

When Einstein called those who ruled Israel for 45 years “fascists”

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What would you say if the notorious racist and anti-semite prime minister of Hungary Victor Orban accused Einstein of ... anti-semitism? And Hanna Arendt as well? Together with the most iconic author of Holocaust literature Primo Levi? Unimaginable and unrealistic? Not at all. On the contrary, that is exactly what is happening today, and - what is more - it is happening on a global scale. Moreover, such attacks do not come only from people like Orban, but from a host of distinguished racists and anti-semites who, with the blessings of a variety of political establishments, use that label to destroy their political opponents - usually left-wing anti-fascists and anti-racists !...

This is not a marginal or topical phenomenon. It is part of a real war machinery set up over the last 3-4 years by the political structures of the right, the extreme right and even of social democracy to wipe out their progressive present or future rivals. Among them Jeremy Corbyn in the UK (who in the end was exterminated), Jean-Luc Mélenchon in France (who survived but was severely ‘injured’) or Jewish American Berni Sanders in the US (who fought back and managed to scare them off thanks to the mobilization of radicalized young American Jews).

In all these cases, even the slightest criticism of Israel’s policies or the slightest support for the rights of the Palestinian people led to an all-out political and media attack on the ‘culprit’, getting close to a public lynching, accusing him of being ... anti-semite! And as if that were not enough, several of the many right-wing governments of the European Union or in the United States have recently taken a further step: they have passed laws that - in the name of fighting anti-semitism - forbid or criminalize any criticism of the brutal policies of (far right) governments of Israel...

And so, the fact that the only criterion for the definition of modern anti-semitism turns out to be the attitude towards Israel and its governments has led to the following tragicomic situation: We witness the various Netanyahu’s and their supporters to honour as “partners of Israel” and “strategic allies” notorious racists and anti-semites of the far right, such as the leaders of Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovenia, such as the former president of the United States Donald Trump, European politicians belonging to the far right like Salvini, Wilders and De Winter or American Evangelists and so many others, while at the same time famous anti-racists and anti-fascists - many of whom are actually ... Jewish (!) - are denounced as “anti-semites”, even though they have spent most of their lifetime fighting against anti-semites such as the present “friends of Israel”.

That is why the “strategic ally” and great friend of Netanyahu and of his political descendants, the prime minister of Hungary Victor Orban, could very well accuse and bring to trial today the Jew Alberto Einstein on charges of anti-semitism because he had dared to send the following “scandalous” open letter to the *New York Times*, 73 years ago:

Letter to the *New York Times*:

New Palestine Party: Visit of Menachem Begin and Aims of Political Movement Discussed

To the Editors of the *New York Times*:

Among the most disturbing political phenomena of our times is the emergence in the newly created state of Israel of the "Freedom Party" (Tnuat HaHerut), a political party closely akin in its organization, methods, political philosophy and social appeal to the Nazi and Fascist parties. It was formed out of the membership and following of the former Irgun Zvai Leumi, a terrorist, right-wing, chauvinist organization in Palestine.

The current visit of Menachem Begin, leader of this party, to the United States is obviously calculated to give the impression of American support for his party in the coming Israeli elections, and to cement political ties with conservative Zionist elements in the United States. Several Americans of national repute have lent their names to welcome his visit. It is inconceivable that those who oppose fascism throughout the world, if correctly informed as to Mr. Begin's political record and perspectives, could add their names and support to the movement he represents.

Before irreparable damage is done by way of financial contributions, public manifestations in Begin's behalf, and the creation in Palestine of the impression that a large segment of America supports Fascist elements in Israel, the American public must be informed as to the record and objectives of Mr. Begin and his movement.

The public avowals of Begin's party are no guide whatever to its actual character. Today they speak of freedom, democracy and anti-imperialism, whereas until recently they openly preached the doctrine of the Fascist state. It is in its actions that the terrorist party betrays its real character; from its past actions we can judge what it may be expected to do in the future.

Attack on Arab Village

A shocking example was their behavior in the Arab village of Deir Yassin. This village, off the main roads and surrounded by Jewish lands, had taken no part in the war, and had even fought off Arab bands who wanted to use the village as their base. On April 9 (THE NEW YORK TIMES), terrorist bands attacked this peaceful village, which was not a military objective in the fighting, killed most of its inhabitants 240 men, women, and children and kept a few of them alive to parade as captives through the streets of Jerusalem. Most of the Jewish community was horrified at the deed, and the Jewish Agency sent a telegram of apology to King Abdullah of Trans-Jordan. But the terrorists, far from being ashamed of their act, were proud of this massacre, publicized it widely, and invited all the foreign correspondents present in the country to view the heaped corpses and the general havoc at Deir Yassin.

The Deir Yassin incident exemplifies the character and actions of the Freedom Party.

Within the Jewish community they have preached an admixture of ultranationalism, religious mysticism, and racial superiority. Like other Fascist parties they have been used to break strikes, and have themselves pressed for the destruction of free trade unions. In their stead they have proposed corporate unions on the Italian Fascist model.

