



## B'NAI B'RITH WORLD CENTER - JERUSALEM

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He explained, "Holocaust Denial, in any of its forms, obeys this pattern. For foisting the lie of The Six Million upon the world, Jews are accused of compounding the wickedness that was the just cause of the Holocaust - had it only happened - in the first place. By virtue of the way Jews cynically exploit the Holocaust to serve their political and financial purposes today, are they shown to be deserving of what they suffered yesterday..., or, rather, since there was no Holocaust, what they ought to have suffered yesterday."

"Must the terrible logic that ensures - that an irreparable wrong will never be forgiven - induce in us an equally terrible vigilance: instead of Never Forget, must our motto be Never Mention? Is silence the only precaution we can take against its happening again?"

He said, "The question, *when will Jews be forgiven the Holocaust*, and its implied answer - *never*, have political implications right enough, but there's an important non-political lesson to be drawn from them. If it's not for anything they have *done*, but for what's been done to them that Jews cannot be forgiven, then it's in vain for Jews to strive to alter the way the world sees them."

Jacobson also addressed the application of the same logic of denial of guilt in the criticism of Israel. "The syllogism goes like this. *Not all critics of Israel are anti-Semites. If I am a critic of Israel. Therefore I am not an anti-Semite.* In this way has anti-Zionism become an inviolable space. Question it and you are deemed to have cried anti-Semitism, and since to cry anti-Semitism is a foul, no position from which it is rational to question anti-Zionism remains allowable. By the infernal logic of this magic circle, the anti-Zionist is doubly indemnified, firstly against any criticism of his position whatsoever, since the status of such criticism has been reduced to that of 'tactic', and secondly against the original accusation of anti-Semitism, which anti-Zionism cancels out."

He added, "I don't myself argue that anti-Zionism is a method for circumventing Jew-hating while indulging it, but were that to have been the intention, it could not have been better planned."

Jacobson addressed the role played by Christian prejudices toward Jews, and the similar pattern of double standards that they have followed throughout the centuries. He noted "To see the Jews as prime initiators of both Christianity and Socialism - those explosions in human thought, call them unparalleled liberations or unparalleled catastrophes - is to accept how much, in the way of causing mankind to lose sleep, we are responsible for. Not being forgiven goes back a long way. So could we say it begins - not with our killing Christ, that's altogether too straightforward - but with our conceiving him? Freud speculated that it was those countries in Europe which were the last to forgo what he called 'barbarous polytheism'- the tree-worshippers of Lithuania, for example - that most eagerly embraced the Jew-hating of the 1930s and 40s. They were, Freud suggests, nostalgic for their paganism. 'Their hatred of Jews,' he wrote, 'was at bottom a hatred of Christians.'

"The consequence of this for Jews is that we end up being the meat in the sandwich, responsible for the paganism and responsible for the Christianity, depending which way the wind is blowing. Forcing us to ask: are not some instances of Christian anti-Semitism simply expressions of Christian dissatisfaction with Christianity itself?"

He concluded, "Jews are considered to have forgone their right to own even a part-share in defining anti-Semitism, or to judge the extent to which they are, or indeed ever were, its victims.

"Thus, has the shame of thinking anti-Semitic thoughts been lifted from the shoulders of liberals. Since there can be no such thing as anti-Semitism - Jews having stepped outside the circle of offence in which minorities can be considered to have been offended against - there is no charge of anti-Semitism to answer. The door is now wide open, for those who truly believe they have nothing in their hearts but love, to stroll guilelessly through to hate."

B'nai B'rith World Center Chairman, Dr. Haim V. Katz commented, "B'nai B'rith has been proud to host the leading thinkers of the day on the platform of the Jerusalem Address, and this evening we have heard an invaluable assessment of the use of anti-Semitic rhetoric in the political attacks on Israel, and the place of Holocaust denial in this vitriolic rhetoric. Howard Jacobson is a leading British voice, and uses his eloquent written style, and tonight, his erudite speaking abilities to shed light on how those who profess to have liberal values, when it comes to Israel and the Jews, maintain the oldest of prejudices."

In his closing remarks, H.E. Ambassador Gould thanked Howard Jacobson and said "It has been a privilege to hear Howard speak this evening. Voices such as Howard's are essential for the Jewish community, and indeed he has an almost holy role, not merely as an observer and commentator on identity - but as someone who has helped to shape our identity. He has so often taken our hands and guided us through the complexities of being Jewish in the modern Diaspora."

The 'Jerusalem Address' was established by the B'nai B'rith World Center in 1985 as its most prestigious forum for addressing fundamental challenges facing Israel and the Jewish People. It has consistently hosted some of the most outstanding minds of our times including Abba Eban, Prof. George Steiner, Prof. Shlomo Avineri, Rabbi Dr. Lord Immanuel Jakobovits, Bernard-Henri Levy, Prof. Bernard Lewis, Ambassador Dr. Max M. Kampelman, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, and Melanie Phillips. Howard Jacobson (70), is a novelist and critic, born in Manchester, studied English at Cambridge under F.R. Leavis and lectured for three years at the University of Sydney before returning to teach at Selwyn College in Cambridge. He is described as today's "most Jewish Jewish novelist", and is the author of twelve novels, including *The Mighty Walzer*, *Kalooki Nights* and *The Finkler Question*, for which he won the 2010 Man Booker Prize for Fiction. His most recent novel *Zoo Time*, was published in 2012. He has also written several works of non-fiction, including *Roots Schmoots: Journeys Among Jews*, and most recently *Whatever It Is, I Don't like It*, a collection of his columns in the British newspaper, *The Independent*. He has made several television programs, including, in 1993, a three part adaptation of *Roots Schmoots*. In 2009 he wrote and presented *Jesus the Jew*, and in 2010 *Creation*, both for Channel 4. Howard Jacobson is a strong advocate for Zionism and has written heartfelt columns about his hostility toward the portion of the new Left who claim they can be anti-Zionist without being anti-Semitic.

News of the event was carried in [Ha'aretz](#), [Jerusalem Post](#), [Arutz 7](#) and [Times of Israel](#).