

Dear Tony,

I have hesitated long before replying to yours. Paul Eisen, as I think you know, is a good friend of mine, and I therefore feel affronted by your description of him as an ignorant, a fool and a clown, and of his views as poisonous. He is none of these things, nor do I think it is helpful to describe his views in this way. I certainly do not intend to 'drop him like a shot'. If I ever were to feel the need to end my friendship with him, and I hope that won't happen, it will be after long and careful thought.

I realise that it is your style to use strong, and at times abusive, language of those you disagree with. So far, I've escaped it (at least within earshot), but maybe this won't last! In my view such kneejerk reaction does little to help us understand the world in which we live -including the dilemma for the Palestinians.

The dilemma, it seems to me, is this. That unconsciously or consciously almost all criticism of Israel and support for the Palestinians undergoes a process of amendment to comply with the demands of Jewish power. That such power exists was brought home forcibly to me the other day when David Frost was on Desert Island Disks. He was about to join Al-Jazira and was asked by the presenter whether he hadn't had doubts about being associated with an organisation which might be thought to support terrorism. He replied that he had consulted 'senior Jewish friends' and they had given him the go ahead. He didn't say 'Zionist friends' or 'Israeli friends', but 'senior Jewish friends'.

It didn't seem to occur to Frost, who comes from a Methodist background, that there was something odd about effectively giving Jews the power of veto over his appointment. That is what I mean by Jewish power often acting at an unconscious level. I also experienced the same phenomenon when I was involved with the Centre for German Jewish Studies at Sussex. I felt almost literally gagged when it came to talking about Palestine. There was a dread of unspecified consequences if one said anything more than that the conflict was 'very sad' or 'tragic'. I foolishly considered an offer to work as a fundraiser for the Centre. As soon as I mentioned that I was involved with PSC the offer was dropped. Later I was banned from one of their workshops on Racism, Xenophobia and Anti-Semitism on the grounds that I was a trouble-maker.

Another example of this power is the way the EU has quietly dropped a British Foreign Office report condemning Israel's policies in no uncertain terms. No doubt a majority of the ministers who took this decision were afraid of being branded 'anti-Semitic'.

Yet one more example was the attitude of a relatively prominent journalist and writer friend of mine who was entirely on-side on the Palestinian question, but who nervously asked me to ensure that his name did not appear on any PSC list. 'The trouble is,' he excused himself, 'I have many Jewish friends.' On another occasion he put it more frankly: 'The Jews have us by the balls!'

I've looked again at Paul's 'Jewish Power' and 'Holocaust Wars' and still think that he is dealing with important issues which need to be discussed. I cannot agree that 'Holocaust Wars' is 'damning evidence' of his justification of racial nationalism (I've accepted your terminology) and 'anti-Semitism' (a term I don't accept because it is both imprecise and loaded with a narrative which I reject). I would not have written

it the same way as Paul does, but that's irrelevant. It describes part of his personal journey in a remarkably honest way, and should be engaged with as such.

I'm inclined to agree with Paul that a resolution of the Palestine-Israel conflict could only come about if a much wider, and oppressive, Jewish narrative, of which Zionism is an important part, were to be deconstructed, in other words if its power were undermined. So long as a very powerful group of Jews can continue to use victimhood as a way of manipulating people's thoughts even before they are properly conscious of them themselves, it is difficult to see how a sufficient international resistance to Israeli policies can establish itself.

It occurs to me that what Paul is saying about Jewish power is analagous to what you believe about capitalist power. The world, as at present constituted, is dominated by what Marx called the bourgeoisie and I prefer to call 'the rich'. This group use their power to disseminate a narrative which says, roughly: 'Don't resist our power, because if you do so you will be impoverished - or even more impoverished.'

We both agree that this tyranny has to be broken if we are to move forward to a better world in which imperial wars are a thing of the past and in which ordinary people have a meaningful say in the way the world is run. I guess we also agree that to do so, we need to convince people that there is something wrong with that narrative. People need to understand that they don't need to give the rich unlimited freedom to ensure a reasonable standard of living, and anyway there is something wrong with the idea of endless growth. A rising standard of living is the way resistance to the status quo is bought. (We disagree, of course, about the extent to which society needs to be restructured, but that belongs to another debate.)

I suspect that your preoccupation with class stops you seeing that as a group Jews (not just Israelis or Zionists) also have a tyrannical narrative (to which, of course, some Jews do not subscribe) which runs: 'We are the victims of an endemic disease called anti-Semitism which can be recognised in any criticism of Jews, Israel or Zionism, or in any sympathy for the Palestinians, or even Arabs and Muslims. This disease must be rooted out wherever it is found. Those who are identified as anti-Semitic must be publicly shamed and disempowered.' I suspect that this narrative is believed even by many people who profess themselves to be anti-Zionist. And of course it gives *carte blanche* to Israel.

In my view power is a group psychological phenemon. Any group, not necessarily based on class, which can identify itself in some way, is likely to develop a sense of group solidarity and security. This is generally encouraged by a leadership which is interested in gaining power and which presents itself as the guardian of the group. Once established groups are at least in competition with other groups in the outside world, and may well become aggressive or oppressive in relation to them.

In this sense 'the Jews' are in the same category as 'the British' or 'the Germans' or 'the Christians' or 'the Arabs' or 'the Muslims' or 'the flat-earthers'. All of these groups have narratives which are to a greater or lesser degree chauvinistic. It seems to me legitimate to say that one does not like this aspect of their culture. I feel that I should be as free to criticise the chauvinism of Jews, as a group, as I do that of the British. Of course not all British people share the chauvinism of dominant narratives within our country, nor do all Jews (yourself included) share the chauvinism which to me was so palpable in the Centre for German-Jewish Studies.

But if you attempt to criticise this Jewish chauvinism, which amounts in my view to supremacism, you are branded with the dreaded stamp of anti-Semitism - or Jewish self-hatred.

Whatever the truth about the Nazi atrocities, we agree, I think, that Finkelstein is correct in describing 'the Holocaust' as an industry. To me that industry is a tangible representation of Jewish power and is used to monopolise the suffering caused by the Nazis. I think we also agree that the atrocities against Jews (which I don't doubt, by the way - nor does Paul) are disproportionately emphasised to the exclusion of other groups, particularly non-Jewish Russians. In my view it is not just Zionists who keep this industry going, but Jewish power which has used its huge financial resources to create a whole ethos of uncritical Judophilia.

You will say, I know, that I have written just what the Zionists want. Having sensed, however, that the root problem for the Palestinians is not Zionism alone, but Jewish power, not to give voice to this thought would be to cave in to Jewish power and gag myself in a debate which needs to be had.

Festive greetings,
Francis