

About Alain Badiou's inconsistencies concerning the so-called «Jewish Question», Zionism, «anti-Zionism» and Israël /Palestine

The following texts were written in 2012 and 2014, and slightly modified for their translation. They criticize two books on the cover of which appears Alain Badiou's name. In reality, however, neither of these books is a real one, if by that word, we mean a scholarly study, based on reliable historical sources, and dealing with antisemitism, Zionism and the so-called «Jewish question¹». The first one, *Antisemitism Everywhere*, is an article printed in large letters to turn it into an editorial product that could pass for a «book». The second is a collection of articles, interviews and excerpts of texts.

Alain Badiou has the reputation of being a «*great Marxist philosopher*». I am unqualified to judge his philosophical talent as my philosophical knowledge is quite limited. And I am not interested in labeling who is a «great Marxist» and who is not. I leave this job to Marxologists.

In these two texts I have merely tried to show that Alain Badiou, by venturing into the realm of politics and history, says and writes a lot of nonsense, partly because he has not the proper knowledge to deal with historical and political facts (I could say the same thing about what he writes on China even he is a Maoist, because his ideological positions oblige him to discard or ignore basic facts). Hence my polemical and irreverent tone when faced with the texts of an intellectual who uses his authority acquired in the philosophical (and mediatic)

¹ As noted by Danny Trom, in his book *La promesse et l'obstacle* (Editions du Cerf, 2007), one should establish a difference between the «Jewish question» (an expression wrongly used by many left-wing theoreticians) and «the Jewish problem». For Danny Trom, the «Jewish question» should describe the discussions among Jews themselves when they question their religious, cultural, political identities. What most leftwing militants call the «Jewish question» should be more accurately called the «**Jewish problem**» as Jews are a problem (and not a question) for conscious (or unconscious) anti-Semites and anti-Zionists. Trom skillfully turns the perspective around: he attacks those who don't understand «Jewish realities» ; those who are uncomfortable with Jewishness and Judaism because they do not fit into their small ideological boxes; or, to put it another way, those who consider Jews to be a problem (**but do not dare to say it**), a problem which they would like to «solve».

Marx led the way with his article on *The Jewish Question* in which he explained Jews would **disappear** if they accepted to assimilate themselves into democratic bourgeois society. Many other Marxists followed this path since 1844, but history took a radically different course from their theories.

The creation of the State of Israel in 1948 and today's left- and rightwing «Zionists» have thus only complicated the task of those who wish to see a world free of Jewish identities, whether religious, political (the State of Israel or Zionist associations) and/or cultural.

field to conceal his ignorance about historical and political matters. This irresponsible attitude should pose a problem for anyone who is committed to intellectual rigour and honesty.

Moreover, Badiou is presented as somebody belonging to the left, and even the far left, whereas his political alliances in the intellectual field and some of his arguments, and in any case the arguments of his allies (Eric Hazan and Cecile Winter) show that he has no political sense and that he supports reactionary individuals, insofar as philoStalinism and Third Worldism are strong obstacles to any real emancipation and liberation of the exploited.

Y.C., Ni patrie ni frontières, April 2020

How Eric Hazan and Alain Badiou hide the achievements of a century of debates on Zionism in their pamphlet *Antisemitism everywhere*²

March 2012

Anti-Zionism is an ideology that is sometimes respectable when it's based on solid historical arguments³ defended by activists or intellectuals who do not lose their time (and ours) attacking insignificant reactionary publicists or media people.

In his preface to a collection of contributions about left-wing anti-Zionism, August Grabski⁴ uses a definition of anti-Zionism elaborated by Todd Endelman. For this British historian, legitimate anti-Zionist criticism of Israel becomes antisemitic and therefore illegitimate under the following circumstances:

«1. *When it questions the legitimacy of the Jewish state, but no other state, and the legitimacy of Jewish nationalism, but no other nationalism, either in the Middle East or elsewhere.*

2. *When it denies to the Jewish State, but no other State, the right to express the character of the majority of its citizens (that is to be as Jewish as France is French).*

3. *When it demonizes the Jewish State, turning the Arab-Israeli conflict into a morality play, a problem that Jews, and only Jews, created and for which Jews, and Jews alone, are responsible.*

4. *When it expresses an obsessive, exclusive and disproportionate concern with the shortcomings⁵ of the Israelis and the sufferings of the Palestinians— to the point that this conflict*

² The English version published by Verso is different from the French one as it includes a text from Ivan Segré *La réaction philosémite* (The Philo-Semite Reaction) published earlier (in 2009) and by another publisher (Lignes). So my article only deals with the French version and does not mention Ivan Segré at all, although it would have been interesting, especially because then Segré evolved a lot since 2009.

³ For example, one can read *Etre arabe* by Elias Sanbar and Farouk Mardam-Bey (Sindbad, 2007), a book that exposes the lies of Zionist propaganda (here I write Zionist without quotation marks, because the authors know what they are talking about) since the beginning of the twentieth century, then the lies of Israeli propaganda since 1948, even if one may not share their admiration for Nasser or their deleterious illusions about the virtues of Arab nationalism.

⁴ <http://bataillesocialiste.wordpress.com/2012/03/02/rebels-against-zion/> . It was published by the Jewish Historical Institute in 2011 and includes essays written by Roni Gechtman, Rick Kuhn, Jack Jacobs, Henry Srebrnik, Bat-Ami Zucker, Silvia Schenkolewski-Kroll, August Grabski, Gennady Estraiikh, Philip Mendes, Bashir Abu-Manneh, Polly Pallister-Wilkins; Uri Davis, Ilan Pappé and Stan Crooke.

⁵ The author uses the consensual and neutral term «shortcomings» which does not describe appropriately Israeli colonial practices, constant violation of the Palestinians' most elementary rights and Israeli war crimes.

between two small peoples is transformed into a cosmic, Manichean struggle between the forces of Good and Evil.»

August Grabski adds: *«When criticism of Israel crosses one of these lines and becomes an obsessive narrative of fantasies and fears, that is when we are dealing with solely antisemitic notions.»*

Hazan and Badiou could, for example, have taken such a definition as a starting point to dissect it, challenge it, propose a new one, etc., to raise the level of this debate. Although point 2 is inspired by a nationalist and reactionary argument, the other three points could have been used to begin to sketch a definition of left antisemitism.

