What Makes Hamas Worse Than the Nazis

Lord Andrew Roberts writes in the *Washington Free Beacon:*

My late publisher Lord George Weidenfeld knew about the Nazis. Escaping from Vienna soon after the Anschluss in 1938, he managed to save his immediate family from the Holocaust, although he lost many other relatives to it. He broadcasted to the Third Reich while working for the BBC during the Second World War, and published Albert Speer's memoirs after it. If anyone could get into the psyche of the Nazis, George could.

It therefore came as a surprise when, over tea in the Carlyle Hotel in New York nearly a decade ago, George said, "There are people who are worse anti-Semites than the Nazis." He went on to explain why al Qaeda, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad, although of course not as genocidal on the same physical scale as the Nazis, were qualitatively worse than the Nazis in their belief systems, impulses, and instincts.

George died in January 2016 but had he been alive on October 7 this year, he would have had the satisfaction of having his view, once considered controversial, very publicly justified. For whereas the Nazis went to great lengths to hide their crimes from the world, because they knew they were crimes, Hamas has done the exact opposite, because they do not consider them to be so.

In October 1943 Heinrich Himmler, the head of the SS, delivered a notorious speech to 50 of his senior lieutenants in Posen. “I want to speak frankly to you about an extremely grave matter,” he said. “We can talk about it among ourselves, yet we will never speak of it in public. … I am referring to the evacuation of the Jews, the extermination of the Jewish people. … It is a page of glory in our history that has never been written and is never to be written.”

By total contrast, the Hamas killers 80 years later attached GoPro cameras to their helmets so they could livestream their atrocities over social media. Although the Nazis burnt Jews alive in barns on their retreat in 1945, they did not film themselves doing it. There are plenty of photographs of Nazis standing around death-pits full of Jewish corpses, but these were taken for private delectation rather than public consumption.

When on January 27, 1945, the Red Army reached Auschwitz, they only found 7,000 living skeletons there out of a normal camp population of 140,000, because the Nazis had marched the rest westwards, partly in order kill the death-marchers but also because they did not want evidence of their crimes to be uncovered. Gassing operations there had ended in November 1944, and attempts were made to destroy the gas chambers. “Killing installations had been dismantled,” writes Sir Ian Kershaw in his book *The End*, “and attempts made to rase the traces of the camp’s murderous activities.”

The sheer glee with which Hamas, by contrast, killed parents

in front of their children and of children in front of their parents, was broadcast to the world. Nazi sadism was routine and widespread, but it wasn't built into their actual operational plans in the way that Hamas's sadism has been.

The gas chambers were invented in part because the Nazis did not much enjoy the actual process of killing Jews as much as Himmler hoped they might. As Laurence Rees notes of Himmler in 1941, "He had observed two years before the psychological damage that shooting Jews at close range had caused his team of killers and so he had overseen the development of a system of murder via the gas chambers that to an extent distanced from emotional trauma." No such trauma is evident in Hamas's teams of killers, who phoned up their parents on October 7 to boast about the number of Jews they had killed.

After invading countries, the Nazis often took hostages to ensure the compliance of the local population with their proclamations. The mayor, businessmen, the popular village priest, and other worthies would be taken hostage and threatened with execution if resistance were offered to their rule. It was brutal and in contravention of all the rules of war, but even the Nazis, foul as they were, did not deliberately take nine-month-old babies and young children, women, and octogenarians hostage, as Hamas has done. Nor did the Nazis use babies in incubators and children in hospital ICU units as human shields.

The Nazis recognized that if the Red Cross or other international agencies uncovered evidence of the Holocaust there would be an international outcry, whereas Hamas has spotted something about the modern world that has meant that instead of demonstrations against their atrocities and hostage-taking, the largest demonstrations globally have taken place against the victim, Israel. Even movements traditionally seen as on the Left, such as the women's movement, have failed to raise their voices against the mass rape of Israeli women on October 7.

Rape has been seen in every conflict since the dawn of time. The officer corps of civilized countries denounce it, and in the Second World War even the barbaric Nazis had strict rules against their Aryan master-race having sex with people they considered *Untermenschen*. “One of the differences between the atrocities committed by the Nazis who were carrying out the Final Solution and many other war crimes of the twentieth century,” writes Laurence Rees in his book *Auschwitz*, “is the overt insistence by the Nazis that their troops refrain from sexual violence, not out of humanity but out of ideology. … The Jews and Slavic population of the East represented, to the Nazis, racially dangerous peoples. … Slav and Jewish women (especially the latter) were absolutely out of bounds. Killing Jewish women was a duty, but having sex with them was a crime.”

