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Antisemitism on the Left – The Respectable Antisemitism

This essay was originally delivered as an address (“Respectable Antisemitism”) on March 7, 1976, in Hamburg, at the opening session of Brotherhood Week, an interfaith event sponsored annually since 1951 by the Gesellschaft für Christlich-Jüdische Zusammenarbeit (Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation).

It is not a happy moment at which I appear before you to offer my thoughts on the Jewish Problem. It evidently exists once again and, indeed, on an international scale. It’s “Brotherhood Week.” But where are the brothers? If I were cynical enough, I would quote the American mathematician and chansonnier Tom Lehrer, who already years ago on the occasion of the American “Brotherhood Week” sang: “And the Catholics hate the Protestants and the Protestants hate the Catholics and the Moslems hate the Hindus – and everybody hates the Jews.”

Of course, we are still far from a general hatred of the Jews as an ethnic group and religious community; fortunately so, even if we are perhaps not so far from it as optimists assume. Only one thing is already certain: there is a general uneasiness regarding the Jews. One is beginning to feel disturbing reservations, especially among people who only ten years ago tried one’s patience with their philosemitic pretenses. Antisemitism has a collective infrastructure that is historically and psychologically deeply imbedded. If it is again becoming a reality today, three decades after the discovery of what was done by the Nazis, then this has to do not only with time, which silently and steadily erodes ethical indignation, but also, indeed probably first and foremost, with the situation in the Near

East. It is very dismaying that before our incredulous eyes young people, and particularly those who in the broadest sense of the term regard themselves as socialists, are reviving the age-old phenomenon we had believed was long since dead. We know it from the debate now in progress within the Second International, which traditionally has been well disposed toward the Jews and pro-Israel. The young socialists, to whom the Palestinians now appear as the freedom fighters and the Israelis as the imperialist opponents, are insisting that the Second International disassociate itself from Israel. For the Third International the question doesn't arise anyway. For it, Israel is an imperialist, cancerous growth and the Jews in general are accomplices of the permanent capitalist conspiracy. The Führer, the USSR, commanded and one obeyed.

To be sure, there will be objections that Israel has nothing to do with the Jewish Problem in the broader sense. One is not antisemitic, but anti-Israel. It is easy to reply to this objection, all too easy. At this point, please permit me to quote the Germanist Hans Mayer, a man of thorough Marxist schooling. This author writes in his noteworthy book *Aussenseiter (Outsiders)*:

Whoever attacks Zionism, but by no means wishes to say anything against the Jews, is fooling himself or others. The State of Israel is a Jewish state. Whoever wants to destroy it, openly or through policies that can effect nothing else but such destruction, is practicing the Jew-hatred of yesterday and time immemorial. How clearly this can be observed in the interplay of foreign and domestic politics is shown by the internal policies of the currently anti-Zionist countries. Internally, they will regard their Jewish citizens as virtual "Zionists" and treat them accordingly.

To what extent anti-Zionism makes use of the traditional anti-semitic or anti-Jewish phantasms became clear to me recently while I was reading the French newspaper *Le Monde*, which I do daily. Its special correspondent for the Near East, Michel Tatu, cited a photo volume published by the Egyptian government on the second anniversary of the October War; its text says literally: "In no army of the world are Jews desired . . . because for them money is always more important than principles. . . . Usurers are not fighters." Don't laugh at the fact that his is the voice of a country that in October 1973 was saved in extremis by America's pressure on Israel. Rather listen

further. The journalist adds that this is a relatively moderate attack, that in the “more hawkish” Arab countries, Syria, Iraq, Algeria, one hears a still quite different tone. There is not need to insist that this sort of thing has nothing in common with – unfortunately “normal” – territorial conflicts between sovereign states such as, for example, the conflict between Algeria and Morocco. It is unadulterated Streicher. It is the most scandalous and, besides, the most stupid antisemitism. But in stating this, we must unfortunately take note of the fact that what is both base and stupid has triumphed more than once in the course of world history, and that there is no relying in the least on Professor Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.

