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PROTEST AGAINST DURBAN

Italy boycotts the anti-Semitic UNESCO conference

by Fiamma Nirenstein

**Italy Boycotts the Anti-Semitic Summit**

In 2001⸺photos of Bin Laden and accusations of apartheid. Here's why it should be avoided.

Since 2001, the Durban UNESCO Conference has been attacking Israel. Draghi follows Biden, Macron and Boris.

THE ANTI-RACISM ARGUMENT

Now it's Italy's turn. Mario Draghi knows very well that our country must not allow the shame of Durban to gain a world stage again. Macron announced that France will participate in the fourth meeting of the 2001 conference that - under the auspices of UNESCO and with the bogus title “Conference against Racism, Xenophobia and Intolerance” - established the theoretical and political basis for the current wave of lethal anti-Semitism. A nucleus of rabid anti-Zionism, which jointly attacks Israel and the Jewish people and does not hide its genocidal purpose. It is a dangerous movement because it has no geographical boundaries, is intertwined with terrorism and violence, and disguised as human rights and “legitimate criticism” of Israel.

The fourth meeting of this conference will take place on 22 September: the USA, Canada, Germany, Israel, the Czech Republic, Great Britain, and the Netherlands have already announced their boycott. Italy must reject the criminalisation of the State of Israel and the anti-Semitism it generates, by taking the same action. In Durban, the slogans declaring Israel as a racist, apartheid and genocidal state were born contrary to all the facts, since the Jewish state, which is passionately democratic, practises a policy that is the opposite of this. In Durban, the idea of an “outlawed” occupation was devised, in defiance of the Oslo Accords signed by Rabin and Arafat and against all the historical legal discussion on the subject. The propaganda against the “illegitimate and colonial” occupation of the territories began in Durban, without ever mentioning the many other occupations, such as the Turkish occupation of Cyprus or the Chinese occupation of Tibet...

In Durban 2001, as a correspondent of the press, I reported in disbelief, day after day, how Arafat, Fidel Castro, Mugabe, with their strong anti-American and anti-Israeli support based on the Soviet tradition, took turns to rant from the gallery. Nelson Mandela was there; while the world's delegations fidgeted uneasily without knowing what to do, they peddled their anti-Semitic hatred: Israel was an apartheid state that had to be brought to an end; Israel was the zombie of contemporary colonialism, while the Palestinian state - which never existed - was the symbol of salvation. While Palestinian terrorists in the second Intifada slaughtered women and children in the streets of Jerusalem, in Durban, the Jews - from being the murderers of Christ, an inferior race to be wiped out, and infidel invaders of Islam - became a blasphemy of a people, in a world that worships human rights in a one-sided way.

In the half-dark, crowded, and confused chamber, perplexed delegations went out into the corridor to seek an impossible agreement on resolutions. From the Italian contingent, Margherita Boniver stood up courageously; when we met in the corridors, we exchanged desperate words. In the breaks, I met other Jews like me, who were refugees and persecuted, speakers who were prevented from speaking. The permanently mobilized NGOs distributed anti-Jewish hate material such as the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, wore the keffiyeh, and terrorised the Israeli delegation. The Tutsis, the Tibetans, the Guatemalans of the Nobel Prize winner Rigoberta Menchú wandering around in her multicoloured robes, the “untouchable” Indians, the Uighurs⸺all the oppressed were reduced to extras in the well-planned war against Israel.

By going to Durban nowadays, we risk reviving once prevailing racist theories. The shame of celebrating such an occasion must be avoided for the sake of humanity. Accusations of genocide and racism against Israel, delegitimising its very existence, are the prime fodder for the ever-growing contemporary anti-Semitic movement, which has recently been enriched with the term “supremacism.” In the same vein as in Durban, the crowds - waving the flag of human rights, Muslims against Islamophobia, or blacks against racism (“Black lives matter”) - shout that Palestine will be free and demand the elimination of Israel. In London people were heard shouting “fuck the Jews;” in Los Angeles, people in a restaurant asked, “who is Jewish here?” Mr. Prime Minister, please let us at least turn off this tap of hatred, which over the years has passed into the hands of Qaddafi and the denier Ahmadinejad. In 2001, beneath the skies of a South Africa freed from apartheid, the reporter saw the raised portraits of Osama Bin Laden high in the air. Only a few days later, back in Jerusalem, I witnessed the disaster that changed the world in which we live.