

Kenneth L. Marcus' Oxymoron: Trump and Civil Rights

Von Dr. Clemens Heni, 12. März 2018

[The Times of Israel \(Blogs\)](#)

Fighting for civil rights and working for Donald Trump is an oxymoron. Activist Kenneth L. Marcus was [nominated as assistant secretary for civil rights](#) in the U.S. Department of Education. A first committee hearing took place on [December 5, 2017](#) with a result of 12 to 11 in his favor, and finally the full Senate will vote. Given the GOP majority he will be confirmed.

I know Ken Marcus personally, ever since he gave a talk when I was at Yale in 2008/09. He regularly appears at international conferences on antisemitism, be it in London, Jerusalem or New York City. He is a smart person and I always thought of him as a mainstream guy, who analyzes various forms of today's antisemitism in order to fight them. His main field is defending Israel, which is important and makes good sense. However, I failed to realize some important things.

It was instructive for me to follow his nomination becoming a major topic in public discourse in the US, including articles in the [New York Times](#), the [Washington Post](#) and the [Jewish Telegraph Agency](#) (JTA). The JTA reported on January 19, 2018:

“Patty Murray, D-Wash., the top Democrat on the committee, focused almost entirely on Marcus’ support of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos’ rollback of Obama administration guidelines that emphasize the rights of alleged victims in campus sexual assault cases.

Marcus, who served in similar civil rights positions in the George W. Bush administration, also has opposed affirmative

action and resisted pursuing bias cases without evidence that there is intent behind the bias. He has also opposed equities for LGBTQ Americans, but told the committee that his views in that area had 'evolved'."

The crucial failure of Kenneth Marcus, who mentioned his wife and family being with him at the hearing, is the following:

"Murray asked Marcus to 'name a single example of something President Trump has said or done when it comes to discrimination or women's rights or civil rights you disagree with.' Marcus could not, which in the current political environment would doom any candidate from accruing substantive Democratic support."

Donald Trump abused women and proudly told other men that a celebrity such as he is, can "grab her by the pussy." What would Marcus say if one of these abused women was his wife or his neighbor?

Trump ridiculed journalist Serge Kovalevsky from the New York Times, he ridiculed a handicapped person. That was the moment that [broke the heart of actress Meryl Streep](#), as she said at the Golden Globe in January 2017.

Then, after a neo-Nazi had killed an antifascist counter-protester in Charlottesville and hundreds of neo-Nazis screamed "Jews will not replace us," the US President said that there were "very fine people" among those neo-Nazis.

Trump called Mexican immigrants "criminals and rapists," aiming at an undefined group of people from Latin and South America and he wanted to ban all Muslims from entering the US.

These are all topics of women's and civil rights abuse in the US by Trump before and after his election.

Again, listen to Senator Murray's question and read the answer

by Kenneth Marcus:

“Murray asked Marcus to ‘name a single example of something President Trump has said or done when it comes to discrimination or women’s rights or civil rights you disagree with.’ Marcus could not, which in the current political environment would doom any candidate from accruing substantive Democratic support.”

This disqualifies Marcus from every single post dealing with civil rights and women’s rights. He takes side with a sexist criminal, plain and simple.

That is of course nothing unusual in our world. Many men have no problem with sexism, the abuse of women in particular; take the #metoo campaign as an example. But a high-profile politician in a department dealing with civil rights should or; *must* know much better.

Many nation-wide civil rights groups and umbrella organizations have objected to the nomination of Marcus. This holds for the biggest Hispanic civil rights organization, the [UnidosUS](#):

“UnidosUS (formerly NCLR) and the National Urban League joined today in opposing the nomination of Kenneth L. Marcus as the next Assistant Secretary for the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S. Department of Education. The groups noted his troubling record with regard to enforcing the rights of immigrant students and English learners, and past attempts to undermine critical policies aimed at remedying racial discrimination, including affirmative action.

Marcus’ nomination had been met with opposition from a broad range of civil rights groups who have raised concerns about the nominee’s hostility to affirmative action and other equal opportunity initiatives. Marcus did nothing to assuage those concerns during a recent nomination hearing where he failed

to commit his office to enforcing the law on a number of civil rights issues in which the OCR has played a pivotal enforcement role in the past.”

