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[Frederick Krantz, *CIJR*, Dec. 4, 2015; *Jerusalem Post*, Nov. 12, 2015 — In 1936](https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/parsing-syrian-conflict-dubious-palestinian-allies-honouring-edmonds-courage-creating-biblical-wine/)

Spanish pro-fascist monarchist forces under General Francisco Franco attacked the legitimate government of the Spanish Republic, setting off a vicious and soon internationalized civil war.

[Last Tango in Paris: Amotz Asa-El, *Jerusalem Post*, Nov. 21, 2015](https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/parsing-syrian-conflict-dubious-palestinian-allies-honouring-edmonds-courage-creating-biblical-wine/)— By the time he arrived for his fifth wedding in 1975, Ugandan dictator Idi Amin had murdered tens of thousands of his citizens, including scores of generals, politicians and judges, besides expelling more than 50,000 Asians and thus leading his economy to ruin.

[Yad Vashem Honors American GI Who Told Nazis 'We Are all Jews': Sam Sokol, *Jerusalem Post*, Dec. 2, 2015](https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/parsing-syrian-conflict-dubious-palestinian-allies-honouring-edmonds-courage-creating-biblical-wine/) — An American non-commissioned officer who defied the Nazis while in captivity by refusing to identify Jewish POWs was posthumously honored with the title of Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem on Wednesday.

[Israel Aims to Recreate Wine That Jesus and King David Drank: Jodi Rudoren, *New York Times*, Nov. 29, 2015](https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/parsing-syrian-conflict-dubious-palestinian-allies-honouring-edmonds-courage-creating-biblical-wine/) — The new crisp, acidic and mineral white from a high-end Israeli winery was aged for eight months — or, depending on how you look at it, at least 1,800 years.

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[Bibi Just Went Off On France and It Was Epic: *Israel Video Network*, Dec. 2, 2015](#)

[A Trunk Full of Britain’s WWII Secrets Saved the World: Maureen Callahan, *New York Post*, Sept. 27, 2015](#)

[Lessons From the Pollard Saga: Caroline Glick, *Breaking Israel News*, Dec. 2, 2015](#)

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**THE SYRIAN AND SPANISH CIVIL WARS— BOTH PRELUDES
TO WIDER CONFLICTS?**

Prof. Frederick Krantz,

CIJR, Dec. 4, 2015

In 1936 Spanish pro-fascist monarchist forces under General Francisco Franco attacked the legitimate government of the Spanish Republic, setting off a vicious and soon internationalized civil war. Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany directly supported Franco’s nationalist forces, with air support, military equipment, advisers, and materiel; France provided some aid to the Republic while Britain maintained neutrality. Soviet Russia countered Fascist-Nazi support to Franco with military equipment and advisers, while thousands of largely socialist and communist foreign volunteers, organized into International Brigades, also came to the aid of the Republic.

The viciously partisan war, pitting Catholics against secular Republicans, fascists and monarchists against liberal, socialist, and anarchist republicans, ended with the defeat of the Republican forces in March, 1939, as the Western democracies provided little real help, and the Soviets, fearing the Spanish anarchist-republicans (POUM), withdrew their support. The war, entailing large-scale urban and rural destruction and dislocation (Guernica), produced the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people, and over 400,000 Republican refugees.

The Spanish Civil War should in some ways, mutatis mutandis, remind us of the increasingly complex and even more destructive, dangerous and internationalized civil war in Syria. Now almost five years old, with eight million internal and four million external refugees and a death toll approaching 300,000, the Syrian civil war shows no signs of soon ending. In Syria, of course, the government was, and

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In Spain France and Britain gave only minor, indirect support to the Republic (the International Brigades, however heroically motivated, being militarily of relatively modest weight), while the Soviets, providing arms and some military cadres, but always with an eye on the larger international scene, never went “all in”. Similarly, in Syria, where Obama, while proclaiming that Assad had to go, kept the US (and NATO) out of direct involvement. The moderates received moral support, but little direct military aid, with their weakness creating a kind of pro-Sunni vacuum soon filled by IS.

(The rise of IS can, in fact, in large part be laid at Obama’s feet. Allergic to providing “boots on the ground”, Obama reneged on a pledged “red line” after Assad’s use of chemical weapons was discovered. Lack of American resolve and leadership created the political vacuum into which IS expanded.)

As the crisis deepened, IS expanded and Assad’s area of control steadily shrank. The foreign interventions were now radicalized: the U.S. in 2014, after a series of IS massacres and the beheading of American captives, championed a rather desultory Western-Sunni Arab air campaign against IS (but still no “boots on the ground”, save latterly for the use of Kurdish forces in the north-east). Iran’s support for Assad (before, through and after its nuclear deal with Obama) ramped up, Hezbollah and Iranian Revolutionary Guard troops intervened directly, and, finally, as Assad’s regime seemed to totter, Russia intervened directly. (Putin mounted his own air campaign from his Syrian airbase near Latakia against the “terrorists” [supposedly including IS, but actually directed against the coalition of moderate anti-Assad Sunni forces].)

