MODERN ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST

By Robert W. Smith
Franck Salameh, Advisor
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For my mother, to whom I owe everything I have done and will do and who has supported me throughout all my endeavors, giving me every opportunity possible to expand my world and my life experiences &

For my family, my teachers, professors, and advisors who guided me through my educational career and my exceptional undergraduate experience.

I am externally grateful.

Cover Page:
Map of “Greater Israel” and the “Dream of Zionism” from an edition of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion published by the government of Iran.
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INTRODUCTION

The modern Middle East is a region under close scrutiny by the international community for its continuing political and religious conflict. Rampant anti-Semitism in the region is a phenomenon that highlights how volatile and politicized the Middle East is today. People around the world who identify with the religious, ethnic, and sometimes national title of “Jew” garner the hatred of thousands of residents of the Middle East. These are mostly Arab-Muslims, who continue on the hateful words and prejudices of anti-Semitism decades after it has dissipated from mainstream culture in the West. This study will look at the nature of anti-Semitism in modern Middle Eastern countries, the origins of modern anti-Semitism in the Middle East, the reasons for its continued persistence in the culture of the region, and possible responses to this dangerous phenomenon.

Anti-Semitism Today

Some leaders in Middle Eastern countries from government and academia look to stifle any constructive dialogue about Israel or even Jews in general. This makes it difficult to ascertain the exact nature of current anti-Semitism in Middle Eastern society.¹ For decades now, Arab and Muslim leaders have resorted to vitriolic speech directed against Israel and Jews in an effort to drum up support from the populace² and distract them from the crushing economic and social problems in their countries.³ This has perpetuated Jew-hatred and helped anti-Semitism spread to many communities in the Middle East, making it the popular phenomenon witnessed today.

Difficulties and debate in this field

This investigation is complicated by the fact that current scholars have differing views on what the nature of modern anti-Semitism really is. Some believe that hatred against Jews found around the world today is part of a reaction to the Arab-Israeli conflict,⁴ others propose that it is

² Lassner & Troen, Jews and Muslims, 149.
⁴ Lewis, Semites and Anti-Semites, 237-239.
simply a new manifestation of centuries-old anti-Semitism.⁵ Still others claim that it is thinly disguised as anti-Zionism or hatred against the perceived financial establishment. Abraham H. Foxman, director of the Anti-Defamation League, considers anti-Zionism as an expression of racial hatred.⁶ Walter Laqueur believes that negative references to “Wall Street” and neoconservatives are simply euphemisms for Jews.⁷ This is because, he explains, in the Western world anti-Semitism cannot be open or obvious since the Nazis made Jew-hatred criminal and synonymous with genocide.⁸ Clearly defined camps have been drawn up between those who believe there is a “new” anti-Semitism and those who do not. Writers such as Phyllis Chesler, Alan M. Dershowitz, and Gabriel Schoenfeld, think there is a new anti-Semitism that is different and harder to detect and address than obvious Jew-hatred.⁹ Others think that the hateful speech, violent acts, and deep prejudice associated with modern anti-Semitism in the West and in the Middle East are not a new manifestation but part of the shameful pattern of Jew-hatred that has plagued the Diaspora for centuries.¹⁰

Making the case for a new type of modern anti-Semitism is difficult as the materials and characteristics of Jew-hatred are the same as they were in recent centuries. Also, the apparent increase in attacks on Jews around the world does not necessarily correlate to a change in the nature of anti-Semitism, just an increase in Jew-hatred.¹¹ At the same time, some left leaning academics such as Noam Chomsky and Norman Finkelstein, who deny the existence of new anti-Semitism, are sometimes themselves accused of being anti-Semites.¹² It is unlikely they truly are anti-Semites, however, especially considering many scholars in the leftist camp are Jews themselves.¹³ This does not make them free from other extreme sentiments, however, such as

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⁶ Klug, “Myth of the New Anti-Semitism.”
¹⁰ Fischel, “New Anti-Semitism.”
¹¹ See note 5 above.
¹² Lewis, Semites and Anti-Semites, 247; Fischel, “New Anti-Semitism.”
¹³ Lewis, Semites and Anti-Semites, 247.
Norman Finkelstein’s admiration for Hezbollah.\textsuperscript{14}

The field of modern anti-Semitism and global attitudes toward Israel has become so charged it has resulted in hateful, litigious battles within the academic community. For example, an academic and legal battle raged between Alan M. Dershowitz and Finkelstein. Dershowitz, a renowned Harvard professor, pressured the University of California and even petitioned the Governor of California to prevent Finkelstein from publishing the extensively reviewed book \textit{Beyond Chutzpah} which was highly critical of Dershowitz’s scholarship on Israel.\textsuperscript{15}

\textit{Bias in the study of anti-Semitism}

Modern anti-Semitism in the Middle East is difficult to assay. This is because Jew hatred can be disguised in criticism of Israel and because leaders in the region stifle constructive conversation. Also, the issue has become politicized and arguments over the origins of anti-Semitism and its persistence in the region’s culture are tied to Middle Eastern politics. There is a great deal of hateful literature that supports anti-Semitism, along with Israeli hatred, propagated usually by radical Islamists and Arab nationalists as well as the far left.\textsuperscript{16} At the same time, and there are also many writers who look to demonize Arabs and Muslims as well\textsuperscript{17} and lay the blame for the violence and hatred that is endemic in the Middle East solely at the foot of Arab-Muslims. Riaz Hassan explains that negative stereotyping of Arabs is often at the heart of many discussions of Arab anti-semitism.\textsuperscript{18}

Bat Ye’or is the acclaimed author of \textit{The Dhimmi} and claims that Jews were traditionally the worst treated minorities in the Middle East. This is in spite of her admission that the treatment of different minority groups in the Arab world varied greatly depending on time and place.\textsuperscript{19} This makes her argument concerning Jews as the worst treated minority hard to argue. She also believes that Muslims have developed a hatred for peoples outside the \textit{umma}, or worldwide Muslim community, as a necessary part of jihad and that this hatred has been recently

\textsuperscript{14} Adam Jewell, “Jewish-American academic deplores Israel's massacres” \textit{The Daily Star} January 8, 2008.
\textsuperscript{15} Marcella Bombardieri, “Academic fight heads to print,” \textit{Boston Globe} July 9, 2005.
\textsuperscript{16} Lewis, \textit{Semites and Anti-Semites}, 247.
\textsuperscript{17} Norman Finkelstein, \textit{Beyond Chutzpah} (Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 2005), 14, 61.
\textsuperscript{19} Bat Ye’or, \textit{Dhimmi} (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press, 1985), 122, 78.
funneled against Jews. This is a broad statement that is potentially misleading as scholars and theologians cannot agree on the true nature of the concept of jihad, although most agree it involves military action of some sort. The violent aspects of jihad as well as hatred for those outside of the umma are not accepted by many Muslim communities, including some so called “fundamentalist” groups.

On the other side, some authors make wild claims about Israelis and Zionists. An example of this is the exaggerated idea that Zionists were, for the most part, always determined to uproot the natives of Palestine; never recognizing Palestinians as people with any rights. This is claimed by both Norman Finkelstein and Hal Draper. This idea is historically untrue, at least up until the time of the Balfour Declaration. The great number of these slanted accounts and broad or misleading statements concerning Jews, Israelis, Arabs, and Muslims make understanding the true origins and nature of modern anti-semitism in the Middle East difficult.

These divisions in scholarship on the topic of modern anti-semitism can make investigations into Jew hatred frustrating and inconclusive. Differing opinions and biased statements found in modern research on anti-semitism do not, however, make these scholars’ work unusable or this investigation impossible. Scholars mentioned above, such as Laquer and Bat Ye’or, have much to offer in terms of facts and analysis for their years of meticulous work and deep desire to uncover the truth about modern anti-semitism and the treatment of Jews. Their studies are well respected and in their field. As Finkelstein points out, most of the historical events involved in the relationship between Jews and Arabs are well documented and are accepted by scholars as fact. This is in large part thanks to the lively debate in academic circles and the hard work of scholars, many of them Israeli, looking to uncover the truth sometimes hidden by Arab and Israeli propaganda. So there is a solid foundation of research and a generally reliable base of scholars on which to begin to build this study.

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20 Ibid, 129.
23 Lassner & Troen, Jews and Muslims, 309, 328.
25 Finkelstein, Beyond Chutzpah, 2-3.
Notes for this study

Keeping all this in mind, the aim here is to acknowledge but mostly exclude the more biased statements and ideas concerning modern anti-semitism that some authors and sources carry. At the same time, their research and differing analysis are still utilized to create a more complete picture of the state of current anti-semitism in the Middle East. In working toward these aims the conclusions of more controversial works like *Beyond Chutzpah*, although they will be considered, will not factor as much in this discussion as less somewhat contentious works and scholars such as Bernard Lewis. However, because of the discordant nature of anti-semitism scholarship it would be wrong to assert that any single source or person is indisputable or considered by all scholars in the field to be completely authoritative.

Arab and Muslim attitudes towards Jews are covered extensively in this study since almost all of the countries in the Middle East are dominated by Arabs and Muslims. Most of the people in the Middle East can fall into one or both of these categories like Arab/Muslims, Christians, Persians, Turks, Kurds, Palestinians, Alawis, and others. This means that looking at the general attitude of Arabs or Muslims towards Jews in the region would give a good picture of anti-Semitism there. It must also be recognized however, that the Middle East is an ethnically and religiously diverse region. The opinions of Arabs and Muslims, although helpful to this study, cannot be assumed to represent the opinions of all the people in the region. Chapter four deals with this topic in more detail, especially with regards to the treatment of Jews in historically diverse Lebanon.

It is important to mention here that in this study, strongly religious Muslim groups, militant and otherwise, will be called Islamists, radicals, extremists, or by their appropriate name (i.e. Hamas, The Muslim Brotherhood, Hezbollah). This is to avoid the often used and incorrect term “fundamentalists” because this term indicates they are religious literalists when in fact they are not. Islamists acknowledge, as do most Muslims, that their divergent interpretations go beyond the sometimes abstruse text of the Qur’an. Often their religious ideas are more based on variant strains of traditional or new Islamic scholarship and exegesis that are meant to illuminate

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27 CIA World Factbook
the meaning of the Qur’an, rather than traditional or mainstream Islamic thought.\textsuperscript{28}

\textit{A working definition of modern anti-Semitism}

The working definition of anti-Semitism can vary since the term “Semite” itself is relatively new, as it was developed in the late nineteenth century. Due to the contentious nature of the study of anti-Semitism in the Middle East it is helpful to establish a working definition for this investigation. The European Union’s Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), now the Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), created a working definition of anti-Semitism in 2005. This definition is appropriate for the context of this discussion and will provide a clear idea of what is meant by the word anti-Semitism in this study.

\textit{Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities... such manifestations could also target the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. Anti-Semitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.}\textsuperscript{29}

The working paper goes on to say that modern anti-Semitism can occur anywhere, in any context. It notes that Anti-Semitism can include calling for the death of Jews using an extremist ideology and promoting false stereotypes about Jews like their collective power and supposed control of the media or economy. It also includes blaming Jews as a group for actions taken by a few Jews or non-Jews, Holocaust denial, and accusing Jews of being more loyal to Israel or the Jewish world community than their own countries. Wrongful acts are anti-Semitic if the targets of these acts are specifically chosen because they are Jewish. Discrimination is considered anti-Semitic if Jews specifically are denied rights or privileges that other groups enjoy. Anti-Semitism can target any aspect of Jewish identity whether it is religious, ethnic, racial, or even national.

\textsuperscript{28} Lassner & Troen, \textit{Jews and Muslims}, 127.
Much of today’s global anti-Semitism is connected to the existence of Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict\(^\text{30}\) so the discussion of anti-Semitism in the Middle East, where these events are happening, is very important to scholarship on the topic. The working paper by the FRA, quoted above, states that anti-Semitism can manifest itself with regard to the state of Israel in many different ways. This includes claiming that Israel is a racist endeavor, applying double standards to Israel not expected of other democratic countries and using elements of classical anti-Semitism like the term Jesus killers and blood libel to characterize Israelis. Also, comparing Israel to Nazi Germany and holding all Jews responsible for the actions of Israel are other avenues that anti-Semitism enters discussions on Israel. The report is careful to note, however, that “criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as anti-Semitic.” This can introduce difficulties in properly identifying anti-Semitic speech or actions in regard to Israel if the anti-Semitism is not explicitly obvious.

Summary of thesis

This study attempts to look through religious and government sponsored Jew hatred in the Middle East to determine how anti-semitism became so rampant in the region originally. It also examines why Jew hatred continues to persist as it does today, and what is necessary to bring an end to the hateful speech and persecution that has widened the gap between Jews and Muslims in the region.

Chapter one will examine the possible origins and precursors of anti-Semitism in premodern times through Muslim and Christian tradition and Middle Eastern history. Chapter two looks at sources and causes of current anti-Semitism from European influence in the Middle East, the immigration of European Jews to the region and creation of Israel, Arab nationalism, radical Islam, and the continuing conflict between Israel and Arab countries in the region. The nature of anti-Semitism in the Middle East today is the subject of chapter three. This includes analyzing the agents of Jew hatred, typical materials and claims of anti-Semites, and Jew hatred and its manifestations in the general populace. Chapter four explores the treatment of Jewish communities in the Middle East and the development of anti-Semitism in the region in a

\(^{30}\) United States Department of State, *Report on Global Anti-Semitism*, report to the Congressional Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on International Relations, January 5, 2005.
comparative case study of three countries in the region. These countries, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon, all experienced anti-semitism and Jew hatred in different intensities at different time periods in the past hundred years.

A wide range of materials and sources are used to investigate this complex topic. These include current scholarship on anti-Semitism, religious texts, reports from government and nongovernmental organizations, historical documents, interviews, media sources from within region and from outside, and polling data. This broad spectrum of data will help to demonstrate the current nature of anti-Semitism for the majority of the people Middle East, as well as some of its nuances and complexities, and why it has become such an important part of the political culture and society there.

Anti-Semitism has become central to the Middle East as Jew hatred helps to fuel the Arab-Israeli conflict and is used to promote militant Islamic and nationalist movements that damage the possibilities for peace.\(^{31}\) Whatever the current causes and agents of anti-Semitism may be, it is becoming ever clearer that it will be necessary to address the origins of hate and bring an end to anti-semitism in mainstream culture in order to curb violence in the Middle East. Thus far, begrudging negotiations between bitterly hateful enemies has not led to lasting peace, a pattern that will most likely continue until the culture of hate is stopped.

CHAPTER 1
PRECURSORS OF ANTI-SEMITISM IN HISTORY AND RELIGION

Obvious anti-Semitism, as defined in the introduction to this study, was not historically prevalent in the Middle East. It is still useful, however, to look at the past attitudes and treatment of Jews in religious and social tradition in the region. This is because historical literature and attitudes, especially religious texts, are used to promote anti-Semitism in the Middle East today. Furthermore, looking at precursors to anti-Semitism can elucidate the phenomenon’s origins and sources. Examining the past also allows for a comparison between the historical treatment of Jews and the attitudes of today, which will help to build an understanding of the development of present anti-Semitism in the Middle East.

Although the term anti-Semitism may be relatively new to the Middle East, discrimination against Jews and other minorities and negative feelings against Jews can be traced back through centuries of history in the region. After the fall of the Kingdom of Israel in 720 B.C. and before the Arab conquest of the Middle East in the seventh century, Jews existed as minorities in the region. They were dispersed in small communities throughout the Middle East and were subject to the whim of their conquerors, whether they were Assyrians, Persians, or Romans. The Jews’ independent attitude as a people and a religion gained them the distrust and antipathy of some of their rulers, like during the Jewish rebellions against Rome during the first and second centuries. These feelings often resulted in violence against the Jewish communities that could be categorized as characteristic of anti-Semitic feelings.¹

This discussion of historical anti-Semitism will be examined beginning with the rise of Islam in the Middle East in the seventh century since this is considered by people in the region to be one of the most pivotal historical events in the region and because the Arab conquest set the precedent for many modern behaviors and ideas regarding minorities like Jews.²

Anti-Semitism in the Foundations of Islam

At the time of Muhammad, during the sixth century A.D., small Jewish tribes still existed in the Middle East including in the area of the Hijaz on the Arabian Peninsula. Muhammad had

close interaction with the Jewish communities, who are believed to have had a strong impact the foundations of Islam. Muslims do not recognize the possibility of Jewish or other outside influence on Islam, however. Developments in Judaism are considered a dilution or distortion of the true religion, and any similarities between Judaism and Islam is believed to be due to their common divine source. Because of the commonalities between Judaism and Islam there was initially little friction between Muhammad’s religious followers and Jews, while many Jews converted to Islam.

As Islam began to form into a distinct religion, however, many Jews and Christians rejected Muhammad’s teachings and his claim that he was a prophet of God. This marks an important turning point in the relationship between Judaism and Islam, two religions that began as very close relatives. Muslims began to view Jews as corrupted believers and outsiders in the Muslim community, or umma (أمة). Muslims believed that Muhammad’s coming was foretold in Christian and Jewish religious texts, from which the Quran draws greatly. Jews and Christians, Muslims maintain, distorted their founding texts to hide the fact they foretell Muhammad’s coming. Muslims believe that when Jews and Christians, known as People of the Book, rejected Muhammad they actually rejected their own Abrahamic heritage and strayed from God’s message. This turn in attitude towards Jews would impact the relationship that Muslims would have with Jews for centuries to come. Today, the negative aspects of the traditional Judeo-Islamic relationship are exploited in the Middle East, aiding in the growth of anti-Semitism in the region.

Jews in the Qur’an

The Qur’an is generally ambiguous in its attitude towards Jews. Although it contains anti-Jewish passages it also praises the important figures in Judaism for their faithfulness to the one Abrahamic God. The Qur’an takes different approaches to Jews and their forefathers, the

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3 Nisan, *Minorities in the Middle East*, 257.
5 Ibid, 92-94.
6 Bat Ye’or, *Dhimmi* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated Univ. Press, 1985), 43.
8 See note 6 above.
9 Nisan, *Minorities in the Middle East*, 257.
Children of Israel, depending on context. Also, the meaning of the text is not always clear, which makes claims of anti-Semitism in the Qur’an difficult to establish.

There are many examples of positive passages addressing Jews in the Qur’an. The sacred text reflects the sentiments of the Hebrew Bible and says “O Children of Israel, remember the grace I bestowed upon you, and remember the I preferred you to all other nations.”\(^{10}\) The Qur’an reaches out to all the monotheistic religions of the time and says their beliefs are important to God, as in Sura (a chapter in the Qur’an) Al-Baqarah, which says “The believers [Muslims, rs.], the Jews, the Christians and the Sabians- whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does what is good, shall receive their reward from their Lord.”\(^ {11}\) This idea is echoed in Sura 5:69.\(^ {12}\) The Qur’an gives great praise to the patriarchs of the Hebrew Bible and drew connections to Judaism which at first resulted in some Jews joining Islam.\(^ {13}\)

The Qur’an can be critical of Jews, though, which complicates the sacred book’s attitudes toward Jews. The Qur’an says “You shall find the most hostile people to the believers to be the Jews and the polytheists…”\(^ {14}\) This verse occurs more than once in the Qur’an: “…Allah has cursed [the Jews, rs.] on account of their disbelief, so they- except for a few-do not believe.”\(^ {15}\) This passage indicates that there is a special animosity toward the Jews who do not believe in Muhammad’s message. However, the Qur’an does lay the ultimate responsibility for disbelief of the Jews, Christians, and others at the feet of Allah who chooses to harden their hearts and says there is nothing humans can do to save disbelievers.\(^ {16}\) Muhammad’s negative encounters with the Jews of Arabia help to explain the passages of the Quran that are highly critical of Jews. Some scholars believe that the Qur’anic passages that show antipathy toward Jews came after tension arose between the early Muslim community and Jews in Medina who did not accept

\(^ {10}\) Quran 2:122, 2:47 from Majid Fakhry, An interpretation of the Qur’an (New York: New York Univ. Press, 2002). Unless otherwise noted, Qur’anic translations are from this interpretation. Fakhry’s notes are abbreviated m.f. and the writer’s are abbreviated r.s.

\(^ {11}\) Quran 2:62.

\(^ {12}\) See Appendix 1 for this and other passages not quoted in the text.


\(^ {14}\) 5:82.

\(^ {15}\) 4:46, 5:46

\(^ {16}\) 2:253, 5:41-43
Muhammad’s message.\textsuperscript{17}

On the other hand, the Qur’an does speak very highly of Jews who have believed in the monotheistic God and followed the true path since the time of Moses. It also praises the triumphs of faithful Jews throughout history.\textsuperscript{18} This may seem contradictory to the passages that are disparaging of Jews, but the approach the Qur’an takes on Jews depends on the context of the verse. It praises the People of the Book who have been faithful to their religions; “Oh People of the Book, there are some who indeed believe in Allah and in [the Qur’an mf.]… Those will have their reward with their Lord; Indeed Allah’s Reckoning is swift.”\textsuperscript{19} while condemning those who lost the right path to Allah; “Had the People of the Book believed and warded off evil, We would have remitted their sins and admitted them into the Gardens of Bliss. And had they observed the Torah and the Gospels, they would have eaten amply from above them and below their feet. Among them is a moderate group, but evil is what many of them are doing!”\textsuperscript{20} So the criticism of Jews varies in the Qur’an, and very much depends on the context in which the verse was written.

It is also very important to realize that most of the passages that criticize Jews also deal with Christians and other monotheists, which makes the idea of specific anti-Semitic feelings in the Qur’an difficult to prove. There are passages specifically reprobating Jews but there are also many passages that chastise Christians for their potentially damnable beliefs\textsuperscript{21} showing that the Qur’an is not prejudiced against any one specific religion. Also, even though there are many passages criticizing Jews and Christians, there are a great number which praise them for following the true religion to which they belonged.\textsuperscript{22} For this reason, the monotheistic people, including the Sabians, Christians, and Jews, were tolerated by Muslims, unlike the infidels or kafirun (كافر). Jewish and Christian similarities to Islam did make them better than pagans in the eyes of early Muslims. As a result, monotheists, and a few other ancient religions, were given a


\textsuperscript{19} 4:199.

\textsuperscript{20} 5:65-66.

\textsuperscript{21} See 4:171, 5:14, & 9:30 in Appendix 1

\textsuperscript{22} Fakhry, \textit{Interpretation of the Qur’an}, 2-3.
special, but still inferior status in Muslim lands.\footnote{Lewis, \textit{Multiple Identities of the Middle East}, 116-17.} Infidels were a different case, however, and were to be fought. But even infidels could be pardoned once they were conquered because the Qur’an states “there is no compulsion in religion,”\footnote{Qur’an 2:257.} and Muslims were told they should not be the aggressors even against the worst unbelievers.\footnote{Majid Fakhry, \textit{An interpretation of the Qur’an}, 2-3}

These examples from the Qur’an clearly show negative attitudes toward communities outside of the \textit{umma}, but do not, for the most part, show trends of hate or anti-Semitism such as abhorrent actions or words directed against Jews for simply being Jews or discriminatory practices only reserved for Jews. The Qur’an is ambiguous about encouraging hatred specifically towards Jews. Any condemnation of Jews is usually coupled with reproval of Christians and is based mostly on their rejection of Islam, not any perceived racial or cultural shortcomings.\footnote{Walter Laqueur, \textit{The Changing Face of Anti-Semitism} (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006), 192.}

Much of the criticisms directed toward Jews in the Qur’an, such as straying from the path of Allah at different points in the history, are actually mirrored in the Hebrew Bible. The Hebrew Bible can be at times very critical of the Children of Israel for apparent offenses against God. For example, in Exodus 32 Yahweh is enraged by the Hebrews’ construction of calf idol and only spares the Children of Israel divine wrath after Moses pleads with Yahweh. The Quranic chapter \textit{Al-Baraqah} (البرقYa\textit{a}) is named for this incident, which is retold in this Sura. The Qur’an is critical of the Children of Israel in this story but so are the sacred texts of Judaism. In fact, the Bible gives innumerable accounts of the people of Israel disappointing and angering God by being unfaithful to their religion which inevitably results in their punishment.\footnote{See Deuteronomy 1:41-45, Judges 2:11-15, & Ezekiel 20:27-31 in Appendix 2} Quranic criticism of the Jews of history may not be motivated solely by disdain for Jewish people, then, but might have some of its roots in the tradition of Judaism itself.

Before the foundation of the Kingdom of Israel, the Book of Judges recounts that Yahweh sent many judges, who served as prophets. These judges set the people of Israel on the path of God. Many times these judges were ignored, however.\footnote{See Judges 2:16-23 in Appendix 2} Muhammad saw himself as part of this linage of Judeo-Christian prophets. He considered his rejection by certain Jewish communities in Arabia to be tantamount to the rejection of Biblical prophets by the people of
So it seems although Muhammad criticized Jews of his time for rejecting Islam he also dignifies their religious traditions by praising the patriarchs of Judaism and by emulating and paraphrasing passages from Jewish Scripture, albeit to encourage conversion to Islam. This might mean that passages critical of the Israelites in the Qur’an actually reflect both Muhammad’s desire to promote conversion to Islam and also his desire to emulate the Scriptures of Judaism. What these passages do not reflect, however, is anti-Semitism in the Muslim community, and among Muslims who considered themselves descendents of Abraham, like the Jews.

