

ADELAIDE INSTITUTE

PO Box 3300
Adelaide 5067
Australia
Mob: 61+401692057
Email: info@adelaideinstitute.org
Web: <http://www.adelaideinstitute.org>

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Jewish Directed Iran Sanctions Backfire

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=40lp400dDEo

Press TV switches to new YouTube page after ban



Thursday August 8, 2013 2:0PM

Press TV has created a new YouTube page weeks after Google disabled the alternative channel's access to its official YouTube page without giving explanation.

"Press TV viewers can now watch our videos at www.youtube.com/user/PresstvNewsCast," said Press TV newsroom director, Hamid Reza Emadi, adding that tens of thousands of Press TV subscribers had been unable to watch the videos on the popular video sharing site since July 25.

YouTube's parent company Google "disabled our official page's account citing a violation of terms of services, but clarified neither the nature of the so-called violation nor did it mention the services in question," Emadi added, stressing that Press TV will continue its efforts to get back on its official page on the popular video sharing site.



['Press TV reveals suppressed info'](#)

Last week, YouTube told Press TV that the channel's account had become reactivated.

"The account appears to be active (now) and you should be able to access it," wrote The YouTube Team in response to Press TV's online queries. However, Press TV's YouTube team was unable to access the channel's official YouTube page, whose Google account remained "disabled".

Meanwhile, an article on the official website of the Israeli-American Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has accused Press TV of bypassing the West's sanctions by broadcasting live via Youtube and other internet and mobile platforms.

"ADL has contacted Youtube regarding concerns about Press TV," reads the article, further noting that the station's "broadcast on Youtube comes at the a time when the United States, the European Union and others in the international community are seeking to isolate Iran."

"Press TV has yet to find out whether there's a link between the ADL statement and the blocking of its official YouTube page," Emadi said.

HRE/SL

<http://www.presstv.com/detail/317800.html>

Sun's Magnetic Field Flip Won't Doom Earth, Scientists Say

By [Mike Wall, SPACE.com](#) Senior Writer | August 07, 2013 07:06pm ET

We have nothing to fear from the big change that is about to occur on the sun, researchers stress.

The sun's magnetic field is set to [reverse its polarity](#) in the next few months. But the shift won't spark an increase in powerful solar storms or other events that could have a damaging effect on Earth and its inhabitants, researchers say.

"The world will not end tomorrow," Phil Scherrer, a solar physicist at Stanford University, told [SPACE.com](#). [[Solar Magnetic Field Will Soon Flip \(Video\)](#)]

This polarity flip is perfectly normal solar behavior, occurring every 11

years at the peak of our star's activity cycle. But the field reversal doesn't drive the increase in [solar flares](#) and eruptions of superheated plasma, called coronal mass ejections, that is observed around solar max.

"It's more of an indicator than a causation kind of thing," said solar physicist Todd Hoeksema, director of Stanford's Wilcox Observatory.

From a human perspective, the effects of the field shift will likely be slight and primarily beneficial. For example, the polarity reversal will cause the "current sheet" — an enormous surface extending out

from the solar equator on which the sun's rotating magnetic field has induced an electric current — to become much wavier.

This crinkled current sheet will provide a better barrier against [galactic cosmic rays](#), high-energy particles that are accelerated to nearly the speed of light by faraway star explosions. Galactic cosmic rays can damage spacecraft and hurt orbiting astronauts, who don't enjoy the protection of Earth's thick atmosphere.

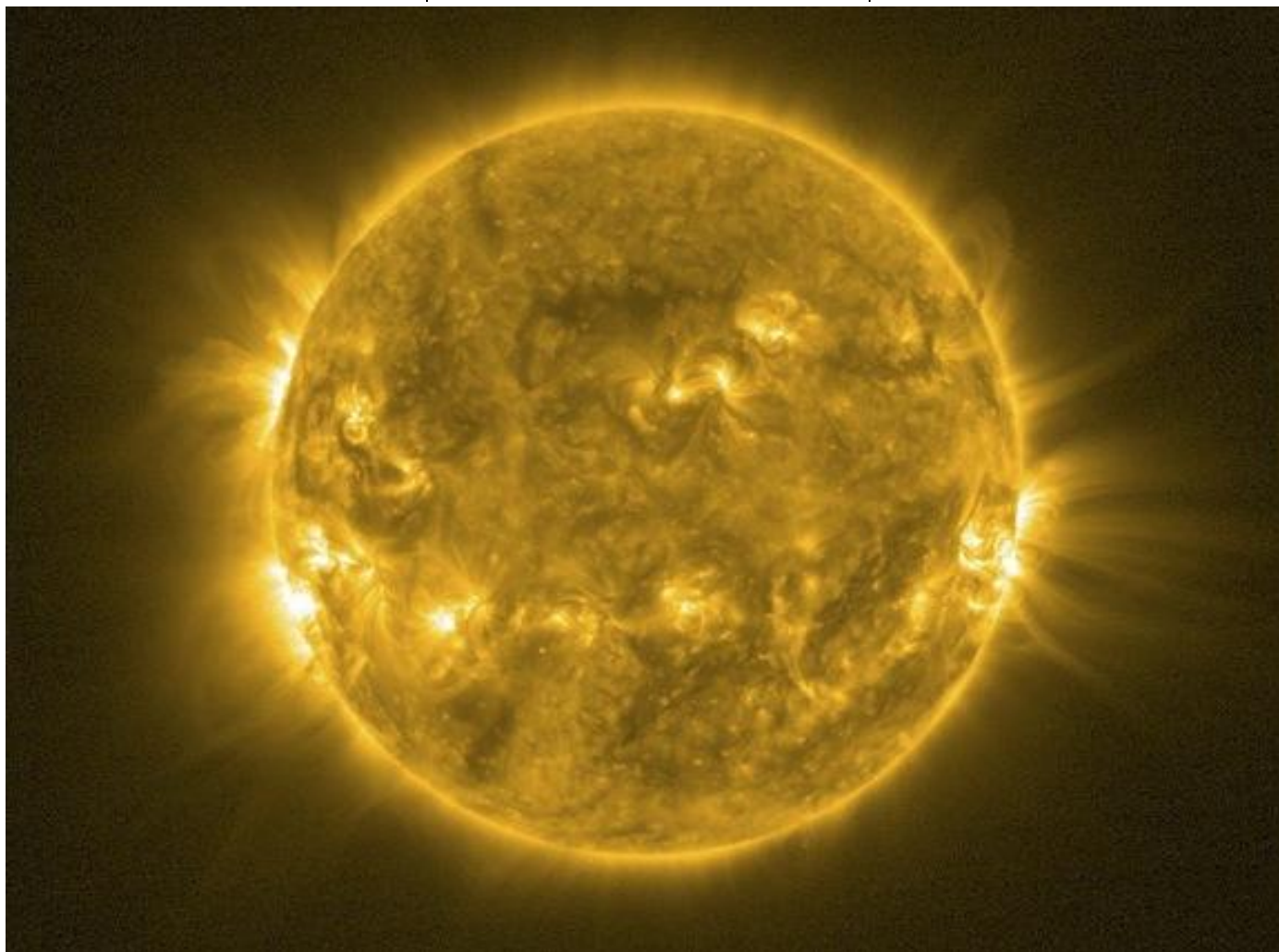
A drop in galactic cosmic ray levels could also have a subtle impact on

weather here on Earth, researchers say.

"One of the things that helps clouds form and lightning to flash is cosmic-ray ionization of things in the [Earth's atmosphere](#)," Hoeksema

told [SPACE.com](#). "So when the cosmic-ray intensity is lower, it means you have fewer places where lightning will occur, and so the storms will probably be a little less intense."

He added, however, that "it's pretty much a speculative endeavor at this point, trying to link the cosmic rays to any real [weather] effect."



This stunning space wallpaper shows the view of the sun from the SWAP – Sun Watcher using Active Pixel System detector and Image Processing – instrument onboard ESA's Proba-2 satellite. Credit: ESA/SWAP PROBA2 science centre

During the reversal, the sun's polar magnetic fields will weaken all the way down to zero, then bounce back with the opposite polarity. Researchers will keep a keen eye on just how strong this recovery is over the next two years or so.

"This field seems to be a good indicator of what the next solar cycle is going to do," said Dean Pesnell of NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Md., project scientist for the space agency's Solar Dynamics Observatory spacecraft. "If it

quickly goes to a high value, then that tells us the next cycle will be high."

The sun has been quiet during its current 11-year activity cycle, which is known as Solar Cycle 24. So it would be particularly interesting to see a strong field emerge after the impending flip, Pesnell said.

