



Jerusalem 6:19; Toronto 7:29

Events...

Shabbat, September 6, 5:45 p.m.

David Zev Harris, Bureau Chief for News Services, The Media Line, Jerusalem, Former Knesset and Diplomatic correspondent for The Jerusalem Post, speaks on "The Final Nail in the Road Map: Now What?" at Shaarei Shomayim.

Commentary...

Hold the Left Accountable By Fiamma Nirenstein

An Italian feminist, human rights activist, and former communist, is fed up with anti-Semitism disguised as anti-Zionism

In 1967 I was a communist, like most Italian youngsters. Bored by my rebellious behavior my family sent me to Neot Mordechai, a kibbutz in Upper Galilee. I was quite satisfied there - the kibbutz used to give money every month to the Vietcong. When the Six Day War began I took children to the shelters; I dug trenches and learned some simple shooting and acts of self-defense. We continued working in the orchards, but were quick to identify the incoming enemy MiGs and outgoing IAF Mirages chasing one another in the skies over the Golan Heights.

When I went back to Italy some of my fellow students stared at me as if at somebody new, an enemy, a wicked person who would soon become an imperialist. My life was about to change. I didn't know it yet, because I simply thought Israel had rightly won a war after having been assaulted with an incredible number of harassments.

But I soon noticed that I had lost the innocence of the good Jew, of the very special Jewish friend, their Jew: I was now connected with the Jews of the State of Israel, and slowly I was put out of the dodecaphonic, psychoanalytic Bob Dylan, Woody Allen, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Philip Roth, Freud shtetl coterie of Jews that sanctified my Judaism in left-wing eyes.

I have tried for a long time to bring back that sanctification, and they tried to give it back to me, because we - the Left and the Jews - desperately needed each other. But today's anti-Semitism has overwhelmed any good intention.

Throughout the years, even people who, like me, signed petitions asking the IDF to withdraw from Lebanon, became "unconscious fascist(s)" as a reader of mine wrote me in a letter filled with insults. I've also been called a cruel and insensitive human rights denier who doesn't care about the lives of Palestinian children.

A very famous Israeli writer told me: "You really have become a right-winger."

What? Right-winger? Me? An old feminist human rights activist, even a communist when I was young? Only because I described the Arab-Israeli conflict as accurately as I could, and because I sometimes identified with a country continuously attacked by terror, I became a right-winger?

In the contemporary world of human rights, when you call a person a right-

ISRAEL NEWS

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וּסְבִיב
winger, it is the first step toward his or her delegitimization.

Jews born after the Holocaust learn a very clear message: Evil has come to Jews mostly from the Right - from the Church during a large part of its history, and certainly from Nazism and fascism. The Left blessed the Jews as the victim par excellence, always a great partner in the struggle for the rights of the weak against the wicked. In return for being coddled, Jews, even during the

Soviet anti-Semitic persecutions, gave the Left moral support and invited it to cry with them at Holocaust memorials.

Today the game is clearly over. The Left has proved itself the real cradle of contemporary anti-Semitism.

When I speak about anti-Semitism, I'm not speaking of legitimate criticism of Israel but of pure anti-Semitism: criminalization, stereotypes, specific and generic lies that have fluctuated from lies about the Jews (conspiring, bloodthirsty, dominating the world) to lies about Israel (conspiring, ruthlessly violent). They started most widely after the beginning of the second intifada in September 2000, becoming more and more ferocious following operation Defensive Shield, when the IDF reentered Palestinian cities in response to terrorism.

The basic idea of anti-Semitism, today as always, is that Jews have a perverted soul that makes them unfit, as a morally inferior people, to be regular members of the human family.

Today this untermensch ideology has shifted to the Jewish state: a separate, unequal, basically evil stranger whose national existence is slowly but surely emptied and deprived of justification.

