

**ISRAEL NEWS**  
*A collection of the week's news from Israel*  
*A service of the Bet El Twinning Committee of*  
*Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation*

 Jerusalem 4:15 Toronto 4:45

## Events...

**Tuesday January 17, 7:00pm**

**Thornhill Pre-Election Candidates Debate**, with Conservative Party Candidate **Anthony Reale** and Liberal Party Candidate **Susan Kadis**. Come hear them debate issues of importance to the Jewish Community, and learn about the policy positions of their respective parties, at **BAYT**.

## From the PA Media...

**PA Leadership Duplicity: PA leader Qadura Faras talks peace to Israelis and terror to Palestinians** By Itamar Marcus and Barbara Crook

Palestinian Media Watch has for years documented the duplicity of the Palestinian Authority leadership, which sends a peaceful message to the world media and hate and terror message to its own people in Arabic.

A new example was documented this week, involving Palestinian Legislative Council member Qadura Faras. Faras has been a prominent supporter of the "Geneva Initiative," an unofficial peace proposal drafted in 2003 by a group of leftist Israelis led by Yossi Beilin and Palestinians, and appears on the Geneva Initiative website, conveying a message of peace to Israelis.

However, when Faras recently addressed Palestinians, he used his speech to honor and praise a terrorist who murdered 10 Israelis. He further spoke in memory of one he called a "Shahid" [martyr for Allah], a term that places blame for his death on Israel - even though he had died of cancer in an Israeli prison. Finally, he pledged to continue in the path of these terrorists. This is a totally different Qadura Faras than the one promoting peace on the "Geneva Initiative" web site.

The following are the transcripts of these two irreconcilable messages - the first to Palestinians, and the second to Israelis.

Faras addressing Palestinians:

"[Palestinian] Legislative Council Member Qadura Fares ... spoke on behalf of the Fatah Movement. He emphasized the continuation of the struggle until the freeing of all of the Palestinian territories from the filth of the occupation, and establishing the independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. Fares blessed the prisoners behind bars, and in particular mentioned the imprisoned fighter, "The Sniper" Tha'ir Hamed, who carried out the ... operation that led to the killing and injuring of several of the occupation soldiers. [In fact, three Israeli civilians and seven soldiers were murdered in the terrorist attack - Ed.]

"Fares mentioned the good traits of the shahids [Martyrs for Allah, which in PA usage includes suicide terrorists], while clarifying their role in defending the homeland, fending off the aggression, and resisting the occupation. Faras said, "We are all going in the way of Ziad Hamed, the Shahid of Silwad, until the fulfillment of the goal for which he became a shahid... [Hamed died of cancer while in an Israeli prison - Ed.]" [Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, January 5, 2006]

Faras addressing Israelis [Geneva Initiative website]:

"It is always asked, do you [Israelis] have a partner on the other side. I am telling you with full sincerity, we are ready to reach an inclusive agreement with you, which will promise us freedom and liberty and statehood, and will promise you the thing we know you are sensitive to, which is your full right to live in peace and security. The question is: Are you ready for this?" [Geneva Initiative web site,

## Commentary...

### Sharon's Place in History

By Frank J. Gaffney Jr.

Historians know a departed leader's legacy cannot be assessed accurately until many years have passed, let alone before he is technically even gone. Yet, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon may be the exception that proves the rule.

Few statesmen have worked harder or more self-consciously at defining their "place in history." In recent years, particularly as he and his family became embroiled in a corruption scandal, he strove to ensure he would not be remembered for his controversial role in the 1982 massacres in Lebanon's Sabra and Shatilla Palestinian refugee camps.

Instead, Ariel Sharon carried favor with his critics by recasting himself as a peacemaker. Though he justified his unilateral "disengagement" from the Gaza Strip as a security measure, its true character was evident in the fact he was suddenly lionized by those on the left who reviled him for decades. Overnight, he joined the peculiar pantheon reserved by the world for Israeli leaders who surrender territory to Israel's enemies in hopes the Jewish State would thereby, somehow be left alone in peace.

