

Transcript of the 8th Annual Daniel Pearl Memorial Lecture

By Christopher Hitchens

March 3, 2010 - UCLA

I can't tell you how much of an honor it was for me to be asked by the Pearl family to do this, and I want to say to them how many people said to me when they heard or read that I was coming things that made it plain how they regarded the loss of your son as personal.

Whether they were Jewish or not, whether they were Americans or not, whether they were interested in the first amendment or whether they were journalists or not, there was something about the manner of his passing that will always remain with us. If I lived in an uncivilized society, today could have been for me a kind of martyr's day. I was just taken by some very courteous and gallant young cadets to see the Veteran's Memorial on the other side of this campus, where is commemorated second lieutenant Mark Daly, a young man who gave his life in Kurdistan a few years ago for the liberation of Iraq, and wrote very movingly to me about it and his service, and a man who I was hoping to meet and his family. I'm very pleased now to count as I now with great pride claim the Pearls as if not family very close friends, and I thought to myself after I go to this memorial I have to go and speak for Danny, but justice at Mark's scattering of his ashes, there will be today no ululations, no wailings, no shooting in the air, no tossing of the coffin on the shoulders of a mob, no hoarse, brutal cries for revenge and suicide and murder. No, we won't have that. Instead, we'll have honest, decent, modest, brave people trying to deal with their grief and trying to apply reason to the crises that led to their deprivation, and I think that marks if you like part of the boundary between civilization and barbarism that this lecture is designed to patrol and I would say enforce.

At the scattering of Mark's ashes down a beautiful coastal spot in Oregon, I quoted from the last scene of Macbeth, and I think I can do it again—I had difficulty doing it that time—where, as you'll recall, the tyrant is gone, the tyranny and the usurpation is over, but Old Sewird doesn't know it yet but he's lost his son in the struggle, and I believe it's Macduff who has to say to him the following, and I'll address it to the Pearls:

Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt:

He only lived but till he was a man;

The which no sooner had his prowess confirmed

In the unshrinking station where he stood,

But like a man he died.

And that's hard enough to get through, believe me, but it's Shakespeare so it isn't for the next beat or so that you get it all. And Macduff adds:

Your cause of grief

Must not be measured by his worth, for then

It hath no end.

That's the best tribute I can offer you, and I'm very acutely aware of my own debt to a finer register of the notion. Now, one more thing. This campus is where my in-laws met, one from Odessa, one from Galicia, and married. As you heard, I was late in discovering some occluded parts of my heritage and I once wrote that anyone who wanted to defame the Jewish people would if they were doing so be defaming my wife, my mother, my mother and father-in-law, and my daughter. So I thought I didn't really have to say anything for myself, but I did add that in whatever turn of voice the question was put to me, whether it was friendly or hostile, was I Jewish I would always answer yes. The denial in my family would end with me. But of course there was the most acute possible test of that question. Faced by young Daniel Pearl in the most appalling circumstances, and again I pause to remember how proudly and how bravely and how nobly he refused any sort of refuge in denial, again setting a standard of a Shakespearian kind it's very hard for me to approach without a feeling of the want of proportion.

I've never done this before, ladies and gentlemen, in my entire lecturing career, a dog and pony show trick of a visual aid, but I'm now going to ask if the comrades up there could cue a little clip that I want to share with you. Cue clip.

[Begin video clip]

SAM RUBIN: All right, we will get to the Mark Kriski on Jay Leno tape properly in a second, but we begin this morning... Mark's like "Why isn't it the first thing?"... with an unusual experience I had Friday involving the newly returning to the screen Mel Gibson. Now, the last time we spoke at any length about Mel Gibson, it was all bad. The summer of 2006, you recall, Gibson was arrested for drunk driving, and reportedly during that arrest went on a slur-filled anti-Semitic tirade. That was then. This is now. Gibson's arrest has been expunged from his records. He completed three years of probation, paid a fine, and attended mandatory Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. He has a new movie, *Edge of Darkness*, that opens later this month. He stars opposite the actor Ray Winston in the thriller. As you might recall, Ray, who is sitting next to Mel during the interview you're about to see, was in the studio with us last Thursday. We all exchanged pleasantries and, well, then things got less pleasant.

