

In Defense of Ben Carson's Remarks on the Holocaust

by Norman Berdichevsky (November 2015)



Abba Kovner, leader of the Vilna Ghetto partisans

In a statement to the public on October 10, Israel Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon urged all civilians with license to carry firearms to arm themselves so as to prevent attacks by Palestinians. In an interview with Channel 2, Ya'alon said: "We are in the midst of a wave of terrorism in which civilians have become the front, and there is supreme importance for the public to be ready and aware." In so doing, he was reaffirming what prominent politicians, statesmen and philosophers, who are regarded as heroes and icons by the political left, have reiterated many times.

Among the many misdeeds of British rule in India, history will look upon the Act depriving a whole nation of arms as the blackest." – Mohandas Gandhi, An Autobiography, pg 446.

Rifles, muskets, long-bows and hand-grenades are inherently democratic weapons. A complex weapon makes the strong stronger, while a simple weapon – so long as there is no answer to it – gives claws to the weak. – George Orwell, "You and the Atom Bomb," 1945.

Certainly one of the chief guarantees of freedom under any government, no matter how popular and respected, is the right of the citizens to keep and bear arms. [...] the right of the citizens to bear arms is just one guarantee against arbitrary government and one more safeguard against a tyranny which now appears remote in America, but which historically has proved to be always possible. – Hubert H. Humphrey, 1960.

The biggest hypocrites on gun control are those who live in upscale developments with armed security guards – and who want to keep other people from having guns to defend themselves. But what about lower-income people living in high-crime, inner city neighborhoods? Should such people be kept

unarmed and helpless, so that limousine liberals can 'make a statement' by adding to the thousands of gun laws already on the books?" –Thomas Sowell

No, these are not our founding fathers who wrote the constitution, nor are they the past chairmen of the National Rifle Association. Their statements are not "taken out of context." They speak for themselves and are based on common sense. Nevertheless, when candidate Ben Carson made several statements to the effect that unarmed individuals facing a gunman might be better off by rushing him, he was savagely accused of mocking or blaming the victims. When he went a step further and even suggested that the Jewish victims of the Holocaust MIGHT have had a better chance of survival if they had not been disarmed, the fury of the Left (and particularly the Jewish Left) pounced on him for his insensitivity.

Indeed, his critics were right that it was the Weimar authorities in the 1920s, and not the Nazis who instigated the severe restrictions on civilians acquiring arms. In 1928, the Reichstag relaxed the regulation a bit, but put in place a strict registration regime that required citizens to acquire separate permits to own guns, sell them or carry them. By pointing to this however, and omitting what followed, it demonstrated once again how the Left and Carson's critics leave out the context or vital relevant information.

What followed? In 1938, revisions made by the Nazis completely deregulated the acquisition and transfer of rifles and shotguns, as well as ammunition. Many more categories of people, including Nazi party members, were exempted from gun ownership regulations altogether, while the legal age of purchase was lowered from 20 to 18, and permit lengths were extended from one year to three years and totally forbade Jews and others hostile to the regime to own or acquire firearms.

Hitler himself directly commented on the law in the midst of World War II...*The most foolish mistake we could possibly make would be to permit the conquered Eastern peoples to have arms. History teaches that all conquerors who have allowed their subject races to carry arms have prepared their own downfall by doing so.* – April 11 1942.

This rule applied even to the police run by members of the Judenrät (Jewish councils held accountable to the Nazis for administering their own communities in fulfilling demands to aid the German war effort). What is undoubtedly true is

that the Jews for centuries had been intimidated by the use of force and denied the ability to defend themselves. By and large, they followed the time tested advice of the Judenrät, and their rabbis who preached capitulation, non-violence, acquiescence and meticulously following the orders of the Nazis in their deportation, incarceration measures, and, deprived of any means of resistance, their annihilation.

The most active resistance organizations among the Jews under the German occupation during World War II all strove to acquire firearms in the certain belief that in the end, Jewish civilians would be helpless in the face of the Nazi killing machine. In this, they were absolutely correct. The current call for civilians to bear arms by the Israeli Defense minister is thus no surprise. It offends those many Jews in the diaspora who have never had to rely on self-defense but expect the authorities to provide it whenever they need it. Those on the Left bear an amazing similarity to those Jews and Christians who want us to believe that the core of their religious belief is tolerance (even towards the intolerant), pacifism, and "social justice," rather than confronting evil.

The core belief of the Judeo-Christian heritage that distinguishes it from the religions of the East is NOT the pacifism of blindly turning the other cheek and a willingness to love your enemy. Such a view derived from the belief in the ancient Hebrew community that one could shame the apostate or enemy into realizing the error of his ways. When the enemy cannot be shamed, as the past forty years of unbridled terrorism and suicide bombers has demonstrated, or the mass killings perpetrated by psychopaths in American schools or theaters, another policy of resistance must be utilized.

The absurd view of pacifists in the face of mass murders and psychopathic killers has not characterized even Hinduism (see what Gandhi had to say above about British policy in India). Only among a tiny ultra-ascetic group such as the Jains is pacificism so exalted that no offense can be given to any being (human or animal or insect).