The defense of Marcus by groups such as [Scholars for Peace in the Middle East \(SPME\)](#), [StandWithUs](#), [the Algemeiner](#) or the [American Jewish Committee \(AJC\)](#) and many other [Christian and Jewish groups](#) is frankly ridiculous as they insinuate that opposition to his nomination is based on anti-Israel bias. There might be a very few groups that oppose Marcus because of his take on anti-Zionist antisemitism, like the [Arab American Institute](#) (although they do not reject Zionism and the Jewish state as such in their long statement, only “policies of Israel”). The main opponents of Marcus, though, have an issue with his analysis and policies regarding racism and sexism.

The biggest and best-known Jewish civil rights organization, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) does not come out in support of Marcus. That speaks volumes.

Then, take a leading pro-Israel Senator such as Elizabeth Warren – she did not even address the topic of Israel or BDS, as Marcus’ positions in that respect are not controversial at all to her. However, she rejects him for this job, because he fails to send a clear civil rights message when it comes to racism, for example, according to the [Washington Post](#):

„Here’s another exchange between Warren and Marcus:

WARREN: Mr. Marcus, if confirmed, you would be responsible for protecting the civil rights of American students at a time when Nazis and white supremacists are marching across college campuses with tiki torches, and many young people are literally afraid to go to school because of the hateful climate that has been fostered by Donald Trump. If confirmed, will you commit to fully enforcing civil rights laws and protecting all students from discrimination and harassment?

MARCUS: Yes.

WARREN: Good. So, I just want to find out a little more detail about what that commitment means to you, and I thought we might go through a few fact situations. So, let's start with an easy one. Say there's a school district that has some mostly white schools and some mostly black schools, and let's say that the mostly black schools have less experienced teachers, teachers with fewer qualifications, those schools have fewer books, they have fewer computers in the library, fewer AP courses available. By any objective measure, those schools have clearly been shortchanged. If confirmed, would your office step in to protect the civil rights of that district's black students?

MARCUS: If I were confirmed, I would ensure that any complaints alleging violation of Title VI would be – would be reviewed.

WARREN: Mr. Marcus, I don't want to start a dance here. This is a set of facts that come to you in your position, if you are confirmed, and my question is are those facts adequate? Will you step in to protect the civil rights of the district's black students?

MARCUS: Senator, I would certainly hope to be able to provide protection for the civil rights of those black students to the extent possible under law, but what . . .

WARREN: But, that's the question I'm asking how you see this. You're allowed to answer hypotheticals, here, so this one should be easy. A yes or a no, would you step in on those facts, or not?

MARCUS: I appreciate that, senator, but unfortunately in my experience the cases that OCR deals with are much more complicated than hypotheticals.

WARREN: So, you don't think that's enough evidence, what I've

just said?

MARCUS: I think I would need to look at it very carefully.

After questioning him, Warren said: "I don't think we need someone in this position whose view of civil rights enforcement is to do as little as possible to protect as few students as possible. I think that would be bad for students overall, and with Betsy DeVos as secretary of education, I think it would be even worse."

A leading pro-Israel group, the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), which is part of the [Leadership Conference](#), a major umbrella organization of civil rights groups in the US, also rejects the nomination of Marcus. Why?

"Hillel would not address Marcus' views on federal policy and sexual harassment. Marcus endorses the decision by Education Secretary Betsy DeVos to remove the Obama-era guidelines that advocates said made it easier for victims to level sexual assault charges on campus. The guidelines discouraged universities from allowing an alleged assaulter to directly cross-examine his accuser, and discouraged what until then was the common practice of requiring that the accused and the accuser first attempt to resolve the issue face to face or through mediation.

As leverage, the Obama administration made the rules under Title IX, a law that prohibits federal funding for schools that allow discrimination against women.

Feminists said that before the Obama guidelines, the process revictimized assault victims. DeVos has said that Obama's rules instead made victims of the accused.

That was the nomination killer for the NCJW, said Faith Williams, the group's senior legislative associate.

"In light of growing number of #MeToo moments and the scandal

at Michigan State University, we need these Title IX protections," she said, referring to the explosion of sexual assault allegations by women and the recent conviction of a sports therapist at the university who was accused of assaulting nearly 200 women in his care.

Also opposing the Marcus nomination is Jewish Women International, which has developed programs in partnership with Jewish fraternities and sororities to counter sexual assault on campus.

"We are deeply concerned by the answers given during his confirmation hearing last week supporting Secretary DeVos' rescission of important guidance clarifying the responsibilities of colleges and universities in cases of sexual assault," Jewish Women International said in a statement last month.

