

Prince William's Middle East Visit Started Out Well, and Then....

by Hugh Fitzgerald



Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, has just completed a trip to the Middle East. He first spent a day and a half in Jordan, visiting the Roman city of Jerash, where his wife had had her picture taken when she was four years old. It turns out that the Middleton family had lived for several years in Jordan, where Kate's father had worked for British Airways. Prince William had his photograph taken as he stood in the exact same spot as his wife, aged 4, had done. That was made much of in the reporting, but nothing was reported – and certainly Prince William would not have been told by his Jordanian guide Samia Kouri – about the 25 churches in the city that had all been destroyed by Muslims, nor about the

circumstances of that destruction. He also watched the England-Panama match on television with Crown Prince Hussein. Bonding, presumably. He met with “refugees” in Jordan. Were they Syrians? Or did he meet, rather, with “Palestinian” refugees? And if the latter, would he have learned that they are by Jordanian law prevented from being full citizens, prevented from practicing many of the professions, or otherwise improving their lot, for the Arab states long ago decided that the more limited the life prospects for these “refugees,” the stronger their propaganda value. Prince William also met with “political figures” (unidentified) and “young scientists” whose names and achievements remain unknown.

Prince William described Jordan’s relationship with the United Kingdom as one of “historic ties and friendship.” That’s true, in a way: Jordan exists as a country only because the British decided back in the early 1920s, when they held the Mandate for Palestine, to ignore the stated purpose of the Mandate, and to prevent, rather than facilitate, any Jewish immigration to that part of the Mandate’s original territory that lay to the east of the Jordan river. Instead, all the land east of the Jordan, out to the desert, first became the Emirate of Transjordan, then the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan, and finally, in 1949, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. That’s one part of the “historic ties and friendship” between the United Kingdom and Jordan. Another part is represented by the role played by English military men, headed by Glubb Pasha, who both trained and led the Jordanian soldiers in the Arab Legion, helping them to take part in the war against the nascent Jewish state in 1948. Historic ties. Friendship.

The royal visitor also described Jordan as a “beacon of hope” – which I suppose it is, if it is being compared with Syria, or Iraq, or Libya, or Lebanon, or Yemen. But that dreamy description would certainly raise some eyebrows among the Jordanian masses, who just a few weeks ago rioted against the

economic policies of the government so violently that the prime minister had to resign; his departure may have temporarily assuaged the protesters, but did nothing to ameliorate problems, which are not of one man's making, but systemic. Jordan is a poor country, being propped up by a few billion dollars from Gulf Arabs, as well as by UNRWA aid for the local "Palestinian" population; it can hardly afford to feed itself, and its burgeoning population of Syrian refugees only makes matters much worse. It is no one's idea of a "beacon of hope."

Then Prince William arrived in Israel. He was widely reported to be the first member of the British royal family to have visited Israel. Not exactly. We all learned that before the arrival of Prince William, other members of the British royal family had indeed visited Israel. Prince Charles had attended the funeral of Yitzhak Rabin in 1990 and of Shimon Peres in 2016. So far, so ceremonial. But Prince Philip, William's grandfather, went to Israel in 1994 to visit the grave of his mother, Princess Alice of Greece, whose remains, after her death in 1984, had been kept at a chapel at Windsor Castle, but in 1988 they were brought to Israel, where she was buried, as had been her desire all along, near her aunt and mentor Elizabeth, Grand Duchess of Russia, at the Russian convent of St Mary Magdalene, above the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives.

And it is the heroic example of Princess Alice that one would like to think could have a lasting effect on Prince William. For during World War II, Princess Alice of Greece sheltered in her palace in Athens three Jewish girls, Rachel, Tilda, and Michele Cohen. When men from the Gestapo, suspicions aroused, came a-calling, Princess Alice, who was indeed somewhat hard of hearing, pretended not to be able to hear a thing, and the Gestapo men finally left, unable to conduct a proper interrogation. For her actions, Yad Vashem bestowed the title of Righteous Among the Nations on Princess Alice. A Righteous

Gentile, she now lies, a permanent pilgrim, in Israel.

When he visited her grave on his last day in Israel, Prince William would have looked upon the Mount of Olives below. Will he have learned what happened to the ancient tombstones at the Jewish cemetery on the Mount, all of them pulled up or knocked down or otherwise destroyed by the Jordanians when they controlled that part of Jerusalem? Many of the ancient tombstones were used to line the floors of the Jordanian army's latrines. One hopes he – and through him, others – will have learned about this. It deserves to be better known. Perhaps he'll be filled on this when he returns home.

