

Rashida Tlaib Rewrites History

We can debate exactly what Rep. Rashida Tlaib meant when she said, “There’s kind of a calming feeling I always tell folks when I think of the Holocaust, and the tragedy of the Holocaust,” since there was a larger context to her words. But what is not debatable is the fact that the larger context of her words is patently false to the point of being ridiculous.

Allow me to explain.

This is the full text of Tlaib’s relevant quote: “There’s kind of a calming feeling I always tell folks when I think of the Holocaust, and the tragedy of the Holocaust, and the fact that it was my ancestors, Palestinians, who lost their land and some lost their lives, their livelihood, their human dignity, their existence in many ways, have been wiped out, and some people’s passports.”

She continued, “I mean, just all of it was in the name of trying to create a safe haven for Jews, post-the Holocaust, post-the tragedy and the horrific persecution of Jews across the world at that time, and I love the fact that it was my ancestors that provided that, right, in many ways. But they did it in a way that took their human dignity away, right, and it was forced on them. And so when I think about a one-state, I think about the fact that, why couldn’t we do it in a better way?”

When questioned, she emphasized that she was “coming from a place of love, for equality and justice” and that she wanted a “safe haven for Jews.”

At worst, her comments are beyond insensitive and ugly, as if there could be any “calming” effect from thinking about the Holocaust, where 1.5 million Jewish babies and children were

slaughtered. Where 90 percent of Poland's 3.3 million Jews were murdered. Where whole families (including multiple generations) were wiped out. Where fiendish "medical" experiments were performed on Jewish twins, often without anesthesia.

What could possibly be "calming" about any of this?

No wonder that Tlaib received a hail of criticism, from President Trump to other members of the House, to political pundits and commentators.

But what if, giving her the biggest possible benefit of the doubt, she meant to say this? "As horrible as the Holocaust was, what calms me is to know that my people, the Palestinian people, made great sacrifices on behalf of the Jewish people, so they could have a safe haven."

What if that was her point?

Well, she missed it just as badly here. As CNN's John King noted, Tlaib "ignored the fact that Palestinian leaders at the time allied themselves with Hitler and that total war is how the Arab world reacted to the declaration of Israeli independence."

So, not only did they *not* make sacrifices to create a safe haven for the Jews. They fought tooth and nail against that safe haven.

One of the most prominent Palestinian Arab leaders of the day, the Grand Mufti Haj Amin Al-Husseini, was a confidant of Hitler. He was responsible for the first intifada against the Jewish population of Palestine in 1936, and he advocated for the genocide of the Jews. (For more on Al-Husseini, see *Icon of Evil: Hitler's Mufti and the Rise of Radical Islam*. The front cover features a famous picture of the two men meeting together.)

The Nazis, for their part, appealed to centuries of Islamic antisemitism, helping to fuel the fires of Jew-hatred among the Muslim population in the Middle East. They even printed 1 million copies of an Arabic-language pamphlet that proclaimed, "O Arabs, do you see that the time of the Dajjal has come? [The Dajjal was a false Messianic figure in Islam.] Do you recognize him, the fat, curly-haired Jew who deceives and rules the whole world and who steals the land of the Arabs?... O Arabs, do you know the servant of God? He [Hitler] has already appeared in the world and already turned his lance against the Dajjal and his allies. ... He will kill the Dajjal, as it is written, destroy his places and cast his allies into hell."

As for Al-Husseini's meeting with Hitler in 1941, summarizes the relevant content of their discussion, which was published by the German government: "Al-Husseini began the conversation by declaring that the Germans and the Arabs had the same enemies: 'the English, the Jews and the Communists.' He proposed an Arab revolt all across the Middle East to fight the Jews; the English, who still ruled Palestine and controlled Iraq and Egypt and even the French, who controlled Syria and Lebanon. ... He also wanted to form an Arab legion, using Arab prisoners from the French Empire who were then POWs inside Germany. He also asked Hitler to declare publicly, as the German government had privately, that it favored 'the elimination of the Jewish national home' in Palestine."

Not surprisingly, when the U.N. recognized the state of Israel in 1947-1948, the surrounding Arab nations sought to wipe Israel off the map, with Azzam Pasha, secretary general of the Arab League, declaring, "It will be a war of annihilation. It will be a momentous massacre in history that will be talked about like the massacres of the Mongols or the Crusades."

This was hardly the self-sacrificing Arab population of Palestine saying, "We'll grudgingly give up our lands for these suffering Jews."

To the contrary, these Muslim leaders were intent on finishing what Hitler started.

Is it true that Palestinian Arabs have suffered over the last 70 years?

Yes, those who fled from the war in 1948 have suffered greatly, while those who became citizens of the fledgling state of Israel have grown from 200,000 in 1948 to over 1.5 million today.

But the Palestinians who suffered the most (and still suffer today) are suffering primarily because of the bad decisions of their leaders rather than because Israel is a genocidal, apartheid state. That's a hard pill to swallow, but it is true.

To be sure, critics of Israel will challenge this statement, putting more blame on the Jewish nation for the suffering of the Palestinians. That is a debate we will continue to have.

But what is not debatable is Tlaib's rewriting of history, along with her terribly poor choice of words.

What on earth was she thinking?