

**The Norwegian Government:
Antisemitism and Anti-Israel Policies
(2005-2013)**

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ABSTRACT

The Labor-dominated Norwegian governments (2005–2013) in which Jens Stoltenberg was Prime Minister played a major role in incitement against and demonization of Israel, along with Norway's leading media and segments of the country's elites. Several of Norway's discriminatory acts or proposals against Israel expressed double standards and constituted antisemitic behavior. Under Stoltenberg, Norway was often a pioneer of anti-Israelism in the Western world. The frequent inflammatory rhetoric greatly contributed to the finding in a government-funded study that 38% of the Norwegian population believe that Israel behaves toward the Palestinians like the Nazis behaved toward the Jews.

INTRODUCTION

Thirty-eight percent of Norwegians believe that Israel acts toward the Palestinians like the Nazis behaved toward the Jews. This figure was published in 2012 by the Norwegian Center for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities, a study paid for by the Norwegian government.¹ Its findings show that about 1.5 million adult citizens of the country hold a demonic view of Israel.

Studies in other European countries found similar or higher percentages of people who believe that Israel behaves like the Nazis, or is waging a war of extermination against the Palestinians. To be considered like Nazis is a contemporary expression of “absolute evil” in Western societies.

In June 2011, the Oslo Municipality published a study on harassment of children in Oslo high schools. It found that one-third of Jewish high school students were harassed verbally or physically at least two or three times a month.² One rarely finds such high levels of antisemitism at schools in other Western societies. A significant number of antisemitic incidents take place in

¹ Christhard Hoffmann, Øivind Kopperud, Vibeke Moe, et.al., “Antisemittisme i Norge? Den norske befolkningens holdninger til jøder og andre minoriteter,” Center for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities, May 2012.

² “Karlegging av kunnskaper og holdninger på området rasisme og antisemittisme i Osloskolen,” *Perduco* (April 2011): 42.

Norway even though the number of Jews in Norway is only between 1,300 and 2,000, including hundreds of Israelis.³

Two studies were conducted by and for the Jewish community in 2011.⁴ One was a survey based on a questionnaire sent out to DMT (*Det Mosaiske Trossamfund*—Norwegian Jewish Community) members in Oslo and Trondheim. At the same time, a qualitative study of Jewish children and youth experiences with antisemitism in Norway was conducted by Islin Abrahamsen and Chava Savosnick. The second study interviewed 21 young Norwegian Jews from school age until 25. It found that young Jews often do not reveal their religious identity, and some have even changed schools, or their parents have moved homes because of the antisemitism they experienced.⁵

Both studies were financed by the Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs.⁶ When DMT members were asked about the level of antisemitism in Norway, 72 percent of respondents from the Jewish community in Oslo saw an increase, while in the Trondheim community that figure was at 55 percent. Half of the respondents said that they had personally experienced antisemitism. One fifth reported to have experienced antisemitism in 2011.

The majority of those interviewed — more than 80 percent — put the main responsibility for this increased trend in antisemitism upon the media. They claim that the way the media is covering the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has made life more difficult for Jews in Norway.⁷ The report further shows that young Jews in Norway in the 10–25 year age bracket are victims of harassment including jokes, classic stereotypes, and sometimes are even held responsible

³ “Hvor mange jøder er det i Norge?,” Det Mosaiske Trossamfund, <http://www.dmt.oslo.no/>, retrieved 24 July 2013.

⁴ “Norske barn tør ikke stå fram som jøder,” *Dagen*. <http://dagen.no/Default.aspx?TabId=248&ModuleId=77152&articleView=true>, retrieved 20 March 2014.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Rolf Golombek, Irene Levie, and Julian Cramer, “Jødisk liv i Norge” (June 2012).

⁷ Knut Olav Åmås, “Den usynlige minoriteten,” *Aftenposten*, 6 June 2012.

for the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.⁸ One incident detailed in the report tells about a young Jew who was spat upon when he was out one evening. The perpetrator shouted, “You should have burned in Auschwitz.”⁹

The Oslo municipality study followed a television broadcast by journalist Tormod Strand on the government-owned NRK station in early 2010. It focused on the harassment of Jewish high school students by fellow Muslim students.¹⁰ The interviewees were parents and teachers, almost all of whom wished to remain anonymous. The broadcast also noted that teachers dare not oppose the antisemitic acts.¹¹

It would be misleading however, to think that the majority of harassment of Norwegian Jews is caused by Muslims. They represent an estimated two to four percent — or 100,000–185,000 out of a Norwegian population of about 5 million.¹² However, former General Secretary of the Islamic Council Shoaib Sultan admitted that “Anti-Semitism is a problem among Norwegian Muslims.”¹³ Tina Shagufta Kornmo and Shakil Rehman from LIM (*Likestilling, integrering og mangfold*—Equality, Integration, and Diversity), an NGO working for the inclusion of immigrants based on liberal and secular values, accused the Islamic Council of not taking Jew-hatred seriously.¹⁴ Based on anecdotal evidence and studies within the Jewish community, the level of antisemitic acts and attitudes seem to be higher among Muslims than in the general population.¹⁵

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ “Tormod Strand — Lærerne tør ikke å ta tak,” *NRK*, 14 Mar. 2010.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Lars Østby, “Muslimsk flertall i Norge i fremtiden?,” *Morgenbladet*, 26 Aug. 2011, http://morgenbladet.no/ideer/2011/muslimsk_flertall_i_norge#.UymSX6hdUik.

¹³ Kenneth O. Bakken, “Antisemittisme er et problem blant norske muslimer,” *Med Israel For Fred*, 15 June 2011.

¹⁴ Johannes Morken, “Jødehat: Liberale muslimer tar oppgjør med Islamsk Råd,” *Vårt Land*, 9 June 2011.

¹⁵ Ibid.

PART-TIME ANTISEMITES AND HUMANITARIAN RACISTS

To better understand contemporary Western classic antisemitism and its latest major mutation, anti-Israelism, two new concepts must be introduced. The first is “part-time antisemites” — those who commit antisemitic acts intermittently. Norway’s Prime Minister during the Second World War, Vidkun Quisling was a “full-time antisemite.” Several left-of-center leaders of Norway commit or condone antisemitic acts, including applying double standards against Israel. Yet they may show solidarity with the Jewish community on other occasions, or even speak at Holocaust Memorial meetings. It may well be that for some of them this is an attempt to persuade the public that they are not antisemites.¹⁶ Such behavior does not whitewash their antisemitic acts, which may contribute not only to the demonization of Israel, but also to the harassment of the country’s Jews.

In recent years, one of the major inciters against Israel has been former Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre of the Labor Party, whose last position in government was that of Minister of Health. Yet this politician has also visited Oslo’s synagogue several times. One such visit was in January 2009 after the Oslo riots.¹⁷

During another visit to the synagogue in January 2011, Støre warned about Jew-hatred in Norway.¹⁸ He spoke there to two classes of school children and gave an impromptu history lesson where he said that historically, Norway didn’t have much to be proud of concerning the treatment of minorities.¹⁹

According to TV2, Støre also stated that Norwegian Jews “are Norwegians” and “Norwegian Jews are our Jews.”²⁰ His need to affirm this is

¹⁶ Miranda Mc Gonagall, “Lysbakkens and Willochs Holocaust Memorial speeches not at all well received,” *Norway, Israel and the Jews*, 27 Nov. 2012, www.israelwhat.com/2012/11/27/lysbakkens-and-willochs-holocaust-memorial-speeches-not-at-all-well-received/.

¹⁷ NTB (*Norsk Telegrambyrå*—Norwegian News Agency), “Antisemittiske holdninger skal bekjempes,” *Verdens Gang*, 13 Jan. 2009.

¹⁸ NTB, “Støre advarer mot jødehat,” *TV2*, 6 Jan. 2011.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

an indication that others in Norwegian society deny it. Would anyone ever say for instance, “Norwegian Social Democrats are Norwegians and Norwegian Social Democrats are our Social Democrats?”

A second concept required for proper analysis of the current situation in Norway is the rarely recognized “humanitarian racism.” It can be defined as attributing intrinsically reduced responsibility to people of certain ethnic or national groups regarding their criminal behavior and intentions. Humanitarian racists judge delinquency and crime differently according to the color and socio-economic status of those who commit them. For example, white people are held to different standards of responsibility than people of color.²¹

Israel is frequently blamed in Norway for whatever measures it takes to defend its citizens. Palestinian responsibility for suicide bombings, rocket attacks, promoting genocide, glorification of murderers of Israeli civilians, and massive incitement, including that similar to Nazi-type hatred, is frequently minimized, if not ignored.

THE GOVERNMENT INCITES

The Norwegian Labor Party-dominated government, government-funded bodies, and public officials have played major roles in the incitement against and demonization of Israel. So do many leading media and other segments of the civil society’s elites.

The Norwegian Labor-dominated coalition government was in power from October 2005 until October 2013. It included three parties: Labor, led by Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg; the Socialist Left Party (SV); and the Centre Party. This government in many ways followed a pro-Palestinian and anti-Israel policy. Several of Norway’s discriminatory acts or proposals against Israel were

²¹ Manfred Gerstenfeld, *Behind the Humanitarian Mask* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs and Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies, 2008), 22–23.

expressions of double standards. They constitute antisemitic behavior according to the European working definition of antisemitism.²²

Under this government, Norway was frequently a pioneer of anti-Israelism in the Western world. This manifested itself in actions of the government, other authorities and related bodies, as well as in certain segments of civil society.

NORWEGIAN AUTHORITIES AS ANTI-ISRAEL PIONEERS

A few examples of anti-Israel hate-mongering from government circles will illustrate this pioneering anti-Israel attitude. In 2006, Finance Minister Kristin Halvorsen — then leader of SV — endorsed a consumer boycott of Israel. The SV program for the period of 2005–2009 did not directly advocate a consumer boycott. It stated that SV would work for a weapons boycott and embargo “as long as the state [Israel] continues to breach international law in dealings with the Palestinians.”²³ Halvorsen was probably the first Western government minister to promote a boycott.²⁴

She later apologized to her government.²⁵ Halvorsen published her memoirs in 2012. She wrote that her initiative to boycott Israel while holding a ministerial position was her “greatest political blunder.”²⁶ Halvorsen mentioned that both Stoltenberg and Støre had made it clear that this was contrary to government policy. That forced her to publicly retract her statement.

In 2005, the decision by the Sør-Trøndelag region to boycott Israel was most likely the first such act by a regional government in the Western world.²⁷ This position was abandoned after pressure from Støre, who claimed it was

²² “Working Definition of Antisemitism,” *European Forum on Antisemitism*, www.european-forum-on-antisemitism.org/working-definition-of-antisemitism/, retrieved 29 July 2013.

²³ “SVs program 2005–2009,” <http://www.rorg.no/Artikler/519.html>, retrieved 20 Mar. 2014.

²⁴ “USA Threats after Boycott Support,” *Aftenposten*, 12 Jan. 2006.

²⁵ Ole Berthelsen, “Halvorsen: – Beklager,” *Nettavisen*, 6 Jan. 2006.