From a practical viewpoint, it is very difficult to firmly establish that the Qur’an is anti-Semitic since there are many difficulties with translating the Qur’an and there is a great deal of active debate over how to understand the sacred texts. Certainly, Muhammad soundly criticized the non-Muslim communities of Arabia and encouraged conversion or conquering of these groups. There appears to be little solid evidence, however, that points to a special hatred for Jews as a people, especially since they could merge with the umma so readily simply by converting to Islam. Islamic theological study is based on the Qur’an, so the lack of anti-Semitic themes in the Qur’an may point to a lack of specific Jew-hatred in the foundations of Islamic tradition. Although passages in the Qur’an may have served as the basis for negative attitudes and discrimination toward non-Muslim communities in the Middle East they do not appear to be a direct source of Middle Eastern anti-Semitism.

The efforts of modern polemical Muslim clerics to connect animosity toward Jews with Islam may have more of a basis in current events than in Muslim tradition. The anti-Semitic Islamic diatribes witnessed in the Middle East today do not reflect the treatises of traditional Islam. Islamists use passages critical of Jews in the Qur’an, often out of context, to prove that anti-Semitism exists in the foundations of Islam when they know Islamic exegesis and commentary of the Qur’an may suggest otherwise. An example of this is a quote from the third

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29 Fakhry, *Interpretation of the Qur’an*, 3.
30 Ibid, 1.
32 Fakhry, *Interpretation of the Qur’an*, 3.
Sura describes Jews as transgressors of God who will be conquered by Muslims. The anti-Israel Palestinian group Hamas uses this verse in its charter to suggest that Muslims today are destined to fight and defeat Israel as well as the Jewish people as a whole. Traditional Qur’anic scholarship suggests, however, that this quote most likely refers to a single Jewish tribe in Arabia that was defeated by a group of Muslims. Traditional scholarship also indicates that this verse cannot be widely applied to current religious communities, as Hamas has done. Hamas is well aware of the accepted meaning of this and other verses of the Qur’an but continue to use these passages selectively, and in a way contrary to tradition, to create a legacy of anti-Semitism in Islam that may not exist.

**Jews in Islamic tradition outside the Qur’an**

The Qur’an does not stand alone in Islamic tradition, however. Many Muslim scholars have offered interpretations for the meanings of unclear Quranic passages. There is also Islamic tradition called the Hadith, that supplements the Quran. Khaleel Muhammad argues that this Muslim traditional literature has become almost as important at the Qur’an in forming the basis of contemporary Muslim belief. This is important because these other sources of Muslim tradition can be more specifically anti-Jewish than the Qur’an. They can provide an interpretation of the Qur’an that gives a generally more negative attitude toward Jews than the obscure text might suggest by itself. Important exegeses of the Qur’an, such as that of Abu Jarir al-Tabari in the tenth century, give ambiguous verses of the Qur’an anti-Jewish meaning. For instance, these explanations interpret the phrase “those who incurred [Allah’s] wrath” in 1:7 to mean Jews despite little contextual evidence to suggest this. Today, this anti-Jewish meaning has become popular in Saudi editions of the Qur’an which are distributed throughout the world.

Anti-Jewish themes are also not restricted to interpretations of the Qur’an as the Hadith

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36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
40 Mohammed, “Muslim Exegesis, the Hadith, and the Jews,” 5-6.
41 Ibid, 7-8.
42 Ibid.
can have overtly anti-Jewish overtones as well.\textsuperscript{43} The Hadith includes a famous narration called “The Promise of the Stone and the Tree.” In it, one of Muhammad’s companions quotes the prophet as saying

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\text{The hour [the Day of Judgment] will not come until the Muslims fight the Jews and kill them. A Jew will [then] hide behind a rock or a tree, and the rock or tree will call upon the Muslim: ‘O Muslim, O slave of Allah! there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him!’} \textsuperscript{44}
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This passage is now featured in schoolbooks for ninth graders in Saudi Arabia concerning the supposed struggle of Muslims against Jews.\textsuperscript{45}

These works provide material for current polemics looking for religious justification for animosity against Jews. Centuries ago, however, the anti-Jewish approach of certain religious literature did not seem to translate into anti-Semitic attitudes in Muslim society.\textsuperscript{46} The treatment of Jews and attitudes toward them was generally better than what anti-Jewish passages from religious tradition would indicate.\textsuperscript{47} This means that current attitudes towards Jews in Middle Eastern society today are a break from the trends of the past.

**Treatment of Jews under Islam**

Despite a lack of overt anti-Semitism in the Qur’an and Muslim society, Jews did experience discrimination under Muslim rule. Those who did not convert to Islam were grouped together with the rest of the tolerated people, like Christians, and were systematically discriminated against for centuries with other religious minorities under the dhimmi system. The fact that all religious minorities were victims of prejudice, not just Jews, and that this discrimination occurred at varying degrees at different times and places in the Middle East\textsuperscript{48} means the treatment of Jews, although not ideal, does not show a pattern of inherently anti-

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{46} Lewis, The Jews of Islam, 60.
\textsuperscript{47} Lewis, The Jews of Islam, 24.
\textsuperscript{48} Bat Ye’or, Dhimmi, 78, 89.
Semitic behavior on the part of the Muslim community in the region.  

The status of religious minorities under Islam was first established by Muhammad in the treaty of Khaybar after a successful fight against a Jewish tribe in Arabia. This agreement was called the dhimma and set the precedent for Muslim interactions with conquered people who did not convert to Islam. Eventually, Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, and Hindus in newly conquered Muslim lands would all make agreements with their new rulers under the dhimma laws. The conquered minorities were often called dhimmi and referred to as a “protected” or “tolerated” people. The dhimma began initially as a political agreement where the conquered people would provide assistance to Muslim troops and pay a special tax, called the jizya. In exchange, the minorities would be allowed to remain in the realm of Islam, or dar al Islam (دار الإسلام), retain their property, and practice their religions but with the stipulation that they could be removed at any time by their Muslim overlords.

After the death of Muhammad, a full body of rules that were intended to guide Muslim interaction with non-Muslims was drafted. The texts called the Pact of Umar I and the Covenant of Umar II, although their origins are contested, both set the standards for the proper role of the dhimmi and how they would interact with their Muslim rulers. The dhimmi people were allowed self-rule in their own communities but were required to conform to certain practices, like wearing specific clothes and riding certain animals. These conventions were discriminatory and oppressive in order to emphasize the inferior position of the dhimmi with respect to Muslims. Dhimmi were generally restricted from working in official capacities.

Although dhimmi were not mandated to work in any particular sector their clearly defined role in society led to minorities gravitating to certain professions. This included jobs that Muslims might be restricted from performing due to religious law, like handling money. Dhimmi people were not allowed to build new places of worship and had to justify the maintenance of their places of worship.

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49 Laqueur, Changing Face of Anti-Semitism, 193.
50 Bat Ye’or, Dhimmi, 45.
51 Bat Ye’or, Dhimmi, 36.
52 Ibid, 44.
53 Bat Ye’or, Dhimmi, 49.
54 Ibid, 124.
already standing religious buildings. It is important to note that these rules were not designed to target Jews specifically so were not technically anti-Semitic, but by their nature resulted in anti-Jewish discrimination nonetheless.

The terms of these treaties are important because they shape Muslim theology and religious thought with regard to religious minorities within the realm of Islam. As a result, these agreement would have consequences for minority communities in Muslim lands for centuries to come. The political agreement with the dhimmi was transformed by Muslim thinkers into a special religious relationship that was described and justified using religious terms. During the following wars of Muslim conquest, theologians framed the relationship between Muslims and those who were conquered as a part of jihad. Land outside of the dar al-Islam was deemed dar al-harb (دار الحرب), or the abode of war. They proclaimed that there could only be submission to Islam and Muslim rulers. Any truce in the battle between Muslims and non-Muslims would be a temporary halt and no lasting peace was possible.

There was flexible enforcement of dhimmi laws, however. Non-Muslim visitors to dar al Islam were granted amnesty from dhimmi status at different points. They were released from dhimmi rules for things such as pilgrimages, like in a treaty with France in 1596, and for trade and commerce. Dhimmi notables were often treated better, and received greater leniency, than the general populace as well. These facts would indicate that the dhimmi status was not a hate motivated system but a political relationship, justified by religion, created by rulers to deal with absorbing conquered people. They do not show manifestations of strong hatred toward any group or specifically toward Jews. The dhimmi, including the Jews of the Middle East, were to be looked upon as inferiors, not objects of acrimony or hate, so modern anti-Semitism in the region does not have very strong roots in the dhimmi system.

Many of the theological ideas surrounding the dhimmi system were not even invented by Muslim thinkers, in fact, but were taken directly from the harsh institutionalized oppression enforced by Christian Byzantine rulers. Before the rise of Islam in the Near East, the Theodosian and Justinian codes, in 438 A.D. and 534 A.D. respectively, along with church law, implemented a system of persecution, supported by religious argument, that was implemented against Jews,

56 Ibid, 21.
57 Bat Ye’or, Dhimmi, 44-45.
58 Ibid, 78-80, 155.
pagans, and heretics.\textsuperscript{59} When the Muslim conquerors arrived in Byzantine territory they found it much easier to keep this former system of discrimination in place than to work out a new series of regulations. There were differences between the Byzantine and Muslim system of oppression, however, one being that now any Christians who did not convert were also placed under \textit{dhimmi} rule just as Jews would be. It is true that many of the discriminatory Byzantine practices were continued under Islam but generally the Muslim \textit{dhimmi} system was kinder to Jews than the Byzantine system and Jews were no longer the main target of this discrimination.\textsuperscript{60} In many cases Jews were actually treated better under Muslim rule than they were under Christian rule and Jews welcomed their new Muslim rulers or, at worse, were indifferent to the change in power.\textsuperscript{61} This shows that political expediency, not anti-Semitism, was the underlying reason for the discrimination of Jews under Muslim rule. This indicates that the \textit{dhimmi} system was not meant to instill hate between the inhabitants of the Middle East and Jews. Furthermore, since this discrimination was applied to all minority groups under Islam so it seems hardly indicative of definitive Jew-hatred or anti-Semitism.

Despite the lack of clear anti-Semitism, Jews were treated with much less respect than those in the \textit{umma}.\textsuperscript{62} Throughout Middle Eastern history, there have been episodes of violence against Jews perpetrated by Muslims and other communities in \textit{dar al-Islam}.\textsuperscript{63} In 1856, the \textit{dhimmi} system was officially abolished by the Ottomans but it took many more years before the institutionalized persecution of the \textit{dhimmi} effectively ended.

Although not anti-Semitic, the \textit{dhimmi} system was a form of institutionalized discrimination that was supported by religious arguments that showed contempt for Jews and other minorities. Bat Ye’or believes that there is lingering disdain for minorities in Arab lands that is an artifact of the \textit{dhimmi} system.\textsuperscript{64} The stereotypes and prejudices that came as a result of the institutionalized discrimination, she argues, are stumbling blocks for constructive relationships among Arabs, Jews, and other minority communities, whose insulation bred

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{59} Ibid, 86.
\item \textsuperscript{60} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{61} Poliakov, \textit{History of Anti-Semitism}, 2:98; Bat Ye’or, \textit{Dhimmi}, 86.
\item \textsuperscript{62} Lewis, \textit{The Jews of Islam}, 33.
\item \textsuperscript{63} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{64} Bat Ye’or, \textit{Dhimmi}, 118.
\end{itemize}
The treatment of Jews in premodern Middle Eastern society

Historical relationships between Jews and non-Jews during Muslim rule were not based on anti-Semitic feelings. There is little evidence of “deep rooted anti-Semitism in the classical Islamic world.” For this reason, the historical relationship between Jews and non-Jews cannot be pegged as a direct cause for the intense anti-Semitism seen in the Middle East today. Bernard Lewis writes that “there is little sign of any deep rooted emotional hostility directed against Jews- or for that matter any other group- such as the anti-Semitism of the Christian world. There were, however, unambiguously negative attitudes.” Jews were discriminated throughout the many centuries of Muslim rule but were never persecuted as Jews were in Christian lands. Although there was contempt and discrimination against Jews, the severe and widespread anti-Semitism of the present has little precedent in Middle Eastern history.

The dhimmi rules regarding the relationships between Muslims and religious minorities did encourage segregation and discrimination. This resulted in tension between religious communities. There are examples of atrocities committed by Muslims against minority groups as well as fierce competition between religious communities. However, since the dhimmi rules were not actually anti-Semitic and were mostly concerned with political and social status, and only loosely based in ideology, they did not completely prevent interactions between the different

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65 Ibid, 86.
66 Efraim Karsh, *Rethinking the Middle East* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2003), 98.
67 Hassan, “Interrupting a history of Tolerance,” 452.
groups. There are also plenty of examples of interfaith cooperation and even real Muslim protection of minorities, including Jews, from outside threats and from each other. This shows that the rules governing dhimmi did not cause overwhelming hate between communities.

Lewis believes that the negative attitudes of Muslims towards minorities stemmed from the dominant position of the Muslim rulers. It was encouraged by the contempt they had against those who chose not to believe, a trend which can be witnessed in “virtually any society.” There was disdain for Jews and other religious minorities but there was little fear or hatred toward Jews that would be indicative of general anti-Semitism. Jews always made up a very small portion, perhaps less than one percent, of the population of the Middle East under Muslim rule. Because of this, Jews of the Middle East were not given much attention by rulers and fellow citizens. Muslims also had more reason to fear Christians than Jews because of the perpetual threat of attack from foreign Christian nations.

There are instances of violence directed specifically against Jews in the Middle Ages, but these were rare and usually not condoned by the Muslim authorities. In Iraq and Yemen in the twelfth century, mobs and rebels committed acts of persecution against Jews, including violent acts. These mobs and rebel groups were opposed by Muslim officials who allowed Jews who were forcibly converted to Islam by the rebels to eventually return to Judaism. The Fatimid Caliph Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah persecuted Jews in the eleventh century. His treatment of Jews, other minorities, and his subjects in general changed constantly throughout his reign, however, and was not typical of a Muslim ruler.

Anti-Jewish polemic was rare outside of texts addressing the Qur’an and the Hadith. Jews received little attention from Muslim authors and historians so little was written about them. What little was written did have a negative attitude towards Jews. This was due to the influence of anti-Jewish religious literature and anti-Semitic imports from Christians who converted to

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70 Bat Ye’or, *Dhimmi*, 87-89.
72 Ibid, 67.
Islam. Christians generally received more attention and polemical attacks than Jews because of conflicts between Islam and Christendom. This pattern in stark contrast to trends observed in the Middle East today. Presently, volumes of hateful, anti-Jewish literature circulate in the region. The break from historical treatment of Jews, and the exponential increase in new anti-Semitic texts in the Middle East shows that current anti-Semitism is not reflected in historical attitudes toward Jews.

The treatment of Jews under Islam and their relationship with non-Jews in the Middle East was not ideal and operated in a context of discrimination and institutionalized inferiority. At the same time, real hatred was usually absent from this relationship. Jews received comparably better treatment under Islam than they did in Christendom, or they do today in some parts of the Middle East. It is also true that Jews could convert any time to Islam and immediately remove the burdens of dhimmitude. Some Jews did convert and some simply pretended to, in order to escape religious discrimination. Although there is plenty of evidence of negative attitudes towards Jews in the past, these are insufficient to explain how anti-Semitism has become so prevalent in the Middle East. Clearly there must be other factors and sources of anti-Jewish prejudice that worked to raise the anti-Semitism to such a high degree.

**Anti-Semitism in Christianity**

Beginning with the adoption of Byzantine discrimination practices and continuing with the cultivation of racial theories in Europe, the Christian world has been a source of anti-Semitic literature, doctrines, and policies that have influenced the treatment of Jews in the Middle East. Christian attitudes towards Jews became increasingly negative in the early days of the Christianity as the religion spread to the gentile community. Jews began to be looked upon by Church fathers as hated by God because their rejection and supposed murder of Jesus. This was reflected in open, targeted hatred of Jews as a people. This Church-sponsored hate of the Jewish community led to discrimination similar to that seen in the Muslim world in addition to restrictions on Jewish religious practices and sanctioned violence against Jews. It also ultimately resulted in the attempted expulsion of Jews from Christian countries such as France (in the fifth

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76 Ibid.
century), Spain (in 613), Italy (in 855) and, for a time, Jerusalem (315). The anti-Semitism witnessed in the Christian world before the modern era could vary in intensity but was often far worse than that seen in the Middle East because of radical elements in Christendom who associated being good followers of Christ with hating the Jews and heretics. A result of this hatred was false accounts of Jews drinking the blood of innocent Gentile children or using it in religious rituals. The practice of fabricating these Jewish crimes was called blood libel and was widespread in Europe. Although it was denounced by some members of the church, it became a popular myth that was often retold and almost always resulted in the deaths of members of the Jewish community.

By most accounts it seems the treatment of Jews in the Christian world was worse than in the Middle East, at least until the nineteenth century, and that while the Muslim world had no explicit hatred specifically toward Jews, the Western world had developed a whole anti-Semitic theology targeted against the Jews. Perhaps anti-Semitism was so obvious in Christendom because, after the rise of Christianity, the Jews were the only religious minority left in Europe which was not at all the case in the Middle East. The Middle East was a diverse, pluralistic society so Jews did not stick out as much as they did in Christendom. Jews had somewhat of an advantage in Muslim lands because they were a tiny, often ignored group.

Despite their better treatment under Islam, Jews were still a dhimmi people and were considered inferior, which may have facilitated the later importation of anti-Semitic ideas from Europe into the Middle East and made it easier to spark specific Jew-hate there. It is important to remember that Christianity began and flourished for a time in the Middle East and there are longstanding Christian communities in the region up to this day. In fact, Christian Arabs were the initial conduits of European anti-Semitism into the Muslim world and translated anti-Semitic literature into Arabic. These efforts to incite hate were opposed by the Ottoman authorities but were still able to permeate the Empire nonetheless, especially as Turkish control over the Middle East diminished. Christian missionaries in the Middle East helped to introduce blood libel to the Ottoman Empire where it became popular in the nineteenth century. Reports of these events

79 Ibid.
80 Ibid, 55-57.
81 Laqueur, Changing Face of Anti-Semitism, 194-196.
83 Hassan, “Interrupting a history of Tolerance,” 455.
where backed by Europeans who looked to expand their influence in the region through the Arab Christians already present there.\textsuperscript{84} Initially, this phenomenon was only observed among the Christians under Ottoman rule. As anti-Semitism grew in the Middle East in the nineteenth and twentieth century, however, it became part of the Muslim consciousness as well.\textsuperscript{85} In this way, historical Christian anti-Semitism has crept into the culture of the Middle East. This may have been aided by the fact that there was a system of minority suppression in the region since the beginning of Islam and Christian Byzantine rule of the region.

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid, 194-195.
\textsuperscript{85} Karsh, \textit{Rethinking the Middle East}, 101.
CHAPTER 2
ORIGINS OF MODERN ANTI-SEMITISM

In order to examine the nature of anti-Semitism in the Middle East today it is important to look at its origins and causes. This helps to elucidate how and why anti-Semitism became so virulent in the region. Also, looking at the sources of anti-Semitism is the first step to addressing the reasons for continued hatred toward Jews and working towards ending this widespread problem.

Anti-Semitism in the Middle East intensified at the turn of the twentieth century, which led to violent attacks on Jews and the stripping of their property. Moving into the modern era and the past one hundred and fifty years, the West has become an ever increasing presence in the Middle East. European nations had imperial and economic aspirations in the region and the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1918 left subsequent power vacuum in the region. With this increased presence came an exchange of ideas with the West, including anti-Semitic materials from Europe. These would soon become pervasive in Middle Eastern culture. At the same time, social and economic problems in the region led to widespread frustration and anger. In this tense atmosphere, anti-Semitism was able to grow rapidly. The perceived threat of Zionists and the Arab-Israeli conflict helped to solidify this antipathy toward Jews and contributed to the prevalence of anti-Semitism in the Middle East today.

Modern European Anti-Semitic Imports

At the end of the nineteenth century in Europe, philologists began to develop terms, including “Semite” and “Aryan,” to describe language groups. These classifications were soon abused and utilized to create racist theories that created a racial hierarchy. Caucasians were placed at the top, above the Semites.¹ These theories were used to legitimize Jew hatred in nonreligious terms, removing conversion as a way for Jews to escape persecution. These anti-Jewish racial ideas would begin to seep into Middle Eastern culture in the early 20th century. This marked the beginning of the importation of modern European anti-Semitic literature and thought to Middle East. Unlike in Europe, race is not as important as religion in Middle Eastern identity. To address this, anti-Semitic racist theories were combined with religious justifications for Jew hatred in the Middle East. Eventually, the tools of hate, like anti-Semitic

¹ Lassner & Troen, Jews and Muslims, 29-33, 36.
literature, rumors, and theories, that were developed as a result of racialist theories infiltrated the Middle East and affected the relationships between Jews and non-Jews in the region.

In the 1930s, Nazi Germany was a welcome ally to Arabs and Persians with the Soviets posing a looming threat to the newly formed and vulnerable Middle Eastern nations.\(^2\) False associations made between Jews and subversive communists in Europe migrated to the Middle East and sparked fear.\(^3\) Also, classic anti-Semitic accusations against Jews were absorbed into popular culture and then religiously justified with twisted interpretations of the Talmud, Qur’an, and Islamic tradition.\(^4\) This included ideas such as Jewish poisoning of wells, blood libel and the killing of gentile children for religious ritual purposes, and conspiracy theories surrounding the world Jewish community.

In order to incite a rebellion against the Allies in the Middle East, Nazi Germany produced Arabic radio broadcasts in the region. They proclaimed that the Allies were greedy imperialists who were guided by a Jewish scheme to control the Middle East and its resources.\(^5\) The fusion of anti-Semitism with anti-colonialism and the concept of a Jewish world conspiracy were accepted by the broadcast listeners in the Middle East. Fear of Jewish world conspiracies still persist in the region today. The Nazis also helped Iran develop its new identity as an independent nation, based in its Persian past, and they imported European racialist ideas calling the Persians “Aryan” and claiming mutual ancestry with Germanic people.\(^6\)

Anti-Semitic literature was imported from Europe to the Middle East and is still widely read today and published there despite their highly questionable content. This includes the supposed plans of Jewish conspirators published in 1903 called *The Protocols of the Elders Zion*. This book has been proven to be a fabrication of the Russian secret police but has remained popular nonetheless. Also the highly anti-Semitic *Mein Kampf* by Adolph Hitler is popular in the region. These European imports helped the people of the Middle East develop a Jew-specific hatred and gave them the tools to proliferate lies about the Jewish people on which to build grand conspiracy theories.

Western anti-Semitism entered the Middle East about a generation after the official end

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\(^2\) Lewis, *Multiple Identities of the Middle East*, 36, 46.

\(^3\) Laqueur, *Changing Face of Anti-Semitism*, 197.

\(^4\) Bernard Lewis, “Muslim Anti-Semitism,” Middle East Quarterly 5, no. 2 (June 1998).

\(^5\) Hassan, “Interrupting a history of Tolerance,” 456.

\(^6\) Lewis, *Multiple Identities of the Middle East*, 45.
of the dhimmi system. Because of this, it is not difficult to imagine that European theories relating to the inferiority of Jews would be easy to introduce into the consciousness of the people of the Middle East. These ideas also arrived in the Middle East during a turbulent period from the fall of the Ottoman Empire to the creation of the state of Israel. The fear, stress, and frustration that the people of the region felt due to instability, foreign incursion, and economic depression allowed the ideas of anti-Semitism to be readily absorbed. Bat Ye’or puts forward the idea that Jew hatred in the Middle East began to increase in the early twentieth century with the xenophobia that resulted from European incursion in the region and the rise of Arab nationalism. While people were looking for explanations and retribution for their hardship, anti-Semitic material provided answers and offered reasons as to why world events seemed to turn against the favor of the majority. It also identified a group of conspirators as scapegoats who people’s anger could be directly toward.

European influence alone, however, cannot fully explain the origins of virulent anti-Semitism today in the Middle East, especially in the light of anti-Semitism’s demise in the Western World. Bat Ye’or notes that in the Middle East “The growth of Western power exacerbated [ethnic/religious] tensions already existent and latent, but did not create them.” So it is clear that the increasing Western presence in the past one hundred and fifty years and European anti-Semitic imports are not the only factors in the growth of anti-Semitism. There must be motives and other factors, along with the imported materials of hate that have led to the persistence of anti-Semitism in mainstream Middle East culture.

Social, Economic, and Political Factors

Classical explanations for the rise of anti-Semitism

Theodor Herzl and Vladimir Jabotinsky, both strong Zionists, believed that the essential cause of modern anti-Semitism had to do with Jewish Diaspora and the fact that the Jews were the minority in every country where they lived. They believed that the consequences of minority status included discrimination and the stereotyping of Jews in these countries. Although these might have been factors in Christian/Western anti-Semitism, it is less likely that these factors

7 Bat Ye’or, Dhimmi, 121.
8 Ibid, 155.
resulted in today’s fervent Middle Eastern anti-Semitism. This is because Jews are not the only religious or ethnic minorities present in the region, which is actually quite diverse.

