

### In Defense of Bat Ye'or

The review of *Islam and Dhimmitude: Where Civilizations Collide* (Briefly Noted, May) suggests that the author, Bat Ye'or, is "unfairly critical" both of Christians "complicit in the 'Islamization' of Judaism and Christianity" and the Holy See's "solicitous" attitude toward threatened Christian communities in the Middle East. These comments are rather misguided, and reflect a lack of understanding of the historical dynamics of dhimmitude so carefully elucidated by Bat Ye'or. With meticulous documentation, Bat Ye'or makes clear that the same dhimmi Eastern Christian clerical movement that lobbied against the renunciation of the "deicide" allegation at Vatican II is also responsible for the Islamization of Judeo-Christian theology.

First, why is it not appropriate, on moral grounds, to criticize those clerics who opposed abrogation of the hateful libel branding Jews as a "deicide people"? Second, both actions, i.e., opposing the renunciation of the deicide allegation and facilitating the Islamization of Judaism and Christianity, are characteristic of the historical role assigned to dhimmi elites under Islamic rule: the promotion of Islamic interests, even at the expense of the dhimmi communities themselves.

It is also quite apparent that the Holy See's "solicitous" attitude toward Eastern Christians is more accurately characterized as an inappropriate silence regarding the persecution of

these dwindling communities. The Holy See has not openly condemned the post-colonial resurgence of classical jihad-war ideology, or its ugly consequences, in the Middle East and North Africa. This genocidal ideology has been responsible, in large measure, for such atrocities as the massacre and enslavement of thousands of Sudanese Christians, in addition to repeated pogroms targeting Coptic Christians in Egypt.

Bat Ye'or's work is a clarion call for the Holy See (and the entire Western Christian hierarchy) to acknowledge candidly the plight of Middle Eastern Christian minorities, while lobbying aggressively for protection of their basic human rights. She argues convincingly that continued silence will allow the Islamic Middle East, already *Judenrein*, to become *Christianrein* as well.

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