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The Islamic Republic of Iran: Multidisciplinary  
Analyses of its Theocracy, Nationalism, and  
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Department of History

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## Iran and the Holocaust: Rescue and Revisionism

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**“Iran and the Holocaust: Rescue and Revisionism”**  
Yitzchak Kerem, American Jewish University of Los Angeles

In light of contemporary Iranian Shi'ite fundamentalist Muslim fanaticism and recent Holocaust revisionism, it is significant to show Iran's altruistic past in their role in enabling the rescue of Jews in Europe and Iran during the Holocaust. The issue of Iranian assisted rescue during WWII is one of several motifs in current Iranian efforts to minimize the Holocaust and advance Holocaust revisionism as a tool of Shi'ite agitation against Israel, Zionism, and Jews in general. Current Iranian regime sponsored Holocaust revisionism not only is anti-Israel oriented, but contains features of anti-Semitism and classic Shi'ite Muslim disdain for Judaism and the Jews.

In France, in 1941-1942, German officials (as opposed to the French Vichy regime), exempted some of the Jugutis or Chola, former Bucharan Jews who were forced to convert to Islam in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and returned to Judaism in the 20<sup>th</sup> Jewry, from arrest and deportation. As early as October 1940 in Paris, Iranian consul Abdol Hossein Sardari noted a recent study by his government that this group was a Mosaic religious community of a non-Jewish race originating from Persia. Mordechai Paldiel noted Sardari's activities in 1940-41 in Paris:

“He supported the claim of the Iranian Jewish community in France, based on spurious data, that far from being Semitic by,[sic] they were in fact part of the Iranian racial stock, thus Aryan by Nazi definition, who had many years before converted to Judaism. They termed themselves Jugutis; in other words, Iranian-Aryans of the Mosaic faith. Sardari supported this claim, and asked the French and German authorities not to apply anti-Jewish measures on this group of Iranian Jews, although some of them were in truth not at all of Iranian origin, but had been born elsewhere. Sardari followed this up with the presentation of a list of Iranian Jews then residing in France. Sardari's action was mainly centered during the period of 1940-41, when Iran was neutral in the war.”<sup>1</sup>

On 11 February 1942, Sardari requested from the Bucharan Jew Dr. Asaf Atchildi<sup>2</sup> in his contacts with the German authorities that he include Iranian Jewish subjects in his lists of Jugutis to be exempt from restrictions; as well as in many cases also those to be released from Drancy. Many on the list were Bucharan (Uzbekistan) and Iranian practicing Jews.<sup>3</sup> Sardari also prepared lists of names of his subjects to be exempt from arrest, internment, and deportation. In light of the status of Iran as pro-German, but neutral, the Nazis were not to shoot Iranian subjects. However, after Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, and Soviet and British troops occupied Iran, Iran lost its sovereignty and under occupation it declared war on Germany. The Iranian diplomats were expelled from Vichy and only Sardari remained; under Swiss protection. He issued Iranian passports to hundreds if not as many as 2,400 Jews; enabling them to escape from the Nazis. Through his efforts Iranian Jews did not have to wear the yellow star, received meat rations, and children received milk rations. He helped many other Jews also and assisted them in avoiding arrest and deportation. In February 1944, the Germans rejected the Jugati lists and some Bucharan and Iranian Jews were arrested and deported to

Auschwitz and others were executed in French camps. In March 1944 the final lists for Jugati protection were made, but by June 1944 their racial origin was challenged by the Germans and some were arrested. As late as July 1944 Jugatis went into hiding. The Iranian Jew Menashe Ezrapour was in work camps in Uriage, Shapoli, and avoided deportation from Gurs when the camp commandant labeled him as Iranian-Iraqi and intentionally overlooked his Jewish identity.<sup>4</sup> He was liberated by the Americans in August 1944 after he worked in the coal mines near Meyreuil.

In fall 2007 Iranian television produced the twenty-two part soap opera series Zero Degree Turn. In the series, Sardari rescues a French Jewish girlfriend of an Iranian-Palestinian Muslim Habib Parsa and her family under German occupation and enables them with Iranian passports to fly to safety in Iran. Parsa's father had been an Iranian diplomat in Jerusalem who had contacts with the pro-Nazi Mufti Haj Amin al-Husseini of Jerusalem. This fictional film captivated Iranian society. Aired on Iranian State Television under the authority of Ali Khameni, who heads the nuclear effort and denies the Holocaust as does anti-Semitic president Ahmadinejad, the show intended to differentiate between Jews and the evil Zionists "who murder the Palestinians like the Nazis killed the Jews". Here the rescue motif in the Holocaust is often used by those hostile toward Jews to deflect national responsibility for the majority of Jews that were deported and annihilated. Similar minimalization of the Holocaust on a national level also exists in varying degrees in Holland and Greece.

