

OPINION and ANALYSIS

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A selection of some of the more challenging and thought-provoking
local and international writings on the Middle East

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SAZF DATES TO DIARISE

22 August 2010 ISRAEL QUIZ: *Finals*

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November 2010 YOM RABIN: *Guest Speaker*

26/27 March 2011 47th SAZF CONFERENCE: *International guest speakers*

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Specific instances of Israeli policy are, for our opponents, nothing but symbols of something deeper and more hateful that they see revealed time and again when they look upon the state of Israel and its deeds.

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Why does the United States, which has so much for human welfare, inspire such hostility? And tiny Israel, the symbol of rejuvenation for a perpetually oppressed people – why does it engender such passionate hatred that otherwise decent people desire to eliminate this state?

3. **Khaled Abu Toameh** **Middle East's Western Media: Hypocrisy, double standards out of control**

The Middle East is not the right place for journalists who care more about their well-being than the facts and the truth.

Excerpts from: Israel through European Eyes

Yoram Hazony, Jerusalem Letters, 14 July 2010

<http://via.readerimpact.com/v/1/792bc4b1ec4cad1e42fbcad07db1683a>

Every few months, Israel is publicly pilloried in the international media and on university campuses around the world for some alleged violation of human rights, real or imagined. Last month it was over an Israeli raid on a Turkish ship trying to run the blockade on Gaza, which left nine dead after the ship resisted seizure. A few months from now it will be over something else: Perhaps it will be over Israeli action against the Islamic terror state in Gaza, or against the Hizballah army in South Lebanon and its ever-growing mountain of missiles. Perhaps it will be over an Israeli strike on the Iranian or Syrian nuclear programs. Perhaps it will be over the destruction of an Iranian weapons ship at sea. Perhaps it will be over the revelation of an Israeli covert operation in an Arab country or in Europe or elsewhere. Perhaps it will be over an incident in an Israeli jail or at a roadblock in the West Bank. Perhaps it will be over the visit of an Israeli public figure to the Temple Mount, or the purchase and occupancy by Jews of a building in East Jerusalem. Perhaps it will be over something else.

But whatever the ostensible subject, and regardless of whether Israel's political leaders and soldiers and spokesmen do their work as they should, we know for certain that the consequence of this future incident, a few months from now, will be another campaign of vilification in the media and on the campuses and in the corridors of power - a smear campaign of a kind that no other nation on earth is subjected to on a regular basis. We know we will again see our nation treated not as a democracy doing its duty to defend its people and its freedom, but as some kind of a scourge. We'll again see everything that's precious to us, and everything we consider just, trampled before our eyes. We'll again have to experience the shame of having former friends turn their backs on us, and of seeing Jewish students running to dissociate themselves from Israel, even from Judaism, in a vain effort to retain the favor of disgusted peers. And we'll again feel the bite of the rising anti-Semitic tide, returned after its post-World War II hiatus.

All this has happened repeatedly, and we know it will happen again. Indeed, these outbursts have grown more vicious and effective with each passing year for a generation now. And there's every reason to think this humiliating trend will continue, with next year worse than this one.

As to the reactions of Jews and other friends of Israel to these smear campaigns - as far as I can tell, the reactions haven't really changed in the last generation either: My friends on the political left always seem to think that a change of Israeli policy could prevent these campaigns of vilification, or at least lessen their reach. My friends on the political right always seem to say that what we need is "better PR".

No doubt, Israel could always stand to have better policies and better public relations. But my own view is that neither of these otherwise sensible reactions can help improve things, because neither really gets to the heart of what's been happening to Israel's legitimacy. Israel's policies have fluctuated radically over the past 30 or 40 years, being sometimes better, sometimes worse. And the adroitness with which Israel presents its case in the media and through diplomatic channels has, likewise, been sometimes

better, sometimes worse. Yet the international efforts to smear Israel, to corner Israel, to delegitimize Israel and drive it from the family of nations, have proceeded and advanced and grown ever more potent despite the many upturns and downturns in Israeli policy and Israeli PR.