"We've had several of these solar minimums, and each time the polar field has been weaker. And each time, the next cycle has been a little bit weaker," he told

[SPACE.com](#). "So it would be nice to see one where the polar field strength was higher, and the next cycle was higher as well."

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<http://www.space.com/22289-sun-magnetic-field-flip-earth-effects.html>

Iran's outgoing president reveals his assets



3 August 2013, 15:58 (GMT+05:00), Azerbaijan, Baku, Aug.3 / Trend N. Umid /

Iran's outgoing president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad revealed his assets in a letter addressed to Iran's Judiciary Chief Sadeq Amoli Larijani, Fars news agency reported.

In his letter he remarked that he has renewed his old house to four 100- square meters houses which was realized with the help of his family and bank credits.

According to the report, the land area and infrastructure of the old house before renovation hit 175 and 130 square meters respectively.

The Iranian constitution stipulates that the head of the judiciary must examine the assets of top officials including the supreme leader, cabinet ministers and their immediate families to ensure that no one has become richer through illegal means while in office.

It should be noted that the inauguration ceremony of Iran's newly elected president Hassan Rouhani will take place on August 4. He will meet with Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei today.

Rouhani will participate in a ceremony known as tanfiz

(validity), during which the Supreme Leader formally appoints the Iranian president.

Hassan Rouhani won the June 14 presidential elections in Iran, gathering over 50 percent of votes, securing his place as the next president of Iran.

Do you have any feedback? Contact our journalist at agency@trend.az <http://en.trend.az/news/politics/2176701.html>

Why Iranian Leader Hassan Rowhani May Not Be Ahmadinejad II

The Bogeyman Is Gone — Listen to New Voice in Tehran

By [Trita Parsi](#), Published August 09, 2013, issue of [August 16, 2013](#)

While the rest of the world cautiously welcomed the surprise election of Hassan Rowhani, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stood virtually alone in swiftly dismissing the Iranian centrist as a wolf in sheep's clothing. And when Iranian news agencies misquoted Rowhani as calling Israel an "old wound" that must be removed, Netanyahu was quick to declare himself vindicated.

"This statement should awaken the world from the illusion some have

taken to entertaining since the elections in Iran," Netanyahu's statement said. "The president was replaced but the goal of the regime remains obtaining nuclear weapons to threaten Israel, the Middle East and the safety of the world."

When it later emerged that Rowhani had been misquoted by the Iranian media — he had called the occupation "a wound" and had made no reference at all to Israel, nor had he expressed any desire for it to be destroyed — Netanyahu at

first refused to retract his statement, and later put the blame on the international news agencies for having disseminated the misquotation.

But the quick condemnation and the reluctant retraction revealed Netanyahu's strong desire to see Rowhani for what he wants him to be — a continuation of hard-liner Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's radicalism that made the campaign to isolate Iran seem almost effortless —

rather than the change Rowhani actually might represent. But what change might Rowhani bring to Iran's posture on Israel? Let's first determine what changes Rowhani — or anyone else, for that matter — likely cannot bring to the

Islamic Republic's policy toward Israel. As I describe in my 2007 book "[Treacherous Alliance — The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the U.S.](#)," Iran's Israel policy is driven by both ideological and strategic concerns. On the strategic

side, Iran has sought for decades to distance itself from Israel in order to avoid attracting Arab anger. Even the shah, who enjoyed very close security collaboration with the Jewish state, kept Israel at arm's length in public.



Not Same Iran: Israel should listen to Hassan Rowhani before dismissing him as a wolf in sheep's clothing, getty images

Beyond the strategic concerns, the current regime in Iran also holds ideological animosity toward Israel, even though for the purposes of operational policy, the ideological factors are secondary.

As a result, the Islamic Republic is not about to turn itself into a friend of Israel anytime soon. Its support for Hezbollah is going to remain intact, as will its ideological opposition to Zionism (it was actually the shah's government that in 1975 voted in favor of the controversial "Zionism equals racism" resolution at the United Nations). It is safe to assume that no one in Rowhani's Cabinet views Israel as a friend or even as a potential friend.

But there is also reliable information showing that his Cabinet is filled with individuals who view the degree of animosity between Israel and Iran under Ahmadinejad as highly counterproductive and counter to Iran's national interest.

Rowhani's interview with Iranian state TV is a case in point. Whereas Iranian hard-liners frame their position on Israel in terms of a

religious duty to secure justice for Islam, Iranian pragmatists frame it in terms of restoring the rights of the Palestinian people.

The former approach is conveniently detached from the Palestinian cause and, as a result, not dependent on the wishes of the Palestinians themselves. Being more Palestinian than the Palestinians creates no contradiction as long as the defense of Islam warrants it.

The latter framing, however, provides the Iranians with a face-saving exit from the issue. If restoring the rights of the Palestinian people is the objective, Iran must then adhere to the wishes of the Palestinians themselves. It cannot be out ahead of them, criticizing agreements and terms that the Palestinians themselves find acceptable.

Using this frame, the reformist government of Mohammad Khatami, president from 1997 to 2005, shifted Iran from its previous position on Israel, from a rejection of the two-state solution to supporting whatever agreement

was acceptable to the Palestinians. Compare Iran's noisy and disruptive profile during the early years of the peace process and its quiet and disengaged profile during the Camp David II talks in the year 2000. Compare Hezbollah's conduct in the year 2000 and its behavior in 2006. The Ahmadinejad government later reversed this shift and revitalized lines of attack against Israel that the Jewish state thought it had put to rest, such as questioning Israel's right to exist. Ahmadinejad also began propagating the idea of a referendum to determine the fate of the Holy Land (knowing full well that the Palestinians will soon outnumber the Israelis), which challenged not only the Israeli government, but also that of the Palestinian authority.

Rowhani's interview is a strong indication that he falls into the latter camp of pragmatists, focusing on the wound of the occupation rather than on ideological factors and objectives. According to one of his Cabinet ministers, he is a proponent of the reformist idea that

Iran should adopt a "Malaysian profile" on Israel.

Much like Malaysia, Iran would be an Islamic state that does not formally recognize Israel and would occasionally criticize Israeli policies but refrain from confronting Israel directly. As I wrote in the Forward in December 2007, Iran would get out of Israel's hair in return for an end to Israeli pressure on the United States to isolate and contain Iran. Iran would be an armchair critic of Israel, voicing its opposition to the occupation of Palestinian

territories, but it would not interfere in the peace talks or add fuel to the fire.

To anyone concerned about Israel's security, this would be a welcome albeit ultimately insufficient change. Additional steps would be necessary to achieve a lasting resolution. But for these first steps to materialize, Netanyahu must come to terms with the fact that Ahmadinejad has left Tehran's political scene and that a new reality is emerging. On Israel, Rowhani is likely not Ahmadinejad 2.0 but Khatami 2.0.

For an Israel interested in peace, that should be good news.

*

Trita Parsi is the founder and current president of the National Iranian American Council.

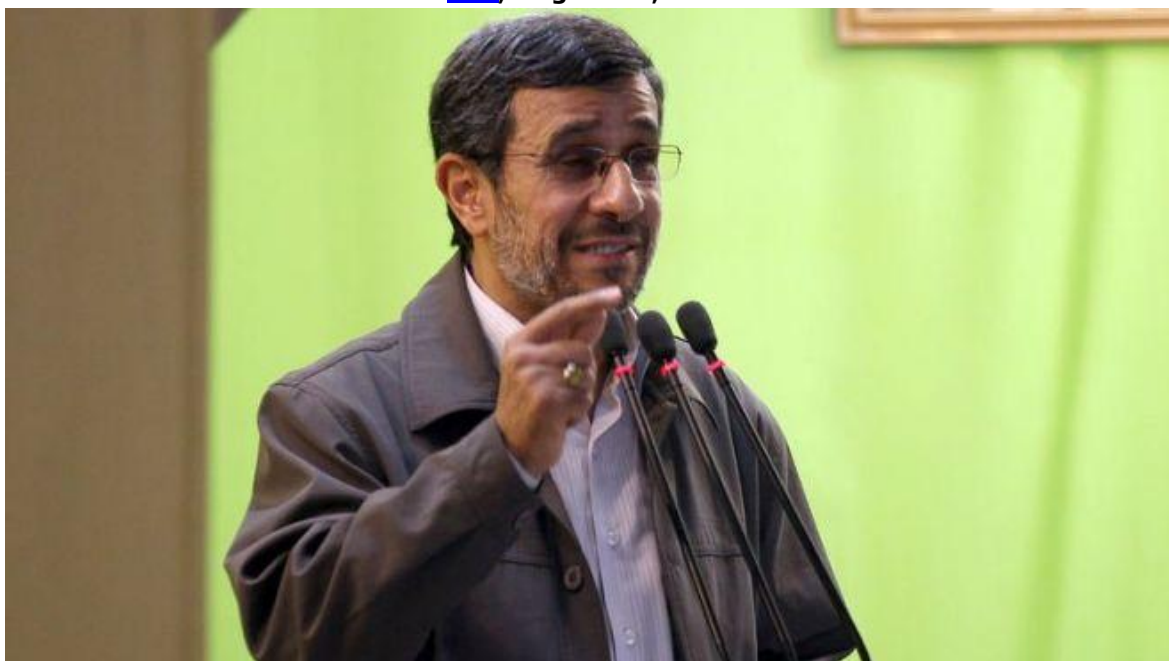
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<http://forward.com/articles/182013/why-iranian-leader-hassan-rowhanimaynotbeahmad/?p=all#ixzz2bZc0aVWH>

