

The Israeli Dilemma of Saying Thank You, General Patton to Machal

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Gen. W. Walker
and the XX Corps
Liberators of
Buchenwald C. C.

By the
Jewish American
Society for
Historic
Preservation

Thank You are two very simple, innocuous words, said often without sincerity. Yet, Thank You are two of the most powerful words that can be ever said.

The Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation recently placed two pavers at the General George Patton Museum in Ft. Knox, Kentucky. The cost of the pavers was minor. The text of the pavers:

"In Gratitude to General Walton Walker and the XX Corps, Liberators of Buchenwald, Concentration Camp, April 11, 1945

By the Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation"

General Patton was considered by the Germans the greatest American General. He was a martinet, an unmitigated anti-Semite, and anti-Black racist. Being Black or Jewish individually was less important to Patton than if the men fought ferociously. He could still hate them as a group. In that sense, he was not different than much of American military leadership. He fit in easily with them.

General Walton Walker served under Patton. His command, the XX Corps, liberated Buchenwald. Walker saw the horror of Buchenwald personally. Infuriated, he ordered the good German citizens of the lovely Bavarian town of Weimar, a onetime home to Johannes Bach, to march the five miles up the hill and see what Nazi Socialism and Anti-Semitism had done. It was Walker who advised Patton and Eisenhower to see firsthand themselves what happened there. It was good PR for the why the war was fought. Patton came. Eisenhower never did. Eisenhower got the credit for walking the good Burghers up the hill and Walker was forgotten.

The placement of the pavers at the Patton Museum was the first time that a Jewish group had ever honored the liberators of Buchenwald at the museum.

No Jew had said Thank You before.

Why was placing the pavers important? It was important to distinguish the uniqueness of the Holocaust from the liberation of so many people across Europe and the world by the American Armed Forces. Patton is an icon of WWII memory. The simple message of Thank You and Jewish are key to the future of memory.

Israel and Israelis have a hard time with the words thank you. The irony is that the greatest thank you should to anti-Semites who helped save Israel. And Jews, especially liberal Jews, go out of their way to say Thank You to those who have done the least for Israel.

Harry Truman was anti-Semitic. His best friend was Eddie Jacobson. Truman openly said his wife Bess, never let a Jew (even Jacobson) cross the threshold of their house. The only way Jacobson could visit Truman in the White House was through the back door, secretly. It was through the back-door Jacobson implored Truman to listen to Chaim Weizmann. Truman overrode his anti-Semitic State Department and Secretary of State General George Marshall to recognize the State of Israel.

Afterwards, Truman proceeded to prosecute anyone aiding Israel's desperate fight to survive. He imposed an arms embargo.

Richard Nixon was an anti-Semite. When Israel was being crushed in the opening days of the Yom Kippur War, he overrode his Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger's advice, to let the Jews be bloodied. Golda Meir sincerely feared for the destruction of the Third Temple. Nixon, the anti-Semite, ordered a massive resupply of Israel that turned the disaster of the Yom Kippur War into victory. Nixon, the anti-Semite, saved the Jewish State.

American Jews revile Nixon. There is nothing in Israel, no memorial or stone that says Thank You to Nixon.

Christian Zionists are the backbone of American political support for Israel. They are reviled by liberal Jews in America and feared by Jews in Israel. Until the creation of the Exodus and the Machal memorials in Israel, the reburial of Col. John Henry Patterson in Avihayil there were no Thank You's which included Christians.

There are a few Balfour Streets and a Wingate Institute for Sports. There is a forgotten forest, Balfornia, a lost grove here and there, a Meinertzhagen Circle no one knows exists.

Liberal American Jews funded a magnificent memorial, a thank you, in Israel to John F. Kennedy. Kennedy did little for Israel. His contributions were more symbolic for Jews in America, much like those of Franklin Roosevelt's than for Jews on the ground in Israel.

President Trump, when he was running for President, frightened Israel's elite. They feared he was all talk and would bring bigotry and hatred to Israel. They feared he was anti-Semitic.

Since Trump's election, Israel has never had an American President who has done so much for Israel. President Trump recognized the obvious, Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. For the first time, the United Nations and the Palestinians are being forced to pay for their kneejerk anti-Israel bigotry. Trump is facing down Iran when President Obama and the world appeased the Iranians.

American Jews revile President Trump. Israelis are cautiously appreciating him. They fear if Trump is defeated electorally, the U.S. will return to the Obama style of support for Israel – no support. Netanyahu says Thank You to Trump. Israel is afraid to say Thank You to Trump.

It has been 70 years and the old Machal veterans, those who came when they did not have to help Israel in the War of Independence, there are fewer who still live. Israel never created a Thank You for Machal. 93% of the Israeli Air Force, the tiny Air Force that saved Israel from destruction, were the foreign Machal volunteers.

The Thank You memorial for Machal in Israel had to be created by The Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation, American Veterans of Israel Legacy Corporation, and a few Israeli friends. Israel did not do it.

Machal is requesting a simple Citation of recognition from the IDF through the Prime Minister to be added to the permanent records; an official, piece of paper from Israel – a Thank You. So far nothing... No Thank You.

If those who have done much for Israel, many for their own reasons or political expediency, or those who helped because they loved Israel, cannot get a Thank

You from Israel...Why help Israel in the future when the skies turn ugly. Israel can't say Thank You when the sky is clear. Who will be her friends in the future?

The right thing, a good Thank You, would be to honor the simple request of the old men and women who were willing to give all for Israel when they did not have to – Machal. They know, their families know, their friends know, Israel has not said Thank You.

Maybe Israel will remember to say Thank You to those others who did do much to help...someday, even ironically, the anti-Semites before it is too late.