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Hamas is a threat to the Palestinian cause

Richard Cohen, The Washington Post, 29 June 2010

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/06/28/AR2010062803753.html>

It's a pity that Israel, while substantially loosening its grip on Gaza, will continue to enforce a blockade when, with just a little imagination, it could insist on a deal with the activists once again steaming its way: You can proceed to Gaza if, once you get there, you demand that Hamas cease the persecution of women, institute freedom of religion, halt the continuing rocketing of Israel, release an Israeli hostage, ban torture and rescind an official charter that could have made soothing bedtime reading for Adolf Hitler. This may take some time.

In fact, these demands would never be met. Gaza is a mean and brutal place with a totalitarian government steeped in a cult of violence and death. This hardly means that the government does not have a measure of popular support and did not, as some of the activists naively point out, come to power by democratic means. So did the Nazis.

The term "Islamic fascism" gets thrown around a lot. I initially recoiled from it because I prefer to reserve fascism for fascists. The term is too loosely employed -- New York City cops were called fascists by Vietnam-era peace demonstrators -- but Paul Berman, in his new book "The Flight of the Intellectuals" makes a solid case that it can, with justice, be applied to Hamas.

Berman traces Hamas's intellectual pedigree to Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, whose founder, Hassan al-Banna, greatly admired Hitler, and to Haj Amin al-Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem who spent much of World War II in Germany cozying up to Hitler, organizing a Muslim SS unit and, on occasion, remonstrating with the Nazis for not killing enough Jews. (See also Robert S. Wistrich's recent book, "A Lethal Obsession".) It's appalling not only that Husseini was granted sanctuary in Arab countries after the war but also that he continues to be revered as a Palestinian patriot.

The successor to both Banna and Husseini was Sayyid Qutb (1906-66), an Egyptian intellectual of uncontested importance whose influence can be found in the writing of the Hamas charter. Qutb was an indefatigable author (more than 20 books, some written while in an Egyptian prison where he was tortured), but the article that should interest the pro-Hamas activists the most is called "Our Struggle with the Jews." It is a shocking and repellent work of anti-Semitism that, among other things, says the "Jews will be satisfied only with the destruction" of Islam. Qutb cites that hoary anti-Semitic forgery "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" for substantiation -- suggesting that his status as an intellectual is somewhat due to heroic grade inflation.

The extremely useful term "useful idiots" was originally coined to describe Soviet sympathizers in Western countries. But there is no reason it cannot be applied to so-called activists who wish to break the blockade, which is an increasingly untenable exercise that Israel, bit by bit, is loosening. That's a good thing. But if Israel is expected to release its grip on Gaza, it's entitled to a bit of reciprocity -- at the very least the release of the hostage Gilad Shalit, who was captured not in Gaza but on the Israel side of the border. He has been held for four years now and has never once been visited by an outsider. How about maybe one ship in the approaching flotilla just for him?

Now is the time, I suppose, to say that Israel is not exactly perfect either. It continues to overreact, uses too much force and has often trampled on the rights of Palestinians. Still, Israel is Thomas Jefferson's idea of heaven compared with Gaza, which could serve as a seaside Club Med for Jew-haters. One country is consonant with the Enlightenment; the other is a dark place of

religious intolerance where the firmest principles of anti-Semitism -- not anti-Zionism or pro-Palestinianism -- are embedded in the Hamas charter.

The irony is that Israel is often called a colonialist power. In some sense, the charge is true. But the ones with the true colonialist mentality are those who think that Arabs cannot be held to Western standards of decency. So, for this reason, Hamas is apparently forgiven for its treatment of women, its anti-Semitism, its hostility toward all other religions, its fervid embrace of a dark (non-Muslim) medievalism and its absolute insistence that Israel has no right to exist. Maybe the blockade ought to end -- but so, too, should anyone's dreamy idea of Hamas. It's not just a threat to Israel. It's a threat to the eventual Palestine.

Deporting the "Son of Hamas": A betrayal of American values

[Noa Tishby, The Huffington Post, 30 June 2010](#)

You may not know Mosab Hassan Yousef, but he is a hero. Mr. Yousef grew up in a culture of violence and hatred, and rejected it for faith in peace and a belief in humanity. He chose to place himself in mortal danger by working against one of the most dangerous terrorist organizations in the world.

