



המרכז הירושלמי לענייני ציבור ומדינה  
Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs

by *Adam Levick*

Published December 2009

No. 92, 1 January 2010 / 16 Teveth 5770

## Anti-Israelism and Anti-Semitism in Progressive U.S. Blogs/News Websites:

### Influential and Poorly Monitored

*Adam Levick*

- Sixty-seven percent of the worldwide internet population visit social networking sites and blogs (web 2.0). These are now outpacing email in popularity. According to Nielsen Online they have become the fourth most popular online category. The popularity of political blogs is increasing as traditional media struggle to stay afloat.
- The three most popular progressive political blogs in the United States are Huffington Post, Salon, and Daily Kos. These three together have over thirteen million unique visitors per month.
- Within these three blogs a number of historical anti-Semitic staples appear frequently: excessive Jewish power and control over society/government; Jewish citizens are more loyal to Israel than to their own country; Israel resembles Nazi Germany; Israel is demonized.
- In part because of the huge size of the blogosphere - there are thousands of bloggers at Daily Kos alone - such hateful commentary often escapes the kind of scrutiny that the traditional media faces. A major challenge is that anonymity provides bloggers with moral impunity.

### Progressive Political Blogs, Jews, and Israel

Progressive blogs and news sites in the United States are a new field where Jew-hatred, in both its classic and anti-Israeli forms, manifests itself. This incitement is hardly monitored, as many of the most popular blogs are only a few years old and it seems counterintuitive that such anti-Semitic expressions would be found in this political milieu. Monitoring the media for anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli bigotry has so far almost exclusively consisted of reading the major American newspapers, magazines, and journals and attending to the three major news networks, as well as radio broadcasts. However, the huge amount of content in the political blogosphere makes such monitoring - which is increasingly necessary - much more difficult to achieve with any degree of thoroughness.

The phenomenon of proliferating anti-Semitism in blogs should be seen in a much broader framework. Sixty-seven percent of the worldwide internet population visit social networking sites and blogs (web 2.0), and these are now outpacing email in popularity. According to Nielsen Online[1] they have become the fourth most popular online category. They trail only web searches, general interest portals and communities, and manufacturers.

The political blogosphere encompasses a number of important sites both on the conservative and progressive side. As ranked by a combination of Inbound Links, Alexa Rank, and U.S. traffic data from Compete and Quantcast, the most popular progressive political news sites in the United States are Huffington Post, Salon, and Daily Kos.

These three together have roughly thirteen million unique visitors per month. Huffington Post, launched in 2005, has about ten million; Salon, launched in 1995, over two million; and Daily Kos, launched in 2002, about a million.[2] For comparison, Nytimes.com has over seventeen million monthly visitors,[3] while the *New York Times's* daily print circulation is close to a million.[4] The three top conservative news websites are Drudge Report with nearly seven million unique monthly visitors, NewsMax with over 2.5 million, and Free Republic

with 1.5 million.

The popularity of political blogs is constantly increasing as traditional media, with falling advertising revenue and much greater costs associated with publication, struggle to stay afloat. For instance, the most popular news website on the internet, Huffington Post, has around fifty full-time employees;<sup>[5]</sup> the *New York Times* employs more than nine thousand.<sup>[6]</sup> Bloggers at Huffington Post are not paid for their work.<sup>[7]</sup> That model, along with the absence of costs associated with putting out a print edition, allows such blogs to maintain a remarkably large amount of continually updated, new content. Daily Kos has eight paid staffers<sup>[8]</sup> and does not even have an actual main office. According to its founder Markos Moulitsas Zúñiga, business is conducted in a "virtual" office.

## The Challenge of Monitoring

In part because of the huge size of the blogosphere, such hateful commentary often escapes the kind of scrutiny that the traditional media faces. The amount of material on the websites of the major blogs makes monitoring them very difficult. The Daily Kos alone, for instance, has thousands of bloggers who contribute to the site, many of whom provide new content daily. In addition, each new blog post often produces hundreds of reader comments - threads that often are poorly monitored by the site if at all.

