

Uris fans old hatreds

Suppose a book appeared that described Jews as dirty, rapacious and ignorant, as well as lying, treacherous and cowardly. And, for good measure, suppose it went on to say that Jewish mothers play with their sons' genitals.

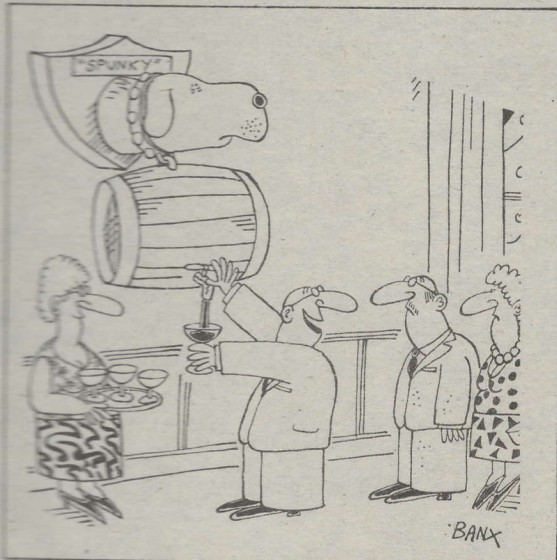
The reaction of our human rights commissions and the Jewish community would be a firestorm. The author might well be jailed. Precisely such a book has, in fact, appeared. Just substitute the word "Arab" or "Palestinian" in the first paragraph for "Jews" and you have Leon Uris' latest book, *The Haj*. All of these nauseating lies are contained in just the first 30 pages of this untruthful, racist polemic. They go on and on.

Uris is best known for *Exodus*, a novel about Israel told in terms of cowboys and Indians where noble Jews, most blond, blue-eyed Aryan types, fight off the Arabs, depicted as dirty, swarthy, murderous Semites, complete with curved daggers and oversized noses. Many thoughtful Israelis found this popular book an affront to their nation, just as many today describe *The Haj* as "garbage."

But people who don't know the Middle East will read *The Haj* and come out believing that Palestine was a desert before the Jews came; that the Palestinians were ignorant bedouin; that the Jewish settlers all played the violin and read Kant. Far worse, readers will inevitably absorb the underlying racist theory of Uris — that Palestinians, being a racially inferior people, or even a non-people, a sort of human detritus, deserved to be displaced from their homes by a superior race of Israeli Herrenvolk.

We have seen all this before. I was reminded of a cartoon last year in the newspaper *Israel Today* that depicted a berobed Arab holding a curved, bloodstained dagger in one hand and a gasoline hose in the other. He was drawn with a huge nose, thick, sneering lips and dark beard; across his chest was written OPEC.

Punch



"We reckon it's probably the way he would have wanted it."

ERIC MARGOLIS



In short, this distasteful caricature was almost a duplicate of Nazi propaganda posters showing big-nosed, thick-lipped bearded Jews holding Christian girls, "International Jewish Conspiracy" emblazoned on them. All you had to do was change the caption and, voila, dirty Arabs instead of dirty Jews. And this in a Jewish newspaper.

The point here is that racism has a tendency to besmirch victim and proponent alike. In recent years, as the Arab-Israeli struggle has grown more bitter, racist smears against Arabs and Moslems in our media have increased. So have anti-Jewish slurs in the Arab media. Some of these slurs in the West are being quietly abetted by people who themselves have only recently escaped from the terrors brought on by racism.

In fact, Arabs and Moslems are about the only group that can be portrayed by the media as villainous, murderous, lecherous or evil without provoking a storm of protest. Bad guys are in short supply: Liberal TV producers don't want to show Russians as heavies; the Chinese are our friends; Nazis are overworked, so who is left? Why, Arabs, Iranians, Moslems.

Arabs are largely Semites. Sad to say, many Jews have joined Uris in promoting anti-Arab racism which is really anti-Semitism minus the Jews. This is extremely dangerous. Only a tiny step separates anti-Arabism from anti-Judaism: The two current bitter foes are like peas in a pod. Abraham, patriarch of the Jews, is also Ibrahim, the first Moslem. In many more ways than either Arabs or Jews care to face, they are closely related.

Forty years ago, *Die Sturmer* showed Jews sucking Christian blood and told tales of incestuous Jewish mothers. Forty years later, Leon Uris writes the very same sort of filth, and with hardly a word of protest from our legions of official or self-appointed "human rights" watchdogs.

Ernst Zundel was charged and pilloried because he made racist slanders against the Jews. But when Canadians of Arab origin protested to the Ontario human rights police about Uris' lies and racism, their complaint was ignored. I am not for a moment suggesting that Uris should be censored; only that the public be made aware that his writings are every bit as false and racist as those of Zundel or Julius Streicher.

Anti-Semitism in North America has now been transferred from Jews to Arabs and Moslems — and so kept alive. Common sense suggests that this evil could easily switch back, one day, to the Jews as people become increasingly fed up with the Middle East. "A pox on both your houses, Israelis and Arabs, Jews and Moslems, you're all alike." Thanks to Leon Uris, this nightmare becomes more real.