



## 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*

### Quote of the Week...

"There are two streams within the national religious community. We are divided on every possible issue - according to so many parameters. Elections are coming up on whether or not to give up parts of the Land of Israel and it comes from us - from our variant views on the matter. Rabbi Ya'akov Ariel, who I am so sad is not the chief rabbi today, said in Yamit that we were mistaken when we said they would not pull out of Yamit. A believer would never say such absolute things about such matters. We should never say things like 'we are sure that G-d is with us' because someone who is sure G-d is with him does not wear a seat-belt when driving the opposite way into oncoming traffic.

"I am not advocating doubt in the goals and the ultimate ends, but doubt in how to reach them. The Book of Job ends when G-d appears in the storm and says the real religious Jew is not the one who says he knows everything, but he who has doubts. I emphasize - not a doubt in religion or in G-d - but in the ways of getting to the goals."

"There is Torah, there is a ruling, but you must prove and root whatever you are saying in the Torah. Proofs and evidence are what you need. The tragedy that happened in religious Zionism is the use of this concept and term daat Torah - which was a cynical creation emanating from the hareidi houses of study.

"There will be a referendum in a week and more than 50% are going to vote to hand over parts of the country to the Palestinians - and it is a disaster. But it is because we made three mistakes: First, we waged a sartorial and tribal struggle of the religious. We forgot that all of our achievements in the past were successful because we were united with the other tribes of Israel. Second, we speak a different language - a religious language - when that is not what our forefathers taught us. Abraham, when he bought Hebron, spoke Hittite, David, when he purchased Jerusalem, spoke Jebusite - only we, today, quote scripture and hope that will convince people. Third, we have failed to present an alternative plan. G-d does not help anyone who does not help himself and a person who does not work rationally is not working.

"We still stand a chance if three things take place. We must present a political program, we must stop acting as a sector or a tribe, but as the Nation of Israel and we must learn to speak Hittite and Jebusite - to speak the national language instead of the religious language." - College of Judea and Samaria professor, Dr. Amnon Shapira at the Jerusalem Conference this week. (IsraelNationalNews Mar 22)

### Commentary...

**Israel's Uninformed Electorate** By Caroline Glick

On the eve of the Knesset elections, Israel faces multiple challenges. Hamas, in appointing technocrats and terrorists to run its new government is showing that it is possible to learn from the Nazi model of governance. Even genocidal mass murderers who seduce their societies with delusions of racial hand religious supremacy can receive international acclaim if they make the trains run on time.

Israel's political spectrum is divided between the Left, represented by Kadima and the Right represented by Likud. Kadima wishes to contend with

the Hamas threat by **בס"ד** making a public show of shunning Hamas while surrendering Judea and Samaria to the terror organization.

The Likud points out that surrendering Judea and Samaria to Hamas will make it impossible to defend the rest of the country. Since Likud doesn't think that Israel should surrender its right to defend itself by turning its heartland over to a global

terrorist organization which together with Fatah and Islamic Jihad has already murdered over 1,100 Israelis and remains committed to annihilating Israel, it objects to surrendering any territory to Hamas.

It has been repeatedly noted in this column that the Israeli media has blocked all public debate on this issue. The media molycoddles politicians on the Left - applauding them for mindlessly repeating the talking points they received from their public relations advisers. Politicians on the Right on the other hand are harassed, insulted and forced on the defensive for daring to suggest that expelling Israelis from their homes and transferring their land to Hamas might not be in Israel's best interest.

It isn't just issues related to Israel's national security that are shunted under the rug by our media stars as they obsess over our politicians' relative likeability and body language. All issues of concern are ignored.

A week before the elections, it seems worthwhile to look at a few of these other issues so that we will at least have some idea of what is at stake.

FIRST, WE have the economy. Of all the parties running in these elections, only two have enunciated their economic policies in any coherent manner. Likud, led by Binyamin Netanyahu is a free market, small government party.

Labor, led by union boss Amir Peretz who oversaw the Histadrut labor union as it plunged into bankruptcy taking several workers' pension funds with it, and held the national economy hostage to its illegal general strikes, maintains that Israel must adopt the South American socialist model that has done such wonders for the Argentinean, Venezuelan and Bolivian economies.

The front-running Kadima party has outlined no economic platform. Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert both promises to continue the free market reforms Netanyahu pushed through as finance minister, and to reverse them, while his deputy Shimon Peres promises an end to "piggish capitalism."

Kadima's incoherence serves its needs in the election season because the only question that the media considers relevant or newsworthy is whether a candidate or a party expresses sufficient "social sensitivity." Translated into talking points this means that candidates are judged by the amount of contempt they level against Netanyahu for having implemented free market reforms.