Unfortunately, no new arguments can be found in the 60-page article written by Eric Hazan and Alain Badiou. The authors deliberately ignore the achievements of almost a century of discussions within the socialist, communist and far left currents, as well as the anarchist movement, about Zionism and antisemitism, thus contributing to the ignorance of the new generations. Due to lack of time and readily available political references, today's politicized youth will probably trust these elders who are supposed to be founts of wisdom, «key Marxist thinkers for the 21st century» and exemplary «anti-imperialist» activists.

A disappointing pamphlet that offers an umpteenth version of conspiracy theories

If, after the creation of the State of Israel, 900,000 Jews left the «Arab-Muslim» countries where they had been living for centuries, it's of course **only** because of the Mossad attacks against «synagogues» (how many? on what dates? the authors do not specify this and do not indicate their sources) in Arab countries.

The discriminatory «dhimmi» status⁶ that Jews had been subjected to for centuries; the recycling of many former Nazis into the police apparatus in Egypt and Syria; the anti-Jewish demonstrations

⁶ This status was based on the very violent criticisms expressed against Jews in the Koran, who were considered as «traitors» to the divine message and responsible for the murder of Jesus-Christ, one of the Prophets recognized by Islam ; moreover, not all Jewish tribes accepted Muhammad's military domination, which gave rise to anti-Judaic verses regularly used by the most antisemitic Muslims until today.

On the Islamophile website (<http://www.islamophile.org/spip/Le-Coran-est-il-antisemite.html>), Doctor Muzammil Siddiqi writes: *«The Koran rather criticizes the Jews who have turned away from the authentic divine message and it rebukes those who despised and ridiculed Prophet Muhammad ... [in fact, the Koran denounces the Jewish tribes who rejected the dictates of the military-religious leader Muhammad, Y.C.]. These criticisms against the Jews are similar to those found in other scriptures, including the Bible [criticisms which are precisely at the root of Western-Christian antisemitism !Y.C.]. (...) Such specific criticisms have never been interpreted by the great scholars of the Koran as incitement to hatred of the Jewish people. They should therefore not be confused with antisemitism.»*

When we know the diffusion of the *Protocol of the Elders of Zion* in the «Arab-Muslim» countries ; the close alliance between Nazi Germany and the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem ; the antisemitic remarks of Ahmadinejad and other Iran political leaders ; the organization in Iran of a Holocaust deniers' congress and a cartoonists' contest about the Holocaust, etc, we can see that Muslim antisemitism is a very serious matter. Unfortunately the «great scholars of the Koran» have hardly been «understood» by Muslims over the past 14 centuries, exactly like the popes have not been «understood» by Catholics, or Luther by Protestants...

organized in the 1940s and 1950s and the anti-Jewish laws passed by the «Arab» regimes after independence; the creation of a state that was supposed to offer a haven of peace to Jews all over the world⁷ ; all these phenomena have did not influence their departure... The massive exodus of Jews from the Middle East, Near East and North Africa has only been provoked by the **joint manoeuvres of the Mossad and CIA...**

The trick is blindingly obvious but apparently Badiou and Hazan judge that the average anti-Zionist reader of their article does not care much about the quality of the arguments presented to him, or her.

Let's be clear: lobbies like the American AIPAC or networks like the French CRIF⁸, secret services like the Mossad, international associations like the Bnai Brith (organized in lodges, following the example of freemasonry), **do exist and are quite politically active**. We could also add French Jewish community radio stations which give a voice to the most obtuse, obscurantist and reactionary «members of the community». It's astonishing (but somehow rather salutary) that their aberrant or scandalous remarks go unnoticed by antisemites and that the far right and Holocaust deniers do not exploit them. All these media, lobbies, associations or secret services have been, and still are, propaganda tools for so-called «Zionism», i.e. for the Israeli state today.

But the concept of an international « Israeli-American-Zionist » plot is too close from the idea of an international Jewish plot defended by the antisemitic agitator Alain Soral⁹ in his pamphlet and best-seller *Understanding the Empire*. Even if he avoids writing «the Jews» on every page, he manages to make his readers understand who are the true «Masters of the World», according to his racist, antisemitic and paranoid spirit.

Unlike Soral, Badiou and Hazan, our two heralds of «white»¹⁰ anti-Zionism are not antisemitic. At the same time, they borrow from antisemitism one of its favourite themes : the international

If the «message of love» supposedly promoted by all religions is regularly transformed into words and acts of hatred committed by their followers, we should perhaps ask ourselves why.

Dr. Muzammil Siddiqi provides us with an element of an answer since he innocently writes: «Koran does not condemn the Semitic race (sic !)\», and then protests against the idea that the Koran contains any «curse cast against a people simply because of their race». This gentleman still believes in the theory of race... which is the ideological basis of antisemitism and racism !

⁷ We know today that this is false, but we can understand the hopes raised by the birth of Israel, especially as it was accompanied by mythological tales about «socialist» kibbutz and economic prosperity – and supported by the USSR, the idol of most of the international left, during its first two years of existence.

⁸ CRIF (Conseil représentatif des institutions juives de France): created in 1944, it was supposed to include all political tendencies. As its policy became more and more rightwing, and also because of power struggles among its religious and political components, it includes today only a part of French Jewish associations, although it pretends to represent all French Jews.

⁹ Alain Soral : « national-socialist » agitator (as he calls himself), he has turned antisemitism into a business, with his books and videos on Youtube. He also sells organic products, survival items and courses, etc.

¹⁰ I am deeply opposed to classifying individuals according to their so-called «race» (even if you call them a «subjective race», like current post-modern ideologists or their leftist friends do). It is more relevant to look at their social function in the relations of production and their class political positions. But since racial pseudo-concepts are used by Hazan and Badiou, one has the right to

Jewish conspiracy (the word «Jew» being replaced here by «Zionist» to which, for good measure, they add the adjective «American»). They want to give credence at all costs to the idea of an «Israeli-American-Zionist» conspiracy that dates back to the aftermath of September 11, 2001, and has strong supports in the media.

Badiou and Hazan want us to believe that French media systematically condemn their ideas or try to silence them, and even drag them before the courts to pay heavy fines. They know very well, however, that they can publish articles at any time in mainstream dailies like *Le Monde* and *Libération* and be interviewed whenever they want in the state-owned radios, starting with France Culture (followed by 1.6 million people every day, so not exactly a confidential media).