²⁶ Ingerd Våge, “Israel-boikott på SV-Kristins tabbetopp,” *Vårt Land*, 25 Oct. 2012.

²⁷ “Oppvask i FrP etter Israel-boikott,” *Adresseavisen*, 15 Dec. 2005.

illegal. The region's original announcement however, was highly discriminatory against Israel.²⁸

After a short decline in anti-Israeli activities in Norway due to the summer 2009 vacation period, they took off again in September of that year. Halvorsen announced that investments in the Israeli company Elbit Systems had been dropped from the country's major pension fund investments due to "ethical concerns regarding its work on the West Bank security barrier." The *Jerusalem Post* pointed out that it was seven years since Israel had started building this barrier and less than two weeks before Norway's national elections, which took place on 14 September.²⁹

The Israeli government took a low key approach to the matter in order not to influence the outcome of the elections. Støre told Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak that the investment fund was a private one over which the government had no control.³⁰ This reply didn't rhyme with the fact that the announcement of the divestment was made by his colleague Halvorsen.

The Norwegian government's ethics concern mainly Israel — not itself. This fits the much broader attitude of those hiding behind a false humanitarian mask. Some examples illustrate this. The same "ethical" Norwegian pension fund was at the time heavily invested in fertilizer companies operating in the disputed Western Sahara. Local inhabitants see these operations as plunder of their natural resources.³¹ The state-controlled Statoil oil firm was at that time planning investments in Northern Alberta in Canada which it was thought would be extremely polluting; Greenpeace claimed that the project would destroy an area of forests the size of England.³² Statoil also tried at the time to

²⁸ "Avblåser boikott av Israel," *Aftenposten*, 17 Jan. 2006.

²⁹ Herb Keinon and Yaakov Katz, "Norway envoy summoned on divestment," *Jerusalem Post*, 3 Sept. 2009.

³⁰ Barak Ravid and Amira Hass, "Norway FM to Barak: Israel is a friend despite Elbit divestment," *Haaretz*, 6 Sept. 2009.

³¹ Erik Hagen, "Norwatch: Rich on Plunder," *vest-sahara.no*, 6 Oct. 2009. www.vest-sahara.no/print_article.php?cat=49&art=1343&dl=en

³² "Can Statoil wash its hands of the Tar Sands?" Greenpeace International, 14 May 2009, www.greenpeace.org/international/news/can-statoil-wash-it-s-hands-of#

get involved in business in Turkmenistan, a country with an extremely poor civil rights record.³³

WELCOMING HAMAS

The Palestinian Hamas party platform calls for the murder of Jews.³⁴ The E.U. and the United States classify Hamas as a terrorist group.³⁵ Both ended contacts with Palestinian officials after the Hamas parliamentary election victory in January 2006 when this terrorist organization formed a new Palestinian government led by Ismael Haniyeh. The United States and the E.U. then also cut off aid to the Palestinians.³⁶

In April 2006, two Hamas representatives, parliamentarian and spokesperson for the Hamas bloc in the Parliament Salah Mohammed El-Bardawil and Mohammed El-Rantisi, were invited by the Norwegian Palestine Committee. It claimed that it was “important” to invite representatives from the new Palestinian government.³⁷ This visit was related to those of a Palestinian delegation to several European countries. El-Rantisi was given a Schengen visa by Norway, thus allowing him entry into any of the fifteen member countries, while El-Bardawil received a national visa as his previous Schengen application was denied by France.³⁸

The entry permits were given only a few weeks after a major suicide bombing took place outside The Mayor’s Falafel fast food restaurant in Tel Aviv, which claimed nine lives and left more than seventy wounded.³⁹ The

³³ Yohan Shanmugaratnan and Eline Lønnå, “Går inn I diktatur,” *Klassekampen*, 29 Aug. 2009.

³⁴ “The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement,” *Yale Law School* http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp, retrieved 29 June 2013.

³⁵ “Hamas Wants off US, EU Terror lists,” CBNNews 12 Mar. 2013.

³⁶ “EU, US set to end boycott of Palestinians,” BBC, 20 Mar. 2007.

³⁷ “Støre ønsker Hamas velkommen,” *Nettavisen*, 18 Apr. 2006, <http://www.nettavisen.no/612389.html>.

³⁸ Abigail Klein Leichman, “Oslo Grants Visa to Hamas Lawmaker,” *Jerusalem Post*, 16 May 2006. Sissel Henriksen, “Slakter Sveriges,” *Klassekampen*, 19 May 2006.

³⁹ “Suicide bomber kills nine in Tel Aviv,” NBC News, 17 Apr. 2006.

Islamic Jihad movement claimed responsibility. Hamas called the attack a legitimate response to “Israeli aggression.” Even though El-Bardawil said that he did not want to condemn the suicide bombing, Støre still welcomed the Hamas representatives to Norway.⁴⁰

In the following months, Hamas representatives parliamentarian Yahya al-Abadsa and Refugee Minister Atef Adwan were invited by the same organization. Al-Abadsa met with Amnesty International Norway and the Labor party head of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Olav Akselsen during his week-long visit.⁴¹ The main opposition parties — the Progress Party, the Conservatives, and the Christian People’s Party decided not to participate in the meeting.⁴²

Adwan met with the head of the Middle East section of the Foreign Ministry, Kåre Eltervåg.⁴³ He also met with parliamentarians from both the Labor and Socialist Left parties, as well as former Conservative PM Kåre Willoch and Gerd Liv Walla, the leader of the main trade union Landsorganisasjonen i Norge (LO). A picture of Valla and Adwan shaking hands was published.⁴⁴

The Norwegian government initially favored meeting with Hamas representatives. The Minister of Development at the time, Erik Solheim from the SV, announced to NRK that government ministers would meet the Hamas representatives. He stated that: “Dialogue is the best way to transfer the message that we cannot accept acts of terror directed at civilian targets.” He also said that the purpose of a dialogue with Hamas must be to contribute to a

⁴⁰ See note 37, above.

⁴¹ Ole Peder Giæver, “Hamas-parlamentarikerer Yahya Al-Abadsa, som denne uken er på besøk i Norge, tror ikke det brygger til borgerkrig i de palestinske områdene,” *Nettavisen*, 13 June 2006.

⁴² Halvor Hegtun, “Strid i utenrikskomiteen om Hamas-møte,” *Aftenposten*, 14 June 2006.

⁴³ “UD-representanter møtte Hamas-minister,” *Aftenposten*, 13 May 2006, <http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/UD-representanter-motte-Hamas-minister-6398901.html>.

⁴⁴ Gro Holm Strømsheim, “Willoch møtte Hamas-minister,” *Dagbladet*, 15 May 2006.

gradual change of Hamas' view on the use of violence and to acceptance of the State of Israel.⁴⁵ He thus intended to legitimize Hamas. For the Progress Party, Morten Høglund argued that it was naive to believe that Hamas would change by simply talking to them. In the end, government officials did not meet with Hamas representatives, as they reversed their initial position.

Norway was the first Western government to recognize the short-lived 2007 Hamas-Fatah unity government.⁴⁶ Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister Raymond Johansen became the first senior European official to hold talks with Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniye in March 2007. Several media presented a picture of the two shaking hands. After meeting Haniye, Johansen said, "We hope that all the European countries and even other countries, will support this unity government."⁴⁷ Israel subsequently cancelled all planned meetings between Johansen and Israeli officials.

When murderous fighting broke out between Hamas and Fatah in Gaza in June 2007, Støre said Israel was partly to blame.⁴⁸ This was a typical example of scapegoating: he blamed Israel for the violence instead of the real culprits — Hamas. It was yet another one of Støre's many manipulative statements. He was also guilty of using double standards, as he remained silent about Egypt allowing large quantities of weapons to be funneled to Hamas.

2011: STØRE DENIES CONTACTS WITH HAMAS

In an interview with Norway's commercial channel TV2 in 2011, Støre initially denied that he had spoken directly with Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal several times on the phone.⁴⁹ The interviewer reacted that Meshaal had confirmed that

⁴⁵ "Hamas-representanter invitert til Norge," *Aftenposten*, 18 April 2006,

⁴⁶ Harald S. Klungtveit and Morten Øverbye, "Israel avlyser alle avtaler med norsk statssekretær," *Dagbladet*, 20 Mar. 2007.

⁴⁷ "Norwegian minister meets Hamas PM," *BBC News*, 19 Mar. 2007; "Norway Hamas Link Angers Israel," *BBC News*, 20 Mar. 2007.

⁴⁸ Unn Gyda Næss and Gry Elisabeth Veiby, "Støre ut mot Israel," *Nettavisen*, 14 June 2007.

⁴⁹ Pål T. Jørgensen and Espen Eide, "Støre har hatt hemmelige samtaler med Hamas," *TV2*, 27 Jan. 2011.

he had been in contact with the Foreign Minister at the time. Støre then asked to stop the tape and restart the interview. He explained that the contacts with Meshaal were made upon a request by Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas.

Opposition leaders Erna Solberg of the Conservative Party (Høyre), Siv Jensen of the Progress Party (FrP), and Knut Arild Hareide of the Christian People's Party (KrF) reacted strongly to this information. Jensen accused Støre of lying to the Parliament.⁵⁰

THE GOVERNMENT “EXPLAINS”

In April 2011, Støre published an article titled, “Why We Must Talk” in the *New York Review of Books*.⁵¹ He argued for the use of dialogue as a tool of conflict resolution in the Middle East. Støre used the international intervention in Afghanistan as an example of why dialogue with hostile and violent groups, such as the Taliban, is an important and crucial element of dealing with the increasing problem of terrorism. He wrote that, “While a military presence is still needed, Afghans and their international partners must find a way forward through diplomatic dialogue with the Taliban.”⁵²

In 2011, the Norwegian government claimed on its official website that it had assisted in bringing Fatah and Hamas together in their short-lived unity government in 2007. Støre had then approached Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal at the request of Mohammed Abbas to convey expectations of the international community that the two parties join in a unity government. The Norwegian government also asserted that it never recognized Hamas and did not establish political contact with it.

Benson K. Whitney, then American Ambassador in Norway saw it differently. In a note from 2009 which he had written to the State Department, he said that, “Even though they would deny it, there are clear signs that the

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Jonas Gahr Støre, “Why we must talk,” *New York Review of Books*, 7 Apr. 2011.

⁵² Ibid.

contact with Hamas is not just a tactical need for dialogue, but that they also support Hamas's position on some level."⁵³

The Norwegian government website also states that its policy is to have contacts with all representative political movements in the Middle East, including Hamas. It does so in order to obtain an understanding of political positions and react to them. The government statement also declared that until Hamas accepts Israel and ceases the use of violence, Norway will not establish official political contact with Hamas. The website furthermore mentions that Norway has not had any political contact with Hamas since 2007.⁵⁴

THE GOVERNMENT'S RHETORIC

The Norwegian government's rhetoric was frequently anti-Israel. Condemnations of Israel are rife, and Støre played a major role in this while he was foreign minister until September 2012.