Of course this was regularly ignored in practice. Maris Rowe-McCulloch’s “Sexual Violence Under Occupation During World War II” shows how the Nazis regularly forced women into military brothels; indeed there was a brothel in Auschwitz itself. SS officers who raped Jewish women there tended to be transferred out, but not punished. One officer, Gerhard Palitzsch, was arrested, but only transferred to a sub-camp of Birkenau. German officers were instructed not to punish rape when it occurred, as a 1940 memorandum from Field Marshal Walther von Brauchitsch in Regina Mühlhäuser’s “Reframing Sexual Violence as a Weapon and Strategy of War” shows. But that is different from the Hamas leadership giving their men orders to rape as many Jewish women as they could find and film themselves doing it, and in all too many cases taking them hostage afterwards or killing them.

In *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*, Daniel Goldhagen notes how “Hitler opted for genocide at the first moment that the policy became practical. The moment that the opportunity existed for the only Final Solution that was final, Hitler seized the opportunity to bring about his ideal of a world forever freed

of Jewry and made the leap to genocide." This came in 1941 when both Poland and the western USSR were under his control. (Over half of all Europe's Jews lived in the Soviet Union then.) "Demonological racial antisemitism was the motive force of the eliminationist program," Goldhagen adds, "pushing it to its logical genocidal conclusion once German military prowess succeeded in creating appropriate conditions."

Yet Hamas embarked on its genocidal attack when it only had southern Israel under its control for a few hours, and thus when it knew that the Israeli response would be instantaneous and devastating. Unlike the Nazis, who hoped that their murders could be hidden by the fog of war and complete territorial domination, Hamas grasped at their window of opportunity in the full knowledge that they would be punished for it, and soon. Whereas the Nazis assumed they would win the war and thus would never have to face retribution for their crimes, Hamas knew it was only a matter of hours away, yet still they launched their attack, caring nothing for the effect on ordinary Gazans. Their lust for torturing and murdering Jews was therefore even more powerful than the Nazis', who waited until the front line had pushed forward before sending in the *Einsatzkommando* to wipe out Polish and Russian Jewish communities.

Toward the end of the war, senior Nazis like Heinrich Himmler and Ernst Kaltenbrunner tried to exchange Jews for cash, exposing how fundamentally cynical and corrupt they were, but also how they were willing to put greed over the killing impulse. Hamas, by contrast, was doing well out of the relative hiatus in military activity before October 7, with thousands of Gazans being issued work permits to earn more in Israel than they ever could in Gaza. Unlike even the heinous anti-Semites Himmler and Kaltenbrunner, therefore, Hamas has not put its greed for cash over its one true love: killing Jews.

"Very many, probably most, Germans were opposed to the Jews

during the Third Reich," writes Ian Kershaw in his book *Hitler, The Germans and the Final Solution*, "welcomed their exclusion from the economy and society, and saw them as natural outsiders to the German 'National Community,' a dangerous minority against whom it was legitimate to discriminate. Most would have drawn the line at physical maltreatment. The very secrecy of the Final Solution demonstrates more clearly than anything else the fact that the Nazi leadership felt it could not rely on popular backing for its exterminationist policy."

Here, too, the contrast with Hamas is obvious. The elimination of Jews is openly promised in the Hamas constitution, as it tacitly is in the "From the river to the sea" chant so beloved of today's demonstrators in the West. Gazans voted for Hamas in 2005 in far greater proportions than Germans voted for the Nazis in 1932, and a good proportion of them celebrated wildly when Hamas paraded its hostages through the streets of Gaza on the afternoon of October 7.

Kershaw writes of how "The Final Solution would not have been possible without the … depersonalization and debasement of the figure of the Jew." In both Gaza and the West Bank, printed educational textbooks present Jews as despicable, worthless, and sinister figures, utterly depersonalized and debased. This is a recipe for further generational conflict. Kershaw argues that in Nazi Germany, ordinary Germans' "'mild' anti-Semitism was clearly quite incapable of containing the progressive radical dynamism of the racial fanatics and the deadly bureaucratization of the doctrine of race-hatred." This is still more true of Gaza today.

George Weidenfeld was therefore correct back in 2015, and the events of October 7 have confirmed it. Hamas is—while taking into account the wild disparity in the sheer geographical and numerical extent of their crimes—qualitatively even more anti-Semitic than the Nazis were. One thing in which they are exactly equal, however, is that Nazi barbarism had to be

utterly extirpated, and that goes for Hamas too.

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