

PALESTINE, ISRAEL, AND ANTI-SEMITISM:

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The most absolutely intractable problem facing the people of the world today, and the most dangerous as well, is the situation in that part of the world called Palestine. That is not to say that there are not other “flash points” such as Taiwan and the India-Pakistan “face off”. But the situation vis a vis Israel and the Palestinians is the most immediately dangerous. There is one fact that everyone is trying desperately to avoid speaking about. That absolutely unavoidable “fact” is that because both sides to the argument are equally right and equally wrong, the problem is not amenable to any solution that is humanely acceptable.

The essence of the problem is, as Sir Isaac Newton pointed out so clearly: “Two objects cannot occupy the same volume of space”. Palestine cannot be the homeland of two antagonistic peoples.

But first, there is an additional problem I am forced to discuss which has grown insensibly out of the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, and that problem is the clear fact that the hatred of Jews is raising its head once again in our world society.

It is a common euphemism and avoidance of fact to refer to the hatred of Jews as Anti-Semitism but this is so misleading it actually does harm. The Jews aren’t, for the most part, Semites at all, but the Arabs, and of course the Palestinians, who are a mixture of various Semitic peoples, definitely are. For this reason I will not use the phrase “Anti-Semitism” to describe this problem, when what I am talking about is hatred of the Jewish people.

Why do I say this? Well technically the Semites are an ethnic group which arose in the area we call “The Middle East” the Hittites, the Akkadians, the Mesopotamians, the Arabs, and the greatest part of the inhabitants of Canaan were Semites. Modern archaeology is demonstrating clearly that the people we call “The Jews” were among the original inhabitants of Canaan. However, the Jews were for the most part driven out of that area in two separate occasions. One of those occasions is called the Babylonian Captivity in which the Jewish inhabitants of Israel and Judea were deported to Mesopotamia around 1500 years before the Common era. Most of them never returned to Canaan/Palestine as they fully assimilated into the local population. A distinct minority were returned to Palestine during the reign of Cyrus The Great and re-built a Jewish society there, but it was a weak power in a military sense, and they were conquered and occupied by later powers the Greeks and Romans being the most significant culturally. Then in the year 70 of the common era, the majority of the remaining Jews were expelled from the country in the time of the Emperor Titus.

The so-called Diaspora began fifteen centuries before the common era, and, as a result of both conquest and the natural movement of individuals went on until 70 years into the

present era. Because of this Diaspora the majority of European Jews aren't even a little bit Semite. Most of the so-called Ashkenazi Jews are the descendants of a tribe of people called the Kazars who came from the Crimean region in Russia and which converted to Judaism during the medieval era. The only Jews who can reasonably be called Semites are those called the Sephardim who are from Spain, Portugal, and North Africa.

That's why I feel it better to be accurate and call it what it is, not "anti-Semitism" but hatred of Jews.

People who are decent and well-meaning had hoped that World War II and the defeat of Germany and the resulting revelation of how far down into the depths of depravity the unbridled hatred of Jews could carry a nation, would put an end to the sickness that began when Christianity became the principle religion of the Western World. But unfortunately, that is not the case.

The very existence of The State of Israel, and its nature as a Jewish Homeland is the result of the actions of Nazi Germany and the immense and very well-deserved guilt felt by most Western Governments for their complicity in the holocaust. For, whether anyone likes the idea or not, inaction in the face of atrocity is complicity in that atrocity!

We all of us know how the holocaust came to be, or at least I hope we do; but what I think is not so well known is the root causes of the deep hatreds that led to the holocaust.

How is it possible that Christians, whose religion was allegedly founded by the mythical Jesus of Nazareth who was described in the foundation myth of Christianity as a "Pharisee of Pharisees" which means "a Jew of Jews" hate the Jews with such an abiding and fierce hatred?

It is my strongest belief that the hatred of Jews was the conscious creation of the early Christian leaders because the religion was founded by Jews and the first converts to it were Jews, as long as the greatest majority of Jews denied the Messiah hood of Jesus, the religion was challenged by those with the greatest right to do so, and the Christians have always been terribly insecure as to the validity of their beliefs. This insecurity led to the hatred of Jews and then on to the Crusades, the Inquisition and other manifestations of insecurity. Church dogma changed the Jews from the "People of Christ" to the "Killers of Christ".

Because of that dogma, the holocaust didn't begin in the time of Hitler Germany but in the late stages of the Roman Empire. According the Christ Mythos, Jesus of Nazareth was Crucified by the Roman Government. The most important thing to understand about this is that the Christian Religion as it was in its beginnings, was at first a branch of and then the only relict of, The Roman State. The Curia Romanum which rules the Roman Catholic Religion is the only part of the Roman Empire to survive that Empire.

