

European attitude to Israel shows moral rot among leaders

By Conrad Black

It is both a pitiful and contemptible state of affairs when within a few days of each other the pope writes, at least as a personal reflection and not on behalf of the whole Church, legitimising the possibility that Israel's conduct in Gaza could be genocide, and the British prime minister utters even more strident criticism of Israel on the same subject and causes the United Kingdom to endorse the International Criminal Court's indictment of the Israeli prime minister.



Respect: Netanyahu defending Judeo-Christian and Western civilisation (Photo by Stephanie Keith/Getty Images)

The leader of the premier Christian church and by far the largest and senior religious institution in the world, and the government of the country which, along with the United States, has done more to advance the concept of human rights and democratic government than any other nation, have effectively thrown the great moral and practical weight of their offices

behind terrorists seeking to resume the practice of genocide against the Jewish people who within living memory have been the principal victims of genocide in all of recorded history. It is an unspeakable and shaming revelation of the moral bankruptcy of much of European leadership.

In September, Pope Francis dragged out the putrid fiction of "proportionality" in the Gaza War, stating that Israel was morally bound not to exceed in response to Hamas the violence that Hamas had done to it. This is absurd: five points for deliberately killing babies; eight points if you can do it in front of a parent? Rape for rape? One expects such ignorance or bigotry from an extensive swath of our thoroughly inadequate media, raddled with hypocrisy as they are. But the world, and especially the more than one billion faithful Roman Catholics (I am one of them), have a right to expect a higher level of perception and moral judgment from the ostensible successor to St. Peter at the head of the Church whose creation was allegedly requested by Jesus Christ.

The Hamas assault upon Israel on October 7, 2023, was and was intended to be an act of war which would begin a war with Israel, a country that Hamas had made clear it would never accept as having a right to exist as a Jewish state, even though it was founded as a Jewish state by the United Nations from the Palestine Mandate of the League of Nations in 1948. Once begun, there is no requirement in a war for "proportionality." No one told President Roosevelt a year after Pearl Harbor that Americans had killed more Japanese than the Japanese had killed in the Hawaiian Islands and it was time to stop, or President George W. Bush a year after 9/11 that Americans had killed more terrorists than the number of people Al Qaeda had killed at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and it was time to stop.

If the pope's theory had been followed, so ineffectual was fascist Italy's war against Britain and later the United States, that the Allied powers would have had no right to

invade Italy at all or to do anything to curtail or seriously inconvenience the regime that made Italy a vassal state of Nazi Germany and diligently emulated its genocidal persecution of Jews. The pope is not an evil man but as a consequentialist, he is what Ronald Reagan used to call a hemophiliac bleeding heart. He seeks the end of bad things without any apparent thought of whether the cessation of them will prevent or assure their repetition.

The unconditional cease-fire that the British government voted for at the United Nations would merely assure the rearmament of Hamas and the relaunch of its barbarous assault upon Israel. The only way to bring this terrorism to an end is to kill, capture, or permanently reorient the terrorists. Israel is defending Judeo-Christian and Western civilization of which both the Holy See and the United Kingdom are pillars, against the most ghastly enemies of civilisation. The United Kingdom has a great deal to answer for in the creation of the entire Israel-Palestine problem by effectively promising the same territory to two different peoples at the same time, (when the territory was governed by Turkey). Keir Starmer knows this and has absolutely no excuse for having aligned the UK with the enemies of civilization.

The pope is an idealistic and politically naïve product of the Latin American Left and while his attempt to reconcile a comparatively gentle version of Marxism with Christianity cannot possibly succeed and is now straining his vast ecclesiastical institution, he at least has, one hopes, an intellectual excuse for simply wishing bad things to end. But he betrays the gullibility that he showed in implying, in response to a trick question from the media, that the Canadian treatment of native people might have had characteristics of genocide. Of course, Canada never committed genocide and no one in the history of Canada, colony or nation, French or British, ever considered such a thing. Israel is equally guiltless of such a fatuous and wicked insinuation.

The clergy, even the most exalted clergyman in the world, can be susceptible to such unworldly thoughts. The objective facts are that Israel has gone to unprecedented lengths to spare the civil population in this urban guerrilla war inflicted upon it by a murderous enemy, and has provided more than 1 million tons of food and relief to Gaza, much of which has been stolen by Hamas. The Hamas leaders have brazenly acknowledged that to the extent that the civil population suffered from famine, it would increase pressure on Israel to allow Hamas to live and continue its war against Israel.

The world has reached a dangerous point of ethical degradation when only the veto cast at the United Nations Security Council by the palsied Biden administration, in its last days, prevented the United Nations from formally demanding an immediate and unconditional cease-fire in Gaza without any release of the 101 remaining hostages and leaving Hamas at perfect liberty to relaunch its barbarous war against Israel at its pleasure. The British and French compliance with the preposterous finding of the International Criminal Court, which mocks justice and is just a corrupt playpen of contending despotic and poor countries, that the prime minister of Israel and his former defense minister are guilty of war crimes, is another depressing indication of the moral rot of Europe.

A new administration will shortly be in office in Washington and will give powerful guidance in a different direction. There will also be a new pope reasonably soon. Many of our greatest and most revered institutions have had a profound flirtation with moral bankruptcy. There is still room for hope, for great hope, that such a fate may yet be avoided, but not by our incumbent leaders.

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