



SNIDER SOCIAL ACTION INSTITUTE

Rabbi Marvin Hier
Founder and Dean

February 6, 2014

Rabbi Abraham Cooper
Associate Dean

Deputy Prime Minister Asscher
The Netherlands

Dear Deputy Prime Minister Asscher:

It is with pleasure that I recall our important meeting in April of last year. The present situation in the Netherlands - with regard to Jews and in particular Israel however, keeps us concerned which I shared during a brief visit to The Hague last month with parliamentarians of various parties. One major issue I am referring to is the almost 39% of Dutch citizens who hold extreme and inflammatory ideas about Israel. You may recall that I sent you the data from the study of the University of Bielefeld which reported these Dutch respondents agreeing with the statement that Israel is conducting a war of extermination against the Palestinians!

I understand that when the issue of the 39% was raised by Mr. Elbert Dijkgraaf in the Dutch Parliament you replied that it was "worrisome" and "unacceptable." I fully agree with you and appreciate the forthrightness of your public response. Obviously the question is how to tackle this challenge. An important first step should be a government-ordered study to trace how such an utterly false and insidious image of Israel was created. Those who conceive and promote an unjustified extreme criminal view of others should be exposed and held accountable in the Court of Public Opinion. We know too well from the 1930s in Germany what can happen when the delegitimization and demonization of a people goes unchallenged.

In our time, in such a climate in The Netherlands, it is no surprise that there are calls for boycotts against the Jewish State.

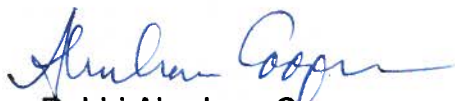
A study by an independent highly professional firm as proposed would focus on how this climate was created and what can be done to remedy this unacceptable situation. I believe it would spark a necessary national discussion among Dutch leaders and citizens. The Simon Wiesenthal Center will gladly help you in defining the parameters of such a study.

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It has also been brought to my attention that the Netherlands has neither admitted the negligence of its World War II government and the collaboration of the bureaucracy with German occupiers, nor offered any apologies. I believe the Netherlands is the only occupied country during the war where this is the case.

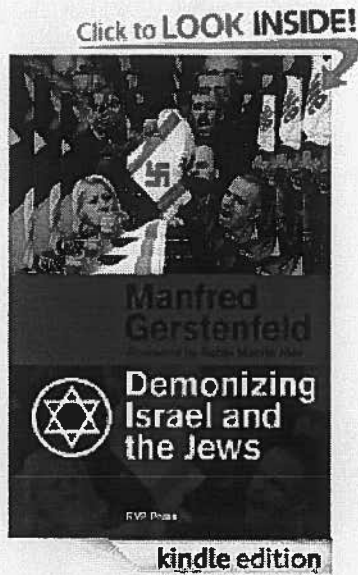
In the coming days, I will send you a copy of Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld's book *Demonizing Israel and the Jews*, which details many aspects of contemporary anti-Israelism and anti-Semitism. In the meantime, please find attached a summary of the statistics from this book, which show that the figures from the Bielefeld study are corroborated by several other studies.

With best regards,



Rabbi Abraham Cooper
Associate Dean
Simon Wiesenthal Center

AC:sg



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An excerpt from Dr. Gerstenfeld's book *Demonizing Israel and the Jews* was recently published in the *Jerusalem Post*

Manfred Gerstenfeld's book *Demonizing Israel and the Jews* consists of 57 interviews with people from a variety of countries on many different topics of anti-Semitism and Israel-hate. The introduction demonstrates, on the basis of studies and polls, that at least 150 million European adults out of 400 million in the European Union hold demonic views of Israel.

(Excerpt from *Demonizing Israel and the Jews* below:)

Manfred Gerstenfeld, *Demonizing Israel and the Jews*, New York, RVP Press, 2013. ISBN 978-1618613363

150 Million European Anti-Semites

Numerical data from various studies provide evidence that well over 150 million citizens of the European Union embrace a demonic view of Israel. A 2011 poll conducted in seven countries by the University of Bielefeld on behalf of the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation illustrates that viewing Israel as having

genocidal intentions toward the Palestinians-which is tantamount to Israel being a Nazi state-has profoundly permeated mainstream European societies.

