

**NEVER FORGET: WEST'S FAILURE TO SAVE JEWS AFTER  
KRISTALLNACHT, & BRAVE CANADIANS WHO FOUGHT FOR  
FREEDOM AT PASSCHENDAELE**

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**79TH ANNIVERSARY OF KRISTALLNACHT**      **fought-freedom-passchen/**

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*Efraim Zuroff*

[\*Jerusalem Post\*](#), Nov. 8, 2017

November 9 marks the 79th anniversary of Kristallnacht, “The Night of Broken Glass,” a major milestone in the persecution of Jews under the Third Reich and an unusually important event which took place in full public view, but whose significance was unfortunately not fully understood at the time.

The story ostensibly begins with the expulsion from Germany in late October 1938 of approximately 17,000 Polish Jews, whose Polish citizenship had been revoked by the Polish government. The Poles refused to allow them to enter and they were stranded on the German-Polish border under extremely difficult conditions. Among those expelled was the Grynszpan family from Hanover, whose son Herschel was living in Paris at the time. Incensed by the suffering of his parents and the others, he bought a gun, walked into the German Legation in Paris on November 7, and asked to see an embassy official. He was taken to the office of third secretary Ernst vom Rath, whom he shot and badly wounded. (Ironically, at that time vom Rath was under suspicion by the Gestapo for expressing anti-Nazi sympathies, largely based on the mistreatment of Jews in Germany.)

Two days later, on November 9, vom Rath died of his wounds. That date also marked the anniversary of the Nazis’ failed Beer Hall Putsch of 1923, and at the gathering in Munich to mark that event, propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels gave a fiery speech calling for spontaneous violence against the Jews. In his words, “[T]he Fuehrer has decided that... demonstrations should not be organized by the Party, but insofar as they erupt spontaneously, they are not to be hampered.” Thus vom Rath’s murder served as the excuse for the outbreak of massive “spontaneous” violence against Jews and Jewish institutions throughout the Third Reich, which at that time included Austria.

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The results were horrific. One thousand six hundred Jews were murdered (the official report by Heydrich listed only 91), approximately 1,500 synagogues were destroyed, 30,000 Jewish men were arrested and sent to Dachau, Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen, more than 7,000 Jewish shops and department stores were vandalized or destroyed. In short, a horrific blow to German Jewry, who, adding insult and economic ruin to injury, were forced to pay a fine of one billion marks (about \$400 million at 1938 rates) as a punishment. The Nazis obviously viewed Kristallnacht as an opportunity to seriously advance their goal of the elimination of Jews from German society, which at that time they sought to achieve via expulsion and emigration. The question is, what gave them the sense that there would be virtually no severe consequences for such a dramatic assault on Jewish life and property?

To answer that question it is important to note two critical events which took place during the four months prior to Kristallnacht. The first was the Evian Conference convened in France, from July 6 to July 15, 1938, by president Franklin D. Roosevelt, ostensibly to solve, or at least alleviate, the plight of the increased numbers of Jewish refugees seeking to flee persecution by Nazi Germany. It was attended by representatives of 32 countries and 24 voluntary organizations, but was doomed to failure even before it began, since the invitations assured the participating countries that none of them would be asked to change their existing immigration quotas, which were the key element limiting the immigration of German and Austrian Jews.

In addition, Britain and the United States made a deal that no mention of Palestine would be allowed on the agenda and in return, the British would not bring up the fact that the United States was not even filling its existing quotas, let alone increasing them. While many delegates expressed sympathy for the Jews living under Nazism, the only countries willing to admit large numbers of Jews were the Dominican Republic and later Costa Rica. On the other hand, the Australian delegate, trade and customs minister T.W. White, bluntly explained that as his country had “no real racial problem, we are not desirous of importing one.”

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To understand the full impact of the failure of the Evian Conference, it must be emphasized that at this point the Nazis had still not decided to implement the Final Solution and were encouraging Jewish emigration from the Reich. In fact, Hitler responded to news of the conference by saying that if other nations would agree to admit the Jews living in the Reich, he would help them depart “even on luxury ships.” The second event was the Munich Agreement of September 29-30, 1938, in which England and France agreed to allow Germany to annex portions of the territory of Czechoslovakia inhabited by Germans (Sudetenland), which included most of the country’s border defenses, fortifications and heavy industrial districts, a decision which left the country practically defenseless...

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**WE SHOULD NEVER FORGET THE HORROR**

**— AND HEROICS — OF PASSCHENDAELE**

*Christopher Sweeney*

[National Post](#), Nov. 9, 2017

The village of Passchendaele in Belgium is today as it was nearly 100 years ago, a small, relatively insignificant rural village east of the medieval city of Ypres. Yet the name Passchendaele continues to send shivers down the spine of all who know or come to know of its horrors.