On Iranian soil, 25,000 Polish refugees, after being released from Siberia and temporarily passing through Uzbekistan, were given refuge in three camps in the Teheran area. They arrived from spring until autumn 1942. Some 2,000 Jews were harbored; over half were children. Funding came from the Polish government, Hadasa, the Joint Distribution Committee, and the affluent Teheran Jewish community. The Jewish Agency ran Camp 2 with an orphanage.<sup>5</sup> Only a small amount of the Jews were allowed to go to Eretz-Israel via Iraq in 1942 and most went via Pakistan/India and then Egypt later in 1942. This rescue operation of Jewish children from the Nazis via Teheran onward to Eretz-Israel was called The Teheran Operation. Tzipora Shertok (later Sharett), wife of Moshe Shertok, head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency and future Israeli Prime Minister, negotiated with the Poles, British, and Persians for the Jewish children to be transferred to Palestine, and tended to the children in the interim. The first group of children left for Iraq on 10 November 1942, but the Arab officials soon after denied further passage. The British needed every plane for the war effort, and the children went via the sea from the Persian gulf to the Arabian Sea, continued to Karachi where they stayed in a camp for several weeks and from there via boat to Aden and through the Red Sea to the Suez Canal, and then to Palestine by train. In February 1943, some 1,230 Jews, including 223 children (ages 0-10) and 638 youth (ages 11-19), arrived in Atlit, Palestine, after the Iran-India-Suez boat and finally Egyptian train route.<sup>6</sup> In August 1943, a group of 107 children arrived via Iraq.<sup>7</sup>

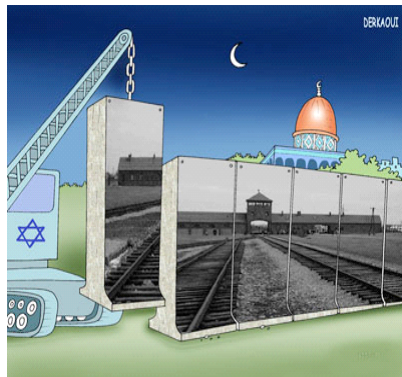
In response to anti-Muslim/Muhammad cartoons in the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten,<sup>8</sup> Iran sponsored an open global International Holocaust Cartoon Competition, which was organized beginning in February 2006 and exhibited in August and fall 2006. Noticeable were anti-Semitic cartoons submitted from South America, many strong anti-Israel and anti-Zionist cartoons from Syria, and local Persian anti-Semitic and Holocaust revisionist/denial distorted material. Noteworthy was the cartoon of Iranian Rahim

Taghipour Sedgh Razmi's razor blade with the cutting inscription "Holocaust, in Israel". In December 2006, Iran hosted an international Holocaust revisionist conference that included the anti-Semitic David Duke and the Holocaust revisionist/deniers Robert Faurisson and Frederick Toben.

## The Results of Iran Holocaust Cartoon Contest-2006

Presentation "The Holy War and Shi'ism" by Prof. Yitzchak Kerem/  
The Hebrew University of  
Jerusalem/Aristotle University

First Prize - Derkaoui Abdellah/Morocco  
First Prize:12000 \$ + Trophy +Honorable Mention



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Here the Jews are delegitimized in Israel for making the Mosque of Omar into the Auschwitz death camp and then trying to liquidate the site.

Carlos Latuff/Brazil

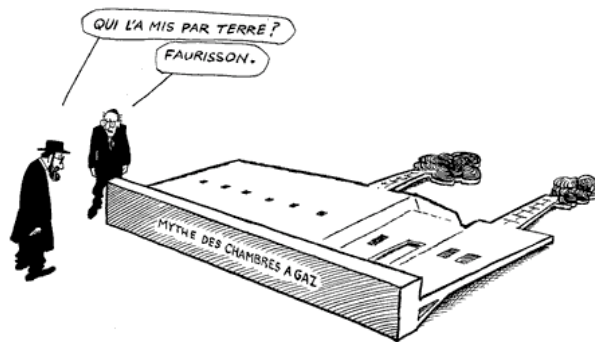
**Second Prize:** 4000 \$ + Trophy + Honorable Mention



The Palestinian Muslim becomes the Jewish Holocaust victim and is enclosed in side the Security Wall camp.

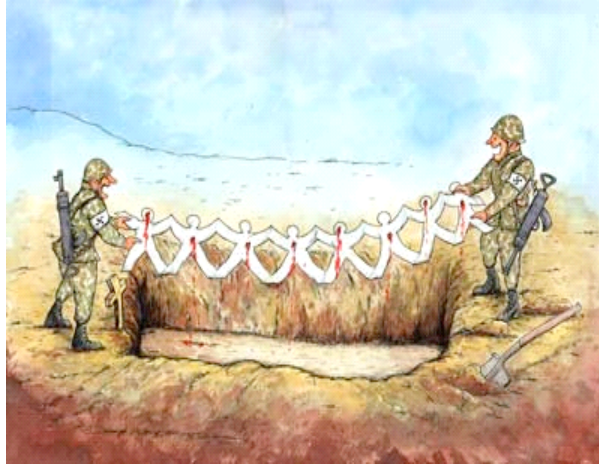
A-chard/France

**Second Prize:** 4000 \$ + Trophy + Honorable Mention



Here it's written, "Who put it on the floor? Faurisson. The myth of gas chambers." Here one Jew symbolically asks another, "who tabled the imagery of Auschwitz?" and the answer refers to the French Holocaust denier Faurisson, who labeled the Auschwitz gas chambers as a myth.

