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“Ever Again:” Stimulating Q+A at Florida Atlantic University

By Jerry Gordon<sup>1</sup>

On Wednesday Evening February 6<sup>th</sup>, I found myself at Florida Atlantic University (FAU) in Boca Raton moderating a Simon Wiesenthal Center of Los Angeles film: “Ever Again”. The film portrays the emergence of Islamist anti-Semitism in France, Britain, Belgium, Holland, the menace of neo-Nazis in the Federal Republic of Germany, and the alliance between the two extremist groups. I had written about both the film and experience in similar “Ever Again” presentations before audiences at Pensacola Junior College and the University of South Alabama late last summer.

This time I was on my own, as Rabbi Ari Hier had returned to Los Angeles. The Boca Raton presentation was facilitated through the FAU student Middle East and National Security Organization and its coordinator, Ms. Lori Porges, a doctoral candidate who introduced me to the audience.

The majority of the audience were transplanted Northeasterners now living in South Florida. Many audience members, as I discovered, had a great teacher, Dr. Walid Phares, formerly on the FAU faculty, and now at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracy in Washington, DC. Dr. Phares will be returning to speak to his friends at the Florida Society for Middle East Studies.

What followed the 70 minute presentation of “Ever Again” was an intense Q+A and continuing discussion that lasted over two hours. I didn’t leave until close to 10:30AM. It was exhausting, but very fulfilling.

While the film graphically portrays the rise of Islamic Anti-Semitism in Europe, the Q+A that followed the film’s presentation veered to what was going on here in the US.

**Introductory remarks**

During the run up to the film presentation, I talked about the American ex-pat writer and Paris correspondent for Pajamas Media, Nidra Poller. I noted that the film had not portrayed two graphic murders of young French Jews that Poller had written about. One victim was a French DJ whose murderer was a deranged Muslim neighbor who shouted “that he had killed his Jew and now could receive his reward in Paradise”. The other French Jewish victim was a cell phone

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salesman in Paris, kidnapped by an Islamist gang, tortured and left for dead on subway tracks. Nor did the film address the slaughter of Dutch Film Director Theo Van Gogh on the streets of Amsterdam by a Dutch Muslim Moroccan. Van Gogh was a colleague of famed Dutch Somali parliamentarian and author, Ayaan Hirsi Ali.

I drew the audience's attention to the recently released Second Annual Report on Anti-Semitism by EU Justice, Freedom and Security Minister Franco Frattini. The EU Report indicated that fully 50% of the Anti-Semitic incidents were attributable to Muslims in what the Islamic scholar Bat Ye'or calls Eurabia. Dr. Andrew Bostom has calculated that, given the relative non-Muslim to Muslim populations in the EU, Muslims were 20 to 32 times more likely to be perpetrators of these anti-Semitic incidents. Bostom also made reference to the corroborative 2006 Kaplan-Small analysis of data, in a *Journal of Conflict Resolution* article, based on an ADL survey of 5,004 Europeans in 10 countries which indicated that Muslims there were 8 times more likely to be Anti-Semitic. I pointed out to the audience that Saudi Arabia had been *judenrein* since the eruption of Islam under Muhammad. Jewish tribes in Medina, Mecca and other small communities were slaughtered, women raped, children enslaved, and survivors intimidated as inferior peoples or *dhimmi* and forced to flee. Those acts of violence and threats to Jews have continued to this day.

There were a number of fascinating questions posed during the long Q+A but I will concentrate on several key ones and the responses I gave.

### **Moderate Muslims**

A questioner asked why we don't hear more from Moderate Muslims, as the film portrayed them as "the silent majority". In my response, I began by asking the audience if they heard about the Million Muslim March Against Terrorism in Washington, DC that occurred a few years ago. It was organized by Karmal Narwash, a northern Virginia attorney, Palestinian by origin, and a failed Republican candidate for state office with some White House connections. I asked the audience how many did they think showed up. Someone said 12, I said, close, 14. I noted that over half were Jews. When it comes to moderate Muslims here in the US there is a real hero: M. Zhudi Jasser, a former Naval Medical Corps officer, Arizona physician and leader of a small group of Muslims in the US who do make a difference. I told them that Jasser wanted to expunge Islam of its political agenda to adhere to the construction clause of our Constitution regarding separation of Church and State (Mosque in this instance). Another audience member commented that Jasser was scheduled to talk in Palm Beach County in a few weeks.

### **Senator Obama's Pastor and Church membership**

Another questioner approached the microphone and created uproar with a matter of fact question: "why wasn't the press exposing Sen. Obama's racist and anti-Semitic pastor at his Church in Chicago?"

At that several audience members jumped up to vigorously protest that was a bogus question or that Obama had repudiated the comments of his Chicago Pastor, Rev. Jeremiah A. Wright Jr.

