



Jerusalem 4:29 Toronto 5:05

**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*

This perverse line of reasoning, whereby the only way for Jews to be happy is for us to again be powerless, has brought Judt under attack by prominent Jews who have exposed the anti-Semitism inherent in his argumentation.

In a new article in The Nation magazine, Judt takes a stab at responding to his many critics. The article is a ponderous attempt to argue that there is no relation between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism.

On the one hand, he says that it is anti-Semitic to say that Jews control the US. But on the other hand, Judt allows that "contemporary US foreign policy is in certain respects mortgaged to Israel," adding, "To say that Israel and its lobbyists have an excessive and disastrous influence on the policies of the world's superpower is a statement of fact."

Judt allows that there has been a rise in anti-Semitism in Europe in recent years, but he blames this on "the policies of Israeli government." Echoing Anglican Lippman, Judt writes that for anti-Semitism to be dealt with in Europe, "Jews and others must learn to shed inhibitions and criticize Israel's policies and actions."

In Judt's view, "once Germans, French and others can comfortably condemn Israel without an uneasy conscience, and can look their Muslim fellow citizens in the face, it will be possible to deal with the real problem [i.e., anti-Semitism]."

Since the September 11 attacks Muslims have been called upon to decry the preaching of hatred in their community. It is argued that until Muslims themselves delegitimize the voices of hatred in their communities the poisonous message of jihad will continue to attract thousands to its genocidal cause.

The 60th anniversary of Auschwitz's liberation is a good time to call for a similar Jewish condemnation of hate-filled Jews and those that use them to advance their anti-Semitic agenda.

These are not legitimate views. These are not legitimate views. They are the views of deranged Jew-haters which, if listened to, will do nothing other than pave the way to the next calamity. (Jerusalem Post Jan 25)

**Events...**

**Sunday January 30 9:00am-12:00pm**

*Nefesh B'Nefesh AACI and the Israel Aliyah Centre Information Seminar at the Novotel Toronto North York, 3 Park Home Avenue*

**Tuesday February 8, 8:00pm**

*Rav Mordechai Elon, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshivat HaKotel, will lecture in Hebrew on Parshat Hashavua at B'nai Torah.*

**Commentary...**

**Today's Jewish Anti-Semites** By Caroline Glick

In a recent poll, 62 percent of Germans said they were "sick of all the harping on about German crimes against the Jews." Two thirds of Germans said they believe Israel is waging "a war of extermination" against the Palestinians.

Jews often focus their attention on Holocaust sentiment among non-Jews to gauge anti-Semitic feelings. But while feelings about the Holocaust serve as an indicator of general sentiment about Jews, there are other indicators no less important or revealing.

Sensitivity about the Holocaust may tell us what a person feels about Jews, but it may also simply tell us what that person feels about dead Jews.

But let's say that most Germans did believe the Holocaust was a terrible crime. Would the German rejection of the Holocaust mean that the majority that believes Israel is today's Nazi Germany is less anti-Semitic? No, it would not.

Yesterday the UN General Assembly for the first time held a special session to commemorate the liberation of the Nazi death camps and the Holocaust. Does this mean that the UN, which devotes some one-third of its resolutions to condemning Israel, is no longer hostile to the Jewish people? No, it does not.

SINCE THE Holocaust, the rallying cry of Jews has been "Never Again!" But the enormity of the Holocaust must not blind us to its present-day mutation.

Today the vast majority of anti-Semites are not calling for Jews to be deported to death camps. They are calling for the destruction of the Jewish state and, as was the case in previous generations, they are seeking out and finding Jews like Karl Marx who share their hatred for the Jewish people and willingly advance their evil agenda.

This agenda is to again reduce Jews to a state of powerlessness where we will be at the mercy of the same world that either participated in or did nothing in the face of the extermination of European Jewry.

Today this is done by striking out at the main safeguard against such powerlessness – the State of Israel – criminalizing it as the modern-day incarnation of Nazi Germany. The role of Jewish anti-Semites in this campaign is to decouple the dead Jews murdered by the Nazis from the live Jews who live in, or support, the Jewish state.

Such a Jew was found by the British conservative magazine The Spectator in one Anthony Lippman. Lippman is actually an Anglican, not a Jew, but as the child of Jewish Holocaust survivors, he will do.

In a recent article, Lippman writes hypnotically about his mother's sufferings in Auschwitz only to explain that the job of Holocaust survivors and their children is to speak out against... Israel.

