



Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

**Wednesday Small Group (via ZOOM!)
Antisemitism, Zionism, and Israel**

Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church, Hayward, CA, 26 May 2021, 3:30 PM

OPENING SONG: The Exodus Song (Performed by Aryeh Leib Hurwitz)

4 min

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVaRAjkdu7o>>

CHALICE LIGHTING / PRELUDE

0.5 min

In this circle of trust and respect, let us stretch our minds and hearts around topics that stretch them further. Let us lift our minds and hearts toward topics that lift them higher and higher. Let us be reminded that this ministry of circles holds the power not just to affirm, but to transform our lives individual and communal. Let us gather once again, lighting our chalice, that our time together might be illumined in spirit and in truth. *Jan Carlsson-Bull*

OPENING WORDS

0.5 min

It is hardly possible to overrate the value, for the improvement of human beings, of things which bring them into contact with persons dissimilar to themselves and with modes of thought and action unlike those with which they are familiar ... It is indispensable to be perpetually comparing [one's] own notions and customs with the experience and example of persons in different circumstances ... There is no nation which does not need to borrow from others. *John Stuart Mill*

MEDITATION / CENTERING

2 min

The first sound of the gong brings us to silence. Please take time to center yourself, and temporarily push aside whatever might be preventing you from participating fully in this session. The second sound of the gong returns us to each other's presence.

CHECK-IN (2 ROUNDS)

40 min

Please share some thing(s) about your life since last we met.

INTRODUCTORY CONSIDERATIONS

15 min

Definitions

Nationalism: Per Wikipedia, nationalism is a way of thinking that says that some groups of humans, such as ethnic groups, should be free to rule themselves. Nationalists think that the best way to make this happen and

avoid control or oppression by others is for each group to have their own nation. Some nationalists think this is the best way to save small and weak groups threatened by the mixing of ethnic groups. The other definition of nationalism is the 'identification with one's own nation and support for its interests, especially to the exclusion or detriment of the interests of other nations.'

Zionism: The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary offers a tersely neutral definition: A movement for [originally] the reestablishment of a Jewish nationhood in Palestine, and [since 1948] the development of the State of Israel.

Law of Return: From the Jewish Virtual Library: Passed in 1950, The Law of Return grants every Jew in the world the automatic right to immigrate to Israel--and immediately become a citizen of the state. The law was changed in 1970 under the stewardship of Prime Minister Golda Meir to stipulate that what the government meant by every Jew was that those born to a Jewish mother, those with a Jewish maternal grandmother, those who had converted to Judaism or those who married a Jew by those distinctions could be accepted for the immediate citizenship.

By contrast, Arab states define citizenship strictly by native parentage. It is almost impossible to become a naturalized citizen in Arab states such as Algeria, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. Several Arab nations have laws that facilitate the naturalization of foreign Arabs, with the specific exception of Palestinians. Jordan instituted its own "law of return" in 1954, according citizenship to all former residents of Palestine, except for Jews and Gazans. In 2004, however, Jordan began revoking the citizenship of Palestinians who lacked Israeli permits to reside in the West Bank.

Anti-Semitism: Hostility to or prejudice against Jewish people.

Working Definition (IHRA Definition—IHRA=International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance): A 38-word statement on antisemitism that reads:

Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

Accompanying the definition are 11 illustrative examples, of which 7 relate to Israel.

SONG: Children of Poland (written and performed by Sy Kahn) 3 min

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1oCXoYKgpU&list=PLm4isM9epVg8jj-nFbjRSu7XAAsOV8O7&index=86>>

The "three Ds" or the "3D test" of antisemitism was formulated by Israeli politician Natan Sharansky to distinguish legitimate criticism of Israel from antisemitism. The three Ds stand for (1) *Delegitimization* of Israel, (2) *Demonization* of Israel, and (3) Subjecting Israel to *Double standards*. Each of these indicates antisemitism. This test was used by the U.S. Department of State from 2010 until 2017, when it was replaced by the IHRA Working Definition.

In 2020, **Independent Jewish Voices (Canada)** published a definition of antisemitism that states: "antisemitism is not an exceptional form of bigotry. People who hate, discriminate and/or attack Jews, will also hate,

discriminate and/or attack other protected groups—including racialized people, Muslims, LGBTQ2+, women, Indigenous peoples."