Nothing could make this more evident than the Jewish withdrawal from Gaza and the subsequent establishment there of an independent and belligerent Islamic republic 40 miles from downtown Tel Aviv. Israelis and friends of Israel can reasonably be divided on the question of whether this withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, or the parallel withdrawal from the security zone in South Lebanon in 2000, was really in Israel's interests, and whether the Jewish state is today better off because of them. But one thing about which we can all agree, I think, is that these withdrawals did *nothing* to stem the tide of hatred and vilification being poured on Israel's head internationally. Whatever it is that is driving the trend toward the progressive delegitimization of Israel, it is a trend operating more or less without reference to any particular Israeli policy on any given issue.

To put this in slightly different terms, it's not the maintenance of a security zone in South Lebanon, or Israeli control of the Gaza Strip, or a raid on a Turkish blockade runner's boat that is responsible for what is happening to Israel's position on the world stage. These specific instances of Israeli policy are, for our opponents, nothing but symbols of something deeper and more hateful that they see revealed time and again when they look upon the state of Israel and its deeds. And until we understand what this deeper issue with Israel is, I believe we'll remain powerless to understand the progressive growth of the hatred toward us - and powerless to fight it ...

II.

In 1962, a Berkeley professor named Thomas Kuhn published a book called *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, which became the most influential academic book of the last half century, selling over a million copies in a dozen languages. Kuhn's book dropped a depth charge under the foundations of academic thinking about the way we search for truth, and about the way we come to believe the things we believe ...

In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Kuhn argues that the traditional picture of science - in which scientists conduct universally replicable experiments to accumulate verified facts, which together make up the body of scientific truths - is without basis in the actual history of science. Instead, scientists are trained to see the world in terms of a certain framework of interrelated concepts, which Kuhn calls a *paradigm*. In the overwhelming majority of cases, the paradigm not only determines the interpretation that a scientist gives the facts, but even what facts there are to be interpreted: The "facts" that scientists consider admissible for discussion are those that easily conform to the dominant paradigm, or that can be made to conform to it by extending the paradigm or introducing minor repairs into it. Those facts that can't be made to conform to the reigning paradigm are overlooked entirely or dismissed as unimportant.

Kuhn was famous, of course, for pointing out that things don't go on like this forever. The history of science is punctuated by shifts in the dominant paradigm, as when Aristotelian physics gave way to Newtonian physics, or when Newton's science was displaced by Einstein's. Kuhn calls these shifts in paradigm *scientific revolutions*, and in the book he ... concludes that while most scientists are reasonable people, what we would usually consider reasonable discussion and argument only takes place among scientists who subscribe to the same paradigm ...

How, then, do scientists come to change their minds? Kuhn says that in many cases, they *never* change their minds - and that an entire generation has to pass before the scientific community enters a new paradigm ...

III.

Kuhn's ideas have had an immense impact on the way the scientific enterprise is understood in the universities ... This has been true, for example, in the field of international relations, in which studies applying Kuhn's ideas have concluded that nations are likewise perceived from within a fixed conceptual framework or paradigm, and that their actions, regardless of how carefully crafted, usually do little more than reinforce pre-existing expectations. The implications of this kind of rethinking for academic research and teaching are vast, and are still unfolding even now.

But as far as I can tell, the revolution in the way scholars think about facts, arguments, and truth has not yet had the slightest impact on the manner in which Jews and friends of Israel think about the progressive delegitimization of the Jewish state in the international arena. Indeed, most of the concerned individuals I speak with are still convinced that if only certain *facts* were better known - or better presented - Israel's circumstances could be improved dramatically.

Unfortunately, I don't think this is right. Media battles such as the one over the Turkish ship off Gaza are necessary for Israel's short-term defense, and we must do our best to win them by presenting the facts as best we are able. But I think that Kuhn's argument makes it clear that the outcomes of these contests won't have any real impact on the overall trajectory of Israel's standing among educated people in the West. This standing has been deteriorating for the past generation, not because of this or that set of facts, but because the paradigm through which educated Westerners are looking at Israel has shifted

What's the old paradigm? And what's the new one to which the international arena is shifting?