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Ahmadinejad gets post-presidency seat on top Iran council

AFP, August 05, 2013



Outgoing Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad addresses his weekly Friday prayer sermon at Tehran University on August 2, 2013. Iran's supreme leader on Monday appointed Ahmadinejad to the Expediency Council, the country's top political arbitration body headed by an avid critic of the outgoing president. (AFP/File)

TEHRAN (AFP) – Iran's supreme leader on Monday appointed Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to the Expediency Council, the country's top political arbitration body headed by an avid critic of the outgoing president.

In announcing the appointment, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei praised Ahmadinejad's "worthy efforts" as president.

"Considering the profuse experience you gained during eight years of worthy efforts, I appoint you as a member of the Expediency Council,"

read a statement posted on Khamenei's website

The council is headed by ex-president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani who repeatedly criticised Ahmadinejad during his turbulent eight-year presidency for his controversial political and economic policies.

It is dominated by conservatives and acts as an advisory body for Khamenei, the supreme leader of the Islamic republic who has final say on all key policies, including nuclear talks and foreign policy.

Ahmadinejad vacated office on Saturday after two turbulent four-year terms, leaving Iran divided domestically, isolated internationally and struggling economically.

He was succeeded by moderate cleric Hassan Rowhani, who has promised to engage constructively with world powers over Iran's contentious nuclear drive and to stave up the shrinking economy.

In the last two years of his presidency, Ahmadinejad fell from grace with Khamenei following a

public power struggle, and during his tenure he was also involved in high-profile feuds with parliament speaker Ali Larijani and judiciary chief Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani. The Expediency Council comprises high-ranking religious and political

figures and former government officials. It is also tasked with resolving legislative issues between the parliament and the Guardians Council, which interprets the constitution.

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/08/05/ahmadinejad-gets-post-presidency-seat-on-top-iran-council/#ixzz2bZc8XuOE>

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad unveils Iran's newest fighter jet

Associated Press | Updated: February 02, 2013 14:12 IST

Tehran: Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has unveiled the country's newest fighter jet, which officials claim can evade radar. Ahmadinejad said at a Saturday ceremony broadcast on state TV that Qaher-313, or Dominant-313, showed Iran's will to "capture peaks." Defense Minister Ahmad Vahidi says Qaher is "fully indigenous,"

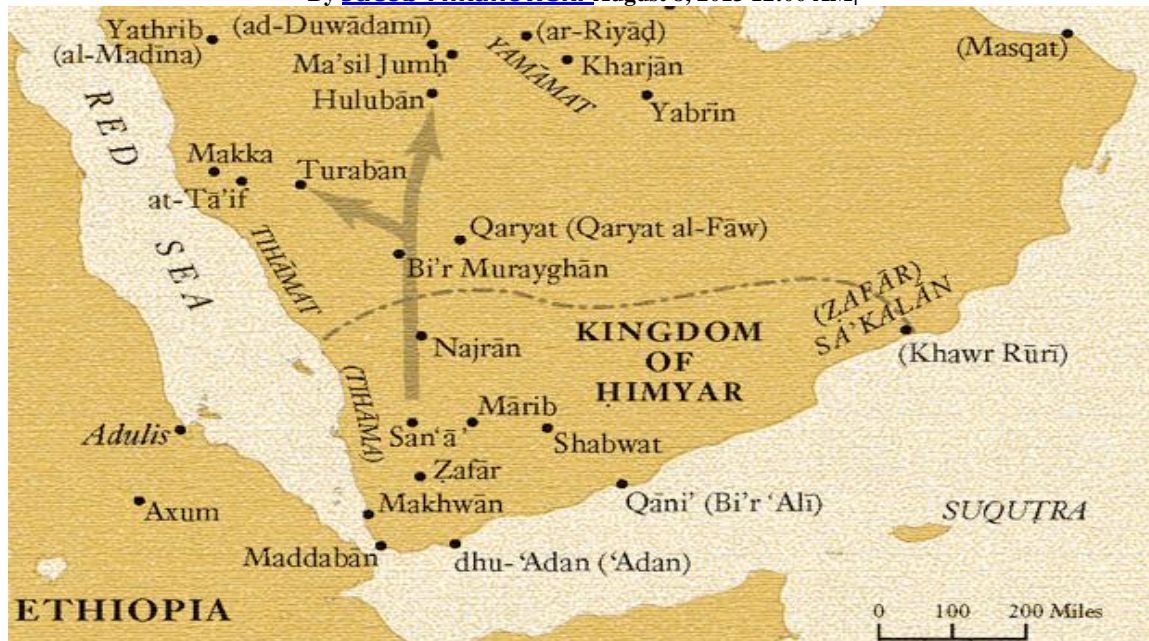
designed and built by Iranian aerospace experts. Photos released by the official IRNA news agency shows Qaher as a single-seat jet, described as a fighter-bomber that can combat both other aircraft and ground targets. Iran unveiled what it said was its first domestically manufactured fighter jet, called Azarakhsh or Lightning, in 2007. Saeqeh, or

Thunder, was a follow up aircraft derived from Azarakhsh. Tehran has repeatedly claimed advances in military technologies in recent years but its claims cannot be independently verified. <http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/mahmoudahmadinejadunveilsirannewestfighterjet325604?curl=1376112030>

Yemen, the Crucible of al-Qaida, Was Once a Powerful Arabian Kingdom Run by Jews

A new book sheds light on the complicated conflicts among Jews, Christians, and pagans in the pre-Islamic Middle East

By [Jacob Mikanowski](#) August 8, 2013 12:00 AM



Late Antique Southwest Arabia, map based on I. Gadja, *Le royaume de Himyar à l'époque monothéiste* - Paris, 2009, p. 139. Courtesy of Oxford University Press

Yemen was one of the first nations to be converted by Muhammad's followers in the seventh century C.E., and it has been a Muslim

country ever since—now known as a [refuge](#) for al-Qaida and a regular source of global terror alerts, like

this week's [scare](#) about liquid explosives that shut down U.S. embassies across the Middle East. However, 1,500 years ago Yemen

was ruled by a dynasty of Jewish kings. Their kingdom, called Himyar, lasted for 150 years and profoundly changed the course of Arabian political and religious history.

Himyar's memory was preserved for centuries by only a few inscriptions and stray mentions in later chronicles known to just a handful of experts, most of whom doubted the extent of the kingdom's Jewish affiliation. Recently, though, Himyar's history has come into focus, thanks to new discoveries in epigraphy and archeology. Now a new book by G.W. Bowersock, *The Throne of Adulis*, is making these discoveries available in English for the first time and shedding new light on the complicated conflicts among Jews, Christians, and pagans that shaped the Middle East before the arrival of Islam.

The origins of Himyar are obscure. The kingdom seems to have coalesced at some point toward the end of the third century C.E. in the territory of what is today southwestern Yemen, and its kings gradually expanded their rule over the southern half of the Arabian Peninsula. Their dynasty lasted until the third decade of the sixth century when the last Himyarite ruler was overthrown by an expedition sent by the Christian king of Axum, in present-day Ethiopia. No chronicles or manuscripts from Himyar itself have survived. Most of what we do know comes from inscriptions carved on stelae and cliff faces in Sabaic, a now-extinct South Arabian language whose alphabet has more in common with modern-day Ethiopian scripts than with written Arabic. These mentions are numerous but brief and often fragmentary, leaving much room for interpretation.