Walter Laqueur argues that Christian minorities in the Middle East escape a good deal of open criticism and public hate because today Christian nations have a good deal of power in the international arena. Muslims still believe Jews to be a weak and vulnerable people, he posits, so it is safe to direct their hate towards the Jewish people. In this case, Herzl’s and Jabotinsky’s reasoning might be correct as the hate reserved for insulated, minority populations in the Middle East would mostly manifest itself in anti-Semitism. Public, ardent anti-Christian statements from regional leaders and media outlets would be potentially dangerous with the heavy presence of Christian dominated countries in the politics and security of the Middle East.

This argument is still insufficient to explain the rise of specific Jew-hatred, however, because it is well known that many political leaders, clerics, and lay people in the Middle East are not afraid to criticize the West, especially America, and persecute Christians along with Jews. Also, the nation of Israel and the Zionist leaders have proven their diplomatic and military strength and many Arabs believe that they secretly control world politics. This would somewhat discredit these explanations for anti-Semitism in the Middle East since people in the Middle East would have little reason to doubt the strength of the Jewish community. So it does not seem that the Jews’ insulated, minority status alone can account for the presence of modern anti-Semitism in the Middle East, although their minority status probably does not help to establish normal relations between Jews and other people of the region.

Anti-Semitism as a political tool

Laqueur also proposes that frustration caused by social and political issues in the Middle East has resulted in the rise of anti-Semitism as violence and anger against Jews serves as an outlet for the aggression caused by these problems. This argument has merit as this would not be the first time in the Middle East or anywhere that social and economic stresses have resulted in attacks based on bigotry and anti-Semitic assignments of blame. The Middle East faces many

11 Ibid 199.
crushing social, economic, and political problems. Without the lightning rods of anti-Semitism, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the plight of the Palestinians, people of the Middle East might start directing their anger over their current problems at their leaders. Jews were, and still are, blamed for economic problems in the West and today the people of the Middle East have followed this trend and have likewise blamed Jews for their current poor state of affairs which exacerbates their hatred toward Jews. Fouad Ajami shows that often when societies are faced with crisis, political and religious leaders use the situation to bolster their own arguments and causes. Societies that do not move forward after crisis gravitate toward the systems of the past, as Islamists groups advocate, or finding scapegoats, like Jews, for their problems.

The rise of the secular Arab nationalist movement did not help the situation of Jews in the Middle East but instead further damaged the relationship between Jews and non-Jews. Judaism is an ancient ethnic and religious way of life so Middle Eastern Jews do not consider themselves to be Arabs. In the heyday of Arab nationalism other religious minorities were generally treated better than Jews since the Jewish community took no part in the movement. Unlike other religious groups, like Greek Orthodox Christians, Jews had messianic expectations and a national identity already formed in the promise of the return to Zion and establishment of Israel. As a result, Jewish intellectuals did not look outside their own religious communities to build a national identity because this would risk their cohesion as an ethno-religious group. Nassar stated directly in 1959 that Israel and Zionism, which are so often associated with Jews at large, provided a direct threat to Arab nationalism and his thoughts were echoed by many other Arab leaders. In this way, secular Arab nationalism in the Middle East helped destroy the reputation of Zionists in the region. This promoted anti-Semitic feelings as Jews were associated with Zionists and were characterized as the enemies of Arabs.

Anti-Semitism has become a tool of political leaders in the Middle East to further their own agendas. Abdul Nasser used anti-Semitic speech and participation in the Arab-Israeli conflict to further his own goals within the region. He also used it to distract Egyptians from the

14 Ibid; Lassner & Troen, Jews and Muslims, 124.
16 Ibid.
17 Bat Ye’or, Dhimmi, 121-122, 154; Lassner & Troen, Jews and Muslims, 20.
18 Bat Ye’or, Dhimmi, 123.
19 Laqueur, Changing Face of Anti-Semitism, 7.
crushing social problems in Egypt and his failure to introduce ameliorating programs.\(^{20}\) Today, unfounded criticisms of Jews at large and blatantly anti-Semitic rhetoric have become expected from many Middle Eastern leaders, whose orations may include denying the Holocaust and Nazi sympathies.\(^{21}\) Many examples of anti-Semitism from current political leaders are discussed in chapters three and four. This hateful speech includes denying the right of Israel to exist, which serves as a major barrier to reconciliation in the region. Leaders are using anti-Semitism and blame mongering to take their citizens’ attention away from real issues and to blame their problems on Jews and Israel.

An example of this rhetorical maneuvering is a criticism of Israel often repeated by the leaders in the Middle East that has to do with Israel’s treatment of Palestinians after its creation in 1948. Israel has systematically discriminated against Palestinians since the state came into being.\(^{22}\) This has led to the mass exodus of many Palestinians from Palestine and has rightly caused uproar in the Arab world. Anti-Israel oratory, however, often ignores that Arab countries themselves have treated Palestinians just as poorly as Israel has. Arab leaders gloss over the fact that Arab governments are just as likely as Israel to avoid compromise on the issue of properly settling Palestinian refugees.\(^{23}\) This one-sided criticism is one example of how Israel is demonized by Arab leaders. As mentioned in the introduction, excessive criticism of Israel can sometimes be tied to anti-Semitism. This means that the hypercritical treatment of Israel may be feeding into the culture of anti-Semitism that has grown in the Middle East.

That is just one example of the many problems in the Middle East that are blamed on Israel and the Jews. In truth, many different people and governments are really at fault for most of the problems in the region, not just Israel. During “Black September” in 1970, Palestinians in Jordan attempted to rebel against the King and when they were quickly put down by the Jordanian military many Palestinians fled to Israel for refuge.\(^{24}\) This incident was a major breakdown in the supposed Arab brotherhood and shows that Arab leaders are often careful to

\(^{20}\) Hal Draper, “The Origins of the Middle East Crisis,” in *The Isreal-Arab Reader* (see note 57), 298.
\(^{21}\) Karsh, *Rethinking the Middle East*, 104.
\(^{24}\) Lassner & Troen, *Jews and Muslims*, 120.
ignore their own country’s role in creating issues in the region or Israel’s role in improving them. Overlooking the faults of their own countries and focusing only on the faults of Israel not only results in hatred for Israel and Jews at large but also prolongs political, economic, and social problems. It seems, leaders are more focused on criticizing outsiders and assigning blame instead of taking the ownership of their problems and the initiative to solve them.

**The role of Islamists and radical religion**

In the twentieth century, religious leaders in the Middle East became a significant source of modern anti-Semitism in the Middle East. This was especially true with those involved in Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, Hezbollah, and Hamas. The rise of Islamism, and ideology that these groups subscribe to, occurred in the early twentieth century with the founding of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928. This came during the arrival of modern ideas and Western influence, as well as great political changes in the Middle East. These changes included the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 and the division of the region into nation-states after World War I.

Radical Islamists have laid the blame for the infiltration of modernism and liberal ideas into Middle Eastern countries at the feet of the West and, more specifically, the Jews. Although the West is dominated by Christian countries, extremist Muslims make the argument that Zionists use their deceitful tactics to control the will of these countries in an effort to impose Western cultural values on the Middle East.25 These radicals will use terms like imperialists, colonialists, Zionists, and materialists freely and often interchangeably in order to create a common external enemy. This is in an effort to use fear to drum up support for their own causes. They utilize the fear of change and uncertainty brought on by current events and the spread of modern thought to serve their own political purposes with the end result being a rise in hate speech and anti-Semitic actions and sentiments.26

To rally support for their causes among the Muslim faithful, Islamist have framed the conflict with Israel as a religious war and use the traditional terms associated with Jihad.27 Some Muslim clerics have joined the Islamists to redefine the events of the modern world in religious

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26 Bat Ye’or, *Dhimmi*, 134.
terms. Suicide attacks, which were previously banned in Islam, were redefined into acts of martyrdom. Islamists have continued the traditional distinction between Muslim lands, *dar al-Islam*, and non-Muslim lands, *dar al-harb*, and have deemed the West to be part of the *dar al-harb*, or place of war, making enemies out of anyone outside the Muslim *umma*.

Islamists maintain that Israel was an artificial entity created in the *dar al-Islam*, and so has no right to exist. They draw ties between the conflicts with Israel to the battles of Muhammad against Jewish tribes in Arabia. They maintain that Israel will be defeated just like the Jews were at Khaybar. Passages critical of Jews and the Children of Israel from the Bible, the Qur’an, and Qur’anic commentary are used by Islamists to portray the Jews as a flawed and deceitful people who are hated by God. The adoption of these concepts by mainstream clerics in the Middle East has led to anti-Jewish sermons being preached in mosques and the permeation of slander against Jews into Muslim society. They tap into the reservoir of stereotypes, misconceptions, and hate toward Jews that formed as a result of the exposure to Christian and Nazi anti-Semitism, the conflict with Israel, and the historical Muslim contempt toward the *dhimmi*.

*Anti-Semitism and the exodus of the Mizrahim*

Just as Palestinians left Israel, there was a mass exodus of Jews out of Arab countries in the first half of the twentieth century. This came as a result of the harsh oppression brought down on native Jewish communities, some of which were present in the region before the time of Muhammad. Middle Eastern Jews, called *Mizrahim*, left their native countries partially because of incentives for moving to Israel. They left mostly because of the political pressure and violent anti-Semitism witnessed in their homelands in the twentieth century. Massacres of Jews and Jews being stripped of their property, really gave people in the Jewish community no other choice but leave Arab countries for Israel, America, and other destinations. The exodus of native Jews from Syria and Lebanon, which falls into this pattern, is discussed in detail in chapter four. These events illustrated that modern people of the Middle East were far less tolerant toward Jews during the time of Israel’s founding than Muhammad was himself or earlier

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29 Lassner & Troen, *Jews and Muslims*, 149.
Muslim communities were. It also shows that undeserved maltreatment of minorities has occurred on both sides of the Arab/Israeli conflict, despite the fact that these events are often glossed over by Arab leaders.

Because of the removal of native ancient Jewish communities from Arab countries in the Middle East, there is little opportunity for progressive interreligious dialogue within Arab countries. The Mizrahim are also often ignored and forgotten so some polemics have successfully framed Israel as a European entity. They deem Israel to be a tool of the West which has no ties to the Middle East. This is in spite of the fact that a good portion of the Jews in Israel have Middle Eastern, not European, heritage. The forced immigration of native Jews from the Middle East shows that people in Arab countries share the blame for creating bad blood between Jews and non-Jews in many Middle Eastern communities.

The role of education in promoting religious division

In the early twentieth century, strong divisions between Arab Palestinians, Jews, and other groups under the British Mandate would even extend to education. In Mandatory Palestine, Jewish children were educated in ultraorthodox Hebrew/Yiddish schools, Christians usually in European English and French schools, and the rest of the Arabs in Arabic schools. This effective segregation in education divided the population of Palestine into rival camps from an early age in a system that still continues today in Israel. Jewish and European schools received support from abroad but Arab schools were underfunded and Arabs were less likely to go to school for economic reasons. This led to an education gap in the general Palestinian Arab population. Each school was allowed to teach in its own manner which gave Palestinian Arabs the chance to inject their own ideology into their children and prepare pupils for a conflict with Zionists and the British. This led to a new generation of children in Palestine who only knew conflict and were ready to continue the hate that resulted from years of bad relations between Jews and native Palestinians.

The heavy presence of Western countries in the Middle East, system of education, encroachment of new ideas, creation of modern nation-states, along with Arab nationalism and

32 Bat Ye’or, Dhimmi, 148.
33 Ibid, 137.
34 Lassner & Troen, Jews and Muslims, 86-88.
the rhetoric of the region’s leaders, as well as socio-economic factors, have all been shown to be factors in the rise of anti-Semitism in the region. These are not the only factors leading to the rise in anti-Semitism, though, as Zionism and the presence of Israel also had a role to play in the growth of Jew hatred in the region.

**The Role of Zionism and Jewish Settlement in Palestinian Anti-Semitism**

Clearly, political and socioeconomic factors contributed to the accession of anti-Semitic attitudes in the Middle East. The relationship between Jews and non-Jews in the Middle East was also damaged by the introduction of Zionism into the region, Jewish immigration to the Middle East, and the creation of Israel. Zionists are demonized and harshly disparaged in the Middle East and most Arabs view Israel as a moral evil, not just a political injustice. They see Zionism and Israel as temporary foreign incursions into the Middle East that will be removed eventually, even if they are there for the foreseeable future. Because of this antipathy toward Zionism and Israel, connections between the Jewish community at large with Zionists and Israelis have had a negative effect on attitudes towards Jews. Hal Draper believes that from the beginning, Zionists actually reinforced anti-Semitic viewpoints because they insisted that Jews are a blood-tribe and that they are inherently different from other populations and not able to assimilate into other cultures. In this way, Zionism may have contributed indirectly to the animosity felt by people of the Middle East towards Jews, although this was not their intention.

Zionists cannot shoulder the full blame for bad feelings among Jews and Arabs alone. It was the Arab reaction to Zionism and Jewish settlers that led to an increase in anti-Semitic feelings, not Zionism itself. They connected the actions of even a few Zionists to the global community of Jews, resulting in the rise of general animosity toward Jews. Details of the development of this animosity toward Jews *vis a vis* Zionism can be found in the following chapters. An example of one Arab reaction to Zionism is from George Antonius, an Arab Christian, who claimed that Zionists had no claim to Palestine because the Jews as a people had died out long ago and only their religion survived. This kind of false perspective helped to

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35 Ibid., 102.
create the idea that Zionists are in every case enemy invaders and helped spread ignorant ideas about the Jewish sense of culture and ethnicity that resulted in a strong ideological rejection of Jewish settlement among Arabs within and outside of Mandatory Palestine.

Zionism first reached the Middle East in 1882 with Zionists buying land from absentee Arab landlords in Palestine. Jewish immigrants gained the approval of the Ottoman establishment to purchase land and move there. They brought the promise of progress in an area that was underdeveloped and had experienced a population decline. However, Zionists, unlike other Jewish immigrants who had arrived in the mid-1800s, did not live with the locals in Palestine. They instead set up settlements away from native Muslim and Christian populations. This was because Zionists considered themselves different from the rest of the people of Palestine. Zionists were also more troubling to people of the region than earlier immigrants as they made their goals of independence and nationhood clear to everyone.

Native Middle Eastern Jews were not allowed to join their European brethren in settlements in Palestine. This was because they were still looked upon as dhimmi and were restricted from moving there. This illustrates that even up to this point in history, Middle Easterners clearly recognized differences between Jewish communities and did not group them into one large cabal as many do today, but that would soon change.

Immigration of European Jews to Palestine increased as the treatment of Jews deteriorated in Europe. European Jews were safer and did not experience persecution in Ottoman Palestine, and especially not under the British Mandate. The native Palestinians, who were mostly Arabs and Muslims with some Christians and Jews, were disturbed by the steady flow of foreign immigrants to their homeland. Their frustration with European governance of the Middle East after the World War I meant they had no desire to support Zionist goals of settlement, despite the innovations and investment that immigrants brought. Any constructive cooperation between Zionists and locals was often swept under the rug by both sides. In the 1930s worldwide economic depression meant that many Palestinians were forced to sell their land.

38 Ibid, 69, 303.
39 Ibid, 76-77.
40 Bat Ye’or, Dhimmi, 148.
41 Lassner & Troen, Jews and Muslims, 79.
42 Ibid, 83.
43 Ibid, 95.
They lost their jobs in Jewish settlements to Jews as well as which only augmented their resentment toward Jews.\(^{44}\)

Some scholars, including Edward Said, argue that this resentment was initially a direct result of the Zionist attitude toward native Palestinians.\(^{45}\) They argue that the European Zionists considered themselves superior to the backwards Palestinians and that Zionists expected the natives to passively accept their presence in the region.\(^{46}\) The claim of these scholars may be hypercritical of Zionists, many of whom were treated as inferior people themselves in their home countries. Records indicate, however, that the colonists’ attitude and treatment of Arabs was not ideal.\(^{47}\) Zionists saw little value in the way of life that persisted in Palestine at the time of their arrival since the area was poor. Colonists imported culture from Europe and from their Jewish heritage and even renamed places with Hebrew names.\(^{48}\) Zionists also did not think of the people of Palestine as a competing nationality.

Key facts in the defense of the actions of Zionists in Palestine are that Zionists thought that the region could easily support the population of native Palestinians and colonists peacefully. Also, before the violence that resulted from the Balfour Declaration, Zionists had no intention of removing the native people from their land.\(^{49}\) This means that even if Zionists might have looked down on the natives of Palestine they still respected their basic rights to the land, though maybe not their political rights.\(^{50}\) Zionists had no idea that their presence in the region would eventually lead to violence either. Zionists generally believed that any conflict that would arise between them and the Palestinians would be relatively minor and involve the personal ownership of land, not the sweeping religious or political claims that to the land.\(^{51}\) The total blame for the subsequent conflicts and feelings of hate directed against Zionists can hardly be borne out entirely by them.

Arabs were strictly opposed to any more settlers entering Palestine after Zionist presence

\(^{44}\) Ibid.
\(^{46}\) Hassan, “Interrupting a history of Tolerance,” 458.
\(^{47}\) Lassner & Troen, *Jews and Muslims*, 325.
\(^{48}\) Ibid, 319.
\(^{49}\) Ibid, 309, 328.
\(^{50}\) Ibid, 312.
\(^{51}\) Ibid, 325.
in the region increased. After the Balfour Declaration in 1917, which stated the British government’s intention of creating a national homeland for Jews in Palestine, the Arabs of Palestine organized and began to use violence against Zionists. They saw the use of violence as their only means to support their cause. This was because their weakening economic and diplomatic position left them with little recourse. A proposed Zionist response to Arab violence was pacifism. Eventually though, Zionists took the position that they would have to actively resist the Arab violence to force Arabs to accept the presence of the Jewish settlers in Palestine. This is because Zionists saw no other choice but to continue with the national project they started in Palestine due to the growing anti-Semitism in Europe and the rise of Nazism in Germany.  

The events of history show that the animosity and violence between the native Palestinians and Jewish settlers in Palestine was not totally the fault of either side, especially since world events worked to introduce more stress into an already tense environment. The perceived threats to their way of life brought on by Zionist and European encroachment, reawakened old prejudices in Arab Palestinians which would help turn animosity and anger into anti-Semitism.

**Israeli Conflict as a Factor in Wider Anti-Semitism**

Both Zionists and the native population of Palestine share some of the blame for the hate that followed the settlement of Palestine. This hatred would have larger consequences for the Middle East and for the development of modern anti-Semitism there. The bad blood between Jews and Arabs that resulted from interactions between Palestinians and Zionists was magnified in the rest of the Arab world. This occurred as Arab nationalists tried to show empathy towards their Palestinian Arab brethren. The cause of the Palestinians against Zionists and Jews would soon become the cause of all Arab countries, at least nominally.

The relationship between the Jews and Palestinians in Israel and pre-state Palestine, as well as between Israel and its Arab neighbors, is a source of anti-Semitism today. This relationship gives polemics fuel for their hateful arguments against Jews worldwide and the Zionist enterprise. Hate felt by Palestinians toward Zionists would spread to other Arab countries, especially with the creation of Israel in 1948 and the subsequent defeat of the Arab

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52 Ibid, 327-8.
53 Ibid, 91.
military coalition that was formed to oppose the “Zionist entity.” After the “great catastrophe” as Arabs call Israel’s victory in the 1948 war, the hatred that some Palestinians reserved for Jewish settlers to spread to all the Arab countries. These countries felt shamed by their embarrassing loss to a much smaller and poorer equipped nation and these negative feelings were quickly transformed into anger for Israel and Zionists.\textsuperscript{54}

Arab nationalism and the traditions of Islam had always promised success through unity and faith. The debacle of the 1948 war seemed to fly in the face of these closely held ideas. To deal with the seemingly impossible setback, Jewish conspiracy theories imported from Europe were expanded to explain how the Jews manipulated world events to perform such an awesome and unpredictable feat. The situation only worsened with another embarrassing Arab defeat in the Six Day war in 1967. A great deal of faith was lost in the united Arab effort as a result of these wars and they are, in fact, considered major factors in the decline of Arab nationalism.\textsuperscript{55} The shame and embarrassment of these events for Arabs resulted in stronger resentment toward Israel and toward all Jews.

The great feelings of acrimony toward Israel in the Arab population of the Middle East are coupled with a hatred of Jews. This is because many people in the region consider the actions of Israel and Zionists to be representative of all Jews and their heritage. This has lead to the demonization of the whole global Jewish community in the eyes of Middle Easterners as they consider Israeli leaders to be the mouthpieces of all the Jewish people. In this way, the presence of Israel and its continued proliferation have contributed to the rise of anti-Semitism in the Middle East for the reaction and emotions that it has elicited from the Arab population there.

It is important to realize, however, that the creation of Israel did not necessitate the phenomenon of anti-Semitism. It was the choices made by individuals in the resulting conflict and the manner in which the Zionist, Arab nationalist, and later Islamist projects were undertaken that led to the great divide between Jews and many groups, especially Arabs, in the Middle East.

Events surrounding the introduction of Zionism and the creation of Israel alone, however, cannot explain the widespread Anti-Semitism seen in the region today. Full blown religious, national, and racial hatred directed against the Jews grew due to many causes working in concert.

\textsuperscript{54} Bernard Lewis, \textit{Semites and Anti-Semites} (New York: Norton & Company, 1999), 239
\textsuperscript{55} Lassner & Troen, \textit{Jews and Muslims}, 112-3.
These include the historical and theological foundation for the inferior treatment of minorities, together with the infusion of harsh European anti-Semitic material in a critical period in Middle East history, and frustration and anger over socio-economic issues, combined with the Arab-Israeli conflict.

All of these factors, to varying degrees, have contributed to the development of mainstream anti-Semitism in the Middle East. It is difficult to pinpoint any of these potential causes of hate as the root cause of modern anti-Semitism. European anti-Semitic imports, political and social issues, radical religion, the creation of Israel, or the presence of Zionists alone probably would not have resulted in the virulent Jew hatred witnessed today. The existence of all of these factors working in concert, however, along with the complicity of the people, has allowed Jew hatred to reach the dangerous level seen today in the Middle East. Islamic tradition is hard to classify as anti-Semitic but can be presented and manipulated in a way that shows deep anti-Semitism. Also, the materials of European Jew hatred could not have been imported into the Middle East without a receptive audience. The hardships and conflicts that faced the people of the Middle East in the past hundred years undoubtedly resulted in real fear and anger. These fears, however, did not necessarily need to result in hate. To make matters worse, the hate generated by the events of the twentieth century would be cultivated by leaders in the region to promote their own agendas and provide fuel for the radical Muslim leaders.

Today, this hatred is spouted by many different groups and organizations, public and private, religious and secular, using the tools of hate developed by Europeans and polemics over the past two centuries. The net result has been an astounding increase in anti-Semitism in the general public, especially in Arab and Muslim populations.
CHAPTER 3

THE NATURE OF MIDDLE EASTERN ANTI-SEMITISM TODAY

Understanding the nature of modern anti-Semitism may be complicated by certain factors such as the presence of “new” anti-Semitism which is often hidden or disguised as criticism of Israel and Zionists. Some factors do work to simplify the discussion of anti-Semitism specifically in the Middle East, however. Anti-Semitism is blatant and obvious in many Middle Eastern countries and promoted by religious, academic, and government leaders. This makes the argument over the existence of new, hidden, anti-Semitism somewhat inapplicable to the Middle East so it does not need to be addressed here much further. Also, for many residents of the Middle East, especially Arabs and Muslims, the terms Zionist, Israeli, and Jew are synonymous. This means anti-Semitic feelings in the region are not typically disguised by euphemisms or innuendo through anti-Zionist or anti-Israel sentiments, as might be the case in current Western anti-Semitism. Also, this means that actions taken by Israel, or even a small group of Israelis, can be interpreted by some residents of the Middle East to be representative of the actions of the global Jewish community. This is due in part to the fact that religion serves as a source of identity in the Middle East, so often Jews are viewed as a monolithic religious group there and sometimes coconspirators in worldwide machinations.

Religion, identity, and anti-Semitism

The idea of religion as the basis of identity in the Middle East is very important to the discussion of anti-Semitism. It makes the nature of Jew-hatred in the region fundamentally different from modern anti-Semitism in the western world. After the Arab conquest, ethnic and racial characteristics were not as important as religion in defining the identity of the people in the region. In the Ottoman Empire, it was very useful for the rulers to define their state in terms of a religious community. This promoted unity and delayed the fragmentation that ethnic and nationalist loyalties would eventually bring about. This resulted in a region where religion is a

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large part of an individual’s identity, whether they are actively religious or not.

