

Delegitimizing the Jewish State

by Bat Ye'or

In a move that caught the Israeli government and the Jewish world by complete surprise, on October 21, 2010, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared the Tomb of the Hebrew Patriarchs in Hebron and Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem “an integral part of the occupied Palestinian territories,” admonishing the Israeli decision to add these biblical shrines to the list of Jewish historical and archaeological sites as “a violation of international law.”¹

What is less known, however, is that the driving force behind “the attempt to detach the Nation of Israel from its heritage” (to use Israeli prime minister Netanyahu's words)² was the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), which pressured UNESCO to issue the declaration and drafted its initial version.³ U.N. secretary-general Ban Ki-moon has recently described the OIC as “a strategic and important partner of the U.N.”⁴ In fact, it has been the OIC that has successfully exploited its marked preponderance at the U.N.—where it constitutes the largest single voting bloc—to turn the world organization and its specialized agencies into effective tools in the attempt to achieve its goals, two of which are to bring about Israel's eventual demise and to “galvanize the *umma* [Islamic world] into a unified body.”⁵

THE OIC'S ISRAEL OBSESSION

Established in September 1969 as the “collective voice of the Muslim world,” the OIC has evolved into the second largest intergovernmental organization after the U.N., bringing together

fifty-six Muslim and other states, as well as the Palestinian Authority.⁶ Though boasting a global range of objectives from the “promotion of tolerance and moderation, modernization, [and] extensive reforms in all spheres of activities,” to

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1 “Executive Board adopts five decisions concerning UNESCO's work in the occupied Palestinian and Arab Territories,” UNESCO Media Services, Paris, Oct. 21, 2010.

2 *Jerusalem Post*, Oct. 29, 2010.

3 See, for example, International Islamic News Agency (Jeddah), Mar. 3, 2010; “Decisions Adopted by the Executive Board at Its 184th Session,” UNESCO, executive board, Paris, May 14, 2010.

4 *World Bulletin* (Istanbul), Sept. 28, 2010.

5 “About OIC,” Organization of the Islamic Conference, Jeddah, accessed Nov. 7, 2010.

6 *Ibid.*

the cultivation of “good governance and promotion of human rights in the Muslim world,”⁷ this body has constantly and disproportionately focused on Israel and its supposed misdeeds. It was established in response to an attempt by a deranged Australian to set fire to the al-Aqsa mosque, which was duly blamed on “the military occupation by Israel of Al-Quds—the Holy City of Jerusalem.”⁸ The “State of Palestine” (i.e., the then-five-year-old Palestine Liberation Organization or PLO, established as a tool for promoting the expansionist ambitions of Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser) was among the OIC’s original twenty-five founding members, and the pledge of “full support to the Palestinian people for the restoration of their rights, which were usurped”⁹—the standard Arab euphemism for Israel’s destruction—has become a central plank of the organization’s policy, reiterated in countless decisions and resolutions on issues that have nothing to do with questions concerning the Palestinians.¹⁰

OIC activities reveal a systematic effort to devise an anti-Israeli media strategy.

The Islamic Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), an OIC organ mandated “to strengthen cooperation among member states in the field of education, science, and culture,”¹¹ has occupied pride of place in the campaign to delegitimize Israel. Since its inception in 1982, it has run dozens of programs and symposia on the Jewish state’s supposed desecration of Islamic and Christian holy sites and the attendant need to wrest them from the Israelis’ control. The most important of these

were the international conferences on the “Protection of Islamic and Christian Holy Sites in Palestine,” held in Rabat in 1993 and 2002 and in Amman in November 2004 respectively under the patronage of the Moroccan and Jordanian monarchs. An examination of conference activities reveals a systematic effort to devise an anti-Israeli media strategy that was to be adopted not only by Arab and Muslim states but also by international groups and organizations, including some of the U.N.’s most powerful agencies.