In his words, survivors have "a terrible responsibility – to live well in the name of those who did not live and to discourage the building of walls and bulldozing of villages. Even more than this, they – and all Jews – need to be the voice of conscience that will prevent Israel from adopting the mantle of oppressor, and to reject the label 'anti-Semite' for those who speak out against Israel's policies in the occupied territories."

ANOTHER such Jew is Tony Judt. Since the start of the Palestinian terror war, Judt, a historian at New York University, has been outspoken in his rejection of Israel's right to exist.

In a series of articles in The New York Review of Books, The Nation and The New Republic, Judt has led the charge in claiming that "the depressing truth is that Israel today is bad for the Jews," and that for Jews to feel good about themselves again Israel must cease to be a Jewish state – that is, Israel must cease to exist.

**Take a Leaf out of Blair's Book** By Evelyn Gordon

Last week's news was noteworthy for what it did not contain: No one voiced any objections to British Prime Minister Tony Blair's statement that the peace process in Northern Ireland cannot progress until political parties sever their ties with paramilitary organizations.

At first glance, that lack of objection might not seem so remarkable. But it is when you recall that Israel's identical demand of the Palestinian Authority has been condemned for years as unnecessary, unreasonable and inimical to any chance of peace.

Speaking to parliament last Wednesday, Blair declared: "We cannot have a situation any longer where there are political parties associated to paramilitary groups – where they are committing either what we might call terrorist offenses or ordinary criminality."

A few days earlier, he termed Protestant parties "entirely justified" in refusing to share power with the Catholic Sinn Fein party as long as Sinn Fein remains the political wing of the Irish Republican Army.

Blair's ultimatum came in response to a series of IRA offenses against the peace process over the last seven years: An IRA spy ring was uncovered in Stormont, the seat of the power-sharing Catholic-Protestant government established by the 1998 Good Friday accord; three IRA members were convicted of training a narco-terrorist organization in Colombia; IRA members allegedly stole documents from a police compound in Belfast; and, of course, the group has consistently refused to disarm in a permanent, verifiable fashion.

The last straw, for Blair, was a \$50-million bank robbery last month for which both Britain and Ireland hold the IRA responsible.

ALL OF the above raise serious questions about the IRA's long-term commitment to peace.

Nevertheless, there is one thing the IRA has not done: It has not violated its cease-fire agreement. Over the last seven years, there have been attacks by various Catholic and Protestant splinter groups, including a breakaway IRA faction, the Real IRA. But the IRA itself has not been involved in any attacks, and the overall level of violence has dropped dramatically since 1998.

In contrast, the Oslo Accord produced a sharp rise in anti-Israel violence. In the first two and a half years after the signing alone, Palestinian

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paramilitary groups killed more Israelis than they had in the entire preceding decade, which included the years of the first intifada.

The first fatal terror attack occurred a mere 11 days after the famous White House ceremony at which Yasser Arafat pledged to end violence against Israel, and the first suicide bombing occurred seven months later. Altogether, Palestinian paramilitaries killed 256 Israelis during the "peace process" years of 1993-2000. And since September 2000, they have killed another 1,041.

Moreover, this violence was not carried out by fringe elements, but by organizations directly affiliated with the PA government. Over the last four years, paramilitary groups associated with the ruling Fatah party – the movement to which Arafat belonged, as does the new PA chairman, Mahmoud Abbas – have been responsible for more Israeli deaths than any other organization except Hamas. Many attacks have even been carried out or abetted by members of the PA's official security services.

The other paramilitary groups are also closely integrated into the Palestinian political system: Hamas, for instance, fielded candidates in the PA's recent local elections and plans to do the same in this summer's parliamentary elections; and under both Arafat and Abbas, the PA government regularly met with Hamas leaders, signed agreements with them and otherwise treated the organization as a legitimate political party in every respect.

And Abbas has made it clear that this is his plan for the future as well: Far from severing ties with the paramilitary groups, he has repeatedly said that his goal is to arrange a cease-fire and then integrate them into the official PA security services – to put them on the PA payroll and have the PA supply their arms.

He also would also like to bring Hamas's "political wing" into his government. Fatah's political wing, of course, is already there.

Given the 1,300 fatalities that Israel has suffered at the hands of Palestinian paramilitaries since the "peace process" began, Israel's demand that the PA stop "co-opting" the paramilitaries and instead denounce, dismantle and disarm them would seem even more justified than Blair's similar demand in Northern Ireland, which was prompted by far less egregious offenses.

Yet while Blair's demand has been treated as utterly uncontroversial – it barely even merited a mention in the international media – Israel's demand, most recently reiterated by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon 11 days ago, has been widely denounced. As Aaron Miller, the State Department's former senior adviser on Israeli-Arab negotiations, summed it up for The New York Times last week: "The Israelis are expecting too much of Abu Mazen [aka Abbas]."

Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn of Luxembourg, which currently holds the European Union's rotating presidency, was even blunter. Following Abbas's election, he declared, "the 'Arafat excuse' [for refusing to hold diplomatic negotiations] no longer exists." In other words, it is enough that the person at the helm has changed: Israel has no right to demand that the policy – of cozying up to paramilitaries rather than confronting them – also change.

Nothing explains better than these very different responses why Northern Ireland has been largely peaceful for the last seven years, while Oslo brought nothing but bloodshed.

In Ireland, an end to the violence has been considered a nonnegotiable condition for progress from the start. But in the Middle East, the world has spent 12 years making excuses for the PA's failure to quell its paramilitaries and insisting that Israel continue making concessions despite this failure. The obvious result is that the PA has had no incentive to mend its ways.

And unless and until the world's attitude toward the PA's coddling of paramilitaries changes, an Israeli-Palestinian peace will continue to be unattainable. (Jerusalem Post Jan 25)

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### **Sharon, Go to Gush Katif** By Elliot Jager

The Gaza Strip is a 360-sq.-kilometer paradox of danger and splendor along the Mediterranean coast. It is home to 1 million Palestinian Arabs - "one of the highest population densities in the world," goes the well-worn cliché - and 8,000 Israeli pioneers who have made the desert bloom.

On Thursday I went to Gush Katif, the bloc of settlements along the Strip's southern coast, hoping a visit would help me mull over whether Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's divisive plan to "disengage" Israel from Gaza's Arab population still made sense.

I had been attracted to the idea when he first announced it, on April 16, 2004. Nine months later, I am having second thoughts - not about the strategic soundness of the plan itself, but about the way it is being implemented.

My sense is that most Israelis feel at odds with the settler enterprise when it seeks to retain places like Gaza: too many Arabs, too few Jews. It reminds Israelis too piercingly of their overall existential situation.

We've all heard the arguments from pundits and politicians for and against disengagement. But we have neither seen nor heard the prime minister campaigning for his plan vigorously and methodically.

Tip O'Neill, late speaker of the US House of Representatives, was fond of saying that "all politics is local." Sharon has convinced Brussels and Washington about disengagement. But what about the people most directly affected? Even if he can't persuade the settlers, doesn't he owe them the courtesy of a visit?

If I were advising Sharon, I'd tell him to go personally to the Jews of Gaza, face the heat, and explain why uprooting their lives serves the national interest. He should sit down with Ami Shaked, the Arabic-speaking civilian security chief of Gush Katif, and hear him out.

Shaked is drained. He's lost many close friends in the war, and he's fed up with politicians and disillusioned with the security establishment. His unenviable burden these past four years, as he supervises hundreds of volunteers, has been to defend Gush Katif, day in and day out, from attacks.

If Sharon had the guts to sit down with him, Shaked would point out that Egypt is playing a dirty game in Gaza; Cairo's intelligence chief, Omar Suleiman, calibrates the number and types of weapons that make it through the Rafah tunnels. Would that change, he'd ask, with disengagement? Or would the enemy simply open up a new front?

Shaked would tell Sharon that "Gush Katif is the gateway to Jerusalem." Let Sharon explain why it no longer is.

Sharon owes it to us - supporters and opponents of disengagement alike - to also spend time with people like Anat Yaakov, cultural director of Gush Katif's community center. She's busy scheduling music, art and social activities for the months ahead. I can see him sitting in Yaakov's tiny office burgeoning with files and paperwork, listening to her ask: "What are we guilty of? How can we absorb it that in a matter of months we won't be here?"

And, "Do you really think removing 8,000 people will make Israel any safer?"

IN NEVEH DEKALIM, the largest community in Gush Katif, people go about their business.

Children play in the schoolyard; the shopping center is bustling. There are groceries to be bought, dresses to be tried on.

I ask a passerby: Do you sometimes feel as if you're in a sci-fi movie in which people are going about their everyday lives while, unbeknownst to them, a gigantic meteor is hurtling their way?

"I'd rather think of Sharon's plan as a giant bubble that will burst before it does any harm," he replies.

Let Sharon bring Binyamin Netanyahu and other Likud bigwigs to Gush Katif. Let them walk about and show the locals they really do feel their pain. Let them explain what will happen to the synagogues - no makeshift structures, but edifices as permanent and charming as any inside the Green Line. Will they really be "dismantled"?