While Netanyahu's reforms caused a large, sustained drop in unemployment and moved Israel from the brink of economic collapse to become the fastest growing market in the Western world, the media barrages the public with unsubstantiated, and transparently imaginary statistics proclaiming that a quarter of Israel's children are starving.

Aside from the invisible hundreds of thousands of starving kids, no one seems to care that workers just barely scraping the borders of the middle class are paying 33-40 percent income taxes, or that VAT - a regressive tax if there ever was one - is 16.5 percent. It doesn't seem to bother anyone that our markets are run by monopolists that overcharge us for everything from food to housing to banking services because they can because they are monopolists.

All the journalists who ooze "social sensitivity" never seem to make a connection between overtaxed business owners and unemployment or low wages for skilled and unskilled, educated and uneducated workers. Given the media's love affair with South American socialism, it should surprise no one that those minor parties that have something to say about the economy generally say that they hate and oppose capitalism and small government.

ASIDE FROM the economy, there is the issue of Israel's constitutional

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crisis. During the course of the campaign, there have been several notable episodes which illustrated the depths of Israel's constitutional morass.

First we have the interim government's treatment of the Knesset's investigative committee into police brutality against protesters at Amona last month. Acting in clear contempt of the Knesset, Internal Security Minister Gideon Ezra and Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz barred their senior officers from testifying before the committee. The fact that as government ministers in a parliamentary democracy they are constitutionally bound to uphold the decisions of the Knesset seems to have made no impression whatsoever on the ministers - who have the full support of the media in their law-breaking activities.

Then we have the odd decision by Attorney-General Menachem Mazuz to appoint himself arbiter of what decisions the interim government is allowed to make before the elections. Last week, Mazuz ordered the Health Ministry's medications committee, which is responsible for determining what prescription drugs should be covered by state medical insurance, to desist from convening until after the elections. It never seemed to occur to Mazuz that it might not be any of his business whether the committee convenes since absolutely no legal issue is raised by the schedule of its meetings.

Mazuz's decision to turn a committee of civil servants into a matter under his purview is just the latest in a series of dubious if not downright unacceptable maneuvers on his part that have served to empower him far beyond what any reasonable person would deem reasonable.

Following Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's massive stroke in January, Mazuz invented a bit of Orwellian legalistic gobbledygook by defining Sharon's condition as of one of "temporary incapacity of a permanent character."

Mazuz had good reason to act as he did. If he had simply declared that Sharon was "permanently incapacitated" - which he is - then a complicated, multi-step procedure for selecting and approving a new prime minister and government would have been set in motion, the results of which are unclear. But by declaring Sharon "temporarily incapacitated on a permanent basis," Mazuz blocked that procedure from taking place. In so doing, he seized the power to select the prime minister from Israel's elected officials, effectively anointing himself the prime minister's sole elector.

Israel's constitutional crisis has two central characteristics - the Knesset is emasculated and the legal establishment as represented by the Attorney-General and the Supreme Court is disproportionately empowered. By all rights, this state of affairs should have been a major issue in the election campaign. Yet, it has received no attention.

Before his temporary incapacitation of a permanent nature, Sharon and his PR consultants began espousing support for constitutional reform that would transform Israel from a parliamentary democracy to a presidential democracy. Since Olmert replaced Sharon, Kadima has been all but silent on the issue.

For its part, Labor members have repeatedly voiced their satisfaction with the current imbalance of powers. This makes sense because in constitutional matters, the state prosecution and the Supreme Court routinely rule in accordance with their members' leftist political beliefs thus empowering the Left well beyond its numerical support among the public.

NETANYAHU HAS stated his preference for a reform of the method of electing Knesset members. The Likud supports splitting the ballots so that 60 members of Knesset will be selected directly by voters on a regional basis while the other 60 will continue to be elected by the proportional party lists.

There can be little doubt that a movement away from proportional elections will not only increase accountability by tying parliamentarians to their constituents, it will also eliminate some of the smallest splinter parties and so stabilize Israeli governments.

In the next few years, Israel's security, economic growth and constitutional order will all be challenged in both familiar and unfamiliar ways. Sadly, because of our media's temporary bias and superficiality of a permanent nature which causes it to squelch all public debate on all the issues of the day, as we go to the ballot box next week, we will be casting votes that will influence how those challenges will be met without the least awareness of either the issues at stake or the manner in which the political parties will contend with them.

