

## **PLENARY LECTURE "ISRAEL STUDIES"**

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Title: **"Jews against Israel: The ambivalences of contemporary Jewish identity"**

Jewish anti-Israelism, which is gradually evolving into a trend in contemporary Jewish life, is an expression of the complexities of the actual Jewish identity. Such Jews are influenced by Western culture on the one hand, and by their weakened Jewish roots on the other hand. Basically, it is with the Zionist idea that anti-Israel Jews have a problem. They are unable, or unwilling, to recognize the historical roots of Zionism and the huge transformations that the creation of a Jewish state has brought about in Jewish life, and have doubts regarding its significance for the continuing existence of the Jewish people. Although many prominent Jewish anti-Zionist activists are academicians and university professors, their arguments against Zionism and Israel show poor knowledge regarding modern Jewish history, matched by an inner drive to explain issues and developments according to their prejudices. Anti-Zionist Jews are found also among Israeli Jews, a baffling yet explainable phenomenon. Anti-Zionist or anti-Israel Jews frequently collaborate with non-Jewish antisemites and their organizations, especially leftists ones, with whom they have common language. They are also active in or with the BDS movement. Their collaboration provides a level of legitimacy to anti-Israel initiatives of European and Moslem antisemites which is highly harmful both to the Jewish state as to Jews in general.

Nevertheless, such Jews are not antisemites. They are moved by diverse motivations than Gentile Jew-haters. They are a continuation of a sociological profile in modern Jewry, the so-called 'assimilationists' of old. In the changed circumstances of the 21<sup>st</sup>. century, these Jews are the 'neo-assimilationists' of our days.