



On The Misattribution of 'Anti-Semitism'

A BRIEF NOTE ON INVECTIVE AGAINST HUMANISTS LEVELED BY APOLOGISTS FOR REVISIONIST ZIONISM

THESIS:

Anti-Semitism is a horrible thing, and must be taken seriously whenever it is encountered—as must all forms of racism. Those who accuse humanists of being anti-Semitic (essentially, for the “crime” of criticizing a particular kind of anti-humanist activity) do a grave disservice to the effort to combat racism. For when certain forms of anti-racism are painted as a crime, the focus is misdirected, and actual racism is lost in the mix. Mis-use of a term only serves to vitiate the term. Moreover, abuse of contentious terms may indicate a case of projection.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS:

Exhibitions of false pride take many forms. Indeed, all groups are susceptible to the trappings of tribalism, and often succumb to the temptation to posit divine Providence (in their own favor). In doing so, a group ascribes to itself a uniquely privileged status. The result is to indulge in a dubiously-grounded exceptionalism. None of us is immune to such temptations, as we all associate ourselves with some kind of group, and so we must all constantly check ourselves.

Critical reflection is the only means at our disposal to address these unfortunate proclivities—as they often operate subconsciously within even the most well-meaning person. The allure of tribalism is always afoot. It's easy to see the dysfunction of tribalism when it's the other guy doing it. Recognizing the wrong-headedness of one's own tribalism is far more difficult. Tribalism is self-justifying. Consequently, it is easy to become seduced by one's own self-righteousness.

Alas, there exist some who depict criticism of a group's ideas / actions / policies as an attack on that group's race—whatever it may be. This non-sequitor is, of course, absurd; yet it is often allowed to persist without being challenged. The irony is that

many false accusations of racism are themselves indications of deep-seated racism. After all, only a racist could castigate a human rights activist for (allegedly) being racist—and keep a straight face while doing so.

It is sometimes deemed heresy to point this out.

One can't help but wonder, though: What's not to like about Humanitarian Zionism?

A lot, apparently, if one is a Revisionist Zionist.

ANALYSIS:

Every racist stance has its mirror-image. (Anti-Semitism has anti-goyimism, and vice versa.) Racism of group A against B entails the possible existence of racism of group B against A. It is racist to only recognize the existence of one without the other. Anything short of denouncing both is, therefore, unacceptable to the humanist, who values all humans—regardless of tribal affiliation. Put another way: Unilateral anti-racism is itself a form of racism.

The key point to understand, then, is that—no matter what the conflict—neither A nor B is uniquely exempt from this logic. It is the recognition of the categorical moral symmetry (which exists independently of circumstance and racial identity) that enables one to recognize any actual asymmetric culpability involved in a dispute. “Racism”, then, could be accurately defined as the wanton denial of that categorical moral symmetry. (Culpability, while independent of racial identity, is a function of circumstance. Circumstance consists of power asymmetries, the degree of transgression, the nature of behavior, etc.) The impartial assessment of all parties involved in a conflict, then, proceeds regardless of whether the party is associated with A or B. In this sense, racism can be seen as a form of hypocrisy.

RZ is one of the most flagrant culprits of this hypocrisy. For, in the Israel-Palestine conflict, RZ takes into account the racial identity of A and B when assessing culpability. That is to say, in RZ eyes, racism is unilateral in nature. When Aryan supremacy is (rightfully) denounced by RZ, humanists are at the forefront of the denunciation. Yet when that denunciation is done in the name of Jewish supremacy, humanists need not hesitate to bring the glaring hypocrisy to everyone's attention. Alas, when the humanist does this, the RZ calls “foul”. Humanists have too often kow-towed when they've been accused of “anti-Semitism” by RZ apologists. Enough's enough.

To ignore the categorical moral symmetry that exists between any two groups entails the obfuscation of actual culpabilities in a conflict. Such obfuscation mustn't be tolerated. Too often, we tolerate it simply because we've been intimidated by the egregious misuse of derogatory labels. This kind of fraudulent taxonomy has prevented humanists from elucidating the culpability in certain conflicts.

