



Swept Under the Rug: The Deeper Threat of Antisemitism

Rare is the person confronted with a complex problem who would not be happy were it just to dissolve before his very eyes. Many are the people who would gladly sweep their most vexing problems under the rug, if they could. The EU tried to avoid dealing with the recent report about antisemitism in its midst. It tried to shelve the report, avoid discussion and evade confronting the findings and recommendations contained in the work that it had commissioned. It was not able to do so. Welcome to reality.

Antisemitism has been dubbed by Robert Wistrich, one of the foremost experts on the subject, the “world’s longest hatred.” If there ever was a vexing problem, the origins and staying power of this hateful view of the world is it. Antisemitism has been around for ages, but in the wake of the dastardly crimes of the Holocaust era, overt expression of it was not fashionable in the Western world. What went unnoticed by many in the West, however, was that while it was simmering under their very feet, it had remained a staple of propaganda in what was then known as the Communist bloc, and it was taking root and growing at a furious pace in the much of the Islamic/Arab world. To a close observer of events over the years, it should have come as no surprise that traditional European antisemitism would be nourished by the Islamic/Arab variety, and again rear its vicious head in Europe. But most people are not close observers, and most have been surprised by the robust resurgence of violent Jew-hatred. What is worse, as recent surveys have illustrated, a great many Europeans are themselves tarred by the antisemitic brush.

There was little in the recent report that was not known to those who monitor antisemitism and follow its expressions in the media and on the streets of Europe. That



Islamic antisemitism has melded into traditional European antisemitism, anti-Americanism, and anti-globalization, has been patently clear for sometime now. That young Muslim men have fomented much of the violence against Jews in Europe has also been apparent from the media reports about such incidents. And that the slanted reporting of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has nurtured antisemitic attitudes is obvious to anyone who retains even a modicum of objectivity as they absorb the daily news.

The recommendations of the report's authors are eminently reasonable. They call for advancing educational activities, increasing interfaith dialogues, teaching more about the Holocaust, fighting the scourge of Internet antisemitism with anti-antisemitism initiatives on the Internet, and urging the media to be more responsible. They also call for better monitoring of antisemitism in Europe and the passage of better and clearer laws against inciting racial or religious hatred.

In its discussion of hate on the Internet, the report mentions the close relationship between radical Islamic Jew-hatred and the European variety. However it does not clearly state that there is a symbiotic relationship between antisemitism and radical Islamic terrorism. It is plainly evident that the Islamic terrorist groups are saturated with hatred for Israel and Jews along with hatred for the West. The recent bombings in Turkey highlight this: the same group in Istanbul bombed two synagogues and then a few days later the British consulate and a British bank.

The resurgence of antisemitism in Europe in and of itself is far beyond being merely a worrisome side effect of some other issue - it is a real and profoundly entrenched problem. But the report fails to highlight the deeper danger European antisemitism poses. Too often, owing to their antisemitic views, Europeans justify terrorism and allow it to flourish instead of taking decisive action against it. They do not seem to realize that the very same organizations, that commit acts of terrorism, hate "Crusader" Europe, and



“imperialistic” America and commit heinous acts against innocent Europeans and Americans, as freely as they hate and murder blameless Jews.

More than 70 years ago a racist, noxious party came to power in Germany. It focused its savagery on its imagined archenemy the Jews, but it also unleashed the most ferocious and deadly war ever fought on the face of the earth – beginning in Europe. Nazi Germany nearly succeeded in destroying the Jews of Europe, and it almost destroyed Europe itself. It is high time that Europeans stand up and look squarely at the terror/antisemitism nexus. Enlightened Europeans must remember that the last time they faced a mounting, life-threatening enemy, they first tried to sweep the problem under the rug, before being jolted into a war for their very existence. Now is the time to take decisive action against those who foster antisemitism and are the sworn enemies of democracy, tolerance and Western civilization.

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