The old paradigm is the one that granted Israel its legitimacy in the first place. The modern state of Israel was founded, both constitutionally and in terms of the understanding of the international community, as a nation-state, the state of the Jewish people ... It is the offspring of an early modern movement that understood the freedom of peoples as depending on a right to self-protection against the predations of international empires speaking in the name of a presumed higher authority. And while there have always been nation-states - the Jewish kingdom of the Bible was the most important classical example - the modern history of the national state focuses on the rise of nation-states such as England and the Netherlands, and subsequently Richelieu's France

The defeat of the universalist ideal in the Thirty Years' War in 1648 led to the establishment of a new paradigm for European politics - one in which a revitalized concept of the national state held the key to the freedom of peoples throughout Europe. By the late-1800s, this idea of national liberty had been extended to the point that it was conceived not only as a governing principle for Europe, but for the entire world. Progressives such as John Stuart Mill and Woodrow Wilson championed the sovereign nation-state, which would have the right to defend its form of government, laws, religion and language against the tyranny of imperial actors, as the cornerstone of what was

ultimately to be a new political order for humanity. Herzl's Zionist Organization, which proposed a sovereign state for the Jewish people, fit right into this political understanding - and indeed, it was under British sponsorship that the idea of the Jewish state grew to fruition. In 1947, the United Nations voted by a 2/3 majority for the establishment of a "Jewish State" in Palestine. And the birth of Israel was followed by the establishment of dozens of additional independent states throughout the Third World.

But the idea of the nation-state has not flourished in the period since the establishment of Israel. On the contrary, it has pretty much collapsed. With the drive toward European Union, the nations of Europe have established a new paradigm in which the sovereign nation-state is no longer seen as holding the key to the well-being of humanity. On the contrary, the independent nation-state is now seen by intellectuals and political figures in Europe as a source of incalculable evil, while the multinational empire - the form of government which John Stuart Mill had singled out as the very epitome of despotism - is now being mentioned time and again with fondness as a model for a post-national humanity. Moreover, this new paradigm is aggressively advancing into mainstream political discourse in other nations as well - even in countries such as the United States and Israel.

Why is this happening? How is it that so many French, Germans, English, Dutch and others are now willing to lend a hand in dismantling the states in which they live, and to exchanging them for the rule of an international regime?

To answer these questions, we have to look at the source of the modern post-national paradigm in European thought. This alternative way of viewing European politics was launched in a 1795 manifesto by Immanuel Kant called *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*. In it, Kant issued a famous and explicit attack on the ideal of the nation-state, comparing national self-determination to the lawless freedom of savages, which, he said, is rightly detested as "barbarism," and a "brutish debasement of humanity."

For Kant, the hallmark of reason in politics is the willingness to give up any kind of right to act on the basis of one's own political independence. This is true of the individual, when he submits to the lawful order of the political state. And it is true of nations as well, which must in the same way give up any right to independent action and enter into an "international state" that will assume all rights respecting the use of force and the establishment of justice ...

In *Perpetual Peace*, Kant argues that the establishment of a universal state, which will "grow until it embraced all the people of the earth," is the only possible dictate of reason. Human beings who do not agree to the subordination of their national interests to the decisions of such a universal state are seen as opposing the historical march of humanity toward reason. The supporters of the nation-state are seen as supporting a violent egoism on an international scale, which is as much an abdication of morals as the insistence of violent egoism in our personal lives.

For many years, the Kantian paradigm, which imputed an intrinsic immorality to the institution of the national state, found few takers in Europe ... But in the 20th century, the Soviets and Marxists blamed the carnage of the two world wars on the order of nation-states ... After World War II, when Nazism was added to the list of crimes attributed to the nation-state, Nazism was seen as the rotten fruit of the German nation-state ... For

the nations to arm themselves, and to determine for themselves when to use these arms, was now seen as barbarism and a brutish debasement of humanity.