Then again, since they have never been challenged on any of these issues, most of our politicians are also unaware of them. (Jerusalem Post Mar 20)

## Embracing Islamo-Fascists By P. David Hornik

The Jewish Left is failing the Hamas test. Seemingly, the election of the fanatically-religious Hamas would have enabled the Jewish Left to join most other Jews in solidarity behind Israel as a country facing a threat. The Left tends to view religion as irrational and destructive, and secularism as rational. During the early period of Oslo terrorism ca. 1993-1996, the Jewish Left constantly assured us that the terror came from fundamentalist "enemies of peace"—Hamas and Islamic Jihad—whereas the ostensibly-secular Arafat and his PLO remained committed to conciliation.

But the empowerment of Hamas—now promoting suicide terrorism for children on its children's website—has caused no change in the Jewish Left's mindset. True, for Israeli leftist author Amos Oz, who has steadily vilified "fundamentalist" Jewish settlers, it is still not Hamas itself that is yearning to make peace with Israel.

But in an op-ed called "Someone to Talk To" on the ynet news site, Oz complains that both "Ehud Olmert and Benjamin Netanyahu . . . claim there is no one to talk with on the Palestinian side" and want to take unilateral measures. Instead, Oz suggests that Israel "try to strengthen the moderate elements amongst the Palestinians, the ones concentrated around [President Abbas's] office, to negotiate with them and to sign agreements with them. . . . Were negotiations with the presidential establishment to produce even a draft agreement, it could signify a breakthrough for a 'bypass road' to avoid Hamas and could lead to victory for the moderate Palestinian camp."

Apart from the fact that Oz predictably upholds Abbas's wholly undeserved reputation for moderacy—not to mention efficacy, even after over a year of rule in which Abbas never lifted a finger against the Palestinian terror organizations—this may also be the first time anyone has suggested simply "bypassing" a serving totalitarian government and "negotiating agreements" with selected elements in the regime.

And should that fail to work, "Israel," Oz assures us, "has got one other way to bypass Hamas: to negotiate with Arab governments for a general resolution to all elements of the conflict on the basis of the 2003 Arab League proposal (the so-called 'Saudi Proposal')." In other words, skip over the PA regime altogether and do it all in one shot—with the whole Arab world, with its great fondness for Israel. For Oz, it is better to engage publicly in ludicrous mental contortions than to join the rest of us folks who just think we're going to have to fight Hamas.

The editorial board of Israel's left-wing daily Haaretz, though, accepts the fact that "the Palestinians elected the parliament and government that Hamas will apparently rule," and criticizes Labor prime-ministerial candidate Amir Peretz for, like Oz, "want[ing] to establish a moderate track for negotiations with the Palestinians and strengthen pragmatists, while intentionally ignoring the fact that Hamas is in power."

Does this mean Haaretz has, for the time being, despaired of its dreams of turning Israel and its environs into a southern version of the EU—peaceful, nonchalant, and more or less productive? Not at all: "it is with these elected [Hamas] bodies that Israel must hope to reach an agreement. . . . while Israel's intelligence services think there is a slim chance for political negotiations with Hamas[,] we must remember that the same intelligence was mistaken in its assessment of Hamas' political power, and it's possible that it is mistaken in its assessment of the changes that will take place."

In other words, for Haaretz the partner for peace is—Hamas itself.

As for the American Jewish Left, the emergence of House and Senate bills calling for an end to aid and ties with a Hamas-led Palestinian Authority has prompted objections. The notion that anyone, anytime, might act assertively toward the Palestinians, hold them accountable for their actions, and redirect aid to someone more deserving proves too much for the devotees of the peace ideology.

Seymour Reich, for example, of the Israel Policy Forum insists in a Jerusalem Post op-ed that "US policy—and any Congressional legislation—should . . . provide opportunities and inducements to Palestinians to publicly commit to achieving a two-state solution using nonviolent means and accepting the State of Israel, and allow for engaging with those Palestinians who make such a commitment." Read: sustain the dream of bribing the Palestinians to adopt Western values after, seemingly, it had been painfully discredited.

At the same time, Reich pontificates, the US must "make certain [its] funds are not used to advance the goals or methods of Hamas." Read: micromanage a distant, corrupt, anarchic, Third World society to ensure that funds end up, and stay in, the hands of alleged good guys and in no way abet the aims of a terrorist government and a general population of people inundated with anti-Semitic propaganda since earliest childhood.