At the time of the Second Lebanon War in 2006, Støre was one of those who called Israel's military strikes against Lebanon unacceptable. He said "The Israeli attack on Qana in South Lebanon is a clear violation of international law." Støre remarked: "Thousands of civilians are still in this area and they have the right to protection. Israel is assuming a great responsibility with this type of warfare."

As Støre so often did in the past, he condemned Israel without offering any alternative on how it must protect its citizens. This was yet another example of his structural anti-Israel bias.

During Israel's Cast Lead campaign against the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip in 2008–2009, the Norwegian government's position toward Israel was among the most negative in Europe. Pretending to serve the interests of the civilian Palestinian population — which had voted a parliamentary majority to the genocide-promoting Hamas — the Norwegian attitude benefitted the terrorist rulers of Gaza.

⁵³ Pål T. Jørgensen and Espen Eide, "Støre har hatt hemmelige samtaler med Hamas."

⁵⁴ "Norges kontakt med Hamas," *Regjeringen*, 27 Jan. 2011.

Støre stated: “The Israeli ground offensive in Gaza constitutes a dramatic escalation of the conflict. Norway strongly condemns any form of warfare that causes severe civilian suffering, and calls on Israel to withdraw its forces immediately.” He added that “Gaza is the world’s most densely populated area, and the effects of a ground invasion on a long-suffering civilian population that has endured a strict closure regime for many years, and now many days of military attacks, will be extremely grave.”⁵⁵

In his condemnation of Israel, Støre repeated a recurrent lie. The Gaza Strip is far from being the world’s most densely populated area. Singapore, Hong Kong, and even the Tel Aviv metropolitan area are more crowded than Gaza.⁵⁶ Such lies are repeated often by many pseudo-humanitarian critics of Israel. Yet once again, Støre criticized Israel without offering any practical alternative for it to protect its population against Hamas’ indiscriminate attacks.

THE LILLENG AFFAIR

One of the internationally publicized antisemitic incidents concerning Norway was caused by Foreign Ministry official Trine Lilleng, a first Secretary in the Norwegian Embassy in Saudi Arabia. In 2009, she sent an email from her embassy account in which she juxtaposed pictures of slain children in Gaza with “photos of Holocaust victims in seemingly correlating situations.” *Aftenposten* printed some of these comparisons.⁵⁷ If one analyzes these pictures, one sees that they involve very different situations.

Yad Vashem, Israel’s Holocaust memorial institute, came out with a strong condemnation of Lilleng. Its spokesman said:

That a Norwegian foreign ministry official is disseminating such distortions is appalling and smacks of anti-Semitism.... Instead of working toward understanding, she is fanning the flames of

⁵⁵ “Israel Must Withdraw Its Troops from Gaza,” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway*, 3 Jan. 2009.

⁵⁶ Stephen Pollard, “Gaza Is Not Too Crowded,” *The Spectator*, 24 Apr. 2008.

⁵⁷ Kristjan Molstad, “UD-ansatt sammenligner Israel med nazistene,” *Aftenposten*, 21 Jan. 2009.

hatred.... There is no comparison between the systematic plan, based on a murderous ideology, to murder every single Jewish person, everywhere, and a long political and military conflict between two peoples.... Coming on the heels of other examples of anti-Semitic incitement, it raises red flags as to what is apparently happening in Norway.

The spokesman added that such “manipulative abuse” of the Holocaust inevitably leads to violence.⁵⁸

The Foreign Policy spokesperson for the Progress Party, Morten Høglund, connected this incident to the Stoltenberg government’s attitude. He said that Lilleng’s email could only be sent because of the “unrestrained verbal aggression against Israel and an uneven approach by the Norwegian government, which made the diplomat feel comfortable enough to send this hateful mail.” The Christian Democrats filed a critical query with the ministry on the matter.⁵⁹

David Harris, Executive Director of the American Jewish Committee, wrote an answer to Lilleng’s email, saying

You’ve been in Riyadh since 2007. If you’re so anguished by human rights violations, perhaps you could have begun by devoting some of your attention — and email blasts — to what surrounds you. Or were your eyes diplomatically shut?

Have you failed to notice the many legal executions, including beheadings, going on in your assigned country? Have you ignored the often abysmal treatment of foreign workers, many from Asia, who also happen to be disproportionately counted among the victims of Saudi capital punishment? Have you neglected the gender apartheid that surrounds you? Did you ever look out of your car to

⁵⁸ Etgar Lefkovits, “Yad Vashem blasts Norwegian diplomat’s comparison of Gaza campaign to Holocaust,” *Jerusalem Post*, 21 Jan. 2009.

⁵⁹ Cnaan Lipshiz, “Oslo parties demand censure of envoy who likened Gaza op to Holocaust,” *Haaretz*, 22 Jan. 2009, English edition.

notice that Saudi women are proscribed from driving, and that's hardly the worst of it?⁶⁰

When Støre visited Israel a few weeks later, he was interviewed by the daily *Maariv*. He mentioned that Lilleng was no longer in Riyadh. The interviewer Shalom Yerushalmi, did not clarify whether she was still employed by the ministry. During the interview Støre, returned to his frequent accusations that Israel acted disproportionately and that one must talk to Hamas.⁶¹

Contrary to what Støre had told *Maariv*, his ministry had *not* recalled Lilleng from Riyadh. In July 2009, Cnaan Lipshiz, a reporter from the Israeli *Haaretz* daily phoned the Norwegian Embassy in Saudi Arabia and asked to speak to her. The Israeli journalist was told that Consul Lilleng would be in later that day. This apparently also contradicted what the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs had said in January, when the Lilleng scandal broke. It had been mentioned at that time that she was a member of the administrative staff.

When *Haaretz* asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about Støre's earlier statement, the Ministry spokeswoman said that it had been a mistake, which the accompanying press attaché had corrected immediately during the Minister's interview. Lipshiz then asked Yerushalmi to check the tape of the interview. He did so and said that he could not find any such correction.⁶²

STØRE'S BACK COVER COMMENT FOR ISRAEL-HATE BOOK

During Operation Cast Lead, two Norwegian physicians and activists, Mads Gilbert and Erik Fosse, went to Gaza to participate in the treatment of wounded Gazans. They traveled to Gaza as part of the humanitarian organization NORWAC, which is supported financially to a great extent by the Norwegian Foreign Ministry.⁶³ Gilbert and Fosse were frequently interviewed

⁶⁰ David Harris, "In the Trenches: Hypocrisy!" *Jerusalem Post Blogs*, 26 Jan. 2009, <http://blogs.jpost.com/content/trenches>, retrieved 5 Jan. 2010.

⁶¹ Shalom Yerushalmi, "Anachnu lo Antishemim," *Maariv*, 8 Mar. 2009.

⁶² Cnaan Lipshiz, "Did Norway promote a diplomat who compared Israelis to Nazis?" *Haaretz*, 24 July 2009, English edition.

⁶³ Erik Abild, "NORWAC i Palestina," *Norwegian Aid Committee*, 19 Dec. 2010.

by the international media and claimed that Israel was attacking civilians and compared it to the God of the Dead and the Underworld, Hades from Greek mythology.⁶⁴ The hospital where they worked was used as the Hamas headquarters. However, the Norwegian physicians did not mention this in their multiple international press interviews.

NGO Monitor subsequently pointed out that Gilbert did not mention that Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza, where the two doctors worked, had been used for military purposes.⁶⁵ A few months later, the Israel Defense Forces revealed that Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh and other Hamas executives took over an entire ward of the hospital during the war.⁶⁶

In their book *Øyne i Gaza* (Eyes in Gaza) Gilbert and Fosse later wrote that Israel entered the Gaza strip to kill women and children.⁶⁷ This is a contemporary secular version of the medieval blood libel, which falsely claimed that Jews used Christian children's blood for religious purposes.

Støre wrote a back cover comment for this hate-mongering book praising the authors for their role during their stay in the Gaza strip. The foreign minister was thereupon heavily criticized. A representative of the Christian Democrats found it "surprising" that the minister wished to take the risk of approving the narrative in the book. The Progress Party attacked Støre on this issue.⁶⁸ Former Conservative Prime Minister Kåre Willoch also wrote a back cover comment for the book.⁶⁹

Eyes in Gaza also tells how Prime Minister Stoltenberg personally called the physicians when they were in Gaza and expressed support on behalf of the

⁶⁴ Gjermund Glesnes, "Sammenligner Gaza med dødsriket Hades," *Verdens Gang*, 4 Jan. 2009.

⁶⁵ "Dr. Mads Gilbert's Media Campaign," *NGO Monitor*, 6 Jan. 2009, http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/press_statement_dr_mads_gilbert, retrieved 7 Mar.2014.

⁶⁶ Yaakov Katz, "Haniyeh Hid in Hospital during Gaza Op," *Jerusalem Post*, 22 Apr. 2009.

⁶⁷ Mads Gilbert and Erik Fosse, "Øyne i Gaza," *Gyldendal* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 2009.)

⁶⁸ Vibeke Buan and Geir Geir Salvesen, "Dumt av Støre å bidra i boken," *Aftenposten*, 1 Jan. 2010.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

government and the Norwegian people. “We are very proud of you,” said Stoltenberg.⁷⁰

STØRE, THE SECOND DURBAN CONFERENCE AND THE GOLDSTONE REPORT

The then-Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, an inciter to genocide par excellence, spoke at the Durban 2 conference in 2009. At that point, all attending representatives of the E.U. countries left the room. The Czech Republic thereafter decided to leave the conference altogether. Støre however, remained in the hall to listen to the Iranian President’s anti-Israel hate speech. He spoke after him and condemned his words. This was a rather safe move as almost all other Western Europeans had shown their disapproval in a much stronger way. Støre was nothing more than a follower.⁷¹

Former South African Judge Richard Goldstone, headed the fact-finding mission of the United Nation Human Rights Council on the Gaza war in 2008–2009. His report was exposed as extremely biased by many.⁷² Two years later in an opinion piece in the *Washington Post*, Goldstone retracted many of the original accusations due to new evidence.⁷³

Støre had supported the initial report. Even after Goldstone’s retraction, Støre continued to maintain that Israel broke international law by systematically attacking civilian targets in Gaza during the Cast Lead operation. He said, “I cannot see any new information that has arisen which might draw doubts on the main findings of the report.”⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Erlend Skevik, “Regjeringen støttet Gaza-legene,” *Verdens Gang*, 18 Sept. 2009.

⁷¹ “Vesten reagerte med avsky på Ahmadinejads tale,” *Aftenposten*, 15 Oct. 2011, <http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/uriks/article3036375.ece>, retrieved 7 Mar. 2014.

⁷² Gerald M. Steinberg and Anne Herzberg, eds. *The Goldstone Report “Reconsidered” — A Critical Analysis* (Jerusalem: NGO Monitor and Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 2011).

⁷³ Richard Goldstone “Reconsidering the Goldstone Report on Israel and War Crimes,” *Washington Post Opinions*, 2 Apr. 2011.

