



Canadian Jewish Congress  
Congrès juif canadien

THE TRUTH YOU FAILED TO SEE:  
A REBUTAL OF DOSSA'S  
"THE EXPLANATION WE NEVER HEARD"

**INTRODUCTION**

Professor Shiraz Dossa, of St. Francis Xavier University, in his article "The Explanation We Never Heard" (*Literary Review of Canada*, June 2007), seeks to defend himself for participating in the international conference, "Review of the Holocaust: Global Vision," held in Tehran, Iran, December 10-12, 2006.

He does so by making a series of claims, a significant number of which can be effectively challenged, thereby casting doubt on his entire defence. As a result, the decision by the LRC to publish the piece and the editorial rationale for doing so, including the assurance that it was preceded by "rigorous fact-checking," is seriously undermined.

What follows is a systematic rebuttal of the article and the LRC's rationale for publishing it. It is largely structured in the form of "claim" and "response."

**THE REBUTTAL**

**DOSSA HAS PUBLISHED PREVIOUSLY ON THE SUBJECT**

***CLAIM***

"The Explanation We Never Heard."

***RESPONSE***

The "explanation" in the LRC echoes, both in argument and text, a Dossa newspaper article published less than a month before he approached the *Journal*<sup>1</sup>.

**AHMADINEJAD DID PARTICIPATE IN THE CONFERENCE**

***CLAIM***

"Ahmadinejad... did not attend or participate in the conference."

## ***RESPONSE***

President Ahmadinejad did participate in the conference, just not in the venue where the other sessions took place. It was very much in line with the proverb, “If Mohammed will not go to the mountain, the mountain must come to Mohammed (Mahmoud in this case).” His became the closing session. His own website notes that he “told participants of the international conference World Vision on Holocaust [sic] who met him in Tehran,”

Iran is your house and the house of world free-thinkers, where everyone can fully express themselves in a brotherly, peaceful, free and calm atmosphere and exchange views with others.<sup>2</sup>

Australia’s antisemitic Adelaide Institute, helpfully features a photograph of Ahmadinejad addressing the conference with the delegates seated lengthwise on either side of him (Caption: “Listening to words of wisdom”) as well as photographs of him with a number of the participants (Captions, among others: “Then the scrum was on to get to the President” and “A firm handshake and a brief exchange of thoughts”).<sup>3</sup>

## **IRAN’S FOREIGN MINISTRY CONTROLS THE IIPIS**

### ***CLAIM***

The conference was “sponsored” by The Iranian Institute of Political and International Studies (IIPIS), “an elite school of advanced politics and policy studies,” implying the Institute’s independence.

### ***RESPONSE***

1. Topping the home page of the Institute’s website is the prominent heading, “Deputy of Research and Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I.R. Iran.”<sup>4</sup>
2. The conference opened with an address by Manoucher Mottaki, Iran’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, in a session chaired by Manoucher Mohammadi, the Deputy Foreign Minister for Education and Research, in other words, IIPIS’s boss. Silently sharing the dais with these two was Seyed Rasoul Mousavi, the Institute’s Director General.<sup>5</sup> And, of course, Ahmadinejad addressed the delegates as well.
3. It was the Iranian Foreign Ministry that proffered an invitation to British Prime Minister Tony Blair to participate in the projected conference.<sup>6</sup>
4. Iran is a totalitarian police state. The conference could not have taken place without the government’s imprimatur.

Thus, the IIPIS may have organized the conference but the de facto sponsor was the government of Iran.

## **HOLOCAUST DENIAL WAS THE CONFERENCE'S RAISON D'ÊTRE**

### ***CLAIM***

The conference's aim was "not Holocaust denial," Dossa categorically asserts and the LRC unqualifiedly agrees with him.

### ***RESPONSE***

Any responsible assessment of this claim must be based on an understanding of Holocaust denial.

### **WHAT IS HOLOCAUST DENIAL? <sup>7</sup>**

It is an international movement that aims both to corrode the true memory of the Holocaust (the preferred term is the Hebrew, *Shoah*) and substitute it with a counterfeit memory. Those engaged in this denial contend that there was no policy of genocide; that the Nazis did not gas a single human being to death, using gassing purely for disinfection and that only thousands of Jews (rather than six million) died (rather than were murdered) during the Second World War and these perished as the unfortunate victims of the exigencies of war, mainly at the end of the conflict.

This contention about the numbers murdered (thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions?) is an important part of Holocaust denial. It is designed to mislead and shift the focus away from the reality of the *Shoah* as the attempt to wipe every Jewish man, woman and child off the face of the European earth. The questioning of numbers is presented as an innocent exercise and one measure of the denier's success is the point at which discussion of the Holocaust as "exaggerated" -- a code word for "hoax" -- becomes part of acceptable discourse.

The Holocaust deniers are individuals with an *idée fixe*. French historian Nadine Fresco, the definitive biographer of Paul Rassinier, the *négationniste* par excellence (1999), has looked at their so-called work and written that in their "research the only ethic is suspicion ... distrust is the only certitude."

The revision of history is a legitimate pursuit. Every generation takes a new look at its past and rewrites it somewhat in the light of new evidence, new perspectives. When engaging in such reinterpretation, historians ask themselves what happened, how it happened, why it happened. They do not deny the events themselves.

