

Column One: The road to serfdom

Caroline Glick , THE JERUSALEM POST

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In Israel, as in the rest of the free world, we are witnessing the death by a thousand cuts of free thought.

Last month, two students at Cambridge University's Clare College became victims of this state of affairs. The students dedicated an edition of their satire magazine to the one-year anniversary of the global Muslim riots which followed the publication of caricatures of Muhammad in the Danish Jyllands Posten newspaper. As the students recalled, those riots led to the deaths of more than a hundred people.

Although the British media refused to republish the caricatures, British Muslims held terrifying protests throughout the country where they called for the destruction of Britain, the US, Denmark and Israel and for the murder of all who refuse to accept the global domination of Islam.

In their magazine, the students published some of the caricatures and mocked the Muslims for their hypocrisy in accusing British society of racial prejudice while calling for its violent destruction.

The Muslim reaction was apparently swift. Fearing for their lives, the students were forced into hiding.

But the Muslims were not alone in their anger. Clare College set up a special disciplinary court to consider action against the students. And the Cambridgeshire police opened a criminal investigation against them in late February.

The persecution of these students provides a case study of the two-pronged offensive being carried out today against Western culture. First there are the jihadists, who call for our destruction. Then there are the leftist intellectuals and public figures who defend radical Islamists and work to silence those who criticize them by criminalizing speech and condemning free thinkers as racists.

The direct consequence of this two-pronged offensive is the repression of free thought.

FOUR YEARS ago, US President George W. Bush called the invasion of Iraq "Operation Iraqi Freedom." The intention was clear. The purpose of the war was not merely to bring down Saddam Hussein's murderous, terror-supporting regime. It was to bring about the defeat of the vile world view that supported the regime and to replace that view with the values of freedom, tolerance and democracy.

Four years on, US forces continue their heroic fight to bring order and security to that violent land. But the purpose of their efforts is no longer clear. The US no longer pushes the Iraqis or the greater Arab world to abandon jihad in favor of freedom.

Earlier this month, columnist Joel Mowbray gave evidence of the Bush administration's abandonment of the war of ideas in a Wall Street Journal expose on the US taxpayer-financed Arabic-language television network Al-Hurra. The US launched Al-Hurra in February 2004 to compete with jihadist television networks like Al Jazeera. Its stated aim was to present a liberal, pro-democracy and pro-human rights voice to the Arab world.

Yet, as Mowbray reported, since former CNN producer Larry Register was appointed to lead the network last November, that aim fell by the wayside.

In December the network began allowing itself to be used as a platform by arch terrorists like Hizbullah commander Hassan Nasrallah and Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh. Last month, when the Israeli Islamic movement began attacking Israel for conducting an archeological dig by the Aksa mosque, Al-Hurra's coverage of the story was more extreme than Al Jazeera's. Palestinian Authority mufti Ikremah Sabri was brought on live and accused Israel of shooting and throwing bombs into the mosque and of denying medical care to those it had supposedly wounded. Al-Hurra has also hosted an al-Qaida terrorist who rejoiced in the September 11 attacks on America.

As is the case in Britain, the Bush administration's decision to largely abandon the ideological battlefield is the result of an uncompromising and unrelenting ideological and political assault against the voices that justify the war against the global jihad generally, and against the hawks in the Bush administration specifically.

Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, Douglas Feith and John Bolton - and arguably Scooter Libby - were all forced from their positions in the Pentagon, the State Department and the White House after coming under unrelenting attack by the Left which all but accused these men of treason for their vigilant support of the war against Islamic totalitarianism. A central component of the onslaught against them was the repeated claim that their support for Israel is what brought these men to delude America into believing that the global jihad is a threat to US national security.

One of the central players in this concerted attack has been the billionaire George Soros. Soros is an anti-Zionist Jew with a troubling past. Specifically, by his own admission in interviews with 60 Minutes in 1998 and PBS in 1993, Soros collaborated with the Nazis in seizing Jewish property in Budapest in 1944.

Author Serge Trifkovic, who is currently researching a biography of Soros, tells of a Holocaust survivor in Hungary who claims that the reason Soros was allowed to remain free was "the boy's special knowledge of the Jewish community and its attempts to protect its property from confiscation."

Since 2003, Soros has donated more than \$100 million to radical left-wing groups and to the political campaigns of far-left anti-war Democratic candidates in the US. His money has made him one of the most influential forces in the Democratic Party.

After Hamas won the Palestinian election last January, Soros turned his guns against Israel. Last October he announced his intention to work with left-wing American Jewish groups such as Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, American Friends of Peace Now and the Israel Policy Forum to form an effectively anti-Israel lobbying group that will compete with the pro-Israel American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). Soros accuses AIPAC of making common cause with the war hawks and so harming US and Israeli national security.