The battle was part of the broader Third Battle of Ypres fought between July 31 and Nov. 10, 1917, which resulted in nearly 400,000 British and Imperial

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(Australian, Canadian, Indian, New Zealand and South African) casualties. The battle featured all of the characteristics that have become synonymous with the First World War; mud, destruction, wasted human life, and negligible results. For these reasons, Canada was a reluctant participant in this battle but dutifully suffered over 16,000 casualties in a matter of just over two weeks (by today's population, this would mean nearly 65,000 casualties). Between Oct. 26 and Nov. 10 of this year, Canada will be observing the 100th anniversary of the bloody Battle of Passchendaele, a battle which, shamefully, is now barely known by Canadians. We should know of it.

The Canadian Corps, having already experienced the horrors of the Ypres salient in 1915, had no interest in returning there from France, but it had no choice. The British and non-Canadian Imperial forces, which in August 1917 had boldly sought to secure important Belgian channel ports occupied by the Germans, had by October ground to a halt ridiculously short of their goal. The new goal was "simply" to capture the ridge on which Passchendaele was located so as to hold the higher, dryer ground for the oncoming winter. But they needed fresh troops to do so, and the only ones available were the Canadians who had been rebuilding themselves after the 1917 battles at Vimy and Hill 70. It was now unfortunately our turn to be thrust into the cauldron. Lt.-Gen. Arthur Currie, commander of the Canadian Corps, immediately saw the difficulties of this mission and gloomily predicted that Canada would suffer 16,000 casualties — he was almost dead-on in this assessment (if you excuse the pun).

The Canadians were sent to the low outlying area east of the village of Passchendaele with the mission to take the ridge ... in waist-deep mud, a moonscape of water and corpse-filled shell craters, against heavily entrenched German defences on the rise. Through intricate planning, based carefully on learning from the failures of others, and massive artillery support, including attacks being precipitated by closely manned "creeping barrages" of shells (by this time, all cutting-edge hallmarks of Canadian fighting on the front), the Canadians succeeded in taking Passchendaele on Nov. 10, 1917. Like at Vimy and at Hill 70, the Canadians had succeeded where all others had failed. Patriotic pride in this accomplishment roared across the country, tempered only by the tragedy of the massive loss of lives.

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The Canadians were soon relieved of their position and brought back to the rear to lick their wounds, and to rebuild their strength. The best that could be dubiously claimed of this “victory” was that the Germans had suffered more losses “per capita” (not even in raw numbers) than the British and Imperial troops in the Third Battle of Passchendaele. Such was the definition of victory in the First World War. However, barely five months later, the British were required to perform a strategic retreat from the area around Passchendaele, with heavy losses, to better consolidate their defences against Germany’s last threatening offensive of the war, launched in March of 1918. All of the fighting by Canada, and others, had been for naught — all of the land gained had been lost.

At the time the 100th anniversary of the battle of Vimy Ridge in April of this year, my brother and I re-traced the steps of my great-grandfather, Martin Sweeney, who was fighting with the Victoria Rifles of Montreal during the battle. We followed his route from the magnificently restored town of Ypres (destroyed during the war) out to Passchendaele and located the approximate spot where he, and five others, had been killed by a shell on Nov. 5, 1917, two days before the final assault on Passchendaele had begun. For the first time, we realized that our long-lost great-grandfather had been within easy eyesight of the ruined town of Passchendaele, over which almost one million men on both sides had been fighting for the previous three months, before he was killed. Surprisingly, this gave us some solace, for he would have known that the Canadians were near their goal and about to achieve victory (correspondence from this battle tells us the Canadians were now deeply confident of their own fighting ability).

Martin’s name is amongst the 6,928 Canadian names on the Menin Gate Memorial in Ypres (a must visit for anyone in that part of the world) dedicated to those who lost their lives in Belgium, and for whom there is no known grave. In viewing his name on the monument for the first time, years ago, with my late father, we knew, sadly, that we were the first of Martin’s ancestors to ever visit his memorial. I still wonder what he, as a 44-year-old man with three grown children, was doing at the Battle of Passchendaele.

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On this 100th anniversary of the muddy, bloody Battle of Passchendaele, it is vitally important that we commemorate the sacrifices of those who came before us, for those who fought for Canada, and the timeless cause of freedom. For make no mistake, Canada at Passchendaele, like elsewhere during the First World War (and, for that matter, all our other wars), was fighting not for plunder or gain, or out of ignorance (as some modern interpreters would have us believe), but for the freedom of others. We declare at Remembrance ceremonies, almost by rote, that “we will remember them.” In this year marking the 100th anniversary of Vimy, Hill 70 and Passchendaele, it has never been more important to “remember them.”

