

William Shawcross

Writer and broadcaster William Shawcross was born on 28 May 1946 in Sussex, England, the son of Lord Shawcross. He was educated at Eton and University College, Oxford, and has worked as a journalist for the *Sunday Times*. He is a regular contributor to newspapers and periodicals including the *New Statesman* and the *Washington Post*.

Publications

Dubcek: Dubcek and Czechoslovakia 1918-1968 (1970), a *New York Times* Book of the Year.

Crime and Compromise: Janos Kadar and the politics of Hungary since Revolution (1974)

Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon and the destruction of Cambodia (1979), nominated for a *Pulitzer Prize*.

The Quality of Mercy: Cambodia, Holocaust and Modern Conscience (1984), awarded the Freedom From Hunger Media Award.

The Shah's Last Ride: The fate of an ally (1988)

Murdoch: The making of a media empire (1992)

Deliver us from Evil: Warlords, Peacekeepers and a World of Endless Conflict (2000)

Queen and Country (2002)

Allies (2004)

Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother: The Official Biography (2009)

AN IRRATIONAL, OBSCENE HATRED

By William Shawcross 06/07/2010

Israel is a cartoon villain, beyond sympathy, beyond even redemption. What is shocking – and frightening – is that the narrative the world accepts is always that of Israel as the evildoer.

Talkbacks (26)

‘Shut up. Go back to Auschwitz.’ That was the response from the “peace flotilla” when Israel broadcast a radio message warning the Turkish flotilla that it was about to enter an area under naval blockade. In another response, someone on board the “humanitarian aid convoy” replied: “We’re helping the Arabs go against the US. Don’t forget 9/11, guys.” After these exchanges, IDF commandos landed on the ships. On the Mavi Marmara they were attacked by pro-Palestinian activists wielding iron bars.

Turkish papers have now published photographs of soldiers bleeding badly as they are assaulted by thugs.

Eventually the commandos shot back in self-defense and nine activists were killed. It was a disaster for Israel and a triumph for those who hate Israel, Jews and the West. Bulent Yildirim, head of the Turkish Islamist organization IHH, which organized the flotilla, exulted in a speech to an audience he called “people of paradise.” “Last night, everything in the world has changed, and everything is progressing toward Islam,” he said.

THAT IS the reality today. Consider these words from Sheikh Hussein bin Mahmud, a pseudonymous but apparently popular commentator in the global

jihadist community: *“Everyone who has had contact with the Jews and lived alongside them, in the East and in the West, has spurned them, loathed them and detested them, to the point where Hitler said, ‘I could kill all the Jews in the world, but I left a few alive so that the entire world will know why I killed the Jews.’”*

Such raw hatred of Jews, let alone Israel, is commonplace in the Middle East, even without an excuse such as last week’s deadly incident. The “peace flotilla” was no such thing. It had some peaceful people aboard, but its organizer, IHH, is a part of the Muslim Brotherhood, an openly terrorist organization pledged to the destruction of Israel and the triumph of Shari’a law everywhere. Scores of the “peace passengers” were Islamic militants pledged to kill Jews and secure martyrdom for themselves. Hence the confrontation with the Israeli commandos and the tragedy of the deaths on board.

That was not enough for Sheikh Hussein. He declared that the **Turks** should “kill every Jew in **Turkey**.” Moreover, “Gaza does not want ‘freedom ships’ bearing blonde women with Muslim, Christian, Jewish and atheist men; it wants a naval fleet and a land army bearing black Islamic banners... Gaza will not agree to a cease-fire with the Jews. On the contrary, it is thirsty to drink the blood of the sons of apes and pigs, and it is hungry and longs to devour the body parts of these cowards.”

Western critics of Israel often say that they are not anti-Semitic, merely anti-Zionist. No such distinction occurs to commentators such as Sheikh Hussein – Jews, Israelis, they are all “the sons of apes and pigs.”