They tell fairy tales about an imaginary repression against any criticism directed against Israel in France, although they know that such conspiracy theories always foster antisemitism.

Badiou is the darling of all «Marxist» intellectuals (but also left militants) who are orphans of «real socialism» – in other words who regret totalitarian state capitalism and its advantages for their caste. Badiou drapes himself in his Mao-Stalinist philosopher's toga, while Hazan wears his «white» Gallo-chic publisher's habit. Our two polemicists have no complex to draw from the oldest arguments of conspiracy theories.

To a certain extent, this is not surprising; the Russian and Chinese regimes, which they adored in their youth and even much later, have always treated their internal opponents as «traitors», «spies», individuals «sold to America», to «revisionism», to «Zionism», when it wasn't to «Hitler and the Mikado» at the same time !

Conspiracy theories and the habit of treating their political opponents on the left as «traitors», «cops», «informers» or «spies» are part of their Stalinist political education: these methods of «discussion» flourished as soon as the Bolshevik party took power and found itself in charge of the «Soviet» state, police and army. The situation only worsened once Stalin, as Party General Secretary, succeeded in eliminating all oppositions within the Russian Communist Party between 1924 and 1928, and used the Communist International to set up an international espionage network in the service of Russian power. The process did not stop at the borders of the USSR and the clandestine maneuvers of Russian secret services: Stalinist bureaucrats taught all the parties of the Communist International to defame (and often physically liquidate) their opponents, drawing on conspiracy theories.

remind them of the unquestionable «whiteness» they share with the petty-bourgeoisie and the «White» bourgeoisie, to which they pretend not to belong and which they denounce with great fanfare.

Moreover, the reactionary or «progressive» positions of individuals do not depend in any way on their skin colour, as Barack Obama, Condoleeza Rice and Colin Powell have demonstrated when they occupied the highest positions at the head of the US.

Richard Nixon and the «White» American big bosses were the first to recover the Black Power slogan (see Marning Marable's book : *Race, reform and rebellion. The Second Reconstruction in Black America, 1945-1990*). Some of the radical Afro-American nationalist leaders of the 1960s and 1970s became fervent defenders of free enterprise. Anyone knowing these facts may have some doubts about the positive effects, for the class struggle, of the importation of racial concepts into the European political and intellectual field by ambitious academics in search of new jobs, politicians in search of electors and positions and... even militants who are certainly revolted and sincere but very poorly informed.

And even their opponents (the Trotskyists) were sometimes contaminated. The example of the Varga affair in 1973, set up within the OCI, the Trotskyist group where Assouline, Mélenchon, Cambadélis, Jospin (all French Socialist Party leaders, MPs, senators and even Prime Minister in the case of Jospin) and a few other current social-patriots were politically trained, offers us a good illustration of these Stalinist methods. But how many mini-trials based on the Stalinist model have been set up from scratch against individuals or small tendencies within far left and ultraleft groups? Stalinism has spread its poison for generations, including among the 68ers, post-68ers, autonomous militants, etc.

Hazan and Badiou are fighting windmills

Their pamphlet boils down to a flat settling of scores with a few mostly uninteresting individuals who, moreover, occupy no significant place in the discussions of left-wing and far left-wing activists: Alain Finkielkraut, Bernard Henri-Lévy, Claude Lanzmann, Eric Marty, Jean Birnbaum, Robert Redeker, André Glucksmann, Pierre André-Taguieff and Jacques-Alain Millner.

It is unlikely that more than 1% of left or far left activists (and I am pretty optimistic here) have read the works of the above-mentioned individuals. At a pinch, they may have had a distracted look at some of their articles in the mainstream dailies *Le Monde* or *Libération*, or heard them for a few minutes on radio or television, but it's obvious that they never paid much attention to their media vociferous ranting, as it most often coincided with the diatribes of the right.

A subject like left antisemitism deserves a serious book that targets something more important than a few conservative scarecrows despised by left and far left activists. Above all, it should be underlied by a vision that goes beyond the Franco-French framework in which French «radical» intellectuals remain confined.

Left antisemitism

We are still waiting for the historian who will put into perspective (and take into account the context and distinct debates in each period), the positions of the anarchists, the left and far left, the unions and the labor movement in general, on the «Jewish question», «Zionism», anti-Zionism, etc., over the past century.

We don't need an intelligent and cultured polemicist like P.A. Taguieff, who compiles and cuts out hundreds of quotations, makes inadmissible amalgams, and makes senseless accusations. No more do we need a hurried historian like Michel Dreyfus, who wrote a book (*L'Antisémitisme à gauche*¹¹) just to reassure left and far left militants, so that they can continue to sleep quietly, with a clean conscience.

We need a researcher, or rather a team of patient and methodical researchers who will be able to describe in depth the debates, the importance of the specific problems and the numerous difficulties raised by the so-called «Jewish question», Zionism and the existence of the state of Israel, in France and elsewhere.

The work has been cleared up a bit in at least two collections of articles, published in English: the first one brings together contributions written by moderate or outright reactionary academics, and deals with many aspects of the history of antisemitic anti-Zionism, both left-wing and right-

¹¹ In France most left and even far left militants are probably ready to admit the existence of a tiny «antisemitism on the Left» («*antisémitisme à gauche*») but not the existence of any «left antisemitism» («*antisémitisme de gauche*). For them, today only one racism is dangerous : anti-Muslim racism which they call «islamophobia». For more details see my article «Antimuslim racism and antisemitism in Europe» on mondialisme.org.

wing, including at the top of the American army (Gallo-Chic «anti-Zionists» will undoubtedly have a heart attack if they happen to read this book !): *Antisemitism and Anti-Zionism in Historical Perspective: Convergence and Divergence* (edited by Jeffrey Herf, Routledge, 2006).

The second one *Rebels against Zion. Studies on the Jewish Left Antizionism* (2011), edited by August Grabski, brings together contributions from several academics, but also left-wing activists close to the Israeli CP, Fatah and Trotskyists. But none of these books has been translated in French.