Historians, for example, when looking at slavery or Hiroshima and Nagasaki ask and answer a myriad of questions but they do not suggest that slavery never took place or that atomic bombs were not dropped. Denial does not make for a workable, honest methodology of history.

The Supreme Court of Canada, in its 1992 decision regarding the constitutionality of the Criminal Code's "false news" law, eloquently wrote that

To deliberately lie about the indescribable suffering and death inflicted upon the Jews by Hitler is the foulest of falsehoods and the essence of cruelty.

The deniers, however, do not stop at defiling the memory of the millions murdered and robbing the survivors of their tragic ordeal. The Holocaust, they add, was invented by Jews or Zionists -- and they use these terms interchangeably -- to gain reparations from Germany for themselves and Israel and to justify the creation of the Jewish State.

Jews, the deniers allege, successfully have pulled off a conspiracy of conspiracies, a scam universal in its scope. By branding Jews as hoaxers on a monumental scale the deniers aim thoroughly to undermine them in the eyes of their neighbours.

The very antisemitism that led to the Shoah is now vigorously promoted by its denial. Antisemitism is a most redoubtable of bacteria, ever mutating and developing new strains to survive the times. Holocaust denial is but one of its newer manifestations.

## **ASSESSING THE NON-HOLOCAUST DENIAL CLAIM**

### **1. The international Holocaust cartoon contest.**

*Hamshahri*, the Iranian mass-circulation daily newspaper, and the House of Caricatures co-sponsored the contest in February 2006, reacting to the publication of cartoons of Mohammed in European newspapers. The sponsors selected 204 cartoons out of 1193 entries from 61 different countries and exhibited them in Tehran in August-September, 2006.<sup>8</sup>

- a. While the document outlining the rules was titled "What is the Limit of Western Freedom of Expression," it described the contest as "a competition on the Holocaust" and referred to the "**alleged historical events like the Holocaust [emphasis added]**" and the "many thinkers [who] **express doubt about the accuracy of the Holocaust [emphasis added]**"<sup>9</sup>

It was, in short, an exercise in Holocaust denial. Christians offend Muslims, so Muslims retaliate by wounding Jews.

- b. It is the Municipality of Tehran that owns the co-sponsors. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, prior to becoming President, was Mayor of Tehran and the city council "is dominated by [his] allies."<sup>10</sup> Mohammad Hossein Saffar-Harandi, Iran's Minister for Culture and Islamic Guidance, handed out the prizes.

It was the government of Iran, in other words, that was behind this Holocaust denial cartoon contest.

## 2. Holocaust denial: the conference's theme and mandate.

Iran's Minister of Foreign Affairs, in the conference's opening address,<sup>11</sup> defined its theme and set out its mandate by devoting seven of his eight-page speech to the Holocaust.

There is a "clinched [sic] interpretation of the holocaust [sic]" as he put it [i.e. the genocide of Europe's Jews] and those who dare challenge this established Western orthodoxy [i.e. the deniers] are deemed heretics and suffer the consequences. The conference, therefore,

... is meant to provide an opportunity for free expression of views for thinkers and researchers [the deniers] who are not allowed to freely express their views....

The Minister does attempt to cover his shame with a fig leaf -- "this conference is basically neither seeking to deny nor to prove the holocaust" -- that is all too transparent since it belies his entire speech, which sets the stage precisely for denial:

... **criticism of the holocaust as a historical event** [i.e. the focus is on the event's historicity] constitutes part of the critical approach to the contemporary history. [Emphasis added].

... those who ... are... now skeptical about their [historical events] reality and **take this skepticism as the basis of their new inquiry about this event [the Holocaust] in an effort to discover the truth...** [Emphasis added].

Even **if the prove [sic] that the holocaust is a historical fact...** [Emphasis added]

... **if the holocaust** with this clinched interpretation of it **is questioned**, then, **the very existence and identity of the Zionist entity** [i.e. the State of Israel] **will be questioned.** [Emphasis added].

The Holocaust denial formula, in this last quotation, emerges fully formulated. The Tehran conference was indeed a Holocaust denial conference. Ahmadinejad's approach to the Holocaust clinches, to use the Minister's favourite word, this contention.

## 3. Ahmadinejad: Holocaust denier

### *CLAIM*

"The first [fallacy] is that Iran's president ... has dismissed the Holocaust as a 'myth'...."

"... Ahmadinejad has not denied the Holocaust..."

"He [Ahmadinejad] has ... raised doubts about the scale of the Holocaust."

## **RESPONSE**

- a. Ahmadinejad, on Feb 11, 2006, at around the very same time that the Holocaust cartoon contest was being launched, addressed tens of thousands at Tehran's Freedom Square, on the occasion of the 27<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Iranian Revolution. The President's own website quotes him as follows:

Some western governments, in particular the US, approve of the sacrilege on the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) [the reference is to the cartoons], **while denial of the 'Myth of Holocaust'** [sic], based on which the Zionists have been exerting pressure upon other countries for the past 60 years and kill the innocent Palestinians, **is considered as a crime.... a decree has been issued about the occurrence of holocaust** [sic] and that it **has to be accepted by others, which marks the Middle Age culture and thinking trend ...** [Emphasis added].<sup>12</sup>

One of the throng at the rally carried a sign with the unambiguous slogan, "**HOLOCAUST IS A BIG LIE!**"<sup>13</sup> He certainly was clear on the President's view.

