



Israel Today, the West Tomorrow

Acquiescence to extremist Islam's assault on Jewry and Israel will not save the nations of Europe from a Muslim fate.

By Mark Steyn

ON HOLOCAUST Memorial Day 2008, a group of just under 100 people—Londoners and a few visitors—took a guided tour of the old Jewish East End. They visited, among other sites of interest, the birthplace of my old chum Lionel Bart, the author of *Oliver!* Three generations of schoolchildren have grown up singing Bart's lyric:

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*Consider yourself
At 'ome!
Consider yourself
One of the family!*

Those few dozen London Jews considered themselves at 'ome. But they weren't. Not any more. The tour was abruptly terminated when the group was pelted with stones, thrown by "youths"—or to be slightly less evasive, in the current euphemism of Fleet Street, "Asian" youths. "If you go any further, you'll die," they shouted, in between the flying rubble.

A New Yorker who had just moved to Britain to start a job at the Metropolitan University had her head cut open and had to be taken to the Royal London Hos-

pital at Whitechapel, causing her to miss the Holocaust Day “interfaith memorial service” at the East London Central Synagogue. Her friend, Eric Litwack from Canada, was also struck but did not require stitches. But if you hadn’t recently landed at Heathrow, it wasn’t that big a deal, not these days: Nobody was killed or permanently disfigured. And given the number of Jewish community events that now require security, perhaps Her Majesty’s Constabulary was right and these Londoners walking the streets of their own city would have been better advised to do so behind a police escort.

A EUROPEAN Holocaust Memorial Day on which Jews are stoned sounds like a parody of the old joke that the Germans will never forgive the Jews for Auschwitz. According to a 2005 poll by the University of Bielefeld, 62 percent of Germans “are sick of all the harping on about German crimes against the Jews”—which is a cheerfully straightforward way of putting it. Nevertheless, when it comes to “harping on,” these days it’s the Jews who are mostly on the receiving end. While we’re reprising old gags, here’s one a reader reminded me of a couple of years ago, during Israel’s famously “disproportionate” incursion into Lebanon: One day the U.N. Secretary General proposes that, in the interest of global peace and harmony, the world’s soccer players should come together and form one United Nations global soccer team.

“Great idea,” says his deputy. “Er, but who would we play?”

“Israel, of course.”

Ha-ha. It always had a grain of truth, now it’s the whole loaf.

“Israel is unfashionable,” a Continental foreign minister said to me a decade back. “But maybe Israel will change, and then fashions will change.” Fashions do change. But however Israel changes, this fashion won’t. The shift of most (non-American) Western opinion against the Jewish state that began in the 1970s was, as my Continental politician had it, simply a reflection of casting: Israel was no longer the underdog but the overdog, and why would that appeal to a post-war polytechnic Euro Left unburdened by Holocaust guilt?

Fair enough. Fashions change. But the new *Judenhass* is not a fashion, simply a stark reality that will metastasize in the years ahead and leave Israel isolated in the international “community” in ways that will make the first decade of this century seem like the good old days.

A few months after the curtailed Holocaust Day tour, I found myself in that particular corner of

Tower Hamlets for the first time in years. Specifically, on Cable Street—the scene of a famous battle in 1936, when Sir Oswald Mosley’s British Union of Fascists, in a crude exercise of political muscle, determined to march through the heart of Jewish East London. They were turned back by a mob of local Jews, Irish Catholic dockers, and Communist agitators, all standing under the Spanish Civil War slogan: “*No Pasaran*.” They shall not pass.

From “*No Pasaran*” to “If you go any further, you’ll die” is a story not primarily of anti-Semitism but of unprecedented demographic transformation. Beyond the fashionable “anti-Zionism” of the Euro Left is a starker reality: The demographic energy not just in Lionel Bart’s East End but in almost every Western European country is “Asian.” Which is to say, Muslim. A recent government statistical survey reported that the United Kingdom’s Muslim population is increasing ten times faster than the general population. Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Antwerp, and many other Continental cities from Scandinavia to the Côte d’Azur will reach majority Muslim status in the next few years.