After I calmed everyone down, I went on to say that Sen. Obama is a smart man. He has virtually drawn even to Sen. Hillary Clinton in Democratic primary and caucus delegate counts. Obama is very much in contention. I then said the best way for Sen. Obama to repudiate the views of his controversial Pastor is to leave the Trinity United Church of Christ in Southside Chicago, as suggested by Abe Foxman of the ADL. Pastor Wright has given an award to notorious Nation of Islam Minister Louis Farrakhan and has reached out to visit Libya's Muammar Ghaddafi. Then I segued to discuss Obama's visit to his Luo tribe half brother in Kenya. Obama used his 'bully pulpit' on the Sen. Foreign Relations Committee in support of Kenyan opposition Leader Raila Odinga who has fashioned an understanding with the National Muslim Council in Kenya to support introduction of strict Islamic Sharia law. Obama has called for a Summit with the leaders of Muslim nations, if he becomes President, to discuss the war on terror and what these nations could do about it.

### **Can Muslim countries in the Middle East survive Islamism?**

One thoughtful questioner speculated whether Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan would recognize Israel as an ally in the region, particularly, against the threats from Iran. In response, I asked her and others in the audience to remember what happened at the Annapolis conference last year. The Saudis and other members of the Arab League wouldn't walk through the same entrance as the Israeli delegation, let alone shake hands. I noted that these Sunni autocratic allies of America may not survive in the next few decades. I pointed out the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, where they constitute the largest minority party. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan might not survive given the threats and attacks of al Qaeda and Salafi Islamists in recent years and the presence of a largely restive Palestinian population. In Saudi Arabia, with the possible drying up of the lake of oil along the Persian Gulf by mid Century, I suggested that the Royal Family would have too many relatives to squabble over dividends from trillions of investments. Al Qaeda and strict Wahhabi clerics may very well topple the Kingdom and turn it into a Sunni Islamic republic.

### **The Fastest Growing religion in our Prisons and its Consequences**

Another questioner, who indicated he was a professional correctional systems officer, discussed his experience of observing Muslim Imam Chaplains converting largely Afro American felons to the Muslim faith and questioned why tax payers support this. Amen to that I said. I asked the audience if they knew where these former felons went after their parole? I noted that many found their way into the web of over 45 para-military camps across the US. These are sponsored by the terrorist group Jaamat ul Fuqra controlled by Pakistani extremist Imam, Sheik Galani. The late Wall Street Journalist, Danny Pearl was on his way to interview, Galani, when he was abducted and slaughtered for being a Jew.

## **Mosques in our Midst**

Another audience member raised the matter of seven Mosques in Palm Beach County, one currently in completion in Boca Raton. He asked, "Did we know what was going on in them?" I referenced the work of Nina Shea both at Freedom House and now at the Hudson Institute in Washington, DC on the hate filled Saudi texts. I drew attention to her call for investigation of text books at the Saudi Islamic Academy in McLean, Virginia allegedly affiliated with the Saudi Embassy in Washington, DC. Shea as a member of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom had gone to Saudi Arabia to question the Education Minister on these Saudi hate filled texts, only to be denied discussions because she was a woman. I noted most American Mosques were built with Saudi funds and stocked with Saudi Wahhabi texts. I indicated that American Congress for Truth (ACT) and allied groups had talented translators, who may be able to expose what is contained in texts used by the Boca Raton and South Florida Mosques.

## **Where is American Jewish leadership on Muslim Extremism?**

Another audience member who was active in the movement to free Soviet Jews over 30 years ago noted that American Rabbis and community leaders were in the vanguard of that successful effort. She asked where were the Rabbis and American Jewish leaders now given the threat of Islamic anti-Semitism and extremism portrayed in the SWC film, "Ever Again". I asked the audience by a show of hands how many members of the Reform Movement were. A number of hands were raised. I then asked if they knew who is the head of the Reform Movement? (Rabbi Eric Yoffie) This time only a few hands were raised. I told them of my experience meeting Rabbi Yoffie after giving a speech defending Israel's security barrier at the Lutheran Church annual meeting in August 2005 in Orlando. I was there with a group of activists endeavoring to water down and defeat anti-Israel resolutions fostered by Lutheran Middle East clerics. We partially succeeded in that effort. That was then. I noted that last fall Rabbi Yoffie showed up at the annual meeting of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) defending Muslims against critics. The problem is that the ISNA, CAIR and more recently the Muslim American Society (MAS) have been identified as co-conspirators by Federal Prosecutors in the Dallas Federal Holy Land Foundation trial accused of funneling \$12 million in charitable funds to the terrorist group Hamas. I asked the FAU audience why Rabbi Yoffie, and many American Jewish leaders, were coming to the defense of such Muslim advocacy groups, when those groups rejected Jews and Israel. I suggested it was the obsessive PCness and the penchant for 'dialogue' that caused these Rabbis and Jewish community leaders to persist in their delusion and denial. This is a view that eminent holocaust scholar, distinguished comparative religions professor and university president, Dr. Richard L. Rubenstein has expressed. This criticism clearly does not apply to the Simon Wiesenthal Center. They had gotten the message and are doing something about it by producing important films like "Ever Again".

