

The Cult of Violence and the Yellow Badge for Jews

The wave of violence started by Palestinians youths, the stabbing of Israeli civilians and the Israeli response, that has resulted in the deaths of 43 Palestinians, 10 Israelis, and a Eritrean migrant worker continues. The terrorist attacks have largely been the outcome of false Muslim allegations that Israel was intending to break the status quo arrangements concerning the Al-Aqsa Mosque on the Temple Mount and in the Old City of Jerusalem. These arrangements permit only Muslim prayer on the site since 1967.

International organizations and the European Union, instead of condemning the Palestinian terrorist attacks, have now added fuel to the fire of incitement and have inflamed tension on the ground. Any reasonable person and organization might be expected to condemn the statement of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on September 16, 2015 that "We welcome every drop of blood spilled in Jerusalem, This is pure blood, clean blood, blood on its way to Allah. With the help of Allah, every martyr will be in heaven."

Stabbings by Palestinian youth followed almost immediately after this glorification of the culture of death by Abbas. But the sound of silence resounded again from the international community.

In an act that must be seen as the height of perversity, UNESCO on October 21, 2015 disgraced itself by passing a resolution by 26 to 6 (among those who were opposed were the US, the UK, and Germany) condemning the Israeli archaeological excavations near the Temple Mount and elsewhere in the Old City. The resolution, introduced by six Arab countries on behalf of the Palestinian Authority, had been toned down under protest, especially that of Irina Bokova, the Director-General

of UNESCO who deplored the original proposal. The whole resolution has to be seen as a deliberate Palestinian attempt to rewrite history.

Most egregious was the clause that was withdrawn seeking to rename the Western Wall, the remaining part of the Jewish Temple, as a Muslim religious site and part of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Nevertheless, in spite of all the evidence to the contrary and the military use of the mosque by Palestinians, the UNESCO resolution condemned the "aggressive and illegal measures taken against the freedom of worship and access of Muslims to the Mosque." Equally absurd and shameful is that the resolution termed two Jewish holy sites, the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron, and Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem as Muslim sites.

The international community has not condemned either the Palestinian cultivation of death nor its distortion of history. Neither has the European Union in its various alternating actions. Some European commentators have concentrated on the wrong problem. Since an article appeared in Le Monde in December 2012 on the issue, some Europeans have been critical of what they term the cultural imperialism of the U.S. The main target is GAFA (Google, Apple, Facebook, and Amazon) that has dominated the Internet. To these four can be added Microsoft. The argument is that they invade personal privacy and that they suggest ways to avoid paying their fair share of taxes. Europe has not been able to regulate them.

Twenty years ago, the European fight was against McDonald's. More recently the target is Silicon Valley. The GAFA designation overlaps with those referred to by Europeans as the "PRISM" companies or the Bullrun Firms, both NSA programs whose existence was leaked by Edward Snowden. The PRISM program, started in 2007, collects Internet communications from at least nine companies, including Microsoft, Yahoo, YouTube, as well as Apple, Google, and Facebook. The Bullrun program, named after the battle in the US Civil War, is

defined as intending to “defeat the encryption used in specific network connection technologies.”

In contrast to their disapproving attitude toward American technology, European countries have been weak or failed to exercise power in responding to Palestinian hostile acts or indeed to the real threat in the world, Islamic terrorism.

For some time the EU has been funding Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), more than 20 over the last three years, that support a boycott of Israel. The EU has been constantly critical of Israel’s settlement actions, and of restrictions of movement and access imposed for security reasons.

Gerald Steinberg has drawn attention to what has been the EU fixation on Israel as revealed in an article by John Gatt-Rutter, former EU representative to the West Bank, Gaza, and UNRWA, in an article in Palestine-Israel Journal, 2015. Two years earlier, on January 29, 2013, Gatt-Rutter had written an open letter from “Occupied Jerusalem” about Palestinians suffering under military occupation and the victims of Israeli systematic violations of human rights.

In 2015, Gatt-Rutter indicated what the EU considers the real problems preventing peace – “the Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem, restrictions on movement and access to Gaza, or actions or inaction by Israel that violate its duties as the occupying power.” He suggests that the EU use its leverage with both sides, but in fact mentions only the Israeli settlements, and it is Israel that has been mainly responsible for not resuming peace talks.

Israel has been associated with the EU in a number of ways: the 2000 Agreement, the European Neighbor Policy, and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and Union for the Mediterranean. Nevertheless, the EU for some time has been preparing documents listing sanctions to be levied against Israel in the fields of trade, agriculture, science, and

culture. Sanctions were also suggested against Israeli banks, touching on loans, mortgages, and the tax-exempt nature of European charities that deal with Israeli settlements.

It is a sign of weakness that on October 18, 2015 the European Council of the European Union (EU) adopted the legal acts providing for the lifting of all nuclear-related economic and financial EU sanctions, following the specifications of the nuclear deal with Iran, the Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). They are said to come into effect with the International Atomic Energy Agency verification of the implementation by Iran of agreed nuclear-related measures. The EU High Representative Frederica Mogherini and Iranian Foreign Minister are both sure that all sides, the West and Iran, are strongly committed to ensure that implementation of JCPOA can start as soon as possible.

In the same spirit as this decision of the European Council, the EU Court of Justice in Luxembourg in the same week ruled to relax the sanctions against Iraco, the main aluminum manufacture company of Iran. This is strikingly different from EU policy to impose sanctions against Israel starting in November 2015. The policy means that products, fruit. Vegetables, cosmetics, toys, and textiles, coming from Israeli businesses in the West Bank, regarded as "settlement products," estimated to be worth 220 million euros a year, will be marked as such and thereby liable to be boycotted or lose their market.

This process is a virtual reminder of the Nazi labeling of Jews with a Yellow Badge. It had started on April 13, 2015 when 16 foreign ministers of EU countries, including Britain and France, proposed labeling goods sold in European stores. The specious argument was that European consumers must know the origin of the goods they are buying. Already, Britain, Ireland, and Belgium were labeling goods in this way. Other countries, such as Norway, refuse to accept fruits and vegetables coming from producers in the West Bank.

The EU and the international community as a whole would do well to rethink its policy of imposing sanctions on the State of Israel, and address the real current problem, the cultivation of death seemingly entrenched at the moment among young Palestinians.

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