Brussels has a Socialist mayor, which isn’t that surprising, but he presides over a caucus a majority of whose members are Muslim, which might yet surprise those who think we’re dealing with some slow, gradual, way-off-in-the-future process here. But so goes Christendom at the dawn of the third millennium: the ruling party of the capital city of the European Union is mostly Muslim.

There are generally two responses to this trend: The first is that it’s like a cast change in *Cats* or, perhaps more precisely, David Merrick’s all-black production of *Hello, Dolly!* Carol Channing and her pasty prancing waiters are replaced by Pearl Bailey and her ebony chorus, but otherwise the show is unchanged. Same set, same words, same arrangements: France will still be France, Germany Germany, Belgium Belgium.

The second response is that the Islamicization of Europe entails certain consequences, and it might be worth exploring what these might be. There are already many points of cultural friction—from British banks’ abolition of children’s “piggy banks” to the enjoining of public doughnut consumption by Brussels police during Ramadan. And yet on one issue there is remarkable comity between the aging ethnic Europeans and their young surging Muslim populations: A famous poll a couple of years back found that 59 percent of Europeans regard Israel as the greatest threat to world peace.

Fifty-nine percent? What the hell’s wrong with the rest of you? Hey, relax: In Germany, it was 65 percent; Austria, 69 percent; the Netherlands, 74 per-

cent. For purposes of comparison, in a recent poll of Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates—i.e., the “moderate” Arab world—79 percent of respondents regard Israel as the greatest threat to world peace. As far as I know, in the last year or two, they haven’t re-tested that question in Europe, possibly in case Israel now scores as a higher threat level in the Netherlands than in Yemen.

To be sure, there are occasional arcane points of dispute: one recalls, in the wake of the July 7 bombings, the then London Mayor Ken Livingstone’s somewhat tortured attempts to explain why blowing up buses in Tel Aviv is entirely legitimate whereas blowing up buses in Bloomsbury is not. Yet these are minimal bumps on a smooth glide path: The more Europe’s Muslim population grows, the more restive and disassimilated it becomes, the more enthusiastically the establishment embraces “anti-Zionism,” as if the sinister Jewess is the last virgin left to toss in the volcano—which, given the 13-year old “chavs” and “slappers” face down in pools of their own vomit in most British shopping centers of a Friday afternoon, may indeed be the case. For today’s Jews, unlike on Cable Street in 1936, there are no Catholic dockworkers or Communist agitators to stand shoulder to shoulder. In post-Christian Europe, there aren’t a lot of the former (practicing Catholics or practicing dockers), and as for the intellectual Left, it’s more enthusiastic in its support of Hamas than many Gazans.

To which there are many Israelis who would brusquely reply: So what? Pity the poor Jew who has ever relied on European “friends.” Yet there is a difference of scale between the well-established faculty-lounge disdain for “Israeli apartheid” and a mass psychosis so universal it’s part of the air you breathe. For a glimpse of the future, consider the (for the moment) bizarre circumstances of the recent Davis Cup First Round matches in Sweden. They had been scheduled long ago to be played in the Baltiska Hallen stadium in Malmo. Who knew which team the Swedes would draw? Could have been Chile, could have been Serbia. Alas, it was Israel.

Malmo is Sweden’s most Muslim city, and citing security concerns, the local council ordered the three days of tennis to be played behind closed doors. Imagine being Amir Hadad and Andy Ram, the Israeli doubles players, or Simon Aspelin and Robert Lindstedt, the Swedes. This was supposed to be their big day. But

the vast stadium is empty, except for a few sports reporters and team officials. And just outside the perimeter up to 10,000 demonstrators are chanting, “Stop the match!” and maybe, a little deeper into the throng, they’re shouting, “We want to kill all Jews worldwide” (as demonstrators in Copenhagen, just across the water, declared just a few weeks earlier). Did Aspelin and

Lindstedt wonder why they couldn’t have drawn some less controversial team, like Zimbabwe or Sudan? By all accounts, it was a fine match, thrilling and graceful, with good sportsmanship on both sides. Surely, such splendid tennis could have won over the mob, and newspapers would

have reported that by the end of the match the Israeli players had the crowd with them all the way. But they shook ‘em off at Helsingborg.