For the record, my own view is that this line of argument is preposterous. The heart of the idea of the nation-state is the political self-determination of peoples. The nation-state is a form of government that limits its political aspirations to the rule of one nation, and to establishing national freedom for this nation. The Nazi state, on the other hand, was precisely the opposite of this: Hitler opposed the idea of the nation-state as an expression of Western effete-ness. On his view, the political fate of all nations should be determined by the new German empire that was to arise: Indeed, Hitler saw his Third Reich as an improved incarnation of what he referred to as the *First Reich* - which was none other than the Holy Roman Empire of the Hapsburgs! The Nazis' aim was thus diametrically opposed to that of the Western nation-states. Hitler's dream was precisely to build his empire on their ruin.

Obvious as this seems to me, many Europeans declined to see things this way, accepting the view that Nazism was, more or less, the nation-state taken to its ugly conclusion. In this way, the Soviets' condemnation of the Western nation-state was joined by a new *Western* anti-nationalism, which eagerly sought an end to the old order in the name of Kant's march of reason

This post-national vision found takers all over Europe. A mere generation later, in 1992, European leaders signed the Treaty of Maastricht establishing the European Union as an international government, and stripping member states of many of the powers associated historically with national independence. Of course, there are many in Europe who have not yet accepted this course ... But the impact of the new paradigm, which is the engine driving the movement toward European Union, has already been overwhelming. Both in Europe and in North America, we are watching the growth of a generation of young people that, for the first time in 350 years, does not recognize the nation-state as the foundation of our freedoms. Indeed, there is a powerful new paradigm abroad, which sees us doing without such states. And it has unleashed a tidal wave of consequences, for those who do and don't embrace it.

IV.

I have to admit I'm deeply troubled by the prospect that a nation such as Britain, which has so often been a light to others in politics, philosophy, and science, should some day soon step down from the stage of world history forever. And the same may be said of Holland, France, and others. But my focus in this letter is the Jews and our own state, and I'd like now to try and understand what Israel looks like when seen through European eyes - or rather, through the eyes of the new paradigm that provides the framework for understanding Israel to so many in Europe, and now also to increasing numbers of educated people in America and elsewhere.

Consider the Auschwitz concentration camp. For most Jews, Auschwitz has a very particular meaning: It was not Herzl's Zionist Organization that succeeded in persuading nearly all Jews the world over that there could be no other way but to establish a sovereign Jewish state. It was Auschwitz and the destruction of the six million at the hands of the Germans and their sympathizers that did this. From the horror and humiliation of Auschwitz, this inescapable lesson emerged: That it was Jewish dependence on the military protection of others that had brought this about. This

message was already articulated with perfect clarity by David Ben-Gurion in the National Assembly of the Jews of Palestine in November 1942:

We do not know exactly what goes on in the Nazi valley of death, or how many Jews have already been slaughtered... We do not know whether the victory of democracy and freedom and justice will not find Europe a vast Jewish cemetery in which the bones of our people are scattered.... We are the only people in the world whose blood, as a nation, is allowed to be shed.... Only our children, our women... and our aged are set apart for special treatment, to be buried alive in graves dug by them, to be cremated in crematoriums, to be strangled and to be murdered by machine guns... for but one sin:... Because the Jews have no political standing, no Jewish army, no Jewish independence, and no homeland.... Give us the right to fight and die as Jews.... We demand the right... to a homeland and independence. What has happened to us in Poland, what God forbid, will happen to us in the future, all our innocent victims, all the tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, and perhaps millions... are the sacrifices of a people without a homeland.... We demand... a homeland and independence....

In these words, the tie between the Holocaust and what Ben-Gurion calls the “sin” of Jewish powerlessness is powerfully in evidence. The meaning of Auschwitz is that the Jews failed in their efforts find a way to defend their children. They depended on others, decent men in power in America or Britain, who, when the time came, did virtually nothing to save European Jewry. Today, most Jews continue to believe that the only thing that has really changed since those millions of our people perished - the only thing that stands as a bulwark against the repetition of this chapter in the world’s history - is Israel.