These obscene declarations were being made only a few days after the United Nations, on January 27, observed the first universal International Day of commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust

- b. Brian Williams, of *MSNBC* "Newsnight," interviewed Ahmadinejad in New York on September 19, 2006<sup>14</sup>. Williams asked him why he had "**called the Holocaust a myth** [emphasis added]." In the question and answer exchange that followed, Ahmadinejad did not deny the allegation and responded as follows:

"... **if this event** [the Holocaust] **happened, if it** [the Holocaust] **is a historical event...** why is it that those who ask questions are persecuted; why is there such sensitivity, prohibition on further studies of the subject..." [Emphasis added].

"... **if this** [the Holocaust] **happened...**where did it happen...[Emphasis added].

"... **if this** [the Holocaust] **happened** in Europe what is it the fault of the Palestinian people..." [Emphasis added].

"... **assuming that the Holocaust happened** what does it have to do with the Palestinian people..." [Emphasis added].

Ahmadinejad, during the *MSNBC* interview, adopted the Holocaust denial position four times. Indeed, like his Minister of Foreign Affairs, he adopted it fully, incorporating the

Jewish extortion component, as excerpts from his letter of August 28, 2006 to German Chancellor Angela Merkel indicate:<sup>15</sup>

... the persistence of a strong will by certain global powers and **special groups** [the Jews] to constantly portray Germany as defeated and indebted country of World War II **in order to continue their extortions.** [Emphasis added].

Even now the conduct of some bullying powers and **power-seeking and aggressive groups** [the Jews] is the conduct of victors with the vanquished. [Emphasis added].

The **extortion and blackmail continue**, and **people are not allowed to think about or even question the source of this extortion** [the Holocaust], otherwise they face imprisonment. [Emphasis added].

**I have no intention of arguing about the Holocaust** [the familiar fig-leaved disavowal preceded and followed by precisely such a discussion]. But, **does it not stand to reason that some victorious countries of World War II intended to create an alibi** [the Holocaust] **on the basis of which they could continue keeping the defeated nations of World War II indebted to them.** [Emphasis added].

- c. It was **Ahmadinejad** who, when addressing the Tehran conference's delegates at the concluding session, publicly **made known the naming of a commission**, headed by his advisor, Mohammad Ali Ramin, "**to determine,**" [in the words of Al Jazeera] "**whether the Holocaust had happened or not**" and, quoting the President, "**help end a 60-year-old dispute.**"<sup>16</sup> [Emphasis added].
- d. The Iranian ministers for Culture and Islamic Guidance (at the awards ceremony for the Holocaust cartoons) and of Foreign Affairs (at the conference), respectively, referred to Ahmadinejad's views on the Holocaust as follows:

**Our president** was the brave and freedom-seeking person who **started this debate** [whether the Holocaust did or did not happen] without being concerned about its consequences [thereby **breaking**] **the taboo** ... that by **questioning the Holocaust** [individuals]... are committing a crime.<sup>17</sup> [Emphasis added].

When the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran asked **if the holocaust were a historical phenomenon** [i.e. questioning the historicity of the Holocaust --emphasis added] why, then, it should not be allowed to be investigated in the context of history....<sup>18</sup>

- e. This Holocaust denial position of Ahmadinejad is not new to 2006. He maintained it with equal consistency in 2005.

On December 8, at a press conference in Mecca tangential to a meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and carried by Iranian satellite television, he stated:

**Some European countries insist on saying that Hitler killed millions of innocent Jews in furnaces ... Although we don't accept this claim...** If the Europeans are honest they should give some of their provinces in Europe -- like in Germany, Austria or other countries -- to the Zionists and the Zionists can establish their state in Europe.<sup>19</sup> [Emphasis added]

On December 14, he delivered a speech in Zahedan, Southern Iran, carried live on television, in which he said:

**They have fabricated a legend under the name Massacre of the Jews, and they hold it higher than God himself, religion itself and the prophets themselves.** [Emphasis added].<sup>20</sup>

- f. Stating that “[Ahmadinejad] has...raised doubts about the scale of the Holocaust,” as Dossa does, is synonymous with saying that the Holocaust was “exaggerated,” thus further convicting Ahmadinejad of Holocaust denial.

Ahmadinejad’s Holocaust denial views inspired and were fully reflected by the Tehran Holocaust denial conference of December 11-12, 2006.

## **HOLOCAUST DENIER/ SKEPTIC DISTINCTION SPURIOUS**

### ***CLAIM***

“The second...fallacy is that the event was a Holocaust denial conference because of the presence of a few notorious western Christian deniers/skeptics, a couple of a neo-Nazi stripe.” “... including among its [the conference’s] attendees a number of notorious Holocaust deniers or sceptics ....” [LRC]

### ***RESPONSE***

The division of those who attack the historicity of the Holocaust into “deniers” and “skeptics” is a purely artificial one. How is someone who purportedly remains open-minded about whether the Holocaust did or did not happen, i.e. a “skeptic,” different from a “denier?” Would one dare speak of a “slavery skeptic” or a “Hiroshima and Nagasaki skeptic?”

The LRC’s, never mind Dossa’s, matter of fact use of the “skeptic” label is frightfully troubling because it demonstrates the degree to which cavalier treatment of the *Shoah*, the greatest calamity to have befallen the Jewish people in modern times, has penetrated mainstream discourse.

