

The New Anti-Semitism

■ DANIEL PIPES

Special to the Jewish Exponent

The most recent issue of *Anti-Semitism Worldwide*, an annual survey published by the Anti-Defamation League, contains two striking but unrecognized patterns.

First, it shows that the main locus of anti-Jewish speech and deeds has moved from the Christian countries to the Muslim world. In the former, the survey reports on the activities of fringe groups; in the latter, it quotes heads of state, powerful political parties, mainstream newspapers and leading intellectuals. For example, the Palestinian group Hamas quotes from *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in its very charter. Anti-Semitism lurks furtively in the world at large; among Muslims, it proudly rules.

Second, and perhaps even more ominous: even in the predominantly Christian countries of Europe and the Americas, Muslims today increasingly carry the banner of anti-Semitism and constitute a physical threat to Jews. That's not to say that anti-Semitism among Christians has evaporated but that it has distinctly less punch than does the Muslim variety.

According to the survey, while rightists harassed Jews and vandalized Jewish property in Europe, "violent attacks with the intent of causing bodily harm were perpetrated in most cases by Muslim extremists." For example, the only anti-Semitic terrorist act in Europe during 1995 was carried out not by skinheads but by an Algerian fundamentalist group (the attempted bombing of a Jewish school near Lyon, France). Muslims from South Africa to Argentina to Sweden also outscore the Right in terms of the reach of their anti-Semitic rhetoric and influence.

The same pattern holds in the United States. Here, the Muslim population divides into two main groups: converts (mostly African-Americans, many at one time connected to the Nation of Islam) and immigrants (mostly from South Asia). Explicit, virulent anti-Semitism is the norm among both these groups. And while a few

brave voices stand up to the endless attacks on Jews, they can barely be heard among the barrage of bias, calumny and conspiracy theory.

Fundamentalists dominate

Like their coreligionists elsewhere, Muslims who immigrate to the United States, or American converts, espouse a wide range of outlooks. But it is striking to note that, in contrast to countries like Turkey and Egypt, where a lively debate is taking place between the moderates and the fundamentalists, fundamentalists dominate in the United States, to the point that moderates hardly have a voice.

* The main locus of anti-Jewish speech and deeds has moved from the Christian countries to the Muslim world.

Fundamentalists control every major Muslim organization, including the Islamic Association for Palestine, the Islamic Circle of North America, the Muslim Arab Youth Association, the Muslim Public Affairs Council and the Muslim Students Association. They also control a growing majority of mosques, weekly newspapers and communal organizations.

This fundamentalist hegemony results from several factors. One has to do with funding and other support from the Middle East, which goes almost exclusively to fundamentalists. The Iranians, Libyans and Saudis have for years helped the most aggressive fundamentalist groups. Another has to do with moderates tending to go out into the world and involve themselves in other, less parochial activities.

Every fundamentalist organization spews forth anti-Semitism, many in public, some more discreetly. Nearly all of them refer constantly to a battle to the death with Jews. For ex-

ample, one of the most eminent Islamic theologians, Yusuf al-Qardawi told a huge audience in Kansas City in 1989, "On the hour of judgment, Muslims will fight the Jews and kill them."

American Muslims focus on two main themes. One concerns the need to destroy Israel. Fundamentalist groups align closely with the cause of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, celebrating their achievements and sharing their murderous attitude toward Jews. Speakers at their meetings routinely call on their audience to help eliminate the Jewish presence from what they call Palestine; the announcement of a terrorist operation against Israelis arouses unrestrained cheering at a Muslim convention.

A second theme concerns the need to gain more clout than American Jews. American Muslims repeatedly declare an intent to match and overtake Jews; they view almost every aspect of their political existence in the United States — population size, fund-raising capabilities, clout in Washington — in terms of this competition. Echoing a common ambition, the intellectual Ali Mazrui holds that "by the next century, Muslims may be as influential as Jews in influencing policy."

Nation of Islam

As for converts, Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam, has established himself as the leading anti-Jewish ideologue. He has danced around but never repudiated his well-known utterances in 1984 about Judaism being a "gutter religion" and Adolf Hitler being a "very great man."

In an infamous speech at Kean College in November 1995, Farrakhan's deputy, Khalid Abdul Muhammad, spewed out a mind-boggling series of statements about Jews. The Nation of Islam sells *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* at its events. And the organization has even done original "scholarship" of its own, putting together a volume in 1991 called *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews* that purports

Continued on Page 6

Continued from Page 5

to show that Jews were primarily responsible for the enslavement of blacks and their transport to America.

