



ADC SPECIAL REPORT

A periodic publication of the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation Commission Inc, No. 30, November 2005

Editor's Introduction

Only sixty years ago the world was forced to face that a so-called civilised nation had sought to totally - and brutally - eradicate a group of fellow human beings. Following the revelation of the unspeakable horror of Nazi Germany's death camps, "never again" became the pious mantra spouted by all political and religious leaders. But not for long.

At an ever-accelerating pace, genocide was practised once more. Atrocity followed atrocity, and again the world became desensitised. And just a few days ago new depths were reached when Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, in a statement reminiscent of the language of Nazi Germany, declared that Israel must be "wiped off the map". When the leader of one UN member unashamedly calls for the elimination of another, the world is perilously close to the bottom of a terrifying slippery slope.

What can we do about this? To begin with, we must understand the facts, describe the dynamics and above all, be frank in naming 'hate'. It is with this in mind that this groundbreaking Special Report discusses what its co-authors, Dr George Halasz and Dr Natan Kellermann, call the phenomenon of 'unconditional hate', namely hate without rational cause or boundaries.

Dr George Halasz is honorary senior lecturer in the Department of Psychological Medicine at Monash University, Melbourne and a consultant psychiatrist. He has co-authored/edited three books, and written many chapters and articles on a range of mental health issues. A child of Holocaust survivors, he has a special interest in the transmission of trauma between the generations.

Dr Natan Kellermann is a clinical psychologist and an international trainer of psychodrama and sociodrama. Until recently he was the executive director of AMCHA/Jerusalem, an Israeli treatment centre for Holocaust survivors and their families. He is the author of "Focus on Psychodrama" (1992) and a co-editor of "Psychodrama with Trauma Survivors" (2000) as well as of numerous articles in the field of psychodrama, sociodrama and related issues.

The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the ADC. Part 2 of this article will be published in our January Report.

Geoffrey Zygiel

Editor

B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation Commission Publications

UNCONDITIONAL HATE (Part 1)

Dr George Halasz & Dr Natan Kellermann

A conversation after the March of the Living 2005 visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp for the 60th year commemoration of the end of World War 2 prompted us to wonder yet again how it all could have happened. How could the German people do such things to the Jews? Did they really hate them so much?

Both the Holocaust of yesterday and the suicide terror war of today are manifestations of hate that have no rational cause and no boundaries. Thus anti-Semitism is apparently not only the longest hate but also the prototype for unconditional hate.

As two mental health professionals who are also children of Holocaust survivors, we struggle to find an adequate professional framework from which to understand the nature of anti-Semitism in our contemporary world. Particularly, we struggle to make sense of its role in the current phenomenon of suicide terrorism in Israel. As a starting point we ask and explore a fundamental question: What motivates the anti-Semite?

To explore this question demands a new level of understanding of the nature and the source of anti-Semitic sentiments and behaviour. What framework of thinking provides adequate understanding? Traditionally, to describe the wrongs that humans do to each other, we rely either on a theological or scientific framework. The former, based on the 'good-evil' spectrum, sees the motivation from evil, "the devil made me do it". The latter, in psychological terms, tends to attribute psychological dysfunction, in particular, various types of arrested development to explain anti-Semitic attitude, "I had a tough childhood".

In our opinion, neither explanation is adequate to describe the complex state of mind of such people.

To offer an alternative model is daunting. It demands an explanation of the complex psychological dynamics behind the pattern of hatred from the Nazi SS soldiers to the Arab suicide terrorists.

We realise that we are walking a tightrope between the 'theological' and 'psychological-scientific' frameworks, seeking a new understanding of the nature and source of Jew-hate that leads to mass killings. Our focus is the understanding of the process whereby individuals develop a state of mind, and a life committed to the destruction of Jews.

For psychology to remain relevant it must provide a source of authentic meaning, understanding, insights and relevant explanations for this extreme

form of premeditated human atrocity. We believe that the construct 'unconditional hate', to be described below, is central to that understanding.

