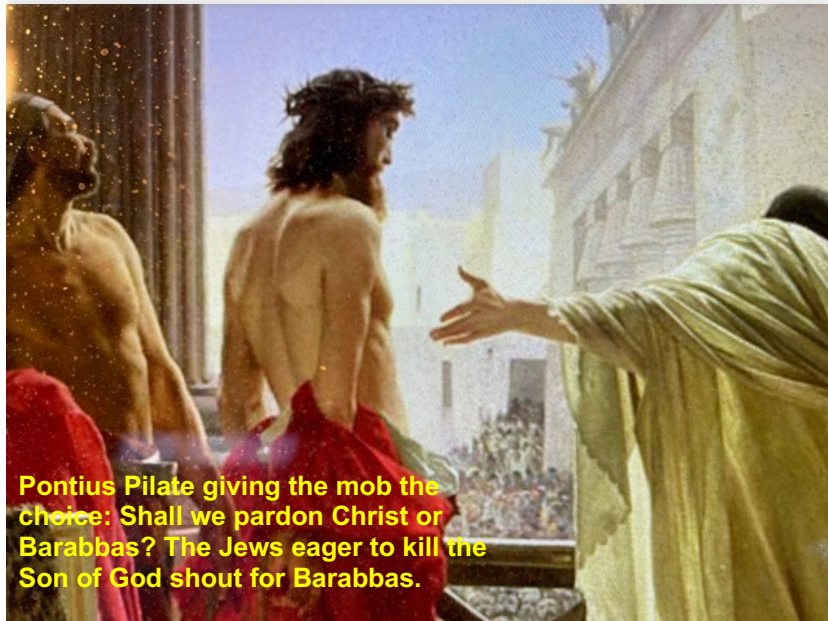


Off The cuff

DON MILLIGAN'S

May 24, 2021



Pontius Pilate giving the mob the choice: Shall we pardon Christ or Barabbas? The Jews eager to kill the Son of God shout for Barabbas.

Pontius Pilate, Killing Christ, and Hating Jews

The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ, His only Son Our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried, He descended into Hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.

I REMEMBER AS A KID the Apostles Creed. We all knew who Pontius Pilate was and how the pharisees, the leaders of the Jewish community in Jerusalem in Anno Domini 33, had agitated amongst the crowd against Jesus. Us Roman Catholics in Kilburn's *Church of the Sacred Heart*, knew only too well that the Jews had killed Christ. This was a perfectly

ordinary and uncontroversial view in the mid nineteen fifties. The Roman governor was a mere by-stander, famously washing his hands of the decision, and allowing the Jewish crowd to decide upon Christ's fate. This story supported the venerable and numerous prejudices to which antisemitism gives rise. So, I was astonished to see a picture at a recent demonstration rehashing this hoary antisemitic tale for the twenty-first century.



Killing Christ is not the only things Jews are accused of, and perhaps the most interesting, is the idea that (alone amongst all oppressed people), the Jews are routinely accused of being responsible for their own

oppression. Antisemites have down the ages blamed the Jews for antisemitism. Now this idea is surfacing again amongst the left-wing supporters of Palestinian solidarity. Tariq Ali, the youthful firebrand from the nineteen sixties, now an old and distinguished man of letters, recently said:

The purveyors of antisemitism today, those who have encouraged antisemitism are the Israeli government.

Killing Palestinians, the way they do it, targeting children as they have done; this is what produces a crude form of antisemitism.

And the support given to this by right-wing Zionist organisations in Europe and America doesn't help challenging antisemitism either.

The bombing of Hamas offices, tunnels, and arms workshops in Gaza by the Israel Defence Force has certainly killed a number of children and other civilians – a truly appalling consequence of the fighting. However, Hamas in firing thousands of rockets into Israel is prepared to kill Jewish men, women, and children, as randomly as any Islamist bus bomber. It is certainly true that because of *Iron Dome*, the Israeli defence system, Hamas doesn't succeed in killing quite as many Israeli Jews as they would like, because killing Jewish men, women, and children is certainly what they intend, because they do not believe that any Israeli is a 'civilian'. The Jews are clearly the enemy as far as the rulers of Gaza are concerned. This is because according Hamas the Jews plan to expand "from the Nile to the Euphrates", and then beyond. They know this because the plan of the Jews is "embodied in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and their present conduct is the best proof of what we are saying."

The Islamists of Gaza routinely refers to both Zionism and the Jews as "Nazis" in their struggle to "raise the banner of Allah over every inch of Palestine", because it is "only under the wing of Islam" that "all religions can coexist in security and safety where their lives, possessions and rights are concerned." Indeed, "In the absence of Islam, strife will

be rife, oppression spreads, evil prevails and schisms and wars break out.”

Any brief encounter with modern history, with the military, social, and cultural practice of Islamists like those gathered together in Hamas and Hezbollah reveals these claims to be utterly ludicrous, just as ludicrous as insisting that people who refer to the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, as evidence of malign Jewish intentions, are not Jew haters and antisemites *par excellence*.