UNIFYING THE UMMA, BASHING THE JEWS

In his address to the 2002 Rabat conference, King Muhammad VI of Morocco stated:

The acts of destruction and distortion committed by the occupation authorities to distort the facts and truths of history cause serious damage to the Islamic and Christian holy sites and violate their sanctity and the values they embody for all the believers of the different religions.¹²

For the Moroccan monarch, as president of the OIC’s al-Quds Committee, such actions as archaeological excavations and the placement of artifacts in museums constituted an attack against all believers. In fact, Christian churches that had been reduced to ruins by centuries of Islamic occupation were restored by successive Israeli governments because, unlike Shari’ah or Islamic law, the Jewish state has no laws prohibiting the restoration or construction of churches. The king could have also benefitted from a measure of introspection: Morocco, like the other Maghreb states, is a place where virtually no vestiges of pre-Islamic Christian history have survived.

Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, the Saudi-

7 Ibid.

8 “Declaration of the First Rabat Islamic Conference,” Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Rabat, Sept. 1969.

9 Ibid.

10 “Resolutions,” Second Islamic Conference of the Ministers of Health, OIC, Tehran, Mar. 1-4, 2009.

11 “Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO),” Specialized Institutions and Organs, OIC, Rabat, 2009, accessed, Nov. 7, 2010.

12 “Message of His Majesty Mohammed VI, King of Morocco,” June 6, 2002, Protection of Islamic and Christian Holy Sites in Palestine International Conference, Rabat, June 7-8, 2002 (Rabat: ISESCO, 2004), p. 11.

born, University of Oregon-educated ISESCO director-general, went a step further, asserting that “the crimes against humanity committed by Israel have reached an extent of oppression, injustice, and aggression that humanity has never witnessed, neither in this age nor in previous ages.”¹³ He amplified this diatribe at the Amman conference where he claimed that Muslim responsibilities toward the Islamic and Christian holy sites in the Palestinian territories sprang from ISESCO’s commitment to the Palestinian cause, which in his opinion, constituted the essence of all issues and the supreme task of both the Muslim world and those Eastern Christian circles that were part of the Arab and Islamic civilization.¹⁴

The proceedings of the Rabat and the Amman conferences represent a monument to anti-Jewish hatred and incitement, featuring such assertions as “Jews are the enemies of Allah, the enemies of faith, and of the worship of Allah.”¹⁵ They also brim with denials of Jewish attachment to the Land of Israel and claims to its Arab (and later Muslim) character since the third millennium BCE. The Jews are accused of having “judaized” the biblical prophets who were in fact Muslim and of having usurped the antiquity of other peoples since they themselves have no history. In the words of Adnan Ibra-

13 “Address of Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwajri,” Protection of Islamic and Christian Holy Sites in Palestine, First International Conference, Rabat, June 7-8, 2002 (Rabat: ISESCO, 2004), p. 15.

14 “Address by Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwajri,” Protection of Islamic and Christian Holy Sites in Palestine, Second International Conference, Amman, Nov. 23-25, 2004 (Rabat: ISESCO, 2007), p. 18.

15 Adnan Ibrahim Hassan al-Subah, “Role of Palestinian Civil Society in the Protection of Holy Sites in Palestine,” Protection of Islamic and Christian Holy Sites in Palestine, Second International Conference, Amman, Nov. 23-25, 2004 (Rabat: ISESCO, 2007), p. 253.

U.N. secretary-general Ban Ki-moon (right, with Libya’s dictator Mu‘ammar al-Qadhafi) has described the Organization of the Islamic Conference as “a strategic and important partner of the U.N.”

him Hassan al-Subah, president of the Jenin Information Center:

People familiar with the Torah, which we believe to have been distorted, know the extent of the evils they attribute to their prophets: corruption, treachery, fornication or approval of it. It is with these facts that we need to arm ourselves when we confront the Zionist propaganda in the world with tangible facts, as part of our defence of the faith and the faithful on earth, wherever they may be.¹⁶

These examples of incitement to religious hatred were on display at the U.N.’s Palais des Nations in Geneva at a reception given by the OIC on December 19, 2008, to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. And why not? After all, the OIC is not only “the collective voice of the Muslim world”¹⁷ but also the U.N.’s largest single voting bloc and a prominent collaborator with many of its specialized agencies.

16 Ibid., p. 254.

17 “About OIC.”

Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri (left), ISESCO director-general, here with H.E. Nurul Islam Nahid, chairman of the Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO, has successfully goaded UNESCO to declare biblical Jewish sites “an integral part of the occupied Palestinian territories.”

INFLUENCING THE U.N.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that these conferences did not content themselves with anti-Jewish diatribes but sought to devise a strategy to harness the international community to the anti-Israel campaign in general and the re-Islamization of Jerusalem (al-Quds) in particular. As one of the speakers explained, “Jerusalem is the cornerstone of the spiritual edifice and the Zionist Jewish entity. Were it to be dislodged, the whole edifice and the Zionist entity itself would crumble like a deck of cards.”¹⁸

Action plans show a media strategy of employing an attractive style and scientific language and magnifying Palestinian suffering since the establishment of the “racist Zionist entity” in 1948. These plans would be effec-

18 Abdullah Kan'an, “Media Plan for Publicising the Cause of Al Quds, Al Sharif in the West and Mechanisms for Its Implementation,” Protection of Islamic and Christian Holy Sites in Palestine, Second International Conference, Amman, Nov. 23-25, 2004 (Rabat: ISESCO, 2007), p. 195.

tively replicated by the U.N.’s Alliance of Civilizations’ Report of the High Level Group (HLG), which would endeavor to “make it clear to the Palestinian people that the price of decades of occupation, misunderstanding, and stigmatization is being fully acknowledged,” although this “story had been left untold or deliberately ignored by the community of nations.”¹⁹

This assertion is not merely false but the inverse of the truth. The Palestin-

ians have benefitted like no other nation from world indulgence. Europe, for one, has vigorously championed their cause since 1973, devising a string of political schemes on their behalf and pouring immeasurable sums of money into the bottomless Palestinian pit.

If anything, it was the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Jews from the Arab countries during and after the 1948 war and the expropriation of their worldly possessions, that was entirely ignored by the Alliance of Civilizations, as was the history of the Jews in their ancestral homeland where they had suffered ethnic and religious oppression by a long succession of foreign occupiers.

While claiming to promote peace, the HLG report added yet another page to both the defamation of Israel and the perennial Palestinian sense of victimization. One wonders what

19 “Report of the High Level Group,” Alliance of Civilizations, United Nations, New York, Nov. 13, 2006, p. 18, art. 5.7.

prompted it to begin the historical survey with the establishment of the state of Israel, ignoring the millenarian Jewish attachment to the Land of Israel that had been acknowledged as early as 1920 by the U.N.'s predecessor—the League of Nations.

Moreover, the report sought to rewrite, under U.N. aegis, the story of the *nakba* (the “catastrophe,” as Palestinians and Arabs call their 1948 failure to destroy Israel at its birth) as a counterweight to the Holocaust, and to impose this narrative on Israel and the international community. In the words of the report, it is “essential for Palestinians as well as for the Arab-Muslim world and Muslims in general to understand and acknowledge the fact that we ... now know and take responsibility for ensuring everyone knows the price and weight of these sixty years of misunderstanding, stigmatization, as well as veiled and abused truths.”²⁰ Indeed, while the Alliance was established in 2005 with the specific goal “to explore the roots of polarization between societies and cultures today and to recommend a practical program of action to address this issue,” it has quickly become an anti-Israel lobbying machine on a global scale. This is evidenced not only from its implementation plan, which places “a priority on addressing relations between Western and Muslim societies”²¹ at the expense of other faiths and civilizations, but also by its close collaboration with numerous anti-Israel nongovernmental organizations and bodies, notably the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The OIC's influence on the Alliance has been manifested in a wide range of historical and cultural issues, including the presentation of Islam as the source of modern Western civilization; the contrasting of Islamic tolerance with European culpability for the Crusades, imperialism and colonization; and the whitewashing of jihad's true nature and its misrepresentation as a struggle for individual self-improvement.²²

The Alliance's views on social issues often echo OIC charges about the pervasive discrimination against Muslim migrants in the West and the Western media's deliberate dissemination of “Islamophobia.” This state of affairs required, in the words, of the HLG report, that “*American and European universities and research centers should expand research into the significant economic, cultural, and social contributions of immigrant communities to American and European life. Likewise, they should promote publications coming from the Muslim world on a range of subjects related to Islam and the Muslim world.*”²³

Such recommendations follow the injunctions of the religious scholars (ulema) who attended the OIC's 2005 summit in Mecca.²⁴

The U.N.'s Alliance of Civilizations has quickly become an anti-Israel lobbying machine on a global scale.