**Shahram Rezai/Iran**  
**Third Prize:5000 \$ + Trophy +Honorable  
Mention**



Above, Jewish soldiers fence off the Palestinian grave site.

**Mohammadreza Doustmohammadi/Iran**  
**Special Prize:3 Gold Coins + Trophy  
+Honorable Mention**



Here the public and the Jew, depicted by classical anti-Semitic demonization, at night are burying the subject of the Holocaust, or alternatively are looking desperately for its meaning and clues to it.

**Special Awards:  
Naji Benaji/Morocco**

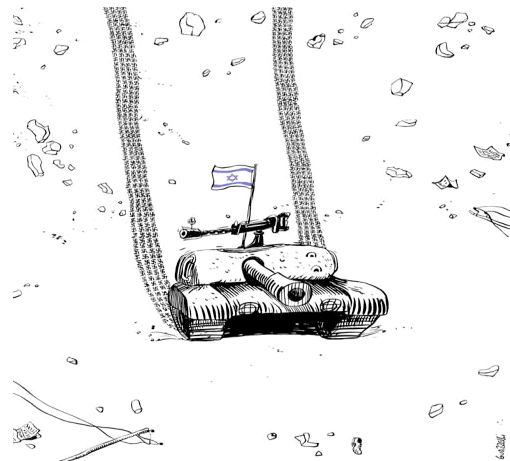
**Special Prize:3 Gold Coins + Trophy +Honorable Mention**



The Jewish Holocaust has been closed and emptied of meaning with the cork of a few skulls and is an empty theme, but the murdered skulls of the Palestinians are full to the maximum.

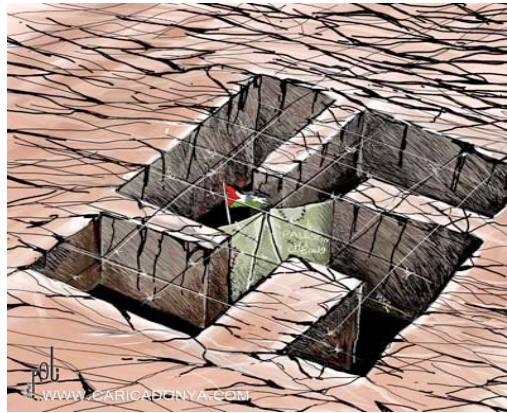
**Eloar Guazzelli/Brazil**

**Special Prize:3 Gold Coins + Trophy +Honorable Mention**



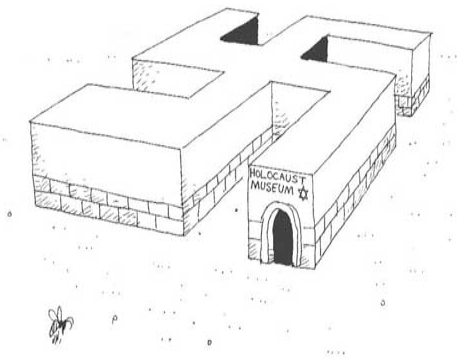
An Israeli tank advances down a slope.

**Naser Al Jafar/Jordan**  
**Special Prize:** 3 Gold Coins + Trophy + Honorable  
Mention



Palestinian nationalism has been driven into the parched ground in a Nazi process symbolized by the swastika.

**Maziyar Bizhani/Iran**  
**Special Prize:** 3 Gold Coins + Trophy  
+ Honorable Mention



The Holocaust Museum is demonized to appear in the shape of the Nazi swastika, something meriting scorn, and itself evolving into Nazism.



**Raed Khalil/Syria**

**Special Prize:3 Gold Coins + Trophy +Honorable  
Mention**



The United Nations has been enchained to the subject of the Holocaust.

**Jaber Asadi/Iran**

**Special Prize:3 Gold Coins + Trophy  
+Honorable Mention**



An Israeli soldier uproots the grave of the Holocaust; using it as a shield while he carries his tank as he trudges forward through the tunnel (of history).

**Casso/Brazil**

**Special Prize:3 Gold Coins + Trophy**

**+Honorable Mention**



The United Nations wreath is laid at the grave of both the Holocaust and the Palestinian people. The United Nations is being criticized for burying Palestinian nationalism and the issue of how the Palestinians have been murdered in a Holocaust.