Now the traditional hook-nosed Jew bears a gun and kills Arab children with pleasure. On the front pages of European newspapers Ariel Sharon munches Palestinian children and little Jesuses in cradles are threatened by Israeli soldiers.

Jews, and the international community in general, have been caught unawares, and have failed to denounce the new trend of anti-Semitism. Nobody is scandalized when Israel is accused daily, without explanation, of excessive violence, atrocities, cruelty.

Why is Israel officially accused by the human rights commission in Geneva of violating human rights, while, China, Libya and Sudan have

never ever been so accused? Why was everybody invited to join the war against Iraq except Israel, despite the fact that Saddam had always threatened Israel with complete destruction?

Israel is an unterstate - denied the basic rights of every other state to defend itself and to exist in honor and peace. People take anti-Jewish prejudices for granted. Everyone is free to think whatever they want. But we Jews must reserve our moral right to hold plain anti-Semites accountable, to say to them: When you lie or use prejudices and stereotypes about Israel and the Jews, you are an anti-Semite, and I'll fight you.

Denouncing the new anti-Semitism is psychologically terribly arduous for Israel and Diaspora Jews. It is even more difficult because between the Jews and the Left there is a divorce the latter does not want.

The Left wants to continue being considered the paladin of good Jews, because this gives it the moral authorization to then speak of Israeli "atrocities." So instead of requesting that Israel become an equal nation and Jews become equal citizens in the world, the Left prefers standing with Jews at Holocaust memorials cursing the old anti-Semitism while it accuses Israel,

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and therefore the Jews, of being racist killers.

But the contradiction has become even ontologically unbearable: How can you cry with the survivors over Jews killed by Nazi when the living Jews themselves are accused of being Nazis?

If we decide it is about time to fight, we must renounce liberal impostors. We have to say that the free press is a failure when it lies, and that it does lie. We have to say that all human rights are violated when a people is denied the right of self-defense, as it is denied to Israel.

Human rights are also violated when a nation is subjected to systematic defamation and made a legitimate target for terrorists. We have to stop accepting what we have accepted since the day the state was born - namely, that Israel be viewed as a different state in the international community.

Because Israel is the focal point of anti-Semitic attacks, our attention must be concentrated there. We must measure the moral character of the person we are speaking to on that basis: If you lie about Israel, if you cover it with bias, you are an anti-Semite. If you're prejudiced against Israel, you're against the Jews.

From now on you cannot use the "human rights passport" freely to employ false stereotypes. You must demonstrate what you assert: that the army ruthlessly storms poor Arab villages that have nothing to do with terrorism; that it shoots children on purpose; that it kills journalists with pleasure.

You cannot? You called Jenin a slaughter? Then you are an anti-Semite, just like the old anti-Semites you pretend to hate. You have to convince me that you are not an anti-Semite, now that we know you do not condemn terrorism, that you have never said a word against the contemporary caricature of the hooked-nosed Jew with a bag of dollars in one hand and a machine-gun in the other.

Israel is in shock over the new anti-Semitism. All the theories that claimed classic anti-Semitism would abate with the creation of the State of Israel and that, in the long run, anti-Semitism would be extinguished have been destroyed. Israel has actually become the sum of all the evil.

The Palestinians are turned into Jesus, crucified; the war in Iraq or in Afghanistan waged by the US is part of the Jewish plan of domination. Jews all over the world are threatened, beaten, even killed to pay the price of Israel's existence. The only way to face this threat is to fight fearlessly, on our own terrain, using all the weapons Israel possesses. Without shame, without fear or sense of guilt.

Israel has the chance to prove itself for what it really is: an outpost in the fight against terrorism and for democracy. That is no small thing.

But we Jews pose as victims and hide from this chance because using it puts us in conflict with our ancient sponsors and their legitimization. We have to realize that legitimization is in our own hands. (Jerusalem Post Sep 3)
From a speech delivered at the YIVO center in New York. Nirenstein is a foreign correspondent for the Italian daily La Stampa.