A major challenge in maintaining some sense of accountability is the fact that some sites, such as Kos, allow bloggers - and those who comment to such posts - to provide a blogger user name instead of their real name. This anonymity may embolden those who would generally be reluctant to attach their names to hateful statements, providing them with a kind of moral impunity. A columnist for the *New York Times* or other traditional print media, or a letter submitted by a reader at such a publication, is easily identified by name and influenced, at the very least, by the fear of public opprobrium.

Some sites, such as Huffington Post or Salon, have readily identifiable contributors. Yet, despite their popularity, the ever-increasing quantity of such bloggers makes each individual blogger less accountable than when such commentators on the national scene were far fewer.

## Historical Anti-Semitic Staples in Three Blogs

Anti-Semitic commentary on the three progressive blogs in question falls into three categories.

### 1. Excessive Jewish Control/Power over Society/Government

The claim that Jews wield disproportionate power and influence over culture, the economy, media, and especially the institutions of government, a power that is injurious to the nation - often rising to the level of a Jewish conspiracy - is clearly anti-Semitic in nature. The U.S. State Department's *2008 Report on Global Anti-Semitism*<sup>[9]</sup> notes that anti-Semitism includes "stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as a collective-such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions."

Within polite circles Jews are no longer accused of "poisoning the wells." Yet they are still often accused of running Hollywood, controlling the financial system, and manipulating U.S. foreign policy and public debate to blindly support Israel. This latter claim, in particular, is all too common in the commentary reviewed in this article.

### 2. Dual Loyalty: Jews More Loyal to Israel than to the United States

One of the oldest anti-Semitic staples is that Jews are not sufficiently loyal to the countries where they reside and instead are more loyal to Israel. Indeed, this notion underlay the failure of European emancipation. From the Dreyfus Affair in France through the Nazis' rise to power, Jews - no matter how devoted they actually were to their host countries - were viewed as outsiders lacking in national loyalty.

Such ad hominem attacks against American Jews who support Israel are common within the blogs in question. The "Working Definition of Anti-Semitism" of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia defines as anti-Semitic: "accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations."

### 3. Israel as Nazi Germany

Since Israel has only been a state for sixty-one years, this is a much more recent manifestation of anti-

Semitism. In most working definitions of anti-Semitism, however, charges that Israel's behavior can be compared with the actions of Nazi Germany are considered anti-Semitic. A recent report by the Anti-Defamation League shows that such comparisons are increasingly common among anti-Israeli activists.[10]

Protests against Israel's [Gaza](#) offensive in 2008-2009 included banners and slogans likening Israeli soldiers to German troops, the Gaza Strip to Auschwitz, and the Star of David to the swastika. As the U.S. State Department *Report* notes: "the demonization of Israel, or vilification of Israeli leaders, sometimes through comparisons with Nazi leaders, and through the use of Nazi symbols to caricature them, indicates an anti-Semitic bias rather than a valid criticism of policy concerning a controversial issue."

## Salon: Glenn Greenwald

Salon, part of Salon Media Group, is an online magazine with content updated each weekday. It offers reviews and articles about music, books, films, and "modern life," including relationships. Its major focus, however, is American liberal politics. Salon's revenues are derived from in-page advertisements as well as subscriptions. Its current editor in chief is Joan Walsh.

Glenn Greenwald is one of Salon's regular political contributors, and his blog stands out in popularity and influence. Although he is Jewish, he does not refer to this. He also has contributed to the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *The National Interest*, and *In These Times*. Interestingly, Greenwald also has penned columns for Patrick Buchanan's paleoconservative magazine *The American Conservative*, often on Israel-related stories.[11]

Since Greenwald's blog is within the broader Salon web address, it is more difficult to measure the traffic his blog generates alone. His blog, however - apart from Salon's general traffic - is typically ranked in the top fifteen (in overall traffic) among all liberal blogs, and in the top twenty in a category including all print and online bloggers/columnists.[12] On 22 January 2009, *Forbes* named Greenwald one of the "25 Most Influential Liberals in the U.S. Media." [13]