This study was undertaken in seven European countries. Researchers polled in each of these 1,000 people of 16 years and over. They were, inter alia, asked whether they were in agreement with the assertion that Israel is carrying out a war of extermination against the Palestinians. Those who answered in the affirmative thus expressed deeply anti-Semitic views.

The lowest percentages of those who agreed with this statement were in Italy and the Netherlands, with 38% and 39% respectively. Percentages for Hungary were 41%, United Kingdom 42%, Germany 48%, and Portugal 49%. In Poland the figure was 63%. These seven countries combined account for well over half of the E.U.'s population.

The E.U. counts over 500 million inhabitants. Of these, more than 80%, or 400 million people are 16 years or older. One may assume-in view of the University of Bielefeld study-that in the entire E.U. the average percentage of those holding demonic beliefs about Israel is at least 40%. Thus one obtains a figure of well over 150 million E.U. citizens who consider Israel a genocidal nation.

Medieval Christian society considered the killing of God's alleged son as "absolute evil." In today's society, absolute evil is to commit genocide or behave like the Nazis did. The current demonic view of Israel, widespread in mainstream Europe, is a new mutation of the diabolical beliefs about Jews held by many in the Middle Ages. That this study received little public attention is yet another indicator of the decaying norms and values endemic to Europe.

Additional Reports

Several additional reports support the aforementioned findings. In the first years of this century, a similar study was undertaken by the University of Bielefeld, this time only relating to Germany. More than 2,500 people were asked whether they agreed with the statement: "What the state of Israel does today against the Palestinians is in principle nothing different from what the Nazis in the Third

Reich did to the Jews.” Fifty-one percent of those interviewed answered in the affirmative.

This statement—Israel is behaving like the Nazis against the Palestinians—is more explicit than saying Israel is conducting a genocidal war against the Palestinians. Their extreme demonic character is identical. The two aforementioned studies undertaken by the same university show results in the same range.

Surveys of non-E.U. countries in Europe show similar data to those from the aforementioned studies. A study published in Switzerland by Gfs Bern found that 50% of the Swiss population view Israel as “the Goliath” in the extermination war waged against the Palestinians.”

The first comprehensive study of Norwegian’s attitudes toward minorities was carried out in 2011 and 2012 by the Center for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities at the request of the Norwegian government. The study found that 38% of Norwegians agree with the statement that Israel behaves toward the Palestinians in the same way that the Nazis acted toward the Jews.

A Very Negative Picture of Israel

There are many other studies that illustrate that Europeans as well as others have a very negative view of Israel. In 2003, a Eurobarometer study asked those polled whether they considered a number of different countries as a threat to world peace. Fifty-nine percent of Europeans said that Israel is a threat to world peace. No other country on the list was considered as dangerous by such a high percentage of those polled. Iran was in second place at 53%, the same percentage as North Korea. Only 8% of Europeans thought that the European Union was a danger to world peace, coming in at the bottom of the list. Yet European soldiers have since participated in major military activities which by far exceed those in which Israel was involved.

The highest percentage of those in the then 15-member E.U. who thought that Israel was a threat to world peace was found among the Dutch with 74%. Next in line were the Austrians with 69%.

For its 2013 annual BBC Country Ratings Poll, more than 26,000 people from 25 countries around the world were surveyed. They were asked whether they viewed a list of 16 countries and the European Union as having a “mainly positive” or “mainly negative” influence in the world.

Germany topped the list with 59% of respondents viewing it positively, followed by Canada (55%), the UK (55%), and Japan (51%). Japan topped the list the year before with a 58% positive influence rating. Only North Korea, Pakistan, and Iran had lower positive scores than Israel. Twenty-one percent of respondents viewed Israel’s influence as mainly positive, while 52% saw the Jewish State’s influence as mainly negative.

Just 15% of respondents considered Iran’s influence as mainly positive, while 59% said the Islamic Republic’s influence was mainly negative. France finished fifth in positive influence (49%), followed by the EU (49%), Brazil (46%), US (45%), China (42%), South Korea (36%), South Africa (35%), India (34%), and Russia (30%). Concerning negative influence, Canada was considered the lowest with 13%, followed by Germany with 15%, the United Kingdom with 18%, and France and Brazil were each with 21%. The European Union was six-lowest, at 24%.

All these data together indicate how profoundly demonization and negative views of Israel have permeated mainstream European society. The notion that large numbers of European adults hold anti-Semitic views, as documented by the above studies, is unpalatable to many Europeans, and many media outlets do not wish to report such findings.