We start with a basic question: why has 'hate' been omitted as a core construct motivating systematic murder of Jews? We suggest that an adequate model to explain such complex and exceptional state of mind demands that we extend the traditional 'psychological' view of hate. We postulate that extreme expressions of anti-Semitism, as in the cases above, reflect not just hate but its extreme variant, 'unconditional hate' (UH).

From this premise, we are forced to rethink and reintegrate a psychological framework where UH plays a central motivating role in understanding both the Holocaust and suicide terrorism. We articulate the processes by which the UH finds expression as incremental, a step-by-step progression of hate, gathering psychic momentum along a spectrum, eventually to transform in the extreme to UH.

To explore this neglected psychological territory, we trace some influences that shape and intensify 'normal' hate, as observed in every-day infant behaviour. We note the central transformational role of family and social attitudes and values. We propose a model where, if the young child's hate remains unchecked, or further, if family and society actively nurture it, the individual develops along this spectrum of pathological hate, defined as unregulated hate.

We postulate that, in the extreme, ordinary hate may 'evolve' into the ultimate state of UH. To the best of our knowledge this construct has not been previously reported. The term 'unconditional hate' was coined by Natan Kellermann and first presented at a conference on anti-Semitism in Melbourne, 2005.

First, we set the stage to understand the development of ordinary love-hate and then ask what conditions disrupt this balance to result in unconditional hate.

Development of balanced 'love-hate'

The 'developmental perspective' of love-hate in childhood is illustrated by a quote from the well-known case of 'Dibbs' - a young boy in therapy, as described by Axline (1964). Briefly, Dibbs had serious identity problems and was in search of a genuine sense of 'self'. The following is an excerpt from the dialogue between the young boy and his therapist:

"I shall sing it to you" he announced. "I will make up a song and sing it just for you. Okay?"

"Okay," I replied...

He took a deep breath. Then he started to sing... The music presented a contrast to the words he composed....

"Oh, I hate - hate - hate," he sang. "I hate the walls and the doors that lock and the people who shove you in. I hate the tears and the angry words and I'll kill them all with my little hatchet and hammer their bones and spit on them." He reached down in the sand, picked up a toy soldier, pounded it with the rubber hatchet, spit on it. "I spit in your face. I spit in your eye. I gouge your head down deep in the sand," he sang. His voice rang out, sweetly and clearly. "And the birds do fly from the east to the west and it is a bird that I want to be. Then I'll fly away over the walls, out the door, away, away, away from all my enemies. I'll fly and fly around the world and I'll come back to the sand, to the playroom, to my friend. I'll dig in the sand. I'll bury in the sand. I'll throw the sand. I'll play in the sand. I'll count all the grains of the sand and I'll be a baby again."

He sucked on the nursing bottle again. He grinned at me, "How did you like my song?" he asked.

"That was quite a song," I replied.

"Yes," he said. "Quite the song." He got out of the sandbox, walked over to me, looked at my watch. "Ten more minutes," he said, and held up ten fingers. (Axline, 1964, p. 85-86).

This vignette serves to illustrate the intimate link in children's minds between 'hate' and 'killing'. Dibbs expresses a passionate hate that leads in his play to killing: "I hate the tears and the angry words and I'll kill them all with my little hatchet and hammer their bones and spit on them." What happens to a child who cannot mentally transform this hate or, of equal concern, if his caretakers – his adult world – encourage and channel this hatred towards Jews? Well, in this case it becomes a perfectly normal and socially acceptable form of animosity, blessed by society and promoted by the majority, as in Germany in the 1930's and is today prevalent in the Palestinian media and education system, which singles out Jews as the embodiments/personification of the Ultimate Evil.

Jews as the Ultimate Evil

In the minds of anti-Semites all through history, Jews represented the essence of everything evil. For Christians, the Jew became a unique, mythic creature similar to the anti-Christ. During the Middle Ages, superstitious people saw the signs of evil powers in all historic events, then fabricated the Jew's affiliation with witches and demons who brought death and destruction to the community. Thus, when a catastrophe actually occurred, the Jews were singled-out as its cause and people would take revenge.

