



ISRAEL NEWS

*A collection of the week's news from Israel
From the Bet El Twinning / Israel Action Committee of
Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation*

but he can certainly split the opposition. The same might be said for Donald Trump, who gains every time a major Democrat pushes further to the left on identity politics, free healthcare, free money and Russian-interference paranoia — a dividend multiplied by alacrity

Commentary...

Trump and Netanyahu will Win Again By Dominic Green

What a relief it is to turn away from the maelstrom of American politics, and the endless speculation over whether Donald Trump asked for a quid pro quo in the hope of generating negative coverage about Joe Biden, to the placid backwater of Israeli politics, and the endless speculation over whether Benjamin Netanyahu asked for a quid pro quo in the hope of generating positive coverage about himself.

How refreshing it is to stop wondering whether the Ukraine-impeachment circus is merely an attempt to reverse the voters' decision and spin the 2020 election by replacing democracy with judicial process, and to start wondering whether the Netanyahu-indictment circus is merely an attempt to reverse the voters' decision and spin the 2020 election by replacing democracy with judicial theater.

There is, as Alfred Dreyfus is reported to have said after his return from Devil's Island, no smoke without fire. But I find it hard to believe that smoke of corruption surrounding Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu will catch flame. For one thing, they're both more than a match for their dilemmas.

The American media have cried Wolf Blitzer for so long that the voters are switching off. In October 2015, more than 24m American watched Donald Trump in his first debate as presidential candidate. The first Democratic nomination debate, in June, drew 18.1m viewers. This week's Democratic debate on MSNBC drew the smallest viewing figures yet. Only 6.5m mildly curious viewers bothered to check in to see if Joe Biden would keep his dental plate in his mouth or whether Bernie Sanders would have another heart attack. As for impeachment, Donald Trump is so alarmed that he told Fox & Friends on Friday morning, 'I want a trial.'

Netanyahu doesn't want a trial. With Israel heading into a third election in the space of a year, he's unlikely to face one soon. Suzie Navot, an expert on Israeli constitutional law, points out that if Netanyahu requests procedural immunity as a sitting member of the Knesset, the Knesset's House Committee will need to convene, and then the entire Knesset would have to vote. But there is no House Committee at present, because there is no functioning government. The committee that arranges the committees, the Arrangements Committee, is controlled by Netanyahu's rivals in Blue & White. But, Navot says, the Arrangements Committee can only convene after a governing coalition and opposition have been formed in the Knesset. So if Netanyahu requests procedural immunity, which by the sound of it he'd be dumb not to, it's likely that the Knesset won't be able to vote on it before March or April. For a full account, see here.

That would mean Netanyahu extending his rule by a full year from last April, when the first of the trio of elections was held. Providing, of course, he comes out on top in February's election. Which on current form, he probably will, because of the marginal gains he has achieved while Israel is in electoral limbo. The State Department's shift on the legal status of Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) is significant less for the legal niceties — Israeli governments of both left and right have consistently ignored those, and with, they believe, good legal reason — than as a precursor to Netanyahu edging towards the annexation that he promised before the second election last September and can now offer again with further American support.

The recent exchange of fire with Islamic Jihad in Gaza is significant not only as part of Israel's multi-front proxy war with Iran. The conveniently timed exchange, initiated by Israel, forced Netanyahu's biggest rival, Benny Gantz of Blue & White, to endorse Netanyahu's strategy. It also forced the Israeli Arab leaders of Blue & White's biggest potential partner, the Joint List, to denounce Israel's actions with a vehemence that shows they are on the side of the Gazans, and not their fellow Israelis.

These incremental advantages may accumulate into a decisive advantage for Netanyahu. He might not be able to unite his country,

with which most of the media endorses the latest talking point on Democrat Twitter.

If the House votes to impeach Trump, the Senate Republicans are hardly likely to agree that they've been backing a criminal for the last three years. Impeachment will fizzle early in 2020, around the time Israelis return to the polls. On current form, both Trump and Netanyahu will be in stronger positions than they are now. Their untruths go marching on. (Spectator USA Nov 22)
The writer is Life & Arts editor of Spectator USA.

Trump and Netanyahu: Both Being Investigated for Made-Up Crimes By Alan M. Dershowitz

There are striking similarities, as well as important differences, between the investigations being conducted against American President Donald J. Trump by the US Congress, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who was just indicted.