On March 25, 2021, the **Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (JDA)**--based on universal human rights principles-- was presented by a group of over 200 eminent Jewish scholars. They defined antisemitism as "... discrimination, prejudice, hostility or violence against Jews as Jews (or Jewish institutions as Jewish,)" and made it clear that "while antisemitism has certain distinctive features, the fight against it is inseparable from the over-all fight against all forms of racial, ethnic, cultural, religious and gender discrimination."

Irwin Cotler, a Professor of Law at McGill University and a scholar of human rights, has identified nine aspects of what he considers to constitute the "**new anti-Semitism**":

- ◆ Genocidal antisemitism: calling for the destruction of Israel and the Jewish people.
- ◆ Political antisemitism: denial of the Jewish people's right to self-determination, de-legitimization of Israel as a state, attributions to Israel of all the world's evils.
- ◆ Ideological antisemitism: "Nazifying" Israel by comparing Zionism and racism.
- ◆ Theological antisemitism: convergence of Islamic antisemitism and Christian "replacement" theology drawing on the classical hatred of Jews.
- ◆ Cultural antisemitism: the emergence of anti-Israel attitudes, sentiments, and discourse in "fashionable" salon intellectuals.
- ◆ Economic antisemitism: **Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movements** and extraterritorial application of restrictive covenants against countries trading with Israel.
- ◆ Holocaust denial.
- ◆ Anti-Jewish racist terrorism.
- ◆ International legal discrimination ("Denial to Israel of equality before the law in the international arena").

Cotler defines "classical or traditional anti-Semitism" as "the discrimination against, denial of or assault upon the rights of Jews to live as equal members of whatever host society they inhabit" and "new anti-Semitism" as "discrimination against the right of the Jewish people to live as an equal member of the family of nations--the denial of and assault upon the Jewish people's right even to live--with Israel as the "collective Jew among the nations."

Brian Klug defines classical antisemitism as "an ingrained European fantasy about Jews as Jews," arguing that whether Jews are seen as a race, religion, or ethnicity, and whether antisemitism comes from the right or the left, the antisemite's image of the Jew is always as "a people set apart, not merely by their customs but by their collective character. They are arrogant, secretive, cunning, always looking to turn a profit. Loyal only to their own, wherever they go they form a state within a state, preying upon the societies in whose midst they dwell. Mysteriously powerful, their hidden hand controls the banks and the media. They will even drag governments into war if this suits their purposes. Such is the figure of 'the Jew,' transmitted from generation to generation."

QUOTES ABOUT ANTI-SEMITISM

10 min

I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions; fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, heal'd by the same means, warm'd and cool'd by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you

tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die?
And if you wrong us, do we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that.”

William Shakespeare

Can anything be more disgusting than to hear people called 'educated' making small jokes about eating ham, and showing themselves empty of any real knowledge as to the relation of their own social and religious life to the history of the people they think themselves witty in insulting? [...] The best thing that can be said of it is, that it is a sign of the intellectual narrowness—in plain English, the stupidity which is still the average mark of our culture.

George Eliot

I regard anti-Semitism as ineradicable and as one element of the toxin with which religion has infected us. Perhaps partly for this reason, I have never been able to see Zionism as a cure for it. American and British and French Jews have told me with perfect sincerity that they are always prepared for the day when 'it happens again' and the Jew-baiters take over. (And I don't pretend not to know what they are talking about: I have actually seen the rabid phenomenon at work in modern and sunny Argentina and am unable to forget it.) So then, they seem to think, they will take refuge in the Law of Return, and in Haifa, or for all I know in Hebron. Never mind for now that if all of world Jewry *did* settle in Palestine, this would actually necessitate further Israeli expansion, expulsion, and colonization, and that their departure under these apocalyptic conditions would leave the new brownshirts and blackshirts in possession of the French and British and American nuclear arsenals. This is ghetto thinking, hardly even fractionally updated to take into account what has changed. The important but delayed realization will have to come: Israeli Jews are *a part of* the diaspora, not a group that has escaped from it. Why else does Israel daily beseech the often-flourishing Jews of other lands, urging them to help the most endangered Jews of all: the ones who rule Palestine by force of arms? Why else, having supposedly escaped from the need to rely on Gentile goodwill, has Israel come to depend more and more upon it? On this reckoning, Zionism must constitute one of the greatest potential non sequiturs in human history.”