SR: You told me this has been your first film for how long?

Mel GIBSON: What, seven years, eight years? Seven or eight years. Starring, to be in front of the camera. I chose to sort of walk away about eight years ago because I felt I was getting a bit stale, and I came back with this because I just felt it was time to get back in the saddle. Enough time had gone by, and honestly it was the best piece of writing I'd seen.

SR: Some people are going to welcome you back, and other people are going to be like, he should never come back.

MG: Why?

SR: Because of what happened before.

MG: What happened before?

SR: The remarks that were attributed to you.

MG: That were attributed to me, that I didn't necessarily make.

SR: Mm-hmm.

MG: Okay. But, and I gather you have a dog in this fight.

SR: Pardon me?

MG: You have a dog in this fight? Or are you being impartial.

SR: I'm trying to be impartial, I guess.

MG: Okay. Well, I went back, and I hope it works out, and I hope people will graciously accept me back.

SR: So when I left that interview I was mad at myself, first, to be honest, because I simply didn't initially understand what he meant when he said, "You have a dog in this fight." And then a few seconds later when I did understand I didn't speak up and say that as both a Jew and a human being I was really offended by what he said in 2006, and while there have been plenty of reports of private apologies and making amends, it never really seemed to me that he apologized, nor as he did when we spoke, did it seem that Gibson contested the remarks, like he didn't actually say them. So frankly, I'm still conflicted, and I should have told him. Audiences, of course, will vote with their wallets and their feet when the movie opens at the end of the month.

NEWSCASTER: Yeah, being defensive is not the best way to handle things sometimes.

SR: I guess not.

NEWSCASTER: You know what, though? When you sat in front of him, what you didn't say said more I think.

[End video clip]

HITCHENS:

All right, now I think from that sordid little showbiz microcosm, I can derive a little introduction to what I want to say further. Notice first the look of chubby woe on the face of the interviewer, sharing his grief with his friends, and saying, "You know what? For a while back there, I could almost believe he was calling me a Jew boy." And then saying, "Perhaps he did already say those things." Look at Mel Gibson's eyes. Look at that face. Look at the way he leans in. You're looking straight into the gun barrel of what I'm talking about, and you observe another thing; it's quite clearly in his case a matter of a mental disorder—it's a pathology, and it must mean a lot to him. I mean, clinicians will tell you, those who study schizophrenia and paranoia, that anti-Semitism very often presents as a very leading symptoms of this kind of crack up. But I don't think that's it either with Mel Gibson, or not entirely. And I certainly don't think it was the booze. I can say that if whiskey made you anti-Jewish, the Pearl family would not have invited me to address them. What none of the questioners have ever asked Mel Gibson is what are the origins of your furious, fanatical, decided hatred of the Jewish people. It would be very easy if he was asked to press him on this. He is a member of a Catholic schismatic faction, which has its own church paid for by him in Malibu, as good a place as any for the selling of souls, I dare say. And the guru and priest of this church is his father Hutton Gibson, a mad idiot savant whose books I have carefully read, and of whom Mel Gibson says that he's never known this man to speak an untruth. Well, very well. Let me rephrase what Hutton Gibson said about Joseph Ratzinger when he was a cardinal. He was obliged to write one of those letters the Vatican occasionally has to produce making nice with the Jews. And he said—well, he did his best, barbarian bureaucrat—it's a pity that the Jews don't share in our love of Christ and our feeling of the savior and that they're excluded from his love and so forth, but we can say that they brought us monotheism and to this extent could be counted as standing in relationship to us rather as an elder brother. Not great, a bit patronizing, but the Catholic Church has said many worse things. Hutton Gibson's comment on this in his book? "Oh yes," he said, "Abel had an elder brother." I think we know, in other words, what we're talking about here.