It is with this outrageous and stupid antisemitism, to the extent that it passes itself off merely as anti-Zionism, that young people are joining forces. Not just a few Nazi offspring of incorrigible parents or grandparents – but alleged socialists. And no one is opposing them with the necessary vigor. On the contrary, the bourgeoisie, whether German, French, or Belgian, breathes a sigh of relief that for once it can march along in the same step with the young generation, which it otherwise regards as a nuisance and whose antiauthoritarian outbursts get on its nerves. Entirely aside from its traditional, dormant antisemitism, this bourgeoisie has its special interests too, which now coincide most exactly and in a comforting way with the thoughtless antisemitism of the young, who often have yet to see a Jew face to face. These bourgeois are interested in business deals: in oil and other things. One must make haste in order to “get in on a good deal,” as they put it. *Les affaires sont les affaires.*

Those multinational corporations that in all Western democracies are ready to accede to the Arab boycott demands for the sake of business know this very well. And they are happy at the thought that they, too, for a change, are moving in the direction of the objective spirit – providing that they have ever heard of it. In this way, antisemitism is becoming what it has not been and could not be since the discovery of the Nazi horrors: respectable.

One must concede, to be sure, that antisemitism as such would perhaps not have gained this respectability if there were really not a very deep tie and, if you will excuse the worn-out word, existential bond between every Jew and the State of Israel. I say “every Jew,”

and immediately draw a line; for naturally there are a few self-hating Jews on call everywhere who are prepared to deny this solidarity, which applies to them, too, for the sake of some ideological phantasm or for reasons of both an illusory and a suicidal "objectivity."

Aside from these special cases, who are more to be pitied than censured, the Jews feel bound to the fortunes and misfortunes of Israel, whether they are religious Jews or not, whether they adhere to Zionism or reject it, whether they are newly arrived in their host countries or deeply rooted there. I gladly offer my own person as a not entirely untypical example. I never belonged to the Jewish religious community; I was raised as a Catholic; I have no relatives at all in Israel and soon I will see the country for the first time in my life; I stem from an old Vorarlberg family; my cultural homeland once was Germany; today it is France; for the last thirty-eight years I have been living in Belgium. And yet to the extent that I am interested at all in the national existence and independence of a community, it is Israel.

All this, of course, has nothing to do with any sort of abstruse myths of blood and race. It is very simply that the existence of a Jewish state has taught all the Jews of the world to walk with their head high once more – a Jewish state whose inhabitants are not only merchants but also farmers, not only intellectuals but also professional soldiers, and not those "usurers" that the new Egypt is blathering about, despite all the empirical evidence, but rather, in their majority, craftsmen, industrial and agricultural proletarians. Some Jews had thought that in the socialist societies they would be able to walk upright as a matter of course. The Soviet Union and its vassal countries have done everything imaginable to cure them of their Marxism-Leninism. For there is no more evident example than the fate of Leopold Trepper, the leader of the spy network "The Red Orchestra," who had been truly a totally convinced Marxist, and who in the end, driven from his Polish homeland, found refuge in Israel.

When I speak of refuge, I am employing still another key word. For more is at stake for the Jews than just to walk upright. Israel is not only the country in which the Jew no longer permits his enemy to stamp him with a self-image, as Sartre understood it; it is also

the virtual shelter for all of the insulted and injured Jews of the earth. Think only of the Jews in the Soviet Union and other Eastern bloc countries, for whom an exit visa to Israel is the last hope of leading a life in dignity and decency. I expressly say: Israel is a virtual hope. If these Soviet Jews were to attain full, and no longer insultingly restricted, Soviet citizenship, probably only a small percentage of them would want to emigrate to Israel – just as today there are but few American Jews who are pressing into that Mediterranean country described by Thomas Mann as “dusty and stony.” But the virtuality is what counts. If ever somewhere in the world a grim fool should turn up whose *idée fixe* it might be to expel the Jews, the possibility of finding the shelter in Israel that, in Hitler’s time – thanks to British Mandate policies – was granted to relatively few Jews, binds every Jew to the fate of this tiny polity in the Near East.

I’d like to see them just once in the face of threat from a new Hitler – Messrs. Maxime Rodinson, Ernest Mandel, Eric Rouleau – all of them Jewish by birth, ideologically alienated, anti-Israel Jews! In lamentable fashion they would haunt the waiting rooms of Israeli consulates in order to secure the piece of paper that would save them, and they wouldn’t give a damn about Marx’s antisemitic aberrations, which at the moment are still sacred texts to them.

