

No More Munichs

by Michael Curtis

Munich is not a name that conjures up pleasant memories for political shrewdness. On September 30, 1938 the Munich Agreement was signed and the appeasement policies of the Western democracies allowed Nazi Germany to annex parts of Czechoslovakia, and to take actions leading to World War II. This diplomatic blunder can now be considered a tragedy of European and world history and a warning to the present policy makers in the consequences of refusal to fight against an evil force.

Evil appeared again in Munich with the shooting on July 22, 2016 outside a McDonald's Restaurant in the city in which nine people were killed and more than 20 others wounded by a lone 18 year old gunman using a 9mm pistol and 300 rounds of ammunition who then killed himself.

The gunman, Aloi Souboly, of Iranian ancestry, was German born and raised, and had dual citizenship. He is said by officials to have been deranged and obsessed with both the idea of mass shootings and with violent computer games. Though there is apparently no link of him to any Islamist terrorist organization, an eyewitness to the events said he had shouted two phrases "I am German," and "Allahu Akbar" before he shot at children.

An incidental reminder of past inhumanity in the city is that the site of the shootings is close to the place where Palestinian terrorists massacred 11 Israeli athletes during the summer Olympics in 1972.

Like other European countries Germany, that has accepted 800,000 asylum seekers from the Middle East, has not been immune from other terrorist violence. This Munich shooting took place only four days after a refugee, an

Afghan teenager, attacked people with a hatchet and knife on July 18, 2016 on a train near Wurzburg, Germany, injuring five people. His attack was waged in the name of ISIS. On December 31, 2015, migrants and asylum seekers were responsible for mass sexual assaults and thefts in Cologne.

Belgium has been the scene of terrorist attacks on March 22, 2016 in Brussels when 32 people were killed and more than 300 injured in suicide bombings at the airport and metro stations; and on May 24, 2014 when a gunman killed four at the Jewish Museum in Brussels.

France, of course, has suffered the most heavily from Islamist attacks. The most well known are the murder of three Jewish schoolchildren and a rabbi by a gunman in Toulouse in March 2012; the murders by terrorists claiming allegiance to ISIS of 17 at the headquarters of *Charlie Hebdo*, the satirical magazine, and at the kosher supermarket in Paris on January 7-9, 2015 in Paris; the massacre by ISIS operatives of 130 killed and hundreds of wounded in multiple attacks in Paris on November 13, 2015; the stabbing to death of a police captain and his wife in their home in a suburb of Paris on June 13, 2016; and the massacre by a terrorist who had accepted Islamist extremism of 84 people and wounding hundreds others by driving a truck along the promenade in Nice on Bastille Day, July 14.

This recital of the horrors committed by Islamist terrorists and those linked in some way to ISIS is required in the light of the intellectual and political horrors committed by a member of the British House of Lords, Baroness (Jenny) Tonge, a member of the Liberal Democratic Party for which she was an MP in the House of Commons from 1997 to 2005, and is now a life peer.

Lady Tonge has become, not simply controversial but notorious for her relentless vituperations against the State of Israel, using the highest institutions in the country as her forum.

Some of these fulminations can be illustrated.

In 2006 Tonge remarked, "The pro-Israeli lobby has got its grips on the western world, its financial grips. I think they've probably got a grip of our party (Lib Dem)." The former Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, was unusually critical: "her language was "irresponsible and inappropriate." In spite of this reprimand she persisted with a justification, like so many other virulent critics of Israel, that she was not anti-Semitic. She explained she had only commented on "the Israeli lobby in politics."

Nevertheless, Tonge went far beyond the supposed "lobby," whatever or whoever that was. On January 2009 in the House of Lords she asked about war crimes being committed in Gaza. She called for the immediate establishment by the UN Security Council of an independent fact-finding commission to Palestine to Palestine to investigate all breaches of international law.

Of course she already knew the answer. At a left wing rally in London on January 19, 2009 she declared, "It is a disgusting, obscene, outrage what is going on in Gaza." She looked forward to a full trade embargo and boycotting everything Israeli. Naturally, she took no heed of the Amnesty Report that criticized the war crimes of Hamas.

Even more disgusting, she made comments about the Israeli IDF in what can be considered a mixture of a form of historic blood libel accusations and stereotypes of the greed of Jews. She wanted to disprove a negative. Tonge said on February 11, 2010 that Israel, the country that had responded very quickly to the emergency in Haiti, should set up an inquiry to disprove allegations that its medical teams, the IDF and the Israeli Medical Association, in Haiti harvested organs of the earthquake victims for use in transplants.

Tonge forgot to say that the "allegations" had only been made on Al Manar, the Lebanese TV station linked to Hezbollah, and

were published by the Palestine Telegraph, the online journal based in Gaza and on which Tonge is a patron.

Lady Tonge has made no secret of her views, often insensitive and bizarre. In a visit to the Gaza Strip in 2003 she compared the conditions for Palestinians there to the conditions Jews suffered in the Warsaw Ghetto during World War II. She dramatically announced she would consider becoming a bomber if she were a Palestinian.

What is disconcerting today in the midst of Islamist terrorism all over the globe is her explanation for terrorism. The House of Lords on July 21, 2016 was debating the living conditions of Palestinian children. Tonge's contribution was, "The treatment of the Palestinians by Israel is a major cause of the rise of extreme Islamism and Daesh (ISIS)." Israel, she said, "is creating a generation of terrorists who will have a justified grudge against Israel and the countries that support her,"

Tonge of course, whether or not she is anti-Semitic, is a lost cause to reasonable and objective discussion of the Middle East in general or to Israeli actions in particular. Two specific things are distressing. One is the use she has made of British parliamentary institutions, not to make genuine criticisms of real, specific Israeli actions but to formulate unending, relentless, and misleading accusations or insinuations.

Even worse is that her remarks prevent, not only any peaceful solution of the Israeli-Palestinian issue, but also any reasonable appraisal of the peril to civilization of Islamist terrorism or proposals for any practical response to it. She has disgraced herself by insulting the hundreds of victims of terrorism, almost all Islamist, in Paris, London, Brussels, Cologne, Copenhagen, Toulouse, Wurzburg, Nice and Munich.