You only have to look at Mel Gibson's film, widely distributed, in a town where he must care about being an anti-Semite, because you would think no one working in Los Angeles or Hollywood would make like that if they didn't really believe it, and I think he must do, where, very controversial scene in the film, only one verse in one of the four gospels in the

New Testament, the _____ publically for the blood of Jesus to be on their heads down to the last generation. It's one of the first versions of the blood libel. After protests, it was cut out—not cut out; the scene is in the film, and it's spoken in either Hebrew or Aramaic—but when the film was distributed in the Middle East, the subtitles were put back in, and it's the only such film ever to have been distributed in the Arab Muslim world, because normally, as you know, prophets, of whom Jesus is counted as one, can't be shown on the screen, so the Arabs never got to see King of Kings—lucky them—or The Greatest Story Ever Told, or I think even Ben Hur. But Mel Gibson they made an exception for. Can you guess why? I think you quite probably can.

So there's a little microcosm just down the road from where we are met, and it puts me in mind of the closing staves of Albert Camus' novel *La Peste*, *The Plague*, where Dr. Tarrou is thinking about how the people celebrating the plague seems to have gone. They've survived it—it was terrible, but people think it's been banished. He says, but the rats are still down there in the sewers brooding, and the plague is still down there with them, and that plague will one day again send up its rats to die once more on the streets of a free city. And I remember the closing passage of Bertolt Brecht's _____ where the leading actor stands forward at the end after Hitler's gone and the stage darkens and the spotlight's on him, and he says, "This was the thing that nearly had us mastered, but do not think that that is all, you men, for though we rose up and we beat the bastard, the bitch that bore him is in heat again."

And no one who pays any attention to the news from the Muslim ghettos in Europe, to the proclamations in the Middle East, to the pronouncements of the Russian Orthodox church, now the black cowed body guard of Putin's new Russian nationalist authoritarianism—question: is Russian nationalist authoritarianism ever good for the Jews?—to Ratzinger himself, now Pope, restoring to the ranks the formerly excommunicated members of the Society of Pope Pius, the anti-Semites, the Holocaust deniers, the people who believed the Church should never have said that Jews were not collectively guilty for the murder of Christ... it's all coming back, and needs to be confronted. It's a very bitch I'm saying anti-Semitism. This plague is very protean and very durable and very volatile. It appears in all ages and in practically all societies. The only one I know where the Jewish people have not been persecuted is India. Just as you think it's been eradicated, up it pops again, surges. It's exploded with or without the existence of the state of Israel, with or without Zionism, with or without finance capitalism, for which Jews were blamed, and with or without communism, for which, amazingly, Jews were simultaneously blamed—and, of course, in parts of _____ and elsewhere, with or without any Jews at all. There were outbreaks of pernicious anti-Semitism. In other words, it's quite different from other forms of racism.

You sometimes read liberal proclamations against racism and anti-Semitism as if they were distinct. Well, I don't think they are distinct in the sense that's implied by that, but I believe that anti-Semitism is rather the mother of all, perhaps to better say the godfather, of all

other kinds of racism. It is somewhat like a version of mental illness as I mentioned above and as Mr. Gibson handsomely illustrates. It's also quite like a conspiracy theory. It has a great appeal to pseudo-intellectuals and the partially educated. It talks about blood and gold and secret documents and forgotten protocols. Nobody accuses West Indians or Puerto Ricans of trying to take over the world's financial system, nor will ordinary, everyday common old garden racism is just that—vulgar, usually based on a sexual repulsion, complaints about different kinds of cooking, overbreeding, who knows what. But the protocols are not like that at all. The protocols of Elders of Zion, which I have a private campaign about—the campaign is simply this: don't ever call it a forgery. Why not? A forgery is a copy of a true bill. The Protocols of the Elders of Zion is not a forgery. There's no true bill of which it's a copy. It's a whole cloth fabrication by Russian orthodox fascists, that is rather brilliantly based on a dialog between Montesquieu and Machiavelli in Hell about how to debauch a state. It's nothing at all to do with Zionism. Fabricated by Russian Orthodox, reprinted in England by the Church of England's own publishers and by the London Times, _____ by almost all the Catholic world, and now available for free on the website of Hamas. Again, from this little microcosm, as with the Gibson one, you can see how the infection spreads.