**Gatto Alessandro/Italy**

**Special Prize:3 Gold Coins + Trophy**

**+Honorable Mention**



Lastly, the Palestinian is behind bars in an Israeli Nazi Holocaust slave labor uniform, grim like Jewish Holocaust survivors, and being held by a Kapo who has the sign of death on his arm insignia. Most of the images speak for themselves. The Iranian regime is promoting the image of the Jew and the Israeli as the Nazi who oppresses, and kills the Palestinians. Additionally, the Jewish Israeli military state is depicted as murdering the Palestinians and is accused of liquidating the memory of the Palestinian people.

Shi'ite Persia and even 20<sup>th</sup> century Iran has rich history of agitation and provocation against the Jews, the infidel. If a Muslim murdered an infidel, including a *dhimmi*, a protected Christian and Jew as people of the book, the Muslim would not be executed if he was not a habitual killer of infidels. In 19<sup>th</sup> century Iran, he would be punished according to the discretion of the judge (yu'azzar).<sup>10</sup> The Muslim murdered had to pay blood money (diyah) of 800 dirhams for a free male *dhimmi* and 400 dirhams for a *dhimmi* woman. If a *dhimmi* intentionally killed a Muslim he had to be handed over with his property to the family of the murdered Muslim. The Muslim relatives had the option either of enslaving or killing the *dhimmi*.

For hundreds of years there were mass forced conversions of Jews in Shi'ite Persia, and large scale massacres.

The Safavid dynasty (1502-1722) was the harshest against the Jews during the past millennium. While the Safavids were at war with the Ottomans, the former persecuted and murdered Sunnis and Jews while saving Christians, and the Ottomans killed Shi'ites and Christians while protecting the Jews. Habib Levy noted:

Despite the massacres and despoliations of the Mongols and Timurids, the writings of European travelers indicate that there were Jews in virtually every city of Iran and a large Jewish population in the country as a whole. In the past, the Jews had been raided and killed along with the adherents of other faiths. Now, as Jews, they became the direct targets of persecution and were forced to convert to Islam. Because of widespread propaganda by pseudo-mullahs during the Safavid period, the belief that the Jews were "unclean" had created a barrier between them and other Iranians. The Jews, who had lived in this land longer than many other nationalities, faced the most trying spiritual and corporal afflictions. Under no previous Iranian dynasty had persecution of the Jews been so intense, widespread, and long-lasting. The free hand given to the pseudo-clerics brought the crushing pressures to their most extreme levels.

European spies bestowed the Inquisition as a legacy upon Iran. Not only did they compel Jews to wear ridiculous caps and garments in public, they also burned Hebrew books to ashes and sanctioned the denigration and degradation of the first followers of a monotheistic religion. Judaism was in danger of being wiped out in Iran. The level of hatred directed against Judaism was much greater than during the time of Haman. ...

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Restrictions against the Jews from the early Safavid period and strengthened during the period of Shah `Abbas II included: Jews may not have shops in the bazaar, a Jew who converts to Islam inherits all of his relatives' property, when it rained Jews could not take cover in alleyways, Jewish women could not cover their faces in public, a Jew could

not pass a Muslim in the street, Jewish weddings had to be in secret, since Jews were unclean they could not join Muslim gatherings or touch their things, if a Muslim cursed a Jew the latter had to remain silent and bow his head, Jews could not build fancy houses, Jews had to hang a rag over their doors, Jews could not buy fresh fruit, Jews could not leave their homes after sunset, and if a Muslim said that a Jew blasphemed, the Jew must be put to death or convert to Islam.<sup>12</sup>

Shah Tahmasp I once fell asleep drunk and alone in a garden near Isfahan. He put on his dagger a diamond for good luck. Shah Abbas II inherited this dagger, once fell asleep with the dagger in his garden and after waking up, he put it aside to go hunting. After the gardener found it and hid it, a thief stole it, removed the previous stone, and took the dagger to the Jewish ghetto. Without knowing that it had been stolen from the Shah, two Jews bought it. The Shah's assistants eventually located the dagger and brought it to him. Although the gardener and thief were located, the Shah blamed the two Jews and issued them a death sentence. One vizier suggested that their blood was "ill-omened" and that instead they should be compelled to convert. Anti-Jewish Vizier Muhammed Beg I'timad al-Dawish gathered the Jews of Isfahan and told them, "You are a filthy, unclean people, and it is not meet [sic] that you should live amongst Muslims. If despite your poverty and privation you do not wish to become Muslims as the king commands, then you must vacate the city this very day".<sup>13</sup> The Jews refused, Beg insisted, the Jews gave a bribe, and Beg relented for a short time, but then he insisted they relocated to the Zoroastrian Quarter. He incited the Zoroastrians against the Jews, and the Jews had to leave Isfahan. Furthermore, he influenced the Shah to issue a decree to eighteen towns with Jewish communities that they need to convert to Islam or leave the country. The Jews prayed and in some places they were forced to convert or leave. In Hamadan, for example, some converted, and others fled to Istanbul or Baghdad.<sup>14</sup>