⁷⁴ Erlend Skevik, “Støre holder fast på Israel-kritikk,” *Verdens Gang*, 14 Apr. 2011.

THE 2011 UTØYA CAMP

In 2011, mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik killed seventy-seven people, sixty-nine of whom were at a camp of the Labor Party youth movement AUF on the island of Utøya. Earlier, Støre had spoken at the camp and said that, “The Palestinians must get their own state, the Occupation must cease, the Wall must be torn down and it must happen now.”⁷⁵

The Foreign Minister also repeated what he had said many times before: “Norway is ready to recognize a Palestinian state.”⁷⁶ The call to tear down Israel’s security barrier indirectly constitutes Norwegian support of Palestinian terrorism. Israel erected this effective barrier to prevent Palestinian terror attacks against Israel’s civil population.

At the Utøya camp, AUF leader Eskil Pedersen promoted an economic boycott of Israel. Støre replied that this was not the correct strategy, despite agreeing that the current situation is “unacceptable.”⁷⁷ He and Pedersen were photographed smiling together in front of a banner at Utøya calling for the boycott of Israel.⁷⁸

Ivar Fjeld, a Norwegian journalist who participated in summer camps at Utøya when he was an AUF leader decades ago said,

There have been many rumors in Norway about what actually took place at Utøya. I have done detailed research to document the activities of the groups which were invited to the island. I want people to know the facts. It seems that the line between “showing contempt” for Israelis and the use of violence against innocent civilians inside Israel, is blurred. Summer camps on Utøya have

⁷⁵ “Jonas Gahr Støre: — Okkupasjonen må opphøre, muren må rives og det må skje nå,” *TV2*, 21 July 2011.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

further fueled the already widespread anti-Israel sentiments in Norway.⁷⁹

In a 2012 article in *Haaretz*, Støre wrote that he was disturbed by the 38 percent comparison found between Nazi treatment of the Jews and how Israel is treating the Palestinians today. He mentioned that there is a need to address how political attitudes in Norway are shaped. Støre added that not only politicians have an important responsibility in this manner, but the media as well.⁸⁰ He did not come to the logical conclusion that a government-financed study should be undertaken by independent experts on how this demonic view of Israel among large parts of the Norwegian population was created. Nor did he ask what his own role in this development was.

FOREIGN MINISTER EIDE

In September 2012, Espen Barth Eide succeeded Støre as Norway's Minister of Foreign Affairs. He had briefly served as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs under Støre from 2010 until he was appointed Minister of Defense in late 2011. Eide has often tried to choose less confrontational statements than Støre had made. This however is not always the case. For instance, he explicitly stated in a NRK radio program *Søndagsavisen*, that Israel is an occupying force in Gaza.⁸¹

Eide also followed the same policy as Støre. While he was Deputy Foreign Minister, he wrote an article in the *Jerusalem Post* shortly after the 2011 Breivik terror attacks.⁸² It was a response to assertions made by *Jerusalem Post* senior editor Caroline Glick and columnist Barry Rubin; the latter claimed that the

⁷⁹ Ivar Fjeld, interview by Manfred Gerstenfeld, "Preaching Israel-Hatred at Norway's Terror Island," *Israel National News*, 27 Jan. 2013.

⁸⁰ Jonas Gahr Støre, "Norway has zero tolerance for intolerance," *Haaretz*, 15 July 2012, www.haaretz.com/opinion/norway-has-zero-tolerance-for-intolerance-1.451077.

⁸¹ Hans Rustad, Barth Eide: Israel en okkupasjonsmakt på Gaza, Document no. 18, Nov. 2012. <http://www.document.no/2012/11/barth-eide-israel-en-okkupasjonsmakt-pa-gaza/>.

⁸² Espen Barth Eide, "A time to heal?," *Jerusalem Post*, 5 Aug. 2011.

youths present at the Utøya political summer camp were engaged in a “pro-terrorist program.”⁸³

Rubin also wrote that the camp was “justifying forces that had committed terrorism against Israel” as it inter alia advocated an end to the blockade of Gaza and recognition of a Palestinian state. Eide responded by asserting that Norway’s government does not condone terrorism of any kind. He furthermore stated that “[i]t cannot be claimed that supporting recognition of a Palestinian state or an end to the blockade of Gaza is the same as supporting terrorism.”

Responding to Eide’s article, Manfred Gerstenfeld wrote:

Attacking Israel and ignoring major Palestinian and Arab crimes comes naturally to many among the Norwegian elite. The best way to counter this is by frequently exposing examples of indirect Norwegian support for terror, hate-mongering and double standards, as well as inaction against anti-Semitism by the government.⁸⁴

In March 2013, Eide claimed that, “time is running out for Israel in the West Bank.”⁸⁵ He thus implied that Israel is the sole responsible actor in the peace process. At that time he addressed his frustration over “the lack of a real peace process” between the Israelis and Palestinians claiming that Israel and the United States think that an agreement can be further postponed.

Eide warned those in Israel who think the relative calm in the West Bank will last. He said that if the Palestinian Authority (PA) breaks down, it is most likely that a radicalization will take place there, as happened in Gaza. In addition, he blamed Israeli restrictions as inhibiting sustainable economic

⁸³ Caroline Glick “Breivik and Totalitarian Democrats,” *Jerusalem Post*, 28 July 2011; Barry Rubin, “The Region: The Oslo Syndrome,” *Jerusalem Post*, 31 July 2011.

⁸⁴ Manfred Gerstenfeld, “Comment: How Israel Should Face Hostile Norway Gov’t,” *Jerusalem Post*, 11 Aug. 2011.

⁸⁵ Barth Eide, “Tiden renner ut for Israel på Vestbredden,” *Aftenposten*, 19 Mar. 2013.

development in the West Bank. He admitted that most of his demands were directed at Israel.⁸⁶

At the Landsorganisasjonen i Norge (LO, the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions) congress in May 2013, Eide said that the government was working together with the European Union to avoid importing merchandise from Israeli settlements in the West Bank. He also repeated his concerns over the possibility of reaching a political solution to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

Eide added: “It is becoming more and more difficult because Israel continues to build illegal settlements on Palestinian land.”⁸⁷ One rarely if ever hears criticism from Norwegian government officials about how the Palestinian Authority undermines peace by glorifying murderers and the Nazi-type incitement against Israel and Jews. Even the fact that the Hamas charter calls for the genocide of Jews is not mentioned. The Norwegian government’s criticism of Israel thus regularly applies double standards, which are in this case, expressions of both antisemitism and humanitarian racism.

At the end of 2012, the Israeli government announced the building of 3,000 new housing units in Givat HaMatos and 1,500 new units in Ramat Shlomo, two neighborhoods just over the 1967 border. Eide criticized this in a press release from the government titled, “Settlements undermine peace.”⁸⁸ He however, never reacted when there were new cases of Palestinian glorification of murderers of Israeli civilians.

PRIME MINISTER STOLTENBERG

Stoltenberg’s support for hate-mongering against Israel is more indirect. On 21 July 2006, while Hizbollah was firing at Jewish civilians from the north and Hamas was firing from the south, Norwegian Stoltenberg declared that Norway would give 100 million kroners each — approximately 16 million USD — as humanitarian aid to Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority. Such pro-

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Yngvil Mortensen, “Utenriksminister Eide: Unngå varer fra israelske bosettinger,” *Fri Fagbevegelse*, 4 May 2013.

⁸⁸ “Nye bosettinger undergraver fred,” *Regjeringen*, 20 December 2012.

nouncements and measures send a signal from the highest level to Norway's citizens about who the victims and the aggressors are.⁸⁹ A few days earlier he had already given another 100 million kroner to the PA.⁹⁰

Over the years, Stoltenberg spoke at several meetings in which there were brutal verbal attacks on Israel, while he remained silent. A prime minister indicates his support by condoning and not confronting these attacks. On 20 April 2002, Stoltenberg requested the removal of posters equating the Star of David with the swastika during a demonstration in Oslo; he continued his speech, however, in front of posters with "Death to the Jews" written in Arabic. This demonstration was organized by Norwegian left-wing parties including Labor and took place in front of the Parliament building.⁹¹

On May 1, 2012, Stoltenberg spoke in Bergen. Israel was the only foreign country fiercely attacked by participants. He did not react to that in his speech. Yet singling out Israel negatively in a way different from any other country, meets the European working definition of an antisemitic act.

Salma Abudahi, from Gaza's Union of Agriculture Work Committees (UAWC) spoke in 2013 at the 1st of May celebration of LO in Oslo. Earlier she had called rockets a "symbol of resistance" and said that occupied people have a right to defend themselves.⁹² "It is important," said Abudahi, "to understand the proportions. The Israelis are killing our loved ones all the time." She did not mention peace with Israel. This was yet another example of Palestinian

⁸⁹ Norwegian Prime Minister's Office, Press Release 99/2006.

⁹⁰ "Norge bevilger 100 mill til Palestina," *Dagens Næringsliv*, 16 July 2006; and "Norge gir 200 millioner til Libanon og Palestina," *Verdens Gang*, 21 July 2006.

⁹¹ Martin Bodd, "Country Reports: Norway," Anti-Defamation League Conference on Global Anti-Semitism, 2002, www.adl.org/anti_semitism/as_conference_proceedings.pdf.

⁹² Manfred Gerstenfeld, "Norway's Annual Israel Hate Day," *Times of Israel*, 4 June 2013; see also Vegard Velle, "Å kjempe er en måte å overleve på," *Fagbladet*, 30 Apr. 2013.

incitement. Stoltenberg spoke after Abudahi at the meeting and ignored her incitement in his speech.⁹³

Stoltenberg as Prime Minister is responsible for all the Israel-hatred and bias coming out of his government. As leader of the Labor party he is responsible for all the incitement coming out of there, including that of the party's youth movement the AUF.

With Stoltenberg one also finds a two-pronged approach. On the one hand looking away from antisemitic acts against Israel; on the other hand, in 2012 he apologized for Norway's complicity in the deportation and deaths of Jews during the Nazi occupation in World War II. "Norwegians carried out the arrests; Norwegians drove the trucks and it happened in Norway," Stoltenberg said. "Today I feel it is fitting to express our deepest apologies that this could happen on Norwegian soil."⁹⁴

SV POLITICIANS

Kristen Halvorsen participated in an anti-Israel demonstration in Oslo in January 2009 during Israel's Cast Lead military campaign in Gaza. She was the only minister of a European country to take part in such a rally. It was reported that there were shouts at the gathering of "Death to the Jews." Pictures in various media showed Halvorsen standing close to a demonstrator who held up a poster which read, "The Greatest Axis of Evil, the USA and Israel."⁹⁵ By not leaving such a gathering nor dissociating herself from it, Halvorsen must be considered as identifying with it.

Shortly before these pictures were published, then-Norwegian Ambassador to Israel Jakken Lian published a letter to the editor in the *Jerusalem Post* in which he tried to whitewash Halvorsen's behavior. He wrote: "The Minister took part in a manifestation for a ceasing of hostilities in Gaza. It lasted for about an hour, and was a dignified and peaceful event. It ended outside the Norwegian Parliament." He added: "The violent demonstration that later

⁹³ Conrad Myrland, "Palestinsk taler på Youngstorget tegner fiendebilder og maner til kamp," *Med Israel For Fred*, 30 Apr. 2013.