PLOTTING THE ANTI-ISRAEL CAMPAIGN

Speakers at the OIC's Amman conference stressed the media's crucial role and importance in the fight against Israel. They recommended that the Islamic world should demonstrate its unwavering commitment to Arab and Palestinian rights, alongside the conviction that the re-Islamization of Jerusalem would restore the city's spiritual preeminence and peaceful religious co-existence, enable the flourishing of faith, and make Jerusalem a worldwide agent of culture and civilization.²⁵

In fact, this picture in no way corresponds

20 *Ibid.*, p. 53.

21 “Implementation Plan, 2007-2009,” Alliance of Civilizations, United Nations, New York, p. 2.

22 “Report of the High Level Group,” pp. 11, 15.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 39, italicized in the text.

24 “Recommendations of the OIC Commission of Eminent Persons (CEP),” Makkah al-Mukarramah, Saudi Arabia, Dec. 7-8, 2005.

25 Protection of Islamic and Christian Holy Sites in Palestine, Second International Conference, Amman, Nov. 23-25, 2004 (Rabat: ISESCO, 2007), p. 175.

to the actual Islamic history of Jerusalem, which for most of the time was a sleepy and neglected backwater. Rather it is a usurpation of the Biblical vision of Jerusalem as “a light unto the nations,” developed by generations of Hebrew prophets more than a millennium before Muhammad.

Abdullah Kan'an, secretary-general of the Royal Committee for al-Quds Affairs in Jordan—whose government signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994—presented a comprehensive plan for inculcating Islamic policy into all Western cultural and media sectors and delegitimizing

The media plan called for delegitimizing laws against anti-Semitism.

the Jewish state, starting with turning the Muslim and Christian holy places in Jerusalem into a central world problem. As a first step, he suggested publicizing the history of Jerusalem as he saw it—from the city's

foundation by the “Canaanite Jebusites” to date—so as to negate “the Torah-based history.” He also proposed to popularize Islamic and Christian holy sites in the same manner, starting with al-Aqsa Mosque, which “according to the noble Hadith, is only forty years older than the first shrine ever created for humanity, al-Haram Mosque in Makkah.”²⁶

In enumerating the themes of ISESCO's media war against Israel in the West, Kan'an evoked arguments repeated by many Western journalists, intellectuals, ministers, and heads of state. These included,

- Convincing the EU that a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict was in its vital interest, thus helping Europeans (especially Germans) free themselves of their guilt complex vis-à-vis the Jews and the weight of history more generally.
- Persuading Western leaders that as long as the Palestinians did not have their own

state, relations between the EU and the Arab world would remain unstable. Once this goal had been achieved, Europe could look forward to an expanded partnership with the Arab world and full access to its markets.

- Emphasizing that America's pro-Israel position was in contravention of international law, threatened U.S. vital interests as well as those of Europe, and jeopardized world peace and security. This argument, consistently inculcated in European leaders and journalists by the OIC, was hammered home by the Western media and became an important catalyst of European hostility toward the United States, especially during the George W. Bush administration.

- Underscoring the alleged threats to Western interests as a result of supporting Israel. This support had to be presented as one of the foremost causes of anti-Western violence, both in the Middle East and in the Western countries themselves, by individuals and groups who reacted emotionally to personal and collective tragedies. This argument was frequently used by Romano Prodi, then-president of the European Commission, and French president Jacques Chirac, among other European politicians, to explain away the resurgence of European anti-Semitism during 2000-05, and was also invoked by President Obama in March 2010 when he publicly humiliated Israel's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu.²⁷

- Convincing Westerners that peace was only possible through the creation of an independent Palestinian state in the entire territory occupied in 1967 with al-Quds as its capital, the “return” of Palestinian refugees, and the abandonment of

26 Kan'an, “Media Plan,” p. 201.

27 *The Sunday Times* (London), Mar. 26, 2010.