Second, Mr. Sharon's Gaza withdrawal legacy was a distinctly personal accomplishment. It seems unlikely any other Israeli politician could have pulled it off. But Mr. Sharon did, thanks to his reputation as a brilliant military general, his credentials as a lifelong "hawk" on security and the famed tenacity that enabled him to "bulldoze" first his opponents, and then the Israeli communities in Gaza.

Third, after only four months, the repercussions of the Sharon surrender of Gaza are becoming frighteningly clear. As my brilliant colleague, Caroline Glick, put it in her column last week:

"Today, as the Palestinian Authority has ceased to operate in any coherent manner; as the Egyptian border with Gaza has been open for terror traffic for three months; and as Hamas has emerged as the most prevalent force in Palestinian politics and society, it is impossible to deny that Sharon's decision to withdraw Israeli forces from Gaza and northern Samaria has vastly empowered Palestinian terrorists. Today, the Gaza Strip has become one of the most active and dangerous bases for jihadi terrorism in the world."

Moreover, had Ariel Sharon not been struck down by ill-health at this juncture, his ultimate legacy would likely have been even more damning. He was

determined to effect a similar, unilateral withdrawal from parts of the West Bank.

There, too, Israeli forces' departure would have been marked by claims of victory over the Jews by those determined to destroy them. There, too, the assertion terror works would justify more of it. There, too, the upshot would likely have been anarchy, at best; at worst, an incipient state-sponsor of terror under a Taliban-style Islamofascist Hamas.

The danger posed by such an enclave on one or both sides of Israel will not be confined to the Jewish State. As we saw in Afghanistan prior to September 11, 2001, safe havens for al Qaeda and its Islamist friends are a threat to the entire Free World, including its leader, the United States.

For this reason, much as the passing - politically, if not physically - of Ariel Sharon might be seen as a tragedy for his loved ones and for many Israelis, it may prove providential for his country, and ours. It affords an opportunity for sober reflection about the wisdom of Mr. Sharon's policies and their repercussions. No longer will Israel be driven headlong by a man who clearly felt he was nearly out of time and was determined to carry out his vision, with little regard for the consequences.

Now, Israel and other freedom-loving nations have an opportunity to reckon with the effects of the Gaza withdrawal, before compounding them with further "disengagements" in the West Bank. The Israelis must find ways

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to deal with the Kassam rockets increasingly fired by Palestinian terrorists, mauling the idea separation alone will secure the Jewish State.

The same goes for the border with Egypt now traversed with impunity by smugglers of ever-more-dangerous arms - including, it appears, surface-to-air missiles capable of downing airliners flying into and out of Israeli airports. Allowing such weapons and those who would wield them free rein in much of the West Bank could cripple Israel's critically important tourist industry, its economy and in time the country as a whole.

The interlude due to Mr. Sharon's departure should allow Israel and the rest of the Free World to focus on another, far more pressing problem: the mortal threat of an Islamofascist Iran armed with nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, the old general's absence may make decision making and action more difficult.

But, as the saying goes, "the prospect of hanging concentrates the mind wondrously." An Iranian regime bent on "wiping Israel off the map" and "a world without America" represents such an existential threat that the leadership and will must be found to deny Tehran the means to act on these ambitions.

If we fail to do so, historians may see Ariel Sharon's weakening of his country in the face of its enemies as the precursor to a devastating new phase in the War for the Free World. (Jewish World Review Jan 10)

*The writer heads the Center for Security Policy.*

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### **Gush Katif Youth at Risk** By Hillel Fendel

A compelling report shows grave consequences of the disengagement, including higher drop-out rates, increasing use of alcohol/drugs, and lack of professional solutions for these and other problems.

Compiled by the Gush Katif-L'maan Acheinu Task Force, the report states that out of 1,000 high school youths among the Gush Katif expellees, 50 have dropped out of school totally, and another 50-100 are registered but barely show up. No solution has been offered for those at risk of dropping out.

In addition, a gap of approximately one school-year has been created between Katif students and others. This is because of the many months of political struggle against the dsq, and another four months of this year in which many of them were not in a proper school framework.

Many junior high school students are reported to be lacking in motivation to go to school. "The educational system did not prepare to deal with the emotional and behavioral problems that resulted from the uprooting," the report states. The problem is especially acute at this age because their performance in 7th and 8th grades affects their chances of being accepted to quality high schools.