The most striking similarity is that both are being investigated for actions that their legislatures have not explicitly made criminal. Moreover, no legislature in any country governed by the rule of law would ever enact a general statute criminalizing such conduct. The investigations of these two controversial leaders are based on using general laws that have never previously been deemed to apply to the conduct at issue and stretching them to target specific political figures.

Netanyahu has been indicted for bribery on the ground that he allegedly agreed to help a media company in exchange for more positive coverage and/or less negative coverage. There are disputes about the facts, but even if they are viewed in the light least favorable to Netanyahu, they do not constitute the crime of bribery.

Nor would the Knesset ever enact a statute making it a crime for a member of Knesset to cast a vote in order to get good media coverage. If such a law was ever passed, the entire Knesset would be in prison. Politicians always seek good coverage and many vote with that in mind. Some even negotiate good coverage in advance of voting. That is why they have press secretaries and media consultants.

Nor could a reasonable statute be drafted that covered Netanyahu's alleged conduct, but not that of other Knesset members who bartered their votes for good coverage. That is why no legislature in a country governed by the rule of law has ever made positive media coverage the "quid" or "quo" necessary for a bribery conviction, and that is why the bribery indictment of Netanyahu should not be upheld by the courts.

Upholding a conviction based on positive media coverage would endanger both the freedom of the press and democratic processes of governance. Prosecutors should stay out of the interactions between politicians and the media unless specifically defined crimes, as distinguished from arguable political sins, are committed, and no one should ever be prosecuted for actions that were never made criminal, and would never be made criminal, by the legislature.

President Trump is also being investigated for alleged bribery. Originally the Democrats thought they could impeach him for non-criminal conduct, such as alleged maladministration, abuse of office or immoral conduct. I think they have now been convinced by me and others that no impeachment would be constitutional unless the President were found guilty of the crimes specified in the Constitution, namely, "treason, bribery or other high crimes and misdemeanors." So the Democratic leadership has now settled on bribery as an offence for which they can impeach President Trump. The problem with that approach -- similar to the problem with the Israeli approach against Netanyahu -- is that it is simply not a crime for a President to use his power over foreign policy for political, partisan or even personal advantage. Imagine Congress trying to pass a law defining what would constitute a criminal abuse of the foreign policy power, as distinguished from a political or moral abuse.

Presidents have even engaged in military actions for political gain. They have given aid to foreign countries to help themselves get elected. They have appointed ambassadors based not on competence but on past and anticipated future political contributions. None of

these has ever been deemed criminal, and Congress would never dream of enacting a criminal statute that sought to cover such conduct.

Could it carve out a specific crime based on seeking personal political advantage rather than partisan political advantage? I doubt it. But even if it could parse such a statute, it has not done so. And if it has not done so, neither Congress nor prosecutors can seek to criminalize the exercise of a President's foreign policy power on the ground that they do not like the way he used it or even if he abused it.

The central aspect of the rule of law is that no one may be investigated, prosecuted or impeached unless his conduct violates pre-existing and unambiguous prohibitions. Neither Congress nor prosecutors can make it up as they go along, because they, too, are not above the law.

Now to the differences. Israel is a parliamentary democracy in which the Prime Minister can be removed by a simple vote of no confidence. There is no requirement of, or need for, an impeachment mechanism. The United States, on the other hand, is a Republic with separation of powers and checks and balances. The Framers, led by James Madison, saw the impeachment power as central to preserving our Republic and not turning it into a parliamentary democracy. That is why they rejected a proposal that would have permitted impeachment on the ground of "maladministration." Such an open-ended criteria, according to Madison, would have resulted in a situation in which the President served at the will of Congress. That is why Madison insisted on the specific criteria for impeachment that the Framers ultimately accepted.

Although the differences between Israel and the United States are significant, they share in common the rule of law. Under the rule of law, properly applied, neither Netanyahu nor Trump should be deemed guilty of bribery. (Gatestone Institute Nov 27)

Truth-Telling to Advance Peace By David M. Weinberg

Critics of the Trump administration's determination that settlements "are not per se illegal" assert that the decision pollutes the possibility of peace. Like President Trump's move of the US embassy to Jerusalem, they allege that it is motivated only by crass political considerations.

These critics are wildly off base. What they don't understand is that Trump administration moves consistently have been designed to reset the Mideast diplomatic table in a way that will advance a realistic peace process; a process that is based on historical truths, concrete realities, pragmatic solutions, and responsible behavior.