## Greenwald vs. Israel and Jews

Greenwald not infrequently vilifies supporters of Israel and Jews as such, including implications of dual loyalty and excessive control. Parts of a Greenwald article that was originally posted on *The American Conservative* are cited on the website of right-wing extremist David Duke. He refers to Greenwald as one of those brave enough to resist the "Likudniks' politically kosher paradigm"[14] and quotes Greenwald's assertion that "large and extremely influential Jewish donor groups are the ones agitating for a U.S. war against [Iran](#), and that is the case because those groups are devoted to promoting Israel's interests." Although, seemingly, such charges of the corrosive influence of "Jewish money" and insufficient American Jewish loyalty to the United States are typical of right-wing extremism and classic anti-Semitism, Greenwald has a liberal affiliation.

Greenwald writes frequently about Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He often focuses on how the conflict plays itself out in American politics, and he makes claims - associated recently with Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer - about the power of the Israel lobby in this political debate. Indeed, the rhetoric Greenwald employs in this context is often much less restrained, and much more hyperbolic, than the more academic style of Walt and Mearsheimer.

## Greenwald's Charges of Excessive Jewish Control/Power

Greenwald consistently warns of an organized, dangerously powerful Jewish community that uses intimidation and smear tactics to stifle debate on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He argues that the tactics employed by such Jews have a chilling effect on U.S. freedom of speech. He also claims often that criticism of Israel is forbidden and hazardous to the career of those who engage in it. Of course, his own harsh anti-Israeli statements have not harmed his career at all. Following are some examples:

So absolute has the Israel-centric stranglehold on American policy been that the U.S. Government has made it illegal to broadcast Hezbollah television stations.<sup>[15]</sup>

Not even our Constitution's First Amendment has been a match for the endless exploitation of

American policy, law and resources [by the Israel lobby] to target and punish Israel's enemies.<sup>[16]</sup>

The real goal [of the Israel lobby], as always, was to ensure that there is no debate over America's indescribably self-destructive, blind support for Israeli actions. [Charles] Freeman's critics may have scored a short-term victory in that regard, but the more obvious it becomes what is really driving these scandals, the more difficult it will be to maintain this suffocating control over American debates and American policy.<sup>[17]</sup>

The point is that the power the [Israel lobby] exercises [is] harmful in the extreme. They use it to squelch debate, destroy the careers and reputations of those who deviate from their orthodoxies, and compel both political parties to maintain strict adherence to an agenda that is held by a minority of Americans; that is principally concerned with the interests of a foreign country; and that results in serious cost and harm to the United States. In doing so, they ensure not only that our policies towards Israel remain firmly in place no matter the outcome of our elections, but also that those policies remain beyond the realm of what can be questioned or debated by those who want to have a political future.<sup>[18]</sup>

Anyone who has argued that a desire to protect Israeli interests plays too large of a role in our foreign policy has been subjected to some of the most vicious and relentless smears. Ask Juan Cole about that, or John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt. Those tactics have, as intended, prevented a substantive debate on this question, as most people have feared even approaching the topic.<sup>[19]</sup>

[Eisenhower] told Israel that "we handle our affairs exactly as though we didn't have a Jew in America" - and [this] was then likely an uncontroversial sentiment. Today, if an American politician said anything remotely like that - that American interests would take precedence over Israel's...how many seconds would elapse before the full-scale and permanent destruction of their political career was complete?<sup>[20]</sup>

If you don't...pledge your loyalty to our policies toward Israel and to Israel, what will happen to you is what just happened to Charles Freeman. You'll be demonized and have your career ended.<sup>[21]</sup>

## Greenwald's Charges of Dual Loyalty

Greenwald accuses Jews who support Israel of having excessive emotional and cultural attachment to the Jewish state - a support, he implies, that is injurious to U.S. national security interests. The implication is that the only way American Jews could show their loyalty to the United States is by ceasing this support of Israel; moreover, that the two inherently contradict each other. Here are some examples (the first was cited earlier):

large and extremely influential Jewish donor groups are the ones agitating for a U.S. war against Iran, and that is the case because those groups are devoted to promoting Israel's interests.<sup>[22]</sup>