It is a little-discussed fact that the Jews are not the only ones for whom Auschwitz has become an important political symbol. Many Europeans, too, see Auschwitz as being at the heart of the lesson of World War II. But the conclusions they draw are precisely the *opposite* of those drawn by Jews. Following Kant, they see Auschwitz as the ultimate expression of that barbarism, that brutal debasement of humanity, which is national particularism. On this view, the death camps provide the ultimate proof of the evil that results from permitting nations to decide for themselves how to dispose of the military power in their possession. The obvious conclusion is that it was wrong to give the German nation this power of life and death. If such evil is to be prevented from happening again and again, the answer must be in the dismantling of Germany and the other national states of Europe, and the yoking together of all the European peoples under a single international government. Eliminate the national state once and for all - *Ecrasez l'infame!* - and you have sealed off that dark road to Auschwitz.

Notice that according to this view, *it is not Israel that is the answer to Auschwitz, but the European Union*: A united Europe will make it impossible for Germany, or any other European nation, to rise up and persecute others once again. In this sense, it is European Union that stands as the guarantor of the future peace of the Jews, and indeed, of all humanity.

So here you have two competing paradigms concerning the meaning of Auschwitz. In a sense, they’re each looking at the same facts: Both paradigms take it as a given that

millions were murdered in Auschwitz by the Germans and their collaborators, that the deeds done there were utterly evil, and that Jews and others who died there were the helpless victims of this evil. But at this point, agreement ends, and ... individuals looking at the same facts through different paradigms see utterly different things:

Paradigm A: Auschwitz represents the unspeakable horror of Jewish women and men standing empty-handed and naked, watching their children die for want of a rifle with which to protect them.

Paradigm B: Auschwitz represents the unspeakable horror of German soldiers using force against others, backed by nothing but their own government's views as to their national rights and interests.

It's important to see that these two views, which at first don't even seem to be talking about the same thing, are actually describing points of view that are almost perfectly irreconcilable. In the one, it's the agency of the murderers that is seen as the source of the evil; in the other, the powerlessness of the victims - a seemingly subtle difference in perspective that opens up into a chasm when we turn these competing paradigms in another direction and look at Israel through their eyes.

Here are the same two paradigms, now with their attention turned to *Israel* and what it represents:

Paradigm A: Israel represents Jewish women and men standing rifle in hand, watching over their own children and all other Jewish children and protecting them. *Israel is the opposite of Auschwitz.*

Paradigm B: Israel represents the unspeakable horror of Jewish soldiers using force against others, backed by nothing but their own government's views as to their national rights and interests. *Israel is Auschwitz.*

In both paradigms, the fact of Israel takes on an extraordinary significance because of the identity of the Jews as the victims of the Shoah. For Israel's founders, the fact that the survivors of the death camps and their children could be given weapons and permitted to train as soldiers under a Jewish flag seemed a decisive movement of the world toward what was just and right. It could in no sense make up for what had happened. But it was just nonetheless, granting the survivors precisely that empowerment that, had it come a few years earlier, would have saved their loved ones from death and worse. In this sense, *Israel is the opposite of Auschwitz.*

But Israel takes on extraordinary significance in the new European paradigm as well. For in Israel, the survivors and their children took up arms and set themselves on a course of determining their own fate. That is, this people, so close to the Kantian ideal of perfect self-renunciation only a few decades ago, have instead chosen what is now seen as the path of Hitler - the path of national self-determination. It is this which lies beneath the nearly boundless disgust so many feel towards Israel, and especially toward anything having to do with Israel's attempts to defend itself, regardless of whether these operations are successful or unsuccessful, irreproachable or morally flawed. For in taking up arms in the name of their own national state and their own self determination, the Jews, as many Europeans and others now see it, have simply taken up the same

evil that led Germany to build the camps. The details may differ, but the principle, in their eyes, is the same: *Israel is Auschwitz*.

Try to see this through European eyes: Try imagining being a proud Dutchman, whose nation was the first to light the torch of liberty in that hopeless uprising against Catholic Spain in a war of independence that lasted *eighty years*. "Yet I am willing to give this up," he says to himself, "to sacrifice this heritage with its dreams of past glory, and to say goodbye to the country of my forefathers, for the sake of something higher: I will make this painful sacrifice for the sake of an international political union that will ultimately embrace all humanity. Yes, I will do it for humanity." Yet who is it who stands against him? Who, among the civilized peoples, would dare turn their backs on this effort, blessed by morality and reason, to attain at last the salvation of mankind? Imagine his shock: "The Jews! Those Jews, who should have been the first to welcome the coming of the new order, the first to welcome the coming of mankind's salvation, instead establish themselves as its opponents, building up their own selfish little state, at war with the world. How dare they? Must they not make the same sacrifices as I in the name of reason and good? Are they so debased they cannot remember their own parents in Auschwitz? No, they cannot remember - for they've been seduced and perverted by the same evil that had previously seized our neighbors in Germany. They have gone over to the side of Auschwitz."