The prime minister might want to have tea at the home of Moshe and Rachel Saperstein. He'll discover that Mrs. Saperstein is a delightful hostess. Maybe he'll sit at the head of the table, facing the Mediterranean, and explain why her tastefully decorated home has to go for the good of the country.

It is Sharon's failure to face the settlers and painstakingly mobilize support for disengagement among the rest of us that has contributed to the talk of strife and civil disobedience. For every political maneuver, every recalcitrant minister fired, every party vote circumvented - and for bringing Shimon Peres, architect of Oslo, to sit by his side - Sharon has undermined what is arguably a prudent proposal.

There is a Machiavellian school of thought that suspects Sharon wants disengagement to be wrenching, maybe even a little bloody, because he wants to show that there is an absolute limit to the territorial concessions Israel can make, and that Gaza and a few settlements in northern Samaria are that limit.

For me, that's not good enough. As things stand now, Sharon's plan lacks political legitimacy. Political scientists think of legitimacy as the legal and moral right to rule. Sharon has the legal right - no one disputes that. But disengagement is too excruciating to be treated as just another political skirmish. For it to have full moral legitimacy most Israelis would have to agree that it is not only a sensible idea, but that it is being implemented in a manner most people would call fair.

Only new elections or a referendum will give Sharon the legitimacy necessary to carry this plan through. And the place to start the campaign is in Gush Katif. (Jerusalem Post Jan 24)

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### **Sharansky: PA Promotes Genocide** By Hilary Leila Krieger

At a press conference timed to coincide with events marking the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, Diaspora Affairs Minister Natan Sharansky will on Tuesday assert that the Palestinian Authority, even under new chairman Mahmoud Abbas, is engaged in the "promotion of genocide" against the Jewish people.

The "Kill a Jew Go to Heaven" presentation, compiled by Palestinian Media Watch, an Israel-based organization that monitors incitement in Palestinian society, and distributed under Sharansky's auspices, accuses the Palestinian media of dehumanizing Jews similar to ways the Nazis did.

A fundamental message broadcast in sermons, academic discourse and even children's shows, according to report co-author Itamar Marcus, is that "the Jews are an evil force, and it's inherent to the Jews, and therefore they have to be killed."

In the run-up to the PA election on January 9, Abbas met with the head of the Palestinian Broadcasting Authority and asked him to check all programs aired on PA television to prevent the broadcast of inciting material. Since then, Marcus said that nationalistic programming calling for violence against Israel has decreased somewhat, but that anti-Semitic rhetoric has remained unabated.

He pointed to January 14, when he said an imam gave a sermon declaring, "The days of the pilgrimage to Mecca remind the Muslim of the connection to his history and remind him of his past glory and the lowliness of the Jews, who today rule the world; how Muhammad expelled them from Medina in

retribution for their actions and their hostility and their corruption, and not on false charges, not unjustly. No, it was retribution for their hostility toward Islam."

It is important to document this phenomenon, he said, because many people view the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as centered on political issues, when the Palestinians have tied redemption to killing Jews. "It's not connected to borders, it's not connected to compromise, and no compromise will be reached [once] it's a battle of God against the Jews."

"As in Nazi Germany, there is an entire 'culture of hatred' in Palestinian society today, from textbooks to crossword puzzles, from day camps to TV music videos," Sharansky charged in a statement issued by his office ahead of the press conference. "Calling for the murder of Jews, as Jews, is the end result."

The presentation comes ahead of Israel's National Day Against Anti-Semitism on Thursday and the same day's ceremonies at Auschwitz. It will be made available in English as well as Hebrew to engage the international community.

"The whole world has to be aware of anti-Semitism, because it isn't just the problem of the Jews. It's the problem of any democratic society," a Sharansky aide said. "The world has to understand what we are dealing with. It's not only whether there was a bombing yesterday or not. If you don't change the atmosphere in books or on TV, it won't be enough." (Jerusalem Post Jan 25)

### **We must Learn from America** By Caroline Glick

Writing Tuesday in The Daily Telegraph, British military historian John Keegan compared the Palestinian terror war to the Iraqi insurgency. "What is going on in Iraq," Keegan writes, "resembles the second Palestinian intifada, though it is more intensive and better organized. It is also more difficult to counter, since the Western forces lack the detailed intelligence to which the Israeli security forces have access."

Keegan's statement is both true and false. It is certainly true that, from a strictly military perspective, Iraqi terrorists and foreign terrorists who fight with them in Iraq have mimicked Palestinian terror techniques, just as American forces have adopted IDF counterterror tactics in combating them. It is also true that Israel, which has been fighting the Palestinians for upwards of 100 years, knows its enemy much better than coalition forces know their opponents in Iraq.

