspect – Zionism, then the Israel-bashing movement would lose much of its legitimacy.

Moreover, Judaism staying in Judaism 2.0 enables the Israel-bashers to make their movement into one of love and liberation: It is not an attack on Jews, it is an attack on Zionism, and an attempt to liberate Jews from the malaise of the occupation and colonialism that was inflicted on Judaism through Zionism. According to this narrative, Israel-bashing helps the Jews and Judaism, since it eradicates a rogue anomaly that occurred in Judaism a century ago – Jewish nationalism.

Recognizing the transformation to Judaism 3.0 robs the Israel-bashers of their starting point. It also underscores the built-in hypocrisy. Most of those who make such arguments “in defense of the Jewish religion” are secular and even anti-religious. It is illogical that Israel-bashers suddenly turned into defenders of religion. Even by their own logic, consciously or subconsciously, willingly or unwillingly, Israel-bashing is Jewish-bashing. The response must be on the national level, since that is the only arena that concerns the attackers.

Increased Jewish religiosity, revival of Jewish literature and culture, greater emphasis on bagel and lox or on Tikun Olam are all irrelevant to the attempts of the Israel-bashers and even supports their cause by showcasing the strength of Judaism outside Zionism.

##### *(i) Where does the lethal Israel-bashing threat lie?*

Many dismiss the Israel-bashing threat as an existential threat to Judaism, claiming that it only lies on the fringe. Part of it is a confusion of

terms. Most notably when it comes to BDS. The Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement is only a fragment of the amorphous Israel-bashing coalition. While it is true that BDS and other extreme expressions of Israel-bashing originate mostly in the fringe, realities are more complex:

- This fringe has been successful at mainstreaming its message. The BDS movement, for example, has sympathizers with various degrees of enthusiasm through the European mainstream, and within far-left circles in the United States. Even the Israel-bashers' term for Israel – “the genocidal colonialist Zionist entity” – gets traction with some mainstream critics of Israel's policies, who are exposed to the Israel-bashers' messaging on social media. This is especially the case in times of military conflict, such as the one with Hamas in May 2021, when media coverage is focused on Israel and emotions run high. Then, the Israel-bashers' messages are not viewed as “fringe,” but rather as a component in the pro-Palestinian side of the conflict.
- This fringe is attaining more and more political power. This was reflected in the rise of Jeremy Corbyn in the UK, a candidate for prime minister in 2019, and the rise of the so-called “squad” in the US Congress in 2018.<sup>10</sup> The prospects of a 2022 Democrat primary between incumbent New York Senator Chuck Schumer, who at times refers to himself as “Shomer Israel” (guardian of Israel) and Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a member of the squad who called Israeli defense operations in Gaza a “massacre,” could symbolize the inflection point when the fringe becomes the mainstream.
- More alarming is that the core of the existential threat from Israel-bashing is not even in the fringe. The most lethal expression might come from those who are not part of the movement, but are influenced by it. They are friends of Israel in the heart of the European mainstream and by extension in Europhile circles in North America. Those are not merely sympathetic to some of the fringe's messages but are actually influenced by the Israeli-bashing culture. When media outlets describe Israeli defense operations against Hamas in Gaza as “Israel attacks Palestinians” and when they rationalize Hamas firing indiscriminate rockets into Israeli

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10 – The squad consists of young progressive members of the US Congress: Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, Ilhan Omar of Minnesota, Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts and Rashida Tlaib of Michigan. In 2021, Jamal Bowman, who defeated Rep. Elliot Engel, became the newest member.

