

Antisemitism: A Reminder and a Warning of the Appalling Crimes from Recent European History

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In Western Europe, in July 1942, the extermination of the Jews started in Paris. The French authorities, in collaboration with the Nazi SS occupiers, decreed that all foreign Jews living in France be immediately rounded up.

The French police having agreed with the SS, started the first round-up of Jewish adults, on the 16 July 1942. They were separated from their children, who never saw them again, and deported East to Auschwitz in Poland, there to be murdered en masse.

The children themselves, aged between 2 and 14, were initially incarcerated in Drancy, on the outskirts of Paris, in a makeshift concentration camp of low-cost housing. Eventually, in August of that same year, over 4000 were packed into railway freight trucks after being collected together for their journey to the East. That train journey lasted two days and two nights before arrival at the Nazi killing factories of Auschwitz.

The next day they were transported a short distance away to Birkenau2, to the gas chambers. The children were locked inside and crystals of poisonous Zyklon B prussic acid were thrown in through a hatch in the wall. Every single one of those 4100 children sent from Paris to Auschwitz Birkenau, died an indescribable death.

Today, in 2019, antisemitism has once again become an ugly, overt expression of racial hatred, exacerbated by the repugnance of the international community to the expansionist, brutalist policies of the Israeli government that treat the United Nations and the international community with contempt.

The impact upon Jewish communities throughout Europe, and also in America, – particularly on campus – has been profound. In legislatures throughout the world, condemnation of Israeli settlement policies has been loud and clear. But Israel cares little as it values its relationship with US Republican President Donald Trump who supports a ‘Greater Israel’, more than its relationship with Europe or indeed any concern for the majority of Jews who choose not to live in Israel but in countries worldwide. And that is a very grave error indeed and a potential disaster for the majority of those living in the Diaspora of Europe and to an increasing extent, also in America.

In order to avoid a tragedy of unknown proportions, Israel needs to change its policies and its political imperatives, fast. The immediate action required being to comply with UN Security Council Resolution 2334.

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