In my view, and I think I am not alone, Kenneth L. Marcus' stance helps to delegitimize the entire pro-Israel camp, a camp he stands pars pro toto, as he has a blind eye concerning the civil rights abuses by Donald Trump. In addition he seems to be supporting very dangerous policies by DeVos, downplaying if not affirming sexist and racist policies by the current Trump administration.

Most people who will gather, again, at the Global Forum for Combating Antisemitism, organized by the Israeli Foreign Ministry (including Netanyahu himself), March 19–21, 2018, will enjoy handshakes and have drinks, celebrating themselves as the elite of true fighters against antisemitism. Real heroes.

I myself participated in that conference in 2008, 2009, 2013 and 2015. No longer. In a time when major participant organizations of the conference including the AJC, the Simon Wiesenthal Center and the Zionist Organization of America (see [Bret Stephens' attack in the New York Times on the ZOA's](#)

[invitation to fascist antisemite Steve Bannon](#)) embrace a sexist, racist and Holocaust distorting president, that kind of conference is a joke, a self-congratulatory farce. As long as women, Hispanics, the handicapped, Muslims and the Dreamers behold the reluctance of a leading pro-Israel activist to genuinely support their civil rights, even while he is being considered for a high civil rights position, in the midst of his loving embrace of Trumpism, the pro-Israel camp is in deep trouble.

Zionism and Israel deserve better!

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Deutsche Männer mit Schnappatmung. Zur Kampagne „besorgter Bürger“ und anderer Rechtsextremer gegen die Amadeu Antonio Stiftung (AAS) und Anetta Kahane

Wir leben in gefährlichen Zeiten. Faschisten lieben, es „gefährlich zu denken“, ans Äußerste zu gehen, theoretisch wie praktisch. Das ist das Erbe von Richard Wagner, Carl Schmitt und Ernst Jünger.

In Berlin wird auf Demonstrationen von Neonazis, anderen „ganz normalen besorgten Bürgern“ (=“Rechtspopulisten“) wie am 30. Juli 2016 schon mal gefordert, Bundeskanzlerin Merkel „zu

steinigen“, wie das [Jüdische Forum für Demokratie und gegen Antisemitismus](#) berichtet.

Die Partei *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD), Verschwörungswahnsinnige, Zeitschriften wie das vom Ex-Linken Jürgen Elsässer geführte Compact Magazin, das Deutschland als von den USA besetztes Land herbei fantasiert, Neonazis aller Art, die „Identitäre Bewegung“ und die beliebten „besorgten Bürger“ hetzen seit Jahren: „Merkel muss weg“.

In USA fordert der republikanische Präsidentschaftskandidat Donald Trump, seine Gegnerin, die demokratische Kandidatin Hillary Clinton, „einzusperren“ („lock her up“), für den niederländischen Agitator Geert Wilders, der auch gegen die jüdische Beschneidung ist, klebt an Merkels Händen „Blut“, Morde durch Jihadisten seien ihr zu verdanken. Der heutige britische Außenminister Johnson verglich während der BREXIT-Kampagne die EU mit Hitler. Selten war die Trivialisierung des Holocaust so Mainstream in Europa, wir wollen von osteuropäischen oder islamistischen Formen der Holocaust-Bejahung hier erst gar nicht sprechen.

Das Klima ist so angespannt und verhetzt, dass viele nicht glauben wollten, dass der mörderischste Anschlag in der Bundesrepublik seit Jahren, der Amoklauf von München vom 22. Juli 2016 mit neun Toten und dutzenden Verletzten, kein islamistischer Anschlag war, sondern von einem rassistisch und neonazistisch motivierten, zudem psychisch kranken Täter ausgeführt wurde. David Ali S. ([manche wollten wohl insinuieren, die Presse würde absichtlich den Vornamen „Ali“ nicht nennen](#), während [ähnlich Fragende in England](#) nicht betonten oder nicht mal erwähnten, dass der Täter ein Rassist und Rechtsextremist war) aus München tötete gezielt Migranten, was nicht nur mit schulischen Problemen in Beziehung steht, sondern auch mit einer offenkundig rechtsextremen Ideologie. Er hatte am selben Tag wie Hitler Geburtstag und freute sich darüber, zudem sah er sich als Deutsch-Iraner besonders „arisch“, während des Amoklaufs wurde ein Video aufgenommen,

das seine rassistische und deutsche Ideologie fragmentarisch zum Ausdruck bringt.