The myth of the Jews as "Christ Killers" was a very successful effort to divert the guilt for

something which cannot be proven ever to have happened. But for almost 1600 years the Jewish people have suffered and died in great numbers. I am afraid that suffering isn't finished, and if events presently occurring in the most advanced nations in Europe can be seen as evidentiary, the suffering has yet to end.

Now, I want to make it clear that there are two separate anti-Jewish phenomena occurring in Europe at this time. The newspapers and television news programs are full of stories about the bombing of synagogues, desecration of cemeteries, and worst of all in my view, the attack on a group of Jewish kids practicing soccer (Football in Europe). Now these episodes of violence, we are told, are carried out by members of the immense Muslim immigrant population in Europe and might therefore be seen as a direct outgrowth of the conflict in Palestine/Israel.

But, these things terrible as they are, aren't what I am talking about. I am talking about the rebirth of anti-Jewishness among the Christian population of Europe. Jew Haters are "coming out of their closets" all over the world. As evidence of the seriousness of the situation we see the rebirth of myths and legends that date back to medieval times and others that have been invented since World War II. If these myths were only surfacing in the Muslim communities it would at least be understandable, but they are surfacing all over Europe and South America.

These myths and rumors are tremendously current in the Muslim World, but they'll believe anything about the Jews as long as it's bad enough. The majority of Muslims apparently believe that "The Jews" were responsible for the events of 9/11. Government run newspapers in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and elsewhere reported and continue to report that all the Jews evacuated the World Trade Centre before the planes crashed. This of course, is not so. But also we hear again both from Muslims and Europeans that there was no Holocaust. There was, this I know for a fact. But we are also hearing canards that come out of the "Protocols of Zion" which are late 19th century Czarist propaganda made much use of by Hitler. In the Muslim world the people apparently believe a lie dating back to the 9th or 10th century. That is the hoary lie that Jews sacrifice Christian or Muslim children for the Passover Holiday.

But the above are only the most egregious and outrageous examples of current anti-Jewishness. The truly dangerous ones are far more subtle, and that kind of prejudice we hear from officials of Charitable Organizations, The Media, European Governments and the United Nations. These things are far more subtle hence far more dangerous.

One need only to be obviously non-Jewish, as I am, to regularly hear comments and remarks that make it indelibly clear that even in America, "The Land of Freedom" the hatred of Jews lies right beneath a surface veneer of acceptance. It is no longer fashionable to show hatred of Jews openly, but when people feel secure they do so.

One particularly ugly aspect of this anti-Jewishness, at least in my opinion, is that much of it stems from envy, for that is what I hear in the remarks and comments I hear, both here

in America and abroad. It's pretty clear to almost everyone that the Jews, in numbers very far from proportionate to their percentile of population have contributed enormously to Human Civilization in more ways than it is possible to fully enumerate. In the arts, in education, in the sciences, in philosophy, in Government, and in Commerce, the Jews have contributed far more than what could be called their share! For this, some people, far too many people in fact, hate them. Remove the Jews from the equation (as some devoutly wish to do) and you would lose much of what makes civilization wonderful.

I do not put up with or permit these anti-Jewish comments and remarks to go unchallenged in my presence, but far too many others do. During the Russian Revolution a really great number of my relatives were murdered because of their names and status and so I can identify with being hated because of what you are born.

All things considered, Russian anti-Jewishness being particularly virulent, and the ruling classes being more than a little complicitous in the pogroms, perhaps some of it was Karma. The Jews though, never did anything to deserve their ill treatment.

Now, let's get back to Palestine/Israel. The phenomenon of revived Anti-Jewishness, even among Muslims, should have nothing to do with what's going on in the Middle East.

But let's attempt to trace the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians and Arabs to its beginnings. The State of Israel was founded in 1948, but that's not when it all began. No matter what the reality of their origins may have been, it has been an article of faith among the Jewish People that someday they would return to The Holy Land. This began to materialize in actual planning with the foundation of the Zionist Movement by Theodore Herzl in the late 19th Century, and truthfully, that's when the conflict began.

Over time, the Jews managed to get Great Britain to promise them a "homeland" in Palestine in a document called "The Balfour Declaration". With this as an impetus Jews from Eastern Europe began to purchase land in the area from mostly absentee Turkish owners. This caused some complaints in the area but the matter came to a head in 1948 when the United Nations agree to form the Jewish State of Israel. As I am sure many of you know, this was not accepted by either the Palestinian Arabs or the various Muslim Countries and the fledgling state was attacked by a conglomeration of Arab armies. It successfully defended itself much to everyone's surprise and has been forced to do so ever since.

