

How the West was won, and how it can be saved

By Phyllis Chesler

The Islamification of the West began long ago with Arab and Islamic attacks against infidels, especially the Jews. By the beginning of this century, anti-Zionism characterized the new antisemitism. Israel became the scapegoat of the world for the crimes of their persecutors.



The parents of Liri Abag, Karina Ariev, Agam Berger, Daniella Gilboa and Naama Levy, at a press briefing at the Hostage and Missing Families Forum HQ in Tel Aviv, July 16, 2024. Photo by Amelie Botbol.

In the last quarter-century, Israel and the Jews have faced large armies, as well as well-funded and relentless propaganda. It has simultaneously been defamed and sanctioned in every language; anti-Israel resolutions and reports have been issued by student bodies, human-rights groups, literary

prize judges, academic faculties and the United Nations, whose only accomplishment has been the legalization of Jew-hatred. Students and outside agitators in the West “flood” streets and campuses, Hamas-style; and take over university buildings on behalf of the sadistic and barbarian aggressors they believe are the victims of alleged Israeli apartheid, colonial oppression and genocide.

Thus, as Israel is fighting for its very life and good name, the entire world believes that Israelis are the aggressors and that the true victims are the leaders of an infidel-hating death cult.

How are we to understand such an Orwellian reversal of reality, such a triumph of Nazi-style propaganda? British journalist and JNS columnist Melanie Phillips explains it to us in her new work, *The Builder's Stone: How Jews and Christians Built the West—and Why Only They Can Save It*. In doing so, she joins and updates the work of writers and researchers Steve Emerson, Oriana Fallaci, Daniel Pipes, Bruce Bawer, Douglas Murray and Asra Nomani.

First, Phillips notes that Israel and the West are up against two death cults: one is external and consists of Islamist jihadists; and the other is a fifth column of elite, “politically correct” Westerners who have been persuaded that the West is evil beyond redemption and that barbarians are entitled to destroy what’s left of society. These Westerners refuse to believe that Islamic regimes have been and remain the largest practitioners of gender and religious apartheid. They refuse to believe that various Islamic regimes still own slaves and murder apostates, dissidents, homosexuals and feminists. They ignore any proof that Islamic regimes currently persecute or forcibly convert, but, more often, genocidally murder Christians, Hindus, Sikhs and Bahá’í.

Despite all this, Arabs, especially Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, are still always the victims.

None of Phillips's predecessors had to ponder the world's unexpected and, at first, unbelievably bizarre reaction to the Hamas-led pogrom on steroids in southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023. This is something Phillips deftly tackles as she explains why so many "woke" Westerners deny Jewish victimhood, especially the atrocities that took place that day.

The ruling "progressive-regressive" paradigm is Western Caucasians and Jews are colonialist "settlers" who perpetrate ethnic cleansing, and all brown- or olive-skinned people, especially Muslims, are uber-victims. This is true even if such victims are terrorists and rapists.

It is a psychosis, a new kind of virus, the poisonous flowering of 70 years' worth of Soviet, Arab, Muslim and Western left-wing-funded propaganda. This complete inversion of reality, to which so many true believers cling, is false. The opposite is true. As Phillips puts it:

"No facts could ever trump the images of Palestinian suffering in Gaza and the noble feelings of horror and compassion these produced. Whether these images had been radically decontextualized, distorted or were outright lies was irrelevant. What mattered above all was to deny the Israeli Jews' status as victims. ... If Israelis or Jews were the victims of Palestinian Arabs, the liberals' whole narrative would be smashed, and their moral personality smashed with it."

Such politically correct ideological narratives preempt mere facts. It is as simple as that. But Phillips's explanation helps us understand not only the denial of the Oct. 7 terrorist attacks but the vicious tearing down of the Israeli hostage posters by smug young people around the world. It helps us understand the angry anti-Israeli university encampments—a Western version of jihad, and border- and barrier-smashing. It also explains the hard-hearted silence about Oct. 7 by Western feminists, both radical and liberal,

and their continued obsessive focus on the alleged suffering of Gazans and the absolute refusal to be emotionally even-handed about the ongoing suffering of Israelis.

However, Phillips goes well beyond the most relevant previous works in this way: She dares to defend religion, especially Judaism, as essential in the fight for Western civilization, and she makes a good case for it.

She believes that "faith" and the belief in Jewish history, Jewish culture and a Jewish covenant with God are precisely what account for Jewish survival after millennia of almost nonstop persecution. She also tells some haunting stories of Jewish concentration camp survivors who went to great lengths to recite prayers and celebrate some holidays. She quotes a former Auschwitz prisoner, Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Meisels, writing: *"Some wrote prayers from memory, usually on cement sacks in lieu of paper All these actions, both the reciting and the writing, were carried out at risk to life, in breaks snatched from work time ... people would write and then hide the paper on their bodies under their clothes."*

In Phillips's view, *"In the midst of that hell, others may have concluded that existence was rendered meaningless, [but] they found meaning and the will to live through affirming their communal identity."*

We learn that Israeli hostage Danielle Gilboa and four other female lookouts taken by Hamas taught themselves to sing the Friday-night song "Sholom Aleichem" in Arabic rather than Hebrew. Their quiet act of faith became a source of strength in the darkness of captivity.

Another released hostage, Eli Sharabi, told an *Arutz Sheva* interviewer that while he wasn't a religious person, during the darkest moments, he discovered the faith. He said: "From the moment I was abducted, every morning I recited *Shema Yisrael*, something I never did in my life," Sharabi

emotionally recounted. "The power of faith is crazy. I felt I had someone watching over me."

According to Phillips, *"Religion is the elephant in the room. The Jewish people are the elephant in the room. The Hebrew Bible is the elephant in the room. It is the same elephant."*

Phillips is at her best when documenting the many ways in which Christianity and Western civilization are based on Jewish law, Jewish values and the Talmud. If anyone has ever studied the Talmud, they would know that it preserves, not silences or "cancels," dissident opinions. It tolerates dissent and believes in the rule of law, not the rule of the king, laws that the people must first accept.

Thus, it is no surprise that various American presidents and statesmen are quoted from the Old Testament. Phillips reminds us that Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson "chose for the Great Seal of America, the image of the Israelite's flight from Egyptian bondage." Abraham Lincoln turned to the Hebrew Bible when writing his second inaugural address. More than 200 years later, President Bill Clinton envisaged revitalizing the United States with a "new covenant," the Hebraic term for a binding compact across generations. President Ronald Reagan's final address likened America to "the shining city upon a hill," quoting the words of the Hebrew prophet Micah, which had been repeated in 1630 by a pilgrim, Father John Winthrop, who imagined New England being "blessed as ancient Israel."

Ultimately, Phillips envisions a joint, Jewish-Christian alliance to "save the West." She writes: *"Reconciling Christianity with its Jewish parents ... would help re-anchor Western national identity in Christianity. It would promote an overarching structure of basic Western principles shaped by the Bible such as tolerance of minorities, religious dissent, and resistance to abuses of power ... and would help the West against the threat of Islamization."*

Her book is a beautifully written volume and will stand the test of time. *The Builder's Stone* both clarifies and arms its readers for the great struggle before us—the one in which we either save Western civilization or die out.

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