



PERSPECTIVES

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50 European Political Has-Beens Oppose Trump's Peace Plan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Fifty former senior European politicians have published a letter against the Trump peace plan in the *Guardian*. Many signatories can be characterized as veteran anti-Israeli inciters. Some can even be labeled antisemites. All have held positions in countries where antisemitism is endemic. In 2019, even before the Trump plan was published, a similar letter was published by former EU officials.

On February 27th, 2020, the *Guardian* published a [letter](#) under the headline "Grave concern about the US plan to resolve the Israel-Palestine conflict." It was signed by 50 former senior European politicians, including many previous prime and foreign ministers. The signatories called themselves "Europeans dedicated to promoting international law, peace and security worldwide." In their letter they warn that if the Trump peace plan goes ahead, Israel will be an apartheid state.

If these individuals were in fact dedicated to promoting international law, peace and security, one would be able to find many letters by them across the media expressing their concern about the problematic state of these issues around the world. Yet as far as can reasonably be checked, these 50 have only signed this one letter recently. This fact exposes them as hypocrites.

Many of the signatories can be characterized as veteran anti-Israel inciters. If one applies the most common definition of antisemitism, that of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, some can even be labeled antisemites. All the signatories have held positions in countries where antisemitism is endemic.

One name among the signatories that immediately catches the eye is Mary Robinson, former president of Ireland and past UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. In 2014, she co-signed an op-ed in the *Guardian* with former US president Jimmy Carter suggesting that Europe and the US recognize Hamas as a political movement. They did not mention that it is also an organization with genocidal intent. Robinson, who is viewed as a top human rights activist, was promoting the interests of an organization that aspires to commit mass murder.

A further glance at the signatories reveals that at least 20 are socialists, reflecting their parties' frequent significant incitement against Israel and sympathy for the repressive, corrupt, anti-democratic, and murderous Palestinian leadership. Those who are anti-Israel often think having a Jewish supporter helps. Former Swiss president Ruth Dreymann, a social democrat, played this role to the letter.

Former Dutch and UN ambassador Robert Serry, a Laborite, is the son of a Jewish father, a fact he discovered only after the latter's death and which is not widely known. In 2014, when Serry was special envoy of the UN for the Middle East peace process, Israel FM Avigdor Lieberman threatened to declare him *persona non grata* when he offered to help transfer Qatari funds to Hamas.

Another former Swiss president, Micheline Calmy-Rey, also a social democrat, supported the Geneva initiative of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. This long-running process, which was conducted in Switzerland against the wishes of the Israeli government and produced no result, attempted to interfere in Israel's internal affairs. The purported Israeli "negotiators" represented nobody.

Laborite Bert Koenders is a former Dutch FM who was active in convincing the EU to label products from the disputed territories. In singling out Israel with this action and refraining from applying such labeling to genuinely occupied territories elsewhere in the world, the EU committed an antisemitic act according to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition.

Another Dutch signatory, Jozias van Aartsen, a liberal, is a former mayor of the Hague and Amsterdam. A highly unusual petition signed by 17,000 people was sent to parliament asking that he be fired as mayor of the Hague on the grounds that he had not acted against anti-Israel demonstrations in the town even when ISIS flags were flown.

A German signatory, Sigmund Gabriel, is the former leader of his country's socialist party and a former FM. He is also a veteran anti-Israel inciter who

falsely calls himself a “friend of Israel.” In 2017, PM Benjamin Netanyahu, who was also Israel’s FM at the time, refused to meet with Gabriel. Netanyahu said: “My policy is not to meet diplomats who visit Israel and meet organizations that slander IDF soldiers and seek to put them on trial as war criminals.”

There are four members of the British Labour Party among the signatories: Douglas Alexander, Ben Bradshaw, Jack Straw, and Garreth Thomas. None of them had much, if anything, to say when their party became institutionally antisemitic under the chairmanship of Jeremy Corbyn.

Another signatory of note is Belgian socialist Willy Claes, who had to leave the position of NATO secretary general due to his involvement in a Belgian corruption scandal for which he was later condemned and denied his right to vote or be elected. The sole Finnish signatory, Erkki Tuomioja, a former social democrat minister of foreign affairs of his country, has in the past compared Israeli defensive measures to the Nazi persecution of Jews in Germany, saying: “It is quite shocking that some implement the same kind of policy toward the Palestinians which they themselves were victims of in the 1930s.” Massimo D’Alema, a former Italian PM and a communist for most of his life, once called Israel a “terror state.” He has defended Hamas, saying: “While the organization is in fact extremist, the terror attacks it wages on Israel are part of the Palestinian resistance to the Israeli occupation.” D’Alema also claims to have always been a “friend of Israel.”

As to the Scandinavian signatories: In October 2001, Israeli tourism minister Rehavam Ze’evi was assassinated by Palestinian terrorists. Danish FM Mogens Lykketoft, who would later become leader of the Danish Socialist Party, said on television that there was no difference between that assassination and Israel’s targeted killing of terrorists. Another former Danish FM, Martin Lidegaard, said in 2014 that if the indirect talks between Israel and Hamas then set to start in Cairo did not yield significant Israeli concessions, the EU should take tougher steps against Israel. A third former Danish FM, Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, compared Israel to apartheid South Africa in an article written jointly with Lykketoft and another author.

During a visit to Israel in 2013, then Norwegian FM Espen Barth Eide, a Laborite, had to admit that part of his country’s aid money was used by the Palestinian Authority to pay the salaries of convicted Palestinian terrorists serving time in Israeli jails. Former Swedish social democrat FM Jan Eliasson took part in a hate demonstration against Israel in Stockholm in 2009 at which Hezbollah and Hamas flags were flown and an Israeli flag was burned.

Three letters similar to the *Guardian* letter have been signed by a variety of mainly European former politicians in the past. The first was published in April 2013. The signatories self-defined as the “European Eminent Persons Group on the Middle East Peace Process.”

That letter’s content was skillfully dismantled by Elliott Abrams, who has served in senior positions under various US presidents. He is currently Special Representative for Venezuela at the Department of State. Abrams said the letter was important in one way: “It shows that European official and elite thinking continues to blame Israel for everything related to the so-called peace process.” Abrams suggested that the signatories, whom he called “formerly eminent persons,” have been seeking to avoid the truth that Mahmoud Abbas refused an extremely generous offer from then Israeli PM Ehud Olmert. He also pointed out that the letter’s claim that the parties had failed to negotiate in the previous four years was false.

Abrams further noted that the signatories did not demand anything from the Palestinians, and treated them like objects rather than people. He said, “Nowhere does the letter mention the issue of antisemitic broadcasting and hate speech in Palestinian official media, nor the matter of the glorification of terrorism and terrorists by the PA, and the impact such conduct has on prospects for peace.”

A second letter from the same self-appointed European “eminent persons” group was published in May 2015. Some signatories of these earlier letters are recidivists in the current letter in the *Guardian*. One of them, former French socialist FM Herbert Védrine, is remembered by many French Jews because he seemed to excuse the multiple antisemitic attacks committed by Muslims in France at the beginning of this century. He said, “One does not necessarily have to be shocked that young Frenchmen of immigrant origin have compassion for the Palestinians and are very excited because of what is happening.”

In April 2019 there was another open letter with many of the usual signatories under a new heading: “High-ranking former European Union officials.” It urged Europe “to reject a United States Middle East plan in the case that it promotes unequal rights between Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories.”

If there is a virtual pillory for immoral members of the elite somewhere, the names of these 50 European political has-beens should be on it.

This is a substantially extended version of an article earlier published by the Jerusalem Post.

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