

Palestine/Israël: The Murderous Spiral in Jerusalem

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The killing of four worshippers at Kehilat Bnei Torah synagogue in western Jerusalem throws a harsh light on the degenerative spiral of murder and mayhem in Israel and Palestine. It also opens a window into how most media coverage prevents the U.S. public from understanding what's happening.

"We are so kind, we are allowing Arabs to come into our neighborhood and work and support their families," said American-Israeli teacher Lisa Goldenhersch, quoted in the Jewish *Daily Forward online*, referring to the fact that one of the attackers reportedly worked at a nearby grocery store. "And this is what we have got in return."

Shockingly, the paper notes, this attack occurred "in the picture-postcard West Jerusalem neighborhood of Har Nof, miles away from the tense seam line that divides the Holy City." In Arab East Jerusalem, it might be noted, there are no tranquil neighborhoods, no picture-postcard places of safety from marauding settler gangs or Israeli soldier raids.

Secretary of State John Kerry, losing no opportunity to make a pompous fool of himself, proclaimed that "to have this kind of act, which is a pure result of incitement, of calls for 'days of rage,' of just irresponsibility, is unacceptable." What Kerry means by "incitement" and "irresponsibility," of course, is that it's all the fault of the Palestinian leadership. That's the line of Israeli prime minister Netanyahu—directly contradicted by none other than the head of the Israeli security agency Shin Bet, Yoram Cohen, who says the Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas isn't inciting anything.

Kerry didn't mention how Palestinian bus driver Yusuf Hasan al-Ramuni, 32 years old and father of two, was found hanged in his vehicle in West Jerusalem one day earlier. Or how the Israeli police spokesperson announced that "no suspicion of criminal activity was found," borrowing the time-honored custom of U.S. southern sheriffs declaring African American lynching victims as "suicides." Or what a coincidence it was that this occurred in the wake of multiple attacks by Jewish settlers on Arab taxi drivers in Jerusalem.

The murders in the synagogue immediately became the lead story in world news. The death and probable murder of al-Ramuni was not—it was a third or fourth-place story, and then mainly because of the Palestinian stone-throwing and Israeli soldiers' tear gas and gunfire that followed that followed. How then are most Americans supposed to understand this except as another example of Muslim religious violence?

Twelve of the synagogue attackers' family members were rapidly detained, and their Jabal al-Mukabbir neighborhood sealed up with cement blocks. That kind of collective punishment is never inflicted when Israeli Jews kill Palestinians, even when (and if) the perpetrators are arrested

The death spiral in Jerusalem seems to wind downward by the week. Settlers seize Arab homes; Israeli soldiers smash their way into al-Aqsa mosque; Palestinian motorists crash their cars into

commuter rail stations, with fatal results. There is talk of a third Intifada, but tragically there may be only a continuing descent into butchery.

Ominously enough, as the provocative influx of Jewish rightwingers into the "Temple Mount" and the synagogue attack indicate, the brutalities are taking on a more religious cast. No doubt about it, life in hell produces bad religion, and bad religion in turn makes the flames of hell burn hotter.

But let's be clear: the cause of the catastrophe is the Israeli Occupation, and the U.S. subsidy that maintains it. The worst "incitement" is the behavior of the 500+ Israeli PR team known as the U.S. Congress, jumping up and down whenever Netanyahu obscenely proclaims "undivided Jerusalem" as "the eternal capital of the Jewish people," thereby insulating him from any threat of sanctions or the elementary requirements of sanity.

David Finkel, November 19, 2014

P.S.

* <http://www.solidarity-us.org/site/node/4306>

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