The Nazis thought of Poles and Slavs and Gypsies as racial inferiors by all means, but the organizing principle of their racism, the thing that gave it its energy and its consistency, was the hatred of the Jew, and that was what their race fantasy was based upon, and it's a pity that even the victims of that race fantasy, Slavs and Poles, also hated the Jew. That's what makes it so horrible and so inescapable. Would it be believed by anybody if it was said that all the Armenians left the World Trade Center just before the planes hit, or all the Irish left the World Trade Center? I don't think so. It has to be the Jews. It's not exciting if it's not. It would be a mere vulgar prejudice. There's not enough traction and grip and flavor to it unless it's the real thing.

Osama Bin Laden and his murderous gangsters by all means deem every Hindu, every Christian, all Shia, all Baha'i, all Ahmadi Muslims to be meat for slaughter, and of course all atheists and agnostics. So they already nearly got me twice. But if you look at their propaganda and if you talk to them, as I have done to specimens of them, you'll find nothing, nothing in their world view that comes up to what they feel in terms of fear and loathing about the Jew, and this seems to me to license Jean-Paul Sartre's conclusion in his portrait of the anti-Semite that the outcome of anti-Semitism and the secret—not secret—desire sometimes of every anti-Semite is murder. If it has to, this will eventuate in blood. It can't be appeased any other way, which makes it another cause of seriousness for us.

So the question is, is this just one single phenomenon, simply with many facets? Can we isolate the _____; is it possible to do that? Can we, to do it better, let me say to recognize it and to combat it, identify it. Can we make discriminations about it? Another word I want to rescue, by the way, is discriminate. People say that racists are guilty of

discrimination. Why do they do that? Why do people say that? Discrimination's the one thing the racist can't do. The racist can't discriminate between members of another ethnic group. It's a silly thing to say about a racist, but we have to learn to discriminate and make distinctions because our survival may depend upon it, and the survival of civilized society too, so I'm going to try. I've only got a little time with you before I yield myself back to your questions. I'll probably only be able to put some questions and not answer them, but believe me, I won't leave while anyone can say I didn't answer a question. So here are some.

Is anti-Zionism anti-Semitic? One's got to deal with this early, so I'm going to. Abraham Foxman, for example, of the Anti-Defamation League, says criticism of Israel of any kind is fine, but those who say that there shouldn't be a Jewish state are guilty of anti-Semitism. I think this is actually wrong on its face. Between Theodore Geisel's proclamation at the World Zionist Congress at the turn of the nineteenth century and the Balfour Declaration, probably no one else in the world knew there was an argument about Zionism, and the only anti-Zionists were Jews. It was an argument, so to speak, within the family. The only member of the British cabinet to vote against the Balfour Declaration and speak against it was the only Jewish member, Sir Edwin Montague, who said he regarded himself as British, didn't want to be told that his proper place was in the Middle East. I've spent some intensely enjoyable evenings with the Neturei Karta, Satmar sect of its rabbis, who have the best arguments I've yet heard for the age of the Earth being 4,300 years, and who refuse to serve—not who refuse to serve in the Israeli army—but really believe that Zionism is a blasphemy against the Torah and an anticipation of the Messiah and should be destroyed and only recognize Palestinian negotiators in the matter. There's a very long tradition of that kind of primitive religious anti-Zionism among Jews, and there were per contra, there were some anti-Semites—Sir Oswald Mosley was one of them—who were quite keen on Zionism because they thought I don't care where the Jews go as long as they go. They would have preferred Madagascar. Sir Oswald's Mosley's very nasty wife, who I had a call with once in print, was very vicious about it. They said they can go anywhere they like, but really they're too good for Jerusalem, but maybe Madagascar. But any rate, that's Zionism of a kind. That tendency I may say seems to have died out. Pretty much now any anti-Semite is also an anti-Zionist. That much is true. But there were, and there still is, another tradition of the secular left, the Jewish Marxist tendency, which was one of the great flourishing of the twentieth century, that warned—Avram Leon was one of them in Belgium; he later died in Auschwitz—that the project necessitated a quarrel with the Palestinian Arabs because of the land, and Avram Leon said it wouldn't matter to the Arab peasant in Palestine whether the occupiers were Belgian or English or Turkish or Egyptian, they would resist any attempt to take over their land. That their propaganda is sometimes anti-Jewish is, you might say, a second order of consideration.

