

CENTRAL PACIFIC REGION



September 18, 2008

BY EMAIL AND MAIL

Rabbi Michael Lerner
Tikkun Magazine
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Re: Israel Shamir article

Dear Rabbi Lerner:

We write to express our dismay over your decision to publish an article by Israel Shamir on Tikkun's website (*Heemeyer Rides Again*, July 6, 2008). Shamir does not merely have a "hatred of Judaism," as is written in the "Editor's Note" preceding the article. Rather, for years Shamir has openly peddled every loathsome falsehood about Judaism, Jewish culture, and the Jewish people as a whole. His hatred is pathological, and it blinds him to any argument or fact that does not conform to his distorted opinions. Allowing Shamir to express his views through Tikkun was profoundly irresponsible and offensive. Though we note the article has just been removed from Tikkun's site, we still call upon you to acknowledge this mistake to your readers.

In case you are unaware, Israel Shamir's Jew-hatred is replete in everything he writes. He routinely promotes the lies of Jewish control of government and media; the existence of a Jewish cabal acting singularly for malicious aims; and Jewish supremacy resulting in indifference to others' suffering. He also heaps praise upon bigots such as Roger Garaudy, a disreputable Holocaust denier, and Eustace Mullins, the prolific anti-Jewish propagandist whose books include *The Biological Jew*, among similar titles.¹

In the article you published, Shamir's own prejudice is also unabashedly on display. His exaltation of Israel's Russian-Jewish population as only "nominally 'Jewish'" and not having been "infected with Jewish chauvinism in the cradle" is a glaring example. Further, Shamir praises these Russian immigrants for keeping their Jewishness "a private thing, not a public identity" and for "not shar[ing] the ideals of other Israeli Jewish communities, i.e. military valour and the amassing of wealth." First, Shamir advances the notion that Israel is by definition a war-mongering nation. Second, he promotes the stereotype of the money-grubbing Jew. Third, he intimates that the only good Jew is the sort who keeps his/her identity "private." It should go without saying that these assertions are insulting at face value.

¹ See, for example, *Carter and the Swarm – Daring the Wrath of the Jewish Lobby* (<http://www.israelshamir.net/English/Eng9.htm>, and at <http://www.coastalpost.com/08/05/01.html>).

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Even if you found anything worthwhile in this article, your decision to publish Shamir remains a mistake: He can now boast that Tikkun thinks his is a reasonable voice. There is a good reason why a writer like Israel Shamir is, as Tikkun put it, "unlikely [to be] hear[d] in the mainstream media": His well-deserved reputation as a bigot precedes him and strips him of any credibility. As a private actor, Tikkun is not required to provide an outlet for his hateful rants.

The Editor's Note rationalizes publishing Shamir by asserting that his views "represent[] a growing sentiment among many Israeli secularists." Even assuming this is true, it is a pity Tikkun could not have published their voices, instead of that of the odious Israel Shamir.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Bernstein". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized script.

Jonathan Bernstein
Regional Director