Unsurprisingly, such prevention is precisely what RZ is aiming for.

Just as no race is uniquely entitled to anything, no group (be it defined by race or by shoe size) is to be quarantined from the race-blind process of sound critical inquiry. Those who misuse the indictment of racism on critics often do so because they demand such quarantine for themselves. Whenever we encounter this maneuver, we should recoil with opprobrium. At best, the misattribution of anti-Semitism is counterproductive. It is therefore the responsibility of all honest people to discourage such misattribution.

Alas, those who are most culpable in the misdeeds of a conflict will engage in whatever feats of rhetorical acrobatics necessary to sabotage any civil discourse that threatens to bring their culpability to light. Hence, obstinate accusations of "anti-Semitism" are leveled against anyone who has the audacity to insinuate that the IG has the monopoly on transgression in the Israel-Palestine conflict. In short, such conclusions have become a form of heresy.

The phenomenon is nothing new: We've seen examples of this deranged imputation by apologists for racist regimes throughout modern history. It's always the other guy who's being despicable, never themselves. How does this work? Simple: "WE are—by definition—right; THEY are—by definition—wrong. Period. Ergo, if anyone is racist, it can't possibly be us. Q.E.D." When searching for an enticing-sounding casus belli to rationalize an otherwise despicable agenda, this is often the routine. (Meanwhile, couching those rationalizations in paeans to "god's will" or appeals to "divine right" or some other such balderdash is common practice for candy-coating one's own iniquity.) Racists on BOTH sides of the Israel-Palestine conflict are guilty of this atrocious gimmick. Self-righteousness knows no tribal limits.

The only conclusion sober-minded people can derive from such peculiar rhetoric is that the person is either profoundly deluded by his own ideological mindset or stupendously confused by his own cognitive dissonance. Either way, clarification of the issue is presently in order.

DIAGNOSIS:



Why do people do this? Basic psychology offers a plausible explanation. Accusing one's critics of racism promptly makes one feel better about one's own position. Instead of pointing to any flaws in the critic's reasoning, one need simply assert: "He's guilty of crime X. That's the only reason he's criticizing my agenda. Therefore his criticism doesn't count (and I can remain smug about my own views)." With RZ, X = anti-Semitism.

X has been many things, depending on which mode of vilification suits the debate.

We see this maneuver with national chauvinists here in the U.S.: "They're just anti-American. So WE must be in the right." We see this maneuver with free market fundamentalists: "They're just socialists. So WE must be in the right." The maneuver requires no sound argument, just the assertion. One can easily validate one's own position simply by claiming critics are only critics because they are guilty of X. Accuse critics of "just being X", and one can summarily dismiss all their criticism—regardless of its merit—without worrying about addressing the cogency of their argument. Whether X = anti-American or socialist or heretic or heathen or anti-Semite, the formula remains the same: Discredit those who disagree with us by labeling them. The label creates the desired perception of Reality.

Even as RZ ideologues sanctimoniously recite their tired, old catechism, every coveted rhetorical flourish must be exposed to the light of day...especially those involving the playing of the hallowed "anti-Semitism" card...a card that, when played, seems to preclude the need for actual evidence. RZ has found its X (a loaded term if there ever was one) and wields it instead of illustrating how its critics' reasoning might be flawed. (When one's critics' reasoning isn't flawed, this seems to be the only remaining option.)

We should all remind ourselves: By abusing the term, "anti-Semitic", one only succeeds in neutering the term. There is real anti-Semitism in the world that—like all other forms of racism—must be decisively identified and addressed. But by misusing the indictment, one undermines the ability of the rest of us to accomplish this important task. Any misuse of the indictment, then, should be called out for what it is: its own form of racism.

Humanists indict the IG for its crimes against humanity because they are humanists and the IG's policies are anti-humanistic. Whether the perpetrator is orange, green or purple, a crime against humanity is a crime against humanity. The logic here couldn't possibly be more straight-forward. To pretend that such an indictment is somehow a function of race, then, is to engage in a blatant mischaracterization.