Do you remember the “road map” summit held in Jordan just after the U.S. invasion of Iraq? It seemed a big deal at the time: The leaders of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, the U.S. president, all the A-list dictators of the Arab League. Inside the swank resort, it was all very collegial, smiles and handshakes. Outside, flags fluttered—Jordan’s, America’s, Saudi Arabia’s, Egypt’s, Palestine’s. But not Israel’s. King Abdullah of Jordan had concluded it would be too provocative to advertise the Zionist Entity’s presence on Jordanian soil even at a summit supposedly boasting they were all on the same page. Malmo’s tennis match observed the same conventions: I’m sure the Swedish tennis wallahs were very gracious hosts behind the walls of the stockade, and the unmarked car to the airport was top of the line. How smoothly the furtive maneuvers of the Middle East transfer to the wider world.

WHEN Western governments are as reluctant as King Abdullah to fly the Star of David, those among the citizenry who choose to do so have a hard time. In Britain in January, while “pro-Palestinian” demonstrators were permitted to dress up as hook-nosed Jews drinking the blood of Arab babies, the police ordered counter-protesters to put away their Israeli flags. In Alberta, in the heart of Calgary’s Jewish neighborhood, the flag of Hizballah (supposedly a proscribed terrorist organization) was proudly waved by demonstrators,

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but one solitary Israeli flag was deemed a threat to the Queen's peace and officers told the brave fellow holding it to put it away or be arrested for "inciting public disorder." In Germany, a student in Duisburg put the Star of David in the window of an upstairs apartment on the day of a march by the Islamist group Milli Görüs, only to have the cops smash his door down and remove the flag. He's now trying to get the police to pay for a new door. Ah, those Jews. It's always about money, isn't it?

Peter, the student in Duisberg, says he likes to display the Israeli flag because anti-Semitism in Europe is worse than at any other time since the Second World War. Which is true. But, if you look at it

from the authorities' point of view, it's not about Jew-hatred; it's a simple numbers game. If a statistically insignificant Jewish population gets upset, big deal. If the far larger Muslim population—and, in some French cities, the youth population (i.e., the demographic that riots) is already pushing 50 percent—you have a serious public-order threat on your hands. We're beyond the anti-Semitic and into the ad hoc utilitarian: The King Abdullah approach will seem like the sensible way to avoid trouble. To modify the UN joke: Whom *won't* we play? Israel, of course. Not in public.

One Saturday afternoon a few weeks ago, a group wearing "BOYCOTT ISRAEL" T-shirts entered a French branch of Carrefour, the world's largest supermarket chain, and announced themselves. They then systematically advanced down every aisle examining every product, seizing all the items made in Israel and piling them into carts to take away and destroy. Judging from the video they made, the protesters were mostly Muslim immigrants and a few French leftists. But more relevant was the passivity of everyone else in the store, both staff and shoppers, all of whom stood idly by as private property was ransacked and smashed, and many of whom when invited to comment expressed support for the destruction. "South Africa started to shake once all countries started to boycott their products," one elderly lady customer said. "So what you're doing, I find it good."

Others may find Germany in the '30s the more instructive comparison. "It isn't silent majorities that drive things, but vocal minorities," the Canadian public intellectual George Jonas recently wrote. "Don't count heads; count decibels. All entities—the United States, the Western world, the Arab street—have pre-

vailing moods, and it's prevailing moods that define aggregates at any given time." Last December, in a well-planned attack on iconic Bombay landmarks symbolizing power and wealth, Pakistani terrorists nevertheless found time to divert one-fifth of their manpower to torturing and killing a handful of obscure Jews helping the city's poor in a nondescript building.