Zuletzt hatte der Nationalsozialistische Untergrund (NSU) gezielt neun Migranten ermordet, allerdings in einem Zeitraum von 7 Jahren und nicht innerhalb weniger Minuten.

Vor diesem Hintergrund ist die Aufklärungsarbeit gegen Rechts von enormer Bedeutung.

Doch in Deutschland ist die Kritik an der Rechten verpönt, die Neue Rechte ist derzeit salonfähig, nicht Gesellschaftskritik und Antifaschismus. Das zeigt sich am [FAZ-Autor „Don Alphonso“](#), der am 31. Juli auf Twitter schrieb, wie der Tagesspiegel-Autor [Matthias Meisner](#) gleichsam geschockt zitiert:

„Im Vergleich zu Maas, Kahane, de Maiziere, Juncker und Twitters Beihilfe ist Erdogan ein altmodischer Zensurpfuscher“

Heiko Maas, der 2014 als erster Bundesminister auf dem Global Forum for Combating Antisemitism in Jerusalem sprach und eine jüdische Aktivistin gegen Rechtsextremismus, Islamismus und Antisemitismus in all seinen Formen, Anetta Kahane, werden hier mit einem antisemitischen islamistischen Führer gleichgesetzt, ja sie seien viel schlimmer als der türkische Präsident Erdogan.

Wer sich also für Israel einsetzt wie Heiko Maas oder gegen Antisemitismus wie Anetta Kahane sei problematischer als ein brutaler, autokratischer und islamistisch fanatisierter Staatsführer wie Erdogan. Geht's noch?

Ja, es geht noch krasser. Dieser Tweet steht nämlich nicht isoliert, er ist Teil einer Kampagne gegen die Kritik am Rechtsextremismus und am Antisemitismus. Eine Kampagne gegen die Amadeu Antonio Stiftung (AAS). Eine Kampagne zudem gegen

Anette Kahane, die Vorsitzende der Stiftung, persönlich. Warum dreht das zumeist weiße, männliche Pöbelvolk so durch?

Die extrem rechte Hetze gegen alles, was links ist oder so interpretiert wird, hat seit vielen Jahren Hochkonjunktur. Von Matussek über Sarrazin zu Pegida und der AfD führt eine der neu-rechten Linien. Parallel dazu gibt es einen organisierten Rechtsextremismus, der weit älter ist und der seit Jahren die Chance sieht, den ganz großen Durchbruch zu schaffen. Eine Nazi-Partei in den Bundestag, „national befreite Zonen“, eine Pogromstimmung gegen Flüchtlinge, Nichtdeutsche und Linke bzw. so Kategorisierte, zumindest in einigen Teilen der Republik wie in Sachsen oder Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

Schauen wir uns mal einen ganz aktuellen Fall an, was den deutschen Antisemitismus und die AAS betrifft. Die Hildesheimer Hochschule für angewandte Wissenschaft und Kunst (HAWK) hat einen Antisemitismuskandal. Jahrelang wurden dort in einem Seminar antisemitische Texte und Dokumente als Lehrmaterial den Studierenden vorgesetzt. Der Journalist Alan Posener von der WELT berichtet darüber:

„Aber der Hochschule liegt seit dem September 2015, mithin seit elf Monaten, ein Gutachten der [Amadeu-Antonio-Stiftung](#) zu den Seminarmaterialien vor. Der Autor des Gutachtens, Jan Riebe, stellt unter anderem fest: ‚Die Texte beschäftigen sich nicht oder nur in Ansätzen mit der sozialen Lage von Jugendlichen in den palästinensischen Gebieten‘ – dem vorgeblichen Thema des Seminars. Viele Texte seien nicht wissenschaftlich, sondern ‚agitatorisch‘. Die meisten ‚widersprechen wissenschaftlichen Mindestanforderungen‘.

Über einen Text heißt es: ‚Eine solche Zusammenstellung‘ negativer Aussagen über Israel ‚ist mir in meiner langjährigen zivilgesellschaftlichen Arbeit fast ausnahmslos aus Nazikreisen untergekommen‘. Ein solches Seminar sei ‚unvereinbar mit den demokratischen Grundsätzen einer Hochschule‘.