The report, published on the Katif.net website, notes cases of drug and alcohol use - "problems that were not known in Gush Katif, but which are now increasing... More and more expressions of despair and feelings of 'no way out' are being registered, and we have even been shocked and dismayed to experience suicide attempts amongst our youth."

The report states that extra-curricular activities for youth are paid for only by donations.

Hagit Yaron, of the N'vei Dekalim secretariat, told Arutz-7's Moshe Priel: "Our goal is to stabilize the communities, and for this we need physical places to have activities on all levels - for adults, youth and children. We have turned to all the government offices, and everyone tells us how important it is, etc., but the bottom line is that we receive nothing. As an example, take Nitzan, where there are seven different communities, yet we have received only two clubhouses - and one of them was already taken for something else, and one is apparently going to be used for youth at risk, such that there is nothing for normative youth. And what about younger children at risk? - There is no informal framework for them. When they come home from school, there is nowhere for them to go, except for 1.5 playgrounds for little children, and nothing else; for older children - nothing."

The report further states that youth workers and counselors have been told to prepare farewell activities. This is in light of a letter from the Education Ministry Youth and Society Administration informing us of a halt to all activities as of this month, because of the lack of budget.

"The State is ignoring the true needs of the expellees in terms of social aid," the report states. "The youths have difficulty communicating with outside social workers who did not work in Gush Katif before the evacuation. It is hard to receive advice and treatment from unfamiliar people, and the problem of lack of trust is more acute for youth. The State does not recognize the need to budget social workers who are familiar to the youth from their Gush Katif days."

Hearings are held on these matters in the Knesset, but they are moving very slowly, and the "long bureaucratic process prevents the necessary help from arriving immediately."

"Following the ideological crisis regarding the State and the army that they underwent," the report continues, "the youth display lack of trust in all types of leadership - religious, military, communal, and governmental." The report emphasizes that many youths continue to enlist in the IDF and even to volunteer for elite combat units.

"Parental authority has been totally eroded in all sectors. The numbers of

divorces and destruction of the family cell have increased - damaging even more the sense of stability among the youth".

(IsraelNationalNews.com Jan 11)

*The writer is an editor at IsraelNationalNews.com*

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### **The Validation of Jewish Anti-Zionism** By Isi Leibler

Otto Preminger's Exodus, a dramatized presentation of Israel's case, during its early years generated enormous global goodwill for the Jewish state. In contrast, if the critics are to be believed, Steven Spielberg's Munich effectively undermines Israel's moral justification for taking tough measures to defend its people from killers. Like Preminger, Spielberg is a Jew. In fact, his magnificent production of Schindler's List and other good deeds, such as creating the Shoah Visual History Foundation, earned him widespread admiration among Jews.

Yet this proud Jew produced a film on the Munich Olympics terrorist outrage based on a book by a discredited author who had falsely maligned the Mossad. Moreover he selected Tony Kushner, a bitter Jewish castigator of Israel, to write the script.

Kushner never bothered to conceal his enmity. He repeatedly stated that Israel was born in sin, and even went so far as to claim that its creation was "a mistake" and a "historical and moral calamity." Moreover, he also openly endorsed groups seeking to divest from Israel.

What did Spielberg expect when he handed over this sensitive role to a man so bitterly hostile to the Jewish state? How was it possible for a good Jew to promote a film which undermines Israel's right to defend itself by implying moral equivalence between Mossad operatives and terrorist murderers?

IN A sense, Spielberg is not to be blamed. His attitude is merely a byproduct of the general drift which began with Oslo when Israeli governments began to soft pedal the justice of Israel's case, and concentrated on persuading Israelis and Jews that Yasser Arafat was a genuine peace partner. There were Israeli leaders who even instructed Diaspora activists to stop defending Israel's actions because the "irreversible peace process" made such activity counter-productive. As a consequence, the passion previously invested in promoting our case in the war of ideas evaporated. The flow of lies and calumnies from those seeking to destroy us went unanswered. Revisionist historians promoted the lie that Israel was indeed born in sin, and distorted the origins of the repeated wars of aggression Israel had to face. Invariably, the lies impacted on global public opinion and the image of Israel was transformed from that of an underdog to an aggressor and occupier.