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**COMMEMORATING THE ANZAC LIBERATION OF BEERSHEBA**

*Isi Leibler*

[Jerusalem Post](#), Oct. 30, 2017

Today Australia is indisputably Israel's best friend in the world - in every respect. The origins of this relationship have their genesis a century ago with the spectacular victory of Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) that liberated Beersheba on October 31, 1917 and paved the way for the conquest of Jerusalem. This was followed two days later by the issuance of the Balfour Declaration, which preceded the British Mandate and subsequently served as the basis for the establishment of a Jewish state.

The Battle of Beersheba was a turning point in the war against the Ottoman Empire after successive failures to capture Gaza. It was the first time Australians

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and New Zealanders were highlighted as having effected a stunning charge of the ANZAC Light Horse Brigade that overcame the Turkish defenses was hailed as a milestone of military bravery comparable to that of the Light Brigade at Balaklava in 1854 and is remembered as the last great cavalry charge, establishing ANZAC as the best cavalry force in the world. It represented Australia's first outstanding achievement as a fighting force, predating the 1918 Western Front victories.

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With the disaster at Gallipoli in 1915-1916, where over 8,000 Australians needlessly lost their lives, many initially predicted that this attempt was doomed to failure and represented yet another example of military incompetence and willingness to cynically sacrifice soldiers. Beersheba was heavily fortified, making the town a virtual fortress, and the battle was considered a last-ditch effort to defeat the Ottoman Empire in the region.

Late in the afternoon of October 31, following an order by their commander, Sir Harry Chauvel, 800 Australian light horsemen, brandishing bayonets, galloped directly into machine-gun fire, many dismounting and engaging in hand-to-hand combat, surprising the Turks who did not imagine that the Australians would act so brazenly. Galloping over 2 kilometers at top speed, they overcame the stunned Turkish defenders in less than an hour. Thirty Australian horsemen were killed and 36 wounded. Over 500 Turks were killed and 1,500 surrendered.

It was a glorious victory, a turning point in the struggle enabling General Edmund Allenby to defeat the Ottomans in Palestine. It also heralded the beginning of an extraordinary close relationship between Australia and Israel. On the personal and individual level, it was enhanced by Australian soldiers temporarily stationed in Palestine at the outset of World War II who developed good relations with the Jews. Old timers still relate nostalgically to the friendship extended by the Australians as tensions were rising with the British mandatory officials.



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This week the Australian and Israeli governments will jointly celebrate the centennial anniversary of the heroic Light Brigade's extraordinary role in Beersheba. Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, New Zealand Governor-General Dame Patsy Reddy, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and a major entourage of ministers, officials, descendants of the ANZACs, and over 100 Australian horsemen, as well as private citizens from both countries will participate in commemorative ceremonies. These will include a joint Australian-New Zealand service at the war cemetery, the opening of an ANZAC museum, and a re-enactment of the charge by the Australian Light Horse Brigade.

It is anticipated that huge numbers will attend what promises to be a spectacular event highlighting the Australian-Israeli relationship. Australian Jewry enjoys an outstanding Jewish lifestyle and can be considered a jewel in the crown of the Diaspora. Jews were among the first boatloads of convicts transported to Australia in the 18th century. The first military commander of Australian forces serving during World War I was Sir John Monash, a proud Jew who was also the founding president of the Zionist Federation of Australia.

In the 1930s, the Jewish community was declining and rapidly assimilating but over the course of time it became reinvigorated by Holocaust refugees and survivors. Most of the newcomers were passionately Zionist and created a unique network of Jewish schools ranging from secular Zionist to Chabad, from Modern Orthodox to Reform and even a Bundist Yiddish school. From the 1980s, the community expanded further with the immigration of large numbers of Russians and South Africans...

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**COMMUNISM THROUGH ROSE-COLORED GLASSES**

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*Bret Stephens*

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[\*New York Times\*](#), Oct. 27, 2017

**“In the spring of 1932 desperate officials, anxious for their jobs and even their lives, aware that a new famine might be on its way, began to collect grain wherever and however they could. Mass confiscations occurred all across the U.S.S.R. In Ukraine they took on an almost fanatical intensity.”**

**I am quoting a few lines from “Red Famine,” Anne Applebaum’s brilliant new history of the deliberate policy of mass starvation inflicted on Ukraine by Joseph Stalin in the early 1930s. An estimated five million or more people perished in just a few years. Walter Duranty, *The Times’s* correspondent in the Soviet Union, insisted the stories of famine were false. He won a Pulitzer Prize in 1932 for reportage the paper later called “completely misleading.” How many readers, I wonder, are familiar with this history of atrocity and denial, except in a vague way? How many know the name of Lazar Kaganovich, one of Stalin’s principal henchmen in the famine? What about other chapters large and small in the history of Communist horror, from the deportation of the Crimean Tatars to the depredations of Peru’s Shining Path to the Brezhnev-era psychiatric wards that were used to torture and imprison political dissidents?**