Nun ist ein Kollege von Posener, der Publizist Henryk M. Broder als Mitbetreiber des Autorenblogs Achgut.com an der Hetzkampagne gegen die Amadeu Antonio Stiftung (AAS) direkt beteiligt. Einer der Texte dieser abstoßenden und gefährlichen Kampagne ist auf seinem Blog erschienen. Dieser Text von Ansgar Neuhof wurde nun sogar in der Monatszeitung „Jüdische Rundschau“ nachgedruckt, nachdem schon die neu-rechte Postille „eigentümlich frei“ den Text publiziert hatte. In dem Text wird eine Beziehung von Kommunismus, Juden (Anetta Kahane ist als Jüdin bekannt) und Geld hergestellt. Es würde sich „lohnen“ gegen rechts zu arbeiten. Anetta Kahanes Tätigkeit für die Stasi wird aufgewärmt, als sei das nicht seit vielen Jahren völlig offen und bekannt. [Kahane hatte 1986 einen Ausreiseantrag aus der DDR gestellt](#), weil sie erkannte, dass die DDR strukturell unfähig war, dem Neonazismus oder Rechtsextremismus zu begegnen, wozu es eine antiautoritäre, bunte Gesellschaft braucht.

Heutzutage erarbeitet sie mit ihrer Stiftung [Ausstellungen über Antisemitismus in der DDR](#). Und eine Kritik am Antisemitismus ist bei der Neuen Rechten natürlich ein No-Go, solange man nicht ausschließlich Muslime oder Linke dafür verantwortlich machen kann.

Der Anhänger von Verschwörungsmmythen Gerhard Wisnewski attackiert die AAS auf der Seite des extrem rechten Kopp-Verlages. Er bekommt Schnappatmung, weil eine heutige Mitarbeiterin der AAS, Julia Schramm, sich 2014 auf Twitter (Gottseibeius!) bei der Royal Air Force bedankte, die im Zweiten Weltkrieg Dresden bombardierte.

In einer unglaublich fanatischen deutsch-nationalen Stimmung – jede Fußball-Männer EM oder WM zeugt davon, allerspätestens seit 2006 im gesamtdeutschen Rausch – werden vor allem „Antideutsche“, also Kritikerinnen des deutschen Nationalismus und Antisemitismus und Rassismus, diffamiert und attackiert. Das haben rechtsextreme Verschwörungswahnsinnige übrigens mit weiten Teilen der Linken, man denke nur an Sahara-ich-wäre-so-

gern-AfD-Bundesvorsitzende-Wagenknecht, die antizionistische Postille junge Welt oder die örtlichen Ableger von DKP, MLPD oder den Stammtischen ehemaliger, nun ergrauter KPD/AO-Mitglieder, gemein.

Man könnte mit Julia Schramm womöglich über ihre völlig notwendige Kritik am Nationalismus in Deutschland reden, am aus ihrer Sicht überholten und falschen Konzept des Nationalstaats, wie sie es in einem kleinen Video kürzlich getan hat, und dabei darauf hinweisen, dass gerade die Kritik am Antisemitismus notwendig eine Bejahung des israelischen Nationalstaats beinhaltet.

Das ist für sehr viele linke Israelunterstützer eine Aporie: hier mit Jürgen Habermas (für die Sozialdemokratischen) oder Marx und Kritischer Theorie (für die ganz Radikalen und Strammen) gegen den Nationalstaat und dort irgendwie für Israel, gegen Jakob Augstein, Jihad und den Iran.

Doch das wäre eine ganz andere Diskussion. Dass Israel der jüdische und demokratische Nationalstaat ist und als solcher zu verteidigen ist, muss erst noch in linke Theoriebildung Einzug erhalten. Da hat die „Israelszene“ noch sehr viel Arbeit vor sich liegen.

Hier und heute geht es darum, die rechtsextreme und antisemitische Kampagne gegen die Amadeu Antonio Stiftung zu attackieren und zu Fall zu bringen.

Dass nun auch noch die Jüdische Rundschau bei dieser unglaublichen, aggressiven Kampagne gegen die bundesweit wohl wichtigste Einrichtung im Kampf gegen Antisemitismus in all seinen Formen mitmacht, schlägt dem Fass vollends den Boden aus. Die Jüdische Rundschau liegt kostenlos in vielen jüdischen Gemeinden aus.

