

How a Holocaust Happens

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by Phyllis Chesler

I have been a proud Zionist for 58 years – ever since the state of Israel blessedly came into being. I have wrestled with Jew-hatred on both the Left and the Right for nearly 40 years. I did not, however, feel compelled to break with politically correct academics until I gauged their response to the bloody intifada against Israel launched by Yasir Arafat in September 2000. Either they did not notice it or they blamed Israel for it.

That's when I knew I would have to speak out in a new way. I have done so in my last two books and in hundreds of articles, interviews, and lectures ever since. This has marked me as a "traitor" in the eyes of a great many leftist academics

because I do not believe that Israel and America are the greatest terrorists in the world. I believe that al Qaeda, Palestinian human bombs, radical Islamism, Hamas, Saudi Arabia, and President Ahmadinejad's Iran are the greatest terrorist threats in the world.

I have also parted company with the view that Islamic gender and religious apartheid have somehow been caused by Western imperialism, colonialism, or racism. Unchecked, the 2000 intifada against the Jews inevitably went global.

I do not believe that Europe or America deserved or caused 9/11 in New York and Washington, 3/11 in Madrid, 7/7 in London, or 10/05-11/05 in Paris. In his recent audiotape, bin Laden referred to the "Zionist crusader" war on Islam while he defended Islam as practiced by ethnic Arab Muslims in Sudan who are committing genocide against black African Muslims and Christians in Darfur.

On April 17, a Palestinian homicide bomber murdered nine people and injured 60 more in Tel Aviv – the Mediterranean coast city of Tel Aviv, not a settlement on the West Bank. How did the world respond?

On that very day, two dozen speakers at the United Nations, mainly from Arab and Muslim countries but also from Cuba and Venezuela, delivered speeches denouncing "Israeli aggression." Iran's Ambassador, Javid Zarif, denounced Israel's "daily brutality" toward Palestinians and Israeli threats against his country. This from a man whose president has vowed to annihilate the Jewish state with nuclear weaponry, and whose government officials claim to have 40,000 human bombs ready to attack Israel and "29 targets in the West."

On the day that Israeli blood flowed in the streets of Tel Aviv, Hamas defended the homicide bombing as "a direct result of the policy of the occupation and the brutal aggression and siege committed against our people." The Palestinian

representative at the UN insisted that “Palestinians have every right to defend themselves.”

People do not always like truth tellers. They challenge our most cherished illusions about the essential “goodness” of humanity and about what we must do in order to remain safe in a dangerous world. As Jews, we know how important memory is. Remembering the truth about Jewish history is a sacred obligation. Hence, it is a victory for both Jewish and enlightened Western truth-telling values that we commemorate the Holocaust. Doing so is also an act of defiance and moral clarity – especially at a time when the phenomenon of Holocaust denial is growing.

Despite Austria’s recent (and problematic) jailing of David Irving for the crime of Holocaust denial, Islamists and not a few Western thinkers continue to insist that the Holocaust never happened or has been wildly exaggerated. They have been published in some cases by distinguished presses and enjoy huge followings. Some say the Jews are exploiting the Holocaust in order to collect reparations money and to justify the creation of a “Nazi Apartheid” Jewish state. They say that the Jews are worse than Nazis and that Israel is perpetrating a “Holocaust” upon the very Palestinians who send human bombs to blow up Israeli civilians.

There are other forms of Holocaust denial which now characterize the new anti-Semitism. For example, the European nations that murdered its assimilated, educated, and peaceful Jewish citizens have now inherited another group of Semites: Muslims, who are far less assimilated and who are violent, not peaceful. Europeans have had a long romance with the Noble Arab Savage whom they nevertheless brutally colonized. Now, in a frenzy of anti-racist guilt, newer generations of Europeans practice “multicultural” tolerance toward their separatist and violence-prone Muslim citizens. They do so for many reasons –

but partly in order to both deny and continue the Holocaust against the Jews.

Such Europeans say: Our ancestors did not commit pogroms or a Holocaust and even if they did we have fully repented and are tired of being accused by Jews. We are now anti-racists who have welcomed twenty-thirty million fertile Muslims of color into our midst. We are not the Nazis. Israel – the Jew that got away – is the Nazi. Look at what Israelis have done to the Palestinians. Ethnic cleansing. Apartheid. Forced transfers. Human rights violations.

Orwell would weep at such a brazen misuse of language. The Europeans are projecting their own sins onto their victims, accusing them of committing crimes that characterize European and Arab, but not Israeli, history.

Israel has not committed genocide. Ethnic Arab Muslims in the Sudan have done precisely that. Israel is not a colonial power. Palestinian terrorists and Iran have colonized and occupied Lebanon. Al Qaeda dreams of a caliphate and the establishment of Islamic religious law all over the world. Israel has no such dream. Israel has been demonized for building an “apartheid” wall (i.e., the “security fence”). But now Saudi Arabia plans to build the longest wall in the world in order to keep out Iraqi-based al Qaeda terrorists. And no one says a word.

To some extent, as dangerous as Holocaust denial is, Holocaust memorialization may also function as a form of denial.

How can remembering the Holocaust be a form of denial? Because in this instance it may also allow us the luxury – and the consolation – of assuming that the “worst” has already happened. Alas, this may not be true.