For the Jewish Left both in Israel and abroad, dreams die hard. But so do the Israeli victims of Palestinian terror that is enabled by those who lack the courage to look at reality and substitute fantasies of friendship with those who loathe them. (FrontPageMagazine.com Mar 22)

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### The Case for Likud By Evelyn Gordon

The upcoming elections are clearly crucial for anyone who opposes another unilateral withdrawal. Yet not any vote for a rightist party is an equally effective vote against withdrawal. In fact, anyone serious about preventing the pullout has only one realistic option: Likud.

There are several reasons for this. First, the only surefire way to prevent the withdrawal is if the Likud rather than Kadima forms the next government, and that requires the Likud to win enough seats to be a viable candidate. It need not be the largest party; President Moshe Katsav consults all the factions before choosing someone to form the government, and if Binyamin Netanyahu had more overall support than Ehud Olmert, Katsav would probably choose him even if Kadima were slightly larger. But for this to happen, the parties must be fairly close in size - say 25 seats for Likud and 30 for Kadima. If Kadima has 35 seats to Likud's 15, Katsav will almost have to choose Kadima, both in deference to the voters' preference and because a 15-seat party is simply too small to form a viable coalition.

Second, even if Kadima forms the government, some of its likely coalition partners, such as Shas, might still be persuaded to oppose the pullout itself. That, however, is possible only if a strong opposition actively mobilizes votes and exerts pressure. If the opposition had only 30 votes against the pullout, Shas would certainly not quit the coalition. But it might if the opposition had 50 votes and its 11 seats were decisive.

A 25-seat Likud can obviously spearhead a stronger opposition than a 15-seat Likud. In this case, however, a 15-seat Likud would probably not be an opposition at all - because if the Likud does poorly in the elections, Netanyahu may well be ousted by Silvan Shalom.

As long as Netanyahu heads the Likud, it will remain in opposition: Aside from the personal enmity between Olmert and Netanyahu, they have no common policy ground. Not only has Netanyahu denounced Olmert's pullout plan so strongly that he cannot back down without destroying his last shred of political credibility, but his economic policies are also antithetical to those Kadima will have to adopt to satisfy its likely senior coalition partner, Labor.

Shalom, in contrast, supported the disengagement, and has already indicated that he would back another pullout in exchange for a suitable cabinet post. Thus if Shalom ousts Netanyahu, part of the Likud (several committed pullout opponents would probably refuse) will be in the coalition within days.

Therefore, for the opposition to have any chance of blocking the withdrawal, the Likud must win enough seats to keep Netanyahu at its helm.

HERE, PURISTS will declare that they would rather vote for a party guaranteed to oppose the withdrawal - even if its efforts are doomed to fail - than cast a vote that offers a chance of blocking the pullout but also risks supporting it. Yet in fact, every "rightist" party is equally risky:

- United Torah Judaism. For a mere NIS 290 million, UTJ not only supported the disengagement; it single-handedly saved it by keeping Ariel Sharon's government from collapsing over the 2005 budget. Anyone who thinks it would not sell the West Bank equally cheaply is hallucinating.

- Shas. Shas's primary concern has always been economics, and it posed the disengagement only after Sharon refused to meet its economic price. Olmert, however, almost certainly will meet it, because Shas's economic policies are very similar to those of Labor - and Olmert does not have a coalition without labor. Any economic policy that satisfies Amir Peretz will not only make Shas comfortable joining the government, but will almost force it to join: Otherwise, Eretz will get the "credit" for these measures, and Shas will lose voters.

Moreover, because Olmert is more likely to back Shas's economic policies than Netanyahu, Shas's economic arch enemy, the party may well tell Katsav that it prefers Olmert a priori.

- National Union-National Religious Party. Were the National Union running alone, this would be a "safe" anti-pullout vote. However, a vote for NU is also a vote for the NRP, which could split off and join a Kadima government after the elections. There are two reasons for thinking this possible. One is NRP chairman Zevulun Orlev's addiction to the cabinet table, as demonstrated by his refusal to quit Sharon's government over the disengagement. Additionally, Orlev has long argued that the NRP should shift its focus to poverty, and his economic views match those of Labor and Shas. Thus Kadima's economic policies will give him an excuse for joining.

- Israel Beiteinu. Avigdor Lieberman's party seems unlikely to join a Kadima

government, albeit mainly because Labor and Meretz both refuse to sit with him. However, his Knesset slate contains at least two leftists - former Labor MK Sofa Landver and Yisrael Hasson, who reportedly signed Yossi Beilin's Geneva Initiative - who might well support the pullout even from opposition.

- A small right-wing party, or not voting at all. This is indeed a "safe" vote - but for withdrawal, not against it. Every vote that the Right wastes, whether by not voting or by voting for a party that fails to enter the Knesset, gives Kadima a larger proportion of the votes that count, thereby making the withdrawal more likely.