The “Holocaust deniers/skeptics” designation masks the real enterprise these evil magicians are engaged in -- the promotion of hatred against Jews and the inflicting of harm upon Jews. They are nothing but antisemites and should openly be described as such.

## **FOREIGN ANTISEMITES DOMINATE CONFERENCE PROGRAM**

### ***CLAIM***

“Out of the 33 conference papers given, 27 were *not* Holocaust deniers....”

### ***RESPONSE***

The professional (i.e. activist) antisemites at the conference fall into one or more of the following categories: Holocaust denial, world Jewish conspiracy, white supremacism and neo-Nazism.

*At least* sixteen (16) of them (that is more than the “few” Dossa suggests in the previous claim) can be identified on the program as playing an active role (amounting to more than six presented papers) and at least one, Mohammed Hegazi, needless to say, is Muslim (belying Dossa’s assertion in the previous claim that they were all Christian).

They follow herein in order of appearance, with the title of their presentation cited when available.<sup>21</sup>

- i. Robert Faurisson (France), “**The Victories of Revisionism**” [the euphemistic term for Holocaust denial]. He dedicated the paper to “our prisoners of conscience,” one of them being Ernst Zundel, Canada’s prime practitioner of Holocaust denial, who currently is serving a five-year prison sentence in Germany.
- ii. Jan Bernhoff (Sweden), “**The Holocaust Demography.**” It pretends to “prove the lack of scientific basis for The Six Million Figure” and “trace[s] the roots of it.”
- iii. Frederick Töben (Australia), “**The Alleged Murder Weapon: Homicidal Gas Chambers and the Logistics Problem – Undress-Gas-Burn.**”
- iv. David Duke (United States), “**Freedom of Speech and the Holocaust.**”
- v. Micahel Collins Piper (United States). Speech title N/A. He is the author, among other books, of *Best Witness: The Mel Mermelstein Affair and the Triumph of Historical Revisionism* (1994) [emphasis added] and *The New Jerusalem* (2004).

The latter is promoted as exposing the “real values” of a dominant and rich “Zionist” or “hidden elite,” “a people decided [sic] different from the WASP founders,” who are devising an “increasingly unstable and ominous future... for America.” Is it necessary to add that it is the Jews that he has in mind?

- vi. Patrick McNally (Japan), “**The Zionist-Semitist Holocaust Story is Unfounded.**”
- vii. Alfonso Pengas (Greece), “**The geopolitical environment of the Holocaust Myth.**”
- viii. Bradley R. Smith (Mexico), “**The Irrational Vocabulary of the American Professorial Class with Regard to the Holocaust Question.**” At the end of the paper’s hard copy Smith advertises, “If you liked this talk you will probably like my book *Brake His Bones: The Private Life of a Holocaust Revisionist*. [Emphasis added].
- ix. Lady Michele Renouf a.k.a. Michele Mainwaring (United Kingdom). Speech title N/A. Renouf, the champion of notorious Holocaust denier David Irving, in her remarks, as summarized by Michael Piper, goes as far as to justify Nazi policies against the Jews because of the latter’s Talmud-dictated inveterate and millennial hatred of gentiles.

... the often hateful (and indeed racist) attitudes toward non-Jews expressed in the ...Talmud were the root of much opposition to Jewish people ... [and] could be partial explanation for the foundational concerns of so many Europeans who supported measures taken by the National Socialist regime of Adolf [sic] Hitler to curtail the influence of the Jews ... before and during World War II.<sup>22</sup>

- x. Serge Thion (France). Speech title N/A. He is one of a number of leftists who became a Holocaust denier. The U.S.-based Institute for Historical Review, “the world nerve centre of Holocaust denial,” lists him as one of its authors. A defender of both Rassinier and Faurisson, he co-authored with the latter, *Vérité historique ou vérité politique?*<sup>23</sup>
- xi. Wolfgang Fröhlich (Austria), “**Holocaust, realities and evidences.**” Fröhlich, while in attendance, did not present allegedly for fear that Austria would prosecute him for Holocaust denial. Instead of his submission two other papers were “interposed,” one by Jürgen Graf (Switzerland), whose Holocaust denial work is listed by Faurisson as among the “essential studies.”
- xii. Georges Theil, a.k.a Gilbert Dubreuil (France). Speech N/A. Featured as **one of the principal commentators** in “**Merchants of the Myth**” a 13-part **Holocaust denial series** (10/06-01/07) **on Iranian TV's Channel 4**. He **denies the gas chambers** and sees the **Holocaust as Hollywood-created fiction** (“When they have no proof or evidence, they create films”). He is a **great admirer of Faurisson**:

It is people like [him] who can demolish this lie [the Holocaust]. He can be compared to Louis Pasteur, who served humanity by inventing medicines. Faurisson, too, by exposing historical truths, has performed a very great service to humanity.<sup>24</sup>

- xiii. Alexander Baron (United Kingdom), “**The Nazi gas chambers: Rumours, Lies and Reality – One Researcher’s View**,” which he summarizes as “**The full extent of Jewish suffering has been greatly exaggerated....**” He describes himself as “an ardent conspiriologist [sic].”

He provides useful information as to how he came to take part in the conference since it very likely applies to the other participants as well.