During the Safavid period the Shi'i government revived the Sunni Pact of `Umar against the Jews, which had been forgotten for a long time. As the Safavid dynasty declined, Shah Sultan Husayn closed schools, shattered wine jugs, and persecuted Christians, Zoroastrians, and Jews alike.<sup>15</sup>

The distinguished Shi'ite theologian al-Amili (d.1622) wrote the following (p.213) about *jihad* war in the *Jami-i-Abbasi*, his seminal Persian manual of Shi'a Law:

"Islamic Holy war [jihad] against followers of other religions, such as Jews, is required unless they convert to Islam or pay the poll tax."<sup>16</sup>

At the of the Zand regime during the rule of Khan Qajar at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, many Jews in the Kashan region were pressured to convert to Islam.<sup>17</sup> In the early decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century more than 2,500 Jews in Shiraz were forced to convert to Islam. In 1839 in Mashad some 400 Jews had to convert to Islam after a Jewish physician was carrying the carcass of a dead dog when a Muharram procession had passed.

Daniel Sadik depicted the 1860 riots against the Jews in Hamadan:

On the 7<sup>th</sup> day of Passover of April 1860, the Jews of Hamadan were accused of having scoffed at Muslim lamentation ceremonies. As a result, the Jewish quarter was assailed by thousands of Muslims. Attempting to save themselves, Jews fled to the

houses of the local ulama. However, the ulama, “who had a hand in the plunder, met together, and wrote a certificate that the charge [against the Jews] was true” and dispatched it to the Shah. The Shah believed the allegations and issued a royal edict ordering the punishment of the Jews. The local governor then jailed “all the Jews”, and tortured them in diverse ways. “Many have had their noses and ears cut off”, and were marched through the city in front of a rejoicing mob. The Jews were fined 20,000 qerans as well. A decree was issued forbidding the Jews to leave the city lest they cross the border to nearby Ottoman areas. Some ten days later, a second wave of attacks commenced.”<sup>18</sup>

In 1892, Mullah `Abdallah in Hamadan forced a Jewish girl to convert to Islam and married her to a Muslim. When the Jews complained to the governor, the mullah sought vengeance. On the evening of Yom Kippur when the Jews were in the synagogues, the Muslim mobs amassed. When the Jews left the synagogues, they had to hurry home and secure their doors. Those who did not make it home were forced to recite the Islamic declaration of faith and convert to Islam in order to save their lives.<sup>19</sup>

In 1885, on the eve of the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah, a synagogue was burnt down in Hamadan. Despite Jewish reverence for the Shah, the ulema contrived plots against the Jews. When the ulama was to be punished by the Shah, the former bribed him with money or falsely assured him that they would stop such activity.<sup>20</sup> Incidents inspired by the ulama continued for decades.

Shi'ite Muslim anti-Jewish agitation, what is often termed anti-Semitism, has a rich history in Iran, and time and space do not allow for extensive elaboration.

The predicament of Iranian Jewry in light of oppression, forced conversion, and abduction of Jews reflects deep-rooted Shi'ite local enmity toward the Jews. Daniel Tsadik characterized acutely the pressure on Shiraz Jewry to convert to Islam:

Israel J. Benjamin, who visited Shiraz during the 1840s or early 1850s, described the community of Shiraz as decaying – with most of its nine synagogues “laid waste”. Abuse of Jews was not infrequent. Mullah Eliyahu, the head (Nassi) of the Jewish community was imprisoned, as he “had drawn upon himself the ill-will of the Imam. His release was conditioned first on payment of a large ransom, and later on conversion to Islam. He refused to convert and reportedly received 2,000 blows. Ill treatment did not distinguish between men and women, or between high and low social status. An affluent Muslim asked a Jewish girl to whom he “took a fancy” to embrace Islam so that she could become his wife. She refused, but he went to a local mullah, arguing that she wanted to convert. The mullah then violently summoned her to marry him; several days later she committed suicide. Her body was mutilated, and “only during the night did the Jews venture to collect the remains and bury them”. Not all cases of maltreatment derived from religious distinctiveness. Internal strife was occasionally another reason. Around the same time, after a certain excommunicated Shiraz rabbi defamed his brethren, saying they had offended the Prophet in a certain way, the ulama pronounced that the Jews were “worthy of death”. Their lives were saved only thanks to the governor’s protection.<sup>21</sup>

In order to understand the Shi'ite preoccupation with their disdain for the non-Muslim infidel, whether Christian or Jewish, one needs to understand their aversion to impurity:

‘ In 1871, the Jews and Armenians of Teheran were about to be required by the authorities to sign a pledge pertaining to the Muslim purity laws. The main reason behind this was the desire to pressure Muslims from non-Muslim contamination. Jewish and Armenian water carriers, for instance, were to be prohibited from transporting water to Muslim “houses and shops” and Jews and Armenians were not to allow Muslims to use their baths. The Jews and Armenians were also to pledge “to behave in rainy and snowy days” in such a way that no Muslim would be defiled by them or through the air they breathed. Finally, the minorities would agree to clean their own quarters. Any deviance from these stipulations was subject to punishment.’<sup>22</sup>

The impurity, of the infidel, *najis*, was greatly feared by the Shi'tes and greatly applied to the Jews. At times in 19<sup>th</sup> century Iran, Jews were forbidden to go out of their homes on days of rain for fear of contaminating the Muslim population.