In short, the Likud is no riskier than any other party, and offers a better chance of preventing the pullout.

Purists, of course, also have another argument: the Likud must be punished for the disengagement. That, however, is patently ridiculous: Since most pullout supporters have quit Likud for Kadima, "punishing the Likud" actually means punishing the very MKs who opposed the withdrawal!

Moreover, it would retroactively validate the disengagement. The Likud had 40 seats in the last Knesset. If, following the split with Kadima, it cannot win at least 20, then most Likud voters evidently did support the disengagement, and Sharon was justified in dismissing the plan's defeat in a party referendum as being engineered by people who "don't vote Likud anyway."

Thus for anyone who seriously wants to prevent the next withdrawal, the Likud, for all its flaws, is the right choice - both morally and practically. (Jerusalem Post Mar 22)

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### Stand Up: Wafa Sultan Is Passing By Mona Charen

Among the most moving scenes in film history occurs in "To Kill a Mockingbird," in which the little girl, Scout, who has been watching her lawyer/father plead for the life of a falsely accused black man in the old South, is exhorted by an elderly black spectator in the gallery to rise to her feet. "Your father is passing," he explains.

I thought of that after viewing video of a woman who must be one of the bravest souls on earth. A Syrian-born psychologist who now lives and works in Southern California, Dr. Wafa Sultan caused a sensation when she appeared on Al-Jazeera TV in a debate with an Egyptian professor of Islamic Studies named Dr. Ibrahim Al-Khouli. Speaking (in Arabic) as if the words could not come quickly enough to keep up with her thoughts, Dr. Sultan offered the most impassioned defense of Western civilization I have heard in a very long time. Certainly she was more ardent for the values we hold dear than most liberal Democrats.

She began by describing the struggle in which we are engaged as one between "two opposites, between two eras." It is a clash, she said, "between civilization and backwardness, between the civilized and the primitive, between barbarity and rationality. It is a clash between freedom and oppression, between democracy and dictatorship. It is a clash between human rights on the one hand, and the violation of those rights on the other hand. . . ."

Dr. Al-Khouli was clearly taken aback.

Are you saying, the host asked, "that what is happening today is a clash between the culture of the West and the backwardness and ignorance of the Muslims?"

"Yes," replied Sultan, "that is what I mean."

She wasn't finished. Not by a mile. She went on to scorn Muslim clerics who say out of one side of their mouths that Islam forbids them to offend the beliefs of others, and yet characterize Christians and Jews as "those who incur Allah's wrath" or as apes and pigs. She paused to consider the common Islamic description of Jews and Christians as "People of the Book."

"They are not the 'People of the Book,' they are people of many books. All the useful scientific books that you have today are theirs, the fruit of their tree and creative thinking."

Sultan then forthrightly explained that she herself is neither Muslim, Christian nor Jew, but simply a secular human being. She does not believe in the supernatural, but respects the right of others to believe what they wish.

"Are you a heretic?" demanded Al-Khouli in triumphant tones. "You can say whatever you like," she replied. In an age that has brought us the Theo van Gogh assassination, deadly riots over a series of Danish newspaper cartoons, the Pym Fortune assassination, the death threats against Salman Rushdie, Hirsi Ali and Ibn Warraq, among many others, it requires truly remarkable courage to stare into the Al-Jazeera camera and calmly permit yourself to be labeled a heretic.

Sultan was raised as a pious Muslim, but her faith was shaken when she

was studying medicine at the Aleppo University in northern Syria. As The New York Times reported, terrorists from the Muslim Brotherhood burst into her classroom in 1979 and shot her professor as she watched. "They shot hundreds of bullets into him, shouting, 'God is great.'" It was a turning point in her life. She eventually left her home and moved with her husband and children to the United States.

Sultan's debate is available on The Middle East Media Research Institute's website at [www.memritv.org](http://www.memritv.org). MEMRI says that the video has already received 3 million hits since it first aired on Feb. 21, 2006.

Courage is among the rarest of virtues. Most people will not risk even the displeasure of their boss, far less their very lives, for something they believe in. Sultan doubtless speaks for millions of Muslims who similarly deplore the barbarism that has come to dominate large segments of the Muslim world. But without leadership like hers, they must feel besieged and beleaguered. Her heroic stand deserves our awe and deep respect. Stand up: Ms. Sultan is passing. (Townhall.com Mar 17)

*The writer is the author of [Do-Gooders](#) and [Useful Idiots](#).*

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### **The 'Occupation' Is the Problem** By Arthur Cohn

The Palestinian film *Paradise Now*, which