cities, the Israel-bashing poison inevitably trickles into the global mainstream. That is particularly the case with younger audiences who have a more active social media presence and are more vulnerable to social pressure. There are social circles whose entry point is acknowledgment that Israel engages in massacre, ethnic-cleaning and genocide in Palestine (just as in the past, there were social circles whose entry point was the acknowledgment of the widely accepted belief that Jews use the blood of Christian children to prepare Passover Matzos). This happened in the May 2021 conflict, when the Israel-bashing message carriers were no longer on the fringe. Respectable news personalities, late-night comedians, business leaders, and even some politicians and diplomats labeled Israel's actions against Hamas military targets as "murder," "bombing Gaza indiscriminately," and "targeting civilians." Some suggested Israel should not take any measure to strike back at Hamas, and instead rely on its Iron-dome rocket defense system. (There were 12 Israeli casualties from Hamas rockets, as well as hundreds of injuries and thousands of trauma injuries of various degrees.) Similarly, the notion that the eviction of eight Palestinian families in a civil property dispute amounts to "Ethnic Cleansing" was adopted by some mainstream friends of Israel who were merely "expressing criticism." Indeed, when a ceasefire was announced after 11 days of fighting, the rockets stopped, but the poison that infected the mainstream has stayed. This is just like through the centuries, after seven days of Passover, Jews were no longer making Matzos, but the poison spread by the blood-libels resonated in the mindset of the European mainstream.

These three factors amount to a frightening reality. Just like anti-Semitism that preceded it, and nearly eradicated Judaism a few decades after it first appeared as a fringe movement, Israel-bashing has spread and is now present throughout the spectrum of the world's touch-points with the Jews.

Just like anti-Semitism, it has moderate "polite" elements, as Herzl called them, and extreme elements, such as those who were calling for outright negation of Judaism in Herzl's time, and of Israel today.

Where does the danger to Judaism lie? Is it from the outspoken, outright BDS activist who is openly calling for an end to Israel? Or is it in the "polite elements," such as a European government official who packages his criticism in the context of friendly words to an ally, and has both legitimacy and the fulfillment mechanism?

*(ii) The path to destruction through Israel-bashers-lite*

The path to Israel's destruction was, until recently, a military one. As recent as in 1973, this path nearly materialized. But today, the threat of a military invasion from Arab armies has greatly subsided, due to a number of factors: Those strong armies that served as the path to Israel's destruction have been severely weakened – such as the Syrian and Iraqi armies. It is also due to the changing interests of the Arab nations, who no longer want to destroy Israel. In fact, most Arab countries view a strong Israel to be in their strategic interest and some of them have recently struck peace treaties with the Jewish state. Finally, it is due to the further fragmentation of the Arab world, and the further strengthening of the Israeli military and intelligence capabilities.

Now that the military path towards the elimination of Israel has subsided, another path to Israel's destruction has opened up – the political path. Israel's adversaries recognize this.

Hence, the vehicle to end the Zionist endeavor is no longer through military means, but through influencing multinational organizations: the UN and their various agencies, the International Criminal Court, the EU and even individual European governments.

The dream of the Israel-basher is that the UN Security Council will strenuously condemn, maybe even impose sanctions that will demoralize the Israelis. If the sanctions and isolation are strong enough, the thinking goes, the Israeli elite would simply leave, leading to a domino effect and the end of Israel. Same goes for actions of the International Criminal Court who could order mass arrests of Israeli soldiers and citizens living in the West Bank and in Jerusalem. The mere threat of arrest can paralyze Israelis' travel, business and freedom – akin to the threat of terrorism.

While some might even fantasize of upgrading the sanctions against Israel into intentional use of force like in Yugoslavia, the more realistic path to destroy Israel is a diplomatic war of attrition against the Jewish state. This path to destruction does not go through the hardcore of Israel-bashers, but rather through sympathizers of the Israel-bashing movement. While the hardcore Israel-basher might be in the fringe, the Israel-bashers-lite and sympathizers have spread into the core of European governments, the EU, multinational organizations, the media and hence, to public opinion. In particular, it has a strong presence in the young generations. It then percolates through Europe's sphere of influence into the United States – to college campuses, academic circles, civic groups, the media and the cocktail receptions in New York and Los Angeles.

The Israel-bashers-lite present an immediate existential threat to Israel and thus to Judaism. The threat is not to the religious aspects of Judaism, nor to the immediate safety of individual Jews (Judaism 2.0). It is funneled specifically through Israel and Zionism. Hence, recognizing the transformation would go a long way to confront the threat.