I think it fair to say that in the many wars and conflicts since 1948, the Israelis were never the aggressors though in the current conflict there are grounds to claim they are. But I must ask where does self-defense end and aggression begin?

In the beginning of this essay I made the claim that "both sides are equally right and equally wrong" and that is the crux of the problem. Palestine was not an uninhabited desert Island but a place many of whom's inhabitants had lived since the end of the Crusades. The Jews who flooded in from Europe's displaced person's camps were the

descendants of people who had lived in Europe for centuries, and as I indicated earlier, some of them, the Eastern Jews who were descended from the Kazars, had never lived anywhere but Europe and the Crimea. To the inhabitants, even though the Jews were in Palestine legally and with the full support of the United Nations, they nonetheless were seen to be invaders or colonizers.

The only claim the Jews had to Palestine was based on the Old Testament. That claim then, is only as valid as one accepts the Bible to be. In any case the Jews had been forced out in the year 70 of the common era, and the Palestinians had been living there for a very long time. From 70 C.E. to 1948 C.E. is 1878 years. The question one must try to answer logically is this: Is a hiatus if such a length leave a nation with a valid claim to a piece of land? If it were uninhabited the question would be moot, but it wasn't uninhabited, and there's the rub!

The members of the United Nations were ashamed of their behavior vis a vis the holocaust and as a result gave away someone else's land to people whom they pitied. There has been 54 years of almost continual conflict as a result.

The State of Israel is a "fact on the ground". Israel exists, it cannot be made to stop existing. The Palestinians have been subjected to a great injustice by the creation of that state. Two wrongs do not make a right. The question the Israelis and the Palestinians are faced with, and by now the rest of the world as well, is what to do about it? Can a way be found to deal justly with both sides?

But there are additional complications. It would be easy to say that Palestine should be made a "one man one vote Democracy" and the Palestinians and the Israelis live there in a totally secular state. Is it possible? I really don't think so.

The existence of a "Jewish State" as a refuge for all Jews everywhere is very important to the Jews. Given the history of their long travail, one can hardly blame them. Given the present recurrence of anti-Jewishness in places they felt themselves safe, one can hardly blame them. Because of their need for an exclusively Jewish place of refuge, the Israelis have created a kind of theocratic state. To the degree that a Government is theocratic, it is NOT Democratic. The theocratic nature of the Israeli state is unjust to the majority of Israelis who are totally secular. In point of fact, Israel was founded by Zionists who were Socialists and totally secular.

The Palestinians, have been dispersed in a Diaspora of their own, and worse yet, many of them, have spent almost three generations in squalid refugee camps, confined there by reason of policy of their Arab neighbors. But no matter whose fault it is, and Israel bears almost as much, but not nearly as much fault as The Arab States, it is an injustice.

This has now become a problem for all of us. Is it a problem amenable to solution? By that I mean to say amenable to a peaceful solution. There are, of course, other options, but they are totally unacceptable!

Do I see a solution? Sad to say, no I don't! The ONLY solution is for religion to be completely removed from the equation. If it were not for religion we would not have this problem. Is it possible to remove religion from the equation? I really doubt it.

Of course, if anyone has been reading newspapers or watching the Television News Programs they can't help but be aware that all sorts of people and institutions are talking about a solution. But, it's a solution imposed on the parties to the conflict by people and institutions outside of the conflict. While an imposed "solution" may stop some, or even most, of the bloodshed for a while, it will definitely not stop all of the bloodshed. No externally imposed solution can last. Naturally there is talk of "Peacekeepers"; but how long can they stay? The moment they depart the conflict will take up where it left off.

No matter how much the European Union, the United States, and the more responsible Arab Nations want peace in Palestine, if the two parties to the conflict do not accept the other party's existence, there can be no "Peace" no matter how much everyone, including the parties to the conflict, desire it.

But I've been talking about two disparate problems. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the rebirth of European and American Anti-Jewishness. As I believe and hope I've made clear, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is insoluble or at least insoluble as far as I can see. But what about the other? Of course the hatred of Jews wouldn't exist were it not for religion. But religion is a fact of all our lives, even those of us who subscribe to no religion at all. Can people be educated to stop hating those who believe differently than themselves? Can they be retrained to stop killing those who question their beliefs? People of good will have been trying to make the world a better place by ending inter-religious hostility for millennia. I very much fear that as long as each of the religions believe themselves to be "the only true faith", the task is nearly insurmountable. Notice, I said "nearly insurmountable" that means I haven't given up hope. Nor should you.

Religion is like AIDS or Cancer, the Human Race would be far better off without it.