First and foremost, this means dialing down unreasonable Palestinian expectations and rolling back Palestinian maximalism. Palestinian leadership must be disabused of the notion that it can coerce Israel into rapid, wide-ranging and risky withdrawals by appealing to international courts and tribunals to criminalize Israel. The canard that settlements are illegal, or a war crime, has been a key part of this insufferable Palestinian offensive.

As US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo wisely said last week, "calling settlements illegal hasn't advanced peace." Just the opposite. When the world terms Jewish settlements in Judea (Judea!) and Samaria as illegal and considers the territories to be stolen property that must be returned to Palestinians, the Palestinians have no reason to genuinely negotiate with Israel.

Even if you think that Israeli settlements should be rolled back in the context of a sensible peace arrangement, applying the demonizing epithet "illegal" makes for a destructive narrative that distances, not advances, peace. It is deleterious discourse.

What Washington has done – last week and in its previous decisions about Jerusalem, UNRWA, aid to the Palestinian Authority, the Golan and more – is put the Palestinians on notice that the US will not deliver Israeli concessions on a silver platter, and that the longer Palestinians are obstructionist the less statehood they will get.

Washington is also asserting that real peacemaking begins with truth-telling. As Netanyahu said, "Jews are not foreign colonialists in Judea and Samaria." Or as Blue and White leader Moshe "Bogie" Ya'alon said, "One cannot be an 'occupant' in his own land." Now, let the negotiation begin from here.

Implicit in the Trump administration's refreshingly realistic approach is the understanding that Israeli-Palestinian negotiations should not begin from any 70-year-old armistice line forced upon Israel by Arab aggression; nor "from the point that talks last left off" 11 years ago under a previous, defeatist Israeli government; nor from the defensive "security fence" forced upon Israel by Palestinian terrorism; nor from any borders high-handedly dictated in advance by jaundiced foreign countries or politicized international legal tribunals.

Similarly, Israel's baseline position at the outset of any future talks should be that 100% of Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) belongs to Israel by historical right, and that this right is richly buttressed by

political experience, legitimate settlement, and security necessity. Only then can Israel hope to obtain a sensible compromise.

Keep in mind that there is a broad consensus in Israel on security and settlement matters; accentuated in the way that Blue and White leaders this week responded positively to the US announcement on settlement legality and to previous US declarations regarding Jerusalem and the Golan. Even if, inshallah, the Palestinians one day choose to settle with Israel, Israel will insist on maintaining control of the Jordan Valley and most highland settlement zones, not to mention a very broad Jerusalem envelope.

And thus, kudos are due to the Trump administration for essentially rejecting obsolete paradigms and hackneyed diplomatic assertions such as "everybody knows what the contours of a Mideast peace settlement look like and they run along the pre-1967 lines," or "Israel must allow a full-fledged Palestinian state on contiguous territory in full control of all its borders."

Today, these are no more than ruinous, synthetic gospels.

The reason for this is that the Clinton-Obama parameters for an Israeli-Palestinian deal were never wise nor fair to Israel. They didn't sufficiently take into account Israel's historic and national rights in Judea and Samaria. They certainly didn't consider, and today cannot adequately accommodate, the dramatically changed security environment in the Mideast since the Arab upheavals began and Iran began its march to Israel's borders.

Worst of all, those parameters insufficiently considered the irredentist nature of the Palestinian national movement. We now know, alas, that the Arafat- and Abbas-led Palestinian Authority isn't anywhere near becoming the stable, moderate, democratic State of Palestine that was promised to Palestinians and Israelis alike.

Instead, one part of the Palestinian-claimed area is run by an exceedingly-corrupt secular dictatorship that "pays for slay" (it funds terrorism against Israel) and seeks the criminalization of Israel in every international forum, and which would fall to Hamas without Israel's military presence; while the other part is occupied by a radical Islamist dictatorship that is armed to the teeth by Iran, has fought three wars against Israel over the past ten years, and is openly committed to Israel's destruction.

Remember this too: The only Palestinian government/s in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza that Israelis can live with over the long term must agree to a permanent end to the conflict and all claims on Israel – meaning no "right" of return, the inculcation of peace (and not genocidal anti-Semitism) in schools and media, and reconciliation with Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish People.