Muslims worldwide are fed with Nazi-propaganda about the evil intentions of Jews and Israel. The Palestinian Authority under Mahmoud Abbas continues to promote this hate ideology and depict Israelis as cruel and inhuman murderers. For example, in PA TV on October 6, 2005, an actor depicting an Israeli soldier gleefully and cold-bloodedly murders a bride in her wedding gown (Palestine Media Watch, October 2005). And, in the 2003 summit of Islamic leaders, Malaysian Prime Minister Mohammad said: "The Europeans killed six million Jews out of 12 million, but today the Jews rule the world by proxy. They get others to fight and die for them. They have now gained control of the most powerful countries and this tiny community has become a world power." The audience stood up in vocal consent.

Another example of how such blind hate is instigated in an Iranian TV drama series with the name *For you, Palestine* or *Zahra's Blue Eyes*. It describes how Israelis steal the blue eyes of Palestinian children to implant them into Jewish children. Because of the characters chosen, its primitive hatred does not remain passive and indifferent, but passionate and violent, demanding bloody revenge. Indeed, Zahra's father promises to take revenge, both for her, and for the crimes against the Palestinian people. A sad consequence of this TV-series is that it has cast doubts over a humanitarian Israeli project, that for years has provided poor infants from all over the world (including Arab countries) with acute heart surgery, and saved many lives as a result. Instead of allowing such a project to build bridges between ordinary people in the Middle East, this series has transformed good will into hate.

The close links between the hatred of Jews and Islamic terrorist activity has also been described in detail by Küntzel (2003).

Anti-Semitism Re-examined

From the above examples we need to revisit the various theories suggested to explain such persistent hate against Jews. Here, we discuss briefly five of the most common reasons for anti-Semitism that has surfaced in different guises throughout history.

Jews are hated because:

1. They are the cause of all misfortunes.
2. They possess too much wealth and power.
3. They arrogantly claim supremacy over other peoples.
4. They killed Jesus, and
5. They are different and inferior.

Many of these 'reasons' for anti-Semitism are no longer relevant in today's Europe. (This leads to the distinction between the 'old' and so-called 'new' anti-Semitism, which we will elaborate in part 2).

First of all, fewer than 2 million Jews still live in Europe and most Gentiles simply have no personal contact with them. Secondly, the secular trend has made religious anti-Semitism irrelevant. Thirdly, people in general are better educated and too aware of the history of the 2nd World War to believe in all the lies about Jews. Fourthly, there is less competition from Jewish intellectuals than before and because of the improved financial situation in Europe Jews are no longer a privileged group to be envied. Finally, racial prejudice is more dominant against immigrant foreigners who are seen as more different and strange than against assimilated Jews, who look, speak and behave like everybody else. What remains are the old stereotypes of the alleged Jewish control of mass media and global conspiracy.

In addition, while these theories seem to be sufficient justification for many people to hate Jews, they do not withstand logical reasoning. Some of them even seem to be preposterous in light of common sense and factual knowledge. For example, why would Jews initiate misfortunes that hurt themselves as much as anybody else? How can the Jews be ascribed with a bewildering variety of diametrically opposed and even contradictory roles at the same time? How can the Jew be described, both as a parasitic capitalist and a revolutionary socialist, an internationalist and a 'localist,' and a religious fanatic and an atheist? And if Jews had so much power, would they not have been able to prevent the Holocaust and all the recent condemnations of Israel? And what kind of justice system can accuse Jews today for the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth over two thousand years ago? Finally, if Jews are hated because of being strangers, why were not assimilated Jews spared Nazi persecution?

Because the truth is that none of these reasons really make any difference to the anti-Semite.

Jews could be good or bad, behave like everybody else or behave differently, and be assimilated or traditional. It doesn't matter. Whatever they do, whether good or bad, is quite beside the point as far as Jew-haters are concerned. The efforts of Jews to adapt to the cultures and norms of their host societies do not make them more accepted and welcome. No amount of Jewish charity would erase the charge of Jewish greed.