So much for what I have called the existential tie of all Jews to the State of Israel, and this has nothing, absolutely nothing, to do with nationalistic or religious mysticism, which is always only mystification. I am talking about very real, political, social, and psychological facts. And already I hear the objections, and the questions: “And the Arabs? And their state? And their national dignity?” They are raised justifiably and demand an answer.

I am no specialist on Middle East questions and no better versed in the history of Zionism than any newspaper reader. But my scant knowledge suffices completely for making a few observations that must be just as obvious to common sense as to those experts who are not ideologically twisted. The Palestinians, who did not exist as a nation when the first Zionist immigrants set foot on the soil of present-day Israel, but who in our time are in the phase of becoming a nation, have a right to a state of their own. The Arabs who inhabited Israeli territory within its borders prior to the Six Day War have a

right not to be treated as second-class citizens. I have already said on another occasion that in this entire conflict *right opposes right*.

It must be borne in mind, however, that the rights of the Palestinians – those who are now living within the area that became the State of Israel in 1948 and those who were driven from their homesteads by the wars (for which their fellow Arabs, after all, were not so entirely without blame) – the rights of these Palestinian Arabs in principle can be satisfied without insuperable difficulties. What is expected of the one group? That they be loyal citizens of Israel. What is demanded of the others? That once and for all they clearly acknowledge the fact of the Jewish national state. The rest is of a purely technical nature and can therefore be overcome with some intelligence and good will.

And finally, what is expected of a public opinion that, from the far right to the far left, is ready to condemn Israel in the name of national identities and the right to peoples' self-determination? Nothing more than the recognition of the obvious fact that the much-maligned Zionism is also a national liberation movement, that the Jews, too, the most martyred, most tragic people in the world, have right to their national identity – insofar as they are searching for one and have not already assimilated religiously and ethnically to their host peoples. For that is certainly also a solution, but one that always requires two groups of participants: the ones who are assimilating and the ones who are prepared for their absorption.

All this is terribly banal. But it is nonetheless true since, after all – contrary to a distorted tenet of Adorno's holding that the banal cannot be true – it is always true, for otherwise it could not have become a banality. I repeat: in the Near East conflict *one right opposes another*. And I add: *danger, however, does not oppose danger of the same order*. The fact is that the Arab nations – from the Saudi Arabian despot who is spreading the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* to the religiously possessed Qaddafi down to the "moderate," pro-Western Sadat and the self-styled Marxist Habash – are all determined to wipe out the State of Israel, as a Herr Göring once wanted to wipe out the cities of England. And it is another incontrovertible fact that in the whole world there is no one who will sound the alarm before a new genocide is set into motion. Really no one? Of course, that

isn't entirely true. There are, for example, such personalities as Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, known everywhere to be lackeys of imperialism, who protested against the shameless UN and UNESCO decisions. These two and a handful of others. But they have no power. Wherever there is power – from the White House in Washington to the Palais d'Elysée, to Downing Street, or the Kremlin (where they have long ago suppressed the fact that it was mainly Jews who stamped the Motherland of the World's Workers out of the ground of old Russia) – there is the readiness, paraphrasing the matter more or less diplomatically, to defend the "right of the Arabs," which can be quantified in Petrodollars, and to sell the right of the Jews, which is the eternal nonright of the poor, for a few pieces of silver.

This kind of *Realpolitik* – in French one says "La réalpolitik" when speaking of vile opportunism – seeps, uncheckably and constantly, into the lifeblood of what is called public opinion, which, as we know from sociological studies, consists of nothing but opinions about opinions. And we can regard as characteristic of this change in public opinion (not too long ago still favorable to Israel) the behavior of the Christian religious bodies, and especially that of the Vatican. In February 1976, during an Islamic-Christian colloquium – convening, of all places, in Qaddafi's Tripoli – Vatican representatives, first with hesitation but in the end submissively, signed a general condemnation of Israel in which Zionism was once again stigmatized as racism. And in a special reference to Jerusalem it stated: "The Islamic character of Jerusalem is a fact. . . . Judaizing of the city is as much to be avoided as the division and internationalization of the Holy City." One thought one was dreaming: the nightmare of a joint Crescent-and-Cross crusade against Jewry! Surely, the Vatican later disassociated itself from this document that its representatives had, so inconceivably, countersigned. It went even beyond that: at a meeting between Catholic and Jewish theologians in Jerusalem, Rome assumed a position of an almost pro-Israel character.