Prince William spent an hour and a half at Yad Vashem. He was clearly overwhelmed, as anyone decent should be. He wrote this in the museum's guestbook: "It has been a profoundly moving experience to visit Yad Vashem today. It is almost impossible to comprehend this appalling event in history. Every name, photograph and memory recorded here is a tragic reminder of the loss suffered by the Jewish people. The story of the Holocaust is one of darkness and despair, questioning humanity itself."

"We must never forget the Holocaust – the murder of 6 million men, women and children, simply because they were Jewish. We all have a responsibility to remember and to teach future generations about the horrors of the past so that they can never reoccur. May the millions of Jewish people remembered by Yad Vashem never be forgotten."

At Yad Vashem he met, as well, with two elderly Israelis, who were among the 9,000-10,000 children (at least 7,500 of whom were Jewish), who were brought to England between 1938 and 1940 from Germany and German-annexed territories (Austria, the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia, and part of Poland) in order to save them from what awaited them at the hands of the Nazis. Prince William was surely moved by this meeting. And perhaps here, too, someone will remind him not only of those thousands

who were saved, but of the one and a half million Jewish children who were murdered by the Nazis, some of whom might have been saved had they been allowed to go to Mandatory Palestine. But the British government prevented Jews from going to Palestine at the time of their greatest need, maintaining a blockade throughout the war, and then continuing it even after the war, with the Royal Navy turning back ships carrying survivors of the Nazi camps, preventing them from landing in Mandatory Palestine. This unhappy history should also be conveyed to Prince William. It ought to give him pause.

Along with his visit to the Western Wall, Prince William visited the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque, where he undoubtedly learned from his "Palestinian" guides that Muslims are certain that Muhammad rode his winged steed Al-Buraq from Mecca to "the farthest mosque" (al-masjid al-aqsa) in Jerusalem, from which point he travelled to the Seventh Heaven and then back to Mecca. But will he also learn that "Jerusalem" is not mentioned even once in the Qur'an? Will someone tell Prince William that the "farthest mosque" could not possibly have been the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, because that Umayyad mosque was only completed in 705 A.D., 73 years after Muhammad's death?

Prince William seems to have been equally moved by his trip to Ramallah. Jewish suffering memorialized at Yad Vashem, "Palestinian" suffering memorialized in the tall tales and taqiyya of Mahmoud Abbas and his corrupt confederates. He began it by referring to "Palestine" as a "state" – which is what the U.N. would have you believe. But if it is a state, it's a state run by a corrupt despot, Mahmoud Abbas, who with his two "businessmen" sons has helped himself to nearly a half-billion dollars between them of aid meant for the "Palestinians." It's a state that relies on another state, Israel, for the collection of taxes, and relies almost completely on endless foreign charity – from UNRWA and others

– to survive. Its reason for existence is not to live in harmony with, but to be the vehicle for the destruction of, another state. The “Palestinian people” were invented after the Six-Day War to make plausible the notion that this was not a war of 22 Arab states against Israel, but a conflict between “two tiny peoples, each struggling for its homeland.” This propaganda victory has been devastating to Israel, which realized too late the effect that “Palestinian people” business was having.

In Ramallah, the story of “Palestinian” suffering and Israeli cruelty was undoubtedly presented to Prince William by those “Palestinians” at their most welcoming and on their best behavior. Songs may have been sung, but they weren’t the songs sung on Palestinian children’s shows that encourage them to “kill Jews.” Prince William would not have seen what is in the Palestinian textbooks that are hair-raising in their antisemitism. No one would have pointed out to him that so many of the streets and squares and schools in the “Palestinian” cities he passed are named after “martyrs” – that is, dead terrorists. No one will have told him about the “Palestinian Pay for Slay” program – that is, the very generous (many times more than the average West Bank wage) permanent subsidies given by the Palestinian Authority to the families of terrorists who have been killed, or to “Palestinian” prisoners for as long as they are imprisoned.

