

San Sabba

by: Rabbi Jeremy Rosen

“Risiera di San Sabba is a five-storey brick-built compound located in Trieste, northern Italy, that functioned during World War II as a Nazi concentration camp for the detention and killing of political prisoners, and a transit camp for Jews, most of whom were then deported to Auschwitz. SS members Odilo Globocnik and Karl Frenzel, and Ivan Marchenko are all said to have participated in the killings at this camp. The cremation facilities, the only ones built inside a concentration camp in Italy, were installed by Erwin Lambert. Today, the former concentration camp operates as a civic museum.” ([Wikipedia](#))

I had not even heard of San Sabba until a friend, Didier Lestienne, posted on Facebook a stinging condemnation of the disruption last month of a ceremony held to commemorate Jews and others who were murdered by Nazis and Italian fascists there and the liberation of the camp. The rabbi of Trieste was whistled, booed, and interrupted. Demonstrators flew Palestinian flags. The rabbi curtailed the event and walked out in protest.

The video posted is confusing and clearly not complete but it can be seen here: <https://www.facebook.com/IsraelAkshav/videos/1034341500056627/>

Didier comments (translated from the French), “It should not be said that those who booed the rabbi are ‘young people without culture and without historical memory’. Maybe orchestrated, but not innocent.” Sadly, regardless of whether they were put up to it or not, so many young Europeans have been brainwashed into believing a very different narrative that it has now entered the European and Muslim mindset. If you doubt me, just look at Britain, where the Labour Party, the main opposition and soon possibly the government, has to all intents and purposes adopted a narrative that discriminates against any Jew seeking to assert his or her right to a homeland. Across Europe Jews are now told to hide their identity.

Another friend, Massimo Torre Franca, posted this response in Italian (Facebook’s translation):

“San Saba is the only field of transit and extermination on Italian soil. The others were just transit camps. He also had a crematorium, which he worked. In San Saba they have absolute right to enter and speak, in my opinion, only the Slovenes, the descendants of the partisans, of any ethnicity, and the Jews. That is, those who were taken over by Nazis and fascists. What the **** do the Palestinian flags have to do with this ceremony? The same as Haji Amin Hussein, Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, head of the Palestinian National Movement, friend and collaborator of

Himmler?!? Who was waving those flags, managed to drive the Jews away from San Saba.”

The president of the organization of Italian rabbis issued this statement:

“We are shocked at what happened yesterday on 25th of April in Trieste at the commemoration of San Sabba, the only extermination camp in Italy. It is unacceptable that the rabbi who represented the Jewish community at that time, his history of pain and his participation in the liberation of Italy was booed. And whistled at when he informed the community’s difficult decision to withdraw from the demonstration for political exploitation by “Antizionists” of certain groups present at the event.

This problem is not a new one. For this reason, the Jewish community has been absent from commemorations in Rome and was forced to withdraw. The 25 April is for Italian Jews a fundamental date because it has a profound meaning, that of the return to freedom and liberation from Nazi-Fascism, the end of a terrible nightmare that had culminated in racial laws and the Shoah.

We consider it shameful and unacceptable that common memory should be used in this way, and we think it is high time that, on this subject, strong and clear positions were taken by all and, in particular, by political forces and religious leaders.”

Disruption of Jewish events is increasing. Political opposition to any government, to any prime minister, or to any party is absolutely legitimate—though foulmouthed terms of abuse simply reflect the puerile minds of grown children who cannot distinguish between dirty nappies and clean ones. Zionism has many opponents within Judaism and without. If the Left, Hamas, and Islam were opposed only to political Zionism, I would feel much less antagonistic to them than I do. I can sympathize with the right to take up cudgels of argument, pressure, persuasion, and opposition to a specific political situation in which many different and often contradictory elements have played a part. Even if I believe that the only solution is a negotiated settlement directly between both parties.

The opponents of Zionism have achieved a conflation, elision, blurring, confusion, bollixing up, mingling, bungling, transposition of two different issues: Jews as a people, religion, and culture and Israel as a political entity. And they are bad.

Anything connected with Judaism, with lamenting the killing of Jews, or with commemorating their loss, is regarded as an affront to them. A legitimate target for disruption, disturbance, denial, and desecration. Indeed, the common Arab term for Israelis and Zionists is Yahud—Jew. There is no attempt to distinguish a religious or ethnic group from a political one. A French teacher and novelist in Strasbourg told me over 20 years ago that she could

no longer mention the Holocaust in schools for fear of being shouted down and abused. In most schools from Ireland to Poland the Holocaust can now only be spoken of in terms of universal genocides that do not include Jews.

For as long as opponents of Israel continue to disrupt, to silence, to deny history, and deny reciprocal rights, to suggest everything is Israel's fault alone, there is no chance of peaceful dialogue let alone cohabitation with Jews anywhere. Where opposition turns into prejudice and denial it becomes poison. The present climate is leading to a Europe that will soon be judenrein, just as the Nazis wanted it. Except this time it is the Left that is cooperating and assisting the Fascists in the process. It is true that both France and Italy have a long history of strong Marxist parties and street violence in pursuit of political goals and that this is not new. De Gaulle began the French tradition of calling Israel a "shitty state." What is so disappointing is that we had thought, hoped, that Europe had grown better not worse.

Both France and Germany have begun to realize the magnitude of the problem they have ignored for over a generation. And although Britain may currently have a Conservative government that is aware and protective, there is every chance that a Labour government would not. Anyone who seen the recent Youtube clips of the abuse and vilification of any labour parliamentarian who opposes anti semitism is subject to, can only be staggered that a supposedly civilized country can produce such despicable apologies for human beings. Europe has a long tradition of appeasement. It is an ostrich. And as we know, if the ostrich buries its head for too long, the predators creep up on it, and it is too late.

The only response up to now has been to tell Jews not to show they are Jewish in public. Imagine saying that to any other ethnic identity. Blacks should all wear white makeup! Women must cover up from head to toe! Muslims may not wear hijabs, Sikhs no turbans, and Indians no saris. When Jews are told to cover up and shut up, I fear it is too late.