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## **We sorely need the ADL ... to do its job**

Charles Jacobs



Last week I attended the New England premiere screening of *Unmasked Judeophobia*. I didn't sleep well that night. Gloria Greenfield, the director and producer, has fashioned a Klieg light that pierces the fog of denial insulating America's comfortable Jews from having to deal with the unpleasantness of the threats gathering against us. Words cannot convey the power of this film to drive home a message so obvious yet so long resisted. It would be an act of negligence for any Jewish leader not to urge his community to see it.

The film opens with Elie Wiesel telling us with crushing sadness that the Jew-hatred he assumed had perished with the closing of Auschwitz, is now back. Yet even that fails to prepare the audience for what follows: 90 minutes of riveting revelations by dozens of the most eloquent scholars and activists of our time, describing the movements and the ideologies that now threaten Jewish life emanating from the Muslim world, paralleled by leftist Israel-hatred, growing rampantly in Europe and now even reaching our shores. Anyone who has not known or sensed that there is a serious problem will be changed by this documentary.

The film does beg a central question: How did people who have advocated effectively for almost every other righteous cause fail to protect itself from the webs of lies, blood libels and moral inversions that now ensnare Jewry? Why are so few speaking of this Islamist-based anti-Semitism?

In the film, Harvard professor Ruth Wisse describes how modern liberal creeds strenuously resist data about today's anti-Semitism. Almost from kindergarten, we are drilled to think that humans are basically the same: good, self-interested and essentially reasonable. It's a secular catechism:

Just be sensitive enough to understand the other fellow's point of view, and we can all get along. But since irrational Jew-hatred (and much else) cannot be solved through discourse and reason, acknowledging the reality of anti-Semitism would force many to break (painfully) with these deeply held beliefs about how the world is supposed to work. Most prefer denial.

The film documents that the greatest threat to Jews today is the rampant spread of Islamic anti-Semitism, funded chiefly by Saudi petro dollars and propagated through Muslim Brotherhood ideology among multitudes throughout the vast Muslim realm. But this truth is blocked: Muslims are seen exclusively through the liberal lens as victims of Western colonialism and so cannot be blamed for their conduct. This gives the Islamic world a free hand in attacking the Jews, whose "occupation" of Palestine then becomes the accepted "logical reason" for their Jew-hatred. This is the big lie of our time: Jews were hated, attacked and massacred throughout the Middle East long before 1948. But painful facts cannot easily trump comforting dogma.

**And so even Jewish defense agencies, wary of upsetting their own liberal frameworks (and their liberal donors!) shy away from the most important task this era has set before them: exposing Islamic anti-Semitism and creating plans to counter it. It can only be for such reasons that the Anti-Defamation League, the largest and best funded Jewish defense organization (at \$55 million a year 2009, the last reported year), has flinched from this task. Yes, ADL head, Abe Foxman has said that the most alarming danger to Jews since WWII comes from Muslim anti-Semitism, but apart from a few such statements, ADL remains essentially silent on the issue.**

My colleague Ilya Feoktistov and I have just completed an empirical study of ADL press releases from 1995 to the present (see my blog, [www.charlesjacobs.org](http://www.charlesjacobs.org)). It's a good if not perfect indicator of ADL priorities. Here are a few central findings, expressed in the nearby pie chart: Only 3 percent of ADL's press releases focus on Islamic extremism and Arab anti-Semitism.

Only another 5 percent deal with domestic and international terrorism. By contrast, fighting for causes unrelated to Jewish defense accounts for 31 percent of ADL's press release output. Instead of warning the Jews about Islamic anti-Semitism, these days, the ADL is often warning us about the dangers of "Islamophobia," a term created and employed by radical Islamists to block and stain with the racist label, any public concern about Islamist beliefs and conduct.

Jews, including ADL, have effectively challenged American and Europe's political leaders and clerics to stand up against anti-Semitism in the Western world, but we've almost entirely ignored the anti-Semitism gushing in the Muslim world.

*Charles Jacobs, president of Americans for Peace and Tolerance, wrote this column with researcher Ilya Feoktistov.*