Arafat, Again Jerusalem Post Editorial

"He's still alive. They hit 'em with five shots, and he's still alive!" - Solozzo in *The Godfather*

It is time to abandon the fiction of Yasser Arafat's "irrelevance." For two years, the Sharon government has done everything in its power to preserve it. It has confined the Palestinian leader to his Ramallah headquarters and demolished a substantial portion of those quarters. It has penalized foreign diplomats who meet with him. It has persuaded the Bush administration to adopt a similar posture.

What has this accomplished? Arafat remains a figure of uncontested authority in the Palestinian Authority, as his recent assertion of authority over security matters makes clear. Whatever hopes there were that power would gradually devolve from Arafat to Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas appear to have been ill-founded.

The US secretary of state makes plaintive and polite appeals to "the chairman" to work with his prime minister and avail him of his "security elements."

This weekend, the European Union's foreign policy representative, Javier Solana, will be in Jerusalem to plead for an easing of Israel's "Arafat or us" policy. We are inclined to concede the point. The effort to isolate Arafat may have been a worthy one, and European diplomats such as Joschka Fischer and Dominique de Villepin, both of whom met with Arafat in recent months, deserve blame for doing nothing to help it.

Yet it's time to recognize that the policy has failed. Abbas and his Security Minister Muhammad Dahlan have failed to acquire the kind of power needed to bring terrorist elements to heel. Waiting for them to do so would be pointless, as they anyway refuse to wield it. So insofar as Solana's business is concerned, there is no point in causing pointless aggravation to visiting dignitaries.

None of this is to suggest that it is now time to re-engage with Arafat, much less to accord him his old privileges. What is required is a reassessment of a have-it-two-ways policy that has served neither Israel nor the United States well.

From Israel, we hear that Arafat is both irrelevant and a mastermind of terrorism. From the US, we hear that Israel must take no steps to deport or

assassinate Arafat, because this would undermine Abbas. Yet it is the administration's declared view that Arafat is the key obstacle to peace, which is supposed to be Abbas's mission.

Maybe there is a convenience to these contradictions.

In keeping Arafat where he is, a cynic might argue that the Sharon government gets the best of both worlds: It can blame the Palestinian side for obstructing the peace process and thereby forestall a peace process it doesn't want to enter in the first place. As for the US, the president can point to his road map as proof that he's engaged in the Middle East and then leave it to the parties to get nowhere. "If we want everything to remain as it is, it will be necessary for everything to change." Perhaps Lampedusa's famous maxim for Sicily is George W. Bush's intuition for Israel.

But we do not take the cynic's view. As senior Western diplomatic sources tell us, the principal reason the US opposes the forcible removal of Arafat is because it is not convinced something better will fall into place. Israel's view is more or less the same, compounded by fear of international reaction.

Underlying this view is the belief that the current situation is tolerable. Yesterday, after Palestinian Kassam rockets reached as far as the southern city of Ashkelon, Israel grimly warned that such attacks crossed "a red line." Funny, that: Such warnings are never issued when Israelis are shot dead in their cars driving through the territories. Nor does it seem that red lines are considered crossed when suicide bombers take fewer than, say, 20 victims with them.

Thus, following last week's bus bombing, we were told by senior Israeli officials that, perhaps with the next large-scale attack, Arafat's future may have to be reassessed. But why even bring up his name if the threat is so plainly hollow?

No less than it is in the nature of man, it is in the nature of governments to prefer known to unknown dangers. We, too, cannot be certain that the removal of Arafat will bring about the peace we all seek. But we also feel that the current situation could hardly be worse. Removing the man chiefly to blame for the loss of so much life, rather than rescuing him, seems to us one risk well worth taking. (Jerusalem Post Aug 28)

Where Are Our Friends? By Yossi Olmert

Persia and Israel shared years of friendship and strategic cooperation until the Shah's regime was overthrown in 1979. Early good relations resulted from the fact that Persian nationalism did not contradict close relations with Israel. The Shah's never conducted a Shi'ite foreign policy, and Arab countries chiefly Iraq were the Shah's implacable enemies.