I was one of those selected from some eight hundred applicants to present an original paper on the Holocaust. The Iranian Government paid for my ticket and accommodation.<sup>25</sup>

- xiv. Mohammad Hegazi (Australia), “**The fate of Zionism project.**” He is listed on the program as a **member of the antisemitic, Holocaust denying Adelaide Institute**, which is headed by Töben.
- xv. Richard Kriege (Australia). Speech title N/A. His focus is **denying that Treblinka was a death camp**. This alleged electronics engineer, in October 1999 led a six day, Adelaide Institute- funded expedition to the camp. Using “Ground Penetration Radar” he determined that the soil had not undergone any “large-scale disturbances” and therefore **concluded “No Trace of Mass Graves” at Treblinka.**<sup>26</sup>
- xvi. Herbert Schaller (Austria), “**Report on the Criminal Law Aspects of the Holocaust Problem.**” A criminal lawyer, he has represented Holocaust denying defendants since 1989, including David Irving and Ernst Zundel. A believer in the views of his clients, he speaks in his paper of

“... [a] worldwide cartel [that]...forbids any attempt to provide evidence questioning the Holocaust” [and concludes that] “At this Conference in Teheran [sic] it **has been publicly established that there are no proofs for the existence of homicidal gas chambers**, although sufficient evidence had been available [to this effect] for a long time.”<sup>27</sup>

Out-and-out antisemites (without counting the Iranians and others) made *at least* more than one third (16) of the forty-five (45) presentations.

## **DOSSA SHOULD HAVE KNOWN NOT TO ATTEND**

### ***CLAIM***

“None of us knew that a few deniers/skeptics would be in attendance. This is not at all unusual in the Islamic world. In southern conferences, one rarely knows who will be appearing until one gets there. ”

## **RESPONSE**

1. The exhibition of the infamous, well-publicized, widely condemned, government-directed Holocaust denial cartoon competition (see above) ended only three months before the Tehran Holocaust conference began. Should loud alarm bells not have rung in Dossa's ears about taking part?
2. When one attends a conference, especially when one is presenting a paper, is it not standard to ask of the organizers, before even accepting, who will be attending, who else is on the program, who are my co-panelists? Are copies of the program, as well, not made available to the presenters, in different drafts as the conference evolves? What is it about "southern conferences" and events in the "Islamic world" that would lead to such a different modus operandi?
3. **Eight antisemites preceded Dossa with presentations:** Faurisson, Bernhoff, Töben, Duke, Piper, McNally, Pengas and Smith. The latter in fact was one of two co-panelists with Dossa in his session, which was the last one of the first day.

Considering who these individuals were and what they spoke about (**six presentations were unambiguously Holocaust denial in theme**) one would have thought that Dossa, now that he knew the company he was keeping, would have exited the conference immediately. Certainly, no self-respecting Holocaust scholar would have stayed.

## **DOSSA'S HOLOCAUST SCHOLARSHIP/EXPERTISE QUESTIONABLE**

### **CLAIM**

Dossa identifies himself in his article as a "Holocaust scholar" on one occasion and as a "Holocaust expert" on another.

### **RESPONSE**

On what basis does Dossa arrogate to himself the description of Holocaust "expert/scholar" and on what basis does the LRC accept his characterization at face value?

His name does not appear either as a contributor or in the bibliography or index of a number of the recent historiographical studies and overviews of the Holocaust.<sup>28</sup> He does not teach a course on the Holocaust.<sup>29</sup> His expertise appears to be in the writings of Hannah Arendt, political theory and, more broadly, a critique of liberalism.

His one book, *The Public Realm and the Public Self: The Political Theory of Hannah Arendt* has an eight-page Holocaust discussion while the subject is not in the index. There is also a ten-page treatment of Eichmann (one of Arendt's books was *Eichmann in Jerusalem*) where,

from the index, it appears he deals with abstruse concepts (“banality,” “conscience,” “guilt” and “privacy”) rather than with historical issues.

Dossa’s record does not make him into a Holocaust scholar and it is highly likely that he would not be so recognized by those in the field. **Were he a Holocaust scholar he should have attended a real conference on the Shoah in Berlin** on December 11, 2006. Sponsored by Germany’s Federal Agency for Civic Education it was **organized specifically to counter the Tehran travesty.**

Experts came from all over the world to share with people at large the results of the most recent research. Wolfgang Benz, head of Germany’s Center for Anti-Semitism [sic] Research, aptly captured the nature of the two conferences.

We have to say very clearly: This is what happened. **Reality cannot be a matter for debate and does not belong in the political realm to be viewed according to one’s political ideology.**<sup>30</sup>

## **ANTISEMITISM APPLIES TO JEWS, NOT TO MUSLIMS**<sup>31</sup>

### ***CLAIM***

“... Catholic anti-Semitism has always had two strands, anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish...”  
“In the post-Holocaust period, however, the anti-Muslim strand... got a new lease on life and quickly superseded anti-Jewish anti-Semitism....As a result, Muslims now bear the brunt of Western anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.”

### ***RESPONSE***

It will have been noted that this essay adds a “sic” after “anti-Semitism” and spells the phenomenon as a single word, “antisemitism.” Most scholars have adopted the latter form instead of the hyphenated version with a capital “S,” because there is no such thing as a “Semitism” to oppose. The expression, after all, has everything to do with Jews and nothing to do with Semites.