Lenin, Stalin and left-wing anti-Zionism

On this subject, one can also read Asmund Borgen Gjerde's thesis *Reinterpreting Soviet "Antizionism". An analysis of "antizionist" texts published in the Soviet Union, 1967-1972*¹². Its first chapters retrace the ambiguities of the Bolsheviks concerning the Jewish question and Zionism, to explain how antisemitism in the USSR did not arise on an ideologically virgin soil ; it did not also suddenly appear after the Six-Day War (even if 1967 marked a rupture linked in particular to important changes in Russian Jewry), whether the (neo-) Stalinists, (post-) Trotskyists, Leninists and (post-) Maoists of all trends like it or not.

A. Borgen Gjerde explains well how, in his relentless struggle against the Bund before 1917, Lenin, while denouncing pogroms, antisemitism, the crimes of the Black Hundreds, anti-Jewish discrimination, etc., always defended the idea that antisemitism was a vestige of feudalism, which could only mobilize backward peasants. He refused to admit that antisemitism was also rife among the Russian working class, which was the criticism of the Bund.

This denial of workers' antisemitism has been a constant among Lenin's successors, or followers, whether they are Trotskyists, Stalinists, Maoists, Left communists or «ultra-lefts». For them, antisemitism (and indeed often racism as well, but that's another discussion) is an ideology almost exclusively prevalent among the petty bourgeoisie (peasants, small traders, craftsmen, etc. And these social strata are supposed to disappear in the dustbins of history because of the inevitable evolution of capitalism.

This may partially explain why the Western left, far left, and ultraleft have always been so slow to react against antisemitism, as proven in France by numerous examples from the Dreyfus Affair to the assassination of Ivan Halimi¹³, without forgetting their attitude towards the deportations of French Jews and Judeocide during the Second World War. For these activists, antisemitism was, and often is, only a marginal phenomenon, concerning only the petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie: **those who propagate it** (the capitalist media and the ruling classes) ; **those who are infected by it** (the «middle classes») ; and **those who are victims of it** (the loan sharks of the Middle Ages, the French officer Dreyfus in the 19th century, the Jewish merchants, craftsmen,

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Asmund

Borgen

[https://www.academia.edu/36425434/ MA_thesis_Reinterpreting_Soviet_Anti-Zionism](https://www.academia.edu/36425434/MA_thesis_Reinterpreting_Soviet_Anti-Zionism) . Since this article, at least another useful book appeared (although I have not read it) : Brendan McGeever, *Antisemitism and the Russian revolution*, Cambridge University Press, 2019. You can hear a conference and debate with other historians here (after 10 minutes of introduction): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oqsn233cKrg> . And he published also an article in *Jacobin* about his book <https://jacobinmag.com/2017/06/russian-revolution-antisemitism-pogroms-reactionary-workers> .

¹³ See «Will the far left learn from the Toulouse murders ?» <http://mondialisme.org/spip.php?article2466> .

bankers and capitalists in the 20th or 21st centuries). And these Marxists quietly ignored and still ignore the social realities, the class contradictions within Jewish communities, especially the existence of a Jewish proletariat...

The progress of historical research are ignored by Marxist intellectuals – including Badiou

Indeed, historians have considerably advanced during the last sixty years. Badiou and Hazan could have, for example, picked some articles in the four volumes of *La Société Juive* (Fayard, 2000). At least they would have learned some useful basic facts if they had wanted to further their understanding of the so-called «Jewish question» and antisemitism.

In Islamic lands of the Middle Ages, the Jews, far from being specialized in trade and finance, exercised nearly 250 different trades! This is very far from the stereotype of the Jew unable to cultivate the soil, or to work with his hands. The immense majority were hawkers, servants, employees, peasants, companions or craftsmen.

In the medieval West, at a time when, in theory, Jews were confined to certain professions, they were engaged in other trades than those which were allowed to them by the Church. The rich Jewish merchants and bankers did not constitute the majority of Jewish population, however small their communities were (they varied from a few hundred to a few thousands of individuals, at the time and were very dispersed on the European continent).

The tax registers of the twelfth century, for example, show that only a minority of the 3,000 Jews living in England were able to pay taxes, and that this minority paid for the rest of the community, too poor to pay anything. In Germany, in the fourteenth century, of 8,000 families, 2,000 were poor and depended on alms coming from their co-religionists. Certain Jews were even so destitute that they joined groups of marginal and delinquent Germans, there influencing the vocabulary used in German underworld! In Moravia, in a community of 50 families, in the seventeenth century, 5 families provided 3/5 of the community taxes. In Amsterdam, at the end of the eighteenth century, 4,000 people maintained 18,000 poor Jews. In Frankfurt, in 1870, 25% of the community were without resources. In Warsaw in 1872, the financial, industrial and commercial upper middle classes represented only 6 % of the Jewish population. These few examples show the falseness and perversity of the «Judaism = religion of money» myth, a myth maintained by the various religious and political institutions, and taken up again by Marx in his (in)famous *Jewish Question*.

The Marxist «economic» explanation quite simply does not quite hold water. Likewise, we should not be astonished that certain Marxists gather untruths so that their theses do not appear glaringly wrong. Thus Sabby Sagal¹⁴ can claim that, in the Middle Ages, Jews enjoyed «*privileges and protection*» which «*gave them real power*», and that they had a «*legal status (...) far higher than that of the serfs*». This kind of assertion leads one to think that the majority of the Jews formed part of the privileged classes, which is false. The Marxist economic explanation does not make it possible to understand the reasons for the hostility of the agricultural workforce or townspeople to Jews over the centuries.

¹⁴ See his article published in 2002 in *Socialist Review*, the monthly publication of the British SWP <https://socialistreview.org.uk/265/zionism-and-anti-semitism-jewish-question> .

The religious factor played a great part because all Western societies until the nineteenth century rested on Christian values and these values organized everything: political power, justice, education, law, social life, etc. Moreover, linguistic, ethnic, and national factors had a role: apart from Hebrew, Judeo-Spanish or Yiddish, the Jews often spoke at least one of two additional languages (for example, the Jews expelled from France to England in 1066, spoke French, before being driven out, in their turn, from England two centuries later, in 1290; in 1895, 80 % of Serbian Jews still spoke Judeo-Spanish (Ladino) as did about 96 % of Bulgarian Jews, etc.).

