

“We refuse the fatal spiral of ethnicization and confessionalization of the conflict” - French Jews for Palestinian Rights

Monday 22 August 2011, by [BENSAÏD Daniel](#), [KAHN Marcel-Francis](#), [TOMIEWICZ Stanislas](#), [VIDAL-NAQUET Pierre](#)
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THE FOLLOWING TEXT (abridged here) was published in the French daily *Le Monde* of October 18, 2000 accompanied by the signatures of fifty French people of Jewish origin, several of them well-known political or intellectual figures.

CITIZENS OF THE countries in which we live and citizens of the planet, we do not habitually express ourselves as Jews.

We combat racism and anti-Semitism in all its forms. We condemn the attacks on synagogues and Jewish religious schools in France which take as their target a community as such and its places of worship ...

We refuse the internationalization of ethnic community logics that can translate, here in France as well as in Israel, into confrontations between young people within a single school or a single neighborhood.

By claiming to speak in the name of all world Jewry, by appropriating the common memory of Jewry as their own, by proclaiming themselves to be representatives of all Jewish victims of the past, Israeli leaders have claimed the right to speak in our name without asking our permission.

No one, however, has the monopoly of [memory of] the Nazi genocide against the Jews. Our families have had their share of deportees, fatal victims and resistance fighters. We therefore find it intolerable that the language of community solidarity is turned against us in the aim of legitimizing a policy of “sacred union” between Israeli leaders of different parties.

As the conflict has escalated, inadmissible acts of violence have been committed by both sides. This is unfortunately the logic of any war. However, the political responsibilities are not equally shared.

The state of Israel disposes of a territory and an army. The Palestinians of the occupied territories and the refugee camps are condemned to living under Israeli tutelage in a mutilated and dependent economy, in a crippled society, in a territory divided into small fragments, cut through by “strategic routes” and peppered with Jewish colonies.

The calculated act of provocation organized by Ariel Sharon at Haram el-Sharif, with the agreement and support of Ehud Barak, set the region ablaze ... A possibly irreversible step has now been taken. This symbolic provocation, by accentuating the religious character of the conflict at the expense of its political content, favors the rise of extremist religious forces and weakens supporters of peace and a secular Palestine and Israel. A race to disaster has begun. A civil war within Israel between Jews and Arabs is in the offing.

Not in spite of our Jewish origins but because of them, we oppose this suicidal logic based on identity-panic. We refuse the fatal spiral of ethnicization and confessionalization of the conflict.

We support Judeo-Arab fraternity and call for a renewal of the peace process, which would require enforcement of the UN resolutions, the recognition of a Palestinian state and the right to return for Palestinians chased from their lands. Only in this way can the peaceful coexistence of different cultural and linguistic communities on a single territory can become a real possibility.

Daniel Bensaïd, Marcel-Francis Kahn, Stanislas Tomkiewicz & Pierre Vidal-Naquet...

P.S.

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