### Ecosystem of frustration in Europe

What makes the threat from the Israel-bashers-lite even more dangerous is the ecosystem of frustration already described. Those built-up European frustrations are bound to find an outlet at one point or another, and if history is the judge – that outlet tends to be the Jews. This is already evident in the intensifying European political opposition to the Jewish state and the lack of public outcry to its outrageous actions, such as product labeling or implying that Jerusalem has no Jewish connection.

Such lack of public outcry to early symptoms of a massive anti-Jewish movement is a recurring phenomenon in Europe. In previous episodes of European assaults on Judaism, the public outcry was passive or at best weak.

Europe is in its early stages of dealing with its new frustrations. During the Coronavirus pandemic, anti-Semitic accusations in Europe went rampant, and many accusations were directed at Zionism. For example, in early 2021 as Israel became the world's leading vaccinator of its population and Europe was struggling, a new version of the good-old European blood-libel emerged: "Israel is vaccinating its people, while letting the Palestinians die of Covid." Ironically, this came from the same people who view the Palestinian Authority as a sovereign government and refer it as "the State of Palestine."

More alarming are the set of long-term European frustrations that are looking for an outlet. It has only been one hundred years since its unexpected fall from grace and abrupt shift of power to the United States, yet European deniability is still paramount. Similarly is the European radical shift from a religious society to aggressive secularism as well as the extreme shift from monarchies to liberal democracies that occurred over the last two centuries. As discussed, there is increasing evidence that Europeans are not sufficiently prepared for such shifts. Same goes for Europe's conflict with Islam and its dealing with new domestic-generated terrorism. These new and growing European frustrations mean that there will be a receptive ear to the menacing Israel-bashing movement.

*(iii) External threats push Jews towards one another*

In the past, the mere existence of a threat was not sufficient for the Jews to transition or transform. The threat needed to mature and even materialize in order for Jews to reluctantly transform.

As long as there is plausible-deniability, the Jews will linger in the old frameworks (along the line of the Biblical narrative of the “Egyptian watermelons” as a sign of stability of Israeli life in Egypt).

Herzl recognized this human behavior pattern and hence, along with identifying the threat to Judaism, he also recognized a positive aspect of the threat: “There, in anti-Semitism lies the will of God to benefit [the Jews] – for it pushes us towards one another and unifies us. Its pressures unite us and such unity liberates us.”

Applying Herzl’s logic to today, it is possible that Israel-bashing today may be the will of God to push Jews towards one another and unite around their Zionist identity, to liberate Jews from their past and unify under Judaism 3.0.

How should Judaism adjust to the new existential threat of Israel-bashing? First and foremost, to recognize that it exists as an existential threat to Judaism. So far, this has not happened.

Israel-bashing tends to get diminished into the limited category of BDS – the movement to Boycott, Divest and Sanction Israel. As discussed, the BDS movement tends to be associated with fringe elements and is generally viewed as an outlier. BDS is certainly not an existential threat to Judaism, but Israel-bashing is – it has the mechanism, philosophy, popular support and resources to eradicate the Jewish state and hence, to eradicate Judaism.

Acknowledging that Israel-bashing is an existential threat which is alive and real goes a long way. This is especially given the errors of the past.

When anti-Semitism emerged in the late 19th century, it was treated in a similar way to BDS today – just a little movement on the fringe. There was a failure to recognize that anti-Semitism was the current manifestation of the centuries-old Jew-hatred. It even took Herzl time to do so. As mentioned, he first developed what he described as a “liberal attitude” towards anti-Semitism. Once he recognized the magnitude of the threat, Herzl tried to alert the Jews, but he encountered widespread ambivalence. Being rejected early on by a group of French rabbis and intellectuals, he concluded: “French Jews look at my idea in hostility. I did not expect it to be anything else. It is too good for them here. Too good for them to think that a situation can change.” Indeed, when the situation changed for the worse for French Jews, it was too late.



Today, a danger looms, but it is still not too late to recognize and counter this danger. And yet, the danger of Israel-bashing is often dismissed, since just like for the French Jews of 1895, there is sufficient plausible-deniability that allows today's Jews to enjoy the "Egyptian watermelons."