Yet, tactical capabilities aside, the US and its coalition partners will likely emerge victorious in Iraq, while Israel is losing its war against Palestinian terrorism. The reason for this has little to do with military prowess and everything to do with a vision for the future. The Americans and their allies in Iraq, including the 85 percent of Iraqis who intend to vote on January 30, have a clear vision of where they want to go. They wish, through ushering in democracy and liberalization, to better the lot of the Iraqi people while ensuring, through counterterror warfare, that the terrorists will have no future at all.

In Israel, in spite of the IDF's mastery of its realm, the policies of the government are creating a situation in which Palestinians who are not involved in terrorism continue to live on a dead-end street while the terrorists who are responsible for both their suffering and the suffering of the Israeli people are given respect, legitimacy, power – and the future.

This week, the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), which monitors the Arab press, released a transcript of the televised confession of Muayed al-Nasseri, who commanded Saddam Hussein's "Army of Muhammad" throughout 2004. In his confession, Nasseri said that his organization was founded by Saddam immediately after the fall of Baghdad to US troops in April 2003. He then detailed its links to the Syrian and Iranian regimes and to other terror forces operating in the country.

The fact that the Iraqi interim government decided to run Nasseri's statement on television speaks volumes about the nature of Iraqi politics today. The Iraqi people want to know, and the interim government whose members are now running for election want them to know, who it is that is bombing them every day. As Nasseri made clear, Iraqis' enemy is not the coalition forces who are fighting day and night to kill and capture the terrorists. Their enemies are Saddam's henchmen and their Arab and Iranian neighbors who would prefer to see Saddam and his tyrannical rule reinstated than see the Iraqi people prosper in a free, open and democratic country.

It is interesting to note that in spite of being the most visible politician in Iraq, Interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi is projected to lose his power in the elections. Allawi, a Shi'ite and former Ba'athist who was anointed by the Jordanian monarchy, UN representative and former Arab League chairman Lakdar Brahimi and the CIA, is headed for defeat largely because the Iraqi public was angered by his decision to stop the de-Ba'athification process initiated by the interim governing council appointed by the US after the fall of Saddam's regime. Speaking this week to The Financial Times, Mohammed Tawfiq, one of the leaders of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, said the Shi'ite party that is set to take over from Allawi's interim government will vigorously reinstate the process.

One of the most outstanding features of the upcoming elections in Iraq is that they are only the first step toward the democratization of the country. The elections next week are not for a permanent government, but for a Constitutional Assembly. That elected body will select an interim government that will run Iraq until the assembly has completed the writing and ratification

of a new Iraqi constitution. Only after the ratification process is completed will there be elections for a non-transitional government. And that government, in accordance with the constitution, will be both democratic and opposed to terrorism.

Meanwhile, the situation with the Palestinians is the exact opposite of the situation in Iraq. Yasser Arafat's death in November provided the Palestinians with their first real opportunity to begin the process of liberalization and democratization. Arafat, who ruled by terror and tyranny since the founding of Fatah in 1959, prevented all challenges to the PLO's preeminence among Palestinians. The fact that his patently dictatorial declaration that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people was accepted shows that the entire world, over time, came to believe that Palestinians have no right to freedom in any real sense.

And so, when he finally passed away, for a moment it seemed that it would be possible to usher in a new period in Palestinian history. Just moments, however, after Arafat was finally declared dead, the nations of the world, led by Israel, America and the EU, ensured the continuation of Arafat's authoritarian, terror-supporting regime by anointing his deputy of 40 years, Mahmoud Abbas, to replace him. That Abbas's election last week was a sham was testified to by the resignation en masse of the Palestinian Central Elections Committee last Saturday, just hours before Abbas was sworn in as the new PA chairman.

Ammar Dwaik and Baha al-Bakri, two of the former election officials, told The Jerusalem Post that a group of gunmen, including at least one security officer from the PA's General Security Force, stormed their offices on Election Day and demanded that non-registered Palestinians be allowed to cast ballots. The purpose of the fraud, they claimed, was not to change the results of the election, in which Abbas ran without significant opposition, but to ensure a convincing victory for Abbas, who was declared the winner with 62 percent of the vote.

Abbas has made no bones about the course his leadership will take. On the day he was sworn into office, two Palestinian youths were shot to death in Nablus for "collaborating" with Israel, and in Gaza, a Palestinian court sentenced five men to prison for the same crime. Abbas stated that rather than fight Palestinian terrorists, he will negotiate with some and integrate others into the Palestinian security services.