The word “anti-Semitism” implies a racial hatred of Jews, which is witnessed in Europe and the Americas, but in the Middle East this feeling would be closer to the term anti-Judaism since the hatred is religiously based, rather than racially or ethnically based. ⁴ Today, despite efforts by some residents of the Middle East to move toward more secular society, Islamists continue the tradition of using religion in identity by framing modern politics in the context of a religious struggle. This is part of an effort to unite all Muslims and bring them into the folds of the Islamist cause. ⁵ Polemical Islamist leaders often use the word kafirun, which means “unbeliever” in the Qur’an, ⁶ to refer to modern Israelis. This means that the hatred Muslims or Palestinians may have toward Israel is manifested as a religious based acrimony. Since kafirun is often used to describe Jews in general, not just Israelis, rancor directed against Israel might be applied to all Jews, regardless of how an individual Jewish person views Arabs or Israel.

“Anti-Semitism” has come to include any type of animosity toward Jewish people, whether it is religiously or racially based, ⁷ and so it is used here to describe hate-motivated speech, literature, or actions in any form directed against Jews in the Middle East. Also, the difference between European and Middle Eastern anti-Semitism is somewhat superficial since the “Jewish people” can be considered at the same time a religious, ethnic, or cultural group and even sometimes as a nation and a race. ⁸ This would help explain why anti-Semitic material was easily transferred from Europe to the Middle East despite the fact that religion is more important than race in the Middle Eastern concept of identity. The ideological basis for anti-Semitism may differ between the two regions but the results of both are the same and include hateful rhetoric, threats against Israel and Jews, and institutionalized discrimination. Because of these factors the working definition of anti-Semitism presented in the Introduction can be applied to the Middle East and the anti-Jewish attitudes seen today in many communities in the region.

⁴ Bernard Lewis, The Multiple Identities of the Middle East, 43.
⁵ Jacob Lassner & S. Ilan Troen, Jews and Muslims in the Arab World (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 140, 149.
⁷ Office of the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism (SEAS), United States Department of State, Contemporary Global Anti-Semitism, report to the Congressional Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on International Relations, January 5, 2005.
⁸ Karpat, “The Ottoman Ethnic and Confessional Legacy.”
Manifestations and Elements of Anti-Semitism in the Middle East

Anti-Semitism in the modern Middle East takes many forms and is evident in many aspects of Middle Eastern society. As discussed in chapter two and will be explored further here, classical anti-Semitic stereotypes have been continued in the Middle East along with the idea of a world Jewish conspiracy and the blood libel myth. Other common elements of anti-Semitism in the Middle East include unreasonably harsh treatment and criticism of Israel, equating Israelis with Nazis, and Holocaust denial. All of these actions fit the working definition of anti-Semitism and are characteristic of Jew-hatred.

Treatment of Israel in the diplomatic arena

Bernard Lewis believes that current acrimonious attitudes toward Jews in the Middle East are illustrated in the way countries in the region treat Israel.9 This is because Israel is often viewed as a Jewish collective, not a secular state.10 This would mean that the poor diplomatic relationship and aggressive attitude that many Arab and Muslim leaders take toward Israel might actually be part of an underlying popular antipathy for Jews in general. Lewis makes the point that the poor diplomatic treatment of Israel by Arab states is unprecedented for the region and often unmatched in the modern world, even between the bitterest of enemies. Of the modern Arab countries, only Egypt in 1978 and Jordan in 1994, along with the PLO, even recognize Israel as a legitimate state. This is in spite of the fact that Israel has existed for sixty years and has rebuffed countless attacks by its neighbors. Many leaders even publicly declare a desire to wipe Israel off the map, even though this may not actually reflect their personal feelings.11

Criticism of Zionism or Israel can have “the effect of promoting prejudice against all Jews by demonizing Israel and Israelis and attributing Israel’s perceived faults to its Jewish character.”12 So these political hostilities have the effect of intensifying negative attitudes toward Jews and might be part of the building culture of anti-Semitism in the region. The diplomatic acrimony in the Middle East directed toward Israel has deep implications since it serves as a major obstacle to resolving the Israel-Arab conflict and can spark anti-Semitic feelings in the region.

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10 Lassner & Troen, Jews and Muslims, 149-150.
11 Bernard Lewis, “Muslim Anti-Semitism,” Middle East Quarterly 5, no. 2 (June 1998).
12 SEAS, Contemporary Global Anti-Semitism, 4.
Equating Israelis with Nazis

Another example of how vitriolic the criticism of Israel has become, in the Middle East and elsewhere, is the comparison of Israel with Nazi Germany. Yeshayahu Leibowitz (1903-1994), considered Israel’s most influential philosopher, called some Israeli military forces “Judaeo-Nazis” for their treatment of Palestinians. His is one of the many voices in the Middle East comparing Israelis to Nazis. Political cartoons depicting Israeli’s with Nazi uniforms and swastikas have become commonplace in Middle Eastern newspapers. These cartoons have become especially popular since the intense fighting in Gaza in 2008. This military escalation elicited a strong reaction from many people in the Arab media who began to equate the plight of Palestinians in Gaza with the Holocaust. Not only did journalists and Palestinian leaders diminish the scope of the Holocaust with their comments, they also connected the actions of Israel with those of the Nazis. Considering the magnitude of Nazi atrocities against Jews and other groups, equating Israel and Nazi-Germany is a bitter association for journalists and leaders to make. It is also viewed as outright anti-Semitism for the insensitivity it shows towards Jews and Israel’s Jewish heritage.

Holocaust denial

Holocaust denial is another staple of anti-Semitic speech in the Middle East today, although it is a relatively new phenomenon. For most of the twentieth century, the prevailing attitude in the Middle East concerning the Holocaust was to ignore the event or maintain that the Holocaust had nothing to do with the Middle East and could not be used to justify the creation of Israel. Beginning in the 1990s, however, questioning the events of Holocaust became more commonplace and Holocaust denials frequently appeared in Arab media, especially in areas under the Palestinian Authority. For example in 1990, the magazine of the Palestinian Red

14 See Figures 1, 2, & 3 in Appendix 3; Lewis, “Muslim Anti-Semitism.”
15 See Figures 3 & 8 in Appendix 3.
17 SEAS, Contemporary Global Anti-Semitism, 23.
Crescent, Balsam, claimed that Jews concocted the Holocaust.\textsuperscript{18} This continues today with claims that the Holocaust either did not happen, or if it did it was on a small scale and “the Jews brought it upon themselves.”\textsuperscript{19} Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, the official daily newspaper of the Palestinian National Authority, reported in 1998 that when Hitler began his persecution of Jews in Germany, the Jewish media machine began to produce stories and pictures of the mass killing of Jews. This was to create sympathy for their cause in Palestine and to gain financial and political reparations.\textsuperscript{20}

Today, educated people in the Middle East in academia, government, and media support Holocaust denial. In Iran, president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad participated in a government sponsored conference in December of 2006 focused on debunking the Holocaust. His efforts at Holocaust denial have been supported by journalists and professors in the Middle East.\textsuperscript{21} The idea that the Holocaust was fabricated is repeated throughout the Middle East and helps to undermine the legitimacy of Israel in the eyes of the citizens of the region. This is because many see the Holocaust as one of the biggest justifications for the creation of Israel. This is not the case, however, as plans to create a Jewish homeland in Mandatory Palestine were well underway before the Second World War. Nonetheless, Holocaust denial is still a means of chipping away at the foundations of the state of Israel in the minds of Israel’s opponents and remains a dangerous notion. The continued use of Holocaust denial, which is rampant in the Middle East, has become recognized as anti-Semitic in itself and is one more example of the caustic attitudes towards Jews and Israel in the region.

Countries in the Middle East may even resort to censorship to prevent any notion that the Holocaust happened. Serious attempts were made in the Middle East to prevent the showing of the Steven Spielberg movie Schindler’s list, a film about the Holocaust. This resulted in the successful censorship of the film in some Middle Eastern countries.\textsuperscript{22} The rationale given for banning the movie had to do with the film’s violence and sex scenes. It was clear, however, that the film’s subject, the Holocaust, was a major factor in it getting banned and that the movie was

\begin{footnotes}
\item[19] Lewis, “Muslim Anti-Semitism.”
\item[21] SEAS, Contemporary Global Anti-Semitism, 24.
\item[22] Lewis, “Muslim Anti-Semitism.”
\end{footnotes}
considered propaganda. Another example of the censorship of material about the Holocaust occurred in Lebanon. Hezbollah successfully worked to remove textbooks used by a school in Beirut that contained references to *The Diary of Anne Frank*. The group’s television network, Al-Manar reported that the textbook was aiding Zionist attempts to gain sympathy for Jewish persecution.

*Myth of Jewish conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elder Zion*

The idea that Jews colluded to invent or exaggerate the Holocaust is actually part of a larger trend of accusations in the Middle East that the Jewish population worldwide is cooperating in a plot aimed at world domination. Conspiracy theories are actually an important aspect of current Middle Eastern political life. Conspiracism is part of the mainstream culture and can be witnessed in the professional and academic world. Daniel Pipes shows that Arabic speakers as well as Iranians are especially susceptible to conspiracy theories. Current anti-Semitic conspiracy theories tie the whole Jewish community into Zionist plots and results in violence and anger toward Jews around the world.

*The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is a popular book in the Middle East today which shows how prevalent the idea of Jewish conspiracy has become. The book was dreamed up by the Russian secret police one hundred years ago and was supposedly written by Jewish leaders detailing the workings of a Jewish cabal. According to *The Protocols*, clandestine Jewish conspirators plan to manipulate world events through deception and control of the media and financial institutions. Today, the *Protocols* have become more popular in the Middle East than any other region. It is continuously reprinted in the Middle East and there are now more editions of the *Protocols* in Arabic than in any other language. It is also widely sold and displayed in Middle Eastern bookstores. At different points the book has been a best seller in Syria, Turkey,

26 Ibid, 5.
27 Ibid, 28.
29 Ibid.
and Lebanon. The persistence of the Protocols of the Elder Zion in the Middle East illustrate how deeply rooted conspiracy theories surrounding Jews and Israel have become in the region.

Apart from being popular reading, the Protocols are used as a legitimate source of information to verify wild claims made by Middle Eastern journalists, academics, and government officials concerning a worldwide Jewish conspiracy.30 The Protocols are taught as fact by Hamas and Hezbollah and even appeared in Saudi textbooks as an authentic source.31 A 2005 edition of The Protocols, authorized by the Syrian government and published in Damascus, “claims that the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 were orchestrated by a Zionist conspiracy.”32 This version also goes on to predict the destruction of the state of Israel.

In Iran, The Protocols of the Elders of Zion were serialized in a daily newspaper and Iranian networks work to disseminate copies of The Protocols to other countries in different languages.33 This raises the fear that anti-Semitic materials produced in the Middle East are helping to fuel anti-Semitism outside the region. This is a legitimate concern since global anti-Semitism is on the rise.34

**Blood Libel**

The slanderous idea of Jewish blood libel has also survived into modern day Middle Eastern culture where it can be found in Arabic and Iranian publications, television and radio broadcasts, and internet sources.35 As explained in chapter one, blood libel involves accusations of ritual murder of gentile children by Jews. The Saudi newspaper Al-Riyadh published an article on March 10, 2002 describing, in detail, how Jews use human blood in order to make cookies for the festival of Purim.36 In June of 2002, an independent newspaper in Bahrain, Al-Wasat, printed a cartoon showing a Jewish man piercing a baby with a spear, “furthering the anti-Semitic blood

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32 Ibid.
33 Bernard Lewis, “Muslim Anti-Semitism,” *Middle East Quarterly* 5, no. 2 (June 1998).
libel that Jews kill children.”  

The continued use of this myth in Middle Eastern culture is representative of the virulence and intensity of anti-Semitism in the region. It shows how powerful acrimonious fabrications, especially old stereotypes, can become in a region with a strong atmosphere of hate after years of conflict and destructive rhetoric.

**Agents of Anti-Semitism**

Although many elements of anti-Semitism in the Middle East are from Europe, there is plenty of homegrown anti-Semitic material from religious and government leaders and from the media in the Middle East. Now that anti-Semitism has become prevalent in many communities in the Middle East, agents of Jew hatred may use anti-Semitic speech to gain popularity. Looking at these agents of hate is important because anti-Semitic material from these sources, like those issuing from government officials and satellite television networks, makes up the most visible and publicized examples of Jew-hatred in the region. There is also a very real danger that anti-Semitism coming from leaders in society and the media is facilitating the further spread of anti-Semitism in the general public of the Middle East and beyond.

**Islamists and religious leaders**

As discussed in chapter two, Islamist leaders gained popularity by using the fear of change from the encroachment of Western countries. They also took advantage of the uncertainty from the decrepit economic state in certain countries to rally support from the populace. Utilizing the poor socio-economic conditions of the people, Islamists drummed up support among discontents with promises of improved lives and victory over their perceived enemies. They used, and still use, broad terms like imperialist, colonist, materialist, and Zionist to describe a common enemy to create a scapegoat for society’s ills that the people can direct their indignation and anger toward. Important Islamist texts lay the blame for the encroachment of atheism, materialism, pornography, and other social ills into the Middle East at the feet of Jews

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37 See Figure 4 in Appendix 3; SEAS, *Contemporary Global Anti-Semitism*, 29.
39 Ibid, 134.
and Zionists.\textsuperscript{40} Sayyid Qutb (1906-1996), an influential Islamist and leader of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950s and 60s, accused Jews of trying to corrupt the world for their own financial benefit.\textsuperscript{41} Jews, Qutb says, use trickery to infiltrate the world’s institutions casting religious moral precepts aside.\textsuperscript{42} In this way, the foundational manuscripts of the Muslim Brotherhood and similar groups go beyond anti-Zionism and show explicit anti-Semitism.\textsuperscript{43} This has helped to frame the ideals of Islamists, like religious and political reformation, in terms of holy war and hatred, especially toward Jews and the West.

Now radical Islam has become a powerful force in the region with the Islamic revival, beginning in the 1970s. The revival coincided with the demise of Arab nationalism as a viable unifying force among Middle Easterners. After defeat in the Six Day War, regular Arab people turned toward religion for solace.\textsuperscript{44} Conservative Muslim leaders blamed corrupt governments and revolutionary regimes in the Middle East, like Abdul Nassar’s Egyptian government, for social problems and military defeat.\textsuperscript{45} People involved in the Islamic revival were not parochial or ignorant of Western culture; among them were a number of doctors, scientists, and professors who knew very well the harm that their extremist views could bring in the region.\textsuperscript{46} The revival led to religious parties gaining more political control in nominally secular states. For instance, Shi’a Muslims have found they can achieve significant status through Islamist groups. Extremist leaders in the governments of Middle Eastern Countries have harnessed religious fanaticism to take attention away from real issues and prevent social and political change. This had allowed the anti-Semitism of these groups to infiltrate Muslim communities in the Middle East, many of whom already had negative views of Israel or Jews.

Hamas is a Palestinian political party and is considered one of the most anti-Semitic religious extremist groups today.\textsuperscript{47} Hamas views “capitalism, communism, the West, Zionism, and Jewry as components of a multi-faceted onslaught acting in concert to destroy Islam and

\textsuperscript{41} Sayyid Qutb, \textit{Milestones}, (Beirut, Lebanon: Holy Koran, 1980) 207.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{43} Laqueur, \textit{The Changing Face of Anti-Semitism}, 198.
\textsuperscript{44} Fouad Ajami, \textit{The Arab Predicament} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981) 52.
\textsuperscript{45} Ajami, \textit{The Arab Predicament}, 66.
\textsuperscript{46} Lassner & Troen, \textit{Jews and Muslims}, 128.
\textsuperscript{47} Hassan, “Interrupting a history of Tolerance,” 453.
eliminate the Palestinian people from their homeland."

Although Israel is made up of secularists, religious idealists, and pragmatists, Hamas views Israel as a monolithic religious state. The role of Jewish religion in the policies of modern Israel are greatly exaggerated by Hamas in an effort to frame the current conflict in a religious context which fits neatly into the Islamist narrative they have created surrounding modern events. Riaz Hassan explains how the charter of Hamas exemplifies the organization’s views on Israel and Jews in general.

*The Charter [of Hamas, he wrote] propounds an ideology saturated with anti-Semitism that flows directly from the 19th Century, right wing European thought superimposed on a flawed reading of the of the Prophet Muhammad’s antagonistic relationship with the Jewish Community of the Arabian Peninsula.*

The charter of Hamas cites the *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* as fact and blames the Zionist movement for, among other things, both World Wars and the creation of communism, capitalism, the drug trade, and the UN. Now that Hamas has become a strong political and media presence, the anti-Semitism propounded by the group has made life dangerous for Jews in the Middle East. Clearly, religious leaders and Islamist groups have contributed significantly to the atmosphere of hate directed against Jews in the Middle East and have further complicated the political conflict in the region by turning it into a religious struggle and by spreading hate.

*The media*

Current religious and Islamist leaders are not the only agents of anti-Semitism in the Middle East. The Middle Eastern media contributes greatly to feelings of anti-Semitism in the region, as well, since conduits of mass communication are often used to direct public opinion. Anti-Zionism and anti-Israel attitudes permeate Middle Eastern magazines, newspapers, television, websites, and radio where it very quickly can become anti-Semitic. Classic anti-Semitic materials like the *The Protocols of Elders of Zion* and blood libel are used by media

48 Ibid.
50 Hassan, “Interrupting a history of Tolerance,” 453.
51 Hassan, “Interrupting a history of Tolerance,” 454.
outlets.\textsuperscript{52} The media is the most common source of anti-Semitic feelings in the region today.\textsuperscript{53} It supplies hateful material and supports common anti-Jewish stereotypes and fears in news stories, commentary, and dramatic programming.

Hezbollah is a powerful Islamist political party in Lebanon which helps to spread anti-Semitism in the Middle East through its satellite television channel Al-Manar, started in 1991. Hezbollah has violently opposed the existence of Israel and has used Al-Manar as a propaganda tool against Israel. The network has been accused of pushing an anti-Western agenda and of airing anti-Semitic programming, which resulted in a judge banning the station in France.\textsuperscript{54} During Ramadan in 2003, Al-Manar televised a Syrian-produced series called \textit{Al-Shatat} (الشتات), meaning “The Diaspora,” that centered on a secret global Jewish conspiracy responsible for starting both world wars. The program also featured a quasi-ritualistic murder of a gentile child by Jews, reminiscent of blood libel. This type of program clearly crosses the line between anti-Israel sentiment and blatant anti-Semitism and shows elements of hate. This is far removed from Al-Manar’s current claim that it promotes cooperation between the world’s people.\textsuperscript{55}

The wide viewership of this network, believed to be one of the most watched Arab networks, has created a cause for concern as messages of hate may be leaking out to the wider Arab and Muslim worlds through its broadcasting.\textsuperscript{56} The channel currently attracts millions of viewers worldwide, although the precise number cannot be verified. The case of Al-Manar shows how pervasive and dangerous anti-Semitism in the Middle East can become as Jew-hatred seeps through mass media.

Al-Manar attempts to appeal to all Muslims, Sunni and Shi’a, and has given itself a new image, moving away from being just an outlet of Palestinian rejectionists, and moving toward

\textsuperscript{52} Menahem Milson, \textit{Arab and Islamic Antisemitism}, The Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), Inquiry & Analysis Series Report No.442, May 27, 2008, at http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/177/2680.htm
\textsuperscript{53} Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), United States Department of State, \textit{Report on Global Anti-Semitism}, report to the Congressional Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on International Relations, January 5, 2005.
\textsuperscript{56} Avi Jorisch, “Al-Manar: Hizbullah TV, 24/7,” \textit{Middle East Quarterly} 11, no. 1 (Winter 2004).
becoming the voice of all Muslims. The network began as the channel of extremists with radical views and a narrow viewership but is now billing itself as a legitimate source of news and information, which is now available to millions of people. As the channel tones down its blatant support for violent resistance and obvious hatred, it becomes more appealing to moderate Arabs and Muslims, but the message of hate is still unfortunately there although it becomes harder to detect.

Riaz Hassan explains that the response from most Arab leaders and intellectuals to the criticisms of Al-Manar’s programming is that they think disparaging remarks about Al-Manar are “merely an attempt by the ‘Zionist lobby’ in the US and Jewish organizations in Europe to silence legitimate criticism of Israel and Zionism.” Arab leaders willing to publicly criticize the programming of Al-Manar, are not as common as the network’s supporters.

It is not certain what the regular, everyday viewers of programs on Al-Manar think about the legitimacy of the information coming from the network. The continued popularity of this network could indicate that audiences generally believe that the message and viewpoint of Al-Manar is correct. This is just an assumption, however. It should be noted that Al-Manar’s sponsorship by Hezbollah and its financial support from Iran, not just the station’s popularity, could be factors in its growth and international availability.

Another Islamist group, Hamas, has worked to intensify its anti-Semitic rhetoric through media outlets since taking control of Gaza in 2007. The group’s “sermons and media reports preaching violence and hatred have become more pervasive, extreme, and sophisticated” in recent years. Hamas has begun to use the same media tactics as Hezbollah and has created a satellite television station called al-Aqsa, similar to Al-Manar.

Adult and children’s programming on al-Aqsa is geared toward instilling the ideology of Hamas in its viewers, including the group’s anti-Semitism. Interviews with Muslim clerics and Hamas officials, documentaries, and other programs broadcast on al-Aqsa feature reaffirmations of Jewish conspiracy theories and the evil, deceitful nature of Jews, along with Holocaust

57 Ibid.
58 Hassan, “Interrupting a history of Tolerance,” 453.
59 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
Children’s television includes the program *Tomorrow’s Pioneers* (رواد الغد) which started airing in 2007 and continued through last year. The program features animal characters, like a Mickey Mouse look-alike, struggling against Jewish oppressors and is blatantly anti-Semitic in its attacks against Zionists. This programming has further exacerbated growing anti-Semitism in the Middle East. There are now concerns that the Hamas satellite network, along with Al-Manar, is working to spread hate in other parts of the world, through Muslim immigrant populations outside the Middle East.

Anti-Semitism on Middle Eastern television is not just limited to the networks of Hamas and Hezbollah. The Egyptian television series *The Knight Without a Horse* (فارس بلا جواد), which ran from 2002 to 2003, was inspired by the *Protocols of the Elder Zion*. It depicts a Jewish world conspiracy along with the ultimate downfall of Zionists. The series contained many elements of anti-Semitism but was generally well received by people in the Egyptian media. They claimed that the stereotypes of Zionists portrayed in the film were true even if the *Protocols* were a forgery. This program and the response from the Egyptian media show how pervasive and accepted anti-Semitism has become in Middle Eastern broadcasting.

Newspapers and other print media are also a significant source of anti-Semitic material in the modern Middle East. It is particularly worrisome that many of these anti-Semitic media outlets are actually owned and operated by the governments of countries in the region. *Al-Ahram* and *Al-Jamhuriya* are two examples of Middle Eastern newspapers that consistently showcase anti-Semitism and attacks on Jews in cartoons. They also happen to be backed by the Egyptian government. Articles in these newspapers have equated Jews with Nazis, accused Jews of controlling the American government, and claimed that Jews were behind the terrorist attacks in

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62 Ibid.
64 Stephen Roth Institute, “Arab Countries 2008/9.”
66 Hassan, “Interrupting a history of Tolerance,” 453.
67 See Figures 5 & 6 in Appendix 3.
Madrid in 2004 and the attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001.\textsuperscript{69}

Newspapers in Saudi Arabia are hypercritical of Israel and Jews in general. They frequently publish articles and cartoons with anti-Semitic themes while rarely publishing material disparaging of other religions.\textsuperscript{70} The media in Yemen is also described as “prone to conspiracy stories involving Jews and Israel.”\textsuperscript{71} Jewish citizens of Turkey have reported seeing a rise in anti-Semitic material coming from Turkish newspapers and websites since Israel’s conflict with Hezbollah in 2006.\textsuperscript{72} These are just a few examples of the great volume of anti-Semitic material observed in print media in the Middle East. The popularity of these publications suggests that their readers are inclined to believe many of the myths and stereotypes perpetuated in the print media. Reading supposedly authentic anti-Semitic material on a daily basis can only intensify anti-Semitic feelings in the general public in the Middle East.

Whether it is on television, in the newspaper, or on the internet, the media in the Middle East has become a large source of modern anti-Semitism in the region. It does not help that in the Middle East, many news outlets with wide distribution and large audiences are owned or operated by governments, political groups, or radical Islamists who are all pursuing their own agenda and using anti-Semitism as a political tool to further their own goals.

\textit{Government}

Governments and officials in the Middle East are another strong source of anti-Semitism in the Middle East today. Anti-Semitic feelings are encouraged through statements made by officials, discriminatory rules and laws, and the sponsoring of anti-Semitic media and events. Government sponsored anti-Semitism seen in the Middle East is especially prevalent in Muslim societies in the region.\textsuperscript{73}

Officials in Middle Eastern government have made anti-Semitic statements denying the Holocaust, denouncing Israel as a Jewish collective, and proposing Jewish conspiracy theories. The Syrian ambassador to Iran accused American Jews of colluding with Zionists during the

\textsuperscript{69} Simon and Schaler, “Anti-Semitism the World Over,” 180; DRL, \textit{Report on Global Anti-Semitism}.
\textsuperscript{70} See Figure 7 in Appendix 3; DRL, \textit{Report on Global Anti-Semitism}.
\textsuperscript{71} DRL, \textit{Report on Global Anti-Semitism}.
\textsuperscript{72} SEAS, \textit{Contemporary Global Anti-Semitism}, 56.
\textsuperscript{73} Simon and Schaler, “Anti-Semitism the World Over,” 175.
attacks on September 11, 2001. The envoy said

Syria has documented proof of the Zionist regime’s involvement in the September 11 terror attacks on the United States ...[That] 4,000 Jews employed at the World Trade Center did not show up for work before the attack clearly attests to Zionist involvement in these attacks.\(^7^4\)

Statements like this one help to legitimize conspiracy theories surrounding Jews that continue to circulate in the Middle East and perpetuate Jewish stereotypes and Jew-hatred.

