

Iran and globalising anti-Semitism

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Iran's appointment as defence minister of a person wanted for a terrorist attack on Jews has drawn attention once more to its anti-Semitism. Yet, as a recent book shows, Iranian enmity towards Israel is just one example of a developing global anti-Semitism. This will eventually be manifest in "all nations" coming against Jerusalem.

IN DEUTERONOMY 28 it is written, "And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD [Yahweh] shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life" (vv. 65,66). These words continue to be fulfilled at the present time. Even in countries such as Britain, anti-Semitic attacks are on the rise. In July the BBC reported a record rise in such attacks in the first half of 2009.¹

Yet at the time of the end this anti-Semitism will find expression at an international level, with the focus directed against Israel and Jerusalem, as Joel 3:2 states: "I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for My people and for My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted My land". In Ezekiel 38, one of the nations specifically mentioned who comes against Israel is "Persia" (v. 5), or Iran. In this article we will consider the anti-Semitic stance taken by Iran, and will then, using a book published last year on anti-Semitism, place it in the context of international anti-Semitism as a whole.

Iranian anti-Semitism

On 18 July 1994 the Israeli-Argentine Mutual Association (AMIA) community centre in Buenos Aires was blown up by a bomb. It was a massive explosion, destroying the seven-storey building and killing eighty-five people. It sent shock waves through the Jewish community in Argentina, which numbers around 200,000 and is the largest

in Latin America. Nobody has ever been convicted for the atrocity. Twenty Argentines were put on trial in 2001 but were acquitted in 2004.

Many believe, including some in Argentina, that the bombing was masterminded by Iran, with a team from Hizbullah actually carrying out the

attack. Iran denies all involvement. Nevertheless, in 2007, following the compiling of a new report on the bombing, an Argentinean judge asked Interpol, the international police organisation, to issue arrest warrants for seven Iranians suspected of involvement.

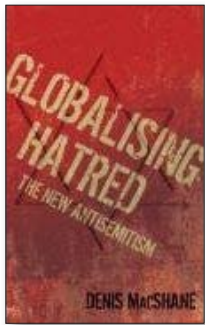
One of the suspects is Ahmad Vahidi. Following the controversial election in Iran he has recently been appointed by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as the new defence minister. Even prior to the confirmation of his appointment his nomination had caused consternation in Argentina and Israel. When his appointment was confirmed, the US State Department described it as a backward step for Iran, and said it was "disturbing".²

Iranian involvement in the attack has not been proven, but it is strongly suspected and is consistent with the Iranian attitude towards Israel. In 2005, President Ahmadinejad notoriously spoke of how Israel should be "wiped off the map". Whilst not all in Iran might agree with his view, it is indicative of the Iranian government's attitude towards Israel. In similar vein, in December 2006 a two-day conference was held in Iran to examine whether or not the Holocaust took place.³ Those attending included several 'revisionist' historians who deny the Holocaust. President Ahmadinejad, who regards the Holocaust as a myth, spoke at the conference.

1. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/8166173.stm>.
2. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/8237179.stm.
3. See http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/8264111.stm.

International anti-Semitism

Iran is not unique in its anti-Semitism. It is part of an international trend that has been growing for several years. Denis MacShane, a British Labour MP who was Minister for Europe in the Blair government, published a book last year in which he persuasively argues that anti-Semitism is a growing international phenomenon.⁴ He writes that a recent British parliamentary inquiry into the concerns of Jews in Britain concluded that “antisemitism is a defining ideology of the twenty-first century. It is international; it is disseminated across languages and cultures; it is supported by states”.⁵ Iran is just one of the states who support anti-Semitism.



Given that Iran is one of the countries mentioned in Gog’s alliance in Ezekiel 38, we should not be surprised that Iran is anti-Semitic. Perhaps, even more so, we would expect the European “scarlet coloured beast” (Rev. 17:3) also to show signs of anti-Semitism. In writing of the European Parliament, Mr MacShane is unequivocal about its growing anti-Semitic component: “Yet it is at the European Parliament—in theory the democratic home to the elected political expression of Europe’s ideals—that the strongest, formal, organised political expression of antisemitism can be found . . . twenty Members of the European Parliament now represent far-right, antisemitic political groups in the twenty-seven member states of the EU”.⁶

MacShane’s book is not without its problems. For example, he appears to misrepresent Churchill’s views.⁷ However, the evidence which he compiles is overwhelming. His thesis is not simply that anti-Semitism is on the rise, or that anti-Semitic attacks are increasing; it is that anti-Semitism is a worldwide phenomenon networking around the

globe. He argues that “today’s antisemitism is not just traditional Jew-hatred, nor can it be reduced to a variant of racism. It is a growing component element of international politics. Antisemitism is exported by a number of states and has an impact on geopolitics that should not be underestimated. It is part of the new anti-Occidentalism . . .”.⁸ Occidentalism concerns the perceived characteristics of the West. The anti-Western views of countries such as Iran incorporate, asserts MacShane, anti-Semitism. For example, he writes of “the myth of the Jewish Lobby” and its supposed influence on Western governments.

Conclusion

With regard to Iran in particular, MacShane writes of its “determined Shia ideological expansionism (based on a fundamental hatred of Jews and Israel)”.⁹ Iran is indeed playing a prominent anti-Semitic role, befitting its future role as prophesied in Ezekiel 38. However, this is just one part of a developing global anti-Semitism which will find its full expression, and demise, at Armageddon and the judgements that will follow.

4. MacShane, D. (2008), *Globalising Hatred—The New Antisemitism*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson. Readers might like to look back at the more detailed review of this book by Brother John Nicholls in the *Testimony*, [Mar. 2009, p. 22](#).
5. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
7. MacShane writes that, in 1918, “Churchill warned Lloyd George against putting Jews in his cabinet” (p. 149). However, Martin Gilbert, in his *Churchill and the Jews* (listed in MacShane’s bibliography), states that Churchill wrote to Lloyd George, “There is a point about Jews which occurs to me—you must not have too many of them . . . Three Jews among only seven Liberal Cabinet Ministers might I fear give rise to comment” (p. 29). Thus Churchill was not against putting Jews in the cabinet, just concerned about initiating undue comment.
8. *Op. cit.*, p. 9.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 135.

Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism

Anti-semitism is an expression of enmity by non-Jews for Jews. Anti-Zionism may express disapproval of the Zionist secular political movement either by Jews or non-Jews.

Anti-semitism seems to have dogged the race during most of its existence. It is a fulfilment of the divinely expressed curse upon the people of Israel if they failed to remember the LORD their God and keep His commandments. It is not merely the price of being different, as many Jews like to think . . .

Anti-Zionism is a political opposition to the Zionist aspirations of those Jews who have sought to establish a Jewish political state in the Holy Land.

Israel: Land and People of Destiny, Islip Collyer, p. 240