Prince William appears to have been most affected by whomever he met with last. He seemed genuinely touched by his visit to Yad Vashem. He might have made the connection between Jewish defenselessness during the Holocaust, and the defense, and refuge, that the Jewish state of Israel can now provide. And if Israel is to exist, it needs to exist within “secure and defensible borders,” as stipulated by U.N. Resolution 242. But having uttered, and written in the guestbook, all the right sentiments about Yad Vashem (that by now are boilerplate), he continued his journey, and things began to go wrong from

there. He refused, for example, to meet the mayor of Jerusalem, Nir Barakat, in his city, suggesting Ramat Gan instead. Apparently he felt that such a meeting would lend too much legitimacy to Israel's claim to Jerusalem as its capital. Barakat refused, and the meeting never took place. Does Prince William think Jerusalem was ever the capital of another people? Which people? When? Does he know how many thousands of years it has been the capital of the Jewish people? In "not taking sides" by refusing to visit the Mayor of Jerusalem, even in the western part of the city, he is indeed "taking sides" – the side of Arab and Muslim denial of the Jewish connection to Jerusalem. History, it seems, is not Prince William's strong suit.

Then came his visit to the "Palestinians." In Ramallah, he heard Mahmoud Abbas declare how much he, and all the "Palestinians," wanted peace. The Prince, unaware of the countless refusals of Abbas to engage in peace talks with Israelis, not to mention the celebration and support his government gives to terrorists and their families, took it all at face value. The "Palestinians" pulled out all the stops: what were billed as "Palestinian" folk dances (in reality, the Dabke dances that many Arabs do), a visit to the Jalazone refugee camp (touring its clinic and school, to see what good works these touching people managed to build), where smiling young women showed him their books. There was a red carpet, a marching band, an honor guard. During the Prince's walkabout, he was cheered and photographed, according to the script, and a good time was had by all. No mention of why there were still people kept in "refugee" camps at all, when the Israelis had managed to quickly incorporate into their society a far larger number of Jewish refugees who fled from Arab lands during and after the 1948 war. No discussion of the Pay-for-Slay arrangements, nor of the streets named after terrorist murderers. No mention of the thousands of Muslim terror attacks on Israel. What did any of that matter now that Mahmoud Abbas had declared himself roundly for peace – he

wouldn't lie, would he? – through “negotiations,” declaring his “full commitment to achieving a full and lasting peace based on a two state solution where the state of Palestine lives side by side with the state of Israel with both supervising peace and security.”

That's a curious way for Abbas to describe his refusal to engage in negotiations with Israel, as he has been doing for some time, even to the extent of infuriating other Arabs, including the Saudis, who are tiring of the “Palestinian” cause, and aware that Israel is a useful ally against Iran. Crown Prince Muhammad reportedly told Abbas recently that he should accept whatever is offered.

The Duke replied to Abbas's welcome in Ramallah: “Thank you for welcoming me and I'm very glad that our two countries work so closely together and have had success stories with education and relief work in the past and long may that continue.”

In his heedless enthusiasm for the “Palestinians,” Prince William elevated the “Palestinian Authority” to the status of a country, which will come as a surprise to many.

As for “success stories” with “education and relief work” – would he include as a “success story” in education the songs for children on Palestinian television, about killing Jews? Would “relief work” be considered a success even if it relies almost entirely on the endless generosity of the Infidel West, especially through the U.N., and refugee rolls that never diminish, but only increase?

Is there any way to let Prince William know about all the things he touched on, however tangentially, but that he didn't know enough about to understand correctly? His whirlwind trip now over, he can perhaps study the very matters that confronted him in the Middle East. He should learn that Great Britain failed in its solemn duties as Mandatory authority,

splitting off territory intended originally for the Jewish National Home in order to create the Emirate of Transjordan, and that originally the Mandate for Palestine was to include territory on both sides of the Jordan. He should learn about how Britain sealed off the escape route to Palestine for Jews before, during, and after World War II, so that along with the inspiring story of the 10,000 saved by the Kindertransport, he learns as well about the one-and-a-half million Jewish children who were murdered, when many might have been saved had they been allowed by the British into Palestine. He should learn about the role of the British soldiers who trained, and officered, the Arab Legion in the 1948 war. He should learn about the invention, for propagandistic purposes, of the "Palestinian people" after the Six-Day War. He should find out about Mahmoud Abbas's refusal to negotiate except on his terms – meaning that the Israelis should return to something like their 1949 Armistice Lines, a preposterous demand. He should learn about the "Palestinian" children's songs promoting the murder of Jews, about the subsidies given to the families of terrorists, about the many streets and squares named after many terrorists.

That's a lot to take in. But, especially if he's far from the Arab marching bands and red carpets and honor guards, and the cheering crowds of welcoming "Palestinians," he should take the time to engage, once back in London, in the sober study of what he clearly needs to learn about Israel and the "Palestinians." It's not beyond him. After all, he's a Prince among men.

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