Those who favor the attack on Gaza are certainly guilty...of such overwhelming emotional and cultural attachment to Israel and Israelis that they long ago ceased viewing this conflict with any remnant of objectivity.<sup>[23]</sup>

The dominant narrative among neocons and the media is that, deep down in his heart, [Obama] may be insufficiently devoted to Israel to be President of the United States. Has there ever been another country to which American politicians were required to pledge their uncritical, absolute loyalty the way they are, now, with Israel?<sup>[24]</sup>

[Charles] Freeman is being dragged through the mud by the standard cast of accusatory Israel-centric neocons (Marty Peretz, Jon Chait, Jeffrey Goldberg, *Commentary*, *The Weekly Standard's* Michael Goldfarb, etc. etc., etc.).<sup>[25]</sup>

## Greenwald's Demonization of Jewish Israel Supporters

Also of note are Greenwald's extreme accusations against well-known Jewish pro-Israeli commentators, using

almost demonizing terminology. In one post he accuses Michael Goldfarb of *The Weekly Standard* and Martin Peretz of *The New Republic* of "psychopathic derangement" over what he characterizes as their insensitivity toward civilian deaths. He goes on to impute to them "sociopathic indifference," and says these are the same attributes as terrorists possess. Goldfarb and Peretz, he says further, seem to get a "blood-pumping excitement" from the suffering of the weakest members of society.[26]

Regarding syndicated columnist Charles Krauthammer, Greenwald asserts: "It is difficult to find someone with a more psychopathic indifference to the slaughter of innocent people in pursuit of shadowy, unstated political goals than Charles Krauthammer." [27] And Greenwald calls Senator Joe Lieberman, in the context of his support for Israel, a "bloodthirsty" fanatic.[28]

## Daily Kos: Background

Daily Kos is a progressive blog publishing news and opinion. It functions as a discussion forum and group blog for a variety of activists, whose efforts are primarily directed toward influencing and strengthening the Democratic Party. The site makes clear that "This is a Democratic blog, a partisan blog...with one goal in mind: Electoral victory." [29] Additionally, the site features a participatory political encyclopedia, glossaries, and other permanent content.

Daily Kos is an example of a collaborative blog, offering comment-posting privileges to its visitors. Daily Kos was founded by Moulitsas in 2002. It is financially sustained by advertising. Members can also purchase an ad-free subscription to the site.

In June 2006, members of Daily Kos organized the first-ever political blogger convention, called YearlyKos, in Las Vegas, Nevada. The event was attended by approximately one thousand bloggers and featured appearances by prominent Democrats such as Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid, California Senator Barbara Boxer, General Wesley Clark, Governors Mark Warner, Bill Richardson, and Tom Vilsak, and Democratic National Committee Chair Howard Dean. Subsequent annual conventions became known as Netroots Nation and also were attended by an array of prominent Democratic Party leaders.[30]

The rules for Daily Kos diarists state that posts/comments may be deleted that:

- Contain hateful or defamatory writing
- Are deliberately designed to inflame
- Contain deliberately inflammatory titles, or titles that contain attacks

## Daily Kos: Israel Equals Nazi Germany

Narratives advancing the third abovementioned anti-Semitic staple, Israel as Nazi Germany, appear perfectly acceptable in the Daily Kos community. It is common to find commentary that describes a Jewish state whose behavior is nothing short of evil, and even descends to the level exhibited by Nazi Germany.

On Israel-related news, one of the most frequent Daily Kos bloggers is one called Heathlander[31] who also maintains his own blog.[32] Heathlander has penned diaries - which are still up on the Kos website - with such headlines as "Suicide Bombings Are An Inevitable Result Of Israel's Military Policies"[33] and "Israeli war criminals - in their own words." [34] In one post Heathlander says: "Just as the French had the right to violently resist the Nazi occupation...so the Palestinians have the right to violently resist the Israeli occupation." [35] In one long post, Heathlander would not condemn a fellow Kos blogger who used the term "Zionist Occupied America." [36]