In 2006, the Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament Mahmoud al-Mashhadani claimed that Jews were funding and supporting violence in Iraq in order to carry out the Zionist sectarian agenda.\(^7^5\) This is another example of a statement by a government official that lends credence to conspiracy theories surrounding Jews in the Middle East. The reality in Iraq is that almost all of the native Jews fled the country after 1948 as they faced “strong hostility” from fellow Iraqis and from the country’s leaders not, as the al-Mashhadani suggests, the other way around.\(^7^6\) Ten years ago, perhaps 100-200 Jews lived in Iraq and after the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, the few remaining Jews emigrated with Israel’s help. Perhaps less than a dozen live there now, not including Jews who may have converted or intermarried with non-Jews.\(^7^7\) The dramatic decline in the population of the native Iraqi Jews, maybe the oldest community in the Diaspora, is symptomatic of the historically negative attitude of the government of Iraq toward Jews. This pattern of Jewish flight from a hostile society is a prevalent phenomenon in the Middle East.

The Islamic government of Iran claims that it is not anti-Semitic, but it will still only tolerate the existence of Jews under the terms of Shari’a, which is strict Islamic law.\(^7^8\) The Iranian Jewish community, which numbered 80,000 in 1979, dwindled to 25,000 after the Iranian Revolution and the establishment of the Islamic Republic, when Iran severed relations with Israel.\(^7^9\) Citizens belonging to minority religions in Iran, which includes Jews, are currently subject to legal discrimination. These laws are not restricted to the Jewish people, however, and

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\(^7^4\) SEAS, Contemporary Global Anti-Semitism, 19
\(^7^6\) The Jewish Year Book 2009, ed. Stephen W. Massil (Portland, OR: Vallentine Mitchell, 2009), 147.
\(^7^8\) Bernard Lewis, “Muslim Anti-Semitism.”
\(^7^9\) Simon and Schaler, “Anti-Semitism the World Over,” 170.
Iranian Jews are allowed to maintain their religious practices within the country. This means that the laws may not be specifically anti-Semitic but they certainly are discriminatory, like the dhimmi laws. These laws can only hurt the perception and quality of life of Jews, especially when coupled with the greatly anti-Semitic rhetoric of Iran’s leaders. The president of Iran is one of the most openly anti-Israel and anti-Semitic figures in the Middle East today. He has pursued a strict anti-Israel policy since 2005 and, as discussed above, is an ardent Holocaust denier.

The Saudi Arabian government has also systematically discriminated against Jews, who are one of the four groups of people not allowed to even enter Saudi Arabia. The government of Saudi Arabia does not practice religious tolerance and so is allowed to freely discriminate against Jews. Anti-Semitism is present in Saudi public schools where they teach Jews are cursed by God and obey the devil. The Saudi secretary-general of the Manpower Council wrote an article in June of 2004 that appeared in several Saudi newspapers where he claimed “Jews were ‘masters at manipulating the media, money, and world organizations… [and they] had succeeded in winning world sympathy by playing on the Holocaust and on Nazi atrocities.’”

In Saudi Arabia, and in many other Middle East countries as well, anti-Semitism is rampant in government-controlled press. Saudi Arabia state sponsored media uses the terms Jew, Zionist, and Israelis interchangeably, compares Israel to Nazi Germany, actively promotes Holocaust denial, and has even blamed Jews for 9/11. These articles often appear in the opinion and editorial sections of newspapers, perhaps to allow the promulgation of anti-Semitism without the editors appearing to actually support these hateful statements.

Other government sponsored media behaves in a similar fashion and promotes anti-Semitic material. For instance in 2001, an article in the Egyptian newspaper Al-Akhbar criticized people who believed in the Holocaust, indicating it was a historical fabrication. On April 26, 2007 the newspaper Tashreen, which is owned by the Syrian government and has the second

80 The Jewish Year Book 2009, 146-147.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid 177.
largest distribution in that country, published a cartoon with an Israeli soldier standing next to a 
Nazi officer telling him that they are the same.86

The Middle East is one of the few regions in the world today that has governments that 
promote anti-Semitic stereotypes and ideas with impunity. Strong anti-Israel sentiment is not 
exactly surprising given the history of conflict in the past. However, the intensity and virulence 
of government sponsored anti-Semitism is an inappropriate and unproductive response to 
political issues with Israel. Certain governments and officials in the Middle East today have 
actively promoted Jew-hatred through a variety of mediums. Tragically, when governments 
promote anti-Semitism it lends legitimacy to unreasonable feelings of hate and harmful 
stereotypes and prejudices. These deepen the negative opinions of Jews in the minds of the 
citizens in the Middle East.

**Anti-Semitism in the General Public**

It is not always clear how these sources of anti-Semitism affect the attitudes of the 
general public in the Middle East. There are groups and communities that do not accept anti-
-Semitism, as discussed in chapter four, but their numbers would be very difficult to quantify. 
Regular people, especially Arabs and Muslims, do often join in with the anti-Jewish sentiments 
of the government and radical organizations, listen and watch anti-Semitic media outlets, and 
follow polemical leaders. This highlights the fact that many people in the Middle East harbor 
some anti-Jewish sentiment.

It can become difficult to draw the line between official, institutionalized anti-Semitism 
and a grassroots feeling of hatred toward Jews among the general public. Before the twentieth 
century, there was not mainstream antipathy towards Jews in the Middle East. The events of the 
twentieth century along with the agents of anti-Semitism have changed this and led to the 
development of popular Jew hatred. Now, politicians and media outlets continue to use anti-
-Semitism. This is not only to bolster their own cause but to appeal to the feelings of animosity 
towards Jews and Israel that they have helped to build during the past hundred years.

Anti-Semitism is not just restricted to religious organizations, political groups,

86 See Figure 2 in Appendix 3; O. Winter, *Antisemitic Cartoons in the Arab and Iranian Press*, 
The Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) Inquiry & Analysis Series Report no. 368, 
academia, or the media. For example, former Dutch Member of Parliament, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, details the anti-Semitism she witnessed in common people in Saudi Arabia. She says, “Growing up as a child in Saudi Arabia, I remember my teachers, my mom and our neighbors telling us practically on a daily basis that Jews were evil, the sworn enemies of Muslims whose only goal was to destroy Islam. We were never informed about the Holocaust.”

In the spring of 2008, the people in Middle Eastern countries surveyed by the Pew Global Attitudes project had the most negative opinions of Jews out of all the countries involved in the project. In Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon, people who had an unfavorable opinion of Jews were 76%, 95%, 96%, and 97%, respectively, of the total people surveyed in each country. The fact that almost all of the people surveyed in these countries had an unfavorable opinion of Jews shows just how strong anti-Semitism may be among the population of the Middle East, especially in these countries. These numbers are particularly astounding considering how people in other countries with some history of anti-Semitism responded. 7% of people polled in the United States had an unfavorable opinion of Jews, 9% did in Britain, 25% in Germany, and 34% of people in Russia. In fact, the only other countries with more than 60% of respondents saying they had unfavorable views of Jews were Pakistan and Indonesia, both majority Muslim countries. This survey bolsters the idea that anti-Semitism is rampant in Middle Eastern society and is not just restricted to polemics or radical leaders and that the virulence and intensity of Jew-hatred there outpaces much of the rest of the world.

The nature of popular anti-Semitism

It is clear that there are negative attitudes toward Jews in the wider population of the Middle East. Discerning the exact nature of anti-Semitism in the general populace is not exactly easy to determine, however, because of the incessant anti-Semitism spewed by polemics, the media, and certain government officials in the region. Bernard Lewis suggests that anti-Semitism is still mostly political and ideological in nature, not a grassroots phenomenon or a movement of

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89 This is the sum of the percentage of respondents who answered “slightly unfavorably” and “very unfavorably” to the question “please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of… Jews”
the people.\textsuperscript{90} He argues that the anti-Semitism seen in the younger generations in the Middle East today is mostly a result of their education. It is also from the relentless anti-Jewish and anti-Israeli bias in the media and the fact that young non-Jewish people have no exposure to actual Jewish culture or history. This would make anti-Semitism a mostly top-down phenomenon in the Middle East and, as he calls it, “a political and polemical weapon to be discarded when no longer required.”\textsuperscript{91} To illustrate this he discusses the way Arabs treat Jewish travelers in the Middle East. He comments that Jews who visit the Middle East, when they can actually enter an Arab country, are treated with respect and politeness. This is because the feelings of anti-Semitism in the Middle East are not personal and intimate, unlike anti-Semitism witnessed in the West.\textsuperscript{92} Some examples of the existence of personal relationships between Jews and Arabs are discussed in chapter four.

There are other scholars, such as Efraim Karsh, who argue that anti-Semitism has now completely infiltrated the culture of the regular citizens of the Middle East because of its prevalence in the media, government, and other institutions.\textsuperscript{93} The sheer volume of anti-Semitic material present in the media, government, and universities in the Middle East would indicate that anti-Semitism is widespread in the general population of the region. Whether it is still mostly a top-down phenomenon or not is still a matter of debate.\textsuperscript{94} Anti-Semitism from governmental and organizational leaders could be responding to a real desire for anti-Semitic material from their audience or could be trying to be sensationalist. Most likely it is some combination of both of these factors but it is difficult to quantify how much each plays a role in the continued anti-Semitism. No matter what its current source is in Middle Eastern society, it is important to establish how anti-Semitism among the general public in the Middle East may manifest itself in the region.

\textit{Treatment of Israel in the general public}

A possible manifestation of anti-Semitism, in a less overt form, may be witnessed in the

\textsuperscript{90} Lewis, \textit{Semites and Anti-Semites} 258-9.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid, 259.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid, 257-258.
\textsuperscript{93} Efraim Karsh, \textit{Rethinking the Middle East} (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2003) 98.
\textsuperscript{94} Lewis, \textit{Semites and Anti-Semites} 256.
way people in the Middle East view Israel, as was discussed in detail earlier in this chapter. Since Israel is so often equated today with the greater Jewish community, unfair or unreasonably intense criticism, anger, and hate directed against Israel, might be a manifestation of underlying hatred for Jews. These attitudes are often considered anti-Semitic in of themselves as explained in the FRA definition of anti-Semitism referenced in the introduction.

This disdain for Israel is seen in the general public in the country of Syria who have a very negative opinion of Israel. The people have a deep mistrust of Israelis, which is reciprocated by Israelis, and the relationship between the two groups has been fraught with hatred and bloodshed. Even if Syrians accept the inevitability of peace with Israel they are hesitant to begin a normal relationship and “reluctant to accept the concept of a ‘warm peace.’”

It is particularly useful to look at the attitudes people have toward Israel in Middle Eastern countries which have normalized relationship with Israel, such as Egypt and Jordan. In these countries, official government policy toward Israel is actually in opposition to the general feelings of the citizens. There is significant criticism of the government of Egypt and Jordan by its citizens for the countries’ continued formal relations with Israel. When normal relationships between Israel and other Arab countries did not materialize after Egypt and Israel signed a peace treaty in 1978, Egyptians became angrier with Israel and frustrated with the official relationship Egypt had begun with Israel.

A similar situation is witnessed in Jordan, which also has formal diplomatic relations with Israel. The Jordanian public was very apprehensive of forming an official relationship with Israel even while its government was actively pursuing progressive negotiations with Israel in the 1990s. At that time, King Hussein of Jordan said that they face “the question of getting people to remove the psychological barriers of the past,” before Jordan can completely normalize its relations with Israel. This is most likely referring to the previous conflicts between the two countries and the great animosity toward Israel that has taken hold in Jordan and the wider

96 Ibid, 2.
97 Dina Porat and Esther Webman, eds., Antisemitism Worldwide 2008/09 General Analysis, Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Antisemitism and Racism, Tel Aviv University, 45.
98 Lewis, Semites and Anti-Semites 257.
99 Pell, Trip to Jordan Syria, Israel, 7.
Middle East. The Jordanian public also has fears that formal relations will bring about Israeli hegemony over Jordan and that Israel will dominate the Jordanian economy, culture, and politics. This fear might stem from conspiracy theories surrounding Jewish and Zionist control of world institutions and global policy.

**Anti-Jewish conspiracy theories, demonstrations, and threats**

The 2006 Pew Global Attitudes poll asked respondents “do you think that relations these days between Muslims around the world and people in Western countries such as the United States and Europe are generally good or generally bad?” Those who answered “bad” were then asked whether they believed the West or Muslims were responsible for this. 22% of the respondents in Egypt and 28% of respondents in Jordan volunteered the answer “Jews” as the responsible party, even though this was not one of the possible choices. The only other groups/countries in the survey who volunteered the answer “Jews” more than 1% of the time were Muslim dominated. This reflects the trend of negative attitudes toward Jews seen in the 2008 global poll in Middle Eastern and Muslim countries. The question was not even related to Jews but still shows the popular antipathy towards Jews in the Middle East. This question might reflect the strong presence, in Middle Eastern society, of the idea that Jews control world policy and attitudes, especially in the United States. Since people in the Middle East suspect Jews of dominating the media and government in the West, it makes sense that they would lay the blame for problems in the relationship between Muslims and the West at the feet of the Jewish people. Perceivably, this is because Jews could use their influence to help turn Western opinions against Muslims.

In December 2008 and January 2009, Israel and Hamas attacked each other in Israel and Gaza. This event resulted in pro-Palestinian demonstrations throughout the Middle East. There was a great deal of anti-Israeli sentiment at these demonstrations and in Egypt there was even anger directed against Egyptian leaders because the government was seen as complicit in Israel’s actions during the war. Anger directed toward Israel does not necessarily constitute anti-Semitism and might be expected in a time of conflict. However, because the distinction between

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100 Ibid.
Israel and the Jewish community at large is often blurred in the Middle East, these demonstrations have the potential to gain anti-Semitic overtones. This was true in Turkey, where a basketball game against Israel had to be cancelled after people threatened the Israeli players and shouted slogans such as “Death to Jews.”102 Also, a synagogue in the Turkish town of Izmir was vandalized with the words “We will kill you” drawn on it, while Jewish owned shops in Turkey were vandalized.103 Similar anti-Semitic acts occurred in Damascus, Syria in 2003 with minor harassment and property damage directed at Jews supposedly in response to actions taken by Israel against Palestinians.104 These examples show how quickly popular demonstrations against Israel, which are common in the Middle East, can become anti-Semitic. This illustrates the undercurrents of Jew-hatred in the general public of the region.

Violence against Jews

In recent years, anti-Semitic violence in the Middle East has been intense in Israel and the Israeli-occupied territories but is almost completely restricted to that area.105 This could be indicative of improving attitudes toward Jews in the general public. It could simply be due to other factors as well such as the relatively small number of Jews in Middle Eastern countries outside of Israel and the isolated nature of these Jewish communities. Either way, it shows that violence is no longer a strong outlet of anti-Semitism among the people of the Middle East. Indeed, the Stephen Roth Institute recorded only two serious acts of anti-Semitic violence in Yemen in 2008 as opposed to 112 cases in the United Kingdom and 40 in Russia.106 These numbers cannot be directly compared because of differences in demographics among the countries and this number represents only one country in the Middle East. The figure it does fit into the idea, however, that anti-Semitism does not frequently manifest itself in actual violence in the Middle East outside of Israel/Palestine.

This does not take away from the fact that anti-Semitism is a real, widespread, and serious problem in the general population of the Middle East and that it has serious repercussions for developing normal relationships between Jews and non-Jews and for continuing the peace

103 Ibid.
104 DRL, Report on Global Anti-Semitism.
105 DRL, Report on Global Anti-Semitism.
process in the region. Polling data, reports of threats and demonstrations targeting Jews, and the popularity of anti-Semitic materials in the Middle East have shown that the phenomenon has become pervasive in the culture of the general public. Possibly, as Bernard Lewis hopes, anti-Semitism has not taken such a firm hold in Middle Eastern households and neighborhoods that it cannot be alleviated with the removal of top-down anti-Semitic pressure from government, media, and other sources. No matter what the nature of this phenomenon is in the general public of the Middle East, it is clearly widespread and dangerous. Efforts against the causes of anti-Semitism in the Middle East and towards the quieting of the voices of the agents of hate should be strengthened in the future.
CHAPTER 4
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES & THE RISE OF ANTI-SEMITISM IN SYRIA, LEBANON, & JORDAN

So far this discussion has had a broad focus and has been mostly centered on generalities concerning anti-Semitism in the Middle East using examples and data from across the region. The Middle East is expansive and its people are diverse, however, so generalities cannot fully describe the situation in any one country or area. The goal of this chapter is to build a greater understanding of the topic and to devote some time to a more specific study of anti-Semitism, the rise of this phenomenon as well as the current nature of anti-Semitism. As established in the previous chapters, anti-Semitism as it is discussed here will include classic hate material and anti-Jewish developments of the twentieth century like the demonization of Israel and Zionists. It will also include official, institutionalized Jew hated from governments as well as popular anti-Jewish sentiments from the general public and nongovernmental groups. These issues will be more closely examined and compared in three countries in the region, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan.

These countries were chosen because they are significant in the events in the Arab-Israeli conflict and they represent some of the variation seen in the region in terms of their religious and ethnic makeup. They also have different systems of government and historical relationships with Jews, allowing for meaningful comparisons. At the same time, all three countries experience rampant anti-Semitism today with varying levels of tolerance toward Jews.

Chapter three included many examples of current anti-Semitism from Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan. This included anti-Semitism in the media, from governmental officials, and Islamist groups, and the general public as indicated by polling data. Anti-Semitism was shown to be manifested in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan in things like the popularity of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, efforts to down play the Holocaust, and the perpetuation of the blood libel myth. Also, the poor attitudes towards Israel and Israelis in many communities in these countries typified the general antipathy they have towards Jews. More examples of anti-Semitism today will be explored in this chapter. The focus here, however, will be more on the treatment of the Jewish people in these countries, their interaction with non-Jewish communities, and the historical development of virulent anti-Semitism along with the actions that people are taking or not to continue anti-Semitism or discourage it in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan.
Syria

The country of Syria is located near the Eastern shore of the Mediterranean and shares a border with Israel and Lebanon to the West, Jordan and Iraq to the South and East, and Turkey to the north. Syria’s proximity to Israel and Lebanon has contributed to the country’s relationship with these two countries. During the past sixty years, Syria has taken part in several wars with Israel and maintained a strong presence in the domestic affairs of Lebanon. Syria has twenty-two million people making it much larger than Israel, Lebanon, and Jordan. Ninety percent of the people in Syria are considered Arab and about 74% of the people are Sunni Muslims, 16% are Alawis and Druze and 10% are Christian.¹ There are perhaps around 1,500 Jews living in the capital of Damascus, in Aleppo, and in the town of Qamishly making up a very small percentage of the total population.² Syria has been under the rule of military dictators almost since its independence in 1946. Its government has been dominated by the Arab-nationalist Ba’ath party and it is currently ruled by Bashar al-Assad, a member of the Alawite minority. The country has no formal relations with Israel and anti-Semitism is widespread in Syrian society. Anti-Jewish material is pervasive in the media, is often government sponsored, and is commonplace in the general population.

Historical background

Jewish people have inhabited the area of modern day Syria for about two thousand years, and there is evidence of a strong Jewish presence in the area during Roman rule of the Levant.³ The city of Aleppo in Syria is home to the ancient Great Synagogue of Aleppo. The Aleppo codex, a Torah manuscript consulted by great scholars such as Maimonides, was housed in the Great Synagogue. The codex is a representation of Syrian Jews’ connection to the history of the region.⁴

¹ CIA World Fact Book, 2010, s.v. “Syria.”
⁴ Ibid, 35
Arabs invaded Syria in the seventh century and the Jews of the region have remained, for the most part, under Muslim rule ever since. This means Jewish people in Syria were subject to *dhimmi* laws until the nineteenth century. Although the exact interpretation of these laws varied from place to place, Jews in Syria generally could not build new synagogues, had to justify the existence of old places of worship, and had to visibly demonstrate their inferior position. Nevertheless, Jews worked in regular professions and even served in official capacities in the larger community.\(^5\) It is true as well that foreign Jews who came to Syria were not treated as *dhimmis*. They avoided certain taxes which gave them an advantage and resulted in resentment from native Syrian Jews.\(^6\)

There is evidence of regular interaction between Jews and their Christian and Muslim neighbors, as they maintained inter-communal friendships. Syrians of different religious backgrounds were mutual guests for dinners, weddings, and other events.\(^7\) This does not mean, however, that there were not strong divisions between the different religious groups in Syria at the community level. Ottoman rulers separated confessional groups into official administrative divisions called *millets*. The division inherent in the *millet* system and discrimination due to *dhimmi* laws would ultimately affect the way that the communities interacted with each other.

In practice, the Ottomans left local leaders in religious communities with a good amount of authority. This might have been a factor in the *millet system* being internalized by the communities of Syria and the development of strong religious divisions in society. In fact, the official segregation of religious communities became typical in most aspects of daily life. For instance, in a single factory, workers would be sequestered according to their confessional group. If a Jewish person and a Muslim were performing the exact same job they would be still be separated from each other on the factory floor.\(^8\) This strict division between religious groups would have great implications as Syria moved into the modern age. At this point, religion was strongly linked with identity and the power vacuum created by declining Ottoman rule would lead to intercommunity competition that interfaith friendships could not withstand.

In the 1800s Ottoman power diminished and European influence grew in Syria. Tensions among the Jews, Christians, and Muslims intensified as people banded together within their

\(^5\) Ibid, 39.
\(^6\) Ibid, 22.
\(^7\) Ibid, 38.
\(^8\) Ibid, 42.
religious community to jockey for power. European pressure resulted in the overturning of *dhimmi* laws in Syria starting in 1830. This was contrary to the desire of the Muslims living there who actually continued to enforce elements of *dhimmi* rules. Maintaining the *dhimmi* system in Syria would become very difficult in practice, however. Syrian Jews and Christians started obtaining foreign citizenship and passports from the European consulates in the Near East. This gave them the same legal status as foreign merchants and visitors and allowed them to avoid the restrictions put on *dhimmi* people, gaining more power and freedom.

*The rise of anti-Semitism*

Even though the Jewish people of Syria were gaining freedom from the restrictions they previously faced from Muslims there was increasing opposition against Jews from Europeans in the region and the Christian population of Syria. Europeans were prejudiced against Jews, which would work against Syrian Jews in the restructuring of power in Syria. Jews were discriminated against by the European consuls making it difficult for them to obtain foreign passports to shed the restrictions of *dhimmi* status. Syrian Jews often had to appeal to wealthy or influential Jews in Europe before the consuls would cooperate with them. Jews also had to deal with pressure from the native Christian population of Syria. Competition between Jews and Christians was very strong, especially among the members of these groups who jostled for government jobs and contracts. This antagonism was manifested in the promotion of wild, hateful accusations against Jews. Europeans encouraged charges against Jews which Syrian Christians helped to spread. An example of one such episode is the Damascus affair of 1840 where Jews were accused of murdering a Catholic priest to use his blood for rituals. The French consul in the region was the chief accuser and Greek Christians may have helped to fuel the case, importing the concept of blood libel from European

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9 Ibid, 39.
11 Ibid, 41.
12 Ibid, 42.
13 The accused were notable Jews who competed economically with Christians. The affair resulted in widespread violence and riots against Jews. It was a successful use of a Christian anti-Semitic claim in the abode of Islam and established blood libel as an important anti-Jewish tool in the Middle East. This incident had widespread consequences for the relationship between Jews and non-Jews in the Middle East and Europe.
Christians. Eventually, the accused Jews who had not died in prison were released, which was seen as a vindication for the community, but the overall affair was a disaster for Jewish intercommunity relations.

The events of the nineteenth century provided opportunities for anti-Semitic feelings and ideas to be introduced into Syria. These events singled out and isolated the Jewish community from the other minorities, like the Christians and the Alawis, despite the official end of dhimmi rule. Still, this did not mean the end of inter-community relations. Jews continued to live in integrated neighborhoods, work with foreign Protestant missionaries, and shelter their fellow minorities from Muslim attacks.

During this period, anti-Semitism was not a feature of the Syrian Muslim population. Muslims were actually more fearful of the Christian community than Jews. Muslims feared Christians would gain power with the intervention of European powers. This was evident in the 1850 Aleppo riots when Muslims attacked Christians. Conversely, Muslims saw Jews as more or less harmless. Perhaps this is why anti-Semitism was mostly restricted to the Christian community of Syria before the twentieth century.