During the last years of sporadic anti-British violence, the IZL and Stern groups inaugurated a reign of terror in the Palestine Jewish community. Teachers were beaten up for speaking against them, adults were shot for not letting their children join them. By gangster methods, beatings, window-smashing, and wide-spread robberies, the terrorists intimidated the population and exacted a heavy tribute.

The people of the Freedom Party have had no part in the constructive achievements in Palestine. They have reclaimed no land, built no settlements, and only detracted from the Jewish defense activity. Their much-publicized immigration endeavors were minute, and devoted mainly to bringing in Fascist compatriots.

Discrepancies Seen

The discrepancies between the bold claims now being made by Begin and his party, and their record of past performance in Palestine bear the imprint of no ordinary political party. This is the unmistakable stamp of a Fascist party for whom terrorism (against Jews, Arabs, and British alike), and misrepresentation are means, and a "Leader State" is the goal.

In the light of the foregoing considerations, it is imperative that the truth about Mr. Begin and his movement be made known in this country. It is all the more tragic that the top leadership of American Zionism has refused to campaign against Begin's efforts, or even to expose to its own constituents the dangers to Israel from support to Begin.

The undersigned therefore take this means of publicly presenting a few salient facts concerning Begin and his party; and of urging all concerned not to support this latest manifestation of fascism.

ISIDORE ABRAMOWITZ, HANNAH ARENDT, ABRAHAM BRICK, RABBI JESSURUN CARDOZO, ALBERT EINSTEIN, HERMAN EISEN, M.D., HAYIM FINEMAN, M. GALLEN, M.D., H.H. HARRIS, ZELIG S. HARRIS, SIDNEY HOOK, FRED KARUSH, BRURIA KAUFMAN, IRMA L. LINDHEIM, NACHMAN MAISEL, SEYMOUR MELMAN, MYER D. MENDELSON, M.D., HARRY M. OSLINSKY, SAMUEL PITLICK, FRITZ ROHRLICH, LOUIS P. ROCKER, RUTH SAGIS, ITZHAK SANKOWSKY, I.J. SHOENBERG, SAMUEL SHUMAN, M. SINGER, IRMA WOLFE, STEFAN WOLFE.

New York, Dec. 2, 1948

However, the most important thing about this letter is not in the first place that public figures like Einstein (1) and Hanna Arendt call Begin and his party "fascist" - in other words they did something that would today be more than sufficient for the media to stigmatize them as ... anti-semites and for the authorities of many member states of the European Union to bring them to court. The most significant and essential fact is that the **dramatic warnings contained in this open letter have been fully confirmed over the last 40 years**. Indeed, they continue to be confirmed every day in Israel and in the entire Middle East, with the tragic consequences we all know.

In fact, **Menachem Begin, labeled in 1948 as "fascist" and "terrorist", became prime minister of Israel 29 years later (1977!). And he managed to do so at the head of the new Likud Party, founded by him as the continuation of his earlier Herut (Freedom) Party, which Einstein and Arendt also denounced as "fascist"**. But the main thing is that since then (1977) Israel is ruled by this very same Likud Party, effectively monopolizing power. After about a century (!) of permanent and often extremely violent and bloody civil conflicts among Zionists, today Likud has gained full control over the country, while the formerly powerful Labour Party, supported by the founding fathers of the State of Israel, has almost completely disappeared ...

However, this does not concern only Begin, the founder and leader of the "terrorist" organization Irgun. **Yitzhak Shamir, his successor as prime minister of Israel and leader of the Likud Party, had headed an even more extreme right-wing terrorist split faction of Irgun, known as the Stern Gang**. This group, according to Einstein's and Arendt's open letter... "inaugurated", together with Irgun, "a reign of terror in the Palestine Jewish community"! A "reign of terror" which

cost the lives of thousands of Palestinian Arabs, but also Jews.” ...

And what about the longest-serving prime minister of Israel and leader of the Likud Party, Benjamin “Bibi” Netanyahu ? Is he too a genuine offspring of the “fascist” womb that gave birth to Begin, Shamir and the other far-right political leaders of Israel? Although much younger, **Netanyahu has a direct, and even family relationship with the most extreme and pure-blooded fascist wings - and later splits - of far-right “Revisionist” Zionism**, inspired, created and led by **Ze’ev Jabotinsky** [1] a century ago. In fact, “Bibi”’s father, who had served as Jabotinsky’s secretary, followed Abba Ahimeir when he disagreed with Jabotinsky’s rejection of his proposal to become something like... a Jewish Mussolini, at the head of a purely fascist Zionist party [2]. A close ally of this fascist ideologue and theorist, “Bibi”’s father ran the publications of Ahimeir’s fascist organization. At that time, Ahimeir developed quite close ties with Mussolini’s fascist Italy, but never managed to do the same with Nazi Germany, although he did not hesitate to praise Hitler in 1933!