For his heroism, the US immigration authorities may today choose to send him to certain death.

Yousef is the renowned "Son of Hamas": the eldest son of Hamas founder Sheikh Hassan Yousef. Hamas itself is well known, for all the wrong reasons. The Islamist group is infamous for its practices, of which suicide bombings of buses, weddings, and cafés are only the tip of the iceberg. For all Hamas's terror against Israelis -- of whom I am one, native-born and raised -- its most numerous victims are the Palestinians who suffer under its tyrannical rule in Gaza.

To live under Hamas as a Palestinian in Gaza is to suffer oppression and privation in equal measure. The *Economist*, among other sources, has documented its repression of the people it purports to liberate: If you form a rival political party, Hamas's killers will storm your mosque and shoot you down at prayer. If you protest its taxes, you'll be thrown in some of the worst jails in the Middle East. If you fail to abide by its extortionate permitting processes, Hamas will bulldoze your home. (Interestingly, foreigners only show up to protest when Israelis do this.) If you attempt to purchase basic goods, you are subjected to Soviet-style shortages as a result of Hamas's unyielding belligerent actions. If you are one of the dwindling number of Palestinian Christians, forget about living as anything but a dhimmi -- a second-class citizen without basic freedoms. And God help you if you are a woman or a gay man.

Overlaying all of this is the awful realization that what Hamas does to Palestinians is only a preview of what it would do to Israelis, given the chance. Those of us from Israel know this all too well. Even I, from a super left-wing Israeli family -- we're Labour voters, and even Labour is sometimes too conservative for us -- have had to confront that grim reality. I remember that awful day in 1995, when I was woken up by the words, "A bus has exploded two blocks from home." Twenty-one Israelis and one Dutch citizen were killed in that attack. A radical Islamist fanatic detonated his suicide vest. He slaughtered 22 innocent people who wanted nothing more than to get to work, to go shopping, or to get home.

One of the dead could have been me. And the murderer could have been Mosab Hassan Yousef.

I wasn't among the dead through plain luck -- and Mosab Hassan Yousef never became a killer through the power and uprightness of his conscience and character. A year after that attack,

Yousef was arrested by the Israeli security services. That's when he began working for Israel to stop Hamas's terrorism, as one of its most trusted and valuable secret agents.

When we are raised with a certain doctrine, any doctrine, we tend to relate to it as absolute reality and it is often impossible to make your own judgment on what you are being told is "the truth." Not Mosab Hassan Yousef. He grew up, thought about what he was being indoctrinated, and came up with the following conclusion: "People become enslaved to radical Islamic beliefs that promote hate and violence." Imagine that: having never known any other life, having been taught an ideology of death from the cradle, and having a founder of Hamas as his own father, the young Yousef was ready to reject all that. Once in an Israeli prison, he was, paradoxically, free: free for the first time to examine his scruples and follow his conscience.

I believe that there is good in every heart, and that hate judgment and racism are taught. No evil is innate, and no child is born bad. Yet how many of us would have the strength to do what Yousef did? I'm not sure I would, and I am sorry to say few could.

What came next was a decade of precious information. Yousef became a double agent for Israeli security. Remarkably, he saved lives on both sides: he prevented Hamas attacks on Israelis, and he insisted that the Israeli forces never kill those on whom he informed. On top of all that, he had a change of faith. Yousef turned against Hamas in 1996, and three years later, he began exploring Christianity -- a process culminating in his 2005 baptism. The radical break with his past, from Islamist purveyor of violence to Christian advocate for peace, was complete.

Yousef could not stay in Israel or any of the Palestinian territories after that. As an apostate from Islam and (by 2007) a known agent for Israel, he was marked for death on two counts. There was no safe haven for him -- no spot outside the reach of Hamas or the Palestinian and Islamist movements. So he came to America.

Now, three years later, he may have to return -- and not by choice. Yousef has spent his three years in this country speaking out against terrorism, against Radical Islam, and against hate. He has written a bestselling book about his experiences. He has been a model immigrant: productive, upright, and fully embracing the American ideals of toleration and individual liberty. Yet because his application for refugee status is denied, a federal immigration judge in San Diego may today elect to force him to return to Israel or the Palestinian territories, where he will be a marked man.

This is, to be blunt, insane. I too am an immigrant in this great country but my situation is hardly like Yousef's. If Mosab Hassan Yousef is sent home, the hunt begins, and he counts down the days until the most accomplished murderers on earth exact their revenge. It is a cruel injustice, and a terrible repayment for a man who has truly walked in righteousness where most of us would surely fail.

Yet in a larger sense, it's not just Yousef's fate that is in the hands of the immigration judge today. The question is whether America's justice system is worthy of the American people. Americans are better than a great people -- they are a good people. They understand that Yousef, in his actions - rejecting violence and standing up for peace - embodies the longed for hope for the troubled Middle East.

That's an ideal, and a sort of man, that America has attracted from its very founding. From the Jewish refugees from European pogroms, to European refugees from fascism, to Asian refugees from Communism, to Mosab Hassan Yousef runs a direct line. The "huddled masses yearning to be free" have always found refuge on these shores. If the immigration judge today sends Yousef to the deadly welcome of Hamas, he'll do more than condemn one good man -- he'll betray the ideals that bring America the world's best.

Britain decriminalizes vigilantism against Israel

British Israel Group, 5 July 2010

Britain decriminalizes vigilantism against Israel In a mind-blowing verdict, a British jury acquitted people who admitted that they purposefully caused damage to an arms factory - because, they said, the arms were being used by Israel.

Five activists who caused **180,000£** damage to an arms factory were acquitted after they argued they were seeking to prevent Israeli war crimes.

The five were jubilant after a jury found them not guilty of conspiring to cause criminal damage to the factory on the outskirts of Brighton.

The five admitted they had broken in and sabotaged the factory, but argued they were legally justified in doing so.

They believed that EDO MBM, the firm that owns the factory, was breaking export regulations by manufacturing and selling to the Israelis military equipment which would be used in the occupied territories. They wanted to slow down the manufacture of these components, and impede what they believed were war crimes being committed by Israel against the Palestinians.

They are the latest group of peace and climate-change activists to successfully use the "lawful excuse" defence "omitting an offence to prevent a more serious crime" as a tactic in their campaigns.

They had decided to act last January after three weeks of Israeli military manoeuvres against Gaza in which many Palestinians were killed.

In his summing up, Judge George Bathurst-Norman suggested to the jury that "you may well think that hell on earth would not be an understatement of what the Gazans suffered in that time".

The judge highlighted the testimony by Caroline Lucas, the Green MP for Brighton Pavilion, that "all democratic paths had been exhausted" before the activists embarked on their action. Meaning that the judge pretty much told the jury to acquit them. Unbelievable.

Hove crown court heard the activists had broken into the factory in the night. They had video-taped interviews beforehand outlining their intention to cause damage and, in the words of prosecutor Stephen Shay, "smash-up" the factory.

The full article can be read at <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3914014,00.html>

As one blogger writes *"actually, I think Judge Bathurst-Norman's courtroom is a bit of hell on earth.*

The witnesses lied in his courtroom and he bolstered their mendacity. Oddly enough, he has been quoted as warning:

- "that Britain risks falling into anarchy or becoming a police state if confidence in the judiciary is lost. He said that political decisions...had tied judges' hands and led to "silly" sentences".

- the trouble is, if you go on for political reasons undermining the public's faith in the judiciary, sooner or later you are heading for anarchy and... in due course for the equivalent of a police state."

The blogger then asks *"I wonder, is the judge a "Palestinian"?"*

Yes: Judge George Bathurst-Norman, who has previously had a record as quite a law'n'order judge, gave a summing up so favourable that some supporters were worried that the jury might react to what they perceived as an attempt to bounce them into a not guilty verdict. We need not have worried! Perhaps the fact that His Honour was born in the Arab town of Jaffa opposite Tel Aviv might have something to do with it! Judge George Bathurst-Norman was brought out of retirement to hear the case.

Shouldn't we all be Israelis now?

Kyle-Anne Shiver, a Catholic journalist, 3 July 2010

For the past three weeks, I've been on vacation, purposely avoiding news of any kind as I sought to refresh my soul. The very first thing I read upon resuming my vigil on the world's affairs was a report describing those despicable Israelis cold-bloodedly murdering a group of innocent peace activists bringing much-needed aid and comfort to the Israeli-victimized Gazans and a companion piece filled with the world's condemnation of Israel.

Having followed Middle East events rather conscientiously for a number of years, I immediately suspected that there was a great deal more to this story. Having watched a Western press grow more and more wilfully blind and downright anti-Semitic over three decades greatly increased my scepticism. Seeing my American president blink, blink, and blink again while blathering more inanity about irrelevancies, unable to discern right from wrong, brought me to the brink of gut-wrenching nausea.

What has happened to us? The West, I mean, and more specifically, America ?

The Israeli Defence Forces are not stupid, for one thing. They had clear video of individual soldiers legally enforcing a two-nation naval blockade for purely defensive purposes. The boat boarded by the IDF had multiple warnings and were peacefully informed that the ship would need to be boarded and inspected for weapons before it could pass to deliver the aid purportedly on board. All perfectly in accordance with international law. Instead of "peace activists," the soldiers - not drones or missiles or mechanized artillery, mind you, but real men, sons, brothers, husbands, fathers -- were met by an army of savages wielding steel pipes, who overwhelmed the soldiers and beat them without mercy.

The savage gang was fired upon, and nine of them were killed. It was called an Israeli-perpetrated massacre.

And I daresay there is not a single American adult who would not defend the actions of the IDF if the men being beaten were among their own sons, brothers, husbands, or fathers.

A Chicago police officer attempting to inspect a car trunk for illegal drugs who is surrounded by a gang and beaten with steel pipes certainly has the right to use his gun and depend upon his partner to do so. An American soldier disarming people by law in the wake of Katrina, if met by a

gang wielding clubs against him, would fire in self-defence. Would we have the same difficulty condemning the real law-breakers? I don't think so.

Figuring out who is right and who is wrong in this situation is not hard stuff. It's not the kind of moral dilemma which anyone over the age of twelve ought to have difficulty resolving. No, it isn't Auschwitz, at least not yet. It isn't the blueprints for massive "ovens," at least not yet, but the leaders of Israel's enemy states have publicly declared over and over again their intentions to perpetrate Holocaust II at the first opportunity.

No, understanding the Israeli position as the only morally defensible one in the region is not difficult. It's the kind of elementary morality that any good parent hopes to have instilled in his children before they reach middle school.

So again, I ask myself, what has happened to us as a civilization?

Why are the Israelis having to spend precious time and energy trying to convince the rest of the world of the justness of their cause? A cause that is simply about surviving in peace while surrounded by historical throwbacks to the 7th century?

When the Israelis finally bent to world pressure in 2005 and left Gaza -- forcefully uprooting their own people, and even being so thorough as to take the dead Jews from their cemeteries -- they were acting in good faith, attempting to trade land for peace. The Palestinians could have become good neighbors, could have asked for the helping hand of do-gooders around the world for rebuilding moneys and assistance. The world would have been generous. The Israelis themselves offered such assistance.

Instead, the Palestinians took to using Gaza exactly as they had before the Israeli occupation: to perpetrate war. Nearly ten thousand rockets have rained down on innocent Israelis since the land-for-peace deal was made. Those rockets have killed hundreds of Israelis, nearly all civilians. And, in fact, the Israelis do send food and medicine daily into the Gaza that assaults them without mercy.

Now, if peace is really the only objective, the Israelis could have peace by this time tomorrow, and the only thing they would need to do to achieve it is to march quietly into an Iranian-built "oven." The Arabs would all be happy. The Muslim world would rejoice immediately, and all would be well in the entire region. All American troops could come home from the Middle East. President Obama could bow as much as he pleased and play golf the rest of the time.

About a year ago, I shamelessly berated a dear Jewish friend for becoming paranoid about unfolding events -- not in Israel, but right here in America. She, naturally, sees things differently from how I do. She was noticing the telltales in American foreign policy under the new administration. She was calling my attention to signs I couldn't then read. Perhaps a part of me simply wanted to believe -- with all my heart and soul -- that nothing whatsoever similar to the Holocaust could ever happen again because we *good* Americans would *never, ever, ever* permit such a horror on our watch. I argued this point with my friend vehemently. For a while, we were so passionately at odds on the "Jewish question" that we stopped corresponding and talking on the phone. Now I shake with guilt and shame over my callous insensitivity, and I wonder where I found such faith in the American people and such naïve blindness about human evil.

We have clearly elected an anti-Semitic president. I say this with due trepidation; I take the charge as seriously as any I know. Barack Obama's anti-Semitism is so transparent that I tremble to consider that it may not even be merely an intellectual Israel-vs.-Arab-nation prejudice, but may actually be racist, or even a soul-disordered hate for all things deigned by God.

Consider Obama's presidential record on judging events. When lawyer Obama heard only scant details of Professor Gates' arrest, he didn't bat an eyelash before publicly declaring that the police "acted stupidly." When President Obama learned of Chávez-wannabe Zelaya being exiled from Honduras, he took the side of Zelaya without even the slightest hesitation, and he even threw the weight of the entire U.S. government against the tiny, struggling Honduran democracy. When Eric Holder announced that he intended to grant the 9/11 terrorists civilian trials in the heart of NYC, President Obama needed no time to study the issue, gather all the facts, or hold any public investigations on the matter. President Obama seems to have no difficulty whatsoever taking sides.

Yet whenever the president is confronted with events in which Jews or Muslims are concerned, we encounter an altogether different Obama persona. We see the dodger. We see the presumed thinker. We see the lawyer calling for all the facts, all the wider ramifications, all the possible contingencies. In every instance of terrorist killing or foiled killing since taking office, President Obama has dodged the one word that fits: "Muslim." He has removed every mention of Islam from all intelligence material on terrorism. Since day one of his presidency, we have seen a man seemingly going out of his way to soothe the hurt feelings of Muslims, all the while publicly insulting and humiliating the Jewish Prime Minister of Israel. Now, with clear film showing soldiers mercilessly beaten by a savage gang and firing in self-defense, the president dithers, joins an immoral U.N. condemnation of the Israelis, and continues to "gather facts."

Remembering the fears of my Jewish friend, I must now ask whether Barack Obama is signaling to the entire Muslim world that Israel is theirs for the taking, that America will stand aside and twiddle our collective thumbs while Iran and her Muslim neighbors finally get to carry out Holocaust II.

And for the very first time in my life, I am ashamed of my country.

The only thing I can add is that I now declare myself, a devout Catholic, Jewish too. And it would seem the only moral thing any of us can do is to proclaim this as loudly and as furiously as we can. When Helen Thomas says the Jews need to go back to Poland and Germany, and those on a "peace flotilla" tell an Israeli soldier to "go back to Auschwitz," and a president looks the other way while evil parades as good right under his nose, then the time for silence has passed. There is a quirky verse in the book of Genesis which any God-fearing person ought now heed, in my opinion. Speaking of the Jews, His chosen people, God told Abraham: "I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse."

I say again, shouldn't we all be Israelis now? Yes, we should.

***Bits and Pieces* Clips from various media in the Middle East and elsewhere**

Imra.org.il, 5 July 2010: Egyptian authorities have banned an Arab delegation from the Arab popular mobilization from accessing to the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing. The delegation includes 15 members of the Arab countries, headed by Assistant Secretary-General of the Union of Arab Lawyers, Abdel-Azim Al Maghribi.

Imra.org.il, 5 July 2010: Hamas political bureau chairman Khaled Mishaal has affirmed that the West Bank would restore its resistance program and that the siege on Gaza Strip would end soon. Mishaal, speaking in an interview with Jordanian weekly "Al-Sabeel" to be published on Sunday, said that Hamas was ready for resuming indirect negotiations on a prisoners exchange deal with Israel. He said that his movement would seek to capture more Israeli soldiers if one was not enough to release the Palestinian prisoners. Mishaal said that resistance was the

spearhead in foiling any attempt to turn Jordan into an alternative homeland for the Palestinian people.