But almost all Palestinians reject these contours. They view such as a "sovereign cage." They do not crave a "statelet" (even on the 1967 lines) and apparently, they feel no urgency about achieving it.

As the prominent Palestinian adviser Prof. Ahmad Khalidi has admitted: "The concept of Palestinian statehood is nothing but a punitive construct devised by our worst enemies – the US and Israel – to constrain Palestinian aspirations and territorial ambitions."

Or as Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas has repeatedly made clear, the Palestinian liberation movement will never recognize Israel as a Jewish state or agree to forgo the so-called "right" of refugee return. In short, he wants his state, but without an end to the conflict. He wants a state in order to continue the conflict against the "illegal" Jewish settler presence in all "Palestine."

Stripping Abbas of any legitimacy for such warlike discourse about Israeli "illegality" is a key goal, and hopefully will be a solid outcome, of the Trump administration's announcement this week.

One Trump administration critic, Senator Mark Warner (D-Va.), charged that Pompeo's announcement about settlements "serves no strategic purpose." Warner is precisely wrong. In the long-term perspective, the determination that settlements are not illegal is strategically smart, tactically valuable, historically purposeful and potentially promising of peace. (Israel Hayom Nov 26)

Legalizing Politics and Politicizing the Law By Evelyn Gordon

One of the modern era's most dangerous problems is the conflation of politics with law. Political questions are increasingly treated as legal ones, which inevitably results in the law becoming politicized. Last week provided two salient examples.

One was the response to the U.S. State Department's announcement that Israeli settlements don't violate international law. What was striking was that many opponents didn't actually challenge the department's (correct) legal conclusions. Instead, they objected on policy grounds.

Democratic presidential candidate and former vice president Joe Biden, for instance, complained, "This decision harms the cause of diplomacy, takes us further away from the hope of a two-state solution, and will only further inflame tensions in the region."

Another leading Democratic candidate, South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg, termed the announcement “a significant step backward in our efforts to achieve a two-state solution.”

Rabbi Rick Jacobs, president of the Union for Reform Judaism, was particularly blatant. While acknowledging that the decision focused solely on international law, he worried that it “will be widely read as a broader change to the U.S. position on Israeli settlements,” which “would place serious and critical obstacles to a viable two-state solution.” Consequently, he urged the administration “to reverse its position.”

Essentially, all three want the settlements declared illegal simply because they think settlements are bad policy, regardless of what international law actually says. In other words, they’re incapable of distinguishing policy from law.

Without an accepted arbiter, whether or not something violates international law is endlessly debatable.

People who understand this difference have no problem with settlements being recognized as legal because they understand that something can be bad policy even if it’s legal. Indeed, that’s precisely what all administrations, both Republican and Democratic, did for roughly three decades between Jimmy Carter and Barack Obama: They vehemently opposed settlements on policy grounds while simultaneously acknowledging that they weren’t illegal.

Yet the concept of “it’s legal, but it stinks” has evidently gone out of style, especially on the left. When leftists think something stinks, they want it declared illegal, even if it’s not.

The advantages of this tactic are obvious. Policy questions, by definition, are disputable; indeed, many people disagree that settlements are bad policy. But law ostensibly eliminates controversy because once the courts rule something illegal, then everyone is supposed to accept that it must stop. Thus branding any policy one opposes as illegal is meant to make it politically illegitimate. If settlements are illegal, they mustn’t be built, even if they’re actually good policy.

Granted, this ploy has an inherent problem when it comes to international law since there are no recognized courts whose authority to make such judgments is universally accepted. Neither America nor Israel, for instance, ever agreed to accept the legal interpretations of the International Criminal Court, U.N. agencies or any other such body. And without an accepted arbiter, whether or not something violates international law is endlessly debatable.

But the bigger problem is this tactic’s enormous cost, which far outweighs any possible benefit: When people start branding anything they object to as “illegal,” they turn the law into just another player on the political battlefield. And once that happens, legal decisions will be treated with no more respect than any other political pronouncement.

Thus Americans who object to recognizing the settlements’ legality on policy grounds are destroying any pretensions that international law might have to objectivity and impartiality, just as the European Union did by insisting that international law requires labeling products from Israeli settlements, but not from Turkish settlements in northern Cyprus or Moroccan settlements in Western Sahara. In both cases, international law is being treated not as an objective, universally applied standard, but as a selective political tool to punish disfavored countries or policies. And as such, it deserves no more deference than any other political decision.