Nonetheless, the Tripoli colloquium did not vanish from the collective consciousness. Nor does the Vatican's later pro-Israel position disavow what a Moslem participant in Tripoli had assured Western journalists in a private conversation: "The Vatican is iso-

lated," the man had said; "it desperately needs the good will of the Moslem world with its vast population and power."

It actually is the fascination with power that produced this change in the political climate. Nobody wants to swim against the tide, something that everyone knows is quite strenuous. Only few dare to stand by what yesterday was self-evident but now suddenly causes displeasure. Only a while ago it was natural to support the Israelis' right to their sovereignty; and now one suddenly catches oneself feeling that such a declaration has become a real test of courage and that, perhaps, it will become an offense tomorrow. From the political officeholder to the cautious journalist down to the man holding forth on politics on the street corner – everyone looks about expectantly, as though wanting to ask: What and how much is actually permitted again? Whoever has some insight and a bit of flair for recognizing the fluctuations of the forever fluctuating, will be inclined to assure these impatient people that, in fact, a good deal is not only permitted but called for. Wiseacres speak with relief of breaking a taboo, and have no inkling of the dark powers to which they are lending their voices.

The point is, however (and now I return to the subject that I have taken on here), that all this – I mean: the self-alienation of the Left, the interests of international high finance and of the political powers, the maliciousness of the rulers, and the effusive exaltation of the subjected and dispossessed – all this has its effects on the world, in which, today as yesterday, the Jew will be burned. Such is the will of "sound popular instinct" in Harlem (New York), at the regular beer round in some Fürth or another, in the Café de Commerce in Dijon, or in some tiny town in Kent – and, naturally, all the more in every Arab bazaar.

Permit me now to open a parenthesis. In the familiar argumentation of the friends of the Arab cause it is routinely pointed out that in the world of Islam, in contrast to the Christian world, the Jews had always lived together with the Arabs peacefully and by mutual consent. That this was by no means so has been proven most irrefutably in an excellently documented book by Albert Memmi, a Tunisian Jew living in France, a man, moreover, who had always supported the Arabs when they were under French domination in North Africa.

Antisemitism or anti-Judaism was always a matter of course for the Moslems. In the territory of Islamic rule the Jews were and always remained second-class citizens, and where they worked their way up, as in Moorish Spain, their situation was always precarious. In the most favorable instances they were tolerated, but they were never accepted. That has not changed. While it is possible in Israel for a politician who is a Communist and, at the same time, an Arab nationalist to become the mayor of a city, the few Jews who still live in Syria or Iraq or even in supposedly modern Tunisia (where they may be no less indigenous than their Arab oppressors) eke out their existence amidst constant humiliation and threat. The Christian world is as little concerned with their fate as with that of the Soviet Jews, for whom not only the road of total assimilation is blocked but also the flight to a land that even under the most difficult economic conditions must appear to them as the "Promised" one.

Existentialist-positivist and stubborn atheist that I am, it doesn't occur to me to convert the Jewish fate into a metaphysical phenomenon. In my eyes the Jews are as little a chosen people as an accursed one. They are nothing but the chance result of historical constellations that were unfavorable to them for two thousand years. Two millennia: that is a very tiny span of time in the unrecordable history of the human species. I can well imagine that a man of the stamp of a Lévi-Strauss, who is occupied with prehistoric societies and their structural myths, smiles gently and a bit scornfully at what are for him such microtemporal courses of events. This member of the Académie Française would cease smiling only if there were a rude knock at his door and a harsh voice, no matter in what language, commanded him, the Jew, to open immediately and come along. To lull himself into a false sense of security would be quite wrong. As we all know, a man of a still greater stature – Henri Bergson – was forced to wear the Yellow Star of David before a kind death saved him from the very worst.

No, the Jews and their historical existence are not a metaphysical phenomenon. They are, as I just said, more the victims of chance than of necessity – and also of that *indolence of the heart*, which in the Middle Ages plunged the peasant and in the heyday of capitalism the proletarian into unspeakable misery. *Indolence of the heart*: I

choose to employ this old-fashioned formula. For it summarizes the factual situation better than the most sophisticated sociopsychological studies. The older ones among you may still have witnessed how, in the Third Reich, due to indolence of heart people quickly grew accustomed to their Jewish neighbor being fetched at night and deported.