To make matters worse, elements on the Israeli Left initiated a drumbeat of unprecedented self-hatred in the media and universities. Outlandish views that had hitherto been restricted to inconsequential fringe groups filled the op-ed columns of Haaretz, the media flagship of the Israeli intelligentsia, and whose English-language edition began publication in recent years.

Within the Israeli polity, such post-Zionist propaganda only had marginal impact because being in the front lines of terror, Israelis were not unduly influenced. However when the English-language versions of these masochistic articles were globally disseminated on the Internet, they impacted negatively - especially on Jews living in societies where application of double standards and demonization of Israel by the local media had already become daily fare.

IN THIS new era, Jews like Kushner, formerly regarded by the community as marginal, were provided with an imprimatur to promote their outlandish attacks on Israel as respectable alternative approaches. Even Israel's right to exist became a subject for debate. In effect, Jewish anti-Zionism became validated in mainstream institutions and most Jewish leaders opted to bury their heads rather than face unpleasant confrontations.

Take for example Limmud of England, a highly successful adult Jewish educational program in which over 2,000 people of all ages participate annually. At the recent conference in Nottingham, virtually the entire range of Jewish civilization was covered. Aside from the Orthodox rabbinate which foolishly instituted a boycott because of the participation of non-Orthodox rabbis, the full spectrum of Jewish viewpoints was aired, including blatant anti-Israel libels.

Limmud had no qualms in providing a platform to Queen Mary College Professor Jacqueline Rose whose *The Question of Zion* is an abominable book that conveys the message that Israel was a colonial implant and effectively a criminal state. On a previous occasion, Robert Fisk, the venomous anti-Israel demonizer, who was sacked from *The Times* for his unabashed anti-Israeli outbursts, had participated.

There was a panel at Limmud on "Just Wars" comprised of Jews and British imams in which Muslim clerics discussed whether the intifada was an "obligatory war." And no less than Gideon Levy, the prolific pro-Palestinian journalist from Haaretz, also participated.

Needless to say, those exposed to anti-Israeli diatribes are not in danger of being transformed into enemies of Israel. But a basic question of principle is involved. Surely, even a pluralistic Jewish educational conference whose declared objective is the enhancement of Jewish identity must have its red

lines.

Are there no limits? Does anything go? Is it a requirement of freedom of expression for a Jewish organization to provide a platform for those who delegitimize Israel? Are views which question the right of a Jewish state to exist to be accepted as a legitimate "alternative" Jewish viewpoint?

Would anti-Semites be tolerated? Would Kahanists qualify? And why, in a society which is already saturated with hostility against the Jewish state, should a respectable Jewish platform be provided for Jewish defamers of Israel? I contacted the Limmud organization to pose such questions to them but failed to obtain a response.

LIMMUD'S TOLERATION of anti-Zionist hate mongers is merely the latest example of a trend which is proliferating in Jewish communities throughout the world. Such a climate of permissiveness would have been inconceivable only a few years ago. Is it therefore any wonder that in this atmosphere, Spielberg, a liberal, did not feel inhibited from turning to a person like Kushner to write his script on Munich?

We live in complex times. Israel remains the principal anchor for Jewish identity for most Jews. If, distinct from legitimate criticism of Israel, reputable Jewish organizations are willing to tolerate debates in which the verities of the Jewish state are undermined, we are paving the way for our own moral self-defeat. Diaspora Jews will simply not survive if they lack the backbone to purge the enemy from within. As Jews, we must not become absorbed into the moral turpitude associated with post-modernism which blurs distinctions between good and evil. (Jerusalem Post Jan 11)

*The writer chairs the Diaspora-Israel relations committee of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, and is a veteran international Jewish leader.*

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### **Anarchy and the PA Elections** By Danny Rubinstein

At first glance, it seems that this is another conspiracy theory (one of many) that is prevalent in the Palestinian street. The subject this time concerns the reason for the deterioration in internal security in the territories.

