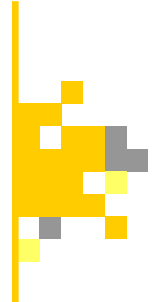


## ENTREVISTA

### Jeffrey Herf

(BA in History, PhD in Sociology, Professor,  
University of Maryland College Park)



#### About the interviewed:

Jeffrey Herf studies the intersection of ideas and politics in modern European history, specializing in twentieth century Germany.

He has published extensively on Germany during the Weimar Republic, Nazi Germany, the Holocaust, and on West and East Germany during the Cold War.

His research interests now focus on the Nazi period and German and European history in post World War II decades up to the collapse of Communism and the end of the Cold War in 1989.

Professor Jeffrey C. Herf is Distinguished University Professor Emeritus (History) at the University of Maryland, with research expertise in Europe and Modern History.

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**1. The war of narratives, the war of propaganda, is an inseparable component of the history of wars. It resembles the dramatic Shakespearean universe in which cynicism, hypocrisy, pain, plots, intrigues, human evil, and questions about who started it and who suffered the most all parade before our incredulous eyes. Does Israel have an advantage in this war compared to the Westerners?**

**Jeffrey Herf** – Israel has an advantage with that unfortunately too small part of humanity which makes clear moral distinctions between terrorist organizations and democratic states. Israel's disadvantage is that antisemitism is widespread in most Islamic countries, and in those places in Latin America that have not incorporated the rejection of anti-Jewish hatred that emerged from the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s. In Brazil, one must reckon with the continuing impact of anti-Jewish hatred in the Christian tradition and its secularization in global radical left.

It is crucial for opinion shaping people in Brazil to look closely at the ideology of Hamas. I have done so in an essay in the online journal Quillette: Here is the link to my essay: "The Ideology of Mass Murder," (October 10, 2023): <https://quillette.com/2023/10/10/the-ideology-of-mass-murder/>.

**2. Why is the West not sensitive to the Palestinian situation in the same way it was touched by the Hamas attacks on October 7th?**

**JH** – The West is incredibly "sensitive" to "the Palestinian situation." For decades the United States and the European Union have poured millions of dollars into the West Bank, and the United Nations has served as an apologist for Palestinian organizations, even when they engage in terrorism. The Palestinians have the great misfortune of having secular leaders (the PLO) which turned down repeated offers by Israel to end the conflict with a two-state solution, and others have made the lunatic decision to support Hamas, an organization with origins in the fusion of Nazism and Islamism in the 1940s. I have made these points in several essays over the years. See my "Why They Fight: Hamas Too Little Known Fascist Charter" in *The American Interest* (August 2014); <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2014/08/01/why-they-fight-hamas-too-little-known-fascist-charter/> and "Fascism with a Religious Face: Hamas is at War with Israel Forever," <https://www.americanpurpose.com/articles/fascism-with-a-religious-face/>.

The Hamas Charter of 1988 is one of the most important restatements and reformulations of radical Jew-hatred since the Holocaust. Anyone who has any interest in these issues must read it. It is easily accessible on the internet at the Avalon Project in Yale Law School: [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/hamas.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp).

On scholarship in the Nazi-Islamist fusion, see my article: "Nazi Antisemitism and Islamist Hate" in *The Table Magazine* (July 22, 2022): <https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/history/articles/the-nazi-roots-of-islamist-hate>.

**3. Another important aspect in the current situation is the positioning of the great powers. How do you assess American involvement? What about China, Russia, France, and Germany?**

**JH** – In his clear and emphatic support for Israel President Biden stands in the tradition of Franklin

Roosevelt and Harry Truman. Russia is now a blend of fascism and imperialism so it is now surprise it is criticizing Israel. Since Mao in 1965, China has been antagonistic to Israel. Fortunately, France and Germany are standing with Israel and recognize that this is part of a global battle of democracy and free societies against fascism, terror, religious fanaticism and antisemitism.

**4. Could the vigorous manner in which Israel is attacking the Gaza Strip provoke some form of anti-Semitism?**

**JH** – Nonsense. I hope the Brazilian press is not treating the propaganda from Hamas as a reliable source. Israel is in a fight for survival. There is no alternative to defeating Hamas.

**5. How do you analyze the global situation where, on one hand, we see the West accusing Russia, a major power, of waging war against a weaker country, Ukraine, while simultaneously aligning itself with another power, Israel, which surrounds a people that also has its own state? This situation could potentially lead to the ultimate failure of the UN?**

**JH** – This question reveals ignorance of the facts. Russia attacked Ukraine. Hamas attacked Israel. Hamas is not a state. It is a terrorist organization that has seized power violently in a territory that Israel left long ago.

**6. In your opinion, is Western support for Israel a result of the scars of the Second World War or a strategy to curb the growth of Arab countries, Turkey, and Iran?**

**JH** – No. Western support for Israel comes from a recognition of shared values in support of democracy and a free society. Those values are evident in Israel's 1948 Declaration of

Independence. It would help if scholars, intellectuals, and journalists in Brazil would read it or read it again.

### **7. Why is the conflict between Israel and Palestine far from a positive outcome?**

**JH** – The overwhelmingly obvious reason why the conflict continues is that the Palestinian organizations, both secular and religious, PLO and Hamas, have repeatedly rejected Israel's offers of compromise. Hamas has made very clear that it despises Jews, Judaism, Zionism and the State of Israel and wants to destroy it. The massacre of October 7 was genocidal in its intent and consequence.

**Interviewers** : José Renato Ferraz da Silveira and Claudio Andrés Téllez Zepeda