Today everyone can observe how indolent hearts accommodate themselves when the world everywhere, be it the capitalist or the socialist one, is isolating the Israelis and the Jews who are one with them and thereby abandoning them to the catastrophe that is already hovering over their heads like a storm cloud.

In no time, the Near East question will become a new Jewish question. And we know from history how such a question is answered. The disassociation from Israel and with it from every individual Jew, as cautious as it is clear, hardly surprises the expert on indolent hearts. The millions of Jewish burnt offerings – oh, perhaps they were really “only” five million or even four, and not six million – have been paid off. And now let these eternal troublemakers be quiet; people have other worries; crisis, inflation, unemployment, energy problems. The wretch was led to his fall; suffering will overtake him and, like once Pontius Pilate did, the world will wash its hands of him.

Antisemitism, in the guise of anti-Zionism, has become respectable. I won't elaborate on its roots here. Everyone knows them; enough research has been done on the subject. I will merely state what many newspaper articles, especially in France, have made clear to me. With an indolent heart, people act as if they know nothing of the existential tie of Diaspora Jews to Israel. Obtusely, they do not want to recognize that this union of despair is not whimsical folly, but that it merely expresses the plain fact that burnt child, the Jew, knows in the depth of his heart where, and where alone, is the aid station willing to tend his burns.

The respectable antisemite has an enviably clear conscience, a spirit as calm as the sea. He also feels in agreement with historical developments, and this is conducive to his moral tranquility. If, occasionally, he awakens from his apathetic drowsing, he asks the ritual questions: Is Israel not an expansionist state, an imperialist outpost? Has not Israel itself caused the trouble that is besetting it

from all sides with the “immobility” of its policies? Does not the very idea of Zionism bear in it the original sin of colonialism, so that every Jew who avows solidarity with this land becomes personally guilty? It hardly pays to discuss such questions. After all, Israel’s expansion was the result of the bellicose Arab fanaticism that already in 1948 promised the Jews nothing more than to “throw them into the sea.” Jewish colonialism was not a colonialism of conquest. The word itself, both etymologically and politically, derives from the Latin *colonus* – farmer. Israel’s “immobility” can be explained when we consider the situation of someone who is standing with his back to the wall. This person is not immobile, but a priori immobilized.

All this does not mean that I am unaware of the errors of Israeli policies. But I know, still deeper and more precisely, that Israel’s errors are in ridiculous disproportion to the indifference of the others who are motivated entirely by *Realpolitik*, the Russians and the English, the French and the Germans, and tomorrow very likely the Americans – not to speak of the Arabs, who become incomprehensible when at the great feast of their nationhood (which I heartily grant them), they seem compelled to present the Jews as a burnt offering. Human sacrifices without end.

But one is used to such sacrifices, especially when Jews are concerned. The sacrifice of the Jews is in the best tradition, a sanctified custom. One cannot prevail against it. What good then is Brotherhood Week, for which we have gathered here? I admit my pessimism. But since I am not only a born pessimist but by temperament an enlightener, and since, in addition, my home has been situated rather far to the left on the political map my whole life long, I don’t wish to shrink from directing a few words to my friends from the leftist camp. The Right would hardly respond to me anyhow. For even where it makes out to be genuinely pro-Israel, it inspires me with skepticism.

Certainly, there is more than one righteous, conservative man – perhaps he is even a former National Socialist – who is earnest about his friendship for the Jews and the State of Israel; and his motivation may have nothing to do with personal relief from guilt but rather with an insight into the facts. This must be expressly stated. Yet, as a mouthpiece of the social class that the Right repre-

sents and of the tradition that it upholds and the political heritage that it transmits, it cannot possibly attain that unbiased, humane attitude toward the Jews, which is the only acceptable one. It would be entirely wrong to grant an advance in trust to those circles that a few decades ago were financing Hitler. For them Israel and the Jewish fate are only a welcome argument against everything that dares to question the existing social order. For the Right, let us not forget, stands for order.

But the Jews, and also the Israeli Jews, yes, especially they, are an element of creative disorder. Jews were present wherever fossilized structures were broken up: in Germany, starting with the "Young Germany" movement to the treatises of the Frankfurt School; in France, as members of the Popular Front, later as disciples of Sartre, and later still as structuralists; in the United States they are at the center of the liberal movements. And, concerning the Middle East, it was, without a doubt, the Jewish settlers in Palestine, with their attempt to create a democratic socialist society, who awoke the Arab nations from their centuries-long, deep feudal slumber. I ask the Left to consider all this; for although it may have been led astray it is by nature generous. The progeny of Heine and Börne, of Marx and Rosa Luxemburg, of Erich Mühsam and Gustav Landauer cannot, dare not be the ones to spread this respectable antisemitism. For this rabid anti-Zionism will inevitably lead to antisemitism, and for every Jew, no matter where he lives and what political persuasion he adheres to, it is a mortal threat.