⁹⁴ Reuters, "Norway offers long-delayed Holocaust apology," *Ynet*, 27 Jan. 2012.

⁹⁵ Itamar Eichner, "Geluchei rosh wesarat haotsar," *Yediot Achronot*, 14 Jan. 2009.

followed outside Israel's embassy was carried out by fringe groups. Ms. Halvorsen strongly disapproves of violence and incitement to violence, and has said so repeatedly."⁹⁶

In a later article, "Norway is not an anti-Semitic country," Ambassador Lian rejected the accusations of antisemitism in Norway.⁹⁷ He admitted that there were incidents of racism and antisemitism in Norway as in any other country, but stated that these accusations were mere generalizations.⁹⁸

Before she became Deputy Minister of the Environment, Ingrid Fiskaa of SV said in 2009,

When for example the Palestinians are exposed to a slow genocide and the UN does not get much done, this discussion does not appear. Why not? Because it is not in the U.S. interest. In some dark moments, I might wish that the U.N. send some precision-guided rockets at selected Israeli targets, but of course that wouldn't be relevant and probably wouldn't solve any problems either.⁹⁹

Fiskaa's statement about Israel committing genocide against the Palestinians was an explicit illustration of what 38 percent of adult Norwegians think about Israel, as an aforementioned study has found.

Lian also tried to whitewash the murderous fantasies of Fiskaa:

Her critical comments about Israeli policy were made last year, long before she was appointed. This is then presented as yet another Norwegian anti-Semitic incident. When you single out specific statements or actions made by individual residents of a country and

⁹⁶ Jakken Biørn Lian, Ambassador of Norway in Israel, Letter to the Editor, *Jerusalem Post*, 2 Apr. 2009.

⁹⁷ Jakken Lian, "Right of Reply: Norway is not anti-Semitic," *Jerusalem Post*, 12 Dec. 2009.

⁹⁸ Richard Oestermann, "Ambassadør avviser at Norge er antisemittisk," *Norge Idag*, 14 Dec. 2009.

⁹⁹ Olav Østrem, "Hauken og duen," *Klassekampen*, 19 April 2008.

project them on a population or a government, it is possible to make anybody look like anything.¹⁰⁰

Lian applied a fallacy known as a “strawman” in this case. One invents an accusation and then claims it is incorrect. However, no one had accused all Norwegians of being responsible for Fiskaa’s hatred. The issue is the normative failure of Stoltenberg, and her party to appoint such a person as deputy minister.

THE KING’S AWARDS

In 2013, King Harald V awarded Gilbert and Fosse the Royal Order of St. Olav (St. Olavs Orden) — “a reward for excellent merit for the fatherland and humankind.”¹⁰¹ Fosse was awarded the medal for his “medical and societal efforts.”¹⁰² Gilbert was given the award on the basis of his “broad efforts in emergency medicine.”¹⁰³ In doing so the Norwegian king ignored the antisemitic hate-mongering of the two physicians.

These awards had precedents. In 2007, Harald V had awarded the Knight’s Medal of the St. Olav Order to German-born Norwegian cartoonist Finn Graff for his graphics work.¹⁰⁴ In one of his caricatures he drew Israeli Prime Minister Olmert as the Nazi camp commander from the film, *Schindler’s List*. It was published by the country’s third largest daily *Dagbladet* in 2006.¹⁰⁵

In 2011, Graff published a cartoon about the prisoner swap for the kidnapped Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit. The illustration hints at Palestinian prisoners being released into another “prison,” that being Gaza. Graff inserted

¹⁰⁰ Lian, “Right of Reply”

¹⁰¹ “St. Olavs Orden,” *Det Norske Kongehus*, 6 Nov. 2012, <http://www.kongehuset.no/artikkel.html?tid=27216&sek=27047> (the website of the Norwegian royal house), retrieved 7 Mar. 2014.

¹⁰² NTB, “St. Olavs Orden til Mads Gilbert,” *Verdens Gang*, 6 May 2013.

¹⁰³ Ida Louise Rostad, “Gilbert får kongens medalje,” *Nordlys*, 6 May 2013.

¹⁰⁴ NTB, “St. Olavs Orden til Finn Graff,” *Dagbladet*, 7 Mar. 2007.

¹⁰⁵ Finn Graff, *Dagbladet*, 10 July 2006.

there the Buchenwald inscription: Jedem das Seine (To each what he deserves).¹⁰⁶

In 2012, the King awarded the Royal Medal of Honor, which recognizes people for outstanding work in the arts, science, industry and public service¹⁰⁷ to the outspoken antisemitic Muslim convert Trond Ali Lindstad. After strong national and international criticism, the award was cancelled on the day on which the ceremony was to be held. Oslo Mayor Fabian Stang had said earlier that he was unwilling to hand the medal to Lindstad.¹⁰⁸

In 2010, Lindstad had published an article warning readers to “Beware of the Jews and their special, Jewish interests,” and “be critical of Jews in the world, when it comes to the influence they have within newspapers and other media, in many political organs and related to contacts and networks where decision are being made.”¹⁰⁹ In a 2008 article, Lindstad had suggested that the use of suicide bombers may be “legitimate” if directed against military targets.¹¹⁰

In a 2011 article, Lindstad argued that attacking Israel with rockets is “legitimate and necessary” and gave his full support to Hamas and Hezbollah.¹¹¹ He has several times questioned Israel’s legitimacy and right to exist and even hinted at its destruction by the force of arms.¹¹² In 2012,

¹⁰⁶ Martin Eikeland, “Mener Dagbladet demoniserer Israel,” *Vårt Land*, 19 Oct. 2011; Jan-Erik Smilden, “Århundrets fangebytte,” *Dagbladet*, 19 Oct. 2011.

¹⁰⁷ “Kongens fortjenstmedalje: Statutter,” *Det Norske Kongebus*, 6 Nov. 2012.

¹⁰⁸ NTB, “Fabian Stang vil ikke dele ut medalje til Linstad,” NRK, 12 Nov. 2012.

¹⁰⁹ Trond Ali Lindstad, “Vær kritisk til jøder,” 28 Mar. 2010, <http://www.koranen.no/artikkel.php?id=379>.

¹¹⁰ Trond Ali Lindstad, “Legale selvmordsaksjoner,” 30 June 2008, <http://www.koranen.no/artikkel.php?id=507>.

¹¹¹ Trond Ali Lindstad, “Rakettagrep — legitimt og nødvendig,” 8 Aug. 2011, . <http://www.koranen.no/artikkel.php?id=875>.

¹¹² Tor-Bjørn Nordgaard, “Linstad forsvarer selvmords-bombere og advarer mot jøder,” *Norge Idag*, 19 Nov. 2012.

Lindstad held eighth place on the 2012 Simon Wiesenthal Center's international list of antisemitic slurs.¹¹³

THE BROWNBACK LETTER

In August 2010, then-U.S. Senator Sam Brownback wrote a letter to Wegger Strømmen, the Norwegian Ambassador in Washington.¹¹⁴ In it he said,

I have been contacted by human rights activists who have raised alarm over increased reports of anti-Semitism in Norway, often linked to events in the Middle East. The attached document from the Simon Wiesenthal Center outlines some of the occurrences they have shared with me. These reports are concerning, particularly as they have sometimes involved prominent members of Norwegian society. Clearly, Norway is a democracy and, as such, its citizens have the freedom to criticize individuals and nations. However, continued unaddressed negative attacks and behaviors leads to further hate and anti-Semitism.¹¹⁵

The Simon Wiesenthal Center document attached to the Brownback letter listed several examples of extreme antisemitic acts in Norway. It also quoted hate statements and acts of support for anti-Israel hate-mongering by King Harald V, Stoltenberg, Støre, Halvorsen, and Fiskaa. The Senator's letter was ignored by all Norwegian national media and the government.

Parliamentarian Øyvind Vaksdal from the Progress Party then posed a parliamentary question to the Foreign Minister. In his reply, Støre rejected

¹¹³ "2012 Top Ten Anti-Semitic/Anti-Israeli Slurs," Simon Wiesenthal Center, <http://www.wiesenthal.com/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=lsKWLbPJLnF&b=4441467&ct=12697485>, retrieved 7 Mar. 2014.

¹¹⁴ Bjarte Ystebø, "Senator Brownback bekymret over Norge," *Norge Idag*, 18 Aug. 2010.

¹¹⁵ "Breaking: Letter from US Senator Brownback on anti-Semitism in Norway," Norway, Israel and the Jews, 10 Aug. 2010, <http://www.israelwhat.com/2010/08/12/breaking-letter-from-senator-brownback-on-anti-semitism-in-norway/>, retrieved 7 Mar.2014.

accusations made against members of the government that they contribute to a hostile environment for Norwegian Jews.¹¹⁶ He also failed to address any of the specific cases referred to in Brownback's letter, such as the Lilleng Affair, his endorsing of the book by Fosse and Gilbert, and Halvorsen's participation in a hateful pro-Palestinian demonstration during Israel's Cast Lead operation.

THE OSCE REPORT

The Norwegian government usually ignores foreign criticism of antisemitism and the widespread extreme anti-Israelism in the country. It is assisted in this by the leading media which usually does not report on such critiques. This stonewalling however, was not possible when a three-member OSCE delegation visited Norway in summer 2012.

After their visit, the delegation published a report in which it criticized Norway for intolerant attitudes towards both Jews and Muslims. The authors stated that the police did not map the level of hate crimes, nor did they fight them in a measurable way. The report also recommended increased security for the Jewish community there. The OSCE delegation further commented on the Norwegian government's attitude concerning the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. It warned that the "strong anti-Israeli attitude can develop into anti-Semitism."

The delegation urged the foreign minister to conduct a debate which would promote a less biased view of the conflict and does not lead to a demonization of the Israeli state. It also stated that the continued ban on kosher slaughter is seen as negative for Norway's reputation of tolerance and inclusion.¹¹⁷ The OSCE report and its widespread criticism of Norway got some attention in the Norwegian press.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Tor-Bjørn Nordgaard, "Mener Brownback tar feil," *Norge Idag*, 15 Sept. 2010.

¹¹⁷ Andrew Baker, Adil Akhmetov, and Catherine McGuinness, "Report of the Personal Representatives of the OSCE Chair-in-Office on Tolerance and Non-discrimination Issues [on the country visit to] Norway," 11–15 June 2012, *Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Information System* (Vienna: OSCE, 14 Dec. 2012).

¹¹⁸ NTB, "OSSE: Norge viser intoleranse mot jøder og muslimer," NRK, 21 Oct. 2012; Per Anders Johansen, "Reagerer sterkt på holdninger til jøder," NRK, 21 Oct. 2012.