If this was a territorial dispute over Kashmir, why kill the only rabbi in Bombay? Because Pakistani Islam has been in effect Arabized. Demographically, in Europe and elsewhere, Islam has the numbers. But ideologically, radical Islam has the decibels—in Turkey, in the Balkans, in Western Europe.

And the prevailing mood in much of the world

makes Israel an easy sacrifice. Long before Muslims are a statistical majority, there will be three permanent members of the Security Council—Britain, France, Russia—for whom the accommodation of Islam is a domestic political imperative.

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ON THE HEELS of his call for the incorporation of Sharia within British law, the Archbishop of Canterbury gave an interview to the *Muslim News* praising Islam for making "a very significant contribution to getting

a debate about religion into public life." Well, that's one way of putting it. The urge to look on the bright side of its own remorseless cultural retreat will intensify: Once Europeans have accepted a not entirely voluntary biculturalism, they will see no reason why Israel should not do the same, and they will embrace a one-state, one-man, one-vote solution for the land between the Jordan and the Mediterranean.

The Muslim world has spent decades peddling the notion that the reason a vast oil-rich region stretching thousands of miles is politically deformed and mired in grim psychoses is all because of a tiny strip of turf barely wider than my New Hampshire township. It will make an ever more convenient scapegoat for the problems of a far vaster territory from the mountains of Morne to the Urals. There was a fair bit of this in the days after 9/11. As Richard Ingrams wrote on the following weekend in the *London Observer*: "Who will dare to damn Israel?"

Well, take a number and get in line. The dust had barely settled on the London Tube bombings before

a reader named Derrick Green sent me a congratulatory e-mail: “I bet you Jewish supremacists think it is Christmas come early, don’t you? Incredibly, you are now going to get your own way even more than you did before, and the British people are going to be dragged into more wars for Israel.”

So it will go. British, European, and even American troops will withdraw from Iraq and Afghanistan, and a bomb will go off in Madrid or Hamburg or Manchester, and there will be nothing left to blame except Israeli “disproportion.” For the remnants of European Jewry, the already discernible migration of French Jews to Quebec, Florida, and elsewhere will accelerate. There are about 150,000 Jews in London today—it’s the thirteenth biggest Jewish city in the world. But there are approximately one million Muslims. The highest number of Jews is found in the 50-54 age group; the highest number of Muslims are found in the four-years-and-under category. By 2025, there will be Jews in Israel, and Jews in America, but not in many other places. Even as the legitimacy of a Jewish state is rejected, the Jewish diaspora—the Jewish presence in the wider world—will shrivel.

And then, to modify Richard Ingrams, who will dare *not* to damn Israel? There’ll still be a Holocaust Memorial Day, mainly for the pleasures it affords to

chastise the new Nazis. As Anthony Lipmann, the Anglican son of an Auschwitz survivor, wrote in 2005: “When on 27 January I take my mother’s arm—tattoo number A-25466—I will think not just of the crematoria and the cattle trucks but of Darfur, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Jenin, Fallujah.” Jenin?

You can see why they’ll keep Holocaust Day on the calendar: In an age when politicians are indifferent or downright hostile to Israel’s “right to exist,” it’s useful to be able to say, “But some of my best photo-ops are Jewish.”

The joke about Mandatory Palestine was that it was the twice-promised land. But isn’t that Europe, too? And perhaps Russia and maybe Canada, a little ways down the line? Two cultures jostling within the same piece of real estate. Not long ago, I found myself watching the video of another “pro-Palestinian” protest in central London with the Metropolitan Police retreating up St. James’s Street to Piccadilly in the face of a mob hurling traffic cones and jeering, “Run, run, you cowards!” and “*Allahu akbar!*” You would think the deluded multi-culti progressives would understand: In the end, this isn’t about Gaza, this isn’t about the Middle East; it’s about them. It may be some consolation to an ever-lonelier Israel that, in one of history’s bleaker jests, in the coming Europe the Europeans will be the new Jews. 🏴‍☠️