The security-related lawlessness in the territories, especially in the Gaza Strip, has in the last few days reached unprecedented peaks. It includes the abduction of foreigners by armed gangs, a sort of revolt of police officers in Rafah and a wild takeover of the border crossing there (the only connection between Gaza and the outside world), the breach of the wall at the border with Egypt and the killing of two Egyptian police officers, a forcible seizure of government and municipal offices, and a slew of other violent incidents and gun battles between rival gangs. The ones responsible are armed groups, generally members of units that have been or are presently affiliated with the Palestinian security services - and they are all affiliated with the Fatah movement.

In the Palestinian street, they understand that this is no coincidence. The rise of hooliganism, which is a sign of security-related disorder, is not incidental and it's no coincidence that those responsible are Fatah members. The popular interpretation is that this is intentional and organized chaos whose goal is to generate riots that will lead to the cancellation of the parliamentary elections slated to take place in about two weeks. The Palestinian officials who are now speaking, whether overtly or not, about the need to cancel the elections (they are careful not to say "cancel," but only "postpone") are all Fatah members. Since everyone knows that the movement is undergoing a serious crisis and that Hamas is expected to be bolstered in the elections, it's reasonable that Fatah activists will search for excuses to cancel the elections. Anarchy in the territories is a good excuse.

Until recently, the Fatah leaders had a better excuse for canceling the elections: The Israeli government's opposition to voting in East Jerusalem, due to Hamas' participation in the elections. The problem is that the United States and Europe believe that elections in East Jerusalem should be allowed, and so it's not clear whether this excuse will hold. It's safer to have elections canceled because of anarchy.

Is the anarchy in the territories really organized anarchy? The Palestinian public thinks so, but that doesn't prove that it's true. What is clear is that Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas and his aides acknowledge their inability to exert control. Every government generally makes an effort to display its strength and refuses to acknowledge weakness. That's how the PA has acted as well for many years. Yasser Arafat, for instance, tended to blame Israel or external forces for his failures. Leaders do not like to announce publicly, "We are weak." Yet Abbas announced over the weekend: "The reason for the security-related lawlessness is government weakness." More than once he and his people have hinted that due to this weakness, there will be no alternative but to delay the elections.

Those who oppose the anarchy and the attempts to cancel the elections are, of course, Hamas activists preparing for victory. Hamas leaders on Friday organized an impressive demonstration in Gaza and sharply condemned the abduction of foreigners and the security-related lawlessness.

Will the elections take place in the end? There is serious doubt that they will. The reason is that nearly the entire world does not want elections that Hamas will win. Israel doesn't want it, and Egypt and Jordan and basically the entire Arab world are worried about a strengthening of the radical Islamic

movement. The Americans and Europeans, too, will likely be understanding if Abbas announces that the conditions for holding elections are not suitable right now.

Meanwhile, the Palestinians have a break: the four days of Id al-Adha (Feast of the Sacrifice), which starts tomorrow. Abbas has asked that the festivities be restrained, so as not to create the impression that the Palestinians are happy because of Ariel Sharon's health condition. But immediately after the holiday, there will apparently be a renewal of the tumult in the territories, which will almost certainly bring about the cancellation of the elections. (Ha'aretz Jan 9)

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### **Spielberg's Moral Confusion** By Mona Charen

Around the globe — but particularly in the Arab world — anti-Semites whine that the Jews "control" Hollywood. It's true that there are many prominent Jews in the movie business, but as Steven Spielberg's Munich amply demonstrates, it little profits the Jewish people.

Munich is a well-crafted movie, but it is a deeply and disturbingly dishonest one. Many moviegoers were not even born in 1972, and many who were alive will scarcely remember the details. Do moviemakers owe nothing to them? Do they owe nothing to the truth? This is not Oliver Stone's JFK, but for that reason its effect may be more insidious. The film looks like history but it is a morality play of the artist's imagination. Spielberg uses real historical figures like Golda Meir as props, putting words in their mouths that they not only did not say, but would never have said. During the opening credits, the audience is informed that the film is "inspired by real events." That could mean anything — but movie audiences probably will not parse the words with lawyerly care. They will read it in the context of a film that offers generous servings of verisimilitude. There are clips of sportscaster Jim McKay reporting from the Munich Olympics in 1972, as well as the voice of Peter Jennings narrating the harrowing events. Some of the details of the kidnapping and murder of the eleven Israeli athletes are well-researched. But as CC Colton warned, "Falsehood is never so successful as when she baits her hook with truth."