**Why is it that people who know all about the infamous prison on Robben Island in South Africa have never heard of the prison on Cuba’s Isle of Pines? Why is Marxism still taken seriously on college campuses and in the progressive press? Do the same people who rightly demand the removal of Confederate statues ever feel even a shiver of inner revulsion at hipsters in Lenin or Mao T-shirts? These aren’t original questions. But they’re worth asking because so many of today’s progressives remain in a permanent and dangerous state of semi-denial about the legacy of Communism a century after its birth in Russia. No, they are not true-believing Communists. No, they are not unaware of the toll of the Great Leap Forward or the Killing Fields. No, they are not plotting to undermine democracy.**

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But they will insist that there is an essential difference between Nazism and Communism — between race-hatred and class-hatred; Buchenwald and the gulag — that morally favors the latter. They will attempt to dissociate Communist theory from practice in an effort to acquit the former. They will balance acknowledgment of the repression and mass murder of Communism with references to its “real advances and achievements.” They will say that true communism has never been tried. They will write about Stalinist playwright Lillian Hellman in tones of sympathy and understanding they never extend to film director Elia Kazan.

Progressive intelligentsia “is moralist against one half of the world, but accords to the revolutionary movement an indulgence that is realist in the extreme,” the French scholar Raymond Aron wrote in “The Opium of the Intellectuals” in 1955. “How many intellectuals have come to the revolutionary party via the path of moral indignation, only to connive ultimately at terror and autocracy?” On Thursday, I noted that intellectuals have a long history of making fools of themselves with their political commitments, and that the phenomenon is fully bipartisan.

But the consequences of the left’s fellow-traveling and excuse-making are more dangerous. Venezuela is today in the throes of socialist dictatorship and humanitarian ruin, having been cheered along its predictable and unmerry course by the usual progressive suspects. One of those suspects, Jeremy Corbyn, may be Britain’s next prime minister, in part because a generation of Britons has come of age not knowing that the line running from “progressive social commitments” to catastrophic economic results is short and straight. Bernie Sanders captured the heart, if not yet the brain, of the Democratic Party last year by portraying “democratic socialism” as nothing more than an extension of New Deal liberalism. But the Vermont senator also insists that “the business model of Wall Street is fraud.” Efforts to criminalize capitalism and financial services also have predictable results.

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It's a bitter fact that the most astonishing strategic victory of the West in the last century turns out to be the one whose lessons we've never seriously bothered to teach, much less to learn. An ideology that at one point enslaved and immiserated roughly a third of the world collapsed without a fight and was exposed for all to see. Yet we still have trouble condemning it as we do equivalent evils. And we treat its sympathizers as romantics and idealists, rather than as the fools, fanatics or cynics they really were and are. Winston Churchill wrote that when the Germans allowed the leader of the Bolsheviks to travel from Switzerland to St. Petersburg in 1917, "they turned upon Russia the most grisly of all weapons. They transported Lenin in a sealed truck like a plague bacillus." A century on, the bacillus isn't eradicated, and our immunity to it is still in doubt.

*CIJR Wishes All Our Friends & Supporters: Shabbat Shalom!*

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**Christine Dunn, *Jerusalem Post*, Nov. 8, 2017**—Jennifer Teege did not learn about her family's dark secret until she was close to 40 years old. It happened in the central library in Hamburg, Germany, her hometown.

### **[Night Falls: German Jews React to Hitler's Rise to Power:](#)** Robert Rockaway, *Tablet*,

**Nov. 8, 2017** —When Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany on Jan. 30, 1933, he gained the authority to implement his racist ideology toward Germany's Jews, who then numbered 535,000 out of a general population of 67 million.

### **[Kristallnacht: When America Failed the Jews:](#)** Mitchell Bard, *Algemeiner*, Nov. 9,

**2017**—On November 11, 1938, a front-page story appeared in The New York Times.

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It read: “A wave of destruction, looting, and incendiarism ~~found its way to Canada/~~ since the Thirty Years War and in Europe generally since the Bolshevik Revolution swept over Great Germany today as National Socialist cohorts took vengeance on Jewish shops, offices and synagogues for the murder by a young Polish Jew of Ernst vom Rath, third secretary of the German Embassy in Paris.”

**[The Roots of Revolution](#): Joshua Rubenstein, *New York Times*, Oct. 20, 2017—As we mark the 100th anniversary of Lenin’s triumph, Chamberlain’s book broadens our understanding of the roots of the Bolshevik Revolution, describing how German Idealism, which first emerged from Immanuel Kant’s reaction to the French Revolution, came to inspire philosophers and cultural figures throughout 19th-century Europe and Russia.**