## **Islamist Intimidation of Free Speech and Infiltration in our Government.**

There was a question raised by an audience member about the assault on 'free speech' by Islamists here in the US. The issue was triggered by radio talk show host Michael Savage's legal action against the Council of American Islamic Relations (CAIR) for the latter's invasion of his free speech rights and secondary boycott against his nationally syndicated radio program advertisers. That allowed me to discuss two egregious examples of abuse of free speech rights. The first was the Islamic Society of Boston (ISB) case against the David Project, Steven Emerson of the Investigative Project on Terrorism, Fox News cable outlet WFXT and the Boston Herald American. The ISB had hired a prominent Boston litigator, Howard Cooper, to bring defamation actions against these defendants who alleged that a giant Mosque being built on land formerly owned by the City in the Roxbury section of Boston was being funded by terror financiers from the Middle East. That defamation effort by the ISB eventually fell apart, when the ISB realized it had adverse exposure. The defense cost hundreds of thousands of dollars triggered by the ISB action in the Massachusetts state courts. The second case was the matter brought by CAIR in the Commonwealth of Virginia courts against a fellow blogger Andy Whitehead of Anti-CAIR. That case died when the able counsel for Whitehead forced CAIR to withdraw the case. CAIR and other Muslim Brotherhood front groups persist in bringing defamation actions in the US.

I also drew attention to the recent kerfuffle surrounding Stephen Coughlin, the lone Pentagon Islamic Law and Jihad Military doctrine specialist. Coughlin was called a "Christian fanatic with a pen" by a Muslim Outreach aide to Deputy Defense Secretary England, Heshem Islam. Mr. Islam and others had facilitated entry of Wahhabi Muslims as Military Chaplains, for example Navy Lt. Cmdr. Saifislam, whose name in Arabic meant "sword of Islam".

Concerns about infiltration by Muslim Brotherhood front groups extend to our Congress. I pointed out that Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-OH), a former Presidential hopeful, has on his staff in DC, Ms. Noura Erekat, the American niece of Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat. Ms. Erekat was formerly a principal in the US Campaign Against the [Israeli] Occupation. Rep. Joseph Sestak (D-PA), a retired Navy Vice Admiral, who represents a suburban Philadelphia district, has a former CAIR staffer in his district office.

### **What do we do about it?**

Another questioner asked what can we do and what action steps should we take to combat the threat of radical Islamic extremism? Obviously support for campus and general audience outreach by the Simon Wiesenthal Center is one means. Before the presentation a couple approached me about their recent visit to the Museum of Tolerance of the SWC in Los Angeles. They were impressed by what they saw and what the SWC was doing both here in the US and abroad. Clearly, support of SWC programs is one means of trying to combat Islamist anti-Semitism.

I also suggested visiting the American Congress for Truth (ACT) website. When I informed them that ACT had been founded by my colleague Brigitte Gabriel, a victim of Jihad in Civil War torn

Lebanon who was rescued by Israelis, a smile of recognition flickered across the faces of audience members who had heard her speak in South Florida. I explained the growing membership both in North America and abroad, and the mission of ACT to combat radical Islamic extremism. Given the connection to the missionary efforts of Dr. Phares at FAU, perhaps many of them might become ACT members, as well as supporters of the SWC.

### **What do we do about our grand children?**

After the Q+A a clutch of audience members hung on for a series of exchanges. One thoughtful grandmother noted that there were few students at the showing of "Ever Again". The reality according to FAU program coordinator Porges was conflicts in academic schedules at the start of the spring semester at FAU. During the Q+A I had referenced the David project founded by Dr. Charles Jacobs in Boston. The David project mission is to train young people who might become future advocates for Israel and leaders in the Jewish community. As of last fall, given a David project presentation that I saw in Connecticut, the program had completed training several hundred young people, mainly in Colleges and Universities, with doubtless more candidates to come.

I told them of one such David project 'graduate' who made a difference during his undergraduate days at Yale University. He is now an assistant editor at *The New Republic* (TNR), Jamie Kirchick. Kirchick was in the first 'class' of David project trainees. I met Kirchick when he was a freshman at Yale's Pierson College during a presentation by Bat Ye'or and we kept up the connection at various Yale 'activist' events during his four years in New Haven. Kirchick is currently assisting in the 'birthing' of a new book on Zionism with TNR publisher, Martin Peretz. I noted to this grandmother and others in the small group that perhaps Kirchick's undergraduate career as a journalist on the *Yale Daily News* had burnished his communication skills and his fearless ability to speak out on anti-American, anti-Semitic and anti-Israel issues in a combative collegiate environment. I also said, it seems to me that we have to start earlier in exposing young Jewish children to their Zionist heritage. The likely venues for that are religious schools, after school Jewish youth groups and Jewish youth camping experiences. As the grandmother and I commiserated about grand children, we said that in addition to socializing with bunk mates and learning to swim, play tennis, softball and hold color war competitions, perhaps a dose of Zionist heritage and the importance of Israel might be added to the mix. These summer camp programs might be a screening mechanism for selecting candidates for the David project advocacy programs and others like it.

The FAU presentation of "Ever Again" and the Q+A that followed it may have brought about a new awareness of the threats of Islamic anti-Semitism both here and abroad. It also may have stimulated thoughts on how to better inform both young people and adults to combat it. The event prompted me to write this, a credit to the audience who attended the FAU presentation of "Ever Again".