Munich is actually a misnomer, for the film isn't so much about what happened in Munich as what supposedly happened afterward. Though Israel has never officially acknowledged the fact, it is unofficially acknowledged that following the terrorist atrocity at Munich, the Mossad tracked down and executed a number of the Black September terrorists who were responsible. Munich follows a team of Israeli Mossad agents assigned to kill the terrorists one by one.

The screenplay (by gay activist Tony Kushner, author of *Angels in America*, and Eric Roth whose previous credits include *Forrest Gump*) is based on the widely doubted 1984 book *Vengeance* by George Jonas. Jonas based his tale on the word of one Israeli who claimed to have headed a clandestine assassination squad for the Mossad. But Jonas was the second, not the first author to whom this particular Israeli had peddled this tale of "Avner," the Israeli hit man. The first, according to *Time*, was a writer named Rinker Buck who was offered an advance from Simon and Schuster. But the deal fizzled when Buck traveled to Europe to check his informant's information and found that "he was changing his story daily." Buck said he could not write the book in good conscience. Jonas apparently could. And while the book has been debunked for 20 years, Spielberg saw fit to build a movie upon it.

Though the film portrays the violent brutality of the Palestinian terrorists at Munich, it does not even begin to convey the context. One of the themes of Munich is that vengeance begets vengeance in an endless cycle of pointless violence. Yet the murder of the Israeli Olympic team was utterly unprovoked — unless one is willing to accept the terrorists' logic that the very existence of Israel represents provocation enough. Following the murders of eleven Israeli athletes on German soil a mere 27 years after the Holocaust, the Olympic Games were suspended for a day. The Olympic flag and the flags of most competing nations were lowered to half-staff. But the Arab nations insisted upon flying their flags at full mast. Avery Brundage, president of the International Olympic Committee, praised the Olympic movement in a speech after the massacre, but said not one word about the dead Israelis.

Of the terrorists who took part in the Munich attack, three were imprisoned in German jails. Just a few weeks later, PLO terrorists hijacked a Lufthansa plane and threatened to kill the passengers unless the three Munich terrorists were released. Germany promptly complied.

With all due respect to Spielberg's artistic muse, it is all too predictable that a film portraying Israelis in a sympathetic light is just not in the cards right now. Righteous anger and robust self-defense are out (at least among Hollywood liberals). Today, we must have nothing but shades of gray. As Spielberg acknowledged to *Time*, he believes that "a response to a response doesn't really solve anything. It just creates a perpetual motion machine." Terrorists kill, but so do Israelis (and Americans). Each is avenged and both sides become poisoned and corrupted by the endless minuet of murder. Yes, alright, some are killers of innocents and some are avengers of innocents, but in the end, the movie seems to ask, "Does it really matter?" Throughout this brooding thriller, the members of the Mossad team are tormented by doubts,

to the point where the protagonist, Avner, eventually abandons Israel altogether. Golda Meir (Israel's prime minister at the time) is also portrayed as defying her better nature. In ordering the targeted assassinations, she sighs, "Every civilization finds it necessary to negotiate compromises with its own values."

Not only is there no record of Meir saying anything like this, there is every reason to believe that she would not say it, particularly not in this context. In what sense was targeting the killers of innocents a betrayal of Israeli or Jewish or Western values? Nations are fully entitled and in fact required to protect their citizens. Israel was engaged in a war with Palestinian terrorists, just as we are now engaged in a war with al Qaeda. Perhaps Kushner and Roth and Spielberg would all be more comfortable if our post-capture plans for Osama bin Laden included a stint in a comfortable federal prison — not Guantanamo — with the full panoply of constitutional protections. But few Americans would feel their souls compromised if an American Special Forces guy simply shot him through the head.

