

Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism
Indiana University

Announces

**Anti-Zionism, Antisemitism, and the Dynamics of Delegitimization:
An International Scholars' Conference**

April 2-5, 2016

Call for Papers

This conference will aim to explore the thinking that informs contemporary anti-Zionism and to clarify the ties such thinking may have with antisemitism and broader ideological, political, and cultural currents of thought.

The French Prime Minister, Manuel Valls, recently declared that "anti-Zionism is an invitation to antisemitism." The Canadian Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, concurs, stating that anti-Zionism is "the face of the new antisemitism. It targets the Jewish people by targeting Israel and attempts to make the old bigotry acceptable for a new generation."

Are they right? What are the possible links between anti-Zionism and antisemitism? When does criticism of Israel cease to be a part of legitimate or acceptable discourse and become a form of antisemitism? These have been much discussed questions, but recent events have given them a new urgency, and examining them today seems both timely and necessary.

Most arguments against Zionism formulated in the pre-state period would find few supporters today. The destruction of European Jewry during World War II and the establishment of Israel a few years later changed history in decisive ways and brought most Jews and others to recognize the need for and validity of a sovereign Jewish state. Nevertheless, in some circles attitudes towards the ongoing existence of such a state are no longer as affirmative as they had been, and publicly voiced calls for the end of Israel are becoming more prevalent. These anti-Zionist views are emerging at a time when antisemitism is on the upsurge in Europe and elsewhere. How, if at all, are these phenomena related? What exactly

do people mean when they say they are not against Jews or Judaism but "Zionism?" What does "Zionism" signify to its present-day opponents? What motivates them to fixate, sometimes fervently, on what they see as the singular "injustices" and even "evil" of Zionism and Israel? Of what irredeemable sin do they find Israel to be uniquely guilty?

The thinking that gives rise to these questions finds abundant expression today on college and university campuses as well as in some NGOs, political parties, trade and labor unions, religious institutions, human rights organizations, the United Nations, the global media (including social media), the arts and popular entertainment, etc. Those who align themselves with anti-Zionist agendas within these bodies frequently advance the goals of delegitimization. And the ultimate end point of delegitimization is the dissolution of Israel as a sovereign Jewish state and, for some, the nullification of the notion of the Jewish people as such. Why do such radical goals have appeal to otherwise thoughtful, professedly "peace-loving" people? What do they see in Israel that makes it, alone among all of the world's countries, unacceptable as a state? No other nation, after all, is targeted for elimination. Why is Israel?

This conference will provide opportunity to explore and debate these and related questions in their historical, ideological, political, psychological, and cultural dimensions.

Papers are invited from younger scholars as well as more senior scholars. For oral presentation at the conference, papers will be restricted to 30 minutes. Thus, they should not exceed about 12 pages, double-spaced. For possible inclusion in a projected volume of edited conference proceedings, papers should be 20-25 pages, double-spaced.

Instructions for Submitting Paper Proposals: Please send detailed proposals to Alvin H. Rosenfeld (rosenfel@indiana.edu), together with your curriculum vitae, by June 1, 2015. Proposals should be no longer than 2 typed pages, double-spaced. Decisions about acceptance will be sent to applicants by September 1, 2015.

Academic Advisory Board: Chaired by Alvin H. Rosenfeld, this committee will read and assess conference paper proposals. Members include: Doron Ben-Atar (Fordham University), Bruno Chaouat (University of Minnesota), Günther Jikeli (Indiana University), and Elhanan Yakira (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem).

Conference Sponsors: Indiana University's *Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism*, *School for Global and International Studies*, and *Indiana University Press*.

Expenses: Those presenting papers who require financial assistance can apply to the *Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism*, c/o Alvin H. Rosenfeld, for coverage of conference-related travel, food, and accommodations costs. We will do our best to help meet at least some of your needs.

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