

August 9, 1996

## AN EDUCATION IN VIOLENCE

TWO weeks ago Yasser Arafat responded to the latest Israeli demand that he do "more" to put an end to terrorism. What is he expected to do? Go out with a gun looking for putative terrorists? Surely not. There are many channels for his influence, but among them there should certainly be a public education campaign in mosques, at public meetings, in public print, on radio and television.

Everybody should know that Arafat has turned his back on terrorism. And so, a few days after that latest demand, made to him personally by Foreign Minister David Levy, Arafat's response was delivered in Gaza. It was an eloquent eulogy, a veritable hymn of praise to the memory of Yihye Ayyash, renowned Hamas killer of Jews.

Ayyash was a martyr, a hero, Arafat told the cheering crowd. Ayyash and his comrades, all heroes, all martyrs. It was practically identical with the speech Arafat made after Ayyash was killed by Israeli forces.

In every one of his speeches (some public, some "leaked"), Arafat has demonstrated how he is discouraging violence. In a mosque in Johannesburg, South Africa, he proclaimed (or envisaged) the jihad; in Stockholm early this year, at a dinner with 40 Arab diplomats he described (expansively) what would be done to the State of Israel (dismantlement) and its Jewish inhabitants (only dispersal). What do all these pronouncements amount to if not a deliberate education campaign not against but in favor of terror? Who can gauge the number of Jews who are likely to be killed by enthusiastic young Arabs thus encouraged and influenced by the rhetoric of their leader, and by the force of the "heroic" example of Ayyash and his like? Would it not be more expedient from Arafat's point of view to stop making such blatant pro-terrorist speeches? Why does he encourage widespread suspicion in Israel, and elsewhere, concerning his real designs? Surely he could assuage the concerns of at least some Israelis about his supposed "commitment to peace"? Arafat, however, has a problem.

First and foremost, he must consider his own Arab "constituency," both Palestinian and nationwide. These people have had it drummed into their minds all their lives that the Jews have no right to exist as a nation, that the State of Israel is due for destruction, that it is a mitzva to kill Jews. Any suggestion that weapons for achieving those ends are openly being relinquished might have dire consequences for Arafat, who has many enemies and, no doubt, many false friends too.

To Arafat's good fortune, the Rabin-Peres-Aloni regime, which after all was working toward fulfillment of Arafat's dream of a Palestinian state, did not evince or unduly encourage negative reactions to Arafat's rhetoric. Shimon Peres fatuously even pretended to accept Arafat's learned explanation that jihad meant "peaceful development." WHAT IS disturbing is that the new government has also (so far) failed to react. Is it possible that Binyamin Netanyahu too does not regard persistent inflammatory propaganda as an integral ingredient of terrorism? In these very weeks, on a different level, Arafat's chief ally in the Arab world has scored a major diplomatic victory.

It was at his urging that the Netanyahu government persuaded President Weizmann where Peres had failed to release the two Arab murderesses. An appeal to the Supreme Court against this decision has been rejected on the astounding grounds that such a

decision could further Israel's diplomatic interests. What diplomatic interests? To give further encouragement to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's evident credo that murderers of Jews should not be punished? This is a field in which Mubarak has played a special role. In October 1985, at Ras Burka in Sinai, seven Israeli tourists three adults and four children were murdered by an Egyptian soldier, aided by a group of his comrades.

He simply fired into the group. Two died on the spot. Five were wounded and bled to death on the ground.

The remaining members of the tourist group among them a physician were prevented at gun point by the murderer's comrade from rendering any help to the five wounded. A report of the incident was brought to Mubarak, who dismissed it as a "matter of no importance." It was later reported that the man who had done the shooting had been jailed. It was also reported that he died in prison.

His accomplices were never put on trial. Not long after that came the episode of the Achille Lauro, an Italian ship hijacked by a group of Fatah members. The boat was due to land at Ashdod and there, disembarking with all speed, the hijackers planned to rampage through the town, shooting at all and sundry in the crowded streets.

The plan miscarried, but not before the hijackers succeeded in killing one Jew on the ship, an elderly wheelchair-bound American named Leon Klinghoffer. They then heaved him, in his wheelchair, over the side into the sea. Arrested by the Egyptian police, the hijackers were not tried in Egypt.

Neither were they extradited to Italy (for hijacking the boat) nor to America for killing Klinghoffer. They were spirited out of Egypt in a plane destined for the terrorists' haven of Algeria. The aircraft, however, was intercepted and brought down by a US Air Force plane.

It was then discovered that the influential Egyptian who had had the hijacking murderers freed and had placed a getaway plane at their disposal was President Mubarak. Now, with the help of both the president and prime minister of Israel, Hosni Mubarak, by securing the release of the two women murderers, has added another notable notch to his tally.