However, under the current Islamic Republic foreign policy is driven not only by Iranian interests but also by Islamicism. With regard to Israel, the Islamic element is dominant and unshakable.

By adopting a vitriolic anti-Israel policy the Islamic regime hoped to win over Arab and Muslim public opinion. Let's admit it: They have largely succeeded.

By placing itself in the forefront of the struggle against Israel, the regime seeks to highlight the conflict in the Middle East as not just Israeli-Palestinian or Israel-Arab, but as one with a major religious dimension something that was previously in the background. For tactical reasons the religious angle was blurred by the Palestinians and the rest of the Arab world.

It is no coincidence that Islamic terrorism aimed at Israel as well as the US has flourished since the establishment of the Islamic regime.

The Iran of the Ayatollahs means business. Its leaders want to destroy Israel, and they say so without any qualms. But many in Israel and in the West can't bring themselves to grasp the depth of Iran's hatred. Legions of pundits and politicians would have us believe that the Iranians do not mean what they say.

The inability to accept that there are political systems motivated by philosophies utterly opposed to ours and which really do intend to realize themselves at our expense is hard for Westerners to acknowledge the shock of 9/11 notwithstanding.

The Bush administration defines Iran as part of the axis of evil, suggesting growing awareness of the dangers it poses. But that is as far as it goes.

In Israel there was a behind-the-scenes debate about the extent to which Iran actually poses a challenge. Israel's security and intelligence community is now unified behind the assessment that the Iranian situation is serious. Even so-called moderates, including former president Ali Akbar Rafsanjani, are in the forefront of the anti-Israel chorus.

But our problem isn't the rhetoric. Iran is relentlessly pursuing a nuclear program which could pose a mortal danger to Israel. Whether they are two or four years from the completion of this program is unknown, but there is no doubt that we are approaching the twelfth hour.

The bulk of the intelligence gathered by various countries attests to this reality, and the fact that there may have been some exaggeration about Iraq's

WMD programs should not undermine our faith in the depth and accuracy of the information about Iran.

Ideally, the US should have led an uncompromising campaign against Iran's programs, preferably achieving the cooperation of Russia and other states which support Iran's buildup.

Unfortunately, this is not the case. Israel is more or less alone in sounding the alarm. Publicity is the first element in a strategy designed to arouse world attention. But more needs to be done.

For instance, America's presence in Iraq could act as the main leverage of pressure on Iran. Overt and covert activities could be initiated by the US that would weaken Iran's self-confidence and boost the motivation of its internal opposition.

With the clock ticking, Israel may have to take a crucial decision regarding Iran and in the not too distant future.

The choice confronting our leadership is between relying on American-led action, which has not yet materialized, or going it alone and dealing militarily with the Iranian nuclear buildup. Let us not delude ourselves: This is not going to be like the Iraqi operation. We are facing an entirely different and much more difficult situation, though not an impossible one.

Even at this late stage Israel's supreme national interest lies in cooperation with the US. Any US action would have less hazardous regional repercussions than unilateral Israeli moves. The question therefore is whether the Bush administration still possesses enough energy to go beyond the Iraqi arena to deal with Iran.

For Israeli leaders, the question is: Will they be ready, in due course, to follow Menachem Begin's courageous 1981 example left no other choice?

Nothing less than the very existence of Israel is at stake.

The writer is a Middle East specialist. (Jerusalem Post Aug 31)

Ze'ev Jabotinsky on Self-delusion By Sarah Honig

In a few days, on September 1, some of us will note that exactly 64 years ago World War II began, ushering in the worst catastrophe ever for the already long-suffering Jewish people. Besides literally shattering millions of Jewish lives, that war brutally shattered often complacent conceptions of the mainstream and left-of-center Jewish establishment, which vituperatively rejected Revisionist leader Ze'ev Jabotinsky's relentless warnings, sounded with ever-increasing passion and urgency.