This distinguished them and isolated them from the remainder of the population¹⁵. The fact that Jews could read and write (for religious reasons) made them a very distinct minority, in an ocean of illiteracy and crass ignorance maintained by the Churches and dominant classes. The elimination of illiteracy constituted a very appreciable asset for them when they were allowed to use their talents, and that could only cause hatred and jealousy.

The fact that Marxists reduce anti-Semitism to a primarily economic question has an other problematic consequence: it implies that, when capitalism will disappear, all forms of racism will go up in smoke. It is difficult to imagine a more naive position.

In his study, Borgen Gjerde points out that Lenin oscillates between two images of the Jew:

– the bad Jew (bourgeois, reactionary, nationalist, «clericalist», manipulated by the rabbis and Jewish bourgeoisie, attached to his religious, cultural, ethnic traditions, who wants to perpetuate the «spirit of the ghetto» and considers antisemitism as eternal – and who is usually a Zionist)

– and the good Jew (a proletarian, internationalist, universalist, acculturated or even assimilated Jew, anxious to distance himself from his Jewish «roots» that he considers as a limitation, or even as an unbearable identity prison – and therefore is an anti-Zionist).

He also detects a contradiction in Lenin, a contradiction which partly explains current theoretical confusion among left anti-Zionists: sometimes Vladimir Illitch considers the Jews as a nation (but only those who speak Yiddish – Hebrew being for him the language of religious obscurantism and bourgeois nationalism) ; sometimes Lenin denies them the status of a nation.

This position is linked to his particularly mechanical conception of a supposedly «double nature» of national cultures: according to Lenin, national cultures have both a reactionary dimension (that's the case of bourgeois culture, here Zionism and Judaism) and a revolutionary dimension (that's the case of the proletariat, here the culture of the Jewish, internationalist, socialist, proletarians and intellectuals).

According to Borgen Gjerde, it was under Stalin, and as early as the 1930s, that Soviet propaganda began to assimilate Zionists not only to imperialist agents in Palestine (see the declarations of the Communist International during the 1929 pogroms in Palestine, which emphasized only their «positive» aspect, i.e. the rebellion of the Arab masses against British imperialism!), but also to fascism and Nazism. Long before the Second World War (**and long before September 11, 2001, contrary to Badiou and Hazan's assertions**), Soviet newspapers published cartoons showing rabbis brandishing weapons and wearing prayer shawls decorated with swastikas.

¹⁵ A much more sophisticated and scholarly analysis than mine can be found in Maristella Botticini and Zvi Eckstein, *How Education Shaped Jewish History, 70-1492*, Princeton University Press, 2012. Their work show that we are still very far from understanding antisemitism (not to say the Judeocide) in all its dimensions.

A book published in the USSR in 1946 already defended the thesis (so widespread today in anti-Zionist circles that it has become a sinister banality) that «Zionists» had borrowed the concept of the «superior race» from fascism. This echoes another theme which has become common in current left «anti-Zionist» propaganda, and which is based on a complete misunderstanding: the assimilation between the religious notion of the «chosen people» and the fascist concept of the «superior race», which makes it possible to compare Judaism and Nazism, or Zionism and Fascism.

But, as we say in French «the worm» (or in any case the deadly ambiguity of left anti-Zionism) «entered the fruit» a long time before, since, during the lifetime of Saint Lenin and Saint Trotsky, in 1921, street shows were staged with «pedagogical» aims, in the form of trials that ended with the symbolic death sentence of the Jewish religion. It is moreover at this period (the Jewish Left anti-Zionists did not invent anything!) that a whole arsenal of propaganda was created by the Jewish Bolsheviks (the *Yevsekstii*¹⁶), who were mainly former Bundists. Their propaganda used antisemitic stereotypes: these atheist Communist Jews published caricatures of Jews with a long nose, thick lips, big ears, a beard and hair in battle. Being Jews, these communists thought they could fight Jewish nationalism (that means not only Zionism but also the Bundist conception of national cultural autonomy) and Jewish religion with this type of weapon, without any consequences. For them, the end justified the means. A tradition «religiously» preserved until today among left anti-Zionists.

This article is not the appropriate place to develop in detail such a hypothesis, but I can at least argue here that this binary Leninist view of the Jews, this indecision on the existence of a Jewish national question, and this underestimation of antisemitism among Communist, and then Stalinist, Jews have marked, with nuances and transformations, the whole history of left anti-Zionism, from Lenin to groups such as the UJFP (Union des Juifs Français pour la Paix¹⁷), Michael Warshawski's writings, for example today, or the UJRE¹⁸.

If one day a historian engages in this complex task, let's hope that he will know that **the debates about left antisemitism did not begin after the attack of September 11, 2001, as our Gallo-Chic anti-Zionist duo claims...**

A debate that has nothing to do with 9/11!

Even if he doesn't quote the text of the French Etudiants socialistes révolutionnaires internationalistes (anarchists), entitled «Antisémitisme et sionisme¹⁹» (1900), or if he ignores the exchange of letters between Reginald Reynolds and Emma Goldman in 1938²⁰, and limits his study to the debates during the last thirty years, this historian will for example be interested in

¹⁶ *Yevsekstii* : the Jewish section of the Russian Communist-Bolshevik Party was created in 1918 and took on the task of spreading the revolutionary message among the Jewish masses in Yiddish.

¹⁷ Small group of anti-Zionists founded in 1994. Contrary to its title, it includes many non-Jews and plays with antisemitic tropes in its so-called «antizionist» propaganda.

¹⁸ Union des Juifs pour l'entraide et la résistance : organization created in 1943, very close to the French armed resistance of the CP. It published a daily in Yiddish until 1993. If one goes through the archives of its monthly organ *La Presse nouvelle*, one realizes that it took years for French Jewish Stalinists to admit the existence of antisemitism in the USSR and the so-called «popular democracies». And when they admitted it, they were obliged to perform all sorts of political contortions.

¹⁹ <http://www.mondialisme.org/spip.php?article1801>

²⁰ Available here <https://freedomnews.org.uk/archive/#archive1940s> in the issues of July, August and September 16th of *Spain and the World*.

