

Yankee Steve's Column
for the Week of June 10, 2010

Journalist Helen Thomas, Anti-Semite?

Recently at the conclusion of a White House press conference Rabbi David Nesenoff of New York approached veteran reporter Helen Thomas [1920-] to ask her some questions. His hand-held video camera was set to record her every word. What was her take on the most recent problems in the Middle East? His choosing Thomas is interesting since it is well-known that she does not always side with the Israelis.

Never one to shy away from making her opinions known or ask hard questions the soon-to-be nonagenarian erupted into a brief Mount Vesuvius-like tirade against the Jews. The Jews, she said, should leave Israel forthwith and go back to the places they came from - to Germany, Poland, and America.

As a consequence of this politically incorrect statement Ms. Thomas has been ostracized from the White House press corps where for 50 years she occupied a prominent place. What should we think of this?

First, Thomas has the right to speak her mind. Let's not be hypocrites; had she asked for the forced removal of the Palestinians the rabbi might have agreed. Former Prime Minister of Israel Golda Meir [1898-1978] was of the opinion that the Palestinians were not even a people which from her standpoint might have meant that the Palestinians should pack up and go. The trouble is that they are from Palestine and have nowhere to go. And that is why many of them are still living in refugee camps hoping for the day when they can return to lands their forbears occupied for centuries.

Meir also said that the Jews were in the same predicament. They had to stay where destiny had put them. This she declared was Israel's secret weapon. The Jews could never be expelled from the land because they had nowhere else to go. Apparently Meir did not think that the Palestinians would stay the course. The Palestinians have proven to be equally as tenacious as the Jews.

Secondly, I am sure that Thomas doesn't blame the Jews for all that is wrong with the Middle East. After her long career in news coverage, she probably thinks is what most of us do; we are sick and tired of the conflict in the Middle East. Enough already!

We are beginning to think that there is no light at the end of the tunnel, and both sides in this conflict must share the blame. We are realizing that the Jews and the Palestinians have been hewn from the same quarry. Each is as stubborn and I might add as shrewd as the other; each

knows how to play the waiting game. This conflict, because of the nature of the combatants, could drag on for a thousand years each hoping the other will leave

No one should believe that the two-state solution which would allow the Jews and the Palestinians to live side-by-side in peace is what these two peoples really want. Each would gladly pay the other's cab fare out of town. This is the real reason why peace has not come to the region. Each in their way has tried to derail the peace process while they continue to fight over a piece of real estate that would fit into the state of Florida seven times.

The Israelis accepted the land granted to them by a United Nations' charter in 1948 but it is a fact that its leaders had designs on the entire area. The plan has always been to oust the Palestinians in an attempt to recover the kingdom over which King David ruled in the Bible. Interestingly, this delights American Evangelicals of the Dispensationalist school of theology, who like the Israelis will not face up to the fact that David never practiced people removal or what is commonly called ethnic cleansing. Nor will these same Evangelicals admit that David was not just a ruler, he was an instrument through which the light of God was shown to the peoples around him, for example the Jebusites who built Jerusalem.

Modern Israel is not basking in that same light. Israel permits elective abortions and even allows gay pride demonstrations. I am not a friend of Islam because it is unambiguously heterodox with a history of bloodshed, but I would judge that the Muslims of the Middle East have something to complain about because it is obvious by now that the Jews are no longer a light to the nations.

As for the Dispensationalists they are guilty of having little or no regard for the Palestinians. It is as if they have written the Zionists a blank check. Here do what you want with a shattered people, whose very own leaders are as corrupt and self-serving as the Mafia, and no matter how tough you are with the Palestinians we are going to stand alongside you. The Palestinians "Arab" is a four-letter word; only the Jews need to be evangelized.

Sage Advice

When we know the facts about what happened when the state of Israel was founded in 1948 many of us would place a great deal of the blame for the conflict in the Middle East with the Zionists. Instead of wearing phylacteries as did their fathers they put the sixth commandment to one side and began preaching their own version of Manifest Destiny.

The Zionists are not the same as those Jews who lived in Israel for centuries who in fact occupied the old quarter of Jerusalem and who were never part of the Diaspora. They would have advised the incoming Jews to use a different approach. For centuries these Jews had lived in peace with their Arab and Christian neighbors. They shared Jerusalem. The sins of terrorist groups like the Irgun and the Stern Gang cannot be laid at their feet.

Now before you accuse me of being an anti-Semite, I want you to know that I truly believe that if the shoe were on the other foot, the Israelis were living as prisoners and the Palestinians were pleading innocence; however the shoe is not on the other foot. Wrongs have been carried out by the leaders of Israel.

The Zionists wanted a nation made up of Jews only. Israel's democracy is similar in nature to an Athenian-style democracy which limited citizenship to Attic-born Hellenes. If Israel had not been so ethnically strict, a nation might have come into existence that would have included everyone, a country like that might have been accepted in the region.

The Zionists or Ashkenazi Jews of Europe refused to listen to Albert Einstein [1879-1955]. The famed scientist told them not to repeat the mistakes that were made by Colonialists, but they would not listen. Is this why Einstein did not become their first president? After all he was as much a Socialist as any of the Zionists which may help to explain why the Israelis have been so heavy-handed with the Palestinians. Socialists believe that the end justifies the means. If we are to accomplish a lot of good then we can do many things that on the surface look bad, but which are in fact not evil because the state in its service to people can do no wrong.

How else do you explain the way the Israel's has gone beyond self-defense to sadism? The living conditions in Gaza are a disgrace. Gaza has been bombed into the Stone Age. This is not self- defense; it is punishment.

In conclusion, when I was a boy growing up in the Bronx I found out early that Jews would sit down with you and take the time to give you advice. I had many long conversations with older Jews who would listen and after listening to you would present you with alternatives.

Now it is my turn to give Jews advice. I believe that Israel has only two alternatives. Israel can gather more flies with honey than vinegar.

Israel can afford to be magnanimous because American taxpayers have enabled it to negotiate from a position of power. However, I am sure that the sentiments of the American people will not always be favorable toward Israel if it continues to elect men like Ariel Sharon and Benjamin Netanyahu.

If the people of Israel continue to send to government men like Sharon and Netanyahu it will become apparent that hostilities are what the people of Israel really want, and if that is the case then they must acknowledge that they share in the government's guilt. You can only hide behind the socialist ideology for so long. Eventually the people of Israel will have to admit, "*Mea culpa!*" America does not need Israel; Israel needs America! That being the case, the people of Israel will have to rid their nation of thugs like Netanyahu if they want our support to continue.

Ever yours, Yankee Steve Cakouros oldlineconservative.com