

Globalising hatred: the new antisemitism, by Denis MacShane, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2008, 208 pp., \$19.95 (hardback), ISBN 0753823098

MacShane's book on 'new antisemitism' is both a deeply factual and compelling account of how antisemitism has persisted but mutated over the centuries in which it has existed. In the introductory chapter, the author highlights some of seemingly isolated acts of antisemitism, focussing mainly on those perpetrated in Paris in recent years, but also points to the lack of willingness for citizens and institutions to engage in open debate about the rising tide of antisemitism. More specifically, the notion of 'freedom of speech' is often invoked – by universities and other institutions – to counteract claims that antisemitism is being encouraged and promoted on university campuses. As the author notes, this buzzword often silences debate and allows antisemitism to persist. MacShane correctly observes that much of this rhetoric stems from the fact that antisemitism and anti-Zionism have become conflated in public and political thinking and that antisemitism that is *framed* in terms of anti-Zionism has somehow come to be viewed as a political position, rather than as a means of manifesting age-old antisemitism. This also contributes to its growing social acceptability in societies and among individuals who would claim to oppose racism and xenophobia.

One of the particularly commendable aspects of MacShane's book – and there are several – is his attention to highly controversial and sensitive areas of the debate on new antisemitism. In the book, he carefully discusses the case of antisemitic parliamentarians, growing antisemitism on British university campuses, antisemitism and anti-Zionism (which are often purported to constitute completely delineable positions) and the manifestation of antisemitism among Muslims, many of whom may be socialised to believe that this is acceptable. Having studied the social psychological aspects of antisemitism myself, I found the content and focus of MacShane's book highly insightful and appropriate for examining the manifestation of antisemitism in the 21st century. What has become clear from my own engagement with this area of enquiry is that when there is support for prejudice at multiple levels (institutional, social and individual), it will thrive. This book provides a clear analysis of all of these levels, with particular foci on the institutional and social dimensions.

In his discussion of antisemitic parliamentarians, MacShane provides insight into the vicissitudes of antisemitism in British (and European) politics. He describes the antisemitic diatribes of both far-right politicians such as Nick Griffin, from whom they might well be expected, *and* left-wing politicians such as the former London Mayor Ken Livingston, who infamously told a Jewish *Evening Standard* journalist that he looked like a Nazi concentration camp guard. The book shows how individuals at distinct ends of the political spectrum often converge in their overt demonization of Jews and Israel. Moving from the institutional level (the world of politics) to the social level, MacShane elegantly synthesises academic theory/research and real-world examples of antisemitism around the world to demonstrate both the pervasiveness and growing social acceptability of antisemitism. While many readers will be fully aware of aspects of long-standing antisemitism in Western Europe, the case of Japanese antisemitism will be comparably less familiar to readers. MacShane's brief discussion of the Japanese context demonstrates how ideas (and in this case antisemitic ideas) are rapidly globalised and appropriated in new contexts in order to serve particular social functions (e.g. scapegoating). Crucially, this book connects historical antisemitism with what the author refers to as "neo-antisemitism" and shows that long-standing antisemitic "stimuli" such as the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* can be resurrected and popularised in order to target the Jewish State, rather than the Jewish people.

The book includes a chapter on British university campuses as "breeding grounds" for antisemitism. While MacShane describes several ways in which universities have been contexts in which antisemitism is openly manifested and in which Jewish students are

consequently made to feel excluded and, in some cases, unsafe, the reasons underpinning the proliferation of antisemitism on the campus are only peripherally explored. It seems to me that the notion of 'freedom of speech' is increasingly misused in many university contexts, which can give rise to an "anything goes" attitude, provided that potentially antisemitic views are presented under the guise of "balanced debate". Furthermore, as MacShane correctly observes, some pro-Palestinian societies and Muslim societies have decided to invite speakers, who are known to hold antisemitic and other extremist views, to university campuses, effectively providing them with a platform for voicing their antisemitic views. It may be difficult to challenge these groups about their decisions given the political and social sensitivities underpinning minority identities/ rights. Political correctness, itself a means of protecting identities, can sometimes lead to our own ignorance of how some identities are actually being threatened. I felt that MacShane's discussion in that chapter provided a good opportunity to remind us of our collective rights to feel safe and included on university campuses (and elsewhere) and our collective duty to speak out against overt bigotry and demonization.

This book presents irrefutable evidence of the growing threat of antisemitism – the innumerable cases of antisemitic attacks on Jews in chapter 4 attests to this threat. MacShane also demonstrates the perhaps subtler ways of manifesting antisemitism through the use of particular linguistic and visual representations. For instance, the terms 'Zionist' and 'Zionism' appear to have replaced the terms 'Jew' and 'Judaism' in many contexts, but the broader representations, tropes and stereotypes that are drawn upon are often reminiscent of the era of overt antisemitism. Furthermore, terms such as 'apartheid' are frequently used to provide a lens for viewing and evaluating Israel, despite the highly problematic nature of this analogy. MacShane rightly acknowledges the power of visual imagery in contributing to the demonization of Israel and, often, of Jews. The depiction of Israeli politicians in Nazi uniforms, for instance, not only delegitimizes Israelis but it is also deeply insensitive and offensive for Jews in view of the horrors of the Holocaust. In both language and image, more established tropes and stereotypes, such as those that reinforce the notion that there is a global Jewish conspiracy, are mobilised in order to denigrate the Jewish people, but given the focus on Israel many of these tropes and stereotypes escape the attention and concern of those usually committed to anti-racism.

In his book, MacShane refers to antisemitism as a "light sleeper" which can awaken at any point even after periods of relatively positive intergroup relations. History itself demonstrates the accuracy of this metaphor. Yet, MacShane also highlights the many possibilities of challenging and defeating antisemitism, provided that we view this as an offshoot of racism and xenophobia which would be condemned by any other reasonable, freedom-loving individual. The book makes the accurate observation that Israel is consistently scapegoated in much the same way that Jews have historically been scapegoated for the failings and shortcomings of groups and societies. In his book, MacShane elucidates the power of language, rhetoric and imagery in fanning the flames of antisemitism, as well as the ease with which this is uncritically accepted by masses of people if the conditions allow this to happen. I felt that the author could have considered more rigorously the role of identities in sustaining antisemitism and how we might as a society collectively work towards separating antisemitism from particular group identities. In my own work, many of my interviewees have told me that "as a leftist" or "as a Muslim" they cannot accept the existence of Israel. It seems to me that antisemitism (and, in my view, its variant – anti-Zionism) has become so inextricably entwined with particular group identities, in the minds of group members, that some people perceive any acceptance of Israel as coterminous with disloyalty to their groups. By acknowledging this, we may be able to develop some pathways to a more harmonious society in which antisemitism plays no part.

Overall, *Globalising Hatred: The New Antisemitism* offers a frank and compelling account of antisemitism and its offshoots in the modern world and explores the dangers of allowing antisemitism to flourish in the very contexts that are supposed to be committed to educating and unifying members of society, such as university campuses. The problem of antisemitism must be addressed and MacShane's book is a good attempt to do so.

Rusi Jaspal
De Montfort University Leicester