– the antinational and Anti-Deutsch movements who since 1989 launched this debate in Germany and Austria, **TWELVE years before September 11th**. The reactionary involution of the Antideutsch²¹ should not make us forget that they came from the German far left and claimed to be influenced Frankfurt School Marxism;

– the Trotskyists of the Alliance for Workers Liberty who took a stand in Britain as early as **1985** and wrote numerous texts about left antisemitism²² ;

– left-wing British anti-Zionists like Steve Cohen who wrote about it in a book²³ as early as **1984**;

– the libertarian communists of the De Fabel van de illegaal (now Doorbraak²⁴) who led this debate in the anti-globalization movement as early as **1998** and tried (unsuccessfully) to extend it to other countries, which is why they left the movement ;

– the anarchosyndicalists of the CNT-AIT in Toulouse who took courageous positions criticizing leftwing antisemitism.

And this list is certainly not exhaustive. I deliberately chose small, little known, Far Left groups (although I could have quoted much more famous historians and intellectuals deliberately ignored by the authors), as Alain Badiou was active in the tiny world of far left groups : the Union des communistes de France marxiste-léniniste (1969-1985) and the Organisation politique (1985-2007). Therefore he can't ignore these texts, or at least he could have had a quick access to them through Internet if he had been seriously interested in digging the question of Left antisemitism.

When the French left and far left militants will consider the international dimension of the political issues they address and when they will read the numerous and articles written in English about Left antisemitism, they may cease their useless diatribes against media puppets. Let's be fair: they sometimes try to rise to the «global» level, but that's only to take up the most outdated ideas of Stalinist geopolitics on «progressive» states and the Israeli-American-Zionist Axis of Evil!

This way, they just contribute to strengthen the «alter-imperialist» camp, made up, among others, of Russia, China, Iran and Venezuela. As the GARAP writes in its article about «sub-fascism», *«alterimperialism relays, within the advanced countries, both the expansionist (economic, commercial, diplomatic, territorial and military) desires of nation-states recently raised to the rank of regional powers, and the discourse of their politico-military garrisons implanted in their spheres of influence²⁵»*.

Hazan and Badiou's pamphlet is all the more indecent since these two intellectuals, devoid of any historical memory, but not devoid of nerve and cynicism, accuse those who criticize them of being «Stalinists» and «supporters of the state».

²¹ See for example Raphael Schlembach, «Towards a critique of Anti-German “communism”» <http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/id/eprint/50351/>

²² <https://www.workersliberty.org/left-antisemitism>

²³ *That's funny you don't look antisemitic* <http://you-dont-look-anti-semitic.blogspot.com/>

²⁴ Many texts of this group have been translated in English : <https://www.doorbraak.eu/category/translations/english/> About Left antisemitism one can read, among others, «Campaign against the MAI potentially antisemitic» ; «ATTAC's open flank» ; «Ten tips against anti-Semitism» ; «Biggest manifestation of anti-Semitism since 1945»; «Anti-Semitism on the Indymedia website»; «Is Zionism the new enemy of the anti-globalization movement?»; «The conservative roots of anti-Americanism Between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism».

²⁵ <https://garap.org/communiqués/communiqué04.php> (2011).

However, Alain Badiou is not afraid to defend Mao-tsé-toung, this bloodthirsty and megalomaniac statesman who ruled his country with an iron fist for almost thirty years. Mao was the great organizer of labor camps, shootings and planned famines, as well as the organizer of one of the biggest anti-proletarian mobilizations in History (the very badly named «Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution»).

As regards his friend Eric Hazan, he never explained why he supported the French Stalinist Party until 1956 ; we would like to understand the reasons of his illusions on Russian Stalinism or on the Algerian National Liberation Front, which also built a very classical state, despite its initial rhetoric in favour of a so-called «self-management». Let us note that Hazan still feels nostalgic about the French Communist Party before 1956. As if he did not realize yet, in 2012, that the French CP has a long history of betraying basic Socialist and Communist ideals :

- it negotiated the reappearance of its daily (*L'Humanité*) in June 1940 with the German nazi ambassador Otto Abetz;
- it proposed to Marshal Pétain (through the imprisoned «communist» MP François Billoux !) to testify against Blum at Riom's trial;
- it denounced de Gaulle as an «agent of British imperialism» before the German attack on the USSR and then suddenly put the General on a pedestal;
- it advocated a National Union policy and invented the slogan «A chacun son Boche» (Each Frenchman should kill a Kraut);
- it rehabilitated Joan of Arc, an icon of the Catholic far right;
- it refused to incite German soldiers to turn against their officers (which some Trotskyist militants did, risking their lives, and ending up shot or deported by the Nazis, or liquidated by the Stalinists);
- it forced the FTP²⁶ maquisards, full of illusions about their Party, to give up their weapons after the Liberation or to join the French army, even if it meant ending up in Indochina afterward and fighting the Vietminh liberation front ;
- it made French workers roll up their sleeves («The strike is the weapon of the trusts» said Thorez, the leader of the CP) after the Liberation, for the greatest benefit of French bosses;
- and it supported the implementation of the program of the Resistance National Council (the program of a State that ferociously repressed strikes)....

It is derisory to see our two authors suddenly express their indignation about the expression «Hitlero-Trotskyist», when they belonged to organizations that spread this same slander, and have never published the slightest self-critical reflection about their political past (as regards Badiou I can't say his « past » as he still reverts Mao today »). But our two «radical» intellectuals have no sense of shame and bet on their young supporters' ignorance !

«Arab-Muslims», an expression invented by the cops??!

It is also incongruous to see them assert that the expression «Arab-Muslim» (which can be contested, but for more subtle reasons) is used by the cops. Over the last thirty years (and considering just the most recent period) dozens of books or academic articles have appeared on «Colonial reality, history of France and Arab-Muslim world», «Gift economy and anti-economy in the Arab-Muslim society», «Arab-Muslim Encyclopaedism», «Philosophy and wisdom in Arab-Muslim thought», «The challenge of philosophy in the Arab-Muslim world», «The influence of

²⁶ FTP (Franc-tireurs et partisans) : Resistance organization created in 1941 by the French CP after Germany invaded Russia.

urban studies in the field of French doctoral research on the Arab-Muslim area», «Introduction to Arab-Muslim music», «Arab-Muslim imagination», etc.

Were Malek Chebel, Benjamin Stora, Gilles Keppel, the Association des travailleurs marocains de France, the Institut de recherche sur le monde arabe et musulman, etc., all influenced by post-2001 Gallic police thought ?