Less than four months before the blitzkrieg, Jabotinsky addressed a Warsaw audience and answered his numerous detractors' accusations that he was cruelly robbing Jews of hope. He contended that:

"...sometimes bold, fervent desperation can constitute a legitimate response. Worse than that is what I see among Eastern Europe's Jewish masses - equanimity, fatalism. People behave as if they've been condemned and sentenced. I know of nothing like this in history, and haven't encountered such surrender to destiny in novels.

"What's this like? It's like shoving 12 million educated, experienced people into a wagon that is hurtling toward an abyss. And how do these folks behave? One cries, one smokes cigarettes, some read newspapers, another sings. Don't bother looking for one person to take over the controls and reroute the wagon. That's the mind-set. It's as if a great enemy came and chloroformed everyone's brains.

"I come to you in one last attempt and call upon you: Put a stop to this.

"Try to halt this wagon. Try to jump off. Place obstacles in its course. Don't go like sheep to the wolf. In nature, when the wolf devours one sheep and then another, the remainder at least quake and take fright and flight. Yet here - it's just one huge graveyard."

If a Zionist bible is ever written, then Jabotinsky surely must be counted as its greatest compassionate-yet-wrathful prophet. His doomsday-eve admonition should be memorialized by every Israeli schoolchild. Unfortunately it's as meaningful today as it was then.

Granted, we have a state of our own and are supposedly independent. When he was 16, Jabotinsky summed up the essence of Zionism as "Jews again taking charge of their own history, whereas in the Diaspora others make history in our stead."

Were he to see us today he'd doubtlessly be sickened by the way we conduct our affairs. He might again resort to the imagery of sheep going to the wolf.

Our repeated deals with carnivorous terrorists who would devour us and our compulsive recidivist attempts to appease them indicate that we're serially addicted to mind-numbing chloroform.

For a decade we've been stoned on the Oslo hallucinogen. Successive Israeli governments lacked the fortitude to quit the self-destructive habit. Despite a three-year terror onslaught, our government continues to manufacture artificial peace partners, upon whom the nation's collective hope is subsequently pinned.

It's comforting to portray Palestinian Authority honchos as reasonable interlocutors, even though deep down we know they are implacable foes who'd like nothing better than to rid the region of us all. It's disheartening to admit that

Palestinian terror is a strategic threat, and that it's us or them. It's hard to own up that sporadic targeted killings can't replace a sustainable, systematic campaign against the PA itself. Self-deception is sweeter.

Hence we seek encouraging signs of moderation and cooperation from the PA (like temporarily declining body-counts). We're easily swayed, even after particularly hideous dream-crushing atrocities, which we strive to put out of mind quickly and rekindle, yet again, the indomitable hope for coexistence.

No wonder we've been consistently outmaneuvered, especially since Oslo's advent, when our leaders signaled that nothing's sacred, that a homeland is negotiable real-estate, that we can't win, that a second Palestinian Arab state (after Jordan) is tolerable, that Jerusalem is divisible and the Temple Mount forfeitable.

Ehud Barak's administration even contemplated sacrificing some within-the-Green-Line territory (at Halutza) or "repatriating" limited numbers of Arab "refugees."

Arabs aren't dumb. They perceive our erased "red lines" and conclude that Jews want the good life and are willing to gamble anything for peace and prosperity. They hear Israel's premier obsequiously resort to their "occupation" terminology while leading his nation, blood-stained and tattered road map in hand, to accepting Palestinian statehood.

Arabs realize this state is nothing short of a reward for slaughtering Jews.

They see how the world's terror-combating single superpower frequently holds Israel back, and reckon that the American president's falling approval ratings will inevitably mean heavier pressure on Israel to provide him with an ostensible achievement. It's simpler for him to squeeze terror's victim than to eliminate terror.

