

**“Mitzvah or Mishegas? Jew Decide.”**



*“In my country there is problem  
And that problem is the Jew-  
They take everybody money  
And they never give it back.*

**CHORUS:**

*Throw the Jew down the well,  
So my country can be free.  
You must grab him by his horns-  
Then we have a big party.*

- lyrics by Kazakh journalist **Borat**

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*“I want to be the most famous Austrian since Hitler.”*

- Fashion reporter **Bruno**

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*“If you look up Israel on Wikipedia, everything is still in the present tense.  
That’s clearly something I need to work on.”*

-Wadiya’s dictator **General Aladeen**

Each of these shamelessly proud anti-Semites are not back woods racists or religious extremists, they’re creations of observant Jew and comic Sacha Baron Cohen.

With guerrilla style filmmaking and matzo balls to the wall courage, the Brit makes movies that stick faux bigots in real world hot spots - risking life, limb and lawsuits for a laugh. While shooting his mockumentary *Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make*

*Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan*, he earned 43 cop visits, FBI investigations and Secret Service stalking for D.W.M.E. (Driving While Middle Eastern). Playing flaming fashionista Bruno in the eponymous movie, he French kissed another man in a ultimate cage fight - in front of 60,000 good ole southern boys as they shouted “faggot” and stormed the cage to kill him.

Critics of Baron Cohen include the Anti Defamation League. They feel he doesn't mock but rather feeds anti-Semitism. The comic disagrees. “*I show the absurdity of holding any form of racial prejudice.*” He points out Holocaust historian Sir Ian Kershaw also believed the path to Auschwitz was paved with indifference. To Baron Cohen, going along with racist jokes – as many of his participants do - is what's truly dangerous.

Can wise cracking be too wise?

Interviewed on NPR Baron Cohen told Terry Gross, “*The irony of Borat is he's speaking Hebrew, and this guy (Aladeen, lead character in “The Dictator”) who wants to annihilate Israel, is also speaking Hebrew.*” Baron Cohen himself speaks it fluently and is very proud of his Jewish heritage. His mother Daniella is Israeli born. His Welsh Jewish father Gerald was President of the B'nai B'rith first lodge of England. Baron Cohen belonged to Zionist youth group Habonim Dror before high school, and after spent a year working and studying on Kibbutz Rosh Hanikra.

In 2010 he married actress Isla Fisher in a private, romantic Jewish ceremony, to her great relief. It could've been like General Aladeen's garish wedding in the *The Dictator*. Just before they're pronounced man and wife, the despot discovers his bride is Jewish. They embrace, but behind her back he signals for his soldiers to execute her. Mazel tov!