Yet this is exactly what Tariq Ali and the supporters of Palestinian solidarity resolutely insist. They acknowledge that there might be some “crude” sorts of antisemitism knocking about, but on the whole antisemitism is not a serious problem within their ranks, or even in wider society. It is necessary for the left-wing opponents of Zionism, and the enemies of the Jews and of the Jewish state, to argue that Hamas is not anti-Jewish, but simply anti-Zionist, and is indeed committed to sheltering Jews “under the wing of Islam”. Now, you’d have to be deranged to actually believe this, so pressure has grown upon Hamas to present a more plausible face to the world.

The result was the 2017 Hamas Charter following, but not replacing, the charter of 1988, in order to reassure the liberal and left-wing supporters of Palestine solidarity in Europe and North America. It claims that “Palestine has always been and will always be a model of coexistence, tolerance and civilizational innovation.” Despite this embrace of difference, the new charter remains as Islamist as the earlier one. It insists that “Palestine is an Arab Islamic land”, sacred and blessed “in the heart of every Arab and every Muslim.” Palestine certainly has no room for a Jewish state or ‘entity’ of any kind because it “extends from the River Jordan in the east to the Mediterranean in the west and from *Ras al-Naqurah* in the north to *Umm al-Rashrash* in the south”. Palestine “is an integral territorial unit. It is the land and the home of the Palestinian people.”

Using the language of the Western left Hamas

now talks of Zionism as a “racist”, “colonial”, “apartheid” project, and boldly “affirms that its conflict is with the Zionist project not with Jews because of their religion”. The fundamental problem, says Hamas, is that “it is the Zionists who constantly identify Judaism and the Jews with their own colonial project and illegal entity.”

This is certainly a novel take on Jewish nationalism which arose during the nineteenth century. Zionists and Zionism does not “identify” with Judaism and the Jews. On the contrary, it is an authentic expression of Jewish nationalism, which the left from the days of Karl Marx to those of Lenin, right up to our own day, has always rejected. The left’s solution to what became known as “The Jewish Question” was the disappearance of Jews as an ethno-religious community by the process of assimilation. This assimilationism must be contrasted with the hatred of blatant antisemites from Richard Wagner to Adolf Hitler, who sought the disappearance of Jews and Judaism by exclusion, repression, and finally, by genocide.

These two utterly distinct positions have become irretrievably confused and muddled up in the war between the Arabs and the Jews, in Gaza, and in the territory between the Mediterranean and the River Jordan. Consequently, Hamas shares the Western left’s view that Jews have no right to nationalism, and no right to nationhood. Judaism is merely a religion and has no other ethnic experience or content. Consequently, Jews do not need a homeland. Many Jews, share this left-wing, and Islamist, prejudice, and are expressly anti-Zionists. However, the great majority of Jews in Israel and throughout the world believe in defending the state of Israel, regardless of what they think of its government or policies. This is because they know that Jews are Jews regardless of religious belief or observance, and that what matters most when people come to brutalize and kill them, and their children, is not *Judaism*, but that they are Jews.

This attempt by Hamas to make the tone and

tenor of its programme more congenial to the ears of the Western left has resulted in a marvellous exercise in double speak entirely familiar to those of us who have spent our lives in left-wing circles:

Hamas believes that no part of the land of Palestine shall be compromised or conceded, irrespective of the causes, and circumstances and pressures and no matter how long the occupation lasts. Hamas rejects any alternative to the full and complete liberation of Palestine, from the river to the sea. However, without compromising its rejection of the Zionist entity and without relinquishing any Palestinian rights, Hamas considers the establishment of a fully sovereign and independent Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital along the lines of the 4th of June 1967, with the return of the refugees and the displaced to their homes from which they were expelled, to be a formula of national consensus.

There shall be no recognition of the legitimacy of the Zionist entity.

Hamas, Article 20, 2017

Hamas is now saying they will do a deal for a full sovereign state of Palestine within the boundaries of the 1967 armistice, but they demand the right of return for all Palestinian Arabs, and their descendants to live in the “Zionist entity”, to which they continue to refuse recognition, or accept its right to exist. In doing this Hamas makes clear that the circumstances that existed on the foundation of Israel in 1948, must be reversed, and that the “Zionist entity” must cease to exist.

The upshot is that Hamas believes what it has always believed that their struggle is an Islamist struggle to liquidate the Jewish state, and establish the rule of sharia upon Palestine from the river to the sea. This is their moderate compromise. They do not accept a two-state solution any more than Netanyahu or the Israeli right. They want victory over the Jewish “entity” or nothing.

Despite this, liberal commentators in Britain continue to express the pious wish for a secular state in Palestine in which Jews could live in peace and

freedom amongst their Arab neighbours. This is the utopian option which would chase away the left's traditional horror of ethno-religious nationalism with the embrace by a secular state of universal values. This is, without doubt, the outcome for which most of us on the authentic left devoutly wish. However, the ersatz left's supporters of Palestinian solidarity remain on-side with Hamas. Although on principle they are opposed to the ethno-religious nationalism of Zionism, they find no difficulty in accepting the ethno-religious nationalism of Hamas (or indeed that of Pakistan). This is because over the years, acceptance of Islamism, and the notion of Islamophobia, has steadily eaten away the *progressive and traditional universalism of the left*. Thus, it has eventually decayed into a phony left, which supports the ethno-religious nationalism of one side, against that of the other.

As long as this ersatz left supports the Islamism of Hamas and the destruction of the Jewish state, there can be no peace, secular or otherwise.