The 1979 fundamentalist revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini was initially characterized as an “Islam of the Oppressed”, whereby there was a aspiration for a better life, justice and equity, and political and social rights. It also took on a negative agenda and became according to Cole and Keddie ‘a widespread movement of social and political protest against domestic “tyranny” (zulm) and foreign domination (tahmil), a movement supported yesterday by a wide variety of groups as well as the followers of Khomeini against the shah’s regime and supported today primarily by Shi’i groups within the other Gulf societies, although not exclusively by them’.<sup>23</sup> Since this statement was written in 1986, radical fundamentalist Shi’ism has spread to Lebanon, Gaza, Iraq after the Second Gulf War, and even recently to Turkey. Internally, the Iranian fundamentalist regime has become totalitarian, corrupt, inept to the needs of the population, and prostitution, crime, and economic instability is rampant. The urban population has lost faith in the revolution, and the regime has been weakened and has acted in desperation after massive political demonstrations in negative reaction to the manipulation of the ruling clerics in the recent elections. The rural population, more oppressed by the regime of the Shah and the power base and support of the ayatollahs, was supportive of the regime, but its support was not enough to create internal stability. Recently, the “Green”Resistance protest movement has made headway in the periphery despite danger to activists in small towns where they can not go unnoticed like in Teheran.

While Jihad is clearly in Muslim doctrine in both Sunni and Shi'ite traditions, there is an internal spiritual dimension which is historically dominant, and the external Jihad, a holy war, against the infiltration of foreign non-Muslim influences, which has come to the forefront in Sunni Egypt with the Muslim Brotherhood in past decades, El Qaida attacks against the West, and since 1979 with the Khomeini fundamentalist regime in Shi'te Iran.

According to Seyyed Hossein Nasr, the inner Jihad is placed in the below context:

From the spiritual point of view all the “pillars” of Islam can be seen as being related to jihad. The fundamental witnesses (shadadah), “There is no divinity but Allah” and Muhammed is the Messenger of Allah”, through the utterance of which a person becomes a Muslim are not only statements about the Truth as seen in the Islamic perspective but also weapons for the practice of inner jihad. The very form of the first letter of the first witness (La ilaha illa’llah in Arabic) when written in Arabic calligraphy is like a bent sword with which all otherness is removed from the Supreme Reality while all that is positive in manifestation is returned to that Reality. The second witness is the blinding assertion of the powerful and majestic descent of all that constitutes in a positive manner the cosmos, man and revelation from that Supreme Reality. To invoke the two witnesses in the form of the sacred language in which they are revealed is to practice the inner jihad and to bring about the awareness of who we are, from whence we come and where is our ultimate abode . . . .

The great stations of perfection in the spiritual life can also be seen in the light of the inner jihad. To become detached from the impurities of the world in order to repose in the purity of the Divine Presence requires an intense jihad for our soul has its roots sunk deeply into the transient world which the soul of fallen man mistakes for reality. To overcome the lethargy, passivity and indifference of the soul, qualities which have become second nature to man as a result of his forgetting who he is constitutes likewise a constant jihad. . . .<sup>24</sup>

The external jihad is in defense of *dar al-islam*, the Islamic world threatened by infiltration and intrusion by non-Islamic forces:

The earliest wars of Islamic history which threatened the very existence of the young community came to be known as jihad par excellence in this outward sense of “holy war”. But it was upon returning from one of those early wars, which was of paramount importance in the survival of the newly established religious community and therefore of cosmic significance, that the Blessed Prophet nevertheless said to his companions that they had returned from the lesser holy war to the greater holy war, the greater jihad being the inner battle against all the forces that would prevent man from living according to the theomorphic norms that is the primordial and God given nature . . . .<sup>25</sup>

While at the time of the Prophet Mohammed, in Yathrib, he made treaties with Jewish tribes, hostilities between the Muslims and the Jews were frequent. As Islam grew, Jewish tribes in the Hijaz, were unrestrained in their harassment of the Muslims<sup>26</sup> according to the Shi’te scholar Allamah Tabataba’i of Qom, Iran who wrote this at the beginning of the 1970s almost a decade before the Khomeini Revolution. Furthermore, he depicted the numerous battles between the Muslims and the Jews as such:

Many battles took place between the Muslims and the Arab polytheists and Jews, in most of which Muslims were victorious. There were altogether over eighty major and minor battles. In all the major conflicts such as the battles of Badr, Uhud, Khandaq, Khaybar, Hunayn, etc., the Prophet was personally present on the battle

scene. Also in all the major battles and many minor ones, victory was gained especially through the efforts of Ali. He was the only person who never turned away from any of these battles. In all the wars that occurred during the ten years after the migration from Mecca to Medina less than two hundred Muslims and less than a thousand infidels were killed.<sup>27</sup>

Khomeini viewed the exportation of the Islamic revolution as obligatory.<sup>28</sup> On occasion, he stated he opposed using the sword in the exportation of the sword. However, in practice, he helped finance and arm diverse Shi'ites and Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Palestinian Muslim fundamentalism in Gaza, but also the militant Fatah of Yasser Arafat and a more militant umbrella group of secular Palestinian movements comprising the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Khomeini had a conservative Shi'ite Muslim conventional view of jihad. Only the infallible imam had the prerogative of resorting to jihad (holy war), and in his absence, the faqih (the jurist) could not wage an offensive war.<sup>29</sup> However, the defensive war (jang-i difa'i), in self-defense, was the obligation of the faqih. Thus, Khomeini was obligated to pursue the defensive war by all means. On one level this corresponds to the use of force under international law in accordance to Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, but he neglected the primacy of the territorial state, but instead referred to the defense of the "homeland", i.e. Islam. Thus, Iran could intervene in 1982 in Iraq to defend Islam; beyond the borders of the Iranian State. Another paradox was that the Iranian Constitution and Khomeini's ideology for revolutionary Iran stipulated noninterference ('adam-i dikhalat) in the affairs of other states.<sup>30</sup> Iranian clerics Khomeini and Muntaziri encouraged foreign ulama to come to Iran in order to export the revolution, and Khomeini tried to incite rebellion amongst Gulf leaders and condemned their allegiance to foreign powers and namely the United States.<sup>31</sup>

A feature of the Shi'i world-view according to Moojan Momen is the need to find a scapegoat. The Shi'ites were a persecuted minority for hundreds of years and despite that shi'ism has been the official of Iran for quite some time, the regime has often used minorities like the Jews and the Bahai as scapegoats. While individuals believe such a world-view, it is more the ulama, the natural religious leaders of the community, that have led the people to believe in such an idea and to pursue responses to it. Momen gave a perspective to this phenomenon throughout the centuries and until the present time:

'While Shi'ism was a minority, the Sunni majority were, of course, the scapegoats and for a while under the Safavids they remained in this role. Later, when the threat from the Ottoman Empire receded, internal scapegoats were found, especially among those who challenged the authority of the ulama. At first it was the Akhbaris, then successively the Shaykhis, the Babis and then the Baha'is. From time to time, the government or the Jews have also been cast in this role. The motif was very strong in the period immediately before the overthrow of the Shah in 1979, with the Shah being openly identified with Mu'awiya, the enemy of the Imam Husayn. Since the Revolution, the Iraqi government, American imperialism and the international Zionist conspiracy have become the major external scapegoats, while the Baha'is have resumed their role as internal scapegoats.'<sup>32</sup>



Contemporary Shi'ite Iran and their Hezbollah adherents and agents are committed to the triumph of Islam, destroying Israel, establishing a Shari'a state in Lebanon, and establishing world Islamic hegemony. Demonizing Israel and the Jews, via the Koran and hadiths, is integral to contemporary Shi'ite Iran and Hezbollah. The latter considers the jihad war against Israel, the Zionist entity, as 'an annihilationist war intrinsic to broader conflicts: the struggle between the Islamic world and the non-Muslim world, and the historical struggle between Islam and Judaism.'<sup>33</sup> The most senior clerical authority for Hezb'allah, Husayn Fadlalah has remarked.

"We find in the Koran that the Jews are the most aggressive towards the Muslims...because of their aggressive resistance to the unity of the faith."

Postom cited Muslim resentment of the Jews as stated in the Koran and the hadith:

' And the Jews stubborn malevolence -- portrayed in the darkest colors by Islam's sacred texts -- is their defining worldly characteristic. Examples of this archetypal hatred from the Koran, and hadith (traditions of the Muslim prophet Muhammad), amplified by the early Muslim biographies of Muhammad, include:

- Koranic verses labeling Jews as malevolent enemies of Islam (5:82); disobedient slayers of their own prophets who suffered justifiable abasement (2:61), including, for some, transformation into apes and swine (5:60);
- the canonical hadith (Sahih Muslim Book 026, Number 5431), and accounts provided by early Muslim biographers of Muhammad (such as Ibn Saad, below), that the Jews caused Muhammad's protracted, excruciating death from poisoning:

"The Jews discussed about poisons and became united in one poison. She [a Khaybar Jewess, Zaynab Bint al-Harith] poisoned the goat putting more poison in the forelegs.. Allah's Apostle took the foreleg, a piece of which he put into his mouth...Allah's Apostle sent for Zaynab [and]...handed her over to [those] who put her to death...Allah's Apostle lived after this three years, till in consequence of his pain he passed away. During his illness he used to say: I did not cease to find the effect of the poisoned morsel I took at Khaybar..."<sup>34</sup>