Der Journalist [Christian Bommarius](#) hat für die Berliner Zeitung zusammengefasst, mit was für einer Gruppe von Agitatoren wir es zu tun haben:

„In diesem Lager – präziser wäre: Kampfgemeinschaft – stehen die rechtsradikale Zeitung Junge Freiheit und der Publizist Roland Tichy (,Es ist ein peinliches (sic!) Netz der Zensur, das hier über Deutschland gelegt wird und im Zusammenspiel mit den Parteien und vielen Medien glänzend funktioniert.‘), die islamophobe ,Achse des Guten‘ um Henryk M. Broder, Anhänger der rechtsextremen ,identitären Bewegung‘, der auf die Verbreitung von Verschwörungstheorien spezialisierte Kopp-Verlag mit seinem fast schon ulkigen Chefverschwörungstheorienverbreiter Udo Ulfkotte (,Zensur-Republik Deutschland: So sollen Bürger eingeschüchtert werden‘), der rassistische Blog ,politically incorrect‘ und was sich derzeit sonst noch auf dem Markt intellektueller Unredlichkeit und trostloser Unanständigkeit tummelt. Sie alle werfen Maas, der Amadeu-Antonio-Stiftung und anderen, denen der Schutz der Menschenwürde etwas bedeutet, vor, die Republik in eine ,Stasi 2.0‘ zu verwandeln und mit dem ,peinlichen Netz der Zensur‘ zu knebeln.“

Nun hat sich also mit der Jüdischen Rundschau und ihrer Vielzahl von Autorinnen und Autoren aus der selbst ernannten Pro-Israel-Szene auch eine jüdische Zeitung in diese Hetze gegen die Jüdin Anetta Kahane und die Amadeu Antonio Stiftung eingereiht.



Antideutsche werden dieses Land vor sich selbst retten oder es geht unter. So oder so.

Und da ist sie wieder, die Schnappatmung weißer deutscher Männer. Aber sie sind nicht alleine. Vera Lengsfeld ist bei ihnen.

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How not to prevent a second Holocaust

[Times of Israel, May 9, 2013](#)

The fourth Global Forum for Combating Antisemitism, which is scheduled to be held in Jerusalem this month, is a very important international conference. Fighting anti-Semitism, hatred of Israel, Islamism, anti-Zionism, and the distortion of the Shoah are obviously extremely timely and significant topics, given the genocidal threats from Iran against Israel, the growing hostility toward the Jewish state in many countries in Europe, and throughout the Arab and large parts of the Moslem world, and the recent attempts to delegitimize the hereto-accepted narratives of World War II and the Holocaust throughout post-Communist eastern Europe.

Given the Forum's significance and the fact that it was created and continues to be hosted by the Israeli Foreign Ministry, the question arises as to why Israel has invited ministers from countries known for promoting the distortion of the Holocaust and the canard of historical equivalency between Nazism and Communism to an event dedicated to fight anti-Semitism and prevent a possible 'second Holocaust'? Are politicians or representatives of countries known for their

efforts to whitewash their own pro-Nazi legacy allies in the fight against Holocaust denial and distortion of history? Some tiny and not powerful countries have learned to pay lip-service to Israel while promoting the above-mentioned Holocaust distortion in their own countries. This is currently the case in Hungary and Lithuania.

In December 2009 at the last meeting of the Global Forum I participated in the efforts to expose and condemn Lithuanian anti-Semitism. In a working group, Professor of Yiddish Dovid Katz and I, supported by British MP John Mann, criticized Lithuanian anti-Semitism and Holocaust distortion. Our words fell on deaf ears and we were shocked and chagrined when the featured guest speaker, the Foreign Minister of Lithuania, failed to address this issue at all, and whitewashed the serious problems his country faced in this regard.

Now, in May 2013, a representative of the Lithuanian government has again been invited as an honored guest to address the fourth Global Forum. Are there no other, more worthy, countries to invite, when it comes to fighting anti-Semitism and unfair criticism of Israel? Was our criticism in December 2009 completely useless?

After the program for this month's conference was publicized, [Efraim Zuroff, the director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Israel office, said](#) senior government officials from Lithuania, Greece, Hungary and Ireland should not be allowed to attend – much less speak at – the Global Forum for Combating Antisemitism.

The opportunity to address the conference by visiting dignitaries should be a prize given to people who are leading the fight against anti-Semitism, and not to individuals representing countries in which the problem is among the worst in Europe, if not the worst.

This was not the first time that the well-known Nazi-hunter

had drawn attention to this problem. In December 2009 Zuroff already criticized the invitation of the then Lithuanian Foreign Minister:

I am referring primarily to the invitation to Lithuanian Foreign Minister Vygaudas Usackas to participate as a special guest of the forum, but also to the presence there of two right-wing Hungarian politicians, Zsolt Semjen and Zoltan Balog, both of whom have made very negative comments about Hungarian Jews.