It was Wilhelm Marr, a German journalist and agitator, who first coined the term in 1879. It was another one of those ideological “isms” so current then, intended in its case to give a name to the scapegoating of Jews as a political weapon. Subsequently, and anachronistically, it was extended to encompass Judeophobia throughout history.

Elements, it should be noted, have taken advantage of the word’s hyphenated spelling to advance two ludicrous claims:

- a. That there cannot be “anti-Semitism” in the Arab world since Arabs themselves not only are “Semites” but in fact constitute the Semitic majority.
- b. That Arabs and Muslims today, as Dossa would have it, are antisemitism’s main victims.

These claims are made for the single reason of neutralizing the sting of the antisemitism charge.

## **MUSLIM ANTISEMITISM: A CONSTANT FROM ITS ORIGINS TO THE PRESENT** <sup>32</sup>

### ***CLAIM***

“Anti-Semitism is a Euro-American problem, not an Islamic one.”

### ***RESPONSE***

It has been the misfortune of the Jews that Christianity and Islam grew out of Judaism. No sooner were they born that they took up an antagonistic position towards the parent religion and its followers. The antisemitism in Islam can thus be traced back to its very emergence in the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE. The Koran as well as the *Hadith*, i.e. the sayings of the Prophet, contain many negative references to Jews.

Islam viewed the Jews as "God's and humanity's unchosen" in the words of Israeli historian Benny Morris.<sup>33</sup> Robert Wistrich, the noted historian of antisemitism, in turn, notes that classical Islam portrays the Jews as

"deceitful, treacherous and scheming," [as] "corrupters of Scripture," [as] "stubbornly and willfully reject[ing] Allah's truth," [as] "persecut[ors] of the prophets," [as] "deliberately caus[ing] Muhammad's painful, protracted death from poisoning" [and as] "malevolent[ly], conspiratorial[ly] fomenting sectarian strife... heresies and deviations that undermined or endangered the unity of the *umma* [the Muslim nation]." <sup>34</sup>

These pejorative characterizations of the Jew are revealingly similar to Christianity's and laid the foundation for Islam's attitude towards Jews throughout the centuries. At the core of the treatment was the institution of "dhimmitude," which subjected Jews (and Christians) to a markedly inferior status involving special taxation and clothing, wide-reaching discrimination, degradation and periodic violence.

Islam, however, despite the serious disabilities it imposed on Jews dealt relatively better with them than did the Christian world, demonstrating only how horrendous Jewish life was under the latter. It is also true that there are positive statements about Jews in the Koran and that there were periods of positive Jewish-Muslim interaction, giving rise to a number of Jewish "golden ages," that of Spain being one example.

Historians Perry and Schweitzer, nonetheless, point out that Spain often was "as much ghetto as golden age." And during the frequent periods of fundamentalist sweeps, either domestically inspired or as a result of external conquest by newly-converted Muslims, Jewish status

dramatically changed. It is one such episode in the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries that led Maimonides, the great Jewish Renaissance man, despairingly to lament,

... a more hating nation [than Ishmael] has never risen against Israel, no one which has come to degrade us and decimate us and make hating us their chief desire.<sup>35</sup>

The plight of Maimonides exemplifies the denial to Jews of equal membership in the human family and the millennial condition of perennial persecution experienced by them in the Diaspora. It was the objective of Zionism to end this diasporic condition and to reflect the Jewish people's striving for self-determination and the fulfillment of its destiny in its ancient homeland. Since the re-establishment in 1948 of Israel, Zionism's tangible expression, antisemitism also focused on the Jewish State, seeking to deny it its rightful place in the community of nations.

It is Israel and its continuous existence that have especially led sectors of the Arab and Muslim worlds to become centrally engaged in the global antisemitic campaign. "Guided by history and religion," Morris writes, many Muslim leaders

... have traditionally seen the Jews as an inferior race whose proper place was as an abased minority in a Muslim polity; and the present situation, with an Arab minority under Jewish rule, is regarded as a perversion of nature and divine will.... [He adds that the] continuous defeats ... Israel has ... inflicted on the Arab world ... [are seen] as a basic violation or disruption of the "cosmic order," something humiliating and unfathomable.<sup>36</sup>

This global dimension to Muslim antisemitism has been exponentially intensified by the resurgence of Islamism or "political Islam." In contrast with spiritual Islam, Islamism as a movement has blended religion and politics with the aim of imposing its version of Islam on the whole world. It reserves a special hatred for Jews.

With the above in mind, it becomes clearer why sectors in the Arab and Muslim worlds, including the West, with Canada no exception, have been so receptive to Europe's historic antisemitic themes -- the poisoning of wells, the blood libel, the Shylock stereotype, the myth of the Jew as an alien, satanic force engaged in a conspiracy to conquer the world as well as Holocaust denial -- and how it is that they were able to integrate these so easily with their own enduring antisemitic tradition.

The notion of Jewish conspiracies, of one fashion or another, constitutes perhaps the most enduring antisemitic libel. *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, an antisemitic forgery of the early 1900s, produced by the Secret Police of Czarist Russia, is the classic modern articulation of this calumny.

The Nazis wholeheartedly adopted it as the über text for their antisemitic propaganda campaign. According to historian Norman Cohn it is exactly the conspiracy myth of the

*Protocols* that led directly to the Holocaust -- hence his characterization of the document as a "warrant for genocide." <sup>37</sup>

Prof. Robert Wistrich demonstrates that *The Protocols* enjoys "extraordinary popularity," with 60 different Arabic editions available for purchase in Islamic bookshops throughout the world, including the West. The calumny was readily available for purchase at an Islamic exhibition booth during the infamous conference allegedly against racism, which took place in Durban, South Africa (August-September 2001).

