October 7, 2023, marked the third anniversary of the day the terrorist organization Hamas brutally murdered more than 1,200 people in Israel—from newborns to elderly women. This massacre has not only left a lasting mark on the Jewish state; it has also had a negative impact here.

From Sacha Wigdorovits

The pogrom carried out on October 7, 2023, by the Palestinian terrorist organization Hamas and its hundreds of enthusiastic civilian accomplices from Gaza ranks among the most traumatic events in the history of the Jewish state, which is not yet quite 80 years old. And this largest mass murder of Jews since the Holocaust and World War II will have a decisive impact on the parliamentary elections scheduled to take place in Israel in just under three weeks. For at stake is also the question of what responsibility Benjamin Netanyahu's government bears for allowing this to happen.

But here in Switzerland as well—and in the West as a whole—October 7 has left its mark: on our institutions, from the police and law enforcement agencies to universities; on our political system; on our media; and on our civil society.

The police and law enforcement agencies are standing idly by

Thus, the police allow the fanatical mob—which seeks to destroy Israel ("from the river to the sea") and glorifies terrorism—to demonstrate undisturbed on our streets—with the blessing of their political superiors. Law enforcement agencies, such as the Zurich Public Prosecutor's Office, also refuse to do their jobs and, citing alarmingly flimsy justifications, fail to launch investigations even in cases of death threats against Jews—not to mention less dramatic, not to mention anti-Semitic incidents that are less dramatic but nonetheless violate criminal law.

University presidents are cowardly turning a blind eye to sympathizers of terrorism

The "laissez-faire" attitude of the presidents of our universities—such as the ZHdK and the University of Zurich, or the universities in Lausanne and Geneva—is also part of the institutional failure to address openly celebrated anti-Semitism. For, just as in other countries, anti-Semitic and Hamas-sympathizing student groups at most Swiss universities are allowed to agitate undisturbed and harass Jewish students. Out of sheer cowardice, the rectors allow their "educational institutions" to become places where knowledge is no longer imparted, but rather where misconceptions

are spread and (anti-Semitic) prejudices are propagated.

Politicians are opportunistically taking sides against Israel

Numerous politicians have joined this disgraceful charade. Among them is Federal Councilor Beat Jans, who brought 40 children from Gaza to Switzerland along with their Hamas-affiliated chaperones. Yet he shows absolutely no interest whatsoever in the tens of thousands of Israeli children who are traumatized by the massacre of October 7, 2023, or by the rocket attacks carried out by the Lebanese terrorist militia Hezbollah. However, since Jans's "Gaza PR stunt" posed security risks to the Swiss population, the governments of the cantons of Zurich, Aargau, Bern, Thurgau, Zug, and Fribourg refused to participate in his initiative.

Left-wing parties use anti-Semitism to court Muslim voters

Jans, however, has scored points with his own party, the SP, and with the Greens. For the Swiss left-wing parties, too, have jumped on the bandwagon of hatred toward Jews and Israel—just as "Die Linke" has in Germany, "La France insoumise" in France, and the "Green Party" in England. The anti-Semitism hidden behind the term "anti-Zionism" among the European left is linked, on the one hand, to their abstruse view of history, according to which Israel is a (white) colonial state and the Palestinians are its victims. On the other hand, it is based on the—unfortunately accurate—electoral calculation that anti-Jewish and anti-Israel slogans will win votes among many immigrant Muslim voters.

Most media outlets are fueling the hate campaign against Israel

Dass sich nach dem 7. Oktober in Europa solche überwunden geglaubte Abgründe des Judenhasses aufgetan haben, ist nicht zuletzt die Schuld der Medien. Zwar gibt es vereinzelte, die sich an dieser Hetze nicht beteiligen. In der Schweiz sind dies insbesondere die NZZ und der Nebelspalter, gelegentlich auch Die Weltwoche. In Deutschland sind es die Medien des Springer-Verlags wie BILD und Die Welt und im angelsächsischen Raum beispielsweise The Telegraph, der ebenfalls zu Springer gehört, oder das Wall Street Journal und die New York Post, die von der Familie Murdoch kontrolliert werden.

But most other media outlets—from the New York Times to the Süddeutsche Zeitung, and from CNN and the BBC to Swiss television—have, over the past three years, increasingly adopted the Palestinian narrative, particularly that of Hamas or

the Lebanese Hezbollah. In other words: The Israelis are the perpetrators and the Palestinians are the innocent victims of October 7.

Hamas Terrorists as Journalists

In their reporting, these media outlets rely on information from Hamas and organizations affiliated with it; they obtain their videos, photos, and reports from Palestinian “journalists” who, in reality, are often terrorists themselves and, in some cases, were involved in the massacre on October 7.

That is why, from the very beginning of the Gaza War, there were blatant instances of misreporting directed against Israel, such as the claim that Al-Ahli Hospital had been hit by an Israeli missile. As it turned out shortly thereafter, however, it was a misfired rocket launched by the Islamic Jihad terrorist organization in the direction of Israel. Numerous other examples—ranging from doctored photos to selective coverage of certain topics—show that nothing has changed to this day regarding these media outlets’ one-sided, anti-Israel reporting. On the contrary.

In doing so, these media outlets and their journalists are taking sides (with Hamas) in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict instead of reporting independently. An old adage states, “The first casualty of war is the truth.” In the Gaza War, this is the fault of a large portion of the Western media.

Our civil society is being indoctrinated to be hostile toward Israel

This did not leave our Western civil society unscathed. It is true that all the facts indicate that the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) specifically targeted Hamas in Gaza and not the civilian population—let alone that they attempted to commit genocide against the Palestinians living there. But these facts are being suppressed by the majority of the media here. That is why a large portion of our population today believes that the opposite was true: that Israel waged a targeted war against the civilians living in Gaza.

As a result, many people in the Western world today—who are not anti-Semites—have a negative view of the Jewish state. This is particularly true in the arts and culture scene, whose representatives generally have little understanding of politics—even if they believe otherwise. This trend extends to sports and reaches all the way up to the executive suites of corporations.

We have returned to the darkest of times

This results in hostility and boycotts. Not only against Israeli companies, Israeli artists, Israeli athletes, or Israeli tourists, but also against Jews from other countries, who are sometimes even subjected to a “test of conscience” and subsequently ostracized if they do not distance themselves from Israel.

All of these developments are reminiscent of the Middle Ages, which are rightly called “the Dark Ages” in English. Three years after October 7, 2023, the grim conclusion is therefore this: The Hamas massacre was not only a horrific event for Israel; it has also left a deep mark on us here in Europe and in the U.S.—and all of these developments are leading us in the wrong direction.

See also: Hannah Einhaus Appeals to the City Council and the Government of the City of Bern

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