A Kos blogger called monkeypundit penned a post, still on the Kos site, titled "The Rise and Irony of the Zionist Reich." It claims that "Israel's government has policies that have become morbidly reminiscent of Nazi Germany's." In a poll at the end of the post, readers were asked to vote on the question: "Do you see the parallels between the Israeli Government and Nazi Germany?" Of Kos readers responding to the poll, 65 out of 146 said "Yes." [37]

A Kos blogger named makechessnotwar penned "In defense of violence," where he compared Israel with Nazi Germany and accused the Jewish state of practicing ethnic cleansing. The blogger states, "We should...cheer destruction of Israeli infrastructure, including telecommunication and transport, just as we do in the movies

when Nazi infrastructure is bombed or hit," and "there are times when violent acts may be needed to defend themselves against the atrocities being visited on them by the barbarians in charge of Israel." [38]

Kos blogger "jon the antizionist jew" penned a long entry, "Israeli minister threatens Palestinians with a 'Holocaust,'" where he ponders the similarities between Israel and Nazi Germany. The post quotes authors who are quite unreserved in their likening of Nazis and Jewish Israelis, such as Illan Pappé, Richard Falk, and Sara Roy. It concludes by saying: "A Zionist Israel will always look to the Holocaust as the all-purpose justification for their violence towards the Palestinian Other (in defense, of course), and they will always recoil at the process by which the Israeli state comes to resemble its past tormenter in the dishing out of such systematic violence and horror." [39]

Kos blogger Snowy Owl's Diary says, in a post still on the site:

The Warsaw Jewish Resistance saved so many lives, just as [sic] [Hamas](#) saved so many lives. But now U.S. and Canada do not want a Nuremberg kind of Court to look out on Israeli war...crimes. I presume because Israel, unlike the Nazis, have not yet been crunched [sic]. I know...that their day will come as any other Nations in history, but why will it need so many deaths from the all out war that Israel is leading us? I honestly believe the Israeli God made a mistake in calling them the chosen ones. God...probably had other values than humans [sic] one[s]. [40]

## Jewish Conspiracy at Daily Kos

For the most part, when conspiratorial charges of undue Jewish influence are leveled on Kos, they are thinly veiled by putting the word Zionist before the word Jew. In the several examples given, however, even this thin, disingenuous distinction between "Zionist Jews" and "regular Jews" breaks down.

Kos blogger Poli Sci 000 posted a diary on Kos called "Apartheid Israel trying to start World War III." It refers to a "secret Jewish coalition raising funds in excess of \$200 million to wage a propaganda war in America in an attempt to gain American support for another war against Iran." The post later refers to President Bush's former press secretary, Ari Fleischer, as Joseph Goebbels. [41]

Kos blogger Felipe IV posts a title: "Zionist Jews are now a crowd in the Obama Cabinet," pasting an article from a website called cherada.com. The article complains that "Most of the officials who will integrate [sic] the cabinet of Obama are renowned operators of the Jewish Zionist Financial lobby of New York." [42]

Another Kos blogger called qrswave has penned diaries about Israel with such headings as "Imagine a world without Israel." In that one he openly longs for a world where Israel does not exist and waxes eloquent on the peace and harmony that would result from the destruction of the Jewish state. [43] Although qrswave has apparently lost his posting privileges, this and other posts he wrote are still on the site. So is his profile, which links to his own openly anti-Semitic blog, *The Truth Will Set You Free*. [44]

One post on *The Truth Will Set You Free* quotes Charles Lindbergh warning in 1941 that the Jews are the only ones pushing the United States toward war. [45] Another post refers to *The Diary of Anne Frank* as "Zionist fairy tales." [46] Still another argues that all U.S.-based Zionist organizations should be dismantled for treason and disloyal Zionist Jews banned and deported to Israel. [47]

Kos blogger Nepos Libertas is also a blogger at *The Truth Will Set You Free*. Nepos Libertas has one post at Daily Kos titled "Eulogy before the Inevitability of Self-Destruction: The Decline and Death of Israel." [48] It includes a photo of a coffin superimposed with the Israeli flag and refers to a "Zionist movement multiplying like cancer cells." It also accuses Israel of "embodying the vessel of boiling blood of horror and perfidy in demonic vileness for its pattern of terrorism and murder in the name of Zionist ideology." It goes on to state that "After the murder of JFK, Israel has extended its Zionistic tentacle to grasp the United States by the neck," and concludes:

When Israel loses in the great hypothetical battle...in the unforeseeable future, it shall deploy the spread wings of nuclear warheads to destroy adversaries and allies in the obliteration of innumerable millions of human beings, animals and organic life, inferring its conceived truth of absolute moral relativism as having possessed annihilative power in taking the world down with Israel in the orgiastically ethnocentric finale of existentially triumphant self-destruction as the ultimately defeated enemy of the civilized world. This is the bidding of a farewell formed in the

extension of a middle finger by the militantly atheistic Luciferian Ashkenazic Jewish sect that - resolved they be - believe in - by genetic predisposition and/or indoctrination from birth - supremacism of the Master Race, because they have accomplished the goal of procreating State of Israel to dominate in hegemony by the art of seduction....

At the end of the post is a graphic containing the Israeli flag, with a swastika superimposed on the Star of David. Notably, this post is still on the site.

Apparently, those in charge of this progressive do not regard such comparisons between Israeli Jews and Nazis, or explicitly anti-Semitic descriptions of Jews and Israel as demonic forces seeking the destruction of the world, as either hateful or sufficiently inflammatory to be removed from the site.

## Eyal Rosenberg and Daily Kos

Eyal Rosenberg, an Israeli blogger associated with the Left, seemingly should have been the ideal match for this political blog that is popular with Democratic Party activists. Yet his last post on the site explained his decision to leave Kos: "Reading the [comments] over the past months on Daily Kos has led me to believe that people here, under the 'progressive' banner, support views that end up in one place: Me dead." He went on to complain of the "many comments and diaries here show[ing] HAMAS was flexible and peace loving, versus those evil warlike Zionists...."

Rosenberg concluded:

Reading this site for the past few months has me feeling like I was reading the writings of West European communists in the 1970's: Confidant, [sic] just, well written, scientific, moral (remember the 'evils' of capitalism?). Yet - in the view of history - utter garbage. I came to this site with Leftist Zionist Environmentalist Pro-Peace ideology (Meretz style). I leave it with a heavy doubt of the entire "Progressive" ideology, morals and goals.[49]

## Huffington Post

Explicitly anti-Semitic remarks on the comments section of Huffington Post, the largest political online magazine on the web, became so severe that the media watchdog group CAMERA issued a comprehensive report titled "Has Huffington Post Become a Magnet for Israel Haters?"[50] The report demonstrates that articles about Israel, whatever their specific topic or ideological position, often generate a barrage of unsubstantiated charges as well as ad hominem attacks against dissenting commenters. "A dedicated crowd of anti-Israel commenters" seem to be on permanent alert for articles dealing with Israel. Accusations against Jews and Israel, popular among political fringe groups, are leveled routinely.

## Background

Huffington Post is a progressive news website and aggregated blog founded by Arianna Huffington, Kenneth Lerer, and Jonah Peretti. It features various news sources and columnists and covers politics, media, business, entertainment, living, style, the environment, world news, and comedy. It is a top destination for news, blogs, and other original content. In four years Huffington Post has become the most linked-to site on the internet.[51]

Huffington Post was launched on 9 May 2005 as a commentary outlet and liberal alternative to conservative news aggregators like Drudge Report. In November 2008, Huffington Post completed a \$15 million fundraising drive from investors to finance expansion including more investigative journalism and the provision of local news across the United States.

A 2008 report by Eric Alterman in *The New Yorker* said Huffington Post had finally broken even or was on the verge of posting modest profits based solely on advertising revenue. That revenue is believed to amount to \$6-10 million annually.[52]

## The CAMERA Report on Huffington Post

CAMERA reviewed talkback threads following news stories or essays pertaining to Israel that have appeared on Huffington Post since 2006, and found that "crude and often vile slanders against Jews and Israel" were common.