The notion of a world Jewish conspiracy, as extracted from the *Protocols*, forms the basis of the very up-to-date obscene and overwhelmingly believed claim in the Muslim world that 9-11 was an Israeli-Jewish plot. Only Israelis and/or Jews (the terms are used interchangeably), expert power mongers that they are, the argument goes, could have carried out such a sophisticated operation.

As conclusive proof, it is falsely claimed that the purportedly 4000 of them employed at the World Trade Centre did not report for work on the tragic day. Like Holocaust denial, not only does this do violence to the memory of the Jews who perished in the towers and the Holocaust but also, in classic antisemitic inversion, turns the criminals into innocents and the innocents into criminals.

Holocaust denial is irresistible to those in the Muslim and Arab world who attack Israel's claim to statehood. Promotion of this lie is intended to lay the foundation for the ultimate success of Israel denial.

This linkage has been made for a while, but what is especially alarming is that, for the first time, it is being championed by a nation-state, the Islamic Republic of Iran. Iran's current government is motivated by the ideology of Islamism that seeks global victory for its particular version of Islam (Khomeinism) and rejects the presence of a Jewish state in the Middle East, which it sees as the exclusive preserve of the Muslim world.<sup>38</sup>

Antisemitism, of course, is by no means prevalent in all sectors of Muslim and Arab society. The above picture of negativity does not reflect examples of Muslim/Arab opposition to antisemitism and significant positive Muslim-Jewish interaction.<sup>39</sup> But it is sheer nonsense to suggest, as Dossa does, that antisemitism is alien to Islam. Indeed, Wistrich argues that in its contemporary manifestation it constitutes "A Clear and Present Danger."

## **CONCLUSION**

Dossa's "explanation" has been heard previously. Ahmadinejad did participate in the conference. The Iranian Institute of Political and International Studies is a creature of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The *raison d'être* of the conference was Holocaust denial. Ahmadinejad is a Holocaust denier and was the conference's inspiration.

When it comes to the Holocaust a skeptic is a denier. Foreign antisemites dominated the conference program. Dossa should have known better than to attend or should have withdrawn early on. Antisemitism is a phenomenon that applies strictly to Jews. Antisemitism has been an element within Islam since its inception and today its most virulent form has its locus in the Muslim world.

Much of Dossa's explanation, therefore, does not stand up to scrutiny and the decision by the LRC to publish it was not justified.

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<sup>1</sup> Shiraz Dossa, "The truth about the conference in Iran," *Halifax Daily News*, March 23, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> "News Headlines," December 12, 2006.

<http://www.president.ir/eng/ahmadinejad/cronicnews/1385/09/21/index-e.htm>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.adelaideinstitute.org/2006December/contents\\_prog\\_pics1.htm](http://www.adelaideinstitute.org/2006December/contents_prog_pics1.htm)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ipis.ir/English>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.adelaideinstitute.org/2006December/contents\\_program1.htm](http://www.adelaideinstitute.org/2006December/contents_program1.htm)

<sup>6</sup> *Al Jazeera*, February 12, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> See Manuel Prutschi, "Holocaust Denial: An Update," in Paula Draper, *Lest We Forget: A Comprehensive Guide to the Holocaust* (The Holocaust Centre of Toronto, 2007) and Prutschi, "Holocaust Denial Today," in Edmond Y. Lipsitz, ed. *Canadian Jewry Today*, (J.E.S.L. Educational Products, Toronto, 1989).

<sup>8</sup> *Associated Press*, Tehran, Iran, August 14, 2006; *Reuters*, Tehran, November 2, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> *Cox and Forcum Editorial Cartoons*, October 08, 2006.

<http://www.coxandforkum.com/archives/InternationalCartoonE.SM.html>

<sup>10</sup> *Associate Press* Tehran, Iran, Feb. 7, 2006

<sup>11</sup> For the text of the Minister's speech see <http://www.ipis.ir/English/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.president.ir/eng/ahmadinejad/cronicnews/1384/11/22/index-e.htm#b4>

<sup>13</sup> *Iran Focus*, "Special photo report of the demonstration in the Iranian capital, Tehran, on the occasion of the 27th anniversary of the Islamic revolution in Iran," February 11, 2006.

<http://www.iranfocus.com/modules/news/article.php?storyid=5729>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ykd-syzZ4ZY>

<sup>15</sup> *Fars News Agency*, August 28, 2006.

<sup>16</sup> *Al Jazeera*, December 12, 2006.

<sup>17</sup> *Reuters*, Tehran, November 2, 2006.

<sup>18</sup> See footnote # 11.

<sup>19</sup> *Al Jazeera*, December 15, 2005.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> The Adelaide Institute's conference program,

[http://www.adelaideinstitute.org/2006December/contents\\_program1.htm](http://www.adelaideinstitute.org/2006December/contents_program1.htm); Anti-Defamation League, Iran Hosts Anti-Semitic [sic] Hatefest in Teheran,"

[http://www.adl.org/main\\_International\\_Affairs/iran\\_holocaust\\_conference.htm](http://www.adl.org/main_International_Affairs/iran_holocaust_conference.htm); The Coordination Forum for Countering Antisemitism, "The Hall of Shame,"

<http://www.antisemitism.org.il/eng/The%20Hall%20of%20Shame> and selected papers from the conference.