Although he never gained significant popular support, **Ahimeir had a direct or indirect impact on those who shaped present-day Israel**. It was not just that his cult of the most brutal violence, his irredentism and his racist theories pervaded organizations such as Menachem Begin’s Irgun. Equally important is the fact that the founder of the Stern Gang was his “spiritual child”. The same goes for its main military leader, the later prime minister of Israel, Yitzhak Shamir. And, finally, that Benzion Netanyahu was his “disciple” and close collaborator, who in turn had a profound political influence on his son, prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu. And maybe not just on his son, but also on the son of his son, his notorious grandson Yair, known for his scandals, the anti-semitic sketches he publishes and his neo-fascist sympathies, reciprocated by German and American neo-fascists who admire him as their ... “brother” and “idol”!

For all these reasons, **the warnings about the evil consequences of the ‘fascism’ and ‘terrorism’ of Begin and his party, contained in Einstein and Arendt’s open letter, remain extremely relevant 73 years after their publication**. And precisely because Begin’s successors in the Likud Party and in Israel are his flesh and blood, followers of his work, disciples of his teachers and custodians of the same ideological, political but also organizational heritage, what they are doing today in Israel, the Middle East and in the entire world, as scandalous as it is, is neither the product of improvisation nor an invention of the moment. These are political choices that **obey and are governed by the “logic” of a particularly dangerous political current, that of the far-right Revisionism of the Zionist movement, that originated already a century ago...**

Do we have to consider then as surprising and “abnormal” these “strategical alliances” and the flirting of Netanyahu and his friends with the international riff-raff of sworn anti-communists and racists, who “by chance” are also sworn anti-semites? Not at all. Their first teacher was none other than the father and theorist of Zionist Revisionism, Ze’ev Jabotinsky. Motivated by his pathological hatred of the Russian Revolution, Jabotinsky even allied himself in 1922 with the Ukrainian anti-communist and nationalist war-lord Symon **Petliura**, whose army carried out between 1917 and 1922... 897 anti-Jewish pogroms, in which at least 30,000 Ukrainian Jews were massacred! After all, the same pathological brand of anti-communism pushed Jabotinsky’s followers and successors to flirt, or even at times to ally with Mussolini, or even with Hitler. Their motivations are updated today by **Yair Netanyahu, the notorious prime minister’s son, when he stated “I prefer a thousand times Neo-Nazis over the leftwing Antifa’s or the activists of Black Lives Matter”...**

The same goes obviously for the glorification of the most brutal violence or the deeply racist hatred for the Palestinians, nurtured by Israeli leaders over the last decades. Again, they do not “invent” something new. Let’s just remember that these lessons were first preached by the organizations

where they came from and in which they continue to take pride: the terrorist and fascist-like organizations Betar, Irgun and Stern. There is, however, an important difference between yesterday and today: Back then, Jabotinsky, Ahimeir, Begin and Shamir were not at all “presentable” and the international political establishment avoided their company, if it did not openly disavow them. In other words, they were disreputable...

Today, the situation is completely different. **The disreputable “fascists” and “terrorists” of 1948 have been converted not only into entirely presentable “friends” and allies, but - increasingly so - into privileged strategical partners of those who rule the world, into the pillars of their empires!** And worst of all, yesterday’s “fascists” and “terrorists” are today able to impose their authoritarian and undemocratic choices on the majority of western governments and countries!

We will end this text as it began: with Einstein and his warnings. A few days after the massacre of Deir Yassin, those who represented in the US the organizations that perpetrated the massacre, had the brilliant idea to ask Einstein for his support. The answer given by the famous Jewish scientist, which remains - unfortunately - almost unknown, was rather laconic, barely 50 words:

April 10, 1948
Mr. Shepard Rifkin
Exec. Director:
American Friends of the Fighters for the Freedom of Israel
149 Second Ave.
New York 3, N.Y.

Dear Sir:

When a real and final catastrophe should befall us in Palestine the first responsible for it would be the British and the second responsible for it the Terrorist organizations build up from our own ranks.

I am not willing to see anybody associated with those misled and criminal people.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed, 'A. Einstein')

Albert Einstein

Unfortunately, it seems clear that Einstein was right again. With the British now a remote memory, it is indeed true that the descendants of the “terrorist organizations” of 1948 are leading Israel, which is ruled by them, with mathematical precision towards the “final destruction”. A country that may today seem more powerful and arrogant than ever but is in fact living through the worst existential crisis of its history, as it is rotting and disintegrating from the inside. The countdown has already begun and the hour of truth is approaching...

Yorgos Mitralias

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P.S.

CADTM

<http://www.cadtm.org/When-Einstein-called-fascists-those-who-rule-Israel-for-the-last-44-years>

Footnotes

[1] Einstein could have become president of Israel, if he had accepted in November 1952 the invitation made to him by the founder of the State of Israel and its first prime minister David Ben Gurion to succeed Israel's first president, Haim Weizmann, who had just passed away.

[2] It may be that Jabotinsky was not a fascist, but Mussolini had a different opinion, when he stated in 1935 to Davide Prato, who was later to become Rabbi of Rome: **“If you want Zionism to succeed, you need a Jewish State, a Jewish flag and a Jewish language. The person that understands that is your fascist, Jabotinsky”**.