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## Rosner's Blog

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Shmuel Rosner, Chief U.S. Correspondent  
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Posted: **January 19, 2006**

### The Holocaust Memorial Museum and Arab Anti-Semitism: A worthy debate

**January 19; 11:09 EST**

Yesterday evening I attended the event on the thorny and controversial subject "Should Arab Anti-Semitism be on the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's Agenda?" It's a subject I [discussed](#) this week extensively in the email dialog with Walter Reich, former director of this museum - but it was interesting to see the reasons why different people came to form this coalition of change that targets the museum and its board.

As I'm writing a more comprehensive story on this for Sunday's Haaretz (the old good print edition) I will now only share with you some of the headlines, at least the way I see this debate unraveling.

1. Edwin Black, author of "IBM and the Holocaust," spoke mainly about a need for openness. Rabbi Avi Weiss, president of AMCHA, spoke mainly about politics. The demand for a new agenda for the museum brought together a mix of people for which different reasons are the key element of conviction. Some are Holocaust scholars who want their work to be recognized - like Black and Shelomo Alfassa, both of whom are researching the events in the Arab world during the Nazi era. Others focus more on current affairs, and talk about the need to stop the surrender to "political correctness" (always a worthy cause), as Carol Greenwald of the Holocaust Museum Watch stated.

Rabbi Weiss want us to go through two stages: First we have to recognize that the museum is a political tool - then we have to take it out of the hands of those who use it for the wrong purposes. An interesting coalition - with some mixed motives.

2. The easy way to differentiate between the two groups is by listening to the examples they use as they try to persuade the listener (and by the way, the "Ohev Sholom" Talmud Torah and Synagogue was packed yesterday. More than a hundred people sat there patiently for more than two hours).

The "Justice to History" research group talked mainly about one figure and one incident: Amin Al-Husseini, Mufti of Jerusalem and Hitler's ally, and the 1941 Farhud, a pogrom taking place in Iraq that was triggered by Nazi influence. These are figures and events that should be mentioned in the Holocaust museum, they said, and one found it very hard not to agree with

### Today's Poll

#### Should Israel talk to Hamas?

- Yes, but only if it recognizes Israel
- Yes, but only after it is disarmed
- Yes, unconditionally
- Not under any circumstances

Vote 

### Breaking News

15:08

Iran says will hold conference on Holocaust despite international outrage (Reuters)

14:45

Germany confirms it will help Israel buy two submarines at a



#### What to read

[Don't Make Exceptions for Hamas \(David Makovsky\)](#)

#### What to do

["The Pope, the Chief Rabbi, and Jewish Orphans After the Holocaust ..."](#)

#### Previous Domain guests

[Barry Shrage explains 'Jewish cultural survival'](#)

[Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb on Judaism, Church and State, Israel and evangelicals](#)

[Malcolm Hoenlein on Iran, the fence and a 2006 prophecy](#)

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The "let's talk about politics" group has a more nuanced, more interesting and more controversial line of reasoning - and the key examples they used (actually it was Weiss, the most eloquent speaker of the evening) are more up to date: One is Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the president of Iran, and his outrageous remarks on Israel, the other is Yasser Arafat - and the pressure the museum was under to have him as a guest at the late nineties.

3. As these two groups have slightly different agendas, they also tend to emphasize different aspects of the ways in which the museum should deal with the topic of Arab anti-Semitism. One set of speakers talked mainly about the need for historical documentation of the cooperation between Arabs and Germans during the forties. Others were more concerned about current trends of Jewish-hatred and Holocaust denial. One group wanted research, scholars, conferences - meaning, resources and money. The other wanted statements, activism, protest - meaning, politics. But what will happen to this coalition in case that the museum agrees to accommodate the first demand but not the second?

4. The silence of the museum on both issues - Arabs in the 1940's and Arabs now - is troubling. But more troubling is the fact that the museum does not react to the demands being made regarding its agenda. If the people in charge have something meaningful to say about this - it's time for them to react. No such claim should stay unanswered.