I am not exaggerating. With just a bit of imagination everyone can picture what would happen if Israel were destroyed. The surviving Israelis, having once more become mythic Wandering Jews, would flee from the site of the prophet Mohammed and pour out into the world. And again the world would behave as it did after 1933, when such underpopulated countries as Canada and Australia shut their doors to the Jews as though they were bearing germs of pestilence. Again Jews would be forced to earn their living by dubious and illicit work, through obscure financial transactions. For they would not even be acceptable as "guest workers," in times of crisis less than ever before. Once more the public would be concerned with the very old "Jewish Question" – which, if we believe Sartre, never was that but rather always a question of antisemites.

No United Nations refugee committee then would be able to invest the Jews with normal civil rights. Anti-Zionism would be dead, all right. But crude antisemitism, aroused from the deepest layers of the collective unconscious and revitalized, would once again create a myth as a result of a historical chance constellation, the myth of the Wandering Jew, of Shylock.

All this however, would have a twofold result, of which we must urgently be forewarned even now, for time is running out: this twofold result is the total damnation of a human community and also the self-destruction process of what yesterday was still the Left. At this very moment, the process is in motion. We are already witnessing how political groups that regard themselves as "leftist" don't waste a word when a despot and paranoid in Uganda commits abominable murders; how they do not protest when the absolute ruler of Libya enacts laws under which adulterous women are stoned; how they are discreetly silent when in Algeria not a single one of the Revolution's great *chefs historiques* any longer appears on the scene. Ben Bella? He merely exchanged the prisons of the French fascist officer for those of the "socialist" Boumedienne. The Left holds its tongue. And to the degree that it talks, its vocabulary is distorted in the truest sense of the word. Stubbornly it terms "progressive" the tyrannic regimes of Syria and Iraq, where occasionally Communists, too, are thrown into jail.

Yet Israel – certainly no model state, but surely a polity that permits opposition, including antinational opposition – is in leftist mythology a "reactionary" land. All this is even worse than those uncanny dialectics that can be used to justify all and everything. It is political hocus-pocus. It is the total confusion of concepts, the definitive loss of moral-political standards.

I believe in all seriousness that the Left must redefine itself within the context of the problem of Israel – that is, the Jewish Problem. Does the Left still stand up for humanist values? Yes or no? Does it still believe that the concept of democracy embraces universal suffrage, freedom of speech, and the right of assembly – the *droits de l'homme*, which since the French Revolution, after all, have not exactly been unknown? Does the Left still regard nationalism, as it always has, as a political error born of obstinacy? Or, rather, does it find nationalism acceptable wherever, under the sign of tyranny, it

is directed against Jews – and unjust as soon as the Jews, for their part and under unbearable pressure, fall reactively into its trap?

Finally: is the Left prepared to acknowledge that even if so-called formal democracy cannot attain realization as long as economic democracy does not complement it, that formal democracy still must have absolute priority, since economic democracy can be built only on its foundation. Now to the last question: Is the concept of justice still binding for the Left? Justice has been its *raison d'être* as long as it has existed; if the Left sacrifices this concept as a barter for the fetish of revolution, it will destroy itself.

This brings us back to the question of Israel and the Jews. The creation of the State of Israel was an act of justice, as Gromyko, too, clearly proclaimed at the time in the name of the Soviet Union. No one can deny, and I, too, cannot conceal it here that, in carrying out just rehabilitation, injustices toward Arabs have occurred. Nonetheless, the injustice done to the Palestinian Arabs can be redressed without creating a global conflict over the issue. Even today they are not actually homeless, but they possess two states: Jordan, where they constitute the majority of the population, and Lebanon, where in alliance with Syria they are imposing their will. Certainly, it ought to be required that Israel and the Jews of the world contribute their share to the restoration of the full rights of the Palestinian Arabs. But if the Jewish state were destroyed, which is the aim, admitted or not, of all Arab politics from the right to the far left, from the King of Saudi Arabia to George Habash, an irreversible injustice would occur. A fleeting glance at history suffices for us to perceive this, if we are at all prepared for objective analyses. Here, precisely at this point, a Left returning to its true self would take up its great task – if it were able to rid itself of a vocabulary to which it is compulsively clinging, and able to rid itself of a few political myths. Were it to withdraw from the Arabs its blind support and mechanical yes-vote, the Left could help solve the problem of Israel, as well as the Jewish Problem.