Israel's "Zionist, racist character"—standard Arab and Muslim euphemisms for the destruction of the Jewish state.

- Persuading Westerners that their shared interests with Arabs and Muslims far exceeded those they shared with Israel.²⁸

Kan'an then summarized the long-term objectives of the media plan, two of which are of special note:

- Persuading the EU to abandon its slavish trailing of Washington and to form its own independent vision and positions, which "would be more in harmony with the international will vis-à-vis the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Israeli occupation of Arab territories, including Jerusalem, and the right of the Arab Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of its independent state with Al Quds as its capital."²⁹
- Transforming the Palestinian question and the Arab-Israeli conflict from internal U.S. issues to external problems, primarily governed by the mutual interests of Americans, Muslims, and Arabs. This would break the immunity of the Israeli policies and force the Israeli government to bow to the will of the international community and adhere to all of the U.N. resolutions.³⁰

To achieve these goals, Kan'an recommended obtaining the support of certain intellectuals, literary figures, and influential political



The United Nations has become a foremost purveyor of anti-Israel and anti-Semitic incitement. Nowhere has this obsession been more starkly demonstrated than at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance, held in September 2001 in the South African town of Durban.

movements that were capable of molding Western public opinion within the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict and especially with regard to the Jerusalem question. This campaign would refer to U.N. resolutions that formed the basis for the media plan. Here, too, EU support for the U.N.'s international law amounted to endorsement of the strategy and policies of the OIC, whose position as the U.N.'s largest single voting bloc gave it the unrivalled ability to predominate the world organization and its specialized agencies.

Another proposed tactic was to infiltrate the media as well as influential cultural, intellectual, and economic circles with a view to exposing them to the Arab perspective and convincing them that their countries' policies were subservient to "the interests of the Zionist movement with its various formations and bodies and not [to] the interests of their own countries"³¹ Other themes included:

- Discreetly and indirectly encouraging trends critical of Zionism and the Israeli

28 Kan'an, "Media Plan," pp. 202-3.

29 Ibid, p. 205.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid., p. 204.

government's "judaization policies" in Jerusalem within Western circles, so as to make them effective opponents of the "Zionist lobby and the coalition of Jewish and Christian Zionists" and defenders of their countries' vital interests.

- Delegitimizing laws against anti-Semitism, such as France's 1990 Gayssot

Act, which made it an offence to question the occurrence or scope of crimes against humanity,³² and George W. Bush's 2004 law requiring the Department of State to monitor global anti-Semitism,³³ as laws that have no bearing on Western interests but are rather a part of a Zionist ploy to feed Westerners' guilt feel-

ings so as to keep them subservient to Zionist machinations.

Europe has supported Palestinian NGOs that have systematically demonized and delegitimized the Jewish state.

MOBILIZING WESTERN MUSLIMS

No less importantly, the ISESCO campaign envisaged the mobilization of members of Arab and Muslim communities in the West, especially in the United States, who were to be enticed into becoming politically active so as to end their marginalization and gain major political weight. This was believed to be feasible given that these communities comprised high quality populations, including important scientists, intellectuals, and politicians. Arab and Muslim thinkers, religious scholars, and intellectuals living in Western societies ought to recommend to Mus-

lims to reject extremism, fanaticism and violence "as this tends to be detrimental and generates negative reactions to Arab and Islamic issues."³⁴

Another step would involve blocking attempts in Europe and the United States to ban Islamist charitable societies, which according to Kan'an were purely humanitarian organizations but in fact were funneling funds for jihadist and terrorist groups.³⁵ Within this framework, he recommended:

- Encouraging the investment of Arab and Muslim capital in all forms of the media (written, audio, and visual), especially in the United States, thus paving the way for breaking the alleged Jewish monopoly in the field. Arab radio stations and satellite television channels such as al-Jazeera and al-Arabia should broadcast "weekly programs in English [about al-Quds], targeting Western public opinion, benefiting from media personalities knowledgeable about the Western mentality and capable of influencing it to the benefit of the issue of al-Quds with the help of U.N. resolutions." Programs about al-Quds in English, French, Spanish, German, Russian, and other languages should be created, and a multilingual satellite channel called al-Quds would be created, "staffed with a media, information, intellectual, and historical team knowledgeable about the question of al-Quds and its various dimensions."³⁶
- Encouraging Muslim and Arab investments in modern information and communication technologies, notably the Internet, and the filming of television and cinema documentaries with a view to shaping Western public opinion,

32 *Tendant à réprimer tout acte raciste, antisémite ou xénophobe*, République Française, Paris, July 13, 1990.

