

Setting the Record Straight - Part 1

SCHOLARS CIRCLE



About Professor Pessin

Andrew Pessin is Professor of Philosophy and Jewish Studies at Connecticut College and Campus Bureau Editor of the *Algemeiner*. His many books include *Anti-Zionism on Campus*, *Poisoning the Wells: Antisemitism in Contemporary America*, and *The Jewish God Question*, as well as several novels. His most recent novel is *Nevergreen*, a satirical account of campus cancel culture, its ideological excesses, and its deleterious impact on the Jews. Long ago he enjoyed some moments of fame portraying “The Genius” on the David Letterman Show.

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UPCOMING LECTURES BY PROFESSOR PESSIN

- Decolonization and Murder, and the Rejection of ‘Settler-Colonialism’
- Paradox of Prejudice: When Anti-Racists Display Racism



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Common Q&A's

What is meant by a “Big Lie,” and why is it so important to recognize and counter?

It's a Nazi idea that expresses the essence of propaganda: if you tell an extremely flagrant lie often and confidently, people will come to believe it – and thus come to believe the most evil things about the Jews that you want them to believe.

What are some of the most important, most frequently invoked, “Big Lies” told by Israel-haters about Israel, that also do the most damage to the Jews?

These include the charges of genocide, ethnic cleansing, settler-colonialism, occupation, apartheid, that Gaza prior to Oct 7 was an “open air prison,” that Zionism is racism, and that “resistance” to Zionism is justified “by any means necessary” (i.e. violence and terrorism).

What conclusions may be drawn from the fact that anti-Israel activists tell so many and such Big Lies about Israel?

That anti-zionism is antisemitism: Their concern is not to make fair or legitimate criticisms of Israeli policies or practices, but to delegitimize Israel and dehumanize Israeli Jews in particular, portraying them not as rational moral human agents engaged in a complex conflict, but as purely and deeply evil actors, thus marking them for destruction, expulsion, and elimination.

Key Takeaways

- ✓ The campus campaign against Israel proceeds by means of numerous “Big Lies,” blatant flagrant falsehoods that are propagated relentlessly to get people to start believing them.
- ✓ These Big Lies are designed not to provide fair or legitimate criticisms of Israeli policies or practices, but to delegitimize Israel and dehumanize Israeli Jews, marking them as purely evil actors that it would be legitimate to destroy. The campaign is thus profoundly antisemitic.
- ✓ Each of these Big Lies is in fact easily refuted by anyone who spends just a few minutes doing actual, objective research. Further, it turns out for most of them not only that Israel and Israeli Jews are not guilty of the things claimed about them, but rather the other side (Hamas, the Palestinian Authority, other Arab countries) is.
- ✓ It is important for campus activists, especially students, to be well trained in the actual facts and thus be prepared to counter the Big Lies – for letting them go unchallenged allows public opinion to become very sympathetic, once again, to the destruction of the Jews.

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