Some of you may have read Avishai Margalit, Isaiah Berlin's great disciple, who says—I can't do his accent, I wish I could; he's a brilliant guy, lives in Jerusalem, is a Zionist—but he says

the project is to turn the Jew from being the luftmensch, the weightless man, the watchmaker in Budapest, into a sturdy farmer and soldier in Palestine. Well, whether that project's a good one or not, it necessitates, as you emphasize, it necessitates a quarrel over the ownership of that land, a quarrel that will go on for generations. The theft of land, the annexation of land will not be forgiven, whether it's by Jew or anyone else. I'll try his voice. "This is the Zionist original sin. This I do not believe. I say rather it is the immaculate misconception." So may the day never come when there are not anti-Zionist Jews, and may the day never come when it can't be said on a criticism level that the Israeli state, that it can only be motivated by the filthy prejudice that I'm here to talk about.

Okay, is questioning the Holocaust anti-Semitic? You see, I'm going to play for high stakes here. Not necessarily. Yes, if it denies that there was a plan, that there was a design, that there was a clearly evolved intention traceable to the first publication of Mein Kampf for the erasure of European Jewry. To deny that is certainly to exhibit toxic anti-Semitism, but there are many, many arguments about the numbers, about the locations. Yad Vashem, for example, the Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem, says four and a half million—most people say six. Good for Yad Vashem for going on the low side. When we've dug up all the graves—because they haven't all been found yet—in Belarus, in parts of Yugoslavia recently some were found, and elsewhere, the figure may be much larger than we can bear to think. But it's a responsibility. We have to act as if everyone who perished in that was a precious person. It's a responsibility not to reduce it to propaganda, so be prepared to debate on it with people who say, well, it's not true. It isn't true that Jews were ever made into soap. Obviously the Nazis weren't going to wash their hands in Jew. It's a fabrication by Stalin's antifascist Jewish community. We should drop it and we should admit that there's propaganda involved here. Like the Armenian people, who regularly debate with Turkish historians who deny what happened with their people. They show great dignity. They come back again with their historians to the fray. They say we will have this out; we will not have this fetishized or propagandized—we have a duty to historical truth. So I don't believe that there should be any censorship or any intimidation of anyone, revisionist or even denier, who wants to bring forth any evidence. What do we think we lack? The confidence to win this argument? No. We can't have that said. So I'm glad I've got that bit behind me, I must say, but I feel it has to be uttered.

Is there left anti-Semitism, as there used not to be? Anti-Semitism was so much the weapon of the right and of counterrevolution. Lenin said himself anti-Semitism is counterrevolution. You would never have thought, or I would never have expected to see the day, when on supposedly liberal websites, available in California, there would be stories about Israel stealing body parts for the market. That's almost a precise replication of the Passover plot. I didn't expect to see that. I didn't expect to see in my home country leading leftists, members of Parliament and activists, making common cause with the Muslim brotherhood, with Islamic jihad, with the people who publish the Protocols. I would have thought it was unthinkable, but it's not, and given the immense contribution that the

Jewish people have made to the liberal left in every society, this seems to me almost the most painful of the insults that this prejudice is currently building against us. I take it, should I say, a bit more personally than some of the others. I'm used to it from Mosley. I don't care. I don't care about it from Jean-Marie Le Pen. I expect it from him. I hate it spread on campus and on the left, and it really needs to be fought without pity wherever it shows itself there.