Given how amorphous international law actually is, that may be no great loss. But when the same tactics are applied to domestic legal systems, the consequences become devastating. Once a significant portion of the citizenry starts to view legal decisions as politics in another guise, the consensus on which democracy’s survival depends—that legal decisions must be honored—will rapidly erode.

As I’ve noted before, this is already happening in Israel. But last week’s indictment of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu provides a particularly worrying example of the costs.

I’m the rare Netanyahu supporter who thinks that one of the three cases against him is actually serious. But for two understandable reasons, many supporters believe that he’s simply being persecuted by a leftist legal establishment frustrated by repeated failures to oust him through democratic elections.

The Israeli legal establishment says it has finally found a real crime. But like the boy who cried wolf, Netanyahu’s supporters no longer believe it.

The first is that the Attorney General’s Office and the courts have intervened in literally thousands of policy decisions over the past three decades, frequently in defiance of actual written law and almost always in the left’s favor. In short, both bodies have routinely behaved like political activists rather than impartial jurists. So rightists have no reason to trust their impartiality now.

Second, Netanyahu has been targeted by frivolous investigations—including, in my view, two of the three now going to trial—ever since

he first became prime minister in 1996. All involved genuinely repulsive conduct on Netanyahu’s part. But rather than treating such conduct as a problem on which the public, rather than the courts, must render judgment, the legal establishment repeatedly opened cases against him, to which they devoted countless man-hours before finally closing them.

Now, the legal establishment says it has finally found a real crime. But like the boy who cried wolf, Netanyahu’s supporters no longer believe it.

The combination of these two factors means that many Israelis genuinely feel that their prime minister has been ousted by a corrupt legal establishment solely because it opposes his policies. And that will inevitably foster even greater distrust of the legal system.

Leftists spend a lot of time these days fretting about democracy’s possible collapse. But if they really want to avert such a collapse, the first step is to stop politicizing the law, so that legal institutions can regain public trust. For without a legal system whose decisions are widely respected, democracies will be left with no way of resolving disputes but the one shared by dictatorships and anarchies—plain old-fashioned brute force. (JNS Nov 27)

There are No Settlers on the West Bank By Jason D. Hill

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo recently announced that America would no longer consider civilian settlements in the occupied territories of the West Bank as a violation of international law. Many Israelis have warmly embraced this move as a great moral victory for the Jewish state. And to be sure, Pompeo’s declaration reversed a 40-decade-old policy that regarded the settlements as a violation of international law.

The only proper response to Pompeo’s announcement is that it’s a long time coming. And, along with the U.S. announcement, moral citizens of the world must begin a radical reversal of certain anti-Israeli and anti-Jewry references to the so-called “settlers” of Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) and what has been mistakenly referred to as “Occupied Territory.”

To begin with, the Israeli Jews are not settlers in Judea and Samaria. From here on, they should be referred to as “heroic pioneers” on re-founded land in Holy Israel. This is the land of Moses—a nation unified under King David, the only nation blessed by God in the Bible renamed Palestine by the Romans in the second century and later artificially divided into three states. This is the nation occupied and destroyed, and its people exiled and conquered immorally under the Egyptians (1523 BCE–1313 BCE); Babylon under King Nebuchadnezzar (423 BCE–372 BCE); Persia/Media (372 BCE–140 BCE); Greece (371 BCE–140 BCE); and Rome (69 CE–present).

Under the Roman Empire, we witnessed the apocalyptic and most devastating blow to Jewish sovereignty that lasted for 2,000 years. It allowed for, among other dastardly intrusions, occupation under the Ottoman and British Empires. Let us not forget a few historical minutiae:

With the legal re-founding of the state of Israel in 1948, local Palestinian militia groups—along with Egypt, Jordan (then Transjordan), Syria, Iraq, Lebanon—fought a vicious war, supplemented by contingent forces from Saudi Arabia and Yemen, to annihilate tiny Israel. Jordan confiscated Judea and Samaria, which it illegally annexed in 1950. In a defensive war against Jordan in June of 1967, Israel retook its Holy lands of Judea and Samaria from Jordan in just six days. Let us remember that Judea and Samaria historically belonged to Holy Israel and the Jewish people. It never belonged to a “Palestinian state” or to a political entity known as “the Palestinians.”