Thus it is not just by some fluke that we constantly hear Israel and its soldiers (by which we mean the sons and daughters of most of the Jewish families in Israel) constantly being compared to the Nazis. We aren't talking about just any old smear, chosen arbitrarily or for its rhetorical value alone. In Europe and wherever else the new paradigm has spread, the comparison with Nazism, sickening and absurd though it may be, is as natural and inevitable as mud after rain.

And this, I think, gives us the answer to the question with which we started. We want to know how it can be that at some very fundamental level, the facts don't seem to matter any more: How it can be that even where Israel is undoubtedly in the right - not to mention the inevitable cases in which Israeli leaders or soldiers have performed poorly - the country can be pilloried in campaigns of vilification that bite deeper and hit harder with every passing year. How it can be that *after* the destruction of the Israeli security zone in South Lebanon, and *after* Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, the hatred of Israel only grows more full-throated? The answer is that while hatred for Israel may, at a given moment, be focused quite sincerely on certain facts about the security zone or the Gaza Strip or the Turkish blockade runners, the trajectory of international disgust or hatred for Israel is just not driven by any of these facts. It is driven by the rapid advance of a new paradigm that understands Israel, and especially the independent Israeli use of force to defend itself, as illegitimate down to its foundations. If you believe that Israel is, in some important sense, a variant on Nazism, then you just aren't going to be very impressed by "improvements" in Israeli policies or PR. An improved Auschwitz is still Auschwitz.

Perhaps you are asking yourself the following: If this is right, and the comparison between Israel and the most odious political movement in European history is hard-wired into the new paradigm of international politics that is quickly advancing upon us, then isn't it the case that people who subscribe to this paradigm are going to be coming to the conclusion that Israel has no right to exist and should be dismantled?

To which I say: *Of course* this comparison leads to the conclusion that Israel has no right to exist and should be dismantled. And why not? If Germany and France have no right to exist as independent states, why should Israel? And if everyone is prepared to remain dry-eyed on the day the United Kingdom and the Netherlands are finally gone, why should anyone feel differently about Israel? On the contrary, while Jews and their friends continue to speak in dread of "Israel's destruction," this phrase is no longer feared among new-paradigmers of various stripes - some of whom are already permitting themselves to fantasize in public about political arrangements that will permit the Jewish state to cease to exist.

V.

Israel continues to be threatened militarily, first and foremost by Iran. But if Israel falls, it will not be by way of Iranian missiles. It will be by way of words, as the Soviet Union fell. Jews and non-Jews will simply cease to understand why such a state should exist - and then one day, with awesome speed, the independent Jewish state will be no more.

Those who are concerned to defend Israel on the battlefield are well aware that this involves a never-ending reassessment of the sources of danger and the means needed to meet new threats as they arise. On the battlefield of ideas, the state of Israel is today in danger as never before. But the danger isn't coming from Israel's traditional enemies and it can't be fought using the traditional means. You can't fight a paradigm with facts - because pretty much any facts you've got are either dismissed as irrelevant or absorbed into the new paradigm and reinterpreted in a way that only reinforces it. You can only fight a paradigm with a competing paradigm. And the paradigm that gave birth to Israel and which held it firm, both domestically and internationally, is today in tatters.

What can be done? A good start would be to read Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* ... No book will give you a clearer insight into what's happening to Israel today in the international arena, on the campuses, and even, to some extent, in Israel's universities.