It is not surprising that such racist loathing creates a siege mentality in Israel. Worse is the fact that Israelis know it’s not just “the black Islamic banners” with which they have to contend, but also the irrational hatred of much of the rest of the world

The realities of Gaza, Israel and the West Bank – where, with Israel’s assistance, the Palestinian economy is booming – are deemed irrelevant to the conventional narrative. Israel is a cartoon villain, beyond sympathy, beyond even redemption. What is deeply shocking – and frightening – is that the narrative the world accepts is always that of Israel the evildoer.

It was true with the so-called Jenin massacre allegedly committed by the Israelis in 2002. There was no such massacre. It was a lie that was widely and uncritically propagated by the UN, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the BBC. It is true today. The hatred that Israel arouses is absurd, even obscene. One senior military source was quoted last week as saying it did not matter what his country did; however carefully it responded to such events as the “peace flotilla,” it would always be condemned in the UN, on the BBC and almost everywhere else.

The bien pensants of the Western world are never prepared to give Israel the benefit of any doubt. The UN has become more of a lynch mob than a constructive debating chamber. Israel’s right to defend itself is ignored. So is the fact that **Iran** has threatened to obliterate it, and that the Hamas rulers of Gaza are Iranian agents also pledged to its destruction.

LAST WEEK, the UN, as always, jumped instantly to the conclusions most damaging to Israel. The UN Human Rights Council, of which Iran is a member,

instantly denounced Israel for its “attacks on the flotilla of ships carrying humanitarian assistance.”

Similarly, the Israeli ambassador to the EU was harangued and abused in the European Parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee. No one was interested in his explanation, and when he showed images of IDF soldiers being beaten with iron bars on the Mavi Marmara, MEPs asserted the film was faked propaganda. The only person to defend Israel at all was Charles Tannock, the Conservative MEP. (Unlike the Israeli ambassador, the Iranian ambassador was treated with courtesy.)

Israel is an imperfect society (like any other), but it has extraordinary social, scientific and scholastic achievements. Despite living under endless threats, it is far closer to the liberal ideal of a free society than any other in the Middle East. But it gets scant credit.

Europe prides itself on its tolerance of gay rights, free speech and feminism. These are all integral to Israeli society also, but Israel gets scant credit for that. Radical Muslims, on the other hand, stone women, hang homosexuals and kill to deny free speech. Do Europeans protest that? Not many, not often.

Israel is held to a far higher standard than any other nation. Few people seem to care much about North Korean atrocities, at home and abroad, let alone its terrifying nuclear defiance of the world. No one marches or calls emergency meetings of the UN and the EU to protest the vicious Muslim brutality against other Muslims that takes place every day throughout the Islamic world – and beyond. No one demonstrates on behalf of Christians murdered in the Middle East, their churches burned. Such horrors are waved away. Only Israel merits such constant abuse.

The Muslim world and the Western Left are in an unholy alliance; they do not want to improve the Jewish state, they want to remove it. Israel has come to expect double standards from Europe and assault from the UN.

Much more serious is the loss of support from the Obama administration.

In his attempts to reach out to the Islamic world, Barack Obama has abandoned the US tradition of whole-hearted support for one of its principal allies.

He has showed himself far more tolerant of (or unconcerned by) abuses of power in the Muslim world than by mistakes of Israel.

Most recently, Obama backed a Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty conference statement that singled out Israel in calling for a nuclear-free Middle East. No other president has ever done that, and Israelis are understandably concerned. What Obama does not seem to understand is that his lack of support for Israel not only saps Israel, it emboldens its enemies.

The Middle East and the world are now a much more dangerous place as “the sons [and daughters] of apes and pigs” are delegitimized once again. On their way back to Auschwitz, if their enemies succeed.

William Shawcross is a British writer and journalist. In 2003 he wrote Allies – Why the West had to remove Saddam. He is now working on a book about the implications of the trial of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed to be published by Public Affairs Press, NYC.