

Bois d'ébène: Slave trade replay

by Nidra Poller



Fake news, fake metaphors, fake emotions, real human trafficking

Bois d'ébène...it's the French expression for the slave trade – ebony-black human beings stacked like wood, loaded into the stinking hold and shipped across the seas to serve as slave labor. Today, the image is replayed before the eyes of the world. But the clearly visual reality is twisted into a Shoah narrative. The St. Louis desperately roaming the seas in search of a safe harbor. We were wrong then, we sent the Jews to their death, so we will be right now, and give refuge to these new Jews streaming out of Africa.

And the slave ship is called the Aquarius! No, it isn't the dawning of an age of peace & love. No, it has nothing to do with six million European Jews trapped in the killing fields, all doors closed to them, including the Gates of Palestine.

No, these are not refugees fleeing war in Syria. Look at them! See their black-is-beautiful cargo. In this modern age of Equal Opportunity Intl. the slave traders aren't cruel white men. They're dark or black...perhaps Muslim? CNN did an excellent undercover report on the way these Africans are treated by the slave traders in Libya. The women are systematically and repeatedly raped. The men are beaten and tortured. Some are sold into slavery there, others shipped to Europe and who cares what becomes of them? Families pay a fortune to send one member to Europe. But once the poor souls get to Libya, the evil dealers blackmail the families, demand more money to the tune of their victims' screams, and credible death threats against those back home.

The slave traders pocket their ill-gotten gains and pack the bois d'ébène into leaky boats. Deliberately. The NGO rescue ships scoop them out of the hold, out of the choppy waters, and pose for photo ops. Some drown but it's not a total loss; they're used to stir public opinion. The NGOs collect. They live on this misery and dump it into the laps of European taxpayers. Employers collect on cheap labor. The families back home collect via Western Union transfers of the meager earnings of the trailblazer. And eventually, there's family reunification. Sometimes legal, mostly not.

These people are in distress. How can you turn them away? If you don't buy the sob story, you're inhumane. The story hits the media and everyone has to play the Orwellian game: Ten minutes of treacly compassion for the victims, ten minutes of hatred of the heartless, ten minutes of fabricated indignation.

The Al Dura syndrome

Sirens blaring! They're separating the children from their parents! The noise was deafening! One ear was battered with the migrants at sea like Jews on the Exodus and the other ear was ringing with Latinos persecuted at the US border like Jews at the gates of Auschwitz. The media pounced on their icon. A

little girl with black curly hair and a pink jacket, crying tears of desperation. (Did Catherine Ney find a new replacement for that little Jewish boy, hands up in the Warsaw ghetto, already sidelined by Mohamed al Dura?) From there, a hop skip and a jump to the cover of Time magazine. The little girl looking up at a larger than life Donald Trump looking down at her like a child-crushing giant.

Children separated from their parents? Where did we hear that before? Aha! Nazis! The Shoah! And the proof is that Jews one by one and in groups and bundles take a stand. We, as Jews, particularly as Jews, will not condone this inhumane treatment of human beings that deserve tender loving protection. They, the unspeakable Nazis, separated children from their parents. Full stop. Don't finish the sentence. Here in France, for example, families were held briefly in local camps. Then the adults were sent to the death camps where most of the women and the elderly men were immediately exterminated. The children were shipped out shortly afterward. Straight to the gas chambers.

Don't finish the sentence, don't ask where these trespassers are coming from, don't ask where they are being held during their stopover in Mexico. And why these refugees from Central America don't want to live in Mexico. Or can't? Is that an example of good neighborly relations? To let your country be used as a staging area for thousands or tens of thousands of people determined to sneak into the United States and live there as fait accompli?

"I can't go back, says a woman from El Salvador. The gangs will kill me." Certain media have been telling Americans not to pay attention to those alarmist far-right racist Trumpsters; in fact, Mara Salvatrucha's no big deal. Well, not exactly. Those evil MS-13 gangs are reason enough for half of Central America to deserve asylum in the US. But if the same gang members might sneak into the US, hidden in the mass of families that should neither be detained nor separated, don't

panic, open your heart and your arms and trust in the NGOs.

This one, for instance, RAICES (Refugee and Immigrant Centre for Education and Legal Services), that collected \$17 million dollars in an online campaign propelled by the iconic little girl in the pink jacket. Reuter's reports: According to Denis Valera, who identifies himself as her father, she was not separated from her mother, Sandra Sanchez. They have been together in McAllen Texas for the past month, waiting for their asylum request to be processed. Señora Sanchez left without informing Señor Valera or the three children she left behind. If my math is correct, the mother separated the iconic little girl from her father and separated herself from him and their three other children. That's why the child is the poster girl for inhumane treatment of refugees.

Who separated the unaccompanied minors from their parents? To become the next generation of Dreamers? Innocent children brought illegally into the U.S. by their parents, or sent by their families, to throw themselves on the mercy of the merciless American government. They'll have to be naturalized because it wasn't their fault.

Back to Gaza

Two months ago, the real Jews, not the Africans crossing the Mediterranean in leaky boats, were accused of mortally tear-gassing an 8 month-old baby, Layla al-Gandhour, on the border with Gaza during the March of Return. The photo of the mother holding her dead baby and surrounded by weeping women throbbed through international media. France's newspaper of reference, Le Monde, gave the photo a half page. Doubts were immediately raised about the cause of the baby's death. They hardly made a ripple in the news stream. A month later, one of her cousins who was arrested on terror charges said that Hamas paid the family \$2,000 to claim the baby was killed by tear gas. She died of a genetic blood disease, like her little brother a year ago. The bereaved mother is 17 years-old.

Theme and variations on the Mohamed al Dura blood libel

Israelis were accused of cold-blooded murder of a Palestinian child in September 2000, leading to a wave of atrocities against Jews. The photo of 3 year-old Alan Kurdi washed up on the beach near a Turkish resort paved the way for a massive influx of illegal immigrants smashing through the frontiers of Europe. The little girl in the pink jacket is turned into a battering ram to force the United States to open wide its southern border.

And the forces that pull on our heart strings as if we were marionettes are the humanitarians?

First published in