Wishful thinking and political correctness render Israelis so pliable they dare not disobey Washington's dictates for long. They can hardly be relied upon to recognize and repel even existential threats.

Why in the world, then, would Palestinians clean up their act? Terror patently works. Without it, no one would countenance awarding them a state. Why should they destroy a winning proposition?

From the Palestinian perspective, logic decrees that the terror option remain viable. It yields results and potentially restrains Israel - as Hizbullah does on the Lebanese border.

All the while, the world and Israel's Left impose the moral onus on gullible Jews to continue retreating and naively pay tribute. Given this state of affairs, we've no business expecting a cessation of terror, much less peace from the Palestinians.

The glaring difference between Arabs and Jews is that Arabs are renowned for their patience while Jews want peace now. That to them is synonymous with hope. Today, as in 1939, they balk when prophets of doom and gloom, like Jabotinsky a historical millisecond ago, insist on pulling the wool from over their eyes.

Peace Now's eternal optimists always demand to know the alternative. Perhaps the answer is no different from the one Jabotinsky gave. Sometimes desperation is preferable to spurious hope. Resolute determination in the face of unpleasant reality is certainly healthier than persistent self-delusion.

It's better for sheep to comprehend that none other than the big bad wolf lies in wait at the end of the road map's charted path. But sheep who learned nothing from the bitter fate of their kin in Warsaw, nor from the more recent Oslo lesson, and who covet wolfish assurances, are bound to get bloodied again. (Jerusalem Post Aug 28)

Word Choice Matters in Mideast Reporting By Philip Gailey

What is the difference between a "militant" and a "terrorist"?

It's a question that editors around the country are struggling with as their news organizations come under increasing criticism for alleged bias in their coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I'm afraid Webster's New World Dictionary isn't much help. It defines militant this way: "at war, fighting . . . ready and willing to fight; especially vigorous or aggressive in support or promotion of a cause." A terrorist is "a person or thing causing intense fear" and uses "force or the threat of force to demoralize, intimidate and subjugate, esp. such use as a political weapon or policy . . ."

The madness in the Mideast is all of those things and more, and the words you find in Webster's don't begin to describe just how horrible the terrorism and the military retaliation that follows each suicide bomber's success is in the daily lives of the Israelis and the Palestinians. When a Palestinian suicide bomber recently boarded a bus in Jerusalem and blew 20 men, women and children to bits, most of the wire service reports I saw, including one from the Associated Press, said the carnage was the work of Palestinian "militants."

By that standard, I suppose Osama bin Laden is a militant, as was Mohammed Atta, who led the 9/11 terrorist attacks that killed more than 3,000 people in New York and Washington. And President Bush's war on terrorism is really a war on militancy.

For me, it's not a hard call. Acts of terror are committed by terrorists, and the horrific bus attack on Israeli civilians, like the dozens of suicide bombings that preceded it, was an act of cold, indiscriminate terror. So why do so many news organizations insist on describing terrorists as militants? I don't think militants set out to deliberately kill children.

Dr. Bruce Epstein wonders if the St. Petersburg Times is part of the problem, intentionally or not. In a recent letter, this Pinellas County physician complained that newspapers appear to want to "legitimize" Palestinian terrorists by describing them as militants. I happen to believe the Palestinian cause - an independent and free Palestinian state - is legitimate and that the Palestinian people do have legitimate grievances over the Israeli occupation.

That said, I believe Epstein raises a fair question about news coverage of Mideast violence. He objected in particular to a recent headline in the Times on a story about the assassination of a senior leader of the Islamic Jihad, a terrorist group - "Militant's death sparks vengeance threats." He later noticed another headline - "Dealer sympathized with terrorists." That headline was on a story about the arrest of a man in the New York area who was trying to sell surface-to-air missiles to terrorists (they turned out to be undercover agents) to bring down U.S. commercial airliners.