5. To be continued...

[Avi Beker on Jewish Diaspora affairs](#)

[Mireille Silcoff on Judaism and contemporary culture](#)

[David Makovsky on Israeli platforms and policies](#)

[Rabbi Eric Yoffie on the state of Reform Judaism](#)



Responses		Send your response	
1. Of Course it should	18:45   Danite	19/01/06	
2. The Ashkenazi denial of truth.	20:19   Paul Tubiana	19/01/06	
3. # 2 Paul, Do You Hold A Job?	21:52   Yoram	19/01/06	
4. Jewish anti-Semitism	22:23   John	19/01/06	
5. This is a no brainer (i.e. Paul Tubiana)	22:56   Yitzhak	19/01/06	
6. Harmful facts	00:12   Tom	20/01/06	
7. ridiculous	00:26   Sheperd Cohen	20/01/06	

Posted:

## The right-wing argument for the uprooting of the illegal outposts

**January 18, 2006; 16:05 EST**  
**Settlements**

During the implementation of the disengagement from Gaza, I wrote a piece for Slate, [arguing](#) that the dispute within Israeli society was not about Greater Israel people vs. Peace Now people - but rather about law and order people vs. anarchy people.

"The heated debate about the benefits and risks of the plan," I wrote then, "is no longer interesting. The opponents have made some good points, but their battle was argued and lost. The government approved Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan, and the Knesset approved it. Disengagement is legal, and there's no way around it. So, opponents have now adopted a new strategy: They say legality is not everything. Morality is what really counts. Simply put, they answer to what they conceive of as a higher authority than that of the Israeli government and its army. What extremists call morality, cynics (and some journalists) might call politics. The debate over civil

disobedience and the right to disobey is as long as history itself, and each side is ready to manipulate the issue for its own benefit. But what Israel is facing now is a major crisis over the issue of law and order. At this point, no tolerance is possible, no hesitation can be justified."

No reason to write a new piece on the question of the illegal outposts in the West Bank. It's exactly - but exactly - the same. Whether Acting Prime Minister Olmert's motives are political or moral or legal - and you can choose your favorite option in today's [Rosner's poll](#) - he is right on the mark.

Today, it was announced that Ehud Olmert, acting prime minister of Israel, is planning to uproot 20 illegal outposts in the occupied territories, and the right wing was reacting exactly as expected. The Yesha Council said in an official statement on Wednesday that Olmert must "study the complicated subject of the outposts before going out and harshly attacking with a declaration of war" - no less. "With all due respect to Ehud Olmert," they said, "he is not at all dealing with the matter of the outposts in a straightforward fashion. Considering how he is listening to the defense establishment and the prosecution, it seems likely he will also listen to us," Yesha said in its statement. Meaning, the police officer has to listen to the criminal before arresting him - as he probably has some way of justifying his actions.

Especially here in the United States, but also in Israel, those on the right side of the political map should support Olmert. Why? Because the right wing, philosophically, always was the wing of law and order - or wasn't it?

## Israel and Iran

Now let's turn to some serious stuff. Israel is urging the international community to transfer Iran's case to the UN Security Council, which can authorize sanctions - and that's no big news. However, Haaretz's Aluf Benn got some interesting details in an item he published this morning. Among them: "Various Israeli agencies, both defense and civilian, have prepared proposals for diplomatic and economic sanctions against Iran." Read Aluf's piece [here](#) and you can also [read](#) my analysis of the current Iran situation (A warning: It's not the most optimistic).

Responses	 <a href="#">Send your response</a>		
1. <b>Selective Rule of Law</b>	03:49	Mark of Lewiston	19/01/06
2. <b>Move Them Out</b>	04:53	Yoram	19/01/06
3. <b>Legalize These Jewish Communities</b>	06:56	Yishai Kohen	19/01/06
4. <b>Arabs are Exempt from Law and Order?</b>	16:05	Yaakov Ish Tam	19/01/06
5. <b># 3 and # 4 On Settlers</b>	21:58	Yoram	19/01/06
6. <b>Failure to Recognize "The Law"</b>	22:50	Yaakov Ibn	19/01/06

[Previous 2](#) [Next 2](#)



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