

beginning to enact policies of genocide. The country I speak of is, of course, Israel.

I was born into the Jewish tradition. I was raised with Hanukkah, with Seder, with weekly Shabbat. As I became an adult, I had the incredible experience of being the friend and student of an amazing man: a rabbi, a teacher, a social activist, a Jew. I have seen the Jewish community at its best, celebrating life, love, acceptance. And now I have seen the Jewish community at its worst.

Israel's policies towards the Palestinians are brutal and unreasonable. Israel's policies towards Lebanon are insane and murderous. Israel is, and has long been, an extension of American fundamentalist policy in the Middle East. You can call me anti-Semitic for speaking out against a "Jewish" government. Go right ahead. I also don't support the U.S.'s ongoing genocide in Iraq, so why don't you throw in "un-American" and "unpatriotic" while you're at it? Never mind that I am a fierce advocate of the ideas that the U.S. is

supposed to stand for. Never mind that I, at my core, feel so much love for the Jewish people that the Jewish community's overarching betrayal of compassion and rationality feels like a personal betrayal to me. So I must speak out. Does this make me anti-Semitic? I am as anti-Semitic as the mother is anti-child who sees her little boy torturing a cat and cries out in pain, fear and horror.

Yes, all you fundamentalist Jews who will read this and hate me. The actions of our people's government in the Middle East are far worse than the malicious act that I just described. They are shameful. They are cruel. And we, of all people, are this time the perpetrators. We have let fear and hate come to rule the only nation that calls itself Jewish, and we have let pride come between us and seeing or speaking the truth. We have given the victory to terror and propaganda, and I am so ashamed of what we have become.

Julian Michels
Eugene

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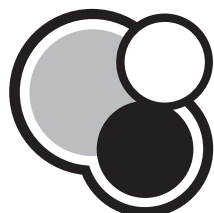
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