Can an anti-Semite make a true statement? Sometimes. The Reverend Bailey Smith, Jerry Falwell's sidekick, once said "Oh mighty God, don't hear the prayers of a Jew." As far as my investigations go, that statement is confirmed. I think it's the only _____ I've been able to find that is anti-Jewish in intention but factually true in statement.

Can anti-Semitism be amusing? To a limited extent, but an indispensable extent, yes. You perhaps know the story of Abe and Solomon walking along together and they see a church with a big sign that says Jews for Jesus: \$1000 to any Jew who converts or joins. Abe takes a look and says, "I'm going to go in. I'm going to try it." Solomon says, "Should I wait for you?" Abe says, "Yeah, if you like." About an hour passes. Abe comes out. Solomon says, "So?" Abe said, "No, I'm a Christian now. I see their point. I'm with Jesus. I'm saved." And Solomon says, "What? Did they give you the thousand bucks up front?" and Abe says, "Is that all you people ever think about?" So it can be funny.

Can you suffer from anti-Semitism mildly? That's my question to Mel Gibson. With most people it's impossible to have it a little bit. It takes over everything else. It sucks out all the oxygen in what's left of your brain and your system and it becomes dominant. Can it be mild? As a matter of fact, I think it can. I mean, I've known two people of whom I think this is true. My beloved friend Martin Amis wrote very amusingly about his father Kingsley who in late life became a bit of a curmudgeon, and he said to his dad once, "What is this? What's it like being a mild anti-Semite," and his father said, "Well, it's all right. It's when I'm watching the credits at the end of a film and I think, 'There goes another one. And another one.'" Well, I can just assure you, the old man although became a bit of a boor towards the end of his life, he wouldn't hurt a fly and he certainly wouldn't hurt a Jew or have it done. So in some way, I think I'm being optimistic—it is a prejudice that can be domesticated, if you like, brought under control, repressed a bit. My ex-friend, Gore Vidal, once got a bad review in the New Republic for his novel Lincoln, and the reviewer was Thomas Keneally, who I don't need to tell you about, the author of Schindler's List, and it wasn't as good a review as Gore thought he should have got, or as a matter of fact, as good a review as I would have given it. I think it's a wonderful novel. But Thomas Keneally got a letter from Gore Vidal saying, "I see that the Jews cast around for someone who is reliably anti-me and made sure that the ancient tribe was vindicated in your poor notice of my novel." Keneally has the letter. Terribly depressing. I mean, so petty, so cheap, so nasty, so deliberately hurtful, but not frightening. Contemptible, not frightening. Don't make a federal case

every time, I say to the ADL. You know, you have to be able to tell what's dangerous, what's wicked, what's toxic, and what isn't.

Is monotheism anti-Semitic? Yes. At least two-thirds of it is, more or less by definition. That's big numbers. That means a lot of people. The two that have plagiarized from Judaism, from the worst bits of Judaism. Why do I say this? Because any real Christian, any serious believing Christian, would give everything he earned to have a personal meeting with Jesus of Nazareth. Nothing more could be desired than that moment. They yearn for it, they thirst for it, they hunger for it. No serious Muslim could want anything more than to have met himself with the messenger of God, with the prophet Mohammed. There were no Ukrainians around at that time, there were no Poles around at the crucifixion, there were no Irish people in Mecca and Medina. There was only one people that stood around that met both these impostors and said no, no sale, don't believe it. Do you think that's ever going to be forgiven? Of course it's not. Of course it'll never be forgiven. They saw Jesus of Nazareth and they spat in his face. They saw the prophet Mohammed and they said, "This guy is just a warlord." And with Jesus they said he's just a crackpot rabbi and also a grave blasphemer, and Maimonides says in one of his sharper passages, "Our sages never did a better thing than when they got rid of that rabbleroising impostor." Well? Makes you proud, I hope. You shouldn't want to be forgiven for getting a thing like that right, but don't go to any mushy ecumenical outreach meetings with these people. It's a waste of time.