When hate is present with such intensity but without a reason, it can be named 'unconditional hate.'

This construct seems to be the polar opposite of 'unconditional love', as described by Carl Rogers (1961).

'Unconditional love,' according to Rogers, is the non-possessive caring and total acceptance of people regardless of their behaviour. The love is provided, not on condition that the person behaves in a certain manner, but because he or she is who they are. Children yearn for such unconditional love – to be loved for whom they are, regardless of how they behave. Everyone wants to receive such treatment.

As in unconditional love, there are no strings attached to unconditional hate, and nothing is expected in return. It is not dependent on what the other person does, but what he or she is. Just as a mother who loves her child, even if it misbehaved, the anti-Semite hates the Jew even if he or she behaved well. And just as a mother who believes that there is something inherently good in her child worth loving, the anti-Semite is convinced that there is something inherently bad in the Jew that justifies 'unconditional hate.'

The dynamics of such 'unconditional hate' is that they hate Jews no matter what Jews do. This is a cardinal feature of a non-rational mind.

Conclusion: Anti-Semitism = Unconditional Hate

Anti-Semitism with its pervasive animosity towards Jews seems to be more than a personal opinion or an attitude. It also involves a strong emotional and physiological arousal, similar to its opposite "love." But instead of attraction, anti-Semites feel repulsion and disgust, almost as if they have an allergic reaction to Jews. In such a 'Judeo-phobic' response, the anti-Semite would say: "I do not really know why, but I detest the Jew and everything that has to do with Judaism and Israel!" If nurtured, this repulsion may develop into a complete worldview and a persistent delusional belief system convinced of the evil nature of the Jews.

No reasoning helps persuade the anti-Semite about his or her biased conceptions. Anti-Semites do not, and cannot, question their prejudices. Even though they might never have had any direct contact with Jews, they are convinced of the correctness of their perceptions and assume others will perceive Jews in the same way.

"Jews try to do so much, not to be hated, but it doesn't matter what they do. We have honestly endeavoured everywhere to merge ourselves in the social life of surrounding communities and to preserve the faith of our fathers. We are not permitted to do so. In vain are we loyal patriots, our loyalty in some places running to extremes; in vain do we make the same sacrifices of life and property as our fellow-citizens; in vain do we strive to increase the fame of our native land in science and art, or her wealth by trade and commerce. In countries where we have lived for centuries we are still cried down as strangers. And often by those whose ancestors were not yet domiciled in the land where Jews had already had experience of suffering. The majority may decide which are the strangers; for this, as indeed every point, which arises in the relations between nations, is a question of might. ... If we could only be left in peace. But I think we shall not be left in peace." (Hertzl 1896)

References

Axline, V.M. (1964). *Dibbs: In Search of Self*. NY: Ballantine.

Palestine Media Watch Bulletin, Report October 2005 <reports@pmw.org.il>

Küntzel, M. (2003). *Islamic Antisemitism and its Nazi Roots*. Keynote address at the conference “Genocide and Terrorism – Probing the Mind of the Perpetrator”, April 11, at Yale University, New Haven.

Rogers, C. (1961). *On Becoming a Person*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Hertzl, T. (1896). *The Jewish State. An Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Question*, ed. Jacob M. Alkow, New York: American Zionist Emergency Council.

Copyright ©.

ADC Special Report is a publication of the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation Commission Inc (ADC), the human rights arm of B'nai B'rith Australia/New Zealand, which is dedicated to researching and combating all forms of racism. PO Box 450, Caulfield South, Victoria, Australia 3162. Tel: Int + 61 3 9572 5770 Fax Int + 61 3 9572 5775 Email antidef@bigpond.net.au

Editor: Geoffrey Zygier

Mailing list manager: Ian Grinblat

To subscribe or unsubscribe from ADC Publications, or to notify email address changes, contact Ian Grinblat at antidef@bigpond.net.au.

To comment on editorial matters, contact Geoffrey Zygier at zygier@bigpond.net.au.