There were Muslim riots in the late Ottoman period targeted against dhimmi people other than Christians. These do not appear to have been motivated by hatred towards Jews or any other group, though. The riots were more a result of the breakdown in historical social structures like the traditional relationship between Muslims and the dhimmi. The failings of the Ottoman Empire along with the distrust Muslims had for the encroaching European powers were other factors as well.

Violence toward Jews did increase with the end of Ottoman rule and the First World War. These events had deep implications for the relationship among the different religious communities in Syria. During and after the war, street violence and power struggles were the hallmark of inter-community interactions. Muslims fought with Christians, Jews, Armenians, and other groups, and all these communities battled with each other. The delicate balance of power between religious groups in Ottoman lands was violently upset.

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14 Ibid, 41.
15 Ibid, 42, 46.
16 Ibid, 41.
18 Ibid.
This period helped to solidify the gaps between confessional groups that would continue in the twentieth century. As a result, friendly interactions between Jews and gentiles began to diminish in the neighborhoods of Syria’s cities during the Mandate period, a time between the two world wars when France was given control over the country.\(^{19}\) Still, there were some people willing to reach out to other communities in these turbulent times. For example, Jews provided refuge for Armenians, who were victims of mass killings.\(^{20}\) Nonetheless, as conflict in the region tested inter-community friendships the division between Jews and the rest of Syrian society grew.

From this point on, the treatment of Jews in Syria and anti-Semitism in the country were directly tied to events happening outside the country. This included the growing conflict between Zionism and Arab-nationalism, World War II, and the creation of Israel. In the late nineteenth century and continuing well into the twentieth century, Arab-nationalism would work to isolate the Jewish community of Syria from the other minority groups. Arab nationalism provided a chance for Christians, Alawis, and Druze to gain equal footing with Muslims through Arab unity. Jewish people were either excluded from the movement or chose not to join because they did not consider themselves to be Arabs. As a result, the Jewish community began to be pushed to the edges of Syrian society.

The introduction of Zionism further alienated the Jewish community as Zionism was viewed to be the antithesis of Arab nationalism. In the eyes of non-Jewish Syrians, Jews started to become synonymous with Zionists.\(^{21}\) To counter this, Syrian Jewish leaders disavowed any connection between the Jewish community and Zionists.\(^{22}\) This ultimately did not stem the tide of anti-Semitism, however. In the 1930s pro-Palestinian nationalism in Syria begot anti-Zionism. This became increasingly anti-Jewish with the infusion of Nazi and Italian fascist anti-Semitism.\(^{23}\)

Walter Zenner writes that during the Second World War “Syrian Jewry was affected by the harsh currents of anti-Semitism, which influenced Arab nationalists.”\(^{24}\) Michel Aflaq (1910-1989), a Syrian Christian and founder of the Arab nationalist Ba’ath party, was attracted by

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\(^{19}\) Ibid, 39.
\(^{20}\) Ibid.
\(^{21}\) Ibid, 49.
\(^{22}\) Ibid, 49.
\(^{23}\) Ibid, 82.
German and Nazi nationalist ideas. Aflaq had enthusiasm for Hitler’s ideas about German society and supported Nazi sympathizers in the Middle East.25

The anti-Semitism of Nazi Germany permeated the Middle East through propaganda. Some local leaders cooperated with the anti-Semitic Nazi campaign to gain support from the Axis powers for their personal agendas. Syria received direct exposure to this culture of hate through the Vichy regime that governed the country from 1940-1941. This worked to intensify animosity directed toward Jews in Syria. This would mean more of the Jewish community would leave Syria and Jews who stayed in the country became increasingly isolated from the rest of Syrian society.26 The desire to leave was so great that Jews who could not obtain approval to immigrate to other countries or move into the British Mandate were smuggled across the border to Palestine. Even when the ideas and culture of Modernism and secularism were absorbed by Syrians, the Jewish people remained segregated and socially isolated from the rest of the population.27

In 1947, the UN announced that it would partition the area of Palestine into a Jewish and Arab state, a decision that was enormously unpopular in Syria. The previous decades of inter-community tensions and anti-Semitic influence in the country came to a head at this point in history. The frustration of the Syrian public with the situation in Palestine resulted in anger directed against Jews in the country who themselves had nothing to do with the events outside Syria. Anti-Jewish riots erupted in Aleppo and the Jewish people of Syria had nowhere to turn. The government could not control the violence and in some instances actually encouraged the destruction of synagogues.28 Almost all of the remaining Jews in Syria left the country for Jewish settlements in Palestine after the riots. Syrian Jews are actually unique among the Jewish communities of the Middle East in that most of their migration to area of modern day Israel occurred before 1948.29 This could have been due to the stress the community faced in the years leading up to the creation of Israel.

26 Ibid, 51.
28 Ibid, 54
29 Ibid, 81.
This time in history presents several important points about anti-Semitism in Syria and in the wider Middle East. The general feelings of anger and hatred against Jews had no single source. Anti-Semitism was manifested in many ways and existed before the creation of Israel. Most of the causes of anti-Semitism were external and did not originate with the people of Syria. In fact, friendships and neighborly relationships between Jews and non-Jews were mostly maintained, although they were strained, and there is little evidence of personal hatred between people.

What would eventually contribute to the rise of anti-Semitism was the arrival of European and Nazi anti-Semitism, tensions from the instability of waning years of the Ottoman Empire, and the appearance of nationalist movements in the region. The socio-economic and political problems of the country as well as artifacts from the dhimmi system, such as feelings of superiority, may have made the country receptive to the seeds of hate brought on by polemics, conflict, and European influence.

Another common element is the unfounded association of Zionists and Israel with the wider Jewish community, resulting in anger towards native Jews in the country. Middle Eastern Jews experienced social isolation and animosity from the populace and the government. This resulted in the migration of Jews from the country, leaving communities that were hundreds to thousands of years old. The mass exodus of Jews out of Arab countries was common during the creation of Israel, as detailed in chapter two. In these ways, the rise of anti-Semitism in Syria reflects the pattern of Jew hatred in other Middle Eastern countries, especially Arab majority countries.

**Current Anti-Semitism and the treatment of Syrian Jews**

The Arab defeat in the war of 1948 with Israel resulted in the overthrow of the government of Syria. The country was ruled by military dictators who followed each other in a quick succession of coups. From 1948 on, Jewish life in Syria, like most Syrians’, would be marked by heavy restrictions enforced by the various oppressive governments. The border between Israel and Syria was closed and the movements of Syrian Jews were restricted.

The remnant Jewish community in Syria was somewhat tolerated as it was allowed to exist but their actual quality of life has been debated by reporters and scholars. Sources on the
treatment of Jews within Syria from 1949 to 1992 are sparse and highly partisan. Therefore, making definitive judgments about attitudes towards Jews in Syria is difficult. But there is evidence that helps establish some basic themes. Syrian Jews and the country’s other citizens have lived with the fear of secret police and state surveillance for decades. Much of the maltreatment of Jews in Syria was typical of the treatment of all Syrians under the military regimes. At the same time, there are plenty of examples of unequal treatment, discrimination, and hate crimes against Jews specifically.

Often the treatment of Jews in Syria as compared with other citizens varied with what regime was in power and was determined by world events, but the same anti-Semitic feelings always persisted. Syrian Jews were forced to stay in the country for political purposes and were restricted to certain areas of the cities of Aleppo, Damascus, and Qamishly. In the town of Qamishly, Jews even had a curfew. They were a bargaining chip and their presence supposedly showed the tolerance of the government as well as its power. In the early regimes, Jews were victimized by the regular citizens of Syria with attacks in the streets that sometimes involved stoning.

After Hafez Assad took control of Syria in 1970 the treatment of Jewish people did not vary as much over time. Under Assad, many of the religious, educational, and economic restrictions on Jews were removed. In the previous regimes Jews had to rely on aid from abroad to sustain themselves.

Jews today are treated worse than other Syrians, however. The movements of Jews outside and inside the country are restricted by the government through various means while Jewish schools have been taken over by the government. These measures are typically justified by events in the Arab-Israeli conflict, which have no real connection to the Syrian Jewish people. Syrian Jews are banned from government employment and from serving in the military. They are the only religious minority in Syria whose official documents note their

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31 Ibid, 56.
32 Ibid, 55, 61.
33 Ibid, 56.
34 Ibid, 56, 57.
religion.\textsuperscript{36} There is a report of Jewish girls being raped and murdered in 1974 when they tried to flee out of Syria. The discrimination, threats, and violence targeting Jews show that anti-Semitism has become an established element of Syrian society.

In 1992, the border between Syria and Israel was opened again, after forty four years. All but 200 of the 4,000 Jews still remaining in Syria decided to leave. This effectively ended the long history of Jewish communities in Syria.\textsuperscript{37} The remaining Jews were too old or sick to flee.

Even with the strong hatred toward the Jewish community in Syria, some recent Jewish Syrian immigrants report that they were able to have some normal social relationships with non-Jews. They think that Muslims continued to be friendlier to Jews than Christians, as Syrian Jews did not consume themselves with Zionism and because the Christians disliked the Muslims so much. Walter Zenner even believes that normal relationships could be formed between Jews and non-Jews if the Syrian government halts its anti-Semitic rhetoric.\textsuperscript{38} Also, many citizens of Syria do not stand in unity with the anti-Semitism promoting government. Sunni’s are opposed to rule under the Assads and Alawis, as Sunnis do not believe Alawis to be true Muslims.\textsuperscript{39} This does not change the fact that there is a general animosity toward Jews in the Syrian populace, and in some instances Jewish refugees from Syria have made life there out to be better than it actually was because of feelings of nostalgia.\textsuperscript{40}

There are currently less than one hundred Jews still living in Syria as compared with 30,000 in 1948.\textsuperscript{41} Since there are so few Jews left in Syria looking at the treatment of Jews in Syria today is becoming less useful in examining anti-Semitism in the country so other factors have to be examined.

The government of Syria has done little to stop anti-Semitism and sometimes even promotes it. The governments of Syria and Israel have made several attempts at peace talks, but these broke down after the 2008 war in Gaza. Making the situation worse, the Syrian government


\textsuperscript{37} Zenner, \textit{The Jews from Aleppo}, 51.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid, 59.

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid, 59.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid, 59, 84.

still sponsors the production of anti-Semitic material in the domestic media.\textsuperscript{42} Institutionalized anti-Zionism is found with outright anti-Semitism in television programming, newspapers, and radio broadcasts supported by the government.\textsuperscript{43} In July of 2006, the Syrian Deputy Minister of Religious Endowment said that Jews are “cursed” and the Qur’an says they are a “sinister and dark” people calling them the “descendents of apes and pigs.”\textsuperscript{44} During a visit from Pope John Paul II on May 5, 2001, President Assad spoke out against the treacherous nature of Jews and their sacrilegious efforts against Islam and Christianity.\textsuperscript{45} The widely read state-owned newspapers \textit{Tashreen} and \textit{Al-Thawra} frequently feature anti-Semitic articles and cartoons.\textsuperscript{46} Chapter three contains even more examples of government sponsored anti-Semitism in Syria.

Anti-Semitic ideas are part of the educational system of Syria as well. Textbooks from Syrian high schools, examined in 2000, portray Jews as the enemies of Muslims and the world community at large.\textsuperscript{47} They maintain the Holocaust was exaggerated and was actually justified.\textsuperscript{48} This early indoctrination with anti-Semitic material is a very dangerous trend witnessed in other Middle Eastern countries as well.

There are even some reports of anti-Semitism targeting the tiny Jewish community left in Syria. The US State Department reports that “in 2003, there were reports of minor incidents of harassment and property damage against Jews in Damascus perpetrated by persons not associated with the government. According to local sources, these incidents were in reaction to Israeli actions against Palestinians.”\textsuperscript{49}

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\textsuperscript{43} Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), United States Department of State, \textit{Report on Global Anti-Semitism}, report to the Congressional Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on International Relations, January 5, 2005.  
\textsuperscript{44} Office of the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism (SEAS), United States Department of State, \textit{Contemporary Global Anti-Semitism}, report to the Congressional Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on International Relations, January 5, 2005, 40.  
\textsuperscript{46} See Figure 2 & 9 in Appendix 3. SEAS, \textit{Contemporary Global Anti-Semitism}, 42.  
\textsuperscript{47} Reuven Erlich, “Syria,” \textit{Anti-Semitism in the Contemporary Middle East}, Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, Tel Aviv, April 2004, at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/html/final/eng/sib/4_04/as_hp.htm#toc  
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{49} DRL, \textit{Report on Global Anti-Semitism}. 
\end{flushright}
Anti-Semitism has become a pervasive phenomenon in Syrian society today. Anti-Jewish propaganda is spouted by the government. The general populace has a deep fear, distrust, and anger for Israelis and Jews at large, manifested in their treatment of the native Jewish population in Syria. The story of the rise of anti-Semitism in Syria shares elements with that in other Arab/Muslim dominated countries with native Jewish populations. Not every country in the Middle East fits neatly into this pattern, however, so it is worthwhile to look in depth at the rise of anti-Semitism in another, more diverse country in the Middle East to try to fully understand anti-Semitism in the region today.

**Lebanon**

The country of Lebanon is smaller than Syria with a population of four million. It maintained a large native Jewish population longer than Syria but today anti-Semitism is a prevalent phenomenon in many communities, especially Muslims and Arabs, in the country. Lebanon is located on the Mediterranean coast and shares its southern border with Israel. Syria borders the rest of the country and has worked to dominate Lebanon’s affairs. The CIA World Factbook estimates that the people of Lebanon are 95% Arab. There is no real majority population or dominant group in Lebanon like there is in Syria, however. The country is religiously diverse and each religious group shares power in the government, in a confessional system, unlike Syria. This means there is no real government sponsored anti-Semitism in the country. Muslims, especially Shi’as, have gained greater control over Lebanon in recent decades with a rise in their population. They still only make up about 60% of the country with the other 40% mostly made up of Christians including Maronites, Greek Orthodox, and others.  

The relatively large minority populations of Lebanon set the country apart from Syria and other countries in the Middle East today. The country was historically diverse and was considered a safe haven for minorities. Jews in Lebanon experienced little to no negative attitudes or violence for most of the country’s history. However, in the twentieth century world events and civil war have altered the makeup of Lebanese society and have made it a dangerous place for small religious communities like Jews. The Jewish population of Lebanon has dwindled to a few dozen and makes up an infinitesimal portion of the population today, like in Syria. Jews never took much part in public life and now they face anti-Israel and anti-Jewish sentiment from

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the many of the Lebanese people. The powerful Shi’a Islamist political party Hezbollah promotes blatant anti-Semitism and spreads its ideology through media outlets in Lebanon.

**Historical Background**

Similar to Syria, there have been Jewish communities in Lebanon since at least Roman rule if not earlier. The Arab invasion came to Lebanon in the seventh century with Caliph Umar. The Jews of Lebanon lived under almost continuous Muslim rule from that time until the nineteenth century.

*Dhimmi* laws were not as strongly enforced in Lebanon as they were in other parts of the Muslim empires like in the cities of neighboring Syria. This might have been for fear that the Christians and Jews of Lebanon would emigrate from the country or because of the ineffectiveness of imposing imperial will over the rugged terrain of Lebanon. Nevertheless, Jews still had to wear certain dress, pay the burdensome *jizya* tax, and could not testify against or intermarry with Muslims.

Before the twentieth century, the small, isolated communities of Jews in the interior of Lebanon did not experience anti-Semitism during Arab/Muslim rule. They even adopted Arab culture and practices. In the Shouf region of Lebanon, Jewish communities farmed near the Druze communities who preferred *dhimmi* neighbors over Muslims. The tolerant and accepting atmosphere of Lebanon meant that the country became a safe haven for Jews from Spain and Jews from the rest of the Middle East from the Middle Ages until modern times. In this way, Lebanon was a unique region in the Middle East during Muslim rule where Jews did not face the kind of discrimination that they and other minorities would have experienced in places like Syria and Egypt. This continued even during the nineteenth century when European anti-Semitism was creeping into Syria and the rest of the Middle East.

Divisions between the religious communities in Lebanon were strictly adhered to, however, leading to sectarianism between confessional groups. In Lebanon this was an integral part of the Ottoman *millet* system, like it was in Syria. The system was intended to keep peace among religious communities by separating them and giving them clearly defined roles. At the

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52 Ibid, 13.
53 Ibid, 17.
end of Ottoman rule in the second half of the nineteenth century, the solidification of religious divisions would work to increase intercommunity antagonism just as it did in Syria. In this way, the millet system may have contributed to the spread of anti-Semitism in the Middle East in the beginning of modern times by reinforcing sectarianism. At the same time, Christian immigrants began moving to the area of the Levant. Competition between these Christians and the Jews in the region led Christians to disseminate Western anti-Semitism in an effort to edge out their Jewish rivals.

The end of Ottoman rule and pluralism amidst sectarian competition

As a result of the growing negative attitudes toward Jews in other areas of the Middle East and because of economic depression of inland trade cities, many Jews immigrated to Lebanon. At the same time, tension between religious communities was a growing trend in Lebanon as well and worked to pressure Jews to leave the interior of the country to the growing city of Beirut.

The early stages of sectarian conflict in Lebanon mirror that of Syria. The breakdown of the old social order, the weakening Ottoman Empire, and fears of foreign intervention on behalf of different communities resulted in hostility and strong competition among religious groups. Changes in Maronite society and instability brought on by the incursion of Muhammad Ali into Lebanon in the early nineteenth century also contributed to the rise in sectarianism in Lebanon.

In Lebanon, like in Syria, conflict arose among religious groups toward the end of Ottoman rule. This would have consequences for the relatively small Jewish community although they tried to stay uninvolved in the sectarian fighting. In 1860, a war erupted between the Druze and Maronites of Lebanon with the Shouf region as the conflict’s epicenter. As a result of this war, sectarianism in Lebanon deepened and the Jewish community was forced to flee out of the interior of the country for their own safety. From 1860 onward, the Jewish population in cosmopolitan Beirut would swell while communities in other parts of modern day Lebanon generally declined. The total population of Jews in Lebanon would continue to steadily increase into the twentieth century. This was because Lebanon’s society maintained a more

54 Schulze, The Jews of Lebanon, 15.
55 Ibid, 19.
accepting attitude towards different religious groups than other Middle Eastern countries like Syria, especially with regard to Jews.

Anti-Semitism was not a prevalent phenomenon in Lebanese society in the early twentieth century regardless of conflict and changes in Lebanese society. Regular interaction between Jews and non-Jews still continued in Lebanon at the end of Ottoman rule despite the sectarian upheavals and European influence in the country. Jews were close neighbors with other religious communities in Beirut like they were in the large cities of Syria\(^{56}\) and many people did not readily absorb the anti-Semitic ideas leaking into the country. The Druze people of Lebanon, for example, refused to believe the blood libel rumors spread by Christian immigrants and the Greek Orthodox in the Levant.\(^{57}\) There was possible anti-Semitism in the general Maronite population due to European Christian influence. The leaders of the Maronite community did not display anti-Semitic attitudes, however, and were more concerned with the threat of the Muslim domination than possible problems with the Jewish community.\(^{58}\)

At the beginning of the Mandate period, the treatment of the Jewish people by the general public in Lebanon was still generally good. There were isolated incidents of attacks on the Lebanese Jewish community as well as instances of real cooperation between Jews and other confessional groups.\(^{59}\) Wealthy Beirut Muslims would buy land in Palestine and sell it to Jews wishing to settle there when Arab landowners in Palestine refused to sell their lands to Jewish people.\(^{60}\) Jewish tourism in Lebanon was very much encouraged and the country even printed a tourist guide in Hebrew.\(^{61}\)

In the twentieth century, Maronite leaders even flirted with the idea of forming a minority alliance with the Zionist organization in the area of Palestine against their common Arab enemies.\(^{62}\) This alliance would prove impossible, however, with dithering on both sides and the danger that Arab nationalists posed to the Maronites. Nonetheless, Maronites would continue to have contact with leaders from the Jewish Agency and the government of Israel.

\(^{56}\) Ibid, 20.
\(^{57}\) Ibid, 18.
\(^{60}\) Eisenberg, *My Enemy’s Enemy*, 69-70.
\(^{61}\) Ibid, 69-70, 75.
\(^{62}\) Ibid, 13-4.
External strife but continued tolerance

In August of 1929 riots broke out in Palestine over access to the Western Wall, the last remaining part of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, resulting in the death of Jews and Arabs.63 Before this time, the general population of Jews and non-Jews in Lebanon took little interest in the problems brewing in Palestine, other than a few anti-Zionist newspapers.64 After the disturbances of 1929, newspapers in Lebanon trumped up their anti-Zionism including running sensationalist stories in order to increase circulation. Newspapers run by Greek Orthodox and Arab-Nationalists also promoted anti-Zionism as they saw Zionists as enemies to Arab unity.65 Eventually most of the newspapers in Lebanon would gain an anti-Zionist edge. This would become significant as the Jewish community was increasingly viewed as Zionist accomplices, resulting in a rise in outright anti-Semitic feelings.

In the 1930s, about 6,000 Jews lived in Lebanon, mostly in Beirut. In response to the anti-Semitic policies of Nazi Germany, many Lebanese Jews lobbied unsuccessfully for German Jews to be relocated to Lebanon. They also started a local branch of the International League against Anti-Semitism in 1933 and even raised money to combat the hostility toward Zionists seen in the local press.66 Outside of these efforts to combat anti-Semitism, most of the Jews of Lebanon kept a low political profile.

Some Lebanese Jews supported the Zionist cause and almost all of them had relatives in Palestine who they would visit.67 In spite of this, the Jewish community of Lebanon had no real association with the Zionist Organization or the Jewish agency in Palestine. Similar to Syrian Jews, Lebanese Jews disavowed political connections with the Jewish Agency in Palestine after Arab violence against Jews in the Middle East.68

Beginning in April of 1936 when Palestinian Arabs revolted violently to Jewish immigration, public opinion in Lebanon became more anti-Zionist, anti-Western, and anti-Jewish. This was because the majority of Arabs in Lebanon were sympathetic to the Palestinians,

63 Schulze, The Jews of Lebanon, 53.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid, 54.
66 Eisenberg, My Enemy’s Enemy, 82.
67 Eisenberg, My Enemy’s Enemy, 82.
assembling demonstrations and volunteering to fight with the Arabs in Palestine. Also, fugitive Palestinians fled to Lebanon where their anger with the Jews in Palestine spread in Lebanon.69

Hajj Amin al-Husseni, the mufti of Jerusalem, helped to orchestrate this Palestinian Arab revolt and organized anti-Jewish and anti-British efforts in Palestine during this time. When the British attempted to arrest him he took refuge in Lebanon. He joining many Palestinians in Beirut who spread ire over the events in Palestine and promoted active anti-Jewish activity.70 Bombs began to appear in the Jewish quarters of Lebanese cities and police had to increase their security there.

Al-Husseni received the help of Lebanese Muslims and he used their donations to buy the support of Arab newspapers in Lebanon and government officials. The press made up sensational stories about Zionist and British wrongs. These became difficult for Lebanese Jews and Zionist sympathizers in Lebanon to counter. The charged atmosphere led these publications to cross the line between political opposition and anti-Semitism. For example, the Beirut weekly al-Makshouf published a sixteen page “historical” pamphlet describing how Jews had damaged other Muslim and Arab countries in the past.71 Shortly after the Arab revolt ended in 1939 al-Husseni fled the country, but the damage was already done and he helped to conflate anti-Semitism with support for the Palestinian cause. The unrest in Palestine was beginning to make Lebanon a dangerous place for Jews.

Despite the growing anger toward Zionists, in the years before and during World War II Lebanon remained one of the safest places for Jews in the Middle East since the country was not dominated by anti-Jewish sentiment. The Druze in Lebanon were even friendly with Zionists, during the Arab revolt.72 The Jews of Lebanon paid police to protect them and had very close connections with the Phalange (الكتائب اللبنانية), a Maronite political organization with its own militia, which also provided them with protection.73 Maronite Patriarch Arida was not afraid to show sympathy for Jews and condemned the actions of the Nazis in Germany.74 The

69 Ibid, 102.
70 Schulze, The Jews of Lebanon, 57.
71 Eisenberg, My Enemy’s Enemy, 103.
72 Eisenberg, My Enemy’s Enemy, 110.
73 Eisenberg, My Enemy’s Enemy, 83.
74 Schulze, The Jews of Lebanon, 59.
unreasonable violence propounded by al-Husseni had outspoken Sunni opponents in Lebanon.\textsuperscript{75} Even while the wave of anti-Semitism was rising in Syria and around the region, there were many people in Lebanon willing to defend the Jewish community and rebuff attacks against Jews made in the name of support for Palestinians.

Control over Lebanon fell under the Vichy regime with the surrender of France to the Nazis in 1940. Remarkably, the anti-Jewish legislation of the Vichy regime could not be implemented in Lebanon because Lebanese officials refused to impose it. Also, the Lebanese general public, including Muslims and Christians, opposed the anti-Semitic measures.\textsuperscript{76} Almost all Lebanese disapproved of the Vichy and many joined the Free French army, Jews and non-Jews alike.

Even under pressure, the Lebanese resisted the anti-Semitism promoted by European influences, Arab-nationalists, and radical Palestinian supporters. This was rare in other parts of the Middle East- like Syria- during this time and is probably tied to Lebanon’s history of acceptance and its religious and cultural diversity.