It is somehow both predictable and shocking that high-ranking representatives of these same countries, Lithuania and Hungary, are again slated to deliver speeches at the Global Forum for Combating Antisemitism. They will, of course, not deal with the failures of their own countries since 2009. They will not apologize for a reburial – replete with military honors – of a minister who served in the Nazi puppet government of Lithuania. Nor will they change their radical nationalist policies, including anti-Semitism, in both countries like the equation of red and brown (“Prague Declaration”) or the toleration of anti-Semitic and far-right parties like Jobbik in Hungary.

The same holds for Greece. Greek neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn was supported by Prime Minister Samaras and a member of that anti-Semitic party was elected by the Greek Parliament to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). A Hungarian extreme right politician from Jobbik was also elected to that very EU body. In March 2013 anti-Semitic and anti-Roma, racist journalist Ferenc Szaniszlo was awarded a prestigious state-sponsored Hungarian award for journalists, the Táncsics prize, given under the auspices of Minister of “human resources.”

Why should Israel honor such countries and governments at an event dedicated solely to fighting anti-Semitism?

The Global Forum for Combating Antisemitism is probably the largest gathering of scholars, activists, politicians, philanthropists, citizens, bloggers, journalists and others in the pro-Israel and anti-anti-Semitism tent. But distortion of the Holocaust remains a key indicator for knowing who Israel's true friends are, and who are its enemies. Ignoring this in 2013 is shortsighted and self-defeating, just as it was in 2009.

Distorting the first and preventing a second Holocaust?

Troubling invitations spark controversies about the Global Forum in Jerusalem, to be held end of May 2013

by Dr. Clemens Heni

The Global Forum for Combating Antisemitism is a very important international conference. The first one was held in 2007, followed by two more events in 2008 and 2009. May 28-30, 2013, the fourth Global Forum will take place in Jerusalem. Fighting antisemitism, hatred of Israel, Islamism, anti-

Zionism, and the distortion of the Shoah are tremendously timely and important topics.

Israel is a tiny country and the only one facing genocidal threats. Anti-Zionism is a religion in Europe and particularly in the Arab world, and parts of the Muslim world. Iran denies the Holocaust and agitates in a Nazi-style against Israel. Islamism is a huge threat on a worldwide level, but particularly in the Middle East, just look at Egypt and the Muslim Brotherhood, Turkey with the more veiled but influential, equally legal form of Islamism and Jihad (remember the Mavi Marmara) or Saudi-Arabia with its decades long spread of Islamist ideology via funding of extremist groups, mosques, cultural centers and the like. Qatar is home of one of the world's leading Sunni Islamists, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who urges the Muslim world to fight Israel, who supports suicide bombing by unveiled females and who thanked Hitler for having punished the Jews. No one is criticizing or isolating Qatar for being host of that influential antisemite and his world-wide media network, including al-Jazeera.

Therefore, the Global Forum will be a very important gathering of those dedicated to fight Islamism, Muslim antisemitism, anti-Zionism and hatred of Israel in all its forms.

However, is it a good idea to invite someone to an event dedicated to fight antisemitism and a possible 'second Holocaust' who is known for distorting, veiling or even affirming the Holocaust? Are politicians or representatives of countries known for their efforts to whitewash their own pro-Nazi legacy allies in the fight against Holocaust denial and distortion of history? Is it a reflection and sign of a change in public relations to invite the very same country to the very same event four years later, again?

Some tiny and not powerful countries have learnt to pay lip-service to Israel while promoting the above mentioned Holocaust distortion in their own countries. This is the case

in Hungary and Lithuania.

In December 2009 I was part of a struggle against Lithuanian antisemitism at the Global Forum for Combating Antisemitism, organized by the Israeli Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem. In a working group, Professor of Yiddish Dovid Katz and I, supported by British MP [John Mann](#), criticized Lithuanian antisemitism and Holocaust distortion!

Now, in May 2013, the very same Lithuanian government will be invited to the fourth Global Forum. Are the representatives at the MfA just lazy and have no other countries in mind when it comes to Israel and antisemitism? Was our criticism in December 2009 completely useless?

