

## Get ready for the 'Jew-niversal' decade of George Soros and open society

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The decade now over was a revolutionary one: social dissolution, waves of incitement, ever-growing gaps in all areas. Racism and violence became the expression of a global phenomenon in which the model of a civil society driven by universal values is succumbing to tribalism with its attendant phobias and prejudices.

Just as the decade was winding down, Rudy Giuliani encapsulated this new worldview in a conversation about George Soros. “Don’t tell me I’m anti-Semitic if I oppose him,” Giuliani, who was raised Roman Catholic, told New York magazine. “Soros is hardly a Jew. I’m more of a Jew than Soros is .... He doesn’t belong to a synagogue.” The former New York mayor also accused Soros of being “an enemy of Israel” and called him a “horrible human being.”

In Israel, the land of the Jewish Giulianis, the decade ended in the same spirit, with a poll showing that only 37 percent of young Jews see minority rights as a supreme value. This is lower than the average in the Arab world.

According to the U.S. president’s lawyer, a Jew’s place is in the synagogue, supporting an ultra-nationalist Israel, and that’s it. I don’t know what kind of a Catholic Giuliani is, but I fear he doesn’t ascribe to the tolerant and inclusive dogma embraced by the current pope. Judging by his statements, Giuliani seems to be the horrible human being.

The decade that has now ended began quite differently. Barack Obama was president, Benjamin Netanyahu’s cabinet included ministers and parties more moderate than he, and there was still some contact with the Palestinians – with a construction freeze in the settlements.

Early in the decade, the highly acclaimed book by Yuri Slezkine, “The Jewish Century,” was translated into Hebrew. Its main thesis is that the modern era is a Jewish era, with social mobility enabled through education, entrepreneurship, pragmatism and a willingness to shatter traditional modes of thinking. All this, according to Slezkine, was part of the worldview of Jewish communities, and modernism turned these values into “Jewish” ones.

The tension between Slezkine and Giuliani, just like the tension between

Donald Trump and Netanyahu on one side and Soros on the other, well characterizes the decade now over. The new populist world order is a gut reaction to globalization, civil wars, the collapse of states, the refugee waves and the global violence. In Washington and Jerusalem, in Ankara and Budapest, rulers spew incitement and hatred, having abandoned the lessons of the past and the pursuit of politics driven by the responsibility that governed world affairs since 1945.

The many evil supporters of Trump with their conceptions of white supremacy and anti-Semitism, and of Viktor Orbán with their “Hungary for Hungarians” and old ultra-nationalism, and of Netanyahu with his “Jewish state” and its built-in discrimination all give legitimacy to what is foul and wrong. Only a few people have the courage to stand up to the decade’s new tyrants at the head of illiberal democracies.

One of these people with courage is Soros, who understood early on that the struggle for power and influence is being waged not only between states but between new types of irresponsible governments and open and activist civil societies. Everywhere a conservative right-wing government has relinquished its natural obligation to defend the liberty and rights of the individual, one can discern some involvement of Soros. He’s a philanthropist taking a resolute political stand, helping local organizations that don’t fear fighting the enemies of an open society, whether internal or external. This is a tough, long fight.

Soros isn’t an elected official. He represents a “Jew-niversal” standpoint, a Jewish alternative symbol to the simplistic Jewish one embraced by Netanyahu, Trump and their supporters. Giuliani – and apparently many of his conservative Jewish supporters – doesn’t know that there’s another kind of global Judaism.

While so many Jews are doing their utmost to become ultra-nationalist and violent thugs, tough and callous, Soros represents – perhaps not consciously – the other face of Jewish civilization, the hidden and enchanted one where the main obligation is the commitment to fix the world’s wrongs not only for Jews but for everyone. People like him are implementing what Karl Popper said: No person or organization has a monopoly on the truth, so the more diverse opinions there are, living in peace and tolerance with one another, the more benefits will accrue to everyone.

This is war, for all intents and purposes, between the open and the closed, between isolationists and the embracers of inclusion. The enemies of freedom will always accuse its defenders of subversion. Its lovers, on the other hand,

are “Soros Jews” who fearlessly fight so that the new decade is ours, a “Jew-niversal” decade of Soros and the open society.