Yet a few contemporary accounts of Himyar do survive. Written by outsiders, they offer precious information about the kingdom's political and religious life, albeit through hostile eyes. Most of these texts are religious in nature and concern the lives of saints and

martyrs who lived in the vicinity of Himyar. The most vivid and surprising is a letter, written in Syriac in the early sixth century, that claims to be an eye-witness record of a pivotal episode in the kingdom's history that would bring an end to the Jewish dynasty. The author of the letter, Symeon of Beth Arsham, was a priest and the leader of one of the Christian communities in the Persian Empire. He was also an avid traveler and a tireless advocate for the rights of his co-religionists, followers of the Monophysite branch of the Christian Church. Symeon, in short, was a diplomat, troubleshooter, and propagandist—a sixth-century version of the roaming political activist of today.

In 524 C.E., Symeon's wanderings brought him to a high-level political conference in the North Arabian desert. Then as now, the Arabian Peninsula was a fertile territory for superpower rivalry and sectarian strife. The summit of 524 brought together representatives from all the forces with an interest in the region: ambassadors from the Byzantine and Sassanian (Persian) empires, their Arab clients—the sheikhs of the great Jafnid and Nasrid clans—and delegates from different branches of the Christian Church. Negotiations were proceeding smoothly when an unexpected visitor arrived. He was an envoy from Himyar, and he had come to announce that there was a new king named Yusuf (or Joseph) on the throne.

In his letter, Symeon recounts the envoy's story in detail. After overthrowing his predecessor, Yusuf ordered all the Christians in his kingdom to convert to Judaism and killed those who refused. He also attacked the neighboring community of Najran and massacred its Christians after violating an offer of safe conduct. The envoy acted as a mouthpiece for Yusuf, announcing his hostile intentions and boasting of the many men and women he had executed by fire and beheading. In Symeon's no doubt embellished

retelling, the envoy's testimony also includes moving speeches by the king's victims, in which they extol Christ and praise martyrdom before heading off to slaughter.

Symeon's letter sounded the alarm among the Monophysites of the Near East and called their supporters in the wider Christian world to action, setting in motion the chain of events that would cause Himyar's downfall. Yet Symeon's narrative has also proven to be an enduring puzzle for historians over the centuries. With little independent evidence to corroborate it, it seemed hard to believe that Symeon's story was true. Was there really a Jewish king in Yemen? Where had he come from? And why would he order the persecution of so many Christians, especially when it would cost him his rule?

Joseph Halévy, one of the first Western scholars to study the ancient history of South Arabia, was among those who doubted the accuracy of Symeon's account. Born in Adrianople in the Ottoman Empire (now Edirne in Turkey), Halévy was a self-taught expert on ancient Near Eastern history and languages. He worked for years as a schoolteacher in Bucharest before being hired by French *Alliance Israélite Universelle* in 1868 to study the Falasha in Ethiopia.

After the success of this mission, the French Academy hired Halévy to lead a scientific expedition to Yemen. He spent years traveling across the Yemeni desert in the company of Jewish guides before returning to Paris. He brought with him hundreds of inscriptions in the then-unknown Sabaic language, which he helped to decipher. But for all his expertise, Halévy simply refused to believe that the King Yusuf from Symeon's letter was really Jewish, insisting that he must have been a Christian follower of the Arian heresy instead.

Eduard Glaser, one of Halévy's scholarly rivals, disagreed. Like Halévy, Glaser was a pioneering

Jewish Arabist, a self-taught expert on ancient languages, and a fearless traveler. He had made several trips to Yemen, mostly in disguise, and he had amassed a trove of artifacts and inscriptions, most of which are now in Vienna's Kunsthistorisches Museum. In translating his finds, Glaser noticed that a number of the inscriptions he had uncovered asked for the blessing of the "Lord of the Jews." He concluded that Symeon's letter was indeed accurate: King Yusuf was a Jew. Not only that, but by the time Yusuf seized power, Himyar had been a Jewish kingdom for over 150 years, something no one had suspected for centuries.

Halévy and Glaser sparred with each other in print multiple times, with neither being able to persuade the other. In subsequent decades, the controversy over Himyar's Jewish identity remained unresolved. For many years, scholars were reluctant to recognize Himyar's monotheism as Jewish, in part because there had not been contemporary documentary proof of the religion as Jewish and in part because the reports that suggested that it was were in medieval Arab histories. For a time, scholars adopted a compromise position, arguing that Himyar's people—or at least their rulers—practiced a kind of home-grown monotheism. They named this hypothetical religion "Raḥmānism," after the old Sabaic word for "the merciful," which shows up again and again in the Yemeni inscriptions. Raḥmānism, they argued, had been influenced by Judaism but stayed distinct from it, remaining a local phenomenon until it was driven out, first by Christianity and then by Islam.

Recently, however, the theory of a separate, local, Himyarite religion has come under fire. New discoveries in archaeology and epigraphy strongly suggest that many Himyarites were in fact Jewish. Several of these finds come not from Yemen, but from Israel. One of these was found at the Beth She'arim necropolis, a famous

cemetery near Haifa in which Jews from all over the diaspora were buried in late antiquity. There archaeologists, led by Zeev Weiss of Hebrew University, [discovered](#) a burial cave, dating to the fourth or fifth century C.E., with a sign painted in Greek announcing that it "belonged to the Himyarites." It seems that pious Jews from Himyar traveled north to be buried in the Jewish homeland. Excavations at Zafar, the Himyarite capital, led by Paul Yule of the University of Heidelberg, have also [uncovered](#) a chamber that may have been used as a Jewish ritual bath, as well as wall reliefs that incorporate Jewish iconography.

Other tomb inscriptions—one in Aramaic for a certain Yoseh from Zafar in Yemen, and another, in both Aramaic and Sabaic, for "Leah, the daughter of Judah"—likewise demonstrate that Jews from Himyar had strong ties to the Holy Land and could move with ease between the worlds of South Arabia and Northern Palestine. More proof of the presence of Jews in Himyar comes from Yemen itself. Signet rings, one carved with a menorah and another with a picture of a Torah niche, point to how important the new religion became as an expression of individual identity.

The most important evidence, however, comes in the form of inscriptions, and it is thanks to the work of their interpreters—principally Christian Robin and Iwona Gajda of the French National Center for Scientific Research—that the story of Himyar can finally be told in detail. In translating these recently uncovered inscriptions, Robin observed that, although the texts were written in Sabaic, a number of them use phrases like "amen" and "shalom" and contain Jewish names such as Isaac and Yehuda. Several make even more explicit references to Judaism, including several mentions of "the people of Israel," a list of the divisions of the priesthood in Hebrew, and allusions to the

existence of synagogues and Jewish cemeteries. A Greek inscription in the port city of Qana, discovered by a team of Russian archaeologists, likewise points to the presence of synagogues in Himyar.

The deciphering of these artifacts has made it become possible to fill in some of the gaps in Himyar's history as a Jewish kingdom. Its rulers likely converted to Judaism sometime around 380 C.E. (According to later Muslim tradition, this conversion happened under the influence of two visiting rabbis from Mecca.) Later on, Himyar's kings solidified their rule over southern Yemen before expanding north and east across the Arabian Peninsula.

At first, the Himyarite leaders seem to have been fairly reticent about their new religion. In fact, the strongest evidence for the date of their conversion comes from the sudden *absence* of references to polytheism and not from overt support for Judaism. But as the fifth century wore on, they became more vocal. Robin has argued that Himyar's rulers promoted Judaism as a way of solidifying their power over a kingdom fragmented by tribal and ethnic divisions. With time, though, faith overshadowed politics. Himyar came to be seen as a "new Israel" in its own right, and its rulers proved to be willing to fight for it with a startling militancy.

Yet, surprisingly, there is no mention of Himyar anywhere in the rabbinic tradition. In an email to me, Bowersock suggested that the rabbis might have felt unwilling to accept the Himyarites as Jews because they were not ethnically Jewish. Robin on the other hand thinks that their silence could have had to do with a reluctance to provide ammunition for millenarian aspirations. It's a mystery, though, and one wonders if the real reason wasn't something else. Could Himyar's story, with its wars, kings, campaigns, and usurpations, have lapsed into obscurity because it stood so far outside the expected

Jewish narratives of exile, persecution, and domination?

In *The Throne of Adulis*, Bowersock, a classicist and historian of the ancient world, places Himyar in an international context. He shows the ways in which its rulers attempted to navigate a course through the great-power conflicts of late antiquity and how their efforts ultimately ended in catastrophe. Along the way, he tells a story rife with intrigue, treachery, and ambition, underpinned by scholarly detective work of the most patient and demanding kind.