This did not mean that German agents in Lebanon did not help sow seeds of hate in the country or that anti-Semitism would not eventually infiltrate some religious communities of Lebanon. The Vichy regime in Lebanon was removed in 1941 but when the country became independent in 1943 anti-Jewish articles in the press were used to distract the public from the immense problems of the government.\textsuperscript{77} Because of the nature of the Lebanese political system, the press was not the official mouthpiece of the government. But quite often newspapers and magazines would reflect the view points of their benefactors, whether they were domestic groups or foreign governments.\textsuperscript{78}

In 1943, the leaders of Lebanon worked out the National Pact which was an unwritten agreement that looked to stabilize the country’s government where confessional groups each took a share of the power. Under pressure from Arabs in Lebanon, the Pact recognized the country’s “Arab face.” Also, Jews were one of the six major minority groups “not represented in the National Pact.”\textsuperscript{79} The National Pact solidified the Jewish community’s position on the fringe

\textsuperscript{75} Eisenberg, \textit{My Enemy’s Enemy}, 111.
\textsuperscript{76} Schulze, \textit{The Jews of Lebanon}, 60-61.
\textsuperscript{77} Schulze, \textit{The Jews of Lebanon}, 64.
\textsuperscript{79} Schulze, \textit{The Jews of Lebanon}, 65.
of Lebanese political life. It also showed that Arabs and Muslims in the country were gaining an important role in the governance of the new country, somewhat changing the face of Lebanon.

From 1944 onward, violence in Palestine had a direct effect on the attitudes toward Jews in Lebanon. This was a result of the years of conflict, regional instability, and growing anti-Semitism from numerous sources inside and outside the country. Lebanese Jews attempted to distance themselves from the conflict but were ultimately unsuccessful, resulting in anti-Jewish riots and proposed boycotts on Jewish goods in the country. In 1946, the Arab League’s decision to boycott Zionist goods led to widespread anti-Semitic acts in Lebanon.

After the UN partition plan for Palestine was announced, Jews in Lebanon armed themselves in fear of impending violence. With the creation of Israel in 1948, these fears were shown to be justified as crowds formed to attack the Jewish quarters of Lebanese cities. Phalange guard protected the Jewish Quarter in Beirut and Jews bought or otherwise mustered protection in other cities. This prevented the kind of widespread violence witnessed in Syria, where Jews had no mean to protect themselves and no one to turn to for help. Eventually, the threat of violence against Jews in the country ended with Lebanon-Israeli armistice in 1949.

The protection that Jews in Lebanon were able to afford themselves against Arab riots in 1948 is part of the unique pattern of attitudes towards Jews in Lebanon. There were many people with anti-Semitic sentiments but there were many others who were willing to defend the Jewish community and not accept the blind hatred of anti-Semitism. This was a phenomenon that was not observed in other Middle Eastern countries, like Syria, where Jews were beginning to flee in large numbers.

Thousands of Jewish refugees from Arab countries immigrated to Lebanon in 1948 as it was the only Arab country in the region that would accept them. In fact, Lebanon was the only country with an Arab identity that saw a rise in its Jewish population after 1948. The number of Jews in the country doubled in a few short years rising to 9,000 in 1951, of which perhaps 6,900 were citizens, and eventually peaked at 14,000.

This influx of Jews from other Middle Eastern countries was due to the fact that Lebanon was a country of minorities. They fit in with the other minority groups and many communities in

81 Schulze, *The Jews of Lebanon*, 73.
Lebanon still showed signs of positive attitudes towards Jews, even after the war with Israel. In 1951, Lebanon allowed Syrian and Iraqi Jewish refugees to leave Lebanon for Israel, granting them freedom of movement not seen in other countries. In 1952 Lebanese Deputy Emile Boustani began an anti-Jewish campaign to raise his political profile. One of his efforts included attempting to expel two Jewish officers from the Lebanese Army. His anti-Jewish motions in the Lebanese Parliament were heavily criticized and voted down. Relationships between Jews and non-Jews remained amicable in business and between neighbors and friends through the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. Despite the growing anti-Semitism in neighboring countries and in certain segments of the Lebanese population, Jew hatred did not become a pervasive aspect of Lebanese culture after the 1948 war.

Internal conflict and the rise of anti-Semitism

The trend of tolerance in spite of conflict would change, however, as Lebanon moved into the second half of the twentieth century. Lebanon would become increasingly hostile place for Jews to live. Many non-Jewish Lebanese did not support the creation of Israel while most Jews did. Lebanon was flooded with Palestinian refugees after the 1948 war, filling the country with people brimming with anti-Jewish sentiments. Support for the Palestinians became a litmus test for Arab loyalty in Lebanon. Tensions continued to rise between the religious communities in the country. The Maronites did not support the integration of Palestinians into Lebanese society while the Sunni’s did. Overall tolerance still continued, though, showing the complex nature of attitudes toward Jews and the diverse character of the different communities in Lebanon.

The condition of the Jewish community in Lebanon and attitudes towards Jews in the country began to deteriorate precipitously starting in the mid-1950s. This was because the Lebanese government became instable and the country faced massive influxes of Palestinian refugees. The first civil war in Lebanon in 1958 had great implications for the conditions of Jews in the country. The instability of the country resulted in more attempted attacks on the Jewish community and the government and Maronites had to work again to protect Lebanese Jews. The

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84 Eisenberg, *My Enemy’s Enemy*, 143.
86 Ibid.
economy of the country also took a hit as a result of the war. Because of these factors Jews began leaving Lebanon and the size of the Jewish population decreased to 7,000 by 1967.\textsuperscript{87}

In 1967, Arab countries engaged Israel in the Six Day War. Lebanon did not join in the fighting, but as a result of the conflict Palestinian refugees poured into the country. By 1970 there were an estimated 240,000 Palestinians in Lebanon and after the events of Black September in 1970-71, discussed in chapter two, that number increased another 100,000 people.\textsuperscript{88}

Lebanon soon became the base of the Palestinian resistance movement through the coercion of Arab countries and because of a lack of centralized power in Lebanon. This made the country instable and more hostile to Jews. The sporadic violence against Jews in 1970 and 1971 marked the end of Lebanese tolerance of the Jewish community and by 1971 only 4,000 Jews were left in the country.\textsuperscript{89}

Nonetheless Jews still had allies in the country like the Maronites who opposed pro-Palestinian measures and protected the Jewish community. This was not enough to stop the increase in anti-Semitic sentiments in other Lebanese communities, though. The influx of so many people with animosity for Israel and Jews, combined with the deteriorating economic, social, and political situation in the country resulted in hatred and violence against Jews. Lebanon was becoming an unbearable place for many people, especially Jews, to live.

Divisions in Lebanese society grew with the influx of Palestinians into the country. This was exacerbated by Arab and Israeli interference in Lebanon’s affairs, and the growth of militant Islam and Shi’a self-determination.\textsuperscript{90} Eventually, the divisions in Lebanese society and the problems the country faced plunged Lebanon into another civil war which lasted from 1975 to 1990. Jews did not take part in the war but 200 were killed in the cross fire. The Green line in Beirut, the area that saw the most fighting in the city, went through the Jewish quarter. As a consequence, Jewish public and economic life effectively ended. Most Lebanese Jews fled the country by the end of the war, leaving only the sick, the old, and the poor. In 1980 only a few hundred Jews remained in Lebanon, with a couple dozen in Beirut.\textsuperscript{91}

\textsuperscript{87} Schulze, \textit{The Jews of Lebanon}, 7.
\textsuperscript{88} Schulze, \textit{The Jews of Lebanon}, 113.
\textsuperscript{89} Schulze, \textit{The Jews of Lebanon}, 7.
\textsuperscript{90} Schulze, \textit{The Jews of Lebanon}, 119, 122.
\textsuperscript{91} Schulze, \textit{The Jews of Lebanon}, 8.
In response to attacks from Lebanon and in support of the enemies of Arab and Muslim militia, like Maronites, Israel intervened in the war and eventually invaded Lebanon in 1982. An indirect effect of Israel’s involvement was that hatred toward Israel swelled in the general population of Lebanon. Militant Islamists became increasingly powerful at this time and considered the actions of Israel to be representative of all Jews, building anti-Semitic feelings.\textsuperscript{92} Anger over the invasion helped Hezbollah emerge as a major powerbroker in Lebanon.\textsuperscript{93} Instability in the country also led to the establishment of Syrian hegemony in Lebanon. These factors helped to create an atmosphere in many Lebanese communities that was very hostile and hateful toward Jews, especially with Muslims and Arabs. This worked to end the general acceptance and tolerance that were characteristic of Lebanon for so many decades.

\textit{Current anti-Semitism and the status of Lebanese Jews}

Until the civil war, Jews in Lebanon still maintained a Levantine identity and had friendships with people in other religious communities.\textsuperscript{94} When they fled the country they regretted leaving, but Lebanon was no longer the tolerant home that they knew. Between 1984 and 1987, innocent Lebanese Jews were kidnapped and killed as they were accused of being spies for Israel.\textsuperscript{95} There are still those in Lebanon who defend against anti-Semitism,\textsuperscript{96} however, and the acceptance that was so important in Lebanese society may not have completely disappeared. One sign of hope is that workers have now started to rebuild the synagogue of Beirut, destroyed in the civil war, in a restoration project approved by the government of Lebanon and even Hezbollah.\textsuperscript{97}

Today, hatred for Jews and anti-Semitism still continues in many communities of Lebanon. Although Lebanon was a tentative haven for Jews for decades in the twentieth century, only about 100 or less Jews remain in Lebanon today.\textsuperscript{98} One estimate from 2004 indicates that

\textsuperscript{92} Schulze, \textit{The Jews of Lebanon}, 8, 130.
\textsuperscript{93} Schulze, \textit{The Jews of Lebanon}, 141.
\textsuperscript{94} Schulze, \textit{The Jews of Lebanon}, 133-134.
\textsuperscript{95} Schulze, \textit{The Jews of Lebanon}, 143.
\textsuperscript{96} Schulze, \textit{The Jews of Lebanon}, 148.
\textsuperscript{97} Hussein Dakroub, “Rebuilding of Lebanon's Oldest Synagogue Begins,” \textit{abcnews.com}, August 5, 2009
there are only a few dozen Jews left and that they are mostly elderly women.\footnote{Encyclopaedia Judaica, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed., s.v. “Lebanon.”} This dramatic population collapse is not surprising considering the transformation Lebanon has undergone. Lebanon is now home to Hezbollah, one of the most militantly anti-Israel and anti-Semitic Muslims organizations in the world today. With its anti-Semitic statements and television network, Al-Manar, promoting Jew-hatred, Lebanon has become a hot bed of anti-Jewish sentiments. These anti-Semitic activities, including the anti-Jewish broadcasts of Al-Manar, are detailed in chapter three. Syria and Iran support the work of Hezbollah in Lebanon, helping the anti-Semitic ideology of these countries infiltrate Lebanese culture.

Militant Islam and social upheaval in Lebanon, partly as a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict, have transformed the country from a safe haven for Jews to a country that is a very dangerous place for Jews to live. For the first half of the twentieth century, Lebanon was more tolerant to Jews than other Arab countries. This continued even after the creation of Israel and the infiltration of anti-Semitism from external sources. The wars with Israel along with the flooding of Palestinians into the country, like in Syria and Jordan, worked to turn opinion against Israel and Jews in many Lebanese communities. The large proportion of Palestinians immigrating to Lebanon along with the migration of Jews and Christians out of the country worked to change the demographic face of Lebanon. These factors assisted in the rise of anti-Semitism in the country in spite of years of work to stop the permeation of Jew hatred and efforts to protect the Jewish community.

Lebanon is still unique from other countries in the Middle East like Syria, however, in that the country’s different ethno-religious groups have real political power. This means they might have a much greater capacity to stop the spread of anti-Semitism and bring about change. An example of the ability for change in Lebanon occurred in 2005. The peaceful “Cedar Revolution” successfully pressured Syria to pull its troops from Lebanon removing a good deal of leverage that Syrian government, an active sponsor of anti-Semitism and Hezbollah, has on the Lebanon.

As a state of minorities, Lebanon must regain its tolerant and accepting identity again if conflict is to stop in the country. Hopefully this process will include welcoming back Jews into the folds of Lebanese society. This will require the support of the groups in Lebanon that may not support Jew hatred, like Druze and Maronites, and the rejection of anti-Semitism from the
Lebanese communities where it has taken such a strong hold, especially in the Muslim and Arab community.

**Jordan**

Jordan, like Lebanon and Syria, shares a significant border with Israel and has been a prominent player in the Arab-Israeli conflict as it borders the important area of the West Bank to its west. The country is slightly larger than Lebanon with six million people. Like Lebanon, the Palestinian refugee population in Jordan has had a significant impact on public opinion in the country. Ninety-eight percent of Jordanians are considered Arab and the country is made up of 92% Sunni Muslims and 6% Christians. In this way, the country’s population is far more homogenous than Lebanon and even Syria. The government is dominated by the Hashemite dynasty, with King Abdullah II at its center with a democratically elected Parliament. The country has not supported a Jewish population in modern history, unlike Lebanon and Syria.

Jordan has been an important player in the Arab-Israeli conflict and hatred for Jews can be found in many communities in the country, similar to Syria and Lebanon. This makes Jordan a critical country in the discussion of anti-Semitism in the Middle East. The King and some members of the government actively work toward peace and show they want interfaith reconciliation with Israel and the Jewish community. Nonetheless, anti-Semitism is still present in Jordanian culture and the country’s peace with Israel has been uneasy.

**Historical Background**

Ancient communities of Jews lived in Jordan during biblical times and through the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 A.D. After Byzantine rule and the Muslim conquest very few Jews lived in the area of modern Jordan, a pattern that continues today. This distinguishes the country from Syria and Lebanon, as well as other states in the Middle East, which contained sizeable Jewish communities into the twentieth century.

The growth of anti-Semitism in Jordan closely mirrors that in other countries in the region. Widespread Jew hatred came about mostly due to European influence and the conflict

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100 CIA World Fact Book, March 2010, s.v. “Jordan.”
with Israel. In the 1948 war with Israel, Jordan occupied East Jerusalem and parts of the West bank. Palestinians subsequently flooded into the country. The population of Palestinians reached 200,000 by 1967, about half of whom lived in the West Bank.\textsuperscript{102} In 1967, Jordan lost control of the West Bank and, as a result of the Six Day War, more Palestinians immigrated into the country.

The wars with Israel and the tremendous influx of Palestinians into Jordan are most likely strong factors in the virulent anti-Semitism among the general population of the country today. The embarrassment of Arab countries over their defeat by Israel promoted the growth of Jewish conspiracy theories and Jew-hatred. The movement of Palestinian refugees into Jordan exacerbated the negative attitudes towards Jews already brewing there.

\textit{Current anti-Semitism}

Anti-Semitism is a widespread phenomenon in the general population of Jordan, a topic also illustrated in chapter three. Anti-Jewish sentiment, as in many Middle Eastern countries such as Syria, is a regular feature of the media and radical groups in Jordan. On May 14\textsuperscript{th} 2008, the Jordanian newspaper \textit{al-Dustur} published an article declaring that Zionist crimes in Palestine had reached a “holocaustic” level.\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Al-Arab al-Yawm}, another Jordanian newspaper that has run stories supporting anti-Semitic staples such as conspiracy theories and the blood libel myth.\textsuperscript{104} One article lent credence to the idea that Jews had used blood ritual in Damascus and that the Israeli army killed Arab children as part of Jewish beliefs.\textsuperscript{105} During Ramadan in 2005 the Jordanian television channel Al-Mamnou’ aired the anti-Semitic program \textit{Al-Shatat}, produced in Syria and based on \textit{The Protocols of the Elders of Zion}.\textsuperscript{106}

During the brief Gaza war in the winter of 2008-2009, protestors in Jordan demanded that their ambassador to Israel be returned. Their voices were joined by the Muslim brotherhood in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{102} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{104} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{105} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
Jordan which serves as the main opposition to the secular government there.\textsuperscript{107} In December 2008, an Islamist Member of the Jordanian Parliament stated on Al-Jazeera that Allah would disgrace Jews and that Allah “sent Muslims to fight and torment [Jews].”\textsuperscript{108} The Islamist leaders in Jordan work to undo the efforts of the Jordanian government toward interfaith reconciliation.

\textit{Government efforts against anti-Semitism and the uneasy peace}

Despite historical conflict between Jordan and Israel and the reluctance of the citizens of Jordan, the government of Jordan has made efforts to reconcile its relationship with Israel. This provides hope that anti-Semitism might have peaked in the country and is perhaps declining. In 1994, Jordan became the only Arab country other than Egypt to sign a peace treaty with Israel. Jordan and Israel have made attempts since then to create a warm diplomatic relationship that has proven impossible so far for Syria and Lebanon. Since the treatment of Israel in the Middle East is often an indicator of anti-Semitism, this is a step in the right direction toward ending Jew hatred in Jordan.

Also in 1994, the Royal Institute for Interfaith Studies was founded in Amman, Jordan under the patronage of Prince Hassan bin Talal, who is the uncle of King Abdullah. The Institute “provides a venue in the Arab world for the interdisciplinary study and rational discussion of religion and religious issues.”\textsuperscript{109} This is a much needed forum in the Middle East since constructive dialogue concerning religious issues is often lacking in the region, even in academia. The Institute shows willingness on the part of the ruling family and scholars in Jordan to move toward understanding in religious studies.

The Institute for Interfaith Studies mostly focuses on Christian and Muslim relations, however, implicitly excluding Judaism. The Institute is attempting to broaden its scope to include all religions and cultures. As part of this effort, the Institute has begun publishing a semiannual bulletin beginning in 1999. Looking at the bulletins from 1999 to 2006, out of sixteen issues and over one hundred articles there are only four articles dealing with Jews or Judaism. Only one of these articles concerns the relationship between Jews and other religions.

\textsuperscript{107} Dina Porat and Esther Webman, eds., \textit{Antisemitism Worldwide 2008/09 General Analysis}, Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Antisemitism and Racism, Tel Aviv University, 49. 
\textsuperscript{108} Porat and Webman, \textit{Antisemitism Worldwide 2008/09}, 50. 
\textsuperscript{109} The Royal Institute for Inter-faith Studies, “About RIIFS” The Royal Institute for Inter-faith Studies website, http://www.riifs.org/purpose/purpose.htm
None of the articles address current Jewish issues or anti-Semitism, although there are many articles dealing with Christian and Muslim concerns today. The Institute is a step in the right direction but it seems still far from helping facilitate real dialogue between Jews and Muslims in the Middle East or contributing to a decline in anti-Semitism. It is true that anti-Semitism is not officially sponsored by the government in Jordan, like it is in Syria. But the government needs to do more to combat the anti-Semitism seen in the Jordanian media and from Islamist groups.

There are also signs that the peace between Israel and Jordan, which is an important sign of Arab-Israeli and Arab-Jewish reconciliation, is uneasy at best. As detailed in chapter three, many Palestinians and Islamists in Jordan oppose peace with Israel and consider it a “palace peace” and not a “people’s peace.” These groups also tend to perpetuate anti-Semitic ideas in addition to anti-Israeli sentiments. In March 1997, a mentally unstable Jordanian soldier killed seven Israeli children on a school field trip to Jordanian territory before he was taken down by his fellow soldiers. The King of Jordan then made generous apologetic gestures to the families of the victims. This elicited mixed responses from the Jordanian people. These ranged from admiration for the King’s attempts at reconciliation to support for the actions of the murderer.

There are also reports of Jordanian border police confiscating Jewish religious items from Israeli tourists crossing into Jordan. Officials say these measures are to prevent the tourists from being identified as targets by terrorists. They explicitly say that these steps have nothing to do with anti-Semitism. Whatever the motive, these incidents show the uneasiness of the situation along the Jordanian border. Relations also continue to be shaky between Jordanian citizens and Israelis. In March of 2010, King Abdullah II, told US vice president Joe Biden that he believed Israel’s plans to build settlements in East Jerusalem threatened the tenuous peace between Jordan and Israel.

111 Reuven Erlich, “Jordan,” Anti-Semitism in the Contemporary Middle East, Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, Tel Aviv, April 2004.
112 Ibid.
113 Bernard Lewis, “Muslim Anti-Semitism,” Middle East Quarterly 5, no. 2 (June 1998)
that the peace can quickly be lost. This may be symptomatic of the anti-Semitism that still grips the country since Israel is so often criticized using anti-Jewish material. For example, on March 8, 2008 *Al-Arab al-Yawm* published an article that claimed the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* are central to the policies of Israel.\(^{116}\) This association between Israel and ideas of Jewish conspiracy has led to connection between anti-Israeli sentiment and anti-Semitism in Jordan. This culture of fear and hate has made a warm peace so far impossible.

The government of Jordan has worked to distinguish itself in recent decades from other Middle Eastern countries like Syria as an agent for peace and reconciliation in the region. There is great hatred and anger toward Israel and Jews in Jordan, however, and a decline in anti-Semitism in the country is still unrealized. The progressive attitude of the Jordanian government could have real power for change. The perceived or real disconnect between the government and the people, which is exploited by Islamists, has weakened the ability of the Jordanian government to change attitudes in the country toward Israel and Jews.

There will clearly need to be many changes in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan before anti-Semitism can be curbed. This may have to include stable relations with Israel and among religious groups inside the countries as well as a shift in the collective will of the general public to begin, or return to, tolerant societies where religious hatred is removed from mainstream culture.

\(^{116}\) Stephen Roth Institute, “Arab Countries 2008/9,”
CONCLUSIONS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO ANTI-SEMITISM

Anti-Semitism has become widespread in mainstream Middle Eastern culture. Chapter three and four detailed how popular media outlets as well as political and religious leaders have incorporated anti-Semitic references and attitudes in their speeches, publications, and their treatment of Israel. This study shows that this anti-Jewish antipathy is often expressed in hypercriticism of Israel, accusations of blood libel, and violence or threats against Jews. It is also manifested in comparisons between Israel and Nazi Germany, Holocaust denial, and support for Jewish world conspiracies, as demonstrated in chapter three.

The growth of anti-Semitism in the Middle East has led to violence, anger, and more problems for the region. It also may be contributing to the global rise in anti-Semitism and so is a cause for real concern.¹ This makes finding possible solutions to anti-Semitism very important. Combating anti-Semitism will most likely be a very difficult process, however, and will require serious efforts and collaboration at the governmental, community, and personal level. Solving the problem of anti-Semitism in the Middle East is still by no means impossible, however, or beyond the reach of people who live there.

The Sources and Nature of Anti-Semitism in the Middle East

Going back to the origins and causes of anti-Semitism in the Middle East, outlined in chapters one and two, may help shed light on possible solutions to this growing problem. Many factors in the Middle East occurring in the nineteenth and twentieth century helped to change the traditional attitude towards Jews. The treatment of Jews moved from vacillating discrimination and overall tolerance to outright hate and rejection from society, in less than two hundred years. Some of these factors were beyond control of the people in the region. The instability and economic troubles brought on by shifting world power and world war as well as Nazi incursion into the region could not have been helped. The response to these events was within the control of people in the region, however.

The anger and frustration brought on by external and internal factors would become very important in the development of intense anti-Semitism. For example, blaming Israel and Jews for the problems of the region intensified hate and diverted attention from solutions. Also, there

were many communities in the Middle East who readily absorbed the anti-Semitism of the West. Islamists incorporated anti-Semitism into their ideology and political leaders used Jew hatred to muster support for their own causes.

As examples from chapter one suggested, there may be underlying factors in the history of the Middle East and Islam as well that helped to contribute to the rise of modern anti-Semitism. Evidence of negative attitudes towards Jews and other minorities is found throughout Middle Eastern history. When the region fell under Islamic rule, starting in seventh century, minorities faced discrimination and some religious based acrimony, as they had for centuries before. Although the Qur’an is ambivalent in its treatment of Jews and Christians, exegesis and religious commentary can be particularly critical of Jews. These anti-Jewish texts are not indicative of strong, widespread hatred or anger towards Jews on the part of Muslims in the past. The Jewish people are praised in certain passages of the Qur’an and Jewish people always had the option to convert to Islam and avoid denigration. Also, the treatment of Jews in practice was better than these texts would suggest. Nevertheless, these anti-Jewish passages help to fuel the fire of anti-Semitism today.

Today, radical Muslims and Islamists often use the anti-Jewish passages from Islamic tradition to bolster anti-Semitic attitudes. It does not help that polemics may take these traditional texts out of context or beyond accepted interpretations. Framing anti-Semitism using religious terms makes their hateful assertions acceptable to the wider Muslim population. In this way, people have been able to use religion in the Middle East as a vehicle for anger and hatred.

There is evidence of anti-Jewish attitudes and discrimination in Islam before the twentieth century, but the hatred seen today in the Middle East far surpasses that of the past. This would indicate that historical anti-Jewish sentiments in Islam are not the main cause of widespread anti-Semitism today, in spite of the current role of some religious leaders in supporting Jew and Israeli hatred. The practice of utilizing anti-Jewish sentiments in traditional Islam to encourage anti-Semitism must be recognized as unacceptable if it is to be stopped. There are many Muslims today, like Christians, who do not consider anti-Semitism to be a necessary part of their faith. This fact offers hope that Muslims and Christians in the Middle East can disregard religious arguments for hate and move beyond the anti-Semitic arguments of radical religious groups.