<sup>22</sup> "What really happened in Iran," <http://www.adelaideinstitute.org/2006December/Piper.htm>

<sup>23</sup> Prutschi, "Holocaust Denial;" "Author biographies," Institute for Historical Review,

<http://www.ihr.org/other/authorbios.html>

<sup>24</sup> "Iranian Holocaust-Denial Documentary Series On Iranian TV: 'Merchants of the Myth,'" The Middle East Research Institute, Special Dispatch Series, No. 1566, May 2, 2007.

[http://www.memri.org/bin/opener\\_latest.cgi?ID=SD156607](http://www.memri.org/bin/opener_latest.cgi?ID=SD156607)

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.alexanderbaron.150m.com/ITMA.html>

<sup>26</sup> "Treblinka Ground Radar Examination Finds No Trace of Mass Graves," Institute for Historical Review,

[http://www.ihr.org/jhr/v19/v19n3p20\\_radar.html](http://www.ihr.org/jhr/v19/v19n3p20_radar.html)

<sup>27</sup> Text of paper.

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<sup>28</sup> Michael Berenbaum and Abraham J. Peck (editors), *The Holocaust and History: The Known, the Unknown, the Disputed and the Reexamined*, (1998).

Michael R. Marrus, *The Holocaust in History*, (2000).

Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, (2001).

Louis Weber (publisher) and David J. Hogan (editor-in-chief), *The Holocaust Chronicle*, (2003).

Christopher R. Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939-March 1942*, (2004).

<sup>29</sup> Dossa's university website. <http://www.stfx.ca/academic/political-science/Dossa/WelcomeDossa.html>

<sup>30</sup> "This Is What Happened," *Spiegel online International*, December 11, 2006; "Historians Debate Holocaust Research in Berlin," *Deutsche Welle*, December 13, 2006.

<sup>31</sup> See Manuel Prutschi, Antisemitism: A brief history: from its origins to the present, Canadian Jewish Congress (March 4, 2003).

<sup>32</sup> Ibid; Manuel Prutschi, "Islamism: Anti-Semitism and the cult of death," *The Canadian Jewish News*, July 10, 2003

<sup>33</sup> Benny Morris, "The rejection: Bleak conclusions from the history of a people," *The New Republic*, April 21, 2003.

<sup>34</sup> Robert S. Wistrich, *Muslim Anti-Semitism: A Clear and Present Danger* (New York: The American Jewish Committee, 2002), pp. 8-9.

<sup>35</sup> Marvin Perry and Frederick M. Schweitzer, *Antisemitism: Myth and Hate from Antiquity to the Present* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) p.267.

<sup>36</sup> Morris, "The rejection," *The New Republic*, April 21, 2003.

<sup>37</sup> Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World-Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (Penguin, 1970).

<sup>38</sup> Manuel Prutschi, "We must speak out against Iran's Holocaust denial," *The Globe and Mail* (web exclusive), January 17, 2007.

<sup>39</sup> Specifically, regarding Holocaust denial:

Fourteen Arab intellectuals publicly issued a letter opposing a Holocaust denial conference that the Swiss antisemite Juergen Graf (see above) was trying to hold in Beirut in March, 2001. They called on Lebanon not to permit "this anti-Semitic undertaking." Their action, together with that of others, was successful. (Sam F. Ghattas, "Lebanon Won't Host Revisionists," *Associated Press*, March 22, 2001).

Over one hundred Iranian academics, writers, artists, human rights activists and others courageously signed an open letter in which, irrespective of their varying positions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, "**Strongly condemn[ed] the Holocaust Conference** sponsored by the government of the Islamic Republic in Tehran on December 11-12, 2006 and its **attempt to falsify history.**" [Emphasis added]. (Gholam Reza Afkhami and over one hundred others, "On the Holocaust Conference Sponsored by the Government of Iran," *The New York Review of Books*, February 15, 2007.

On June 12, 2007, on the eve of an interfaith conference in Bali, Abdurrahman Wahid, the former president of Indonesia and Israel Meir Lau, former Chief Rabbi of Israel and a Holocaust survivor, co-wrote an article on "The Evils of Holocaust Denial." (Wall Street Journal, June 12, 2007).

By lying about the events of the past, the deniers are paving the way toward the crimes of the future. The real purpose of Holocaust denial is to degrade and dehumanize the Jewish people. By denying or trivializing the murder of six million Jews by the Nazis and their allies, the deniers are seeking to advance their notion that the victims of the 20th century's greatest crime are, in fact, that century's greatest victimizers. Holocaust denial is the most visible symptom of an underlying disease - the inability (or unwillingness) to recognize the humanity of others."

There is much that Islam and Judaism have in common. Convergence of the two communities has taken place in different parts of the world, Canada very much included. This interaction has involved a variety of

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dialogues, rejecting religious violence and favouring pluralist democratic politics, common action on issues of mutual interest as well as reciprocal condemnation and repudiation of acts of hate. The ongoing promotion of positive Jewish-Muslim relations can be further advanced by reading sacred texts judiciously and with the right emphasis as well as by mutually recognizing and respecting each other's pasts.