The Axum Stele. (Courtesy of Werner Forman/Art Resource)

Bowersock focuses much of his attention on Himyar's neighbor to the west, the powerful kingdom of Axum. Based in the Ethiopian highlands, Axum at different times controlled territory stretching from Sudan to the shores of the Red Sea. For many years, it controlled Himyar as well, before losing control of the region around 270 C.E. It didn't take the loss lightly. For over 200 years, Axum's Christian kings harbored designs on the Jewish kingdom across the Red Sea. Around 520 C.E. they finally succeeded in getting it back. They installed a puppet king on Himyar's throne—a Christian who was soon deposed in a coup by the Jewish Yusuf. Himyar was threatened by Axum's irredentist ambitions. By virtue of its position on crucial maritime trade routes to India, it was also pulled into a conflict between even larger

powers. In the fifth and sixth centuries, the Middle East was split between the Byzantine and Sassanian Empires. As in the Cold War in the 20th century, the rivalry between these superpowers was ideological as well as political, and it created allegiances and enmities with far-flung states. The Byzantines supported Christians beyond their borders, while the Zoroastrian Persians backed various groups—including Jews—who they hoped could keep the Byzantines in check. Both empires courted allies among the Arab tribes, although neither controlled lands in the Arabian Peninsula. Himyar played an important part in this game. Traditionally on the Persian side, it had switched sides when the Axumites installed their client king. When Yusuf seized the throne, he needed to switch back, having angered not only his neighbors in the region but also their powerful backers in the Byzantine Empire. According to Bowersock, although Yusuf's move against the Himyarite Christians may have been in part about enforcing religious unity, it was also an attempt to win back Persian approval and defend against reprisals from the Christian powers. Yusuf's massacre was a brutal power play. It was also a gamble, and it backfired almost immediately. The persecution of Arab Christians gave the Axumites a pretext to take back what had once been theirs. Led by their king, Kaleb, they launched an invasion as soon as they heard the news from Ramla. According to one chronicle, the Byzantine emperor urged Kaleb on, telling him "to go forth, whether by sea or by land, against the abominable and criminal Jew." Yusuf defended himself as best he could. In a rare instance when an inscription can be tied to a specific moment and event, one of his generals used a cliff as a billboard to brag about the "14,000 men he had killed, the 11,000 prisoners he had taken captive and the 290,000 camels, cows, and

goats" the king had seized from neighboring lands.

Although Himyar didn't leave much of a trace in the Jewish tradition, its real legacy might be in the history of Islam

Before the year was out, the Axumites launched an aquatic invasion across the Red Sea. Yusuf tried to stop them from getting a beachhead by stretching a giant iron chain across the bay where they intended to land. It proved to be a memorable deed, but not a successful one. Within the year Yusuf was dead. His death marked the end of the Jewish kingdom. Under its new Ethiopian rulers, Himyar became Christian. Its people converted, and its synagogues were closed or turned into churches. For a generation, it remained a potent force in southern Arabia, after which the territory came under the sway of the Sassanians, becoming a remote province of a distant empire. The memory of the Jewish kingdom was kept alive mostly by its enemies—in Arabic histories, Syriac chronicles, and Greek martyrs' lives.

Although Himyar didn't leave much of a trace in the Jewish tradition, its real legacy might be in the history of Islam. Bowersock writes that "the tumultuous events in sixth-century Arabia" were the "crucible of Islam." The wars started by Yusuf's massacre profoundly re-organized power relations in the Arabian Peninsula, shifting the Jewish Arab tribes into the Persian camp while putting the pagan ones at a distinct disadvantage. This realignment mattered profoundly in the oasis towns of the Nejd and Hijaz, where Muhammad would announce his revelation a hundred years later.

Robin goes even further in arguing for a connection between Himyar and Islam. Muhammad faced the same challenge as the kings of Himyar: how to unify a highly fractious, polytheistic, tribal society. And it seems likely that he knew the kingdom's history; the Quran alludes to the "people of the ditch," a phrase thought to refer to the

martyrs of Najran. Putting the two together, Robin suggests that when Muhammad turned to monotheism as a way to unite the fractious tribes of the Arabian Peninsula, there's a

possibility he had the memory of Himyar in the back of his mind.

<http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-sharpsandculture/books/140366/himyaryemenalqaida?all=1>

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[Among the Believers](#)

A new look at the origins of Islam describes a tolerant world that may not have existed - By Patricia Crone.

A World Without Jews

An exhilarating new intellectual history argues that anti-Judaism is at the heart of Western culture

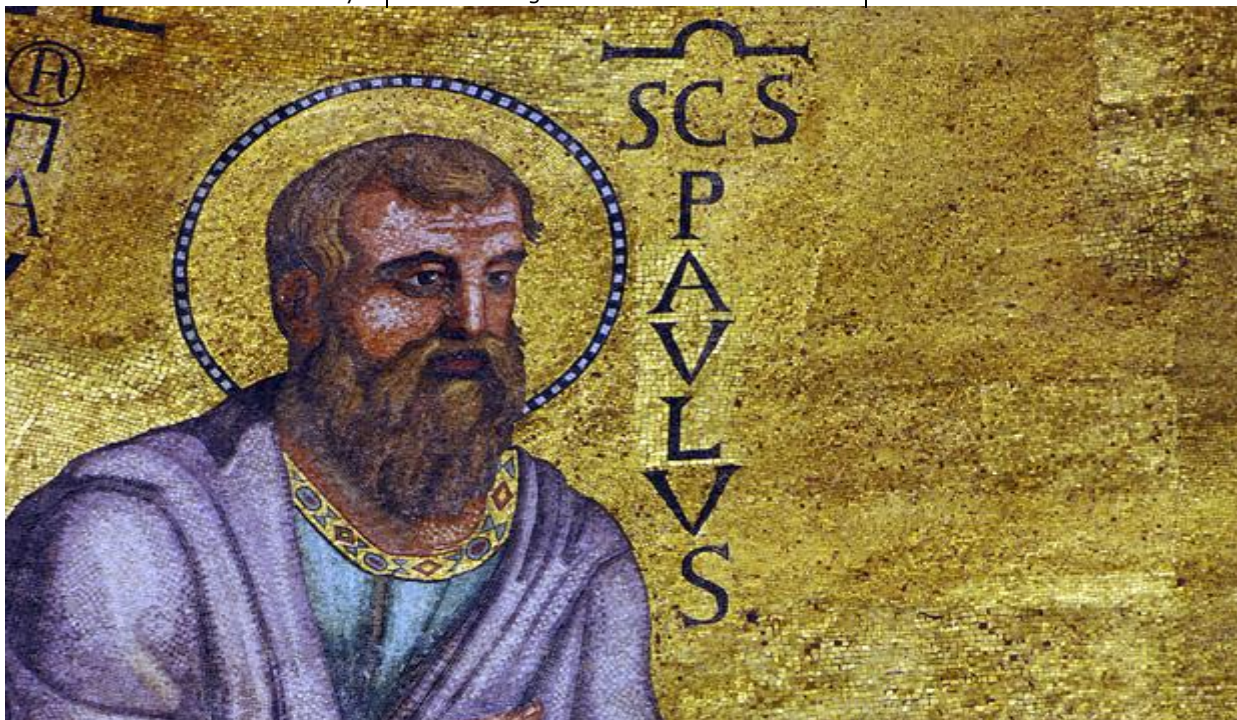
By [Adam Kirsch](#) February 13, 2013 7:00 AM

The title of David Nirenberg's new book, [Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition](#), uses a term pointedly different from the one we are used to. The hatred and oppression of Jews has been known since the late 19th century as anti-Semitism—a label, it is worth remembering, originally worn with pride by German Jew-haters. What is the difference, then, between anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism? The answer, as it unfolds in Nirenberg's scholarly tour de force, could be summarized this way:

Anti-Semitism needs actual Jews to persecute; anti-Judaism can flourish perfectly well without them, since its target is not a group of people but an idea.

Nirenberg's thesis is that this idea of Judaism, which bears only a passing resemblance to Judaism as practiced and lived by Jews, has been at the very center of Western civilization since the beginning. From Ptolemaic Egypt to early Christianity, from the Catholic Middle Ages to the Protestant

Reformation, from the Enlightenment to fascism, whenever the West has wanted to define everything it is not—when it wants to put a name to its deepest fears and aversions—Judaism has been the name that came most easily to hand. "Anti-Judaism," Nirenberg summarizes, "should not be understood as some archaic or irrational closet in the vast edifices of Western thought. It was rather one of the basic tools with which that edifice was constructed."