Epstein writes: "In my mind, this double standard is both appalling and disturbing. If Americans are killed in a terror attack, the killers are called terrorists. If Jewish Israelis are killed in a terror attack, the killers are called militants. . . . By using the word 'militant' to describe a terrorist, the Times legitimizes the terrorist. When the Times substitutes the word 'militant' for terrorist, the newspaper conveys to its readers that these Palestinian (terrorist) groups are legal, legitimate and even moral."

Contrary to what Epstein and other readers suggest, the Times has no such motive or policy. It needs a policy on how to distinguish a militant from a terrorist, and newsroom editors are in the process of drafting one, as are editors at other newspapers around the country.

The Orlando Sentinel has been getting similar complaints from readers, and earlier this year its style committee reviewed the use of militant and terrorist and came up with this standard: "Use caution when using these terms (militants, terrorists), which can show bias toward one side in a conflict. Generally, 'bombers', 'attackers', or 'suicide bombers' are preferred terms."

Manning Pynn, the Sentinel's public editor, recently wrote that despite the style committee decision, the paper will continue to use "militant" to describe Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, both of which are on the State Department's list of terrorist organizations. "The term 'terrorist' certainly expresses judgment: It imputes to the person or organization being described the motive of trying to instill fear. 'Militant' seems to me much more neutral," Pynn wrote.

Foolish me. I thought instilling fear is exactly what Hamas and Islamic Jihad mean to do when they send their suicide bombers into markets, restaurants and buses to kill and terrorize Israeli civilians. I'm all for fair and balanced reporting (I hope the Fox cable news network doesn't slap me with a lawsuit for trademark infringement), but I also believe that words do matter. And if the word "terrorism" is to have any real meaning, then blowing up a bus crowded with women and children must be condemned for what it is - an act of terrorism. (St. Petersburg Times Aug 31)

The writer is the editorials editor at the St. Petersburg Times.

The Demonology of SE Asian Islamists By Michael Danby

When people talk about the root causes of terrorism, I think about Sue Malony and Donna Croxford, two victims of a terrorist attack in Bali, Indonesia, on October 12, 2002 that killed 202 people including 88 Australians.

Sue and Donna lived in Elwood and Port Melbourne respectively, suburbs in my constituency in Melbourne, where I serve as a federal member of parliament. Sue and Donna were killed whilst enjoying a holiday in Bali, and now Donna leaves behind a disabled four-year-old.

As justification for their murderous acts in Bali, two of the known perpetrators, Amrozi bin Nurhasyim and Imam Samudra, have focused their rhetoric on revenge "against the Jews," despite the fact that, to the best of my knowledge, there are no Jews in Indonesia.

Riduan Isamuddin ("Hambali") and Abu Bakr Bashir, the secular and spiritual masterminds of Jemaah Islamiah and that atrocity, also have a zealous hatred of Jews and the Jewish state. These Islamic terrorists live in Indonesia.

Their own declarations show them to be in the grip of an anti-Semitic paranoia every bit as fanatical as that which gripped Russia in the 19th century or Germany in the 1930s. They are convinced that the Jews are plotting to take over Indonesia, and indeed the world the Jews already control the United States and Australia, they insist and subvert Islam and, indeed, all religion.

Throughout the recent trials of the Bali bombers, the salience of Jew-hatred in the demonology of the Islamic terrorists has been clearly and widely exposed by the bombers through their burst into the media. Amrozi said the rationale for the Bali bombing was "because of the evil plan of the United States, the Jews and their allies to colonize [and] to destroy religions."

He also said that the bombing was aimed at "the evil plans of the Jews' dirty hands and their friends who always try in every way to prevent congregation by religious groups, especially Muslims. Then these Jewish people and their friends will easily conquer and make [Indonesia] their possession."