My related question, can anti-Semitism, should it ever be considered flattering? Yes, I think so. The case that convinced Hertzfel that the Jews should leave Europe, the case of Colonel Alfred Dreyfus, led after convulsing and splitting France and French society and culture to the coinage of the term intellectual to describe the pro-Dreyfuside faction. It was a term of contempt coined by the Action Francaise, the extreme anti-Semitic right party, by the Catholic Church and by the bigots of the French army. Intellectual meant someone who is fundamentally unsound, who had no proper blood and soil connection with the organic society of France, who had no loyalties except to mind and to inquiry, who was a doubter. Let me say I hope that word intellectual never loses its association with those wonderful things, and to that extent it's a product of the struggle against anti-Semitism, which is very much a projection of precisely that conservative authority. It was Charles Maurras, the founder of Action Francaise, T.S. Eliot's favorite philosopher, favorite politician, who when he was finally jailed after the war for collaboration with the Nazis, as he was leaving the dock was heard to say, "C'est la revanche de Dreyfus!", Dreyfus is vindicated. And he was right, and it was Eliot, the admirer of Maurras, who in his lecture not long after at the University of Virginia, famous lecture *After Strange Gods*, did not say that a healthy society should not have too many Jews in it. He is often quoted as saying that. He didn't say that. He said a too large number of freethinking Jews is undesirable for a healthy, organic society. Well, from Eliot's Catholic, fascist point of view, that's quite right, and it's the hope not just of Jews but of many others that the freethinking part prevails and the bigotry does not.

Rebecca West, in her wonderful book—I hope you’ve all read *Black Lamb, Grey Falcon*, a journey through the Balkans just as Nazism is beginning to get going in pre-war Europe, looking at the fractured, feudal, backwards society of what was then a sort of Yugoslavia—says, I quote directly, “Many primitive peoples must receive their first intimation of the toxic quality of thought from Jews. They know only the fortifying idea of religion. They see in Jews the effect of the tormenting and disintegrative idea of skepticism.” And you think about what happened to Catholic Croatia, the organic, stable, millennial, unchanging society. The priest was where everyone took their problems, the children were raised with a real fear of the risen Christ, and all outsiders were considered to be vile. Imagine, and then know what happened. She had it absolutely right. Jews aren’t going to be forgiven for troubling the sleep and the peasantry of the feudal types who want to keep them that way, and nor should they want to be forgiven for it. They should be proud of the association.

Here is Jacobo Timerman, who I’m proud to say was my friend, the Argentine editor kidnapped, editor of *La Opinion* in Buenos Aires in the 70’s, by the death squads and tortured in a secret prison about which he wrote a marvelous memoir that again I hope you’ve all read, *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*. Here’s what his interrogator said to him between blows of the cattle prod. He said, “Argentina has three main enemies: Karl Marx, because he tried to destroy the Christian concept of society; Sigmund Freud, because he tried to destroy the Christian concept of the family; and Albert Einstein, because he tried to destroy the Christian concept of time and space.” That should make you proud too, doesn’t it? None of those names are Irish.

Victor Klemperer, final recommendation—if you have not read Victor Klemperer’s diaries of the Third Reich every day between 1933 and 1945, you should. Don’t start them late at night; you will not get to bed. Imperishable. The Winston Smith of Hitler’s Europe. He had a friend _____ who said to Victor, “You know, we Jews are seismic people.” Seismic people, it’s an interesting phrase. Victor Klemperer hated being a Jew. He converted to Protestantism, he wrote incredibly disoblingly about Theodor Hertzl, he would never go near a synagogue, but he was seismic in two senses. He could feel it coming and he wrote an entry every day about what was coming to Germany, and the amazing premonitions that he experienced. But, seismic in another way in the Jews of Europe in having their own version of the enlightenment, the *Haskalah*, named for the mind itself, and contributing so mightily on every front from psychiatry to physics to everybody else’s enlightenment too. Don’t think that’s going to be forgiven.