Nation of Islam views count far more than those of right-wing groups because this organization has a far greater reach. Unlike the Ku Klux Klan, it has an organized paramilitary force in dozens of cities — and for which it has even managed to win federal grants. Unlike the Liberty Lobby, it regularly packs thousands of listeners into large arenas. Unlike the militiamen, its leader appears hand in hand in public with the mayor of Philadelphia. Unlike the Aryan Nation, it has a foreign patron (Moammar Gadhafi of Libya) who has offered it \$1 billion to organize American Muslims and get them “to cast their votes to the candidate who serves the Arabs.”

Implications

Anti-Semitism, historically a Christian phenomenon, is now primarily a Muslim phenomenon — and not just in the Middle East, but right here in the United States. Muslims today are the most vibrant and explicit anti-Semites, and it is they who contribute most to Jew-hatred here. Muslims

speak in terms of overt anti-Semitism hardly found elsewhere in the West. The broadcast of excerpts from Hitler's *Mein Kampf* on Radio Islam in Sweden led to Ahmed Arami spending six months in a Swedish jail.

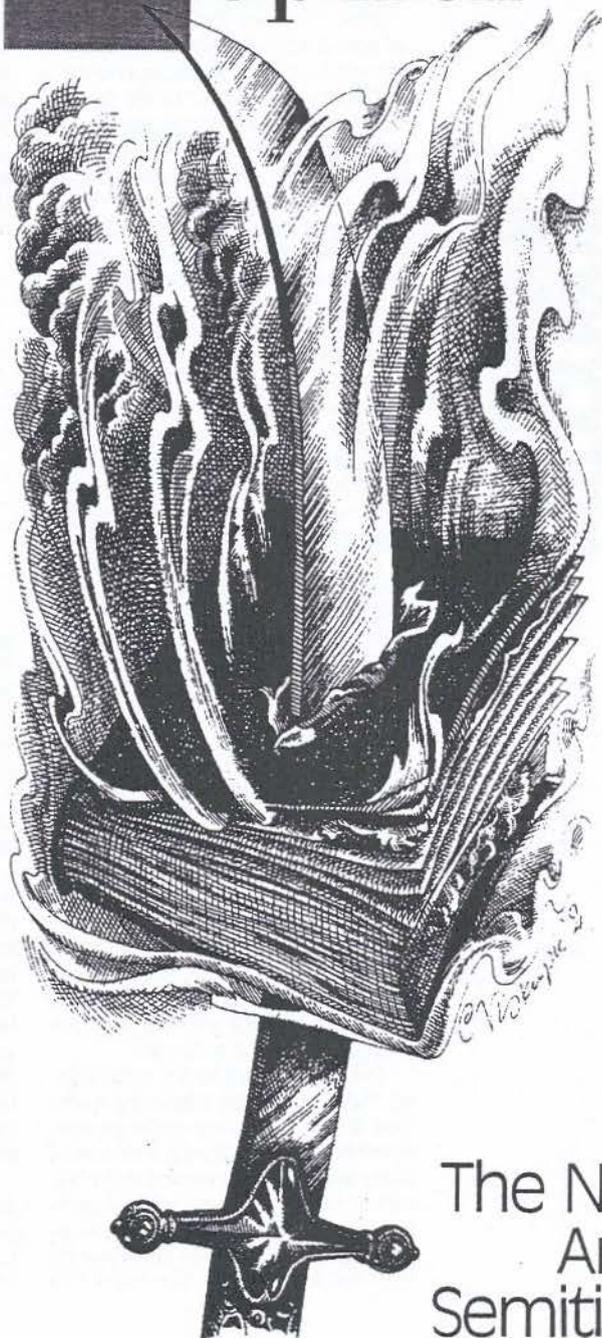
This has several implications for Jews. First, as the population of Muslims in the United States grows, so does anti-Semitism (not to speak of a related phenomenon, that of anti-Christianism).

Second, American Jewish organizations should devote fewer of its resources to the Christian right and more to fundamentalist Islam. School prayer is far less the issue than an atmosphere of overt hostility and potential violence toward Jews.

Third, the institutional preponderance of fundamentalists in the United States makes it extremely difficult for American Jewish organizations to build constructive relations with Muslim counterparts, for all of the main Islamic groups are fundamentalist, with the possible exception of W. Deen Mohammed's movement. Faced with a choice of dealing with fundamentalists or no one, the Jewish organizations should choose the latter course. Otherwise, they run the risk of legitimating their own worst enemies. ■

Opinion

Artwork by Gary Viskupic, © 1995.
Distributed by Los Angeles Times Syndicate.



The New
Anti-
Semitism