Besides, reasonable people understand that there is a moral chasm that separates Israel from the terrorists. Then and now, terrorists target innocent civilians. Their aim is to cause despair, grief, and fear among their enemies and to gain the attention of the world. They are indifferent to the suffering they cause — indeed, even celebrate it. Israelis (and Americans) go out of their way to prevent harm to innocent civilians — even at severe risk to themselves. In Jenin in 2002 the Israeli army sent soldiers to locate terrorists in door to door fighting rather than risk innocent civilian lives by using tanks, helicopters, or planes to attack the terror stronghold. Twenty-three Israeli soldiers were killed who would not have died if Israel had used more indiscriminate violence.

Spielberg's dishonor goes even deeper. It isn't just that he places wanton killers and avengers on the same moral plane, he also badly distorts the underlying issues and seems to accept the Arab version of reality, that is, that Israel's founding was somehow illegitimate. "No one would give it to us, so we had to take it" explains Avner's mother about the land of Israel in a key scene. This is consistent with screenwriter Tony Kushner's view that establishing a state means "f\*\*\*ing people over." That is a lazy and stupid misreading of history. Jews have lived in that land for thousands of years. The land the European Jews settled in the late 19th century was legally purchased and then vastly improved, bringing a swell of Arab immigration to the area. Still, the modern state of Israel would have been a tiny enclave surrounding the entirely Jewish city of Tel Aviv (hard by a Palestinian state) if five Arab armies had not descended upon it in hopes of wiping it off the map in 1948.

The Palestinian spokesman in the film is permitted to wax eloquent about the suffering of Palestinians in refugee camps. But in 1972, those camps had been under Israeli control for only six years. Before that, they were maintained by the Arab governments who hoped to use the miserable Palestinian refugees as human time bombs against the Jewish state.

The movie closes with Avner in the foreground and the towers of the World Trade Center rising behind him. The unsubtle message: We have brought the violence of September 11 upon ourselves. How? By fighting back. One of the team members, the bomb maker, pleads with Avner to abort his mission, crying "Jews are supposed to be righteous." This is the liberal view that we see adumbrated daily about America's war on terror. To be righteous is to be passive and weak. To be righteous is, to use Spielberg's words "to talk until we're blue in the gills." Robert Frost understood this mindset perfectly. He said "A liberal is man too broad-minded to take his own side in a quarrel." We know what happens to Jews who don't fight or can't fight back. (Spielberg made another movie about that.) Now he argues that self-defense is a moral taint. He is confused. It is just a shame that he inflicts his moral confusion on the rest of us. (National Review Jan 6)

*The writer, a nationally syndicated columnist, is author, most recently, of Do-Gooders: How Liberals Hurt Those They Claim to Help (And the Rest of Us).*

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### **Int'l Media: Still Vilifying Sharon?** By Tom Gross

Compared to past international media coverage of Ariel Sharon, which on a number of occasions in recent years has gone beyond personal demonization to outright anti-Semitism, the reporting on Sharon since he suffered a massive stroke last week has been relatively benign. Sharon the butcher, the bulldozer, the war criminal, the "successor of Hitler" has suddenly been humanized in several usually hostile quarters such as the BBC.

But only up to a point. Even amid this improved coverage, as Sharon lies fighting for his life many articles in the Western media have retailed untruths, almost in passing, as though they were incontrovertible historical facts: Sharon initiated the second intifada, Sharon ordered the Sabra and Shatila massacres, and so on.

According to a Google search, there were over 24,000 articles published on Sharon in the 24 hours following his stroke last Wednesday night. But only four days later, in Monday's Washington Post, was there the first mention of Sharon's protracted and successful libel battle in the 1980s against Time magazine for its inaccurate suggestion that he had encouraged the Sabra and Shatila massacres.

Equally, there has been almost no reference to the fact that the Sabra and

Shatila massacres were carried out by (Christian) Arabs against (Muslim) Arabs, in response to massacres by Muslims, and virtually no indication that the Palestinians themselves had carefully planned the 2000 intifada.

This is by their own admission. For example, the PA Communications Minister, Imad Al-Faluji, told Al-Safir (March 3, 2001): "Whoever thinks that the intifada broke out because of the despised Sharon's visit to the Aksa Mosque is wrong. This intifada was planned in advance, ever since President Arafat's return from the Camp David negotiations, where he turned the table upside down on President Clinton."