We can be sure that the great majority of Israeli Jews, who are under such terrible pressure, are willing to seek reconciliation. And we can be sure of the understanding of the Jews outside Israel. The powerful and rich Arab nations need harbor no fears. In a pacified Near East region, the dreamers of a Greater Israel would disappear

of their own, just as would the Diaspora Jewry – which is plagued by constant anxiety and thus reacts aggressively. The Left would then have to demand that the Jews be given a double freedom: the freedom to assimilate in their host countries under the aegis of the Enlightenment, and the freedom to emigrate to an Israel that even within the pre-1967 borders would have enough room to receive a flow of immigrants that most likely would not be particularly large.

It seems crucial to me that the Left – which might possibly help to determine the future spirit and image of the Western world – stop pursuing this systematic anti-Zionism, which, for the Jews, and also in historical-objective terms, bears the repulsive features of traditional antisemitism.

Only a few, almost shamefully trivial insights are needed in order to comprehend this. All the young socialists, communists, Maoists, and Trotskyists have to do is imagine those in power telling them: “It isn’t you we are combating, it is World Bolshevism. We have nothing against your stand on the Left. However: you are forbidden to be teachers; you are barred from the civil service; your public gatherings will be outlawed; if you continue to form parties you will be overstepping the law.” With a minimum of imagination, you need only place yourselves in the situation, and you will understand that with their anti-Zionist emotional fervor these leftists awaken aggressive Zionist reactions on the one hand and, on the other, those antisemitic feelings that have been dragged along through the history of the Occident and the Orient for two millennia and are latently as present today as they ever were. The Left, and with a gesture of sharp rejection, must refuse to allow this antisemitism, now shabbily disguised as anti-Zionism, to become respectable again.

In contrast to a traditionally obstinate Right, the Left has no title to the aforementioned indolence of the heart. It has no title to self-mystification or to an absurd mythology of revolution, no title to that eccentric German idealism that Thomas Mann once characterized by saying, “If it did not sound so presumptuous, one would have to say that the Nazis committed their crimes out of unworldly idealism.” If the Left properly understands itself, it knows that it is a child of the Enlightenment, of the Encyclopedists, the great French Revolution, the intellectual and poetic influence of Lessing, Heine, Börne, Moses Mendelssohn, Feuerbach. It is up to the Left, today

more than ever, to concur energetically with Jean-Paul Sartre, who said in an interview in the days of the October War: I know only that in this conflict 3 million people are up against 100 million. In Israel every Jew must be trembling for his life, even if he is the bravest, and with him all of the Jews in every country of the earth. — Perhaps, though, only someone who was a witness to the murderous frenzy of the Third Reich knows and comprehends this.

The person who is speaking to you here *was* a witness. He himself was touched and squeezed, as in the fairy tale of Hänsel and Gretel, not to see whether he was fat enough but, rather, if he was lean enough to be slaughtered. I appeal to your feelings, to the world's feelings, but above all, certainly, to your intelligence, when I stress: antisemitism, even if it calls itself anti-Zionism, is not respectable. On the contrary, it is the indelible stain that mars the honor of civilized humanity.

Please do not regard this appeal as an address to you personally. I know, in any case, that those of you who have gathered here to open Brotherhood Week, no matter where you stand politically, are of sincere good will. Otherwise you would not have come. But since my words have a certain chance of reaching beyond our narrow circle of men and women who are in basic agreement with one another, I chose them as you have heard them. The problem of age-old antisemitism, appearing in the cloak of respectability and fashionable chic, goes far beyond anything that Christian-Jewish cooperation can solve. It is a matter for the world and its history. And wherever and whenever we, who are in agreement, have the possibility, even in the most modest way, to intervene with our word in the historical proceedings that are once again being conducted against the Jews, we are obliged to make ourselves heard: morally, politically, and with the emotion that befits a good cause.