A mosaic featuring St Paul is displayed over the chapel of the Basilica of St. Paul Outside-the-Walls on December 12, 2006 in Rome, Italy. (Franco Origlia/Getty Images)

This is a pretty depressing conclusion, especially for Jews destined to live inside that edifice; but the intellectual journey Nirenberg takes to get there is exhilarating. Each chapter of "Anti-Judaism" is devoted to an era in Western history and the particular kinds of anti-Judaism it fostered. Few if any of these moments are new discoveries; indeed, Nirenberg's whole argument is

that certain types of anti-Judaism are so central to Western culture that we take them for granted. What Nirenberg has done is to connect these varieties of anti-Judaism into a convincing narrative, working with original sources to draw out the full implications of seminal anti-Jewish writings.

The main reason why Judaism, and therefore anti-Judaism, have been so

central to Western culture is, of course, Christianity. But Nirenberg's first chapter shows that some persistent anti-Jewish tropes predate Jesus by hundreds of years. The Greek historian Hecataeus of Abdera, writing around 320 BCE, recorded an Egyptian tradition that inverts the familiar Exodus story. In this version, the Hebrews did not escape from Egypt but were expelled as an

undesirable element, "strangers dwelling in their midst and practicing different rites." These exiles settled in Judea under the leadership of Moses, who instituted for them "an unsocial and intolerant mode of life." Already, Nirenberg observes, we can detect "what would become a fundamental concept of anti-Judaism—Jewish misanthropy." This element was emphasized by a somewhat later writer, an Egyptian priest named Manetho, who described the Exodus as the revolt of an impious group of "lepers and other unclean people."

As he will do throughout the book, Nirenberg describes these anti-Jewish texts not in a spirit of outrage or condemnation, but rather of inquiry. The question they raise is not whether the ancient Israelites were "really" lepers, but rather, why later Egyptian writers claimed they were. What sort of intellectual work did anti-Judaism perform in this particular culture? To answer the question, Nirenberg examines the deep history of Egypt, showing how ruptures caused by foreign invasion and religious innovation came to be associated with the Jews. Then he discusses the politics of Hellenistic Egypt, in which a large Jewish population was sandwiched uneasily between the Greek elite and the Egyptian masses. In a pattern that would be often repeated, this middle position left the Jews open to hostility from both sides, which would erupt into frequent riots and massacres. In the long term, Nirenberg writes, "the characteristics of misanthropy, impiety, lawlessness, and universal enmity that ancient Egypt assigned to Moses and his people would remain available to later millennia: a tradition made venerable by antiquity, to be forgotten, rediscovered, and put to new uses by later generations of apologists and historians."

With his chapters on Saint Paul and the early church, Nirenberg begins to navigate the headwaters of European anti-Judaism. Paul, whose epistles instructed small Christian communities in the Near East on points of behavior and doctrine, was writing at a time when Christianity was still primarily a Jewish movement. In his desire to emphasize the newness of his faith, and the rupture with Judaism that Jesus Christ represented, he cast the two religions as a series of oppositions. Where Jews read scripture according to the "letter," the literal meaning, Christians read it according to the

"spirit," as an allegory predicting the coming of Christ. Likewise, where Jews obeyed traditional laws, Christians were liberated from them by faith in Christ—which explained why Gentile converts to Christianity did not need to follow Jewish practices like circumcision. To "Judaize," to use a word Paul coined, meant to be a prisoner of this world, to believe in the visible rather than the invisible, the superficial appearance rather than the true meaning, law rather than love. More than a theological error, Judaism was an error in perception and cognition, a fundamentally wrong way of being in the world.

The problem, as Nirenberg argues in the richest sections of his book, is that this is an error to which Christians themselves are highly prone. Paul and the early Christians lived in the expectation of the imminent end of the world, the return of Christ, and the establishment of the new Jerusalem. As the end kept on not coming, it became necessary to construct a Christian way of living in this world. But this meant that Christians would have need of law and letter, too, that they would need to "Judaize" to some degree.

That is why the theological debates in the early church, leading up to Saint Augustine, were often cast as arguments about Judaizing. Marcion, a 2nd-century-CE heretic, followed Paul's denigration of "the letter" to the point of discarding the entire Old Testament (as the Hebrew Bible was now known); to keep reading Jewish scriptures was to miss the point of Christ's radical newness. On the other hand, Justin Martyr, Marcion's orthodox opponent, believed that this reduction of the Old Testament to its merely literal content was itself a way of repeating a "Jewish" error. In other words, both Marcion and Justin each accused the other of Judaizing, of reading and thinking like a Jew. This, too, would become a pattern for subsequent Christian (and post-Christian) history: If Judaism was an error, every error could potentially be thought of as Jewish. "This struggle to control the power of 'Judaism,'" Nirenberg writes, "will turn out to be one of the most persistent and explosive themes of Christian political theology, from the Middle Ages to Modernity."

With the rise of Catholic polities in the Middle Ages, anti-Judaism took on a less theological, more material cast. In countries like England, France, and Germany, the Jews held a unique legal status as the king's "servants" or "slaves," which put them outside the

usual chain of feudal relationships. This allowed Jews to play a much-needed but widely loathed role in finance and taxation, while also demonstrating the unique power of the monarch. The claim of the Capet dynasty to be kings of France, Nirenberg shows, rested in part on their claim to control the status of the Jews, a royal prerogative and a lucrative one: King after king plundered "his" Jews when in need of cash. At the same time, being the public face of royal power left the Jews exposed to the hatred of the people at large. Riots against Jews and ritual murder accusations became popular ways of demonstrating dissatisfaction with the government. When medieval subjects wanted to protest against their rulers, they would often accuse the king of being in league with the Jews, or even a Jew himself.

Accusations of Jewishness have little to do with actual Jews

The common thread in *Anti-Judaism* is that such accusations of Jewishness have little to do with actual Jews. They are a product of a Gentile discourse, in which Christians argue with other Christians by accusing them of Judaism. The same principle holds true in Nirenberg's fascinating later chapters. When Martin Luther rebelled against Catholicism, he attacked the church's "legalistic understanding of God's justice" as Jewish: "In this sense the Roman church had become more 'Jewish' than the Jews." When the Puritan revolutionaries in the English Civil War thought about the ideal constitution for the state, they looked to the ancient Israelite commonwealth as described in Judges and Kings.

Surprisingly, Nirenberg shows, the decline of religion in Europe and the rise of the Enlightenment did little to change the rhetoric of anti-Judaism. Voltaire, Kant, and Hegel all used Judaism as a figure for what they wanted to overcome—superstition, legalistic morality, the dead past. Finally, in a brief concluding chapter on the 19th century and after, Nirenberg shows how Marx recapitulated ancient anti-Jewish tropes when he conceived of communist revolution as "the emancipation of mankind from Judaism"—that is, from money and commerce and social alienation. And this is not to mention some of Nirenberg's most striking chapters, including one on the role of Judaism in early Islam and one devoted to a close reading of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*.

Nirenberg has a sure grasp of a huge variety of historical and intellectual contexts, and, unlike many historians, he is able to write elegantly and clearly about complex topics. Not until the very end of *Anti-Judaism* does he touch, obliquely, on the question of what this ancient intellectual tradition means for Jews today. But as he suggests, the genealogy that connects contemporary anti-Zionism with traditional anti-Judaism is clear: "We live in an age in which millions of people are exposed

daily to some variant of the argument that the challenges of the world they live in are best explained in terms of 'Israel.' " For all the progress the world has made since the Holocaust in thinking rationally about Jews and Judaism, the story Nirenberg has to tell is not over. Anyone who wants to understand the challenges of thinking and living as a Jew in a non-Jewish culture should read *Anti-Judaism*.

<http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-arts-and-culture/books/123971/a-world-without-jevs?all=1>

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[Our Abraham, Not Theirs](#)
Inheriting Abraham, by Jon Levenson, expertly dismantles the idea of the patriarch as the father of three religions
By **[David P. Goldman](#)**

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Faustian Bargain

The singular horror of the Holocaust is being lost in exchange for enshrining rare moments of inspiration and universal narratives of suffering

By **[Ron Rosenbaum](#)** October 10, 2011 7:00 AM

Alvin Rosenfeld is a brave man, and his new work is courageous. The [book](#) is called *The End of the Holocaust*, and it is not reluctant to take on the unexamined pieties that have grown up around the slaughter, and the sentimentalization that threatens to smother it in meretricious uplift. The real "end of the Holocaust," he argues, is the transformation of it into a lesson about the "triumph of the human spirit" or some such affirmation. Rosenfeld, the founder and former director of the Jewish studies program at Indiana University, which has made itself a major center of Jewish publishing

and learning, is a mainstream scholar who has seen the flaw in mainstream Holocaust discourse. He has made it his mission to rescue the Holocaust from the Faustian bargain Jews have made with history and memory, the Faustian bargain that results when we trade the specifics of memory, the Jewishness of the Holocaust, and the Jew-hatred that gave it its rationale and identity, for the weepy universalism of such phrases as "the long record of man's inhumanity to man."