This week Soros laid out his anti-Israel views in the New York Review of Books. In a longwinded screed entitled, "On Israel, America and AIPAC," Soros presents an incoherent hodgepodge of sloppy logic and contradictory statements. On the one hand, he acknowledges that Israel's withdrawal from Gaza radicalized the Palestinians and brought Hamas to power. On the other hand, he insists that further Israeli withdrawals will cause the Palestinians to moderate. While he acknowledges that Hamas is a terror group, he insists that the US must recognize it and force Israel to recognize it and that AIPAC is responsible for neither recognizing Hamas as a legitimate political force in the region.

Soros claims to want peace for Israel. Yet he demands that the US and Israel embrace the Saudi plan which calls for Israel's effective destruction through a forced Israeli withdrawal from Judea, Jerusalem, Samaria and the Golan Heights and the demographic destruction of the Jewish state through unimpeded immigration of 4-5 million foreign-born Arabs.

In effect, Soros's arguments make clear that protestations aside, the advancement of human rights and peace cannot possibly be his true goals. Rather, what seems to interest him most is the erosion of the US-Israel alliance. A US abandonment of Israel is seen as a necessary component of an overall strategy for causing the US to cease its fight against the global jihad.

In her visit here next week, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is expected to pressure the Olmert-Livni-Peretz government to continue diplomatic contacts with the Hamas-Fatah terror government through PA Chairman and Fatah commander Mahmoud Abbas. In light of the administration's weakening stand on Hamas, it is clear that Soros's views have taken hold in ever-widening policy circles in Washington.

In advancing their anti-Israel views, Soros and his allies (most recently, New York Times columnist Nicholas D. Kristof), invoke the work of radical leftist Israeli organizations like the Geneva Initiative, B'tselem and Peace Now. Like Soros, these organizations claim to act for the advancement of peace and human rights. And like Soros, these organizations effectively cooperate with pro-jihadist groups in eroding Israel's ability to defend its rights as a Jewish democracy.

The public storm that ensued this week after Jews in Hebron took control of a building they recently purchased in the city was a clear example of this leftist-jihadist collusion.

In demanding that the IDF move immediately to eject the Jews from the building they had bought, Peace Now and B'tselem ignored human rights and openly advocated the abrogation of the human rights of Israeli Jews to purchase and hold property. In so doing, they lent their support to the racist jihadist view that Jews must be barred from stepping foot in so-called Arab areas.

B'tselem spokeswoman Sarit Michaeli told The Jerusalem Post on Sunday that whether the Jews purchased the building or not was immaterial. In her words, "Our opposition in principle is that these settlements should be evacuated anyway and that there shouldn't be these pockets in Hebron."

She added that "other than watching and making sure that [the sale] was done in a legal way, the IDF has the obligation to make sure that settlers don't take over more areas."

In so arguing, Michaeli gave effective Jewish Israeli support to even more outrageous statements by Israeli Arab parliamentarians. As she claimed that the IDF's job is to fight Jews, Arab MKs Ibrahim Sarsour and Muhammad Barakei participated in the PA's "Jerusalem First" conference in Ramallah. Sarsour called for "Muslims and Arabs" to "liberate Jerusalem."

Sarsour declared, "Just as the Muslims once liberated Jerusalem from the Crusaders, so must we today believe that we can liberate Jerusalem. It is not an impossible dream."

Barakei accused Israel of trying to "empty Jerusalem of its Palestinian inhabitants." Calling Jerusalem a "national issue, not just a religious issue," he called on Palestinians to act immediately to "reclaim the city."

As for Hebron, on Tuesday MK Taleb a-Sanaa called for an international boycott of Israel in response to the Jewish purchase and takeover of the building.

The Arab MKs spoke against the backdrop of Israel's first Arab cabinet minister Ghaleb Majadle's refusal to sing the national anthem and the publication of a University of Haifa poll showing that 76 percent of Israeli Arabs believe that Zionism is a form of racism and that 28% of Israeli Arabs deny the Holocaust.

Needless to say, no criminal investigations into possible treason charges have been opened against the Arab politicians.

A CLEAR line connects the Cambridge students, the Americans in Iraq, and the situation in Israel. The leftist-Islamist front is eroding the free world's sense of justice. Rather than assert our liberal, democratic values and defend our freedoms, fearing leftist condemnation, politicians and opinion shapers have permitted themselves to become shackled to ideologies that negate everything for which the free world stands.

Israel, which stands on the front lines of freedom, is duty-bound to stem the tide. But our ignoble leaders have preferred to stop thinking and silently surrender.

This is how a civilization collapses.



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