Let us remember, too, that Palestinians are really Jordanians. There are no such people as the “Palestinian people.” Before 1964, the referents of such a term were the Jewish people. In any case, the post-1964 self-described “Palestinians” only began claiming the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) following the 1967 Six-Day War.

The Palestinian Liberation Organization was formed in 1964 in order to establish a Palestinian state inside the state of Israel. There was no mention of the West Bank, which had been illegally annexed by Jordan as part of a Palestinian state before 1967. So, the world must now say to the people who refer to themselves today as Palestinians: “Your people waged a ruthless war against Israel. You lost the war, and rather than be grateful that Israel did not fight a war of attrition as the United States did in Dresden, Germany, and in Nagasaki and Hiroshima in Japan, and annihilated you completely, you have the temerity to proclaim you have a right to reclaim rightfully won land.”

We must, therefore, strike from our vocabulary the term “Occupied Territory.” The Jordanian annexation of Judea and

Samaria was regarded as illegal. The British had relinquished its claim to the land when the British Mandate left the region. The Arab forces claimed vehemently that the 1949 Armistice line did not have any legal significance. By that reasoning, the land did not belong to anyone. Since the land did not belong to Transjordan, we must not use the term "Occupied Territory," and under the precepts of international law, it is nonsensical nomenclature. If "Disputed Land" makes better sense, then that conceptually inane term was laid to rest when Israel legally won a war and conquered territory that was taken from it.

We must remember, too, that first the PLO, and now the Palestinian Authority, and Hamas have made permanent declarations of war against Israel. Their charters call for the obliteration of the State of Israel and the removal of Jewry from the area. Along with the indoctrination of a school curriculum promulgating hatred and debasement against Jews and Israel by both the P.A. and Hamas, the charters indict both parties in a state of war against Israel. The Second Intifada orchestrated by then PLO leader Yasser Arafat completely neutralized the Oslo Accords. This means that any action Israel takes against the P.A. and those who vote it into power—such as refusal to confer citizenship and voting privileges to a population that vote terrorist organizations into power—are moral responses to a declaration of permanent war by sworn enemies of the state. There can be no peace once those charters exist.

We must remember that before the 1948 re-founding of Israel, the region called Judea and Samaria was a primitive and primordial backwater with buildings, a few planted trees and grazing sheep with a plethora of shepherds. But it lay outside the process of history, and it was not progressing towards any growth and technological prosperity. Its trajectory was an inverted one. The pastoral and bucolic lives of shepherds make for nice short stories and sentimental poetry. An emulative and monumental civilization they do not constitute.

If there are occupiers in Judea and Samaria, then we may ostensibly point to them as the war settlers who are the Jordanian-Palestinians. They are the real occupiers and improper settlers of the land.

And so we must say to Israelis:

You have to expunge from your identity the term "settlers" and see yourselves as "noble pioneers" fulfilling your lost Manifest Destiny.

In the name of the best within you, do not sully and tarnish it by the prejudicial ways an envious and anti-Jewry world regards you, and wants you to view yourselves. Do not buy into their terminology. The only way the moral legitimacy of the re-founding of your Holy lands can be intransigently enforced and asserted to the world is if, on moral grounds, you persuade your government to totally annex all of Judea and Samaria.

Desist in referring to it as the "West Bank," and, most importantly, declare proudly to the world that as noble pioneers your moral identities are non-negotiable. Announce defiantly that you have the moral right to determine who lives within the borders of your annexed territories. Treat your moral identity with the same implacability as you would a religious commandment. Let it be known that such an identity is a force of nature that behaves with the same inexorability and invariability as the laws of nature.

Proclaim proudly that you are noble pioneers and re-founders of the lost treasure troves of Holy Israel. And if you can do this consistently and without compromise to your sworn enemies, then:

The Glory is Yours.

The writer is professor of philosophy at DePaul University in Chicago and a Shillman Journalism Fellow at the David Horowitz Freedom Center. (JNS Nov 27)

Who Can Speak for American Jews Against Anti-Semitism? Not the ADL By Jonathan S. Tobin

Earlier this week, Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, Britain's chief rabbi, broke with precedent and wrote an op-ed article in The Times calling attention to the "new poison" that had taken hold of the Labour Party. Coming less than three weeks before the British people go to the polls to elect a new government on Dec. 12, it was a stark warning of the consequences for British Jewry should Labour prevail and its anti-Semitic leader Jeremy Corbyn become prime minister.