The historical treatment of Jews in the Middle East was also marked by discrimination,
through the *dhimmi* system, but still does not come close to the hateful attitude towards Jews seen today in the region. The level of antipathy towards Jews in the modern Middle East is perhaps unmatched in the region’s history. It is difficult to even categorize historical attitudes toward Jews as anti-Semitic. This is because the treatment of Jews varied, along with other minorities, depending on the context and there is not much evidence of underlying attitudes of hate for Jews. Also, it appears that the *dhimmi* system was not initially adopted because of hatred toward Jews but more for political expediency. Jews were treated as inferiors along with other minorities but were still allowed to participate in religious and economic life in society. The relationships between Jews and other minorities before the nineteenth century are also hard to classify as anti-Semitic. Competition between people in the Jewish Community and other minority groups could be intense at times but Jews and non-Jews maintained personal relationships and were able to coexist.

On the other hand, religious justification of the oppression of minorities in the Middle East helped to characterize Jews as an inferior people. Also, years of discrimination could have led to real prejudice against Jews and other minorities in the general population of the Middle East. In this way, the system of discrimination in place in the Middle East for centuries could have helped pave the way for strong hatred against minorities. The *dhimmi* system itself may not be the main cause of modern anti-Semitism but it may have made the people of the region more receptive to anti-Semitic arguments concerning the inferior nature of Jews.

As was seen in Syria and Lebanon, the separation of religious groups in the *millet* system may have also contributed to growing hatred between religious groups in the Middle East. The bureaucratic division of religious communities worked to increase competition and fear among the different groups. Jews made up a relatively small portion of the population so they were often not able to defend themselves against sectarian competition when it turned violent. Moving into the twentieth century, Arab nationalism allowed many minority groups, like Greek Orthodox and Druze, to band together with Muslims. Jews and some other minorities did not join the nationalist movement, excluding them from the mainstream culture. These factors led to the marginalization of the Jewish community in many Middle Eastern countries.

Christendom also served as a source of historical anti-Jewish attitudes in the Middle East. Some Christian populations in the Middle East, such as Greek Orthodox, have their own anti-Semitic traditions developed by Church theologians over centuries. Native and immigrant
Christians helped to introduce classic European elements of anti-Semitism to the Middle East, like blood libel and Jewish conspiracy theories. The non-Christian populations of the Middle East mostly ignored these anti-Semitic imports until the twentieth century. With the fall of the Ottoman Empire and growing European influence in the region, Western anti-Semitism began to permeate Middle Eastern culture. Nazi presence in the Middle East helped to firmly establish Western anti-Jewish ideas. Nazi allies in the region helped transfer European anti-Semitic concepts into Middle Eastern culture by using terms and ideas familiar to the people of the region. At the same time, tension between confessional groups brought on by the shifting political situation helped to popularize this language of hate.

Events in Mandatory Palestine and then Israel really helped spark the vitriolic hate for Jews that may have been simmering for decades. Conflict in pre-state Palestine and Israel helped to magnify historical Middle Eastern prejudices against Jews and firmly entrench European anti-Semitic ideas. Conflict in pre-Israel Palestine between Zionists and native Palestinians sowed the seeds of anger and hate. This animosity toward Zionists would spread to the rest of the region as Arabs tried to show solidarity with Palestinians. Anti-Zionism would quickly become anti-Semitic, as was witnessed in Syria and Lebanon. The violence and disappointment of the Arab/Israeli wars for Arabs cemented the antipathy for Zionists and Jews that had been growing for years. Meanwhile, continued sectarian conflict, as was witnessed in Lebanon, made even diverse countries in the Middle East inhospitable to small minorities like Jews.

All these factors led to increased anti-Semitism from regional leaders and intense Jew hatred in the citizens of the Middle East. As a result, anti-Semitism has become a prominent attitude of many people in the Middle East. The issue of anti-Semitism in the general public has become increasingly difficult to study and to separate from anti-Jewish material of polemics and the media. It is now apparent that the anti-Semitism promoted by leaders in the region has taken a firm hold in the general populace, especially in Arab and Muslim communities. As was addressed in several sections of chapter three, this has been due to many factors such as incessant media reinforcement of anti-Semitic stereotypes and the incorporation of anti-Semitism into extremist religious ideology. Also, the introduction of anti-Jewish ideas in education, and the use of Israel and Jews as scapegoats for socio-economic problems in the region have had an impact on attitudes toward Jews. Conflict with Israel greatly affects people’s opinions of Jews since the concepts of Zionists, Israelis, and Jews are often conflated in the Middle East. Violence and riots
directed against native Jewish populations in the Middle East, in places like Syria and Lebanon, showed the effects of events in Israel on general attitudes toward Jews. This has larger implications in the search for a solution for anti-Semitism. If better relationships are forged between Israel and its neighbors there will be less fuel for anti-Semitic arguments and diatribes.

The treatment of Jews has become so bad that the native Jewish communities of the Middle East are almost completely gone after living in the region for thousands of years. This shows how modern attitudes toward Jews have deteriorated greatly from those of the past. With little to no Jews left in many Middle Eastern countries there is less of an opportunity for constructive dialogue between Jews and non-Jews. The only experience that young Middle Easterners may have with Jews is what they are taught or what they see in media reports. In this way, anti-Semitic pressure on Jews to leave their ancient homes in the Middle East has only compounded the problem of Jew hatred.

Addressing anti-Semitism has become very complicated as it is no longer just a top-down phenomenon. Earlier in the century, leaders in the Middle East constructed anti-Semitic arguments to distract the public from social and economic problems and demonize Zionists and Israelis. Now that anti-Semitism has taken hold in the general populace, leaders in the region use anti-Jewish material to appeal to the feelings of anger and hate for Jews that are already present. Some Middle Eastern communities have become reservoirs of Jew hatred. They are filled with the anti-Semitic ideas spouted by polemics and extremists for decades. Events in Israel or involving Jews can ignite into riots leading to dangerous situations for Jews in the region. This shows that at some point in the past hundred years, anti-Semitism moved from being an almost exclusively top-down phenomenon, except perhaps in pre-state Palestine, to widespread through mainstream society.

It can no longer be said that only religious or political leaders display anti-Semitic attitudes. Anti-Semitism is used today by the media, governments, and organizations, for the traditional reasons like blame and fear mongering, but it is also continued because it is has become popular with the people. As more anti-Semitism comes from the top it increases hateful attitudes in the general public which then encourages more anti-Semitism from leaders and polemics. This has become a constantly escalating system of anti-Semitism where hate begets more hate and there is little incentive to end the cycle and change cultural attitudes. This positive feedback mechanism has contributed to the meteoric rise of anti-Semitism. This concept of a
building cycle of hateful attitudes from the leaders, media, and the people is helpful in understanding how anti-Semitism became so deeply entrenched in Middle Eastern society. It may also explain why it has been so difficult to allay or eliminate Jew hatred despite the efforts of people within and outside the region.

This system, where hate fuels more hate, is important to remember while discussing potential future solutions to anti-Semitism. Clearly, curtailing top-down anti-Semitism in the media and government will not be enough. The factors that feed into the growing cycle of hate in the populace of the Middle East need to be addressed as well.

Current Efforts against Anti-Semitism and the Need for More Action

Solving the problem of anti-Semitism is imperative to the future of the Middle East. There can clearly be little chance of a warm peace between Israel and its neighbors without a decline in the hatred and vitriol directed towards Jews. Also, as was addressed in chapter 3, there is a very real concern that satellite television and other mass media produced in the Middle East is actually becoming a source of anti-Semitism in the world. Many of these peddlers of hate receive funding or support from government, religious, or other groups, providing for a greater potential for the spread of anti-Semitism outside the region.\(^2\)

In spite of the factors leading to this increasing system of hate, anti-Semitism in the modern Middle East did not necessarily have to reach the degree it has today. There have been many groups in the twentieth century, such as the Maronites and Druze of Lebanon, who tried to defend Jews. There are even those in public positions today who work against anti-Semitism and toward interfaith dialogue, as seen in the government of Jordan. There are also communities in the Middle East that have never accepted the inventions or attitudes of Jew-hatred and others who speak out against the wild accusations made against Jews. This leaves hope that anti-Semitism can be curtailed in the Middle East and should not be accepted as inevitable or unsolvable.

An example of a notable Middle Easterner who publicly denies the validity of anti-Semitic literature and programs is Osama al-Baz, an advisor to Egyptian presidents Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak. After international criticism for anti-Semitism in the Egyptian media, al-Baz wrote several articles in 2003 to confirm the truth behind the *Protocols of the Elder Zion* and

the Holocaust. They appeared in Al-Ahram, one of the oldest and most popular Egyptian newspapers, which is majority owned by the government. These articles were part of an effort to bring the narrative of the struggle in the Middle East back to historical reality. He writes, “Each of us must understand that to attack Jews as a race or people- and so advocate an inhuman, racist approach- is to damage the cause of the nation . . . Those who criticize Israel have no need of anti-semitism to denounce its policies.”

There are other people in Egypt who are taking steps to end the cycle of hate. In the summer of 2004 al-Lewa Al-Islami, a newspaper of the currently ruling Egyptian National Democratic Party (NDP) published an article that included Holocaust denial. A month after it was printed the party announced that it did accept the reality of the Holocaust. The NDP said that author of the article in question was banned from making further contributions and the editor who approved the article was fired. The party went further and said that they and the government rejects anti-Semitism. In December 2003, the Alexandria library removed a copy of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion from a special display following international criticism. The library director said that including the manuscript was “bad judgment” and he was sorry for causing any offense with the display. These efforts show that there are people willing to fight back against anti-Semitism in the Middle East. However, these positive efforts only came about because of external pressure to address blatant anti-Jewish actions. As examples from chapter three show, anti-Semitism still permeates many media outlets and The Protocols of the Elders of Zion are still very popular in Syria, Lebanon, and other Middle Eastern countries. Clearly, more conscientious efforts will be necessary to effectively combat anti-Semitism.

Another example of work against anti-Semitism occurred in the United Arab Emirates. In 2003, the government closed a think tank in the country that was incorporating anti-Semitism into its events and literature. The reason the government gave for closing the center was that the group’s work contradicted the president’s goal of creating interfaith dialogue in the country. There is also an instance of criticism of anti-Semitism in Iran. In April 2005, the speaker of the

5 Ibid.
6 Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), United States Department of State, Report on Global Anti-Semitism, report to the Congressional Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on International Relations, January 5, 2005.
Iranian Parliament, Gholam Ali Haddad Adel, denounced programming on Iranian state television for its unfair attacks on Iran’s Jewish community.  

In Qatar, annual interfaith dialogue conferences often include prominent members of the international Jewish community. There is also the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID) in Qatar which was established in May 2008. Last year’s proceedings and conferences of DICID did not feature issues surrounding the Jewish community in the Middle East, however, or anti-Semitism in the region, focusing mostly on Jewish issues in the West. The center also denounced Israel’s most recent actions in Gaza saying that they are an attack on the beliefs and principles of “the faith”, which is taken to be understood as Islam. There could certainly be a more concerted effort to address anti-Semitism in the Middle East, especially outside of the context of Israeli actions.  

As promising as they might appear these criticisms and efforts against anti-Semitism in the Middle East simply do not go far enough. They are mostly isolated examples of efforts to end hate, motivated largely by international pressure. They do not represent a strong will to find real solutions for an end anti-Semitism. Also, the voices of reason are often far outnumbered or overshadowed by calls for violence and continued animosity toward Jews. There needs to be focused, concerted efforts by officials and non-governmental organizations to address anti-Semitism specifically. The efforts to promote tolerance need to be as organized and earnest as the efforts of those who promote anti-Semitism. Until this happens, various independent efforts by governments and individuals to address Jew hatred will have little effect.  

The media is one arena where there has been little effort to stop rampant anti-Semitism. There is no system in the region to provide factual analysis or promote balance in the media.

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10 DICID, Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue Periodical Newsletter (Spring 2010).
while there is plenty of government control and censorship of content. Technology and external funding have helped make channels of hate such as Al-Manar and Al-Aqsa available to audiences throughout the region, spreading anti-Semitism.

The satellite network Al-Jazeera, based in Qatar, offers an alternative to strict anti-Semitic themes with goals of promoting fairness and honesty while avoiding propaganda and editorializing. The network even hosts Israeli guests and commentators. It also features people who promote anti-Semitic ideas, however. This may be part of the network’s goal to present the viewpoints of all sides but it may be lending legitimacy to the arguments of hate. Providing a forum for all voices to be heard is an improvement in Middle Eastern media, but it still allows anti-Semitism to exist in the mainstream. If anti-Semitism is to be addressed in the Middle East, efforts will have to be made to improve the treatment of Jews and Israeli’s in the media and reduce hate speech in interviews and programming.

There is also little action being taken to change the attitudes of the general public toward Jews. While there are examples of official efforts against anti-Semitism there is little evidence of grassroots work to end Jew hatred. Actions and criticism against official anti-Semitism are an important first step but the problem needs to be addressed where it has the greatest impact, in the minds of the Middle Eastern citizens. This arena may prove to be the hardest place to curtail anti-Jewish sentiments. Even the peace accords that Egypt and Jordan made with Israel have not significantly improved the public’s attitudes towards Israelis and Jews. This shows that although peace with Israel is a major step toward beginning the process of reconciliation between religious communities, it is still not enough. There needs to be far more positive communication between Jewish and non-Jewish communities outside of official diplomacy and treaties. The discussion of interfaith dialogue should also be distanced from issues with Israel. Although Israel is now intimately tied to the future of the world Jewish community, too often the actions of Israel are taken to be representative of all Jews by the people.

13 Office of the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism (SEAS), United States Department of State, Contemporary Global Anti-Semitism, report to the Congressional Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on International Relations, January 5, 2005.
14 Bernard Lewis, “Muslim Anti-Semitism,” Middle East Quarterly 5, no. 2 (June 1998).
of the Middle East. Too often, diplomatic and military conflict with Israel becomes a pretense to avoid interaction between Jews and non-Jews in the Middle East.

The continuing violence in Israel and the occupied territories is a major stumbling block to positive dialogue. As was discussed in chapter four, the recent violence in Gaza has led to a huge upswing in anti-Israeli and anti-Jewish sentiments in many Middle Eastern countries. If progress is to be made in interfaith relations the association between Jews and Israel needs to be curbed so that positive dialogue can occur outside of the context of war and conflict between Israel and Arab states. Because Israel and the Jewish community are inextricably linked, finding peaceful solutions to the problems in Israel help will help to curb this anger and hatred as well, although this may not be possible for many years.

As part of solving anti-Semitism, the long Jewish heritage in the Middle East and the Jewish contributions to the region’s culture should be recognized. The Mizrahi Jews are often ignored by both sides in discussions about Jews in the modern Middle East. These communities could serve as a bridge and starting point for dialogue between Arabs and Jews since they maintain elements of both communities.

This will require changes in the historical narratives of Jews, Arabs, and Muslims in the Middle East, however. The history of Jews in the region, as taught in Israeli schools, focuses almost completely on the ancient Israel of the Bible.\(^{15}\) Arab history focuses on the non-Jewish communities of the Middle East and after the Arab conquest. This is because Arab investigation of history is driven by the desire to promote Arab national identity and unity.\(^{16}\) The Islamist narrative of the history of the Middle East focuses on the domination of Islam and the eventual subjugation of other religious communities, through force if necessary. These narratives come from vastly different perspectives and there is no common starting point from which to begin constructive dialogue.

If the study and understanding of history is to change in the region than the attitude in academia and educational institutions will have to change as well. Intellectuals in the region have been slow to begin dialogue between Jews and non-Jews.\(^{17}\) Often, academia has even been a


\(^{16}\) Ibid.

\(^{17}\) Bernard Lewis, “Muslim Anti-Semitism.”
source of anti-Semitic ideas and supporters.\textsuperscript{18} Changing this pattern will be an important step toward dialogue between religious communities in the region.

Strong emotions against Israel in the general public are not just from propaganda but also from years of conflict. Most Arabs alive today only know Israel through the lens of war. Israeli government and society contains many moderate elements, however, who have real concern for the problems of Palestinians and Arabs.\textsuperscript{19} Efforts by moderates in Israel have a real potential to change the general attitude towards Israelis and Jews and bring peace to the region. This will have to go hand in hand with a change in viewpoints of Muslims and Arabs so they will be receptive to working with Israelis and Jews. An end to violence and terrorist attacks in the region would help this effort since mutual fear can prevent a good deal of dialogue between moderates on both sides.

Anti-Semitism is a complex phenomenon in the Middle East with no single cause or source. This complicates the study of anti-Semitism as well as the search for solutions for the problem. What is clear, however, is that there needs to be a dramatic shift in the attitudes of the people, religious and community leaders, the government, and the media to bring an end to anti-Semitism. Real, lasting peace in the region will also most likely be a necessary component for a solution to hate. There will need to be a concerted effort against anti-Semitism at every level of Middle Eastern society if the building cycle of hate is to end. Since many of the external factors that led to the rise of anti-Semitism in the region have diminished, such as European anti-Semitism and world war, the solution must now lie with the people in the region. This means that they have a great capacity to end the culture of hate, if they choose, and reject strong currents of anti-Semitism which have swept the region for now over one hundred years. Although it may take time, the efforts against anti-Semitism, the communities willing to defend Jews, and the potential for top-down or grassroots change offer hope that anti-Semitism can be pushed to the fringes of Middle Eastern society and Jews will be someday warmly welcomed back to Arab and Muslim countries again.

\textsuperscript{18} Lassner & Troen, \textit{Jews and Muslims in the Arab World}, 152.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, 350.
APPENDIX I:
Relevant Qur’anic Passages

Sura 2
47. & 122. O Children of Israel, remember the grace I bestowed upon you, and remember that I preferred you to all other nations

253. Had Allah so willed, those who succeeded [the messengers, r.s.] would not have fought one another after they had received the clear signs. But they disagreed [among themselves, m.f.]; some of them believed and some did not. Had Allah pleased they would not have fought each other, but Allah does what He wills.

Sura 4
46. …Allah has cursed [the Jews, rs.] on account of their disbelief, so they- except for a few-do not believe.

171. O People of the Book, do not exceed the bounds of your religion, nor say about Allah except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, is only Allah’s Messenger and His Word, which he imparted to Mary, and is a spirit from Him! So believe in Allah and His Messengers and do not say “three” [gods, m.f.]. Refrain; it is better for you. Allah is truly One God. How-glory be to Him- could He have a son?

Sura 5
14. And with some of those who say: “We are Christians”, we made a covenant; but they forgot part of what they were reminded of; so we stirred up enmity and hatred among them till the Day of Resurrection. Allah will let them know what they did.

41. O Messenger, do not grieve on account of those who hasten to unbelief, from among those who who hasten to unbelief, from among those who say with their mouths: “We believe”, while their hearts do not believe; or those Jews who listen to falsehood or listen to other people who did not come to you, and who alter the words [of the Torah, m.f.]. They say: “If you are given this, then take it, and if you are not given it, then beware!” Whoever Allah wishes to leave in error, you can do nothing to save him from Allah. Thos whose hearts Allah does not wish to purify will have nothing but disgrace in this world, and a terrible punishment in the world to come.

43. But how will they ask you to judge, when they are in possession of the Torah, which contains Allah’s Judgement! Thus they soon turn away. Those people are not real believers!

51. O believers, do not take the Jews and the Christians as friends; some of them are friends of each other. Whoever of you takes them as friends is surely one of them. Allah indeed does not guide the wrongdoers.

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1 Qur’anic translations are from Majid Fakhry, *An interpretation of the Qur’ an* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 2002). Fakhry’s notes are abbreviated m.f. and the writer’s are abbreviated r.s.
69. Surely, the believers, the Jews, the Sabians and the Christians whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good deeds shall all have nothing to fear and they shall not grieve.

82. You shall find the most hostile people to the believers to be the Jews and the polytheists; and you shall find the closest in affection to the believers those who say: ‘We are Christians.’ For among them are priests and monks, and they are not arrogant.

110. When Allah will say: “O Jesus, son of Mary, remember My Grace upon you and upon your mother, how I strengthened you with the Holy Spirit… And [remember, m.f.] how I restrained the Children of Israel from harming you, when you brought them the clear signs; whereupon the unbelievers among them said: “that indeed is nothing but manifest sorcery.”

Sura 6
84. And we granted him Issac and Jacob, and guided each of them; and Noah We guided before that, and of his progeny, [We guided, m.f.] David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses and Aaron. Thus we reward the beneficent
85. And Zachariah, John, Jesus and Elias, each was one of the righteous.
86. And Isma’il, Elijah, Jonah, and Lot; each We exalted above the whole world.
87. [We also exalted some] of their fathers, progeny and brethren. And We chose them and guided them to a straight path.

Sura 9
30. The Jews say: “Ezra is the son of Allah”, and the Christians say: “The Messiah is the son of Allah.” That is their statement, by their mouths; they emulate the statement of the unbelievers of yore. May Allah damn them; how they are perverted!
31. [Jews and Christians, rs.] take their rabbis and monks as lords beside Allah… although they are commanded to worship non but One God.
34. O believers, many of the rabbis and monks devour the property of the people unjustly and bar others from the Path of Allah.

Sura 32
23. We have, indeed, given Moses the Book; so do not be in doubt concerning his encounter, and We made it a guidance to the Children of Israel.
24. And We appointed some of them as leaders, guiding by Our Command, when they stood fast and believed firmly in Our Signs.

Sura 45
16. In fact, We gave the Children of Israel the Book, the Judgement and the Prophecy. We provided them with the good things, and preferred them to all the other peoples.
Deuteronomy

41. Then you answered me, 'We [the Israelites, r.s.] have sinned against the LORD; we will go up and fight, just as the LORD our God commanded us.' And every man of you girded on his weapons of war, and thought it easy to go up into the hill country.

42. And the LORD said to me, 'Say to them, Do not go up or fight, for I am not in the midst of you; lest you be defeated before your enemies.'

43. So I spoke to you, and you would not hearken; but you rebelled against the command of the LORD, and were presumptuous and went up into the hill country.

44. Then the Amorites who lived in that hill country came out against you and chased you as bees do and beat you down in Se'ir as far as Hormah.

45. And you returned and wept before the LORD; but the LORD did not hearken to your voice or give ear to you.

Judges

11. And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Ba'als;

12. and they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; they went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were round about them, and bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger.

13. They forsook the LORD, and served the Ba'als and the Ash'taroth.

14. So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them; and he sold them into the power of their enemies round about, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies.

16. Then the LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the power of those who plundered them.

17. And yet they did not listen to their judges; for they played the harlot after other gods and bowed down to them; they soon turned aside from the way in which their fathers had walked, who had obeyed the commandments of the LORD, and they did not do so.

18. Whenever the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them.

19. But whenever the judge died, they turned back and behaved worse than their fathers, going after other gods, serving them and bowing down to them; they did not drop any of their practices or their stubborn ways.

20. So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel

Ezekiel

27. Therefore, son of man, speak to the house of Israel and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: In this again your fathers blasphemed me, by dealing treacherously with me.

28. For when I had brought them into the land which I swore to give them, then wherever they saw any high hill or any leafy tree, there they offered their sacrifices and presented the

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2 Quotations come from the Revised Standard Edition. The writer’s are abbreviated r.s.
provocation of their offering; there they sent up their soothing odors, and there they poured out their drink offerings.

29. I said to them, What is the high place to which you go? So its name is called Bamah to this day.

30. Wherefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: Will you defile yourselves after the manner of your fathers and go astray after their detestable things?

31. When you offer your gifts and sacrifice your sons by fire, you defile yourselves with all your idols to this day. And shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, says the Lord GOD, I will not be inquired of by you.
APPENDIX 3:
Anti-Semitic Cartoons from the Middle East

Figure 1: By 'Imad Hajjaj in Al-Ghad (Jordan), December 31, 2008.

Figure 2: The Israeli is explaining to the Nazi that they are the same. From Tashreen (Syria), April 26, 2007.

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Figure 3: The caption says “Gaza: a campaign of genocide.” By Hassan Bleibel from *Al-Mustaqbal* (Lebanon), December 29, 2008.

Figure 4: By Ali Khalil from *Al-Wasat* (Bahrain), June 2002

Figure 5: Dehumanized Jewish figure killing the dove of peace. From *Al-Ahram* (Egypt), January 5, 2009.
Figure 6: From *Al-Jamhuriya* (Egypt), March 17, 2007.

Figure 7: A stereotypical Jewish person controlling the Quartet on the Middle East, made up of the UN, US, EU, and Russia. From *Al-Watan* (Saudi Arabia), March 7, 2007.
Figure 8: Stereotypical Jewish person armed with Israeli rockets with a bloody keffiyeh head scarf, a symbol of Palestinian nationalism, in his mouth. By Hassan Idleby from *Al-Bayyan* (UAE), December 28, 2008

Figure 9: A Jewish wolf killing the dove of peace. From *Al-Thawra* (Syria), October 11, 2003
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