NORWEGIAN EMBASSY IN DAMASCUS FINANCES ISRAEL-HATE EXHIBITION

Hate paintings by Norwegian artist Håkon Gullvåg were shown in Amman, Beirut, and Damascus as the “Terra Sancta” or “The Holy Land.”¹¹⁹ The display showed motifs from Israel’s 2008–2009 Cast Lead campaign. Two of the paintings depicting the Israeli flag with blood were censored by the French Cultural Centre where his paintings were on view.¹²⁰ The artist said that he felt a need to express his compassion with “the Palestinian’s cause and their sufferings.”¹²¹

According to the Norwegian Ambassador to Syria, Rolf Willy Hansen, the Gullvåg exhibition was a “tribute to the Palestinian children in Gaza.”¹²² The Ambassador also said at the opening that “this exhibition is perceived as one of the most important political expressions that has been made by a Norwegian artist in a long time.”¹²³ The ambassador thus legitimized the hate-monger Gullvåg.

Parliamentarian Hans Olav Syversen from the Christian Democrats asked the Foreign Minister about the role of his ministry and the embassy in Damascus and if the Terra Sancta exhibition received direct or indirect financial support from the Norwegian government. Foreign Minister at the time, Støre answered that the Norwegian Embassy in Damascus gave Gullvåg 35,000 NOK (approx. \$5,700) to cover costs of transportation.¹²⁴ Given that by March 2014, at least 146,000 Syrians had been murdered and many more wounded by

¹¹⁹ Håkon Gullvåg, “Terra Sancta: Utstillingsturne i Midt-Østen — Utstilling i Damaskus,” 13 Oct. 2012.

¹²⁰ Espen Sandmo and Jan Rye Ravnstad, “Gullvåg sensurert i Damaskus,” NRK Trøndelag, 17 Oct. 2010.

¹²¹ Richard Oestermann, “Kirkeministeren på ‘lærerikt besøk’ i Israel,” *Norge Idag*, 19 Dec. 2011.

¹²² Sandmo and Ravnstad, “Gullvåg sensurert i Damaskus.”

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ “Svar på spørsmål om Håkon Gullvågs utstilling i Damaskus,” Utenriksdepartementet, 26 Oct. 2010.

their countrymen, one can understand even better how hateful was the behavior of the Norwegian embassy in Damascus.¹²⁵

In December 2012, Norwegian Church Minister Rigmor Aasrud — a Labor Party politician — opened an exhibition at the Augusta Victoria church in East Jerusalem showcasing Gullvåg.¹²⁶ This time it included pictures unrelated to the Middle East conflict. Then-Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad was also present at the opening.¹²⁷ Once again, a Norwegian high official legitimized hate-promoter Gullvåg with her presence. When challenged about the Gullvåg paintings, Aasrud's reaction was another expression of double standards toward Israel prevalent among the Norwegian cultural elite. She said: "I think we may accept art may be challenging. Perhaps we can convey from the Norwegian side that art is only art."¹²⁸

Aasrud could get away with this answer in an Israeli environment which is unfamiliar with the Norwegian reality. Her attitude was in complete contrast to that of the Norwegian government when the Danish Mohammed cartoons were published in a small Norwegian Christian weekly *Magazinet*. The Norwegian government put great pressure on its editor until he apologized. Norwegian diplomats to Arab countries were instructed to apologize — not for the fact that the caricatures were published in their country, but for the commotion it created.¹²⁹ Støre also said that it was "unwise" for the *Jerusalem Post* to print the cartoons.¹³⁰

AMBASSADOR TO ISRAEL JUSTIFIES TERROR

The Norwegian government's hostile and hateful attitude toward Israel has gradually become more widely known in Israel and elsewhere, in part because

¹²⁵ <http://www.in.com/news/current-affairs/syrian-death-toll-exceeds-146000-as-fourth-year-begins-group-52594448-in-1.html>.

¹²⁶ "Kirkeministeren besøker Jerusalem," *Regjeringen*, 2 Dec. 2011.

¹²⁷ John Erik Thorbjørnsen "Lærerik jerusalemstur," *Hadeland*, 19 Dec. 2011.

¹²⁸ Kristina Furnes, "Julebesøk till jerusalem," *Dagen*, 12 Sept. 2011.

¹²⁹ NTB, "UD beklager ikke karikatur," *Dagens Næringsliv*, 30 Jan. 2006.

¹³⁰ Bjørnar Hjellen, "Gahr Støre kritiserer israelsk publisering," *Verdens Gang*, 6 Feb. 2006.

of remarks made by Norwegian Ambassador to Israel Svein Sevje after the Breivik murders in 2011. His observations implied that terror against Israel was justified in Norwegian eyes, eliciting strong reactions from various Israeli authors.

Caroline Glick, senior editor of the *Jerusalem Post* quoted Sevje in a July 2011 article:

We Norwegians view the occupation as the reason for terror against Israel. Many Norwegians still see the occupation as the reason for attacks against Israel. Whoever thinks this way, will not change his mind as a result of the attack in Oslo.

Glick then commented:

So in the mind of the illiberal Norwegians, terrorism is justified if the ideology behind it is considered justified. For them it is unacceptable for Breivik to murder Norwegian children, because his ideology is wrong. But it is acceptable for Palestinians to murder Israeli children, because their ideology is right.¹³¹

In a later article titled “Norway’s Jewish problem,” Glick explained her reaction to Ambassador Sevje and Eide.¹³²

My revulsion at this bold attempt to use Breivik’s crime to attack freedom of speech propelled me to write my July 29 column, “Breivik and Totalitarian Democrats.” While the focus of my column was the Left’s attempt to silence their conservative opponents, I also noted that widespread popular support for Palestinian terrorists in Norway indicates that for many Norwegians, opposition to terrorism is less than comprehensive. To support this position, I quoted an interview in *Maariv* with Norway’s Ambassador to Israel Svein Sevje.¹³³

¹³¹ Caroline Glick, “Breivik and Totalitarian Democrats,” *Jerusalem Post*, 28 July 2011.

¹³² Caroline Glick “Norway’s Jewish Problem,” *Jerusalem Post*, 8 Aug. 2011.

¹³³ “Envoy Contrasts Terror in Israel, Norway,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 26 July 2011.

The late Barry Rubin was equally emphatic:

Many Europeans will accept terrorism against Israelis or even Americans; very few will applaud terrorism against fellow Europeans. One of the most sensitive aspects of the murderous terrorist attack in Norway by a right-wing gunman is this irony: The youth camp he attacked was engaged in what was essentially — though the campers didn't see it that way, no doubt — a pro-terrorist program.¹³⁴

The camp, run by Norway's Left-wing party, was lobbying for breaking the blockade of the terrorist Hamas regime in the Gaza Strip, and for immediate recognition of a Palestinian state, without that entity needing to do anything that would prevent it from being used as a terrorist base against Israel. They were justifying forces that had committed terrorism against Israelis, killing thousands of people like themselves.

In an earlier article Rubin wrote, "People who accept rationales for terrorism and reward those movements politically increase terrorism."¹³⁵

Diplomats in foreign countries try to improve relations between their countries. Vebjørn Dysvik, when he was Deputy Head of the Norwegian embassy in Tel Aviv however, published blog posts where he repeated the one-sided Norwegian rhetoric on how settlement activities are an impediment to a peaceful solution.¹³⁶ On another occasion, Dysvik also described how the "occupation" is a "defining factor" of Norway's relations with Israel.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Barry Rubin, "The Oslo Syndrome," *Jerusalem Post*, 31 Aug. 2011.

¹³⁵ Barry Rubin, "Norway and Terror: Repressing Discussion Doesn't Help," *Jerusalem Post*, 6 Aug. 2011.

¹³⁶ Vebjørn Dysvik, "Bosettinger til besvær," *Norge i verden: (Regjeringen)*, 15 Mar. 2013, <http://blogg.regjeringen.no/norgeiverden/2013/03/15/bosettinger/>, retrieved 7 Mar. 2014.

¹³⁷ Raphael Ahren, "Told that Norway is the West's Most Anti-Semitic Country, Diplomat Lashes Out at Israel," *Times of Israel*, 6 Nov. 2012.

THE HAMSUN YEAR: HONORING A NAZI ADMIRER

Israel has become a sensor for the deteriorated morality of the Norwegian Labor party-dominated social environment. In a democracy where elites have very questionable norms, their expression cannot remain limited to Israel only. The following case, which is not linked to Israel, of the Norwegian government honoring a former Nazi-admirer, illustrates this.

In 2009, the 150th anniversary of the birth of Knut Hamsun, one of Norway's most prominent writers, was celebrated with a major government sponsored program. Hamsun had been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1920. He became a Nazi sympathizer, and after the war, he was put on trial for treason. In 1948 the Supreme Court found him guilty of being a member of Quisling's party, the National Unity (Nasjonal Samling), although Hamsun denied it and the matter is still debated.¹³⁸ In 1943, at the height of World War II and the Holocaust, he had presented his Nobel Prize medal to Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi propaganda Minister, and had an audience with Hitler.

The *New York Times* wrote that in February 2009, Norway's Queen Sonja opened the

year-long, publicly-financed commemoration of Hamsun's 150th birthday called The Hamsun Year 2009, where the Queen spent a highly private half hour with Hamsun family members at the National Library. Together they viewed the author's handwritten manuscripts.¹³⁹

Støre promised the Wiesenthal Center that Hamsun's dual role as both a writer and an ardent Nazi would be properly discussed and highlighted during the Hamsun year 2009. This proved not to be the case. In September 2009, Israeli Foreign Minister Lieberman criticized the Norwegian Culture Ministry's commemoration of Nazi-affiliated author Knut Hamsun, who had once

¹³⁸ "Kort biografi," Hamsunsenteret, <http://hamsunsenteret.no/no/knut-hamsun/kort-biografi>, retrieved Mar. 2014.

¹³⁹ Walter Gibbs, "Norwegian Nobel Laureate, Once Shunned, is Now Celebrated," *New York Times*, 27 Feb. 2009.

eulogized Hitler in the Norwegian daily *Aftenposten* as a “warrior for mankind.” Støre still claimed that distinctions were being made between Hamsun’s literary work and his world view.¹⁴⁰

Nazi hunter Ephraim Zuroff, Director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Israel, reacted saying that the Hamsun Jubilee was damaging the work done by the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF), which Norway led that same year.¹⁴¹ Zuroff said that as a result, the work became “less efficient and less symbolic.”¹⁴²

FINANCING CONVICTED TERRORISTS

Norway is one of the biggest financial contributors to the Palestinian Authority, and heads the donor committee established as a part of the Oslo process. Since 2008, Norway has donated more than \$52 million (300 million NOK) annually in direct support to the PA.¹⁴³

On its evening television program *Dagsrevyen* in February 2013, the NRK reported that part of Norwegian taxpayers’ money goes to funding Palestinian murderers in Israeli jails.¹⁴⁴ This was based on findings made by the Israeli research body, Palestinian Media Watch (PMW). It documented that the PA uses money from this budget to pay salaries and cafeteria expenses for all Palestinian prisoners who are in Israeli jails for security offenses. Recipients include all imprisoned terrorists, who receive monthly salaries. Even those serving multiple life sentences for murder receive salaries. One example given involved Ibrahim Hamed, the terrorist behind the Hebrew University cafeteria bombing and convicted of the murder of a total of 46 Israelis.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰ Herb Keinon, “FM Accuses Norway of Anti-Semitic Policy,” *Jerusalem Post*, 29 Sept. 2009.