After that, we have to begin talking about what it takes to establish a new paradigm, or to rebuild an old one that has collapsed. There's much to be said about this, and it's not for now. But I'll leave you with just this thought as a start on it: Paradigm shifts aren't like an election campaign or a struggle over some aspect of policy, much less a short-term media battle like the one over the Turkish flotilla, which can be resolved one way or another in matter of weeks or months, if not days. Paradigm shifts are unusual in the lives of individuals. And when they happen, they often take years to work themselves out. For this reason, clashes between political paradigms tend to play themselves out over a generation or more. By the same token, the relevant media in which these clashes are played out aren't the newspapers or television or the internet. By the time we're reading the newspapers or watching CNN, we've already got our paradigm in place - just like the reporters we're watching, who just keep reporting from within their own set paradigm, over and over again. When it comes to shifts of political paradigm, these take place principally through *books*, which expose people to an idea at length and in depth; and in *schools*, where such books are studied and discussed, especially universities. If we are interested in the reconstruction of the paradigm that has served as the foundation for Israel's existence, that's where the work is going to have to be done.

Immanuel Kant vs. Israel

by Daniel Pipes, National Review Online, August 17, 2010

<http://www.danielpipes.org/8771/immanuel-kant-vs-israel>

As someone who deeply appreciates what Western civilization, for all its faults, has achieved, I puzzle over the hostility many Westerners harbor toward their way of life. If democracy, free markets, and the rule of law have created an unprecedented stability, affluence, and decency; how come so many beneficiaries fail to see this?

Why, for example, does the United States, which has so much for human welfare, inspire such hostility? And tiny Israel, the symbol of rejuvenation for a perpetually oppressed people – why does it engender such passionate hatred that otherwise decent people desire to eliminate this state?

Yoram Hazony of the Shalem Center in Jerusalem offers an explanation for this antagonism in a profound and implication-rich essay, *"Israel through European Eyes."*

He begins with the notion of "paradigm shift" developed by Thomas Kuhn in his 1962 study, *"The Structure of Scientific Revolutions."* This influential concept holds that scientists see their subject from within a specific framework, a "paradigm." Paradigms are frameworks that underpin an understanding of reality. Facts that do not fit the paradigm are overlooked or dismissed. Kuhn reviews the history of science and shows how, in a series of scientific revolutions, paradigms shifted, as from Aristotelian to Newtonian to Einsteinian physics.

Paradigms also frame politics and Hazony applies this theory to Israel's delegitimization in the West. Israel's standing has deteriorated for decades, he argues, "not because of this or that set of facts, but because the paradigm through which educated Westerners are looking at Israel has shifted." Responding to the vilification of Israel by offering corrective facts – about Israel's military morality or its medical breakthroughs – "won't have any real impact on the overall trajectory of Israel's standing among educated people in the West." Instead, the latest paradigm must be recognized and fought.

The fading paradigm sees nation-states as legitimate and positive, a means of protecting peoples and allowing them to flourish. The treaty of Westphalia (1648) was the key moment in which the sovereignty of nations was recognized. John Stuart Mill and Woodrow Wilson endowed the nation-state ideal with global reach.

That paradigm, however, "has pretty much collapsed," Hazony asserts. The nation-state no longer appeals; many intellectuals and political figures in Europe see it "as a source of incalculable evil," a view that is fast spreading.

The new paradigm, based ultimately on Immanuel Kant's 1795 treatise *Perpetual Peace*, advocates the abolition of nation-states and the establishment of international government. Supra-national institutions such as the United Nations and the European Union represent its ideals and models.

Jews and the Holocaust play a strangely central role in the paradigm shift from nation-state to multinational state. The millennial persecution of Jews, culminating in the Nazi genocide, endowed Israel with special purpose and legitimacy according to the old paradigm. From the perspective of the new paradigm, however, the Holocaust represents the excesses of a nation-state, the German gone mad.

Under the old nation-state paradigm, the lesson of Auschwitz was "Never again," meaning that a strong Israel was needed to protect Jews. The new paradigm leads to a very different "Never again," one which insists that no government should have the means potentially to replicate the Nazi outrages. According to it, Israel isn't the answer to Auschwitz. The European Union is. That the old-style "Never again" inspires Israelis to pursue the Western world's most unabashed policy of self-defense makes their actions particularly appalling to New Paradigmers.