«French Blacks²⁷ (16)» and Palestine

As for their assertion that «French Blacks» identify with Palestine, an assertion taken from the racist discourse of the Parti des Indigènes de la République²⁸, if it reflects their desire for a union between «Blacks» (?), «Arabs» (?), «Muslims» (?) and «White» (?) Franco-Gallic people from all social classes to celebrate a new national union, I am rather skeptical about its radical political content.

The majority of «French Blacks» are not (contrary to what Hazan and Badiou write) sons of Malian or Senegalese workers who recently arrived on «French» territory but Afro-Caribbeans. I doubt that anti-Zionism accommodated with a Gallo-chic sauce is their main concern! And if, by misfortune, this harmful ideology becomes dominant among French West Indians thanks to the deleterious influence of individuals like Dieudonné²⁹, the Ka Tribe³⁰, the Mouvement des damnés de l'impérialisme³¹ and other far right scoundrels, there would be no reason to rejoice.

Y.C., *Ni patrie ni frontières*, 5/3/2012 (expanded in April 2010)

P.S. Thank to Charles, Jean-Pierre and Thomas for their very useful criticisms and remarks!

²⁷ On the absurdity of this concept as well as other racial concepts used by the left and far left see my articles :

– «The Racialisation Of Social Questions Leads Nowhere» (last part of «French Banlieues and urban guerillas», 2007, <http://www.mondialisme.org/spip.php?article1002> ;

– «From the sloppy humanist “Black-White-Beur ” slogan of the 1980s to the so-called “social race”: confusion grows among Gallic leftists» (2017) <http://www.mondialisme.org/spip.php?article2667>

– «Radicals play magic tricks with gender, race and biology» (2019) <http://www.mondialisme.org/spip.php?article2805>

²⁸ See the part about the Indigènes de la République and antisemitism in «Antiracism and class struggle in France: dialogue around the PIR (Parti des Indigènes de la République)» <http://www.mondialisme.org/spip.php?article2439>

²⁹ Dieudonné : leftwing standup comedian who became a militant antisemite and a Holocaust denier. Still very popular through his public shows and videos on Youtube.

³⁰ Tribu Ka : tiny Afrocentric group created by Kemi Seba in 2004 and banned in 2006, claiming to be close to the Nation of Islam. Followed by another group (Generation Kemi Seba), banned in 2009.

³¹ Mouvement des damnés de l'impérialisme : pan-Africanist, « antizionist » and « anti-imperialist » grouplet, created by Kemi Seba, and including several (in)famous French Holocaust deniers. Kemi Seba left France in 2011 to live in Senegal where he worked for several Senegalese TVs. He toured several African countries to deliver conferences against French colonialism and pan-Africanism (his new ideology). In February 2020 he has been expelled from Senegal for having burnt a CFA (Western African) banknote and lives now in Bénin.

How Alain Badiou, a Mao-trivial philosopher, and his friend, the calamitous Cécile Winter, deal with Israel-Palestine

In «*Circonstances III. Portées du mot “juif”*»³² Alain Badiou wrote: «*If we want to solve the problem of the infinite war in the Middle East, we will be obliged to forget the Holocaust – and I know this is a difficult thing.*» If one reads the explanation following this foolishly provocative sentence, one realizes that the philosopher's thought (at least in *Circonstances III*) is more nuanced than what Eric Marty asserts in his violent ideological attack³³.

A few lines later, Badiou moderates his statement made in an interview published in *Haaretz* on 27 May 2005: for him, it's not the Europeans but the Israelis and Palestinians who must «forget the Holocaust» if they want to succeed in creating a united and democratic Palestine. Moreover, in other texts of the same book, Badiou takes a clear stand against any form of Holocaust denial (or even «revisionism» – a code word for Holocaust denial) regarding the gas chambers. He thinks Europeans should remember the «*destruction of European Jews*» – an expression he prefers to «Holocaust».

According to Badiou and his idol, President Mao, one can find a right, a left and a centre everywhere, except in the deserts ; therefore one can also observe this configuration in the Palestine «solidarity movement». Let's admit this explanation which is rather simplistic, but quite adequate to crude Maoist «logic».

However, Badiou forgets to mention an essential fact (after all, he is a philosopher, and one expects him to offer us something more sophisticated than a collection of trivialities): the «left» of this «solidarity movement» does not live in Israel-Palestine, but in Europe, in the United States, in Latin America, in Asia, in Africa, or in the neighboring Arab-Muslim countries.

Europeans and Americans should not forget the Judeocide – even if left-wing anti-Zionists do that every day, and have been doing that for a long time. (They are not even able today to recognize an antisemite when they meet one, as shown by their attitude towards the stand-up comedian Dieudonné, the Sheikh Yassin Collective or the Indigènes de la République).

As for Latin Americans, given the impressive number of former Nazis welcomed by their governments after 1945 and given the antisemitic influence of the Catholic Church (or, more recently, of fundamentalist Protestant Churches) in the religious education of Latin American masses, it would be also very useful for them to remember the Christian origins of Nazi anti-Semitism and its political consequence: the Judeocide.

As far as the «Arab-Muslim» States are concerned (and more extensively the 57 states belonging the Organization for the Islamic Conference) they should not forget fourteen centuries of dhimmitude³⁴, anti-Jewish persecutions and especially the expulsion of the Jews after 1948. In these countries no one evokes this Jewish «Naqba», except those who think, like Western leftist conspiracy believers, that Mossad bombs in the synagogues pushed 900,000 Jews to flee their

³² Lignes, 2005, p. 98.

³³ *Cités* n° 57, 2014: «Shoah, généalogie d'un nom, histoire d'une négation», pp. 141-158.

³⁴ See my article in French about Geopolitics of Islam and Jewish dhimmi, <http://www.mondialisme.org/spip.php?article907> .

native countries, even though they had been living in the Middle East and North Africa for centuries and had endured a lot of pogroms, state racketeering, etc.

The above quoted interview with Badiou, like the collection of articles or excerpts of texts included in *Convergences III*, does not bring anything essential to the knowledge of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Admittedly, one can deplore that this book contains some silly anti-Zionist clichés like :

– Hitler's first idea was to «*deport the Jews out of Europe*» to send them to Madagascar. Badiou has not read *Mein Kampf* and ignores the deep roots of German nationalist/racist currents (the *völkisch* movements), before the Nazis, before and after the first world war). The French website phdn.org gathers dozens of quotes that show Hitler's willingness to exterminate the Jews well before 1942: <http://www.phdn.org/histgen/hitler/declarations.html> .