Yet, in the talkback section of the site, Huffington Post states that comments will be deleted that:

- are abusive, off-topic, use excessive foul language
- include ad hominem attacks including comments that celebrate the death or illness of any person, public figure or otherwise
- contain racist, sexist, homophobic and other slurs

CAMERA's tally of 236 sequential entries from a portion of the comment thread - containing over one thousand comments - following one article about Israel found that 73 percent condemned Israel or Jews. Most often this took the form of accusing Jews of controlling the government and being disloyal. Among the most common topics raised by Israel's critics in this sample of 236 entries were:

55 contended that AIPAC or the "Jewish Lobby" control the US government.

35 raised the charge of dual loyalty by Jewish members of Congress.

11 focused on alleged Jewish control of the media....

24 were more generalized anti-Semitic rants lacking any specificity.

## Israel Commentators at Huffington Post

A look at the Israel section of the site reveals that Huffington Post is quite comfortable with columnists who routinely express disdain for the Jewish state and for Zionism more broadly. Such writers include:

Antony Loewenstein:[53] Cofounder of the group Independent Australian Jewish Voices, Loewenstein has echoed Tony Judt's characterization of Israel as an "anachronism"[54] and accused its Diaspora supporters of believing in Jewish racial superiority. His blog, Antonyloewenstein.com, contains posts with titles such as: "Jew Demands We Stay Focused on Oppressing Arabs"; "One State Solution Moves Closer and Closer"; "South African Jews Killing Arabs in the Name of Zionism"; "War with Iran is not Inevitable, No Matter what Zionists Say";[55] "How to dismantle Zionism in a few easy steps."[56]

Jumal Juma:[57] Coordinator of the Palestinian grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign, which supports boycotting Israeli goods, Juma occasionally writes for the radical anti-Zionist newsletter/blog Counterpunch.[58] Going even further than the article in the Swedish tabloid *Aftonbladet* that charged Israelis with harvesting the organs of Palestinians, Counterpunch recently made news by claiming that the blood libel - the notion that Jews ritually murdered gentiles - is true and is related to such organ thefts.

Kevin Coval:[59] A poet, Coval was disinvited from the left-wing J Street's inaugural conference because of incendiary comments he had made. Coval, however, recently penned a piece for Huffington Post titled "Why I'm Not A Zionist." [60] In it he states:

I cannot believe in the...Zionist project. It's built on bodies and lies.... One of its slogans, rooted in the same malicious revisionism as American History and Holocaust denial, is, A land without people, for a people without land.... The formation of the State of Israel is rooted in blood and deceit, is the same story as all colonies built in the name of Imperialism, Capitalism and Dehumanization. Therefore, I am not Zionist.

Phyllis Bennis:[61] A member of the steering committee of the US Campaign to End Israeli Occupation, Bennis, at an event held by Friends of Sabeel in North America, stated: "Israeli policies are designed to suppress one racial group while favoring another." She also demanded an end to the U.S. "unconditional support for Israeli apartheid." In a 2008 booklet called "Iran in the Crosshairs: How to Prevent Washington's Next War," Bennis defends Iran and argues that President Mahmoud [Ahmadinejad](#)'s calls to "wipe Israel off the map" were



misinterpreted. Actually, "the threat is the other way around" because Israel is pushing for a war against Iran. She concludes by asserting that a major reason for U.S. toughness toward Iran is that "Israel's powerful lobbies" have "embraced Israel's approach to Iran" and have created a "serious stumbling block" to efforts to prevent a war against Iran.[62]

Adam Shapiro:[63] A cofounder of the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), which spreads anti-Israeli propaganda and supports those who engage in terror against Israel, Shapiro found himself in the media spotlight when he accompanied an ambulance to Yasser Arafat's headquarters in Ramallah after it was surrounded by the Israeli military in 2003. During his stay he reportedly had breakfast with Arafat. Shapiro has spoken throughout the United States about the ISM's activities and, according to the Anti-Defamation League, has compared Israeli behavior toward Palestinians to that of the Nazis.

