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## National Affairs

### Trendy slander incites murder Barry Rubin

A radical Islamist in the beautiful, almost magical, city of Toulouse, France, murders three Jewish children and a teacher in front of their school. Various VIPs issue statements about how terrible is this deed.

Yet at that very moment, the next round of killings is being prepared by slanderous anti-Semitic lies from respectable people and institutions. There is no serious examination about how anti-Israel and anti-Jewish hysteria paves the way for murder. Fanatics pull the triggers but the distinguished, powerful and honoured provide the ammunition.

Here are three examples of such deeds that took place within hours of the Toulouse attack:

First, Mahir Zeynalov, an editor at Today's Zaman, a Turkish Islamic newspaper close to that country's government, tweets in response to the murders: "Gunmen attack Jewish school in France, vandals attack Jewish cemetery in Poland, Jews burn mosques and (Koran) in Tunisia. What's wrong?" In short, he's saying: how can it be wrong for gunmen to murder Jewish children or vandals to attack a Jewish cemetery in Poland if Jews are burning mosques and Korans in Tunisia. One act balances the other.

Yet Jews are not burning mosques and Korans in Tunisia. As we know from many experiences -- including Afghanistan right now -- anyone who damages a Koran, much less sets fire to a mosque, triggers massive riots and bloody killings. If such a deed ever happened it could result in the massacre of every remaining Jew in Tunisia. These terrified people would never think of committing any such action.

Zeynalov has committed a "blood libel", a lie that might lead to the murder of Jews. A Muslim believing Zeynalov's tweet might feel justified in murdering Jews, say children standing in front of their school.

Second, De Volkskrant, a leading newspaper in The Netherlands, has just run a cartoon showing Geert Wilders, leader of a conservative party that is very critical of Islam, getting loads of cash from Jews or Israel. In this respected newspaper we have the old anti-Semitic libel about Jewish money conspiring against people, in this case both Muslims and the Dutch.

This, too, is a total falsehood. Few Jews support Wilders; there is no Jewish or Israeli financing of his party.

What is the message here? That Jews and Israel are trying to destroy Islam -- as in the Turkish tweet -- and are nefarious plotters attacking innocent people. Isn't it proper, therefore, to murder Jews and Israelis in self-defence?

Exhibit three is Catherine Ashton, the EU's high representative for foreign affairs. On the day of the shooting she gave a speech that spent more time on the death of children in the Gaza Strip than it did criticising anti-Semitism. Left out was that Gaza is ruled by the openly anti-Semitic Hamas, which calls for the destruction of Israel, advocates genocide, carries out terrorist attacks against Israelis and Jews,

and glorifies those who commit the murders. Yet the only reason Hamas can rule Gaza is that Israel voluntarily withdrew from the territory in a gesture intended to promote peace, something Ashton doesn't mention.

When Hamas maintains a war with Israel, firing rockets, missiles, and mortars, Israel defends itself. Hamas also deliberately sites military arsenals in residential areas. Thus, civilians and even children are accidentally killed by Israel in the fighting. This is what happens in other wars, including those being waged by EU countries.

In her speech, Ashton put the priority on erasing terrorism. And like the Turkish and Dutch examples, she states falsehoods. For while Palestinian children have been killed during fighting in Gaza -- fighting always provoked by the actions of Hamas -- the main alleged cases of these deaths in the past week were fabrications.

The most notorious was the story of seven-year-old Baraka al-Mughrabi, reported to have been killed by Israeli military action. In fact, it is now proven that he died from a bullet fired into the air by Palestinians during a funeral.

The subtext is that if Israel is so horrible that it makes little children in Gaza suffer for no reason shouldn't Israelis and Jews be attacked and murdered as revenge?

These three examples are only a small sample, from Sweden's largest newspaper claiming Israel murdered Palestinians to harvest their organs, to a Harvard professor's tales of Jewish-Zionist conspiracies to control US foreign policy, to the dozens of "academic" conferences on Western campuses that demonise Israel.

What is needed is not expensive conferences and long speeches about the evils of anti-Semitism. The real solution is a change in the behaviour of media and academics who slander and distort, and governments that refuse to stand by a democratic country and people beset by terrorism and the world's oldest hatred.

One more thing is needed: the admission that the greatest threat of hatred, "racism", dehumanisation of the "other" and threat of persecution today -- as statistics for Europe and North America show -- is not "Islamophobia" but anti-Semitism.

None of those things will happen because hating and lying about Israel and the Jewish people are too entwined with left-wing ideology, Islamism and the dominant interpretation of Islam.

The principal inspiration for popular anti-Semitism is trendy leftist ideas that now dominate much of Europe and are spreading in North America, and that lay the groundwork for more hatred and more murder.

*Barry Rubin's latest book, Israel: An Introduction, is published by Yale University Press.*

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/opinion/trendy-slander-incites-murder/story-e6frgd0x-1226307628736>