¹⁴¹ “Jødisk kritik av Hamsun-markering,” *Aftenposten*, 21 June 2009, <http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/uriks/article3133476.ece>, retrieved 7 Mar. 2014.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ “Dagsrevyen,” NRK, 28 Feb. 2013.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

The Conservatives, the Progress Party, and the Christian Democrats asked the Parliamentary Committee on Scrutiny and Constitutional Affairs to investigate Norwegian financing of the PA. The committee then requested that the Foreign Ministry provide proper documentation clarifying the funding of Palestinian salaries paid to convicted murderers. Already in 2011 and 2012, Eide's predecessor Støre had been asked by Christian Democrat parliamentarians to clarify whether Norwegian aid to the PA was being used to pay convicted terrorists and their families.¹⁴⁶ At that time Støre assured the Parliament that the ministry knew where and how the money was used.

When the question was raised again after the news report on NRK in February 2013, Eide was asked to look into the matter once again.¹⁴⁷ He then had to admit that Støre had misled Parliament twice on this matter.

In reaction to these findings, then-PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad told Eide that part of the funds were meant as social welfare payments to families whose principal provider was imprisoned, denying that the funds were used to pay convicted terrorists' salaries.¹⁴⁸ This was later found to be incorrect. Eide said that his ministry had received "new information" that conflicted with the PA's claim that Norwegian funds were not being used to pay convicted terrorists' salaries, and that the PA may have been misleading Norway. In response to the misleading information received by the PA, Eide replied to Fayyad that Norway found the funding of prisoners convicted of terrorism, along with the prospect that the PA may have misled Norway, "problematic."

In the end, there were no consequences for the Palestinians for supporting terrorists financially. Eide said that there will be no change or halt in financial support to the PA.¹⁴⁹ According to him, Israel had not asked for any economic

¹⁴⁶ "Skriftlig spørsmål fra Hans Olav Syversen (KrF) til utenriksministeren," *Stortinget*, 15 Sept. 2011.

¹⁴⁷ Øyvind Gustavsen, "Feilinformerte Stortinget om pengestøtte til palestinske fanger," *Verdens Gang*, 12 Mar. 2013.

¹⁴⁸ JNS, "Norway Foreign Minister in Israel Expresses Anger over PA Use of Aid to Pay Terrorists," 4 Apr. 2013.

¹⁴⁹ Erlend Skevik, "Norge straffer ikke palestinerne for terroriststøtte," *Verdens Gang*, 31 May 2013.

sanctions against the Palestinians and to his question to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it replied that they did not think Norway should discontinue the economic support of the PA and Palestinians.

Christian Democratic Parliamentarian Kjell Ingold Ropstad stated that the policy should be changed to put pressure on the Palestinians. His view is that Norway still indirectly contributes to financially aiding murderers in Israeli prisons.¹⁵⁰

When Eide visited Israel in August 2013, Deputy Foreign Minister Zeev Elkin told him that a relatively large percentage of the PA budget, partially funded by Norway, was used to pay salaries to jailed terrorists.¹⁵¹

STATE ANTISEMITISM

The classic definition of state antisemitism is that a state discriminates against Jews within its laws. This rarely happens nowadays in Western democracies. Yet in Norway, there is an example of a law which reflects state antisemitism. Jewish ritual slaughter has been forbidden there since well before World War II — several years before it was outlawed in Nazi Germany. On the other hand, excluding Norway, Japan, and Iceland, no countries allow whaling. For 2013, the Norwegian Minister of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs set the whale quota at 1,286, the same as in 2012. Only half of the quota is usually realized.¹⁵² These mammals are harpooned and often die in an exceptionally cruel and barbaric way.¹⁵³

Seal hunting is currently practiced in six countries: Canada, where most of the world's seal hunting takes place, Namibia, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, and Russia. Canada's largest market for seal products is Norway. In 2013, the Norwegian ministry increased the price on seals as an incentive to combat the

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ "Elkin: Palestinians Being Allowed to Continue To Take Unilateral Steps," *Israel Hayom Newsletter*, 27 Aug. 2013.

¹⁵² Susanne Lysvold, "Får skyte 1286 hval i år," NRK, 7 Feb. 2013.

¹⁵³ Jo Fidgen, "Whale hunting: 'It is like killing an ox,'" *BBC*, 14 July 2013.

waning interest in seal hunting.¹⁵⁴ The quota for Harbor seal in 2012 was 435, but the final result was 355; while the quota for Grey Seals was 460 and only 64 were harvested in the end.¹⁵⁵ These seals are also killed in a barbaric way by being bludgeoned to death.

The circumcision issue is frequently debated in Norway. The Center Party has come out in favor of banning non-medical circumcision of underage boys.¹⁵⁶

POLICE PROTECTION FOR SYNAGOGUE

In October 2012, the Jewish community in Oslo received death threats from the spokesperson of the Islamist group, The Prophet's Ummah.¹⁵⁷ Police protected the synagogue after the threats. On several occasions in the past, requests have been made by the community to improve its security situation. In recent years, a large part of the member fees of the Oslo Jewish community has been spent on security. After yet another request by the community in early 2013, Minister of Justice, Grete Faremo announced further investigations into synagogue security.¹⁵⁸

In January 2013, Faremo said that she wanted more information about hate crime directed towards Jews.¹⁵⁹ Ervin Kohn, President of the Jewish community in Oslo said that the existing "religion" category is not detailed enough and that hate crime motivated by antisemitism must become a separate category.¹⁶⁰ Faremo however, refused to create a separate category for

¹⁵⁴ Hilde Mangset Lorentsen, "Klarer ikke skyte nok kystsel," *NRKNordland*, 14 Apr. 2013.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ JTA, "Norway Plans New Rules on Circumcision of Boys." *Forward* 12 Nov. 2013; <http://forward.com/articles/187485/norway-plans-new-rules-on-circumcision-of-boys/#ixzz2widH2CEY>.

¹⁵⁷ Thomas B. Helle and Gunnar Hultgren, "Islamist truer med å drepe jøder i Norge," *Dagbladet*, 25 Oct. 2012.

¹⁵⁸ NTB, "Faremo skal gjennomgå sikkerhetstiltak ved synagoge," *Verdens Gang*, 3 Feb. 2013.

¹⁵⁹ NTB, "Faremo vil ha bedre oversikt over jødehat," *Verdens Gang*, 26 Jan. 2013.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

antisemitism in addition to the existing ones of “race and ethnicity,” “religion,” “sexual orientation,” and “others.”¹⁶¹

BEFORE THE 2013 ELECTIONS

The Norwegian parliamentary elections took place in September 2013. The various 2013 party conferences held before updated their programs for the coming four-year period.¹⁶²

The April 2013 Labor party conference saw severe criticism of Israel. One example was that the party decided to work for the labeling of products produced in West Bank settlements, in line with E.U. policy.¹⁶³ In its election platform, however, the Labor Party did not mention Israel.¹⁶⁴

On behalf of the party, Eide stated that if the two-state solution will not be realized, Israel will end up with full responsibility for the “occupied Palestinian population.” Israel’s intentions regarding a Palestinian state were also questioned. Eide stated that, “Israel says that they want a two-state solution, but at the same time uses each obstacle to return to the starting position. That gives you a reason to ask whether their goal is truly a Palestinian state.”¹⁶⁵

The Socialist Left Party moderated its Israel policy in its new party program for the election period of 2013–2017.¹⁶⁶ The right of return of the Palestinians was taken out and so has support for East Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian state.¹⁶⁷

The Center Party supported a two-state solution. Its party program for 2009–2013 said that Israel should follow UN resolutions. For the period 2013–

¹⁶¹ Lise Marit Kalstad, “Faremo vil ha oversikt over jødehat,” *Vårt Land*, 26 Jan, 2013.

¹⁶² Conrad Myrland, “Ingen strid om Israel-støtten i FrP,” *MIFF*, 23 May 2013.

¹⁶³ Ingjerd Våge, “Ap skjerper kritikken mot Israel,” *Vårt Land*, 20 Apr. 2013.

¹⁶⁴ Conrad Myrland, “Ap sier ingenting om Israel,” *MIFF*, 18 Apr. 2013.

¹⁶⁵ Bjarte Ystebø, “Israel får skylden alene,” *Dagen*, 24 Apr. 2013.

¹⁶⁶ “Prinsipp- og handlingsprogram 2009–2013,” Senterpartiet, <http://www.senterpartiet.no/folldal/prinsipp-og-handlingsprogram-2009-2013-article57474-5644.html>, retrieved 7 Mar. 2014.

¹⁶⁷ Conrad Myrland, “SV modererer tonen mot Israel i sitt nye program,” *MIFF*, 7 March 2013.

2017, there is no mention of the Middle East or Israel. The only indirect reference is to the continued support of the UN and human rights.¹⁶⁸

THE NEW CENTER-RIGHT GOVERNMENT

The new center-right government was inaugurated on 16 October 2013. The minority government consists of Prime Minister Erna Solberg's center-right Conservative Party (Høyre) and the right wing Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet), albeit with outside parliamentary support from the Liberal Party (Venstre) and the Christian Democratic Party (Kristelig Folkeparti). The majority of the ministers are Conservative Party members. For the first time ever the Progress Party is part of a government. Progress Party leader Siv Jensen is the Minister of Finance. She has been one of the few consistent Norwegian political voices giving staunch support to Israel. During the 2009 Cast Lead demonstrations she spoke of Israel's right to defend itself, but refrained from participating in the ensuing support march as the police could not guarantee her safety.¹⁶⁹

Norway's attitude toward Israel and the Middle East conflict has improved with the new government. The government platform, also supported by the Liberal Party and Christian Democratic Party, states that:

The Government will take a balanced approach to the Middle East conflict, and actively support the goal of a negotiated peace agreement which entails that Israel and Palestine will exist as two states living in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ "Senterpartiets prinsipp- og handlingsplan 2013–2017," Senterpartiet, <http://www.senterpartiet.no/getfile.php/Bildegalleri/Fellesfiler/Prinsipp-%20og%20handlingsprogram%202013-2017%20A4%20nn.pdf>, retrieved 7 Mar. 2014.

¹⁶⁹ "Siv Jensen trekker seg fra fredsmarkering," Nettavisen, 8 Jan. 2009, <http://www.nettavisen.no/innenriks/article2496183.ece>, retrieved 25 Feb. 2014.

¹⁷⁰ Politisk plattform for en regjering utgått av Høyre og Fremskrittspartiet, http://pub.nettavisen.no/multimedia/na/archive/01235/Politisk_plattform_1235066a.pdf, retrieved 25 Jan. 2014.

