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Easy Prey

Can we even pray?

The "Protocols of the Elders of Harvard," as Roger Simon elegantly calls the now-infamous (at least in blogosphere parts) "Israel lobby" screed written by a professor/administrator from Harvard's Kennedy School, and another academic who holds an endowed chair in the political-science department at the University of Chicago, might finally disabuse people of the conventional nonsense that professors at our "elite" schools are really smart. "The Israel Lobby" is really dumb, both intellectually and politically. It should dissuade rational Harvard and Chicago donors from giving any further money to the Kennedy School (where one author, Steven Walt, was, incredibly, the academic dean until his abrupt resignation following the publication of the unfortunate screed) or to the Chicago political-science department (where John Mearsheimer holds an endowed chair). It should also help bright high-school students and their parents realize that a lot of "top" universities are living on largely undeserved reputations.

If these are the stars of that galaxy, it's best to send our children to a different solar system. And it is long past time to take a hard look at how such schools, and such fools, got "rated" at the very top of the educational system of this country. I wonder if the folks at *U.S. News & World Report* are scrambling to revise their evaluation standards. They should.

Most commentary on the screed has generally focused on the details—ranging from factual mistakes to lopsided "interpretations" — which is all to the good. But the most important thing about screed is not the errors of fact; it's The Big Lie at its core. The same Big Lie we've heard for centuries: The Jews run the world, and they do it by manipulating others to carry out the Jews' designs. The premise on which "The Israel Lobby" rests is that American foreign policy, for more than half a century, is the product of a small band of willful and clever people who have tricked the American people and every president into acting in Israel's interests, not our own. This is anti-Semitism in the grand tradition.

But the most amazing sentence in the screed is this one: "Israel was explicitly founded as a Jewish state and citizenship is based on the principle of blood kinship." Which is to say, "Jewish" is a racial matter, not a religious one.

That is why, when Walt and Mearsheimer claim they have nothing against the Jews, it reminds me of Richard Nixon protesting "I am not a crook." He was, and they do. The ritual denial, now as then, is an expression of contempt for the listener, not an act of candor.

We're living at a moment when hatred of religion and of religious groups is gathering momentum. Perhaps this is a reaction to the global religious revival that has been underway for two generations, but whatever its roots, it is now so common that hardly anyone notices

(except, paradoxically, when it's directed against Muslims). Some attention was given to the singularly intolerant action taken by the local regime in St. Paul, Minnesota, barring public displays of bunnies during the Eastern season. And then, to the near-total indifference of the journalistic hunting pack, in late March the San Francisco City Council, angered by Catholic opposition to gay adoption, unanimously approved a resolution that read:

It is an insult to all San Franciscans when a foreign country, like the Vatican, meddles with and attempts to negatively influence this great city's existing and established customs and traditions, such as the right of same-sex couples to adopt and care for children in need.

One could almost see the torch flicker at John F. Kennedy's gravesite across the Potomac, and one had a great impulse to yell very loudly in the fine words of Oriana Fallaci, who lies in pain in Manhattan, snarling back at the cancer that has taken over her body:

How come that, in a country where 85 percent of the citizens say to be Christian, so few rebel to the ludicrous offensive which is going on against Christmas?!? How come that so few protest when your Caviar Left speaks about abolishing Christmas holiday, Christmas-trees, Christmas-songs, the same expressions Merry Christmas and Happy Christmas?!?

That's the sort of anger that comes from a self-described "religious atheist" like Oriana, who knows that if anti-Catholicism and anti-Semitism spread again, it is only a matter of time before they will come for people like her.

As indeed they have already, with their legal briefs and their anti-hate-speech codes, dragging her off to the latest version of the Inquisition for the sin of apostasy against the Church of Political Correctness. San Francisco, under cover of "existing and established customs and traditions," bans free speech. The little reichs of San Francisco, St. Paul, and Paris ban free religion. And "top professors" at Harvard and Chicago take off after the Jews.

No wonder Ayman al Zawahiri and his buddy, the Ayatollah Khamenei, think we're going to be an easy prey.

— *Michael Ledeen, an NRO contributing editor, is most recently the author of The War Against the Terror Masters. He is resident scholar in the Freedom Chair at the American Enterprise Institute*

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