The impulse to find the silver lining is relentless, though. Suffering and grief must be transformed into affirmation,

and the bleak irrecoverable fate of the victims must be given a redemptive aspect for those of us alive. In fact it's an insult to the dead to rob their graves to make ourselves feel better. One recent manifestation Rosenfeld has shrewdly noticed is the way there has been a subtle shift in the popular representation of the Holocaust—a shift in the attention once given to the murdered victims to comparatively uplifting stories of survivors, of the "righteous gentiles," of the scarce "rescuers," and the even scarcer "avengers," e.g., Quentin Tarantino's fake-glorious fictional crew.



The U.S. Holocaust Memorial in Washington. [Brendan Smialowski/Getty Images](#)

Rosenfeld is not afraid to contend with the fact that, as he writes, "with new atrocities filling the news each day and only so much sympathy to go around, there are people who simply do not want to hear any more about the Jews and their sorrows. There are other dead to be buried, they say." The sad, deplorable, but, he says, "unavoidable" consequence of what

may be the necessary limits of human sympathy is that "the more successfully [the Holocaust] enters the cultural mainstream, the more commonplace it becomes. A less taxing version of a tragic history begins to emerge, still full of suffering, to be sure, but a suffering relieved of many of its weightiest moral and intellectual demands

and, consequently easier to be ... normalized." Normalized? The Holocaust as one more instance in the long chronicle of "man's inhumanity to man"? Rosenfeld's book offers a welcome contrarian take on the trend. Yes, we've had enough, as Rosenfeld points out, of museums that cumulatively obscure memory in a fog of well-meaning but misleading

inspirational brotherhood-of-man rhetoric. We've had enough of films like the execrable Oscar-winning *Life Is Beautiful* and the well-intentioned but misguided *Schindler's List*, with its sad lack of self-awareness that a happy ending, celebrating a Christian rescuer and some lucky Jewish survivors, is woefully off base. We've had enough of phony-memoir love stories, and we've had enough of the way a genuine tragic heroine and victim of Nazi death camps like Anne Frank is mendaciously turned into a spokeswoman for the "goodness of man."

What we haven't had enough of is a careful consideration of the implications of the Holocaust for the nature of human nature. As George Steiner told me (for my book, [Explaining Hitler](#)), "the Holocaust removed the re-insurance from human hope"—the psychic safety net we imagine marked the absolute depth of human nature. The Holocaust tore through that net heading for hell. Human nature could be—at the promptings of a charismatic and evil demagogue, religious hate, and so-called "scientific racism"—even worse than we imagined. No one wants to hear that. We want to hear uplifting stories about that nice Mr. Schindler. We want affirmations! And the fact that it was not just one man but an entire continent that enthusiastically pitched in or stood by while 6 million were murdered: Doesn't that call for us to spend a little time re-thinking what we still reverently speak of as "European civilization"? Or to investigate the roots of that European hatred? How much weight do the Holocaust museums give to the two millennia of Christian Jew-hatred, murderous pogroms, blood libels, and other degradations? Or do they prefer to focus on "righteous gentiles" in order to avoid offending their gentile hosts?

And for all their "reaching out" and "teachable moments," how much do the Holocaust museums and Holocaust curricula connect the hatred of the recent past with contemporary exterminationist Jew-hatred, the vast numbers of people who deny the first, but hunger for a second, Holocaust? It's a threat some fear even to contemplate—the potential destruction of the 5 million

Jews of Israel with a single well-placed nuclear blast—a nightmarish but not unforeseeable possibility to which Rosenfeld is unafraid to devote the final section of his book. It's something I speculated about in the *Tablet Magazine* [excerpt](#) from my [book](#) *How the End Begins*. It's something spoken of eloquently by Imre Kertész, one of the writers Rosenfeld wishes to rescue from the "end of the Holocaust." (Only two novels by this Hungarian survivor of Nazism and Stalinist oppression, a 2002 Nobel Prize winner, have been translated, a situation I would like to formally petition some serious-minded publisher to remedy forthwith.)

"Before Auschwitz," Kertész writes, "Auschwitz was unimaginable. That is no longer so today. Because Auschwitz in fact occurred, it has now been established in our imaginations as a firm possibility. What we are able to imagine, especially because it once was, can be again." I wonder what our dedicated affirmationists who once disdainfully mocked concerns about a second Holocaust would say to Kertész.

But no one wants to hear about such grim implications anymore. In a way, who can blame them? Why let the dead have so much power over us? How do we decide how much mental space the Holocaust should occupy? What do we owe the dead? Rosenfeld is on a lonely mission to prevent their disappearance into the maw of generalized human tragedy.

It's been said before and it's probably far too late to make a difference, but to me the process began—the process of the de-natured representation of the murder of 6 million—with the near universal acceptance of the word "Holocaust" for Hitler's exterminationist crime. I'm speaking for myself here, not Rosenfeld, though inspired to express my anger by his eloquent despair. But it cannot be denied that the use of the word "Holocaust"—a Greek-derived word for a religious ritual, a sacrificial offering to the gods that is wholly burnt to ashes—is a lamentable formulation that is an attempt to vaguely sacralize and rationalize mass murder. It gives to the frenzied bloodthirsty slaughter an aura of dignity, religiosity—

bestowed not on the victims but to the slaughterers. It's problematic not because of its pretentiously classical Greek derivation, but because it seeks to give a monstrous crime a transcendent meaning with a vaguely salvific, even redemptive tone.

A burnt offering! Remind me who "offered"? I think it's unfortunate, but it's too late now—though I wince every time I feel compelled to use the term, a choice that goes to the deepest ramifications of Rosenfeld's thinking: It is unbearable to live with the naked, uninsulated, unpunished horror of it all without some phony affirmation. So we clothe it in the fake gravitas of Greek and the fake piety of ritual. Whatever you choose, do not gaze upon the horror without some semantic scrim to veil its monstrosity. Worse is the impulse to somehow make what happened consonant with a religious worldview when in fact, to my mind (and here, again, I'm not speaking for Rosenfeld), the Shoah calls into question the religious interpretation of history. The image of the all-powerful, loving, protective—and interventionist—God that Jews pray to. The one we're so special to.

Of course to some Jews there are no questions, no problems. You are aware I'm sure of the pronouncement of a former chief rabbi of the Sephardic Shas movement in Israel, who called the murder of 6 million Jews God's righteous punishment of secularized European Jews for straying from Orthodoxy into modernism. That Hitler was not evil but rather "the rod of God's anger." But even for those believers who don't stoop to such obscenity there seems a necessity to absolve God of Hitler. To those who still pray and praise Him as the living protector of His beloved Jewish people: Was He just a little busy during those six years from 1939 to 1945? Other things on His plate? Or it was "part of God's plan" to—what plan was that exactly? To establish the State of Israel? What an ingenious plan! Didn't He have any others on hand? The question remains for believers who still offer up those prayers to the God who is their shepherd: Where was God during those years? And please don't tell me—in the latest "sophisticated" rationalization

theodicy, the one you hear from very modern rabbis—that “God was in the camps,” in every act of goodness and self-sacrifice by the inmates there. It’s a formulation that takes from the brave desperate inmates the credit they deserve for their acts and gives it to Someone who was not there. Wouldn’t it have been better if God had been in the Reich Chancellery in Berlin, slitting the throats of Hitler, Himmler, and Heydrich? What an inglorious bastard He would have been.

Sometimes I think the Jewish people who still pray to this God, praising Him for all He’s done for us, have acceded to a kind of Stockholm syndrome in which they will find any excuse for their heavenly captor’s acts or lack thereof.

Again, I’m sure Rosenfeld would disavow any such sentiments provoked by his book in malcontents like me. But it is one of the virtues of his book, his discussion of how the Holocaust has been sentimentalized to death, that it can fire you with fresh anger at an act that repeated exposure to diminished versions of can dull. I’d guess most people are weary of the subject and would rather not think about it. That’s the true “end of the Holocaust” and Rosenfeld is determined not to let us off the hook.