Now, in November, 2015, as Russia’s involvement deepens and the American-led air campaign still shows little sign of markedly impeding IS, the US, in an Obamian about-face, has announced the placing of an initially small contingent of American troops on the ground and a ramping up of the aerial sorties. So suddenly the two leading world-powers are directly facing off against one another in the

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[downwardly-spiralling Syrian civil war where, despite hurried creating public talks/ to avoid accidental confrontations, incidents sparking a deeper crisis—like the recent Turkish shooting down of a Russian bomber-remain quite possible...](https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/parsing-syrian-conflict-dubious-palestinian-allies-honouring-edmonds-courage-downwardly-spiralling-syrian-civil-war-where-despite-hurried-creating-public-talks-to-avoid-accidental-confrontations-incidents-sparking-a-deeper-crisis-like-the-recent-turkish-shooting-down-of-a-russian-bomber-remain-quite-possible...)

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(Prof. Frederick Krantz is Director of the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research)

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LAST TANGO IN PARIS

Amotz Asa-El

Jerusalem Post, Nov. 21, 2015

By the time he arrived for his fifth wedding in 1975, Ugandan dictator Idi Amin had murdered tens of thousands of his citizens, including scores of generals, politicians and judges, besides expelling more than 50,000 Asians and thus leading his economy to ruin. The wedding, part of a flamboyant, unpredictable and ruthless strongman’s eight eventful years in power, has long been forgotten and would not be relevant now but for Amin’s choice for best man, who gladly accepted the dubious role: Yasser Arafat.

The friendship with the East African butcher was but a link in a chain of catastrophic choices of allies that animated the Palestinians’ failure to achieve their goals. Now, what began in the 1930s and continued to the Cold War and its aftermath is approaching a new height, as the Palestinian leadership flirts with the

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[Islamist scourge just when it becomes global enemy No. 1. recreating-biblical-win/](https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/parsing-syrian-conflict-dubious-palestinian-allies-honouring-edmonds-courage-)

The poor choice of allies began when Haj Amin al-Husseini threw in his lot with Nazi Germany. His mistake had three tiers: the moral, the public and the political. Morally, Husseini questioned none of the racist tenets and totalitarian plans for which the Nazis were notorious from their movement’s inception; on the public sphere, he failed to consider the repercussions of siding with a cause that was repulsive to millions, including some of the world’s richest and strongest countries; and politically, he failed to predict his ally’s defeat.

The results of this choice were horrendous, not only because many throughout the victorious West now associated the Palestinian cause with its disgraced ally’s record, and not only because this alliance contributed to the Soviet decision to back Israel’s establishment, but because it left the Palestinians identified with defeat. Even so, Husseini’s successors, as if eager to demonstrate they had forgotten nothing and learned nothing, soon repeated his mistake by spending the Cold War on the wrong side of the future.

Palestinian fighters trained in East German camps, Palestinian diplomats plotted anti-Israeli motions with their Soviet peers, and Palestinian students were indoctrinated in Moscow by Soviet propagandists. Like the Palestinians’ previous strategic alliance, this one also unfolded on the moral, public and political plains, and it, too, ended in calamity.

Morally, Palestinian leaders remained silent when their allies mowed down thousands of freedom fighters in Budapest, crushed the Prague Spring, and let dissidents on the scale of Andrei Sakharov, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and Vaclav Havel rot in jail. Publicly, this Palestinian choice made its leaders lose the respect of the popular luminaries who were fighting tyranny. And politically, when the Berlin Wall fell and the Eastern Bloc vanished, the Palestinians understood they had been in bed with the Cold War’s losers.

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The Cold War had hardly ended when the syndrome repeated itself following Iraq's conquest of Kuwait. Faced with an alliance of 33 countries including NATO, Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and three armies from the former Eastern Bloc, Yasser Arafat failed to understand where history was headed and threw in his lot with Saddam Hussein.

Again, the strategic fiasco unfolded on its three familiar plains: Morally, the Palestinians identified with a bully who, unprovoked, invaded a small and defenseless neighbor, after having previously gassed thousands of his own citizens. Publicly, the Palestinians were now seen by millions of Arabs as adversaries out to split the Arab world. And politically, the Palestinians ended up, again, on the loser's side, a position that left them so splendidly isolated that it took the Oslo Accords to restore their international legitimacy.