And jailed Palestinian terror leader Marwan Barghouti told the Palestinian paper, the Jerusalem Times (June 8, 2001): "The intifada did not start because of Sharon's visit to Al-Aksa. The intifada began because the Palestinians did not approve of the peace process in its previous form." But now, as then, Western media are uninterested in passing such comments on to their readers.

Most of the reporting has failed to supply any context - for example as to why Israeli troops entered Lebanon in 1982. I have seen hardly any references to past moves Sharon made for peace such as the 1982 dismantling of Yamit and 13 other settlements in the Sinai.

THERE HAVE also been some nasty headlines and cartoons.

"He is the King Kong of massacres" ran the headline of a news report on Sharon on January 8 in The Observer, the Sunday affiliate of Britain's Guardian newspaper, referring to the recently-released remake of the 1933 movie classic.

"Ariel Sharon, agent of perpetual war," was the headline of an article in the relatively moderate Lebanese paper the Daily Star, on January 7 by its editor-at-large and frequent guest on America's NPR, Rami Khouri.

"Sharon's legacy does not include peace," is how a January 5 feature on the BBC News Web site by Paul Reynolds, the BBC's World Affairs correspondent, was introduced; while Richard Stott's January 8 column on Sharon for the mass circulation (British) Sunday Mirror was titled "Middle Beast."

On Friday, the entire front page of the (London) Independent carried a photo of Sharon with the words "Inside: Robert Fisk on Ariel Sharon." The article, over 7,000 words extracted from Fisk's new book, was hardly about Sharon at all and consisted almost entirely of Fisk's claims about what happened at Sabra and Shatila. Unsurprisingly, Fisk made no mention of Sharon's successful American court ruling against Time.

Yet, overall, the international coverage of Sharon since his stroke has been relatively kind. Who could have imagined, for example, that The New York Times - which has blackened Sharon's reputation for decades - would run a comparatively complimentary editorial on him by Benny Morris? Who could have imagined that the home page of aljazeera.net would this week show Sharon sitting in a grandfatherly pose looking on as Hanukka candles were lit?

I USE the term "relatively kind" because it is important to recall what the coverage of Sharon was like until just a few weeks ago. He was not only reviled in the international media but frequently portrayed in viciously anti-Semitic terms.

In Spain, for example, on June 4, 2001 - just three days after a Palestinian suicide bomber killed 21 young Israelis at a disco, in the midst of a unilateral Israeli cease-fire - the liberal magazine Cambio 16 published a cartoon of Sharon with a hook nose he does not have, wearing a skull cap he does not usually wear, sporting a swastika inside a Star of David on his chest, and proclaiming: "At least Hitler taught me how to invade a country and destroy every living insect."

A week earlier El Pais, Spain's equivalent of The New York Times, published a cartoon of an allegorical figure carrying a small rectangular-shaped black mustache, flying through the air toward Sharon's upper lip. The caption read: "Clio, the muse of history, puts Hitler's mustache on Ariel Sharon."

Cartoons in the Greek press in 2004 showed Sharon as a Nazi officer. One of Italy's leading papers, Corriere Della Sera, ran a cartoon on March 31, 2002 showing Sharon killing Jesus. The cartoon, which was timed to coincide with Easter day that year, was published as Israelis lay dying from the Netanya Passover massacre three days earlier.

HUNDREDS of similar anti-Semitic motifs have been applied to Sharon in recent years. The Economist magazine compared him to Charles Dickens' infamous anti-Semitic stereotype, Fagin, and previously ran a blackened front cover with the words "Sharon's Israel, the world's worry." And grotesque cartoons of Sharon continued to appear until as recently as six weeks ago in, for example, the Guardian.

Now, by contrast, attitudes to Sharon are by and large restrained, even respectful. But we still have to wait and see whether journalists in the supposedly respectable world media have decided to rid themselves once and for all of the anti-Semitic overspill in their Israel coverage.

It is much too early to tell. (Jerusalem Post Jan 10)

*The writer is a former Jerusalem correspondent of the Sunday Telegraph.*

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