Consider the Faustian bargain that Holocaust museums in America have so often made with the non-Jewish majority: The survivors and eyewitnesses of the Holocaust are dying, and the only way to get Americans to care about the destruction of the Jews, the only way we will get a (nearly) front row seat on the National Mall in Washington for our Holocaust museum, is by convincing Americans that the Holocaust can be a “teachable moment” in America’s uplifting struggle against intolerance. Rosenfeld calls this bargain “the Americanization of the Holocaust,” and even though he’s on the executive committee of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum he’s not happy about the tendency. In discussing, for instance, the Los Angeles-based Museum of Tolerance (the Simon Wiesenthal Center’s Holocaust museum), he says that “by situating the Holocaust within a historical framework that includes such

quintessentially American experiences as the Los Angeles riots and the struggle for black civil rights, both of which are prominently illustrated, the Museum of Tolerance relativizes the catastrophe brought on by Naziism in a radical way. America’s social problems, for all their gravity, are not genocidal in character and simply do not resemble the persecution and systematic slaughter of European Jews during World War II.” It’s a critique I first saw articulated by Jonathan Rosen in a 1993 *New York Times* op-ed called “The Misguided Holocaust Museum” back when the museum on the Mall was first opening. At first I was surprised, but then I was persuaded, at least to a certain extent, by Rosen’s impassioned dissent from the conventional wisdom.

And of course there is the difficult question of how one compares such tragedies. Why not a Cambodian genocide museum? In what ways are the Cambodian, the Armenian, and the Rwandan genocides similar and different from the Nazi genocide? If the Rodney King riots do not deserve being placed on the same plane shouldn’t the casualties of slavery in America, an institution that killed the bodies and murdered the souls of those who survived, count just as much?

There’s an argument that it’s a politically savvy heuristic strategy to unite with other sufferers against the murderous haters rather than set our suffering apart. And Jews have a strong record of concern for the sufferings of others. Solidarity! But Rosenfeld is on a mission not to allow the differences of the identity of the Jewish victims to disappear, and he is both a moral thinker and an astute cultural critic.

I first came across his work when I was writing *Explaining Hitler*, preparing to interview one of the most brilliant historians of our age, H.R. Trevor-Roper, whose biography of Hitler *Hitler: The Last Days* set the tone for envisioning the Fuhrer for decades after the war. Trevor-Roper was feared for his venomous, devastating attacks on fellow historians, but Rosenfeld found the flaw in Trevor-Roper’s analysis of Hitler. In his book *Imagining Hitler*, which was a study of mainly fictional and film visions of Hitler,

Rosenfeld picked up on the language Trevor-Roper used to describe Hitler, as a mystical, numinous, spell-binding, virtually occult figure. Rosenfeld essentially blamed Trevor-Roper for falling under Hitler’s spell himself in his prose and thereby planting in the collective imagination of his millions of readers a superhuman vision of Hitler that precluded rational analysis of why he succeeded—and failed.

I’ll never forget the moment I gingerly brought up Rosenfeld’s critique to Trevor-Roper face-to-face at a parlor in London’s Oxford and Cambridge Club. It was an awkward moment. I think he realized there was some truth to it, and it had gotten under his skin.

And Rosenfeld reminds us that even stories of survivors are not necessarily triumphs over evil. His chapters on Jean Améry, Primo Levi, Imre Kertész, and Elie Wiesel include accounts of suicide and anguish despite survival. Rosenfeld deserves honor for having preserved their truths in all their brutal honesty.

My own feeling is that the end of the Holocaust will not come from Holocaust denial, or Holocaust affirmation kitsch, or even dissolution in universalism. It will come in what I’ve called “Holocaust inconsequentialism”—the sequestering of the Holocaust from history. One saw it not long ago in an article by a prominent British intellectual who claimed Menachem Begin should have been “ashamed” to invoke the Holocaust when he announced the 1981 Israeli raid on Saddam’s nuclear reactor at Osirak. Begin said he did it because he was thinking of the million infants killed in Hitler’s Holocaust and the responsibility he felt never to allow it to happen again. Our British intellectual harrumphed and said Begin shouldn’t have made such an inflammatory connection. But in fact such connections are what historical consciousness is about.

There are only two points in this valuable book I found myself questioning. First is Rosenfeld’s citation of a typically portentous pronouncement from Claude Lanzmann, director of *Shoah*:

“ ‘To portray the Holocaust,’ Claude Lanzmann once said to me,” Rosenfeld writes, “ ‘one has to create a work of art.’ ” This is one

of those profound-sounding decrees Lanzmann is given to. Only artistes like Lanzmann are qualified, not the humble survivors themselves, for instance. One could argue exactly the opposite of Lanzmann, in fact—and it seems to me the thrust of Rosenfeld’s book is that unmediated testimony is a higher form of Holocaust discourse. Artistic license can lead to corruption of the truth. To *Life Is Beautiful*.

One cannot deny the importance of *Shoah*, nor can one deny the self-importance of Lanzmann, who, as I point out in *Explaining Hitler*, misunderstands and distorts one of the key statements of Primo Levi about Auschwitz—the one in which Levi quotes an SS man declaring to him: “Here,” in the camps, “there is no why.” Lanzmann turns this brutal Nazi reproof into an esthetic commandment for Jews, against investigation or interpretation. Against asking why. Lanzmann tells post-Holocaust Jews we must follow the orders of an SS man. It is an inconsequentialist attempt to cut the Holocaust off from human inquiry.

This is “mystification of the Holocaust,” as the influential Israeli scholar Yehuda Bauer calls it, that is of a piece with treacly affirmationism.

The other point I don’t disagree with so much as think it’s been made too often. It has to do with Rosenfeld’s critique of the misuse of Anne Frank’s legacy. Yes, it’s true she’s become an instance of the Faustian bargain: the need to give non-Jews a way of relating to the Holocaust that doesn’t make them feel too bad about human nature. Hence the focus on a single sentence in her diary: “In spite of everything, I believe that people are good at heart.”

Yes, it’s true, as Rosenfeld puts it, that this sentence, written before her capture, may well not be the way the real Anne Frank felt once her family had been betrayed and she had been taken by the Nazis. As Rosenfeld puts it, “surrounded by the dead and dying of Auschwitz and later herself a victim of the deprivations and diseases of Bergen-Belsen [where she died, probably of typhus] it is doubtful

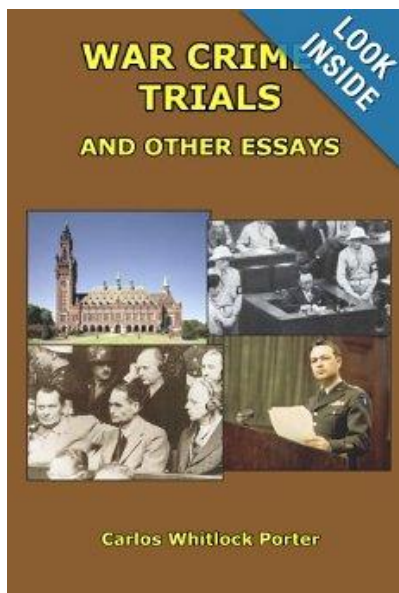
that such a passage from the diary represented anything close to what Anne Frank must have felt at the end.”

I would agree with Rosenfeld that the case of Anne Frank has been a particularly striking instance of affirmationism occluding the ugly truth with fraudulent uplift. And yet I feel this wasn’t her fault, she shouldn’t be written out of the story because people take away the wrong lesson from it. The number of recent attacks on the misuse of that one “goodness at heart” line have begun to seem like an attack on her. Let poor Anne alone already. Is it such a crime that a child in Japan or South Africa comes to awareness of the Holocaust through Anne Frank? Better they be ignorant? That’s the choice the Faustian bargain forces us to make. Don’t blame Anne for the Faustian bargain. Do read Rosenfeld to understand and struggle with it.

<http://www.tabletmag.com/jewishartsandculture/books/80150/faustian-bargain?all=1>

Anatomy of the Nuremberg Trials – Telford Taylor’s Lies

Carolyn in [Saturday Afternoon with Carolyn Yeager, August 10, 2013](#)



[Carlos Porter](#)’s new book [War Crimes Trials and Other Essays](#) refers to the International Military Tribunals put on by the Allies in the city of Nuremberg

following Germany’s defeat in WWII.

There were 13 “trials” but the first and most famous was of the “Major War Criminals”, so-called, prosecuted by the young American Colonel [Telford Taylor](#), under Chief Counsel [Robert Jackson](#).

Porter’s first essay is “Anatomy of a Nuremberg Liar,” which compares Taylor’s description (in his own book) of the “defendants” testimony to the actual court transcripts.

Among the Third Reich personalities covered are General Erich von Manstein; Foreign Minister Joachim Ribbentrop; Rudolf Hess; Head of SS Security (SD) Ernst Kaltenbrunner; Head of Reich Labor Deployment (after 1942) Fritz Saukel and Field Marshall Erhard Milch (Luftwaffe).



<http://thewhitenetwork.com/2013/08/10/anatomy-of-the-nuremberg-trials-telford-taylor-lies/>