My friend Lawrence Krauss, Larry Krauss, I think the greatest living physicist apart from Stephen Hawking, gave a talk recently that you can look up. It’s called “A Whole Universe from Nothing.” It’s about the quantum theory, it’s about the cosmos, it’s about the Big Bang, it’s about the wonderful fact that everyone sitting here is made out of elements that were once stardust, _____. And he said, and I know he did it on purpose, he said, “So forget Jesus dying for you,” he says to the audience. “Millions of stars had to die before you

could be born.” You want to have a look at his mailbag? I know you do, and you know exactly what would have been said about a physicist who has not accepted Jesus Christ as his personal savior.

I’m coming to the close of my remarks, and I hope I haven’t overrun my time too much, and you’ve been very generous. But there’s a very cryptic but I think profound sentence in Leo Strauss’ 1962 essay “Why We Remain Jewish” and I’ll again quote directly from Leo Strauss’ conclusion. He says, “The Jewish people and their faith are the living witness for the absence of redemption. This, one could say, is the meaning of the chosen people: the Jews have chosen to prove the absence of redemption.” Now, if I had to pick any one special trait of Judaism or the Jewish personality or character, I think I would pick irony. No other religion has a prophet like Maimonides who says, “Yes, the Messiah will come, but he may tarry.” Though no Woody Allen, theologians and Christianity say things like that. For all the fetishization in Judaism of unleavened bread, the Jewish people have in fact been the yeast in enormous number of societies and countries, the leaven in the lump. Benny Morris’ new book on the origins of the Israeli-Palestine crisis quotes one of the Mufti’s people writing from the Imam’s headquarters in Jerusalem to the British saying, “You can’t be bringing Judaism to this country. They’re all subversives. It’s nothing but trouble.” Again, take the compliments where you can get them. So natural disturbance of the natural order. Everything was fine, every peasant knew to expect only one meal a deal, everyone knew who owned what and where, everyone obeyed the priests and the mullahs, but now look. These scrofulous trouble makers from Poland and Latvia.

Rabbi Tarfon was a great hater of Christians and had an even greater hatred of Jewish heretics, and I’ve always thought it’s wonderful that the Jewish word for heretic is *Apiqoros*, follower of Epicurus and student of Greek. That’s a nice way to be called a heretic. Anyway, I’m not _____ Rabbi Tarfon, but he had it right when he said—he echoed Strauss in a way—when he says, “You are not obliged to complete the task, but neither are you free to give it up or to evade it.” To be Jewish is to be involved in a continual struggle, a continual test, to be at continual risk, to be always aware of anxiety and danger and angst, just as there could be despite the best efforts of its enemies no final solution to the so-called Jewish problem, Jewish question in Europe. So one has to say there’s no ultimate security or salvation for the Jewish people or any other. More and more, for example, to me Israel begins to resemble a part of the diaspora, not a solution to it or an alternative to it, just one other place where a large number of Jewish people live in great insecurity and constant doubt. Jews will always continue to be identified as malcontents, doubters, unsound, cosmopolitan, and yes, if you like, ruthless.

And I’ll close by saying this. Because anti-Semitism is the godfather of racism and the gateway to tyranny and fascism and war, it is to be regarded not as the enemy of the Jewish people, I learned, but as the common enemy of humanity and of civilization and has to be fought against very tenaciously for that reason, most especially in its current, most virulent

form of Islamic Jihad. Daniel Pearl's revolting murderer was educated at the London School of Economics. Our Christmas bomber over Detroit was from a neighboring London college, the chair of the Islamic Students' Society. Many programs against Jewish people have been reported from all over Europe today as I'm talking, and we can only expect this to get worse, and we must make sure our own defenses are not neglected. Our task is to call this filthy thing, this plague, this pest, by its right name, to make unceasing resistance to it, knowing all the time that it's probably ultimately ineradicable, and bearing in mind that its hatred towards us is a compliment and resolving some of the time at any rate to do a bit more to deserve it. Thank you.