Christopher Hitchens

Equality of condition, though it is certainly a basic requirement for justice, is nevertheless among the greatest and most uncertain ventures of modern mankind. The more equal conditions are, the less explanation there is for the differences that actually exist between people; and thus all the more unequal do individuals and groups become. This perplexing consequence came fully to light as soon as equality was no longer seen in terms of an omnipotent being like God or an unavoidable common destiny like death. Whenever equality becomes a mundane fact in itself, without any gauge by which it may be measured or explained, then there is one chance in a hundred that it will be recognized simply as a working principle of a political organization in which otherwise unequal people have equal rights; there are ninety-nine chances that it will be mistaken for an innate quality of every individual, who is “normal” if he is like everybody else and “abnormal” if he happens to be different. This perversion of equality from a political into a social concept is all the more dangerous when a society leaves but little space for special groups and individuals, for then their differences become all the more conspicuous.

Hannah Arendt

Antisemitism is unique among religious hatreds. It is a racist conspiracy theory fashioned for the needs of messianic and brutal rulers, as dictators from the Tsars to the Islamists via the Nazis have shown. Many other alleged religious 'hatreds' are not hatreds in the true sense. If I criticise Islamic, Orthodox Jewish or Catholic

attitudes towards women, for instance, and I'm accused of being a bigot, I shrug and say it is not bigoted to oppose bigotry.

Nick Cohen

I became aware of Jews in my early teens, as I started to pick up the signals from the Christian church. Not that I was Christian--I'd been an atheist since I was five. But my father, a Congregational minister, had some sympathy with the idea that the Jews had killed Christ. But any indoctrination was offset by my discovery of the concentration camps, of the Final Solution. Whilst the term 'Holocaust' had yet to enter the vocabulary I was overwhelmed by my realisation of what Germany had perpetrated on Jews. It became a major factor in my movement towards the political left. I'd already read 'The Grapes of Wrath' by John Steinbeck, the Penguin paperback that would change my life. The story of the gas chambers completed the process of radicalisation and would, just three years later, lead me to join the Communist Party.

Phillip Adams

Historians have a word for Germans who joined the Nazi party, not because they hated Jews, but out of a hope for restored patriotism, or a sense of economic anxiety, or a hope to preserve their religious values, or dislike of their opponents, or raw political opportunism, or convenience, or ignorance, or greed. That word is 'Nazi.' Nobody cares about their motives anymore.

A.R. Moxon

Our story is not only about exile and oppression and suffering. It is the story of thriving, of triumph, and of great faith. It is the story of a people that laughs in the face of deepest despair, that stubbornly clings to life and to joy even in the face of horror and death. We take our pain and turn it into poetry. We take our misfortune and transform it into opportunity.

Daniella Levy

It is in connection with the deliberate effort of the skillful demagogue to weld together a closely coherent and homogeneous body of supporters that the third and perhaps most important negative element of selection enters. It seems to be almost a law of human nature that it is easier for people to agree on a negative program--on the hatred of an enemy, on the envy of those better off--than on any positive task. The contrast between the 'we' and the 'they,' the common fight against those outside the group, seems to be an essential ingredient in any creed which will solidly knit together a group for common action. It is consequently always employed by those who seek, not merely support of a policy, but the unreserved allegiance of huge masses. From their point of view it has the great advantage of leaving them greater freedom of action than almost any positive program. The enemy, whether he be internal, like the 'Jew' or the 'kulak,' or external, seems to be an indispensable requisite in the armory of a totalitarian leader.

That in Germany it was the Jew who became the enemy until his place was taken by the 'plutocracies' was no less a result of the anticapitalist resentment on which the whole movement was based than the selection of the kulak in Russia. In Germany and Austria the Jew had come to be regarded as the representative of capitalism because a traditional dislike of large classes of the population for commercial pursuits had left these more readily accessible to a group that was practically excluded from the more highly esteemed occupations. It is the old story of the alien race's being admitted only to the less respected trades and then being hated still more for practicing them. The fact that German anti-Semitism and anticapitalism spring from the same root is of great importance for the understanding of what has

happened there, but this is rarely grasped by foreign observers.

