

**Submission to the UN Human Rights Council “Commission of Inquiry” on Israel
created May 27, 2021 by resolution A/HRC/RES/S-30/1**

Organization: HARIF on behalf of the descendants of Jewish refugees from the Middle East and North Africa – victims of Arab and Iranian discrimination and repression on the basis of Jewish identity.

Biography: HARIF is a UK charity representing Jews from North Africa and the Middle East (UK no.1186454), and dedicated to promoting their history, culture and heritage. Over 2,000 years of history in the Middle East and North Africa came to an abrupt and tragic end just 50 years ago. Jews departed for Israel and the West, leaving an enormous cultural and economic void behind. In another 20 years, few Jews who were born in these countries will still be alive. A vital chapter of Jewish identity, history and culture – an entire civilisation – will be lost. HARIF is here to make sure it is not forgotten.

Issues to which our submission applies:

- (1) “Underlying root causes of recurrent tensions, instability and protraction of conflict in and between the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem [*sic*], and Israel; as well as systematic discrimination and repression based on national, ethnic, racial or religious identity;”
- (2) “Facts and circumstances regarding alleged violations of international humanitarian law and alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law leading up to and since 13 April 2021;”
- (3) “Identification of those responsible;”

Submission: (This submission itself does not constitute an endorsement of the “Commission of Inquiry” or its mandate.)

ROOT CAUSES

When will the ‘happy dhimmi’ myth be discredited?

Posted on 24 September 2021

Point of No Return: Jewish Refugees from Arab and Muslim Countries

<https://www.jewishrefugees.org.uk/2021/09/when-will-the-happy-dhimmi-myth-be-discredited.html>

Today, any connection with slavery, however tenuous, is enough to make historical figures into non-persons. It's time to treat the subjugation of Jews in Arab lands with the same seriousness. Lyn Julius writes in *JNS News*:

Although anticipated with trepidation, the [United Nations' Durban IV commemoration](#), titled "Reparations, racial justice and equality for people of African descent," seems to have turned out to have been a damp squib.

But it might not be long before another excuse for an anti-Israel hatefest presents itself. The propaganda strategy behind the Durban conference—to paint one nation (and one nation alone) as racist—remains alive and well on campus and in the media.

We could begin to fight back by making the argument that the treatment meted out to Jews and blacks was uncannily similar, according to a recently published book, *Poisoning the Wells*, edited by the Institute for the Study of Global Anti-Semitism and Policy (ISGAP).

Startling parallels between Jews in Muslim lands and blacks in the American South are revealed in a chapter called "Happy Dhimmis, Happy Darkeys: Myths past and present," by Eunice G. Pollack and Stephen H. Norwood.

According to Pollack and Norwood, Arab leaders and their Western supporters have spread the myth of "perfect harmony" and "mutual respect between Arabs and Jews" in the 14 centuries of "coexistence" before the establishment of the State of Israel. The "paradise" was shattered by the invasion of the foreign ideology of political Zionism, a movement supposedly fashioned by European Jews, with no relevance to Jews living in Muslim lands.

In practice, however, Jews in Muslim lands were treated little better than black slaves in the cotton plantations of the deep South, claim Pollack and Norwood. Both groups were seen as cowardly and obsequious.

Jews were *dhimmis* [under the eighth-century Pact of Omar](#). Although permitted to practice their religion, they were not generally allowed to defend themselves. Indeed, they had to pay protection money in the form of a head tax.

Black slaves were deemed unqualified for military service. When Confederate soldiers encountered black Union Army soldiers during the Civil War, they viewed them with disgust; atrocities followed. The alleged behavior of a Jewish soldier in French uniform set off a pogrom by Algerian Muslims in Constantine in 1834.

In Arab countries generally, Jews occupied the last rung on the social pecking order.

Pollack and Norwood believe that the Koran set the template for Islam's treatment of the "treacherous and cursed" Jews after they spurned Muhammad's revelation. The Jewish tribes

suffered a brutal defeat that involved beheading, rape, pillage and the sale of women as slaves. Both Jews and blacks have been victims of ritual lynchings.

*Dhimmi*s had to submit to restrictions and humiliations. Raids into the Jewish quarters in North Africa resulted in frequent loss of life, as well as pillage and rape. Jews were beaten up on the false pretexts of blasphemy or drunkenness. The assailants, drawn from all ranks of society, were rarely punished. Under Shi'a Islam, "unclean" Jews could be punished if rainwater splashed from them onto Muslims.

But the Western supporters of these myths—the *dhimmi*-deniers—downplay inconvenient facts. They argue that attacks only took place "once in a while" or when the Jews stepped out of line (and were thus themselves to blame), and that the attacks were directed solely at Jews' property.

The myth of "peaceful coexistence" inspired by the [golden age of medieval Muslim Spain](#) originated in the 19th century and was believed by many in the West, including Jews. The historian Heinrich Graetz wrote that life under Islam was far better for Jews than under Christianity. The young Benjamin Disraeli claimed, "The children of Ishmael rewarded children of Israel with equal rights and privileges with themselves."

In reality, even when the *dhimmi* rules were abrogated in 1856, rights had to be purchased. The Ottomans exhibited the "toleration of indifference when suitably paid to do so," to quote the philo-Semitic clergyman James Parkes.

Colonial rule is considered by Western supporters of the myth to have disrupted this happy relationship. In practice, the colonial powers "liberated" non-Muslim minorities from their *dhimmi* status and granted them better education and security.

Israel became tarred with the brush of imperialism after the Suez Crisis in 1956 when Israel joined forces with Britain and France to invade Egypt. Further politicization followed when Israel became an "occupying" power after the Six-Day War in 1967. Beginning in the 1950s, Western intellectuals were so bewitched by Third Worldism that when Tunisian-Jewish writer Albert Memmi moved to France, he was astonished to have been almost congratulated by left-wingers for having been born in a country where racism did not exist.

Dhimmi-denial was mirrored in the attitudes of white Southerners who thought of themselves as upholding Christian values and even "high civilization." After losing the cause of slavery in the American Civil War, they went to considerable lengths to praise slavery's "benevolent features." The master-slave relationship, they said, was amicable: "The only bonds were those of tender understanding, trust and loyalty."

Pollack and Norwood argue that the "happy darkey" myth provided Southerners with a foundation to justify their "lost cause," just as Arabs use the "happy *dhimmi*" to challenge Israel's legitimacy.

Nowadays, as statues associated with slavery are being torn down, and any connection with slavery, however tenuous, is enough to make historical figures into non-persons, the “happy darkey” myth is thoroughly discredited.

How much longer will we have to wait until the “happy *dhimmi*” myth is consigned to the dustbin of history?