Where European anti-Semites saw the Jews as the sworn enemies of Christianity, the Indonesian anti-Semites see the Jews and Christians as allies. Imam Samudra says the Bali bombing was designed "to carry out my responsibility to wage global jihad against Jews and Christians throughout the world." When Samudra was led from court on 26 June, he yelled: "Destroy Christians, destroy America, destroy Jews!"

On August 6, following the bombing of the Marriott Hotel in Jakarta which killed 12 Indonesians, mostly humble taxi drivers and hotel workers, Samudra said: "If it's [the work of] Muslims, I'm happy. Especially if it was for Jews, hopefully [sic]."

The South East Asian focus on the Jews is a new phenomenon, not surprisingly since most Indonesians neither knew nor cared about Jews until very recently. Most of the Indonesian archipelago was converted to Islam between the 12th and 16th centuries, but Islam rapidly adapted itself to Indonesian culture, absorbing many elements of its Buddhist, Hindu and Animist past.

Since Indonesians are not Arabs, Indonesian (Hanafi) Islam was unaffected by the waves of Islamic extremism which periodically flowed through the Arab Islamic world. Even today, nearly all Indonesian Muslims have an allegiance to moderate Islamic organizations such as Mummadiyah or Nahdlatul Ulama, whose leader, Abdurrahman Wahid, was briefly president of Indonesia following the downfall of the authoritarian Suharto regime.

Over the past 20 years, however, Indonesian Islam has undergone far-reaching changes. As Indonesians have become wealthier, better educated and more travelled, they have become more aware of world events such as the Israel-Palestine conflict and the Islamic revolution in Iran. Poor Indonesian youth are attending religious schools (madrassas) and some of them are being indoctrinated by Wahabist preachers funded from Saudi Arabia.

The result has been to reconnect Indonesian Islam with the Islamist strand of the Arab world, with its prevalent strains of anti-Western and anti-Semitic ideology.

In recent years these elements of Islamist anti-Semitism have been deliberately spread in Indonesia by groups such as the Indonesian Committee for Solidarity with the Islamic World (KISDI) and extremist clerics like Abu Bakr Bashir.

In the past these anti-Semitic slogans would have meant nothing in Indonesia, a country without Jews, but today they can be linked to Israel and thus to the United States, Australia and the West in general, and also to Christianity, to create a new blend of Indonesian Islamist extremism, embodied in al-Qaida's local franchise, Jemaah Islamiah.

Unfortunately, Indonesia's welcome but uneasy transformation from authoritarianism to democracy has given militant Islam new opportunities. Older Indonesian Muslim leaders such as former president Wahid, have been challenged by figures such as the Council of Indonesian Islamic Scholars (MUI) and the Indonesian Mujahideen Council, led by Abu Bakr Bashir.

Wahid's successor as president, Megawati Sukarnoputri, is politically too weak to offer much resistance, while Vice-President Hamza Haz has actively dallied with the Islamists.

The shock of the October 2002 Bali bombing brought about a crisis for Indonesian Islam. Although ambitious politicians like Amien Rais are happy to exploit Islamist slogans, they have no desire to see the extremists come to power, nor to have their activities undermine Indonesia's fragile economic recovery. They also don't want to bring about a serious crisis in Indonesia's relations with the West.

Moderate Indonesian Muslim leaders need to fight back against the militants and their imported ideologies, which will be immensely harmful to Indonesia. There must be a reform of the madrasa to reduce the influence of Saudi Arabian "charity." There must be continued economic and political reform.

As the Bali bombing showed, Australia has a lot at stake in the future direction of Indonesian Islam. I might add that Australia's Jewish community also has a lot at stake, for if a significant number of young Indonesians agree with the paranoid rantings of Amrozi and Imam Samudra, their anti-Semitic phobias might lead them to look for real Jews rather than imaginary ones to target next time. The next bomb could easily be planted in Sydney or Melbourne. (Jerusalem Post Aug 31)

The writer, an MP for Melbourne Ports, is secretary of the Australia-Israel Parliamentary Friends of Israel.