Need one point out the error of ascribing Nazi outrages to the nation-state? The Nazis wanted to eliminate nation-states. Like Kant, they dreamed of a universal state. New Paradigmers mangle history.

Israelis themselves are not immune to the new paradigm, as the case of Avraham Burg suggests. A former speaker of Israel's parliament and candidate for prime minister, he switched paradigms and wrote a book on the legacy of the Holocaust that compares Israel to Nazi Germany. He now wants Israelis to give up on Israel as defender of the Jewish people. No one, Burg's sad example suggests, is immune from the new paradigm disease.

Hazony's essay does not offer policy responses but in a letter to me he sketched three areas to address: building awareness of the new paradigm's existence, finding anomalies to invalidate it, and revitalizing the old paradigm by bringing it up to date.

His insights are profound and his counsel timely.

Middle East's Western Media: Hypocrisy, double standards out of control

By Khaled Abu Toameh, Jerusalem Post, 13 August 2010

Western correspondents and newspapers continue to apply double standards when it comes to covering the Israeli-Arab conflict. It is much easier for a Western journalist to sit in Israel and write about Israel without having to worry about his or her safety. Why bother travel to an Arab country and risk being arrested or deported for writing a story that reflects negatively on the dictatorship there?

Besides, who said it's that easy to enter an Arab or Islamic country? The foreign reporters need an entry visa to most of these countries - a process that could last for weeks, months and years.

And when the foreign reporters arrives in an Arab capital, he or she are often escorted by "minders" of the Ministry of Information of that country. Then there are the

mukhabarat [intelligence] agents who start following the reporters from the minute they arrive and until they leave.

Those who are found "guilty" of writing a story that angers the Arab dictator or any of his confidants should forget about applying for another visa.

Otherwise, how does one explain the fact that the mainstream media in the US, Canada and Europe are turning a blind eye to recent developments in Jordan, where the government has introduced a law that restricts media freedom?

The arrest last week of seven Palestinian university lecturers at the hands of Palestinian Authority security services in the West Bank is yet another example of how the international media functions in this part of the world.

Some Palestinian stringers and reporters offered the story about the arrest of the academics to at least a dozen foreign correspondents and newspaper editors in North America and Europe.

Only one foreign journalist agreed to write about the story. His colleagues gave different excuses for turning their backs on the story.

Some said they were concerned about their personal safety should they report a news item that was likely to anger the Western-funded PA security forces in the West Bank.

Others simply blamed their editors in New York, Paris, London and Toronto for turning down the story as "insignificant."

Earlier this week, a disenchanted Ramallah-based Palestinian journalist decided to put her Western colleagues to the test. She contacted the same group of newsmen and editors who had been offered the story on the academics' arrest with a "new idea" for a news item.

The Palestinian journalist proposed that the foreign press write about a Palestinian university professor who complained that Israeli authorities had turned down his request to visit Israel together with his wife and three children.

The response from the international journalists came almost instantly. All but two said it was a "great story" and expressed readiness to start working on it immediately.

It is worth noting that the Palestinian Authority's General Intelligence Service had warned Palestinian journalists and university staff members not to report about the detention of the academics. Of course the Palestinian media in the West Bank, which is controlled by the Palestinian Authority, complied.

The Palestinian authorities even threatened the president of the university not to complain about the arrest of his lecturers. He too complied, and even went as far as to switch off his mobile phone to avoid questions from journalists.

One can only imagine the reaction of the international media had the Palestinian academics been arrested by Israel.

The double-standards approach of the international media is not a new phenomenon. Back in the mid-1990's, many Western correspondents based in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv refused to publish stories about bad government, abuse of human rights and rampant financial corruption under Yasser Arafat's administration.

This hypocritical approach on the part of the media does not only apply to the Palestinians, but to most of the Arab world.

Of course there is no shortage of "great stories" in the Arab world. But for those Western journalists who justify their actions -- or, rather, inaction -- by citing security concerns, the answer is should be: If you are scared, why don't you stop writing about the conflict and start reporting about the weather or environment?

The Middle East is not the right place for journalists who care more about their well-being than the facts and the truth.