In a public statement issued February 15/16, 1986, Hezb'allah stressed its indelible links to Iran and Ayatollah Khomeini ("*We obey the orders of one leader wise and just...*") and conceived of itself as a "*nation*" linked to Muslims worldwide by "*...a strong ideological and political bond, namely Islam.*" Below are two examples of Hezb'allah's commitment to Jihad and the destruction of Israel:

' No one can imagine the importance of our military potential as our military apparatus is not separate from our overall social fabric. Each of us is a fighting soldier. And when it becomes necessary to carry out the Holy war (Jihad), each of us takes up his assignment in the fight in accordance with the injunctions of the Law, and that in the framework of the mission carried out under the tutelage of the Commanding Jurist.

...our struggle [against Israel] will end only when this entity is obliterated. We recognize no treaty with it, no cease fire, and no peace agreements, whether separate or consolidated.’<sup>35</sup>

Present day fundamentalist Iran is led by Ahmadinejad, who not only is a Holocaust denier and seeks to destroy the Jewish State, but is a product of vehement anti-Jewish tradition in Shi’te Persia. The Jew was considered impure, was feared for having the ability to contaminate the society, and presented physical and theological danger to Muslim society. Historically, Persian Muslim responses toward the Jews varied from forced conversions, riots, tax extortion, fines, blood libels, torment, and murder. Riots against Persian Jewry continued as late as 1946 in Mashad. Rescue of Jews in France by the Iranian diplomat Sardari or the rescue of Jews in Iran during the Holocaust was a brief interlude of humanity and altruism in between centuries of Shi’i agitation toward the Jews and the current extremist fundamentalist revolutionary regime.

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<sup>1</sup> Mordecai Paldiel, *Diplomat Heroes of the Holocaust* (New York: Rabbi Arthur Schneier Center for International Affairs of Yeshiva University in Association with Ktav Publishing House, 2007) 202.

<sup>2</sup> Hayim Azez, Yitchak Kerem, et. al., *The Shoa In The Sephardic Communities, Dreams, Dilemmas & Decisions of Sephardic Leaders* (Jerusalem: Sephardic Educational Center of Jerusalem, 2006) 228-229.

<sup>3</sup> Gitta Amipaz-Silber, *Sephardi Jews in Occupied France Under The Tyrants Heel 1940-1944* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1995) 267-288.

<sup>4</sup> Karmel Melamed, “There’s no denying him”, *Jerusalem Post*, December 14, 2006

<http://magazine.jpost.com>, and reprinted as “There’s No Denying Him: Only Iranian Jewish Holocaust Survivor”, *The Jewish Journal*, December 14, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Devora Omer, *The Teheran Operation, The Rescue of Jewish Children from the Nazis* (Washington D.C.: B’nai Brith Books, 1991) 150-160.

<sup>6</sup> Dorit Bader Whiteman and William L. Shulman, *Teheran Children* (New York: Holocaust Resource Center and Archives, Queensborough Community College, The City University of New York, 2001) 4.

<sup>7</sup> Henryk Grynberg, *The Children of Zion, the Path of Tribulations for the Teheran Children* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1995) 160-188.[Hebrew]

<sup>8</sup> Flemming Rose, “Muhammeds ansigt” (“The face of Muhammad”), *Jyllands-Posten*, September 30, 2005

<sup>9</sup> See [www.irancartoon.com/120/holocaust/](http://www.irancartoon.com/120/holocaust/)

<sup>10</sup> Daniel Tsadik, *Between Foreigners and Shi’is, Nineteenth-Century Iran and its Jewish Minority* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007) 23.

<sup>11</sup> Habib Levy, *Comprehensive History of The Jews Of Iran (The Outset of the Diaspora)* (Los Angeles: Mazda Publishers with The Cultural Foundation of Habib Levy, 1999) 269-270.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 293-295.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 319-324.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 327.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 296.

<sup>16</sup> Andrew Bostom, “Hezb'allah's Jihad Genocide against Jews Worldwide”, *American thinker*, June 22, 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Tsadik, 34-35.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>19</sup> Levy, 443.

<sup>20</sup> Tsadik, 126.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>23</sup> Juan R. I. Cole and Nikki R. Keddie, eds., *Shi’ism and Social Protest* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986) 30-31.

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<sup>24</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, et. al., eds., *Shi'ism, Doctrines, Thought, and Spirituality* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988) 277.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 276.

<sup>26</sup> Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i, *Shi'ite Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1976) 152-153.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 153.

<sup>28</sup> Cole and Keddie, 35.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>32</sup> Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam, The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985) 236-237.

<sup>33</sup> Bostom, op. cit.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., See also <http://www.islam-watch.org/Bostom/Hezbollah-Jihad-Genocide-against-Jews.htm>

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.