

THE ARABS, FRANCE AND TERRORISM

Have the Arab nations saved us again?

Libya and Syria have lined up against Iraq in its fight against Iran (which is non-Arab but Muslim). Jordan's Hussein has extended a tentative hand to Iraq. Saudi will be unpopular with whichever side it doesn't help. They're all already unhappy with Egypt. The PLO's Arafat is running around the Middle East like a bantam rooster with its head cut off.

The Levantine merry-go-round may already have convinced a few more people that instability in the Middle East is not Israel's fault. And that access to oil is not primarily threatened by Israel. And that an Arab State in the West Bank might not be so conducive to peace, after all.

There should now be a short recess from the myth that Israel is the fly in every ointment. But the myth will return. We should be careful not to swallow the counter-myth that the Arab nations are the only chief cooks of the anti-Israeli offensive. Extremist left-wing and right-wing forces in the world will keep the pot boiling: a Middle East conflict featuring Israel as the villain is important for these forces.

France is a dramatic example. In postwar France, left-wing groups were the first to attack Israel -- and to attack the Jews for supporting Israel. They did so out of a left-wing pro-Palestinian, pro-Third World stance. Israel was the handmaiden of American imperialism. Their anti-Israel passion was part and parcel of their anti-American passion.

Right wing forces in France later joined the anti-Israel crusade, and also castigated the Jews for supporting Israel. Their stance was nationalistic. After all, wasn't it the Arab nations which had the oil and the big business?

And so Jews are caught between extreme right and extreme left, not just in Europe but here. The latest California Attorney General's report mentions the neo-Nazis and the KKK, both of which would do damage to the Jews. And it mentions the Progressive Labor Party, the Revolutionary Communist Party and the Communist Workers' Party, all of which would do damage to the Jews.

There are actually two *kinds* of threats today. There is the threat of some extremist group developing a mass following and political power -- and attacking the lives of Jews, as in the case of Hitler; or the group existence of the Jews, as in the case of Lenin. But there is also the sheer threat of terrorist attacks, accomplished by small groups like the SLA which will never take political power but which can still effectively kill small numbers of people here and there.

As we know from the daily headlines, this kind of terrorism is on the rise all over the world. It is, of course, difficult to contend with just because it is so covert. The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith provides a unique service, by expertly tracking these covert operations around the world, insofar as they are directed towards Jews. Intelligence is the only defense against these group.

There are both left-wing and right-wing terrorists. And there are both left-wing and right-wing groups which are entering the open political arena, and would pose more massive danger to the Jews. But the way the world tilts today, there are many more Jewish lives threatened by such political groups on the extreme left.

The Soviet Union is the central world factory for the production of anti-semitic materials. Along with the Soviet Union, the left-oriented PLO, their many fellow-travelers in the U.N., and their political supporters around the world, comprise the force most likely to try to execute another holocaust, and drive a couple of million Jews into the sea. These left-wing, anti-American extremists need Israel as the center-piece of their demonology. They will continue to stir things up the Middle East.

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