Alas, Revisionist Zionists have every incentive to ensure people don't notice the humanists' air-tight logic, simply because they don't want their own racism to be exposed.(We saw the same brazen maneuver with defenders of the Apartheid regime in South Africa: whites who criticized it were called "self-hating whites".) It rarely occurs to the RZ apologist that a humanitarian may criticize the IG because the IG is doing something morally reprehensible.

When one doesn't have Reality on one's side, standard operating procedure for defusing criticism is to vilify one's critics...and pray that the distorted portrayal of the critic persuades everyone else to dismiss the criticism.Tragically, such ad hominem attacks often prove effective.Those who can't argue against the merits of the criticism leveled against them typically resort to this underhanded tactic.

What Revisionist Zionists don't understand about criticism of IG policy in the Palestinian Territories is quite simple: If French Canadians from Quebec were doing to WASPS in Ontario what the RZ does to Palestinians, the criticism would be exactly the same.What then? Perhaps the French Canadians would plead some kind of hidden prejudice against French Catholics.

In their more desperate moments, Revisionist Zionists resort to jaundiced invective in an attempt to disguise their own bigotry."If you disagree with me, you must be racist."This is a maneuver typically employed by racists.When an RZ accuses a humanist of anti-Semitism, it is analogous to a KKK member accusing critics of the Klan of "just being racist against WASPs".Of course, no sane person would accept the accusation that critics of the Klan were anti-white (by dint of their anti-KKK stance)."If you criticize the IG's policies, then you're just being anti-Semitic" is preposterous for the exact same reason.

Valid or invalid, one can coherently criticize vegans for abstaining from eating meat.However, to criticize vegans for their carnivorous diet would be not merely invalid; it would be incoherent.Thus, it's one thing to disapprove of humanists for being humanists.It's quite another to denigrate them for being something of which they are the antithesis.The point of coherent criticism is to criticize a movement for being what it actually is.Meanwhile, we must denounce those who castigate a movement for being something that it is clearly not.One may just as well berate a vegetarian for eating meat as accuse a humanist of being racist.

CONCLUSION:

Due to the fact that Humanitarian Zionism will tend to thwart the racist agenda of many hidebound ideologues, it will be misrepresented and demonized by those very hidebound ideologues. That HZ is, by definition, the antithesis of racism won't stop racists from calling it "racist". Revisionist Zionists will do so in an attempt to vilify something they'd wish would just go away. **It is important to recognize that a false accusation of racism is its own form of bigotry.**

Racists have often been known to accuse those who indict them for racism of themselves being the "real" racists. With RZ, this is nothing new. Psychologists call this perverse psychological contortion, "reaction formation". The arsonist accuses the fire department of trying to burn down the house...while declaring himself the true firefighter. To call Humanitarian Zionism "anti-Semitic" is to reveal oneself to be a racist; for only a racist would call anti-racism itself a form of racism. Indeed, there is an ideology that DOES make the Israel-Palestine issue all about race; it's called Revisionist Zionism.

To tell the person who's loudly and explicitly saying, "Let's stop making this about race" that he's "just making this all about race" is rather silly...especially when one looks in the mirror and sees that it's he who has based his stance on demarcations of racial supremacy / inferiority. Alas, bigotry doesn't like mirrors; it much prefers projection.

In the wake of mature civil discourse, "You're just anti-Semitic," is often the only rejoinder remaining in the RZ's rhetorical arsenal. For the humanist, the only practical response to this vulgar accusation is: "Ok. Fine, then. Define 'racism'. Now let's each state our ideals. Then let's see who qualifies and who doesn't." Until we agree on definitions, all debates are pointless.

Which is based on "racism", RZ or HZ? Using any reasonable definition of "racism", the answer is quite obvious. It's similar to ascertaining who tends to eat more meat, carnivores or vegetarians. We need only look at what a genuine carnivore actually does that makes him a "carnivore"; and look at what a genuine vegetarian actually does that makes him a "vegetarian". Thus, it is the guy who proclaims he's a vegetarian while eating a cheeseburger that will be exposed as a fraud. Who's the real racist, then? Once we scrutinize deeds, not just lip-service, and respect the true meaning of the words coming out of our mouths, the verdict is as plain as day.