It was against this backdrop that the Palestinians, having flirted along the decades with German fascism, Soviet imperialism, African totalitarianism, and Saddam's chauvinism, were this fall called to shape a strategy vis-à-vis Islamism. Considering recent weeks' events, the current Palestinian leadership seems set to follow in its predecessors' footsteps.

This week's drama in Paris and the downing of a Russian civilian flight above Sinai last month have sealed Islamism's status as the rest of the world's common enemy. No single idea has been in this position since Nazism. Communism, by contrast, had a democratic version. There were legitimate and strong Communist parties in France and Italy that were critical of Soviet oppression, upheld freedom, and sincerely preached humanism. There is no Islamist equivalent of this, because Islamism is by definition about its violent imposition on the rest of the world through an apocalypse whose horsemen are now evidently deployed, equipped and eager to act.

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There was a time when this quest seemed to many governments best, an irritant at worst. Not anymore. Last weekend’s bloodshed and the subsequent succession of bomb scares, rerouted flights and canceled sports events have finally convinced civilization that it has an enemy, and that the enemy will settle for nothing less than all-out war.

Islamism has overplayed its hand. The sense of insecurity, grief and wrath that has befallen Paris after its trademark glee and light were disrupted by gunfire and commando raids has traveled far and wide. From Paris, London and Washington to Canberra, Beijing, and Moscow, Islamism’s preachers and followers now loom as the most immediate, potent and ubiquitous threat to world peace. This does not necessarily mean that the war on Islamism will be swift, cheap or efficient, or that its allies will join it simultaneously and in similar force.

Like the alliance that defeated fascism, the anti-Islamist alliance will likely take more bloodshed before it is fully assembled and unleashed. Even so, as French President Francois Hollande prepares to visit the White House and the Kremlin in order to coordinate anti-Islamist action, it is clear that Islamism’s enmity, and the need to eradicate it, have this week become the rest of the world’s consensus and most urgent concern...

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YAD VASHEM HONORS AMERICAN GI

WHO TOLD NAZIS 'WE ARE ALL JEWS'

Sam Sokol

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Jerusalem Post, Dec. 2, 2015

An American non-commissioned officer who defied the Nazis while in captivity by refusing to identify Jewish POWs was posthumously honored with the title of Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem on Wednesday. The title, granted after extensive research and corroboration, is intended to honor those who risked their own lives to rescue Jews during the Holocaust.

Captured by the Germans during the Battle of the Bulge, Master Sergeant Roddie Edmonds of the US 422nd Infantry Regiment was the senior officer in the American section of the Stalag IXA prisoner of war camp. When Nazi guards demanded all Jewish prisoners report the following morning, in a move reminiscent of the movie Spartacus, Edmonds instructed all soldier inmates in the camp to show up alongside their Jewish comrades.

When camp commandant Major Siegmann saw the entire American contingent standing and identifying as Jews he exclaimed, "they cannot all be Jews," and Edmonds replied, "we are all Jews." Siegmann then drew his pistol on Edmonds, who coolly responded that "according to the Geneva Convention, we only have to give our name, rank and serial number. If you shoot me, you will have to shoot all of us, and after the war you will be tried for war crimes." Outfaced by Edmonds, the commandant turned and walked away.

Lester Tanner, one of the Jewish POWs Edmonds had save, said of his brave commander: "He did not throw his rank around. You knew he knew his stuff and he got across to you without being arrogant or inconsiderate. I admired him for his command. "We were in combat on the front lines for only a short period, but it was clear that Roddie Edmonds was a man of great courage who led his men with the same capacity we had come to know him in the States," Tanner said.

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Tanner told Yad Vashem that the American troops were well aware of the Nazis' murders of Jews and that Edmonds understood the danger should the Jews be separated from the other soldiers. "I would estimate that there were more than 1,000 Americans standing in wide formation in front of the barracks with Master Sergeant Roddie Edmonds standing in front, with several senior non-coms beside him, of which I was one," Tanner said. "There was no question in my mind, or that of Master Sergeant Edmonds, that the Germans were removing the Jewish prisoners from the general prisoner population at great risk to their survival.

"The US Army's standing command to its ranking officers in POW camps is that you resist the enemy and care for the safety of your men to the greatest extent possible," Tanner said. Edwards "at the risk of his immediate death, defied the Germans with the unexpected consequences that the Jewish prisoners were saved."

A statement from Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev said Edmonds "seemed like an ordinary American soldier, but he had an extraordinary sense of responsibility and dedication to his fellow human beings. "These attributes form the common thread that binds members of this select group of Righteous Among the Nations. The choices and actions of Master Sergeant Edmonds set an example for his fellow American soldiers as they stood united against the barbaric evil of the Nazis." Edmonds died in 1985. He is the first American serviceman, and only one of five Americans in total, to be declared Righteous Among the Nations.

