

## Another Shoddy Week for the “International Community. Balfour’s Legacy : Piracy, Lawlessness, Culture of Peace Denied

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“Just living is not enough. One must have sunshine, freedom, and a little flower.” -“Etre seulement en vie ne suffit pas... chacun doit avoir du soleil, la liberté, et une petite fleur.” (Hans Christian Anderson, 1806-1875.)

It has been another shoddy week for the “international community”, starting in its great representative body, the United Nations, at its flag-bedecked Plaza in New York, the city where Liberty’s Statue is dedicated to: “education, freedom and opportunity”, according to the monument’s website.

The Statue represents the Roman goddess of freedom, who along with her torch, bears a tabula ansanta, invoking the law, inscribed with the American Declaration of Independence (4th July 1776.) The broken chain at her feet represents freedom.

Last Monday, 31st October, three days after celebrations of Lady Liberty’s 125th anniversary, tiny, beleaguered Palestine became a full Member State of UNESCO, which also represents education and opportunity being the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

At the 36th UNESCO General Conference, fifty two spineless nations abstained, including the UK, but the vote was carried by a healthy 107. Fourteen objections included: the US, Canada, Germany, Australia and Israel.

In an astonishing fit of pique, after a moving welcoming address to their new Member by UNESCO’s Chairperson, Russia’s Eleonora Valentinovna Mitrofanova, the United States threw their toys from their pram, stated they would withhold their \$60 million annual dues to UNESCO – and shortly afterwards, withdrew altogether from the Organisation. America’s population is 312,555,000 million (CIA Fact Book) Palestine’s west Bank and Gaza, just 4.2 million. Seldom can a geographical giant have behaved so ridiculously in response to a poverty stricken global church and mosque mouse.

Israel, “the only democracy in the Middle East”, predictably, also withheld its \$2 million dues. As I write it has announced withdrawal from UNESCO. Taxes due to Palestine’s frail economy, from Israel, are also reported halted.

According to the Canadian media, Ottawa too is considering its Cdn\$10 million a year to UNESCO, Foreign Affairs Minister, John Baird being unhappy with Palestine’s welcome. Some

in the United Nations are clearly more equal than others.

It is believed that UNESCO membership, could pave the way to the joining of other influential bodies, such as the World Health Organisation, World Trade Organisation, World Bank and importantly, the International Criminal Court, enabling Palestine to pursue alleged war crimes cases against Israel.

UNESCO has shown some independence and even-handedness in dealings with Israel and Palestine. Last year they defined sites revered by both Jews and Muslims, in the Palestinian territories, as "Palestinian."

There should be concern that there might be those who wish to have the UN meet the same demise as its predecessor, the League of Nations. Further, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated on Thursday that Palestinian efforts to join other U.N. agencies are: "not beneficial for Palestine and not beneficial for anybody."

Benito Mussolini comes to mind, who said of the League of Nations, that it was all : "...well when sparrows shout, but no good at all when eagles fall out." The context was different, but the words apt.

The current mean spirited, political pettiness, so at odds with the acres of fine words of the UN founding Charter, and subsequent Conventions, falls in the week of the ninety fourth anniversary of the original letter from Lord Balfour to Lord Rothschild:

Foreign Office November 2nd, 1917

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet:

His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Yours,

Arthur James Balfour. (Emphasis mine.)

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