While Labour was already trailing badly in the polls, Mirvis's powerful cri de coeur seems to have clarified the situation in Britain. Corbyn's subsequent repeated refusals to apologize for a culture within Labour that has normalized anti-Semitic invective in its ranks, as well as for his own long history of demonizing of Israel and siding with Islamist terrorists, only reinforced the rabbi's point.

The courageous stand provided a marvelous example of what a leader can achieve when the person filling that role is able to rise to the occasion. The ability of the titular leader of British Jewry to speak out

in the defense of the community's interests at a crucial moment also makes it just as clear that at this moment there is no single person or organization that can play the same role for American Jewry.

That is particularly true when it comes to the one group that has always been relied upon to be the principle voice speaking out against anti-Semitism: the Anti-Defamation League. Under the leadership of Jonathan Greenblatt, who took over from veteran director Abe Foxman in 2015, the ADL abandoned its former status as a respected nonpartisan agency devoted to monitoring and combating anti-Semitism. Under Greenblatt—a former Clinton and Obama administration staffer—it has become just one more liberal Jewish group with a partisan agenda. As such, it has lost the ability that it once had to be a singular and powerful voice that could galvanize the debate about anti-Semitism.

Comparisons between British and American Jewry are generally of little value. The two communities have vast differences, starting with the fact that—in keeping with the nature of American society and politics—there is no centralized leadership that can pretend to speak for all American Jews in the same way that the symbolic position of chief rabbi or the Board of Deputies of British Jews does. Nor have American Jews ever been the outsiders in society that Jews have historically been in Britain.

But even acknowledging these great differences, there is also now a sense among most American Jews that the challenges they face are greater than anything they've had to deal with since the Holocaust. Anti-Semitism is growing on both the left and the right. Anti-Zionist invective, fueled by intersectional myths, have become widely accepted on the left-wing of the Democratic Party with open supporters of the anti-Semitic BDS movement being treated like rock stars rather than pariahs. Concurrent with that political trend is the fact that hatred and violence against Orthodox Jews has become normalized in places like Brooklyn, N.Y. On the right, extremist alt-right trolls haven't achieved the influence of their counterparts on the left, though the noise they are making, along with the scattered acts of violence by lone gunman, has rightly terrified Jews.

To its credit, the ADL has been all over the problem of anti-Semitism on the far-right. Even on that score, however, it has staked out ground that makes it hard to be a unifying factor. Greenblatt's unrelenting animus for President Donald Trump and his efforts to blame him for anti-Semitism have failed to properly credit the U.S. administration as the most pro-Israel in history.

Anti-Semitic trends that couldn't be connected to Trump by even the most rabid liberal were swept under the rug. Its belated response to the targeting of Orthodox Jews in Brooklyn by African-Americans has been too little and too late, and bespoke more of a group that is addicted to playing politics than a national defense organization.

Just as bad is the fact that under Greenblatt, it hasn't been slow to recognize the threat from the left as basically uninterested in it. That's hardly surprising given Greenblatt's role in an Obama administration that helped normalize anti-Israel sentiment within the Democratic Party. Whereas under his predecessor one of ADL's prime functions was to defend Israel, now it is generally found among the Jewish state's critics on a variety of issues, often going out of its way to demonstrate solidarity with liberal foes of Israeli policy, whether or not it has anything to do with ADL's anti-hate brief. That has helped to mute its voice when dealing with the anti-Semites that promote BDS that targets American Jewry far more than Israel.

It's also a function of the way Greenblatt has helped transform ADL into a partisan organization—not merely supporting liberal values, but by intervening on issues like Supreme Court nominations in order to mollify left-wing donors eager to keep the organization aligned with Democratic Party priorities.

Part of the problem with confronting anti-Semitism is that partisans only see threats from their political opponents and are blind to dangers from their political allies. Rather than work against that trend, the ADL exemplifies it.

For all of its problems, the Democratic Party isn't Labour. And the marginalization and hate that British Jews face cannot be analogized to what is going on in the United States. Still, it's far from impossible that the Democrats could eventually go the way of Labour if its left-wing routs the centrists as they did in Britain.

No matter what the future brings, there is one thing we know for certain about the fight against anti-Semitism in the United States. The ADL can't speak up for American Jewry the way Rabbi Mirvis has just done in Britain. American Jewry's primary defense organization has become part of the problem, not the solution. (JNS Nov 27)