33 *Global Anti-Semitism Review Act of 2004, PL 108-332*, U.S. Congress, Oct. 16, 2004; *BBC News*, Oct. 20, 2004.

34 Kan'an, "Media Plan," pp. 205-6.

35 See, for example, Daniel Pipes and Sharon Chadha, "CAIR: Islamists Fooling the Establishment," *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2006, pp. 3-20.

36 Kan'an, "Media Plan," pp. 206-7.

which is heavily reliant on this type of educational and media sources. A special emphasis should be placed on the possibilities of “utilizing modern communication technologies, especially the opening of websites dedicated to al-Quds, and encouraging Muslims to embark on an Internet-supported war for al-Quds to counterbalance the activities of the Zionist movement and its octopus-like formations, the most dangerous of which is Christian Zionism and its mastermind, the Neo-Conservatives.”³⁷

On a broader level, Kan’an advised Arab and Muslim communities “to integrate as much as possible within the societies where they live, in order to gain credibility,” especially in universities and institutions of higher learning. “Friends of al-Quds” associations in U.S. and European universities, organizations, and working places were to be established to support those NGOs working for the cause of al-Quds. To this would be added the worldwide distribution of propaganda materials “issued by Americans, Europeans, and Jews against Israel, its policies, and Zionism,” including specifically-produced films that “reveal the barbarity of Israel, the dangers inherent in the policy of demolishing houses, murder and massacre of the Arab Palestinian people, and distributing these films

As the second largest intergovernmental organization after the U.N., bringing together fifty-six Muslim and other states, the OIC has been central to President Obama’s outreach to the Muslim world. Here OIC secretary-general Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu (left) welcomes Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and newly-appointed U.S. envoy to the OIC, Rashed Hussein (right), at the bloc’s headquarters in Jeddah.

as widely as possible in the Islamic world.”³⁸

Finally, specialists and experts in Western affairs should be drawn into “the discussion of the broad lines of the media plan in order to enrich it and guarantee all conditions of its success.” Such experts would specialize in Western media, politics, public opinion, psychology, religions, law and culture, as well as in history of al-Quds. In two notes that appear in the French text but are omitted from the English proceedings, the lecturer ridicules the “Zionist stories of alleged Nazi slaughters.”³⁹

THE OIC’S WORLD COLLABORATORS

These were by no means novel, let alone maverick ideas. The intention to extend the OIC’s influence to Western countries through immigrant populations and their growing weight in

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid., pp. 207-8.

39 Ibid., p. 208.

the host societies had been insinuated on previous occasions, notably by OIC secretary-general Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu at the European parliament in 2005⁴⁰ and by the founders of the Euro-Arab Dialogue, which evolved from a French initiative in the late 1960s.⁴¹

According to unpublished sources from the Euro-Arab Dialogue movement,⁴² in November 1973, Christopher Mayhew, a member of the

The Geneva World Council of Churches urged churches to initiate a policy of economic strangulation and defamation of Israel.

British parliament, and Raymond Offroy, a member of the French national assembly, envisaged the creation of an association for improving Europe's relations with the Arab world.⁴³ Its launching coincided with the European Commission (EC)'s Brussels declaration that urged Israel to return to the pre-1967

lines and, for the first time, recognized the PLO.⁴⁴ Mayhew and Offroy, now supported by the EC, were the first to create a Euro-Arab network, the European Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Cooperation (PAEAC), at a conference in Paris on March 23-25, 1975. Its secretary-general, Robert Swann, a former foreign office diplomat, had been a secretary-general of Amnesty International. The funds for PAEAC came from a Swiss foundation, ANAF, set up in 1969 and managed by an administrative committee consisting of European political personalities. PAEAC benefited from the

financial aid and support of the EC and its networks, in liaison with the Council of Europe. The minutes of the PAEAC meetings were published over the years in the *Documents d'Actualité Internationale* by the French foreign office. These reveal the effective extension of OIC strategy to Europe, combining a policy of immigration with the cultural and political Islamization of Europe.⁴⁵

