

## A Dangerous Delusion

Asaf Romirowsky

PEDRO SANJUAN, *The UN Gang: A Memoir of Incompetence, Corruption, Espionage, Anti-Semitism and Islamic Extremism at the UN Secretariat* (New York: Doubleday, 2005), 208 pp., \$24.95.

Though the world has seen many acts of genocide, the actual term was only coined some sixty years ago. In 1944, international jurist Rafael Lemkin popularized the notion in the League of Nations of what he then termed as “barbarity” (the annihilation of an ethnicity) and “vandalism” (the destruction of an ethnicity’s culture). Lemkin achieved his ultimate goal in 1951, when the League’s successor, the United Nations, enacted the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Lemkin’s timing could not have been better. In the post-World War II era, America and the world became painfully aware of Nazi efforts to systematically annihilate European Jewry. The resulting carnage was and remains so inexplicable that until one physically goes to visit the concentration camps, what took place during the years that Hitler governed Eastern Europe cannot fully be grasped.

This historical context is important if one seeks to fully understand the history of anti-Semitism in the global arena. Because, as Pedro Sanjuan’s *The UN Gang* unflinchingly

details, anti-Semitism lies at the very foundation of today’s United Nations, the same body that in its day accepted Lemkin’s definition of genocide.

The UN Secretariat, Sanjuan says, harbors a deep obsession with anti-Semitism, and a vocal ideological opposition to both Zionism and the State of Israel. Over the years, Arab foes of both have capitalized upon these neuroses, using the UN as a vehicle to sway Western “hearts and minds” by depicting Zionism in the same manner as other fashionable enemies, such as communism and fascism. The institutionalization of this trend took place on November 10, 1975, when the UN General Assembly, by a wide margin, adopted a resolution declaring Zionism to be a form of racism.

The eminent scholar Bernard Lewis has explained that, in the eyes of Islamic radicals such as the Muslim Brotherhood, Jews are all defined as “genetically and ontologically evil.” Essentially the same categorical imperative drives much of the UN’s thinking when it comes to Israel.

Not surprisingly, the Palestinian agenda—and sympathy for the Palestinian cause—has infiltrated every aperture of the buildings at Turtle Bay. It has engendered Arab and Western support for the delegitimation of Israel, and facilitated comparisons between Nazism and Zionism—a false linkage that bol-



ASAF ROMIROWSKY is an Associate Fellow at the Middle East Forum and the Israel Affairs Fellow for the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia.

sters Palestinian claims of oppression. Secretary General Kofi Annan's recent appearance at a UN Palestine Day event which astonishingly featured a map of the Middle East that conspicuously omitted Israel is emblematic of the way in which the UN has transformed itself into a propaganda machine for such thinking.

This rot has penetrated into the UN's specialized agencies, such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). A unique institution with no parallel in the UN system, UNRWA is dedicated solely to providing assistance to Palestinian refugees. Terrorism does not exclude one from being a part of UNRWA. In fact, quite the opposite is true; UNRWA-overseen hospitals and clinics routinely employ members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

Israel dominates not only discussions of the Middle East, but also unconnected matters. Within the corridors of the UN, Sanjuan tells us, Israel is widely viewed as the most delinquent nation when it comes to human rights, well ahead of China, Sudan or North Korea. Indeed, the comparison of Israel to Nazi Germany and apartheid South Africa is taken as a "fact." Israelis in the global arena are called brutal, racist and genocidal.

The UN's deformities are certainly not confined to anti-Semitism. Sanjuan chronicles that for many UN delegates, diplomatic immunity has become synonymous with fraudulent and scandalous behavior—conduct which does not have any consequences whatsoever. This status has allowed them to spread anti-American, anti-Semitic and jihadist rhetoric right here in America.

All of this has been greeted by profound disinterest, if not active

support, from the UN bureaucracy. Sanjuan recounts the reactions of then-Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar when faced with news of jihadist meetings in the Delegates Lounge: "but that is a private social club, so to speak. Anyone has a right to meet there and talk about any subject. Even Nazis can meet there for all I care."

There is perhaps no better example of the deep, systemic deformities plaguing the UN than the recent acrimonious battle over the selection of John Bolton as U.S. envoy—a political tug-of-war that closely mirrored the choice of Jeane Kirkpatrick for the same post in 1981. Those who opposed Bolton's and Kirkpatrick's nominations objected in no small part to the manner in which they dealt with the anti-Semitic and anti-American rhetoric, or with the terrorist ties that many UN member states brandish openly.

President Woodrow Wilson's vision for the League of Nations as a forum of cooperation between nations was based upon the promotion of democratic and free market values. Instead, the UN has turned into a major repository of the disease called anti-Semitism. And, instead of looking for a cure, UN members are actively looking for ways of spreading this epidemic. Perhaps if more people read Sanjuan's scathing critique, the world will have a better chance of transforming the UN into an international body that is actually representative of the totality of the global community.