And what of the law-abiding Palestinians who voted for him? Thursday night's attack on the Karni cargo terminal, which was carried out jointly by Hamas and the Fatah's Aksa Martyrs Brigade – with whom Abbas is now negotiating – forced Israel to close down the terminal through which Palestinian farmers and businessmen transport their goods to market.

The Hamas bomber who blew himself up at Gush Katif junction this week hid his bomb in his underwear. This means that Palestinians waiting at checkpoints will now, no doubt, have to undergo still more intrusive inspections before traveling. To them, Abbas promises nothing other than to demand that Israel release thousands of terrorists from its prisons – terrorists who, if released, will undoubtedly return to terror, forcing Israel to take still more military measures to protect its citizens and thus exacerbating the conditions in which rank-and-file Palestinians live.

The US has made several mistakes in Iraq. It was wrong for it to stop pursuing the de-Ba'athification process. It was probably a mistake for it to call for the Iraqi army not to fight its forces when they invaded in March 2003. In so doing, the Americans enabled Saddam's army to escape intact, to fight another day on the terror battlefield of its choosing. And it was wrong not to seal Iraq's borders with Iran, Syria and Saudi Arabia immediately after the terror war began in the summer of 2003.

Yet, for all it has done wrong, the US has learned from its mistakes. Ahead of the elections, Iraq's borders will be sealed. The US is building an Iraqi military whose forces wish to fight the terrorists. The US is making clear to Iraq's neighbors that they will pay a price if they continue to interfere in Iraq. And the US has made absolutely clear that its forces will not leave Iraq until their job is complete.

In Israel, where the lessons of our government's decision in 1993 to reward terrorists with arms and territory have been learned on the backs of the more than 1,300 Israelis who have been murdered since then, we find that rather than apply those lessons, our government is repeating the mistakes. Rather than forming partnerships with Palestinians like Dwaik and Bakri and the thousands of Palestinians who are demanding democracy, we have anointed yet another dictator who seeks to shore up his legitimacy not by fighting and exposing terrorists, as the Iraqi government is doing, but by incorporating terrorists into his government and security services.

Speaking to Egyptian journalists shortly after Saddam's capture in December 2003, US Ambassador to Egypt David Welch, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's nominee for assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, said, "America does not covet territories, it does not covet resources America does covet ideas, and we believe – to quote Winston Churchill – 'ideas are the empire of the future.'"

While it is still too early to say whether the American idea of an Iraqi democracy will succeed, it is, sadly, self-evident that the Israeli idea of rewarding Palestinian terrorists with land and power in exchange for them not fighting other Palestinian terrorists is doomed to failure. It is true that America has much to learn from Israeli battlefield tactics. But Israel has even more to learn from America's vision for victory. (Jerusalem Post Jan 21)

## Jewish Green Day in Yesha By Ariel Natan Pasko

Tu B'Shvat (the 15th of the Hebrew month of Shvat - this year, January 25<sup>th</sup>) marks the Jewish New Year for trees, the Jewish "Green Day". Tu B'Shvat is a mini-holiday on the Jewish calendar, when it is customary to plant trees in Israel (the Zionist-Green Revolution has repopulated the land with millions of acres of trees since the late 19th century), take nature hikes and stress environmental awareness, and to eat fruits that are specific to the Land of Israel, like dates, figs, grapes, olives, and pomegranates. So while some Jews will be out lovingly planting trees, or growing produce "organically," others will be saying special prayers and conducting a Tu B'Shvat Seder (a meal with Land of Israel fruits, and a ritual order based on Jewish mystical tradition), like a Passover Seder.

What do Jewish "settlers," concern for the environment, Jews from the former Soviet Union, and hi-tech have in common?

They all come together in Hebron-Kiryat Arba. Mofet B'Yehuda, Hebron-Kiryat Arba's hi-tech start-up incubator has an environmental division called Green Tech. The natural outgrowth of their "True Love for the Land of Israel" is environmental awareness, and as Green Tech's website ([www.greentech.co.il](http://www.greentech.co.il)) says, "It's good business too". Bringing Jews home from a 2,000-year exile, building the land, preserving it, and doing business, this is 58th century - on the Hebrew calendar - (21st century) Zionism in action.

As their website states, "Green Tech was established to answer the growing global demand for new ecological and environmental technologies. Green Tech's professional team helps to identify these promising new technologies, to assist the entrepreneurs at the most critical pre-seed and seed stage and to enhance their viability on the world market." Some of Green Tech's graduates include, Lev gum, Ltd, Agarom Ltd, and BionTech, Ltd.