In addition, certain intellectuals, Jews among them, attempt

to hide their rabid Jew-hatred by focusing on the European Holocaust – on all the dead Jews – as a way of diverting attention from the impending Holocaust against living Jews. Because they oppose what was done to the Jews in World War Two, they feel justified, credentialed, to say that today's attacks on Israel are "justified," that the Palestinians are now the true victims, (the "new Jews" in a sense), and the Israeli Jews are their "Nazi" persecutors.

Today the danger to Jews – as well as to the Christian West – is far graver and more complex than it was in the past. Old-fashioned Czarist-, Nazi-, and Stalinist-era anti-Semitic stereotypes (the Jews control the media and the banks, seek world domination, killed Jesus) have been added to the pre-existing Islamic views of Jews as subhuman infidels. The mix is a hot brew of relentless hatred.

Today, anti-Jewish, anti-Israeli, and anti-American propaganda is visually masterful, technologically sophisticated, and available around the clock, especially in Arabic. Jews and Zionists can be "seen" holding a meeting of the (fake) Elders of Zion, (falsely) demanding that Jesus be tortured and crucified, committing (fake) massacres in Jenin, and stabbing non-Jewish children to death for their blood. We are also subjected to films that valorize Palestinian killers – and they are well-done and persuasive films.

One is forced to confront Big Lies at every level. The moment we deal with one lie, ten new ones take its place. Israel and Jews, especially in the Islamic media, are labeled and portrayed as vermin and as child-eating monsters. Islamists feel absolutely entitled to do this – while simultaneously protesting some fairly innocuous Danish cartoons about Mohammed.

Western appeasers are quick to sympathize with Islam's injured "honor" and view the offensive lies about Jews and Israel as Free Speech to which the Islamic world is fully entitled.

Western scholars residing at distinguished universities publish countless 21st-century versions of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion. They insist that Arabs and Muslims are being racially persecuted in America and on American campuses by a Zionist cabal that controls the universities, the media, and American foreign policy. As soon as such papers are debunked as propaganda, not scholarship, guess what happens? Even more appear.

And yet there are individuals and organizations who insist that the unmasking of anti-Jewish and anti-Israel propaganda only proves that the Zionists really do control everything. In other words, lies are supposed to trump truth. When truth tellers use logic and facts they are seen as unfairly “conspiring” against the liars.

In my view, all that we are currently witnessing is worse and more widespread than the propaganda against the Jews that was disseminated before the European Holocaust.

We cannot let this stand. We must expose and oppose all such lies. They are an affront not just to Jews but to Western civilization and constitute a real threat to its survival.

Jew-haters are creating a situation in which – dare I say it? I am sorry but, yes, I must say it – another mass murder, perhaps even a Holocaust-like mass murder, of Jews might be possible. In my view, it has already begun, certainly not in the America and not yet in Europe, but in Israel. (I do think that the recent horrific torture and murder of Ilan Halimi in Paris is as momentous a turning point as the Dreyfus case was in its day.)

Today, Jews who live in the Jewish state – the nation that was initially envisioned as the solution to the ceaseless persecution of the Jews – are besieged. Israel endured the equivalent of 9/11 every month for four years during the

intifada that began in 2000. Even in 2005, during a supposed lull in hostilities, seven Palestinian homicide attacks killed and wounded scores of Israeli civilians; an additional 15 such terrorist attacks were thwarted.

True, Israel is a well-armed ghetto with a nuclear capacity. But the very existence of the Jewish state is now being used to justify verbal and physical attacks against Jews everywhere in the Diaspora.

There are approximately fourteen and a half million Jews in the world. About a third (5,021,506) live in Israel; more than six million live in the United States (5,914, 682) and Canada (393,660); a little less than a third (2,327,848) live in Europe. About 650,000 Jews live in central and South America. The Muslim Middle East is, of course, almost entirely judenrein – only 20,000 Jews remain where more than 800,000 Jews once lived. Now just 76,000 Jews live in Turkey, Iran, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia – countries where large communities of Jews once resided. What am I saying? Simply that Jews mainly live in Israel and the Western democracies which are under jihadic siege. They could, conceivably, be wiped out. How does a Holocaust happen? First, you demonize the group you wish to exterminate. You persuade people that this group has caused the world's suffering and that if this group could be "disappeared" that everything would improve. Then, you seize state power by means both fair and foul as Hamas, the Iranian mullahs, the Saudi princes, and the serial killer Osama bin Laden have done.

You fund terrorists, you fund the demonizing propaganda, (which has created a fifth column in our midst), you condemn only Israel and America at the United Nations for the crimes actually being committed by Islamists and the Islamic nations. You start slaughtering Israeli civilians. You do not stop. You test world public opinion. How many Jews will have to die before the world is willing to stop this carnage?

The world has not yet acted in the matter of the Sudan. Will it act in the matter of Israel?

How does a Holocaust happen? You tell the demonized scapegoats that they are imagining and exaggerating their victimization. You demand that the scapegoats apologize, bow and scrape a bit more. And then you commit the unthinkable: You wipe out a large number of civilians, either in Israel, Europe or America.

Iran's President Ahmadinejad has threatened to annihilate Israel by nuclear means. He has said: "The Zionist regime is heading toward annihilation. It will be eliminated by one storm. Believe that Palestine will be freed soon." I take him seriously. He must be stopped. Who will do it? And when?

What matters is not just what evil people do. They are evil, they do evil things. What matters is what the good people do – or fail to do. Victims of horrific, even genocidal violence are haunted by what the good people failed to do. The time to act is upon us. May we act wisely and decisively before it is too late.