As one of his first official visits, Foreign Minister Børge Brende visited Israel and met with several ministers and leaders, including Prime Minister Netanyahu. In November 2013 the Christian Democratic Party's suggestion to establish a plan to fight antisemitism in Norway, was finally approved. It was decided by the government and its two outside supporting parties to allocate 5 million NOK (approx. 814,000 USD) in the national budget for this purpose. Previous urgings by the Christian Democratic Party to the former government had not been approved.

Solberg and Brende met with Netanyahu in January 2014 during the World Economic Forum in Davos.¹⁷¹ Their conversation showed understanding and a willingness for closer cooperation in the future. In February 2014, however, the Ministry of Finance decided to exclude two Israeli companies; Africa Israel Investments and Danya Cebus from the portfolio of the Global Government Pension Fund.¹⁷² The decision was based on a recommendation from the Ethical Council "due to the contribution to serious violations of individual rights in war or conflict through the construction of settlements in East Jerusalem." The companies were also excluded during the period August 2010 to August 2013 with a similar motivation.

CONCLUSION

In her new year's speech in 1992, then-Labor party Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland said, "It is typically Norwegian to be good."¹⁷³ The so-called Law of Jante (Janteloven) is a pillar of Norwegian culture. One of its major aspects is that one should never think he or she is better than someone else. Brundtland's words however, claim the opposite.

Her concise statement expressed the widespread, arrogant self-image and lack of introspection of large parts of the Norwegian elite. She said this at a

¹⁷¹ "Solberg møtte Netanyahu," NRK, Jan. 2014, http://www.aftenposten.no/webtv/Solberg-motte-Netanyahu-7445123.html#.Uv99i_15ON8.

¹⁷² "New decisions about the Government Pension Fund Global," Ministry of Finance, 30 Jan. 2014.

¹⁷³ Gro Harlem Brundtland, Nyttårstale. "Typisk norsk å være god," NRK, 1 Jan. 1992. www.nrk.no/nett-tv/klipp/35843/ [Retrieved 11 Aug. 2013]

time when there was not much Norwegian anti-Israel hate-mongering. Yet it was well before the admission by the Norwegian government that its postwar predecessors had continued to rob Jewish survivors of their possessions after the Second World War. As 1.5 million Norwegians hold a demonic opinion of Israel nowadays, Brundtland's observation becomes even more absurd. If one has completely false beliefs about others, that is a sign of one's own distorted mindset.

This essay shows that the Norwegian Stoltenberg government frequently applied double standards against Israel, a behavior which fits the European definition of antisemitic acts. Its attitudes and actions often expressed far-reaching humanitarian racism. The government has legitimized the genocidal Palestinian terrorist movement Hamas on several occasions, and if its calls to remove Israel's security barrier had been successful, this would have facilitated Palestinian terrorist acts. The Hamsun festivities were a whitewashing of an extreme Nazi sympathizer. Many other examples of anti-Israel hate-mongering at government levels could be added to the aforementioned. In this context the appointment of the Hamas promoter Stoltenberg as NATO secretary general was an extremely poor choice.¹⁷⁴

Manfred Gerstenfeld's book on the Nordic countries, *Behind the Humanitarian Mask: The Nordic Countries, Israel and the Jews* was published in 2009.¹⁷⁵ At that time, little was known outside of Norway about the widespread demonizing of Israel as well as acts of antisemitism there. Information available at the time was largely anecdotal and there were no studies undertaken on these topics to reference.

Since then, a number of developments have taken place. One is a growing foreign interest in the subject of Norwegian antisemitism and anti-Israelism. This is manifested in the Brownback letter and the OSCE report, for example, and in various articles in publications outside Norway. Non-Norwegian

¹⁷⁴ Manfred Gerstenfeld, "the New NATO Sec. General is a Promoter of Hamas," Israel National News, 29 Apr. 2014; idem, "NATO's New Secretary-General: Problematic Not Only for Israel," *Jerusalem Post*, 4 June 2014.

¹⁷⁵ Gerstenfeld, *Behind the Humanitarian Mask*.

organizations and individuals have also joined in exposing the widespread hate-mongering in the country.

After a visit to Norway in 2011, Harvard Law Professor Alan Dershowitz wrote a much-quoted article in the *Wall Street Journal* in which he compared Norway to South Africa under the apartheid regime saying, “Only once before have I been prevented from lecturing at universities in a country. The other country was Apartheid South Africa.”¹⁷⁶

While there is much anti-Israel incitement and antisemitism in many European countries, the situation in Norway is among the most transparent. The Norwegian government has contributed to creating an atmosphere in which more than one and a half million adult Norwegians hold a demonic view of Israel. The continuous and one-sided criticism of Israel is largely based on extreme double standards and thus is antisemitic in nature.

Norway’s leading non-fiction writer, Hanna Nabintu Herland, has on various occasions called Norway “the most anti-Semitic country in the Western world.”¹⁷⁷ In an interview published in 2013, she said:

The current Labor/radical Left Norwegian government is promoting an extreme one-sided and negative stance toward Israel. It is responsible for creating a politically-correct hatred of Israel among many people in the country. This has made Norway, in my view, the most anti-Semitic country in the West. In Norwegian history, there has never been such an anti-Israeli attitude.¹⁷⁸

American author Bruce Bawer who lives in Norway, wrote a book titled *The New Quislings*. In it he analyzes how many on the extreme left promote the

¹⁷⁶ Alan M. Dershowitz, “Norway to Jews: You’re Not Welcome Here,” *Wall Street Journal*, 29 Mar. 2011.

¹⁷⁷ Hanne Nabintu Herland, “Vestens mest antisemittiske land,” *Senter Mot Antisemittisme*, 23 May 2011. Tor-Bjørn Nordgaard, “Gir eliten på venstresiden ansvaret for antisemittismen,” *Norge Idag*, 15 Nov. 2012.

¹⁷⁸ Manfred Gerstenfeld, interview with Hanne Nabintu Herland, “Norway Promoting Politically Correct Hatred of Israel,” in *Demonizing Israel and the Jews* by Manfred Gerstenfeld (New York: RVP Press, 2013), 133.

interests of totalitarian Islam, like Quisling supported the Nazis.¹⁷⁹ Above all, however, the Parliamentary debate about Norwegian financing of Palestinian murderers drew attention to some aspects of Norway's profoundly twisted value system.

It is not only the previous Labor-dominated government's hate-mongering that has led to a large percentage of the population having a medieval type of mindset. In the Middle Ages Jews were falsely and irrationally accused of representing absolute evil — for instance, as alleged poisoners of wells. Nowadays Israel is falsely and irrationally perceived as a genocidal country.

Many Norwegian government bodies and government-financed bodies have played a role in this demonization of Israel. So have leaders of civil society. Thus this essay only gives a partial view of the widespread anti-Israel hate-mongering in Norway. There is a major need for a similar analysis of this in other government related bodies and in civil society. King Harald V has also contributed to this trend by giving awards to anti-Israel hate mongers and notorious antisemites.

Some actions of the Stoltenberg government in fostering anti-Israelism were explicit. One example was the financing of the Gulvåg Hate-Israel Exhibition in Damascus. In the same category, one can include the back cover comment Støre wrote for Gilbert and Fosse's book which accused Israel of specifically aiming to murder Gazan civilians. Støre allowed himself to be photographed with AUF leader Eskil Pedersen at Utøya in front of a sign calling to boycott Israel, even when he publically opposed it. The same goes for Stoltenberg phoning the doctors who promoted Hamas propaganda during the Cast Lead campaign and Halvorsen calling for a boycott of Israeli products.

Many of these anti-Israel actions were done indirectly. Støre did not recall Lilleng, but may have promoted her. Stoltenberg spoke at meetings in which there were violent attacks on Israel and remained silent. For years he allowed the AUF — the youth organization of the party he leads — to indoctrinate

¹⁷⁹ Bruce Bawer, *The New Quislings: How the International Left Used the Oslo Massacre to Silence Debate About Islam* (Broadside e-books, 2012).

youngsters beginning at 14 years and older to hate Israel. The granting of visas to Hamas by his government was another example. At the same time, the government systematically ignored Palestinian crimes and even indirectly financed its terrorists.

To obtain some perspective on the Norwegian critique of Israel, one might suggest that if the Norwegian government had to cope with Israel's challenges, Norway would have been destroyed long ago. One illustration of the extreme incompetence of its police concerns its role after the Breivik attacks. It has been examined in a report by an independent commission which describes a lengthy series of logistical failures.¹⁸⁰

The police had received an accurate description of Breivik over the telephone, along with the license plate number of the vehicle he used to travel to the island. However, the employee who took the call failed to pass that information on. The first two police officers to arrive at the scene hid on the mainland, 700 meters from Utøya. The police helicopter could not be called up because its two pilots were on vacation. There were also major problems with the emergency networks.¹⁸¹ The government tried to explain these and many other problems away when briefing Parliament.¹⁸²

Israel's military actions are widely criticized in Norway — a country in which its own army leaders have noted Norway's military ineffectiveness. The country's defense reality was summed up in 2008 by General Robert Mood, Inspector-General of Norway's army. He described the army's current capability as "only being able to defend perhaps one neighborhood in Oslo,

¹⁸⁰ Alexandra Bech Gjørsv, Ragnar Line Auglend, Laila Bokhari, Einar Skaarseth Enger, Stefan Gerkman, Torgeir Hagen, Hanne Bech Hansen, Guri Hjeltnes, Linda Motrøen Paulsen, and Karin Straum, "Rapport fra 22. juli-kommisjonen," Regjeringen.no, 13 Aug. 2012, retrieved 7 Mar. 2014.

¹⁸¹ Ben McPherson, "Norway authorities face possible Utøya court case," *The Foreigner*, 5 Apr. 2013, <http://theforeigner.no/pages/news/norway-authorities-face-possible-utya-court-case/>, retrieved 7 Mar. 2014.

¹⁸² Michael Sandelson and Lyndsey Smith, "Norway ministers brief Parliament on 22 July," *The Foreigner*, 10 Nov. 2011, <http://theforeigner.no/pages/news/norway-ministers-brief-parliament-on-22-july/>, retrieved 7 Mar. 2014.

much less the entire country.”¹⁸³ Nothing much has changed since. In 2013 General and former chief of defense Sverre Diesen said that Norway’s military defense does not have the quality nor capacity to face even limited attacks on Norway.¹⁸⁴

What has been written here refers to the previous government’s attitudes toward Israel and to a lesser extent the Jews. If studies were to be undertaken about how the government and part of the elites treat domestic dissenters much additional information about non-democratic behavior in Norway would probably become public knowledge.

¹⁸³ Sveinung Berg Bentzrød, “Army Forced to Sharpen Knife as Cost Cuts Loom,” *Aftenposten*, 30 May 2008.

¹⁸⁴ Julie Ryland, “Former Defence Chief Critical of the Armed Forces,” *The Norway Post*, 11 Sept. 2013, www.norwaypost.no/index.php/news/latest-news/28961-former-defence-chief-critical-of-the-armed-forces, retrieved 7 Mar. 2014.

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Orna Orvell (pen name) is a political scientist who specializes in studies on Norway.

