

Do You Say You Want a Revolution? Philip Giraldi

Americans and Europeans are uneasy about their leadership choices

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I recently returned from a twelve-day cruise to celebrate my wife's seventieth birthday. I usually spend much of my cruise time in the ship's bar instructing the bartender how to make a proper James Bond gin martini "shaken not stirred," a successful endeavor which has transformed the alcohol culture on a number of vessels.

Less fruitful, however, have been my efforts to teach the waitstaff to sing "The Whiffenpoof Song." But be that as it may, this particular cruise came at a time when Super Tuesday primaries were taking place in the US as well as the State of the Union Address.

In Europe the war in Ukraine appeared to be entering a new phase with France threatening to send its *poilus* to fight Russians and Germans contemplating the use of long-range missiles against Moscow.

Meanwhile in the Middle East the Gazans continue to be slaughtered by the Izzies, who are America's perpetual best friend.

Joe Biden, who is arming Benjamin Netanyahu, is perversely planning to build an artificial "humanitarian" food and supplies delivering "floating harbor" attached to a pier offshore of Gaza that will be finished and ready for use in two months after the last Palestinian has died from starvation or disease. And, by the way, it will be constructed by US military personnel who will no doubt be targeted and killed by the Israelis using American supplied bombs as a case of "mistaken identity," just as they murdered those 34 sailors and crew on board the USS Liberty back in 1967.

All of this seemingly uncoordinated activity generates a bit of confusion, while voters far and

wide are wondering if their government leaders are all on Chinese produced fentanyl. That said, a cruise ship is a wonderful place to experience unedited what people are thinking. Present are Americans and foreigners from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds who are easy to meet with casually if one takes advantage of the multiple largely unstructured dining, drinking and entertainment experiences available on shipboard as well as the mingling during excursions on land.

A retired Italian engineer from Udine with whom I was drinking an *ombra* prosecco explained how he was feeling intense *disagio*, translated as uncertainty or unease, over the state of the world and not just his own country, pointing to the terrible electoral choice coming up in the US in November as well as the tottering regimes and struggling economies in Britain, Germany, France, the Netherlands and throughout Scandinavia.

Meanwhile all the politicians can talk about is more wars and the necessity of supporting clowns like Volodymyr Zelenskyy and murderous thugs like the Israelis. There is increasingly no place to escape to.

Among the Americans, whom I assessed as predominantly well-off blue collar retired, many of whom hailing from the Midwest or South, I did not spot a single MAGA hat or Biden-Harris t-shirt but did find that most people intended to vote even though they were completely fed up with the entire political process. Neither Trump nor Biden excited them in any way – nor did any of the non-major party hopefuls like RFK Jr. On the contrary, it seemed to most that the political class was out to punish the American people, a view that I heartily agreed with. Several Americans observed that if the current process whereby the US continues to go to war continues, the draft would inevitably be activated to fill the understrength ranks of the military, putting our children and grandchildren at risk. One woman commented that if there were a button that one could push in the voting booth that would get rid of all existing politicians she would push it. It reminded me of the William Buckley [comment that](#) “I would rather be governed by the first 2,000 people in the telephone directory than by the Harvard University faculty.” A wit subsequently quipped that the country might as a consequence well be run by several iterations of “Anthony A. Aardvark.”

The cruise also had a downside consisting of a glimpse of where corporate cruise-dom lines up on some international issues, which I only discovered subsequent to boarding. The ship we sailed on, part of the Holland-America fleet, would hold events on board in its shops sponsored by sellers of various goods and services.

Nevertheless, given a genocide that is clearly taking place in a place called Gaza together with a right-wing government in place in Israel that has openly advocates for an Israel “cleansed” of Arabs that will be both *de facto* and *de jure* Jews only, I was surprised to see such a tone deaf event sponsored by the ship entitled “The Colors of Israel Exhibition and Sale.”

My wife and I, who strongly support BDS (“boycott, divestment and sanctions”) when it comes to the Jewish state decided that a little intervention was definitely in order so we made up two posters that read “Boycott the Genociders” and we wandered down to the place where the event was to take place and took up position flanking the entrance.

Two Israeli young males were nearby giving us furtive looks as they were starting to unpack whatever it was they were intending to sell. We threatened no one but almost immediately

two ship's crewmen dressed in uniforms I had not seen before on board appeared to tell us that they were security and that any political advertising or harassment of vendors was strictly prohibited. They then took our posters away "for destruction." I observed to them that I was wearing a USS Liberty remembrance shirt, which most definitely had to be considered a political statement, and I politely asked if I should remove it. The two conferred for a while and agreed that I could keep my shirt on as long as I didn't use it to threaten or intimidate anyone.

Later that afternoon we heard several times the ship public address system promote the presence of the Israelis and their wares, something that it normally did not do for individual vendors and which I found very strange. And there was more, two days later, when the ship sponsored a walk around the deck to raise money to send to support Ukrainian refugees, which was, of course, itself a political statement over the nature of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. Those who contributed \$25 and would do the walk would get a free t-shirt indicating in large white on black letters that they had done the charity deed.

When I saw the announcement of the walk on the day before it was to take place, I contacted ship management requesting an interview regarding what was being done, observing that relatively few Ukrainian civilians had been killed and most refugees from that country were displaced voluntarily, with many being helped by foreign refugee assistance agencies and even governments. By way of contrast tens of thousands of Gazans, mostly women and children, have been killed already in what was clearly a genocide and others were unable to escape their death trap ringed in as they are by the Israeli military. I sought inclusion of some mention of the suffering of the Palestinian children in the walk, making it more truly a tribute to innocent victims in both theaters of conflict.

I received no reply from the ship management and the walk proceeded as planned only including Ukraine with several hundred walkers participating. I later learned that Jewish organizations have been [particularly active](#) in assisting Ukrainian Jews who are seeking refugee status or other repatriation, and began to wonder what was up. Mentioning my concerns to a friend who was knowledgeable of the cruise ship industry I subsequently was informed that Holland-America operates ships named after Dutch cities and built in Venice that operate under the Netherlands flag for tax avoidance reasons even though its operational hubs are in Los Angeles and Seattle and most of its customers are Americans. It is actually physically owned by the larger Carnival Corporation, founded in 1972, which, between 1989 and 1999, acquired Holland-America, Windstar Cruises, Westours, Seabourn Cruise Line, Costa Cruises and Cunard Line. Carnival is now by far the largest cruise conglomerate in the world. It was founded by Israeli Ted Arison, now deceased, who was replaced by Mickey Arison, his Israeli born son, who now runs the company as its Chairman and CEO. Arison is also the owner of the NBA's Miami Heat professional basketball team. He lives most of the year in Florida and owns two 200 foot yachts which he also uses as homes!

So, our cruise became something of an interesting experience with a disappointing ending as one must wonder where the money raised for a charity actually wound up! One thing for sure, we will be boycotting Mickey Arison's Carnival fleet in the future. At a certain point, even as a relatively knowledgeable consumer, one gets tired of being bought and manipulated.

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