Extensive U.N.-sponsored networks, bringing together the EU, the OIC, and ISESCO, would effectively implement this strategy in all Western countries. Europe, for example, has lavished millions of Euros on Palestinian NGOs and organs of "civil society," which advocate the economic, political, educational, and cultural boycotting of Israel and which have systematically demonized and delegitimized the Jewish state in schools, the media, Palestinian publications, and on the international scene.⁴⁶

Since 2005, a "Palestinian Week against Israeli Apartheid" has become a regular feature on campuses and in major cities throughout Europe, Canada, and the United States, calling for divestments, sanctions, and boycotts against Israel. According to NGO Monitor, most speakers at these demonstrations belong to organizations financed by European governments, the European Commission, and the New Israel Fund, created following Obama's election.⁴⁷

To these NGOs must be added "The Elders"—a newly-established "independent group of eminent global leaders brought together by Nelson Mandela, who offer their collective influence and experience to support peace building, help address major causes of human suffering, and promote the shared interests of humanity."⁴⁸ Generating much international influence

40 Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, secretary general, Organization of the Islamic Conference, address to Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe, Oct. 4, 2005.

41 Roy H. Ginsberg, *The European Union in International Politics. Baptism by Fire* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), pp. 112-3.

42 1974-1994 Association Parlementaire pour la Coopération Euro-Arabe, association archives, unpublished document in author's possession, pp. 6-12.

43 Ibid.

44 Joint statement, European Economic Community, Copenhagen, Nov. 6, 1973.

45 Bat Ye'or, *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis* (Cranbury, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005), pp. 93-5.

46 Gerald M. Steinberg, "Europe's Hidden Hand. EU Funding for Political NGOs in the Arab-Israeli Conflict. Analyzing Processes and Impact," NGO Monitor Monograph Series, Apr. 2008.

47 "Israeli Apartheid Week 2010: NGO Involvement," NGO Monitor, updated Mar. 3, 2010.

48 "About the Elders," The Elders website, accessed Oct. 13, 2010.

and considerable funds, the group comprises twelve leaders and dignitaries, quite a few of whom—notably former U.S. president Jimmy Carter and former Irish president Mary Robinson of Durban conference infamy—are harsh critics of Israel. It is chaired by former South African archbishop Desmond Tutu—the spiritual instigator of the world campaign of cultural and economic apartheid against Israel.

Small wonder that the group, in line with the former policies of its members while in power, has consistently misrepresented the Israelis as the unjust and warlike party and the Palestinians as hapless victims of their predatory neighbor. For The Elders, the Palestinian denial of Israel's right to exist embodies natural justice (hence, for example, their advocacy of "engaging" Hamas) while Israel's attempts to protect its citizens from sustained terror attacks—from the erection of the security fence, to Operation Cast Lead, to the naval blockade of Hamas—are illegal and disproportionate uses of force. Tutu congratulated Turkey for having sent its flotilla of supposed humanitarians in May 2010 while the Elders condemned Israel's attempt to stop this effort on behalf of Hamas, a terror organization, whose constitution openly calls for Israel's destruction.⁴⁹ They also urged the U.N. Security Council "to debate the situation with a view to mandating action to end the closure of the Gaza Strip."⁵⁰

In what had by now become an instinctive reaction, the European parliament joined the Elders and condemned Israel by a crushing majority, insinuating its massive support for Hamas. Catherine Ashton, the EU's high representative for foreign affairs and security policy and vice president of the European Commission, argued that lifting the blockade would bring peace,⁵¹ conveniently overlooking the fact that the blockade was a defensive response to Hamas'

genocidal policies rather than their catalyst.