## 5. CONCLUSION: THREAT AS THE PROPELLING FORCE TO THE TRANSFORMATION

Theodor Herzl identified anti-Semitism as a key enabler of Jewish survivability. Jews being rejected by Europeans forced them to stay insular and led to the unlikely preservation of Judaism.

Today, the threat of Israel-bashing forces Jews into their Zionist identity, while the threat of post-Zionism awakens latent Zionist sentiments in Israel. Similarly, the reality of evaporation of American Jewry forces the "Jewish Question" upon American Jews.

The mere recognition of the transformation to Judaism 3.0 goes a long way in providing protection from those new existential threats to Judaism. It strips Israel-bashers of the false argument that the assault is not against Judaism, but merely against Zionism. It neutralizes much of the lethal diplomatic capability of the Israel-bashers, and in particular the Israel-bashers-lite. Keeping in mind the politically correct culture of the organizations that are at the forefront of the Israel-bashing movement, a recognition that Zionism is the organizing principle of Judaism, would deny them the luxury of claiming Israel-bashing is not Jewish-bashing – it would turn Israel-bashing into a profound non-politically correct activity. That is in particular in Europe.

Europe's last go at the Jews is audaciously now used as a weapon against Israel. The diabolic narrative that is increasingly trickling into mainstream circles suggests that saving the Palestinians from Israel is applying the lessons of the Holocaust.

Recognizing the transformation would put an end to the Israel-basher's shameful attempt to recruit the battle against anti-Semitism into their own cause.

Recognizing the transformation would also defend against the threat of demoralization of Israeli society. If Jews are led to believe that indeed the attacks against Israel are semi-legitimate and are not against the Jews, this could lead to attrition of Zionist ideology in Israel and the strengthening the post-Zionism narrative described earlier.

The nascent narrative in Israel that suggests that "we are sick and tired of fighting" also has a diplomatic branch: "We are sick and tired of

being condemned by the UN.” It also has a self-esteem branch: “We are sick and tired of being scolded by the BBC and rejected by Europeans.”

All of those applications of externally inflicted fatigue present an existential threat to Judaism due to attrition, due to surrender. But the transformation to Judaism 3.0 further emphasizes the reality that there is no “surrender option.” At best there are illusions that a surrender option exists. The 2005 Gaza withdrawal and aftermath provided strong evidence for the existence of this illusion. The widespread notion at the time that “if we only get out, we will be loved by the UN” and that Israel would have the “moral high-ground” should it encounter terrorism from Gaza was shuttered three years later. Israel’s defending itself from a barrage of Hamas missiles was met not only with condemnation from the UN, scolding from the BBC and rejection by Europeans, but with an unprecedented escalation in the age-old saga of Jew-hatred, labeling Israel’s self-defense actions as a “crime against humanity!”

Under the transformation, it would be clear that labeling Israel’s right to self-defense as a crime against humanity is the same as labeling the Jews’ right to self-defense as a crime against humanity. (Jews killed over 100 Germans in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.) Such labeling puts Europeans and other Israel-bashers back in a position that they are not comfortable with. Hence, it would curtail such Israel-bashing capabilities.

More importantly, the transformation would underscore that one cannot “convert” out of the problem of Israel-bashing. The recognition that there is no “surrender option” to Israel-bashing is similar to past episodes of Jew-hatred where there was no surrender option, only illusions of surrender. And hence, recognizing there is no “self-correcting” or “surrender” option would push Jews into their Judaism, and in particular would block the effort to demoralize Israeli society.

### *(i) Threat as condition to change*

Research shows that people are less likely to make a change in order to obtain a gain, than they are to make a change in order to avoid a loss in the same magnitude. Therefore, a transformation from an existing state of affairs is not likely, unless there is a real and tangible risk of losing what currently exists. This happens when there is a recognition that things are about to change for the worse unless a transformation occurs.

Netflix transformed from an online DVD rental store since it had no choice. People were no longer renting DVDs. It realized that if it kept its current state of affairs, it would go out of business. It recognized that it had to transform in order to survive. Same with an individual who