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ISRAEL AIMS TO RECREATE WINE THAT JESUS AND KING

DAVID DRANK

Rudoren

Jodi

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New York Times, Nov. 29, 2015

The new crisp, acidic and mineral white from a high-end Israeli winery was aged for eight months — or, depending on how you look at it, at least 1,800 years. The wine, called marawi and released last month by Recanati Winery, is the first commercially produced by Israel’s growing modern industry from indigenous grapes. It grew out of a groundbreaking project at Ariel University in the occupied West Bank that aims to use DNA testing to identify — and recreate — ancient wines drunk by the likes of King David and Jesus Christ.

Eliyashiv Drori, the Ariel oenologist who heads the research, traces marawi (also called hamdani) and jandali grapes to A.D. 220 based on a reference in the Babylonian Talmud. “All our scriptures are full with wine and with grapes — before the French were even thinking about making wine, we were exporting wine,” he said. “We have a very ancient identity, and for me, reconstructing this identity is very important. For me, it’s a matter of national pride.”

The redevelopment of local varietals, however — like so many things in this contested land — is not free of political friction. It comes alongside contentious new labeling guidelines by the European Union requiring that wines from the West Bank and the Golan Heights carry a label saying they were made in Israeli settlements. And Palestinians have their own ownership claims on these grapes.

For Israeli winemakers, the search for old-new varietals is an opportunity to distinguish their wares in a competitive global marketplace where they harbor little hope of improving on, say, chardonnay from France. Archaeologists and geneticists are testing new methods for analyzing charred ancient seeds. In the endless struggle between Israelis and Palestinians, it is a quest to underscore Jewish roots in the holy land.

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But Recanati is not the first to sell wine from these grapes. ~~Creating biblical winery near Bethlehem where Palestinians partner with Italian monks, has been using hamdani, jandali and other local fruit since 2008. “As usual in Israel, they declare that falafel, tehina, tabouleh, hummus and now jandali grapes are an Israeli product,” Amer Kardosh, Cremisan’s export director, sniped in an email. “I would like to inform you that these types of grapes are totally Palestinian grapes grown on Palestinian vineyards.” Yes, but the Palestinian farms that sold the grapes to Recanati have insisted on anonymity, for fear of backlash over working with Israelis, or just helping make wine, which is generally forbidden in Islam. Recanati, for its part, embraced the heritage, using Arabic on marawi’s label and hiring an Arab-Israeli singer to perform at its October unveiling to 50 select sommeliers.~~

The vintner, Ido Lewinsohn, said his product is “clean and pure of any political influence,” adding of the grapes: “These are not Israeli; they are not Palestinian. They belong to the region — this is something beautiful.” Wine presses have been uncovered in Israel — and the West Bank — that date to biblical times. But winemaking was outlawed after Muslims conquered the holy land in the seventh century. When Baron Edmond de Rothschild, an early Zionist and scion of a famed Bordeaux winery, helped restart the local craft in the 1880s, he brought fruit from France.

Today, Israel’s 350 wineries produce 65 million bottles a year. The sticky-sweet Manischewitz was long ago overshadowed by top-quality chardonnay, cabernet, merlot, syrah, carignan and more. But there is only so far to go with such imports. “Have we managed to create a DNA for Israeli wines? Not yet,” lamented Haim Gan, owner of Grape Man, a company that advocates Israel’s wine culture...

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CIJR Wishes All Our Friends & Supporters: Shabbat Shalom!

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[Bibi Just Went Off On France and It Was Epic: Israel Video Network, Dec. 2, 2015](#)

[A Trunk Full of Britain’s WWII Secrets Saved the World: Maureen Callahan, New York Post, Sept. 27, 2015](#) —On June 4, 1940, a defiant Winston Churchill delivered his famous “Dunkirk” speech to Parliament. The British had just rescued 338,000 retreating Allied soldiers, cornered by German forces. France was days away from formal surrender. It was spectacular humiliation spun as victory.

[Lessons From the Pollard Saga: Caroline Glick, Breaking Israel News, Dec. 2, 2015](#) —Even before the dust settled on last Friday’s happy headlines proclaiming that after 30 years in federal prison, Jonathan Pollard was being released, we discovered that his release wasn’t the end of his sad saga.

[You’ll Never Guess What Elizabeth Taylor and Marilyn Monroe Have in Common: Barbara Hoffman, New York Post, Sept. 27, 2015](#) —If you’ve never seen Marilyn Monroe’s menorah — or heard Elizabeth Taylor softly recite the Jewish prayer, the Shema, in Hebrew — what are you waiting for?

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