Levgum, Ltd, as the site says, "has developed a revolutionary new technology for recycling rubber tires and other rubber waste, which is both cost-effective and environmentally friendly. This innovative technology will have an immediate environmental impact on industrial nations' rapidly growing problem of rubber waste disposal." Lev gum's products are suitable for the tire and automotive industry, consumer goods production, road and building construction, and agriculture.

Agarom Ltd, is, "producing agricultural protection products from the unique extracts of Israeli aromatic plants. Agarom has developed novel technologies to produce high quality pest control, crop protection, and veterinary products, which are environmentally friendly, safe, cost-effective, and leave no residue in food or the environment. Their products are 100% natural extracts of plants, scientifically blended to offer special synergy and have unique features. The technology for Agarom's products consists of unique methods for extraction, formulation and blending." Agarom's products can be used in Agriculture, Pesticides, Crop Protection, and Veterinary products.

BionTech, Ltd, has, "developed a new technological approach to making dried and liquid extracts from a broad range of herbs and plants. Their unique process has resulted in the production of a natural, garlic-based remedy, which helps to lower blood pressure, strengthen the immune system and prevent colds and flu. This remedy does not contain synthetic chemical substances, preservatives, solvents or dyes." BionTech's products serve the needs of alternative and natural medicines; herbal supplements for food and agriculture industries, and the cosmetics and pharmaceuticals industries.

Just as Jewish "settlers" in Hebron (Judea) are developing new "Green," natural and environmentally friendly techniques and products, so too are Jews in Samaria and Gaza.

Much organic farming is being done without pesticides, insecticides or the addition of any harmful substances (which while keeping insects away) cause various side effects when ingested by humans. The organic farms in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza - Yesha - produce an abundance of fruits and vegetables, some of which can only be found in the heartland of Judea and Samaria.

For example, there are many varieties of exotic mushrooms that are only available in the Gush Etzion town of Tekoa (in Judea). The Israeli Journal of Agricultural Settlements named the Tekoa Mushroom Farm, "Enterprise of the Year" in the Advanced Agriculture category not long ago.

The Zimmerman family of Itamar in Samaria have an organic farm. Their company "Haaretz HaTova" (the Good Land) produces different types of rolled Fruit Leather from high quality organic fruits. They use Grapes, Apples, Pears, Oranges, Lemons and Strawberries. "A great children's snack, also good for hikes, they require no refrigeration." They produce Instant Vegetarian Meals, "cup of soup," in 5 flavors, and in different sizes, suitable for adults or children. They also produce Organic Seasoning Spices. There are 4 types, Pikanti, Italian, Greek and Middle Eastern. The products are homemade by the Zimmerman family from organic vegetables (carrots, peppers, tomatoes, onions, garlic, dill and squash) and organic herbs (such as oregano, rosemary and basil). Their products are all natural and certified Kosher under the supervision of the Samaria Rabbinate. The Association of Organic Growers in Israel also certifies the farm. They can be found at ([www.shechem.org/alon/eindex.html](http://www.shechem.org/alon/eindex.html)). Then there's the Zimmerman's other project, "Joseph's Blessing: Eco-Farm," with greenhouses and a fishpond, check it out at: ([www.shechem.org/alon/ecofarm/index.html](http://www.shechem.org/alon/ecofarm/index.html)).

Another farm in northern Samaria, also markets its specialty products all across the world via the Internet ([www.shechem.org/tea/eindex.html](http://www.shechem.org/tea/eindex.html)). The Brody Family from the Tsel Harim farm in Elon Moreh, on a hill overlooking Shechem (Nablus). They produce Organic Teas and Herbs. In a sampler, they sell five types of aromatic Organic Tea and Herbs grown, picked and hand

packed "with love". The contents include (chosen according to season) Lemon Verbena, Zuta Levana, Mint, Azov [Za'atar], Echinacea/ Zuta mix, and St. John's Wort. Kosher certification is from the Elon Moreh Rabbinate.

On the hill of Achiya - near Shilo - the Shukar family strives to provide the best olive oil, using only Jewish Labor. This organic cold pressed oil is produced from olives grown and processed by Jewish residents of the Binyamin region of Samaria. The Shukar Family was one of the first families to reclaim the land around Shilo and plant olive groves. These are the same hills that were used by the Hasmoneans (the Maccabees) to grow olives and produce olive oil for the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. The Jewish olive oil industry in the heart of the Benjamin region, is only a short distance from the site of the Mishkan (Tabernacle) of Shilo, from the time of the Judges in ancient Israel.