EXPLOITING THE PALESTINIAN CHRISTIANS

Nor has the OIC, together with its willing international collaborators, shied away from exploiting West Bank and Gaza Christians—discriminated against and oppressed by both Hamas and the Palestinian Authority, which have ruled over them for the past fifteen years—for its anti-Israel propaganda campaign.

Consider the document titled *Kairos Palestine*, drawn up by Palestinian theologians and published in Bethlehem on December 11, 2009, by the Geneva World Council of Churches.⁵² In the name of love, peace, and justice, the paper portrays Israel as the epitome of evil and oppression, urging all Western churches to initiate a policy of economic strangulation and defamation of the Jewish state. This was followed by a letter from the Greek Catholic patriarch of Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem, Gregorios III, to Pope Benedict XVI⁵³ in preparation for the October 2010 Synod, planned to bring together the Catholic churches of the Middle

Islamic extremism is "provoked by the threats of the Israeli government against Palestinians." —Greek Catholic Patriarch

East to discuss the greater problems facing the local Christians and to devise ways and means for stopping their ongoing flight from the region.

Invoking his duty to inform the pope on the dangers in the region, the patriarch had no qualms about blaming Israeli actions for the surge of militant Islamism throughout the region

49 "Hamas Covenant 1988," Yale Law School Avalon Project, accessed Nov. 4, 2010.

50 "The Elders Condemn Israeli Attack on Gaza Relief Ships," The Elders, May 31, 2010.

51 Catherine Ashton, speech to the European Parliament, Strasbourg, June 16, 2010.

52 *Kairos Palestine*, Bethlehem, Dec. 11, 2009; *Al-Jazeera: Cross-Cultural Understanding* (Dalton, Ga.), Dec. 15, 2009.

53 Gregorios III, Patriarch to Pope Benedict XVI, Melkite Greek Catholic Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East of Alexandria and of Jerusalem, Mar. 1, 2010.

and its adverse implications for the local Christian communities. He wrote:

There is a diffuse but sure rise of Islamic extremism, provoked by the threats of the Israeli government against Palestinians, Lebanon, Syria, [and Iran], which is spreading

throughout all the countries in the region. Even in Syria, where such extremism has been up to now very limited, its advance has become more and more evident, despite efforts from the government against it.

The U.N. Security Council has devoted a third of its criticism to only one of 192 member states—Israel.

Gregorios lamented the widespread terror attacks by these Islamists

on local Christians, especially in Iraq and Egypt. Yet rather than ask the pope to help restrain the perpetrators of this violence, he begged that

the Holy See's diplomacy redouble its efforts to persuade the Tel Aviv government, despite the views of its most intransigent wing—probably via the United States and those European countries which, having sponsored the birth of the State of Israel and supported it ever since, should be able to exert effective pressure on it—of the grave danger of this development which in the medium and perhaps short term, runs against the interests and future of the State of Israel itself, which needs peace in the region just as much as Arab countries, to be able eventually to live normally all together.⁵⁴

54 Ibid.

CONCLUSION

Judging by Israel's growing international isolation, the OIC's sustained effort to delegitimize the Jewish state has borne substantial fruit. Not only is Israel's right to exist constantly debated and challenged in Western public opinion forums, but sixty-three years after establishing the Jewish state in an internationally recognized act of self-determination, the United Nations has become a foremost purveyor of anti-Israel and anti-Semitic incitement.

Time and again, year after year, its Commission on Human Rights discusses Israel's supposed abuses while turning a blind eye to scores of actual atrocities around the globe. This world organization has 192 member nations, but its Security Council has devoted about a third of its activity and criticism to only one of those states—Israel. Nowhere has this obsession been more starkly demonstrated than in the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in September 2001 in the South African town of Durban where, for eight full days, delegates from numerous countries and thousands of nongovernmental organizations indulged in a xenophobic orgy of anti-Israel and anti-Semitic incitement that made a mockery of the conference's original purpose.⁵⁵

As UNESCO follows suit by denying the Jews some of their most cherished historical and religious symbols, the OIC scores yet another palpable hit in its ceaseless hate campaign.



55 Gerald M. Steinberg "NGOs Make War on Israel," *Middle East Quarterly*, Summer 2004, pp. 13-25.