– Israel is an «anti-Semitic country» (a convenient explanation presented by «anti-Zionists» who want to condemn antisemitism only in... Israel !);

– the Palestinians are the «Jews of the Arab world» (Badiou reveals here his ignorance of 1,400 years of Jewish history in the Near and Middle East and in North Africa).

But, let's be honest, these reservations made, Badiou's political conclusions can be reduced to five very simple and good points:

1. Any state is a machine of oppression.
2. Any state founded on a religion, an ethnical group, a «race», a myth, etc., is (or will become) a machine of oppression.
3. Those who work in a country have the right to live there («He/She who is here is from here»), regardless of their origins.
4. Nazism can't be reduced to antisemitism and is part of a global political project that we must try to understand and explain.
5. Jews and Palestinians have an exceptional historical opportunity to create a common, unique, universalist state, if they abandon, or rather set aside, their religious, cultural, ethnic, mythological, etc., particularisms.

The perspective thus traced by Badiou is correct but completely trivial for those who have known Marxist positions (or even anarchist positions on the first four points) for decades. It's up to the Israeli and Palestinian people to decide whether they want to live together in one universalist, multicultural, multi-religious state (a world first), or separated in two hostile nationalist states (an oxymoron).

In any case, it's certainly not up to (left- or right-wing) anti-Zionists) of all countries to decide the future of Israelis and Palestinians by supporting the PLO, the PFLP, the Islamic Jihad or Hamas. And anti-Zionists who compare the «Zionists» (i.e. the Israelis) to the Nazis, or leftists who support political Islam (antisemitic or not), in Europe or the Middle East, should not be given the slightest credit for finding a political solution.

In this sense, Alain Badiou singularly lacks political lucidity, as shown by the discussion between him and Georges Bensoussan which is currently taking place in the columns of the daily newspaper *Libération*.

But it's rather his ally, Mrs. Winter, who is targeted by Bensoussan precisely because of a particularly disgusting text signed by her and included at the end of Badiou's *Circonstances III*: «Master-signifier of the new Aryans».

If the reader does not immediately understand what this mysterious «master-signifier³⁵» means, he (or she) grasps from the first lines who the «new Aryans» are. They are «obviously» the Israelis, and therefore also the new Nazis. You can find the same idea in the book of Holocaust-denier Roger Garaudy³⁶, *The Founding Myths of Modern Israel*, a best-seller in the Arab-Muslim world, when he criticizes the book of a Jewish theologian in these terms : «*Such remarks annoyingly evoke the 'Aryan myth' whose ideology founded Pangermanism and Hitlerism.*»)

So Mrs. Winter's article already stinks as soon as we start to read it.

In her text, Mrs. Winter indulges in a rapid rewriting of Jewish and world history (20 pages), similar to what can be found in the texts of Bardèche, Rassinier, Faurisson and Garaudy or their German or American friends (Zundel, Irving, Carto, Duke, etc.); according to Mrs. Winter, all Zionists supposedly applauded to the good deal offered by the prospect of the Judeocide, because they were conscious, as early as 1942, that after the war they would get both the «*heritage*» (sic) of the Judeocide and the «*interests*» (sic) of the Holocaust. American Zionist leaders did not take their responsibilities, did not know what to do, and did not want to push Roosevelt and the Allies to intervene, etc. Curiously, Mrs. Winter does not say a word about the attitude of the USSR, which had more than 4.2 million soldiers and was geographically a little closer to Poland and Germany than the United States... But shhh, when you're «anti-Zionist», you have to protect (even posthumously) Stalin and his regime, which of course were very concerned about the fate of the Jews...

The retrospective, sweeping judgments of Mrs. Winter and her manipulated quotes only feed the mill of Holocaust deniers and (left- or right-wing) antisemites. The convergences between them and her are obvious on four points:

1. after all, Hitler (*dixit* Badiou) did not want to exterminate the Jews (so let's erase the genocidal dimension of Nazism, even if it was clearly expressed many years before 1939);
2. it's above all the fault of Western democracies and Palestine Zionists if the Jews were exterminated (the Nazis' responsibility thus becomes secondary, or even conveniently disappears);
3. today Israeli governments finally continue the same policy as the «Zionists» before 1948: Hitler's former «Zionist» allies continue the Nazi policy;
4. Israeli governments are fuelling antisemitism to be materially and morally supported by the West (so one can turn a blind eye to left antisemitism and its political function, especially in France).

³⁵ If you are puzzled by this expression, here is the definition I found in an «encyclopedia of Lacanian psychonanalysis» on line : «*A Lacanian concept derived from Saussurean structural linguistics. In structural linguistics, language is a system in which there are no positive terms, only differences. This means that language only refers to language; that words are only distinct because they are not other words. Imagine looking for a definition of a word in a dictionary. When one finds the definition it consists of only other words. This endless chain of signifiers is halted by the master-signifier. The master-signifier is a signifier that points to itself instead of other signifiers. Žižek refers to Marx's conception of commodity fetishism as an example of a master-signifier.*» <https://nosubject.com/Master-Signifier>

³⁶ Roger Garaudy (1913-2012) : Communist MP and official «philosopher» of the Stalinist Party, member of the CP from 1933 to 1970, he was expelled from the CP in 1970, became a regionalist-ecologist, then a Muslim in 1982 and finally a militant antisemite associated with Holocaust deniers and the Iran regime.

The alliance between Badiou (a Mao-trivial philosopher but nevertheless not a Holocaust denier thanks to the last vestiges of his left antifascist culture) and Mrs Winter who flirts with the Holocaust deniers' argumentation illustrates the limits and aberrations of current anti-Zionism.

Just about everywhere in Europe, young people who are rightly outraged by Israeli war crimes are unaware of the danger of demonstrating alongside antisemites of all kinds. Although the existence of such alliances is denied by Badiou and Winter, they are supported in fact by Mrs Winter's odious arguments. And these arguments can only encourage young people to continue on a path that is a dead-end for everyone, both in Europe and in Israel-Palestine.

Y.C., Ni patrie ni frontières, 19 August 2014