Friedrich A. Hayek

... the Nazis reject as Jewish everything which stems from Jewish authors. This condemnation includes the writings of those Jews who, like Stahl, Lassalle, Gumpowicz, and Rathenau, have contributed many essential ideas to the system of Nazism. But the Jewish mind is, as the Nazis say, not limited to the Jews and their offspring only. Many “Aryans” have been imbued with Jewish mentality—for instance the poet, writer, and critic Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, the socialist Frederick Engels, the composer Johannes Brahms, the writer Thomas Mann, and the theologian Karl Barth. They too are damned. Then there are whole schools of thought, art, and literature rejected as Jewish. Internationalism and pacifism are Jewish, but so is warmongering. So are liberalism and capitalism, as well as the “spurious” socialism of the Marxians and of the Bolsheviks. The epithets Jewish and Western are applied to the philosophies of Descartes and Hume, to positivism, materialism and empirio-criticism, to the economic theories both of the classics and of modern subjectivism. Atonal music, the Italian opera style, the operetta and the paintings of impressionism are also Jewish. In short, Jewish is what any Nazi dislikes. If one put together everything that various Nazis have stigmatized as Jewish, one would get the impression that our whole civilization has been the achievement only of Jews.

Ludwig von

Mises

As a form of neurosis, race-conscious nationalism almost always ignores logic and knowledge: In the East European civil wars between 1918 and 1920 Jews were slaughtered for a variety of contradictory reasons, as capitalists and as communists, as friends of the Ukrainians, as Polonophiles, as pro-German—just as it suited the circumstances.

Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddih

Not everybody can simply wake up one morning, brush his teeth, drink a cup of coffee and kill a god! To murder a deity you need to be even stronger than the god as well as infinitely malicious and evil. Whoever murdered Jesus, a warm-hearted deity radiating love, he must have been stronger than he and also shrewd and abominable. Those accursed god-killers were only able to kill god on condition that they really possessed monstrous resources of strength and wickedness. And so that is indeed what the Jews possess in the deepest recesses of the Jew-hater's imagination. We are all Judas. Even eighty generations later we are still Judas. But the truth, my young friend, the real truth, we can behold before our very eyes here in the land of Israel: the modern Jew who has sprung up here, just like his ancient predecessor, is neither strong nor malicious, but hedonistic, with an ostentatious of wisdom, boisterous, confused and consumed by suspicions and fear. Yes indeed. Chaim Weizmann once said, in a moment of despair, that there can never be such a thing as a Jewish state, because it contains an inbuilt contradiction: if it is a state it will not be Jewish, and if it is Jewish it will certainly not be a state.

Amos Oz

Moral stains are wiped clean with the passing of the transgressor. They do not pass down to their descendants or others of the same faith or ethnicity through osmosis. Those using the very notion of inherited guilt as a stick to beat others with are revealing more about their problematic natures than anyone bearing their accusations.

Stewart Stafford

PREPARATION FOR GROUP REFLECTION

1 min

Read the questions for reflection, one by one

BREAK**6 min**

CONCURRENT WITH SONG: We've Got to Sail Away [written and performed by A. Ken Krupnik (Artist NoName)]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3uAnZ3u5Ly0>

GROUP REFLECTION**50 min**

Two rounds, or the equivalent, with deep listening followed by sharing. Spend this reflection time speaking about your attitudes and opinions about the Jewish people (race, religion, or ethnicity) has played in your life—personally, politically, or both. You may, if you like, respond to one or more of the following:

- ◆ Tell how your understanding of antisemitism and racism has shifted, or why it has not.
- ◆ What are your thoughts about the “New Antisemitism” described by Cotler?
- ◆ What challenge does antisemitism (whether directed towards Judaism as a race, religion, or ethnicity) present to you as a religious or spiritual person? To your spiritual practice?
- ◆ In your daily life today, how do you deal with antisemitic symbols, vocabulary/language, or images? How do you respond to potentially antisemitic encounters?
- ◆ Which of the quotes or other background material surprised you or particularly resonated with you and why?

SESSION FEEDBACK AND FUTURE PLANS**5 min**

- ◆ How did today's session go for you?
- ◆ Clarify who will lead the next session [Ethel Mae—Intention?], and provide tech (Zoom) support [Will?]
- ◆ Summer sessions—How often, when, time, topics?

EXTINGUISH CHALICE / CLOSING WORDS**0.5 min**

My hope is for us to come together not only embracing shared beliefs and values, but acknowledging our differences in ways that promote respect and appreciation. To ask for a shared vision is a fair and legitimate human proposal; what is not fair and legitimate is to dictate the ways on how we get there. If we are to emerge from the long shadows that can engulf us, we must talk with each other, come to understand each other, and renew ourselves and our perceptions of each other.

Alma Abdul-Hadi Jadallah

CLOSING SONG: Peace, Salaam, Shalom (written by Emma's Revolution, performed by Community of Christ Members and Friends)

6 min

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBQ-KsGo_BI