Much has been said about Ariel Sharon's Gaza Expulsion Plan, but little has been said about the importance of the agricultural produce that is grown there. There are 21 communities, most of them founded at least 20 years ago, with over 8,000 residents. Many of the communities are farming communities. There are over 3.5 million square meters (900 acres) of hothouses in Gush Katif. According to Jewish Law, one is required to thoroughly check food (like vegetables) for bugs. Aleh Katif has developed a method of growing bug-free lettuce, spinach, and other green leafy vegetables (with rabbinic certification). Then, there are the cherry tomatoes that originate from Gush Katif. Grown for export, they comprise 90% of Israel's cherry tomato exports. And don't forget the other organic vegetables, spices, flowers, plants and more. Agricultural exports run about \$60 million a year, an average of \$7,500 for every Jewish man, woman and child, in Gaza. And another important statistic, Jewish Gaza manufactures 70% of all of Israel's organic produce. For example, Anita Tucker of the Gush Katif community of Netzer Hazani, known affectionately as "The Granny of Gaza," she has raised children and grandchildren in Gush Katif, and grows organic celery.

About a year ago, the left-leaning Israeli newspaper Haaretz did a story on the "sad" fact that most of Israel's organic fruits and vegetables come from Judea, Samaria (the West Bank) and Gaza. Herzl Bibi, the owner of one of Israel's largest health food store chains, Nitzat HaDuvduvan told the Haaretz reporter that the quality of Yesha's organic food cannot be resisted, even by those opposed for ideological reasons (against Jewish "settlements"). "In the territories there is a great deal of awareness of organic farming. The farms are small, and on the hilltops, with respect to the climate and dealing with pests, it is easy to grow good-quality organic food," Bibi said. "During two or three months of the year organic strawberries come only from the Jewish 'settlements' of Netzer Hazani [in Gaza] or Itamar [in Samaria]," Bibi pointed out.

As Miriam HaLevi, an organic farming student told Arutz Sheva, "It is always an ideological decision to do without pesticides. It is therefore no surprise that the same people willing to sacrifice for the ideal of a complete Land of Israel are also willing to forgo the easy answers that modern chemical farming supplies in favor of farming organically, which requires the same traits of patience, faith, and idealism while refusing to use poisonous means to reach questionable ends."

So, if Israel carries out Sharon's Gaza Expulsion Plan, not only would it be a travesty (expelling Jews from their homes), and an affront to Jewish history (a rejection of part of the homeland), but will cause a decline in the healthy eating habits of Israelis.

But if you prefer celebrating Tu B'Shvat the old fashioned way by planting trees in Israel, you can contact the "Plant A Tree In Yesha" campaign ([www.trees4yesha.org](http://www.trees4yesha.org)). Their stated goal is "to plant 10,000 new fruit trees adjacent to the settlements and hilltops throughout Yesha, enabling growth, security, and financial freedom to the people of Yesha." As they say, "Fruit trees of Israel have always represented prosperity, ownership and peace, and today it is no different." According to their website, last year they planted trees in Hebron-Kiryat Arba (Hilltop 26 and Givat Lapid), the farm at Maon and Ma'ale Chever (in the Hebron Hills), Bat Ayin (Gush Etzion) in Judea, and in Tapuach, Yitzhar, Sa-Nur, and Kedumim in Samaria.

The Talmud teaches, "When the fruit trees of Israel will once again give of their fruits, there is no surer sign that the Redemption of the Jewish people is at hand" (Sanhedrin 98A).

Or, if you prefer planting in Gaza, contact Gush Katif ([www.katif.net/2b/english.php](http://www.katif.net/2b/english.php)). According to Gush Katif's website, "A year ago, just before Tu B'Shvat of 2004, the Prime Minister announced his plan to expel the settlements of Gush Katif. From that day on the inhabitants of Gush Katif are doing their best to fulfill the verse, "Enlarge the place of your tent" (Isaiah 54:2), in order to demonstrate to the people of Israel just how determined the people of Gush Katif are to remain there forever."

"Our shop stocks a broad selection of seedlings from the Gush Katif nurseries, for planting in houses, yards, kindergartens, schools and IDF bases in Gush Katif," their website informs us. Their best sellers are, Myrtus Tarentina, Bougainvillea (large), and Eucalyptus Calophylla (medium), for you home gardeners.

The Jewish People's love for its ancient-modern homeland is constantly being renewed, often in more and more environmentally friendly ways, whether through new "Green" technologies, afforestation, or organic farming. Happy New Year to the Land of Israel, Happy Tu B'Shvat! (Hebron news Jan 25)