## Conclusions

Taken together, the more than thirteen million unique monthly visitors to Huffington Post, Daily Kos, and Salon represent the opinions of many of the most politically engaged within the American progressive community. The increasing hostility toward Israel and its Jewish supporters on these blogs becomes even more worrisome in light of polling data on the views of such progressives.

For instance, an aggregate poll[64] by Gallup on American support for Israel by party affiliation, from 2002 to 2006, demonstrated that liberal Democrats are the least supportive of Israel out of five categories: conservative Republican, moderate/liberal Republican, conservative Democrat, moderate Democrat, and liberal Democrat. When asked whether they support Israel, the Palestinians, or neither/don't know, only among the liberal Democrats did a clear majority of 55 percent either support the Palestinians or respond with "neither/don't know," with only 43 percent supporting Israel. Conservative Republicans were the most pro-Israeli, with 78 percent supporting Israel outright. Indeed, many of the more popular conservative blogs/news sites - such as Drudge Report, Newsmax, Townhall, and Hot Air - tend to be supportive of Israel. They also are largely free of the strain of paleoconservative thought, exemplified by *The American Conservative*, that has historically been hostile to Jews and Israel.

There is even evidence to suggest that the outright anti-Semitism featured in this report is consistent with the increasing identification with such views among the American progressive community as a whole. A Stanford University poll[65] in May-June 2009 gauged the extent to which anti-Semitism was increasing as a result of the U.S. economic crisis. Respondents who were self-described Democrats were nearly twice as likely as those who identified themselves as Republicans to agree that Jews, as a group, were primarily responsible for the economic meltdown. The authors called this finding "somewhat surprising given the presumed higher degree of racial tolerance among liberals and the fact that Jews are a central part of the Democratic Party's electoral coalition."

Seemingly, even for those who deny that hatred of the Jewish state represents a new form of anti-Semitism it would be difficult to defend the manifestations of classic anti-Semitism - staples of dual loyalty, Jewish control, and so - seen in these blogs. Such sentiments harken back to the racially and religiously based anti-Semitism of centuries past, a historically lethal force that self-styled progressives should ostensibly be in the forefront of resisting. And yet, a blogger with a large national following such as Glenn Greenwald, among others, can bemoan the corrosive effects of "Jewish money" and still be considered a progressive in good standing. This is despite the fact that progressive politics is supposed to entail a commitment to combating bigotry of all kinds and a sensitivity to even subtle negative stereotypes.

Likening anti-Semitism to pollution, in a [Jerusalem Post](#) interview Manfred Gerstenfeld[66] makes a distinction between that "which comes out of a chimney and spreads over a huge area" and that "which comes from the exhaust pipes of millions of cars, each one contributing its little bit." The former, he says, was characteristic of the Nazi era with its "leader," Adolf Hitler, as the central cause of the anti-Semitic smoke the world over. The latter, Gerstenfeld claims, characterizes today's postmodern form of the phenomenon: global but fragmented, with no single leader. Indeed, this aptly describes the new, diffuse media with its myriad of political blogs that lack any central and readily identifiable address, or "boss." This situation enables the new media to escape the regular and focused scrutiny that previously existed.

It is impossible to know just how much harm such rhetoric emanating from progressive blogs is causing. But it is time for principled progressives to take a stand against those in their own ideological community who claim to oppose all forms of intolerance but exhibit it blatantly toward Israel and Jews.

During an appearance by Martin Luther King at Harvard University, a student stood up and made a sharply hostile comment about Zionism. King responded: "When people criticize Zionists they mean Jews, you are talking anti-Semitism." [67]

Such moral clarity is needed to confront the increasingly acceptable hatred of Israel - and Jews - within the American progressive community.

\* \* \*

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Before moving to Israel in 2009, Adam Levick worked in the Civil Rights Division at the National Office of the Anti-Defamation League, where he was responsible for monitoring progressive journals and political blogs in the United States. He has published in the *Philadelphia Bulletin* and the *Jewish Exponent*.

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JCPA, Beit Milken, 13 Tel Hai St., Jerusalem 92107, Israel, Tel: 972-2-5619281 Fax: 972-2-5619112, [jcpa@netvision.net.il](mailto:jcpa@netvision.net.il)

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