Now, facing the next Global Forum end of May 2013 in Jerusalem, [Efraim Zuroff](#), the director of the [Simon Wiesenthal Center's Israel office](#), said senior government officials from Lithuania, Greece, Hungary and Ireland should not be allowed to attend – and speak at – the Global Forum for Combating Antisemitism. “The opportunity to address the conference by visiting dignitaries should be a prize given to people who are leading the fight against anti-Semitism, and not to individuals representing countries in which the problem is among the worst in Europe, if not *the worst*,”.

In [December 2009 Zuroff already criticized](#) the invitation of the then Lithuanian Foreign Minister:

“I am referring primarily to the invitation to Lithuanian Foreign Minister Vygaudas Usackas to participate as a special guest of the forum, but also to the presence there of two right-wing Hungarian politicians, Zsolt Semjen and Zoltan Balog, both of whom have made very negative comments about Hungarian Jews.”

Isn't it predictable and also shocking, that these two countries, Lithuania and Hungary, are again supposed to deliver ridiculous speeches at the very same Global Forum for

Combating Antisemitism? They will of course not deal with the failures of their own countries since 2009. They will not apologize for a reburial of a Nazi puppet minister in 2012 in Lithuania (with military honors). Nor will they change their radical nationalist policies, including antisemitism in both countries like the equation of red and brown (“Prague Declaration”) or [the toleration if not support of antisemitic and far-right parties like Jobbik in Hungary](#). The same holds for Greece. Greek neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn was supported by Prime Minister Samaras and a member of that antisemitic party was elected by the Greek Parliament to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). A Hungarian extreme right politician from Jobbik was elected to that very EU body, too. In March 2013 antisemitic and anti-Roma, racist journalist Ferenc Szaniszló was awarded a state sponsored and most important Hungarian award for journalists, the Táncsics prize, given under the auspices of Minister of “human resources.”

Why should Israel honor such countries and governments at an event exclusively dedicated to the fight of antisemitism?

Nevertheless, computer expert and NGO activist [Andre Oboler from Australia rejects Zuroff’s criticism](#) and recently attacked the leading Nazi-hunter, historian and activist from the Simon Wiesenthal Center on his JPost blog for his criticism of this year’s Global Forum.

In addition, Oboler is the author of a brochure about [antisemitism on Facebook](#). Of course it is important to deal with antisemitism, neo-Nazis, Holocaust denial and related issues on the leading social network. However, Oboler bases his text on British scholar, very influential book author and activist Richard Dawkins. Dawkins insists that there is no free-will, everything is determined, biologically and/or culturally. For example, Dawkins created the term “Meme,” which in layman’s speak is a means for ideas to be transmitted via ‘cultural’ genes from one generation to the next.

If one takes this idea one step further the notion of free will can no longer exist in such a Dawkinsian world. One can only wonder what Dawkins would say about the Lithuanian Activist Front (LAF) and their active and self chosen involvement in the killing of Jews during the Shoah. Dawkins has sparked controversies about his aggressive new atheism, too and his friendship with animal rights activist Peter Singer, who endorses euthanasia, and says that a handicapped baby could be seen as a "non-person" and be killed, is highly troubling. Dawkins has talked about the (in his view: huge and dangerous) Jewish influence in American foreign policy, for example, and has agitated against Judaism.

The Global Forum for Combating Antisemitism, organized by the Israeli Foreign Ministry, and probably the biggest gathering of scholars, activists, politicians, philanthropists, citizens, bloggers, journalists and others in the pro-Israel and anti-antisemitism tent, should be a place to analyze and fight all forms of antisemitism.

Inviting countries who are known for their contribution to the distortion of history, for the antisemitic rewriting of the history of the Second World War, Nazi Germany and the Shoah, was a bad idea in 2009 and is a bad idea in 2013.

Of course Israeli diplomats are happy if a European or Western colleague is rather friendly and not outspokenly hostile to the Jewish state. However, we have to think twice. We cannot criticize one form of antisemitism (like anti-Zionism or Muslim antisemitism) while endorsing another form of antisemitism like Holocaust distortion, the equation of red and brown, the trivialization of the Holocaust and the promotion of the swastika as "cultural heritage" as is the case in Lithuania. No one who trivializes the Shoah can be considered a true friend of Israel and the Jews, regardless of his or her lip-service to the Jewish state.

Does the steering committee of the Global Forum, including

Oboler, and the Israeli government really think that countries who distort the Shoah are among the best allies to prevent a 'second Holocaust?'