What then is the hallmark of the Judeo-Christian heritage? It was exemplified by Danish clergyman, playwright, and philosopher Kaj Munk (see this month's NER article), who taught that singing amen in church and expressing fond hopes and prayers are not enough – No, No! He proclaimed that "We are Christians only when we go out into the world and say No to the devil, renounce all his works

and all his ways, and say Yes to the Holy Spirit.”

Ben Carson only stated his opinion that in the face of disturbed, psychotic individuals intent on committing a mass atrocity, it may be in the best interests of those who are threatened and unarmed to do the unexpected and daring – what the passengers aboard flight 93 over Pennsylvania did in the face of the 9/11 attackers – Let’s Roll!

Since Ben Carson made his remarks on the Holocaust, he has been attacked by many submissions to the internet and letters to the editor, the great majority of whom have misquoted him claiming he said to the effect that if the Jews had had guns, the Holocaust would not have occurred. What he actually said was: *“The likelihood of Hitler being able to accomplish his goals would have been greatly diminished if the people had been armed.”*

Hannah Arendt, an acknowledged, reputable scholar of the Holocaust and the author of what is still undoubtedly the most widely read book on the subject (*Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*), had this to say: *“Without the assistance of the Judenrät, the registration of the Jews, their concentration in ghettos, and later, their active assistance in the Jews’ deportation to extermination camps, many fewer Jews would have perished because the Germans would have encountered considerable difficulties in drawing up lists of Jews. In occupied Europe, the Nazis entrusted Jewish officials with the task of making such lists of Jews along with information about the property they owned. The Judenrät also directed the Jewish police to assist the Germans in seizing Jews and loading them onto transport trains leaving for the Nazi concentration camps....To a Jew, this role of the Jewish leaders in the destruction of their own people is undoubtedly the darkest chapter of the whole dark story.”* (pp. 117-118).

One is advised to read the memoirs and biographies of two great Jewish heroes during the Holocaust, Vilna ghetto leader, the fighter and poet, Abba Kovner and Warsaw ghetto leader Mordechai Anielewicz, both of the far-Left Zionist movement Hashomer Hatzair. Both of them wrote lovingly of the dedication and appreciation they felt for their weapons – the firearms acquired at great cost and sacrifice that enabled them to actually confront and challenge the German troops on a level playing field. Reading what Kovner and Anielewicz wrote and said then, I was instantly reminded of how closely their thoughts on the subject resembled

the words and sentiments of Gandhi, Orwell, Humphrey and Sowell.

If only the leaders of the Judenrät had known the true intentions of the Nazis, they would not have made it so easy for the Germans to organize the successful mass deportations and transportation to the death camps. What then can the unarmed "victim" do when faced with a gun held by a madman? In the latest shooting incident at Umpqua Community College, rushing the shooter, as Carson noted, might be a strategy to plant in the minds of individuals encountering a similar threatening situation. Chris Mintz, a 30-year-old Army veteran was shot a total of seven times during the same incident and survived. He almost succeeded in barring entry of the assailant in the classroom. Had he been assisted by even one more of the other students, he might well have succeeded.

Carson added, he would "not just stand there and let him shoot me. I would call out – *"Hey guys, everybody attack him. He may shoot me, but he can't get us all."*

For this, he has been crucified by many in the media who cannot imagine the victim refusing to be a victim. This was also the tragedy of the Holocaust – Jewish community leaders were paralyzed by fear, intimidation and the threat of an enemy armed to the teeth and their mistaken belief that the best policy to avoid mass casualties was to submit and follow orders to the last letter.

Look at what happened a few short months ago in Copenhagen! Imagine what could have happened if the Danish government and the Jewish community had sanctioned the use of even a single armed guard at the entrance to the main synagogue in the center of Copenhagen (under constant television surveillance). Dan Uzan, the 37-year-old volunteer, was killed as he stood outside his local synagogue on a frigid night to make sure that inside, a young girl and her family, could celebrate the girl's bat mitzvah in peace.

The Danish government had not been able to invest any funds for a single armed policeman nor allow the armed self-defense of the Jewish community which, of course, is understandable: Denmark is among the largest contributors to virulently anti-Israeli organizations in Europe and after providing approximately 30 million euros to the Palestinian Authority in the last five years alone, there was not enough to pay for either trailing a known Islamist fanatic or securing the most obvious targets in the country.

Instead, the government forced the country's sole Jewish radio station to shut down for the first time in its history. Shortly after the attack in Copenhagen, the Danish ambassador to Israel—urged Denmark's Jewish community not to emigrate to Israel, promising that his country will do *“everything in our power so that the Jewish community in Denmark feels safe.”*

If Ben Carson has erred – it is on the side of caution. His ultra-liberal critics err on the side of denying reality. Of course, the Republican candidate is an anathema to liberals and all those who, for years have secured the Black vote in the country by appealing to them to put their vital concerns and needs in the hands of the government. This policy has not stopped the constant mayhem and carnage among innocent civilians (mostly unarmed Blacks in Chicago, Baltimore, St. Louis, and many other large urban centers).

Dr. Carson's proposal cannot be tested in a laboratory. No one knows for sure how he or she will act in a desperate situation facing a deranged gunman. Nevertheless, his remarks need to be taken in the context of focusing more on the psychological make-up of the gunman and how their sense of godlike mastery (like the Nazis) once challenged by the intended “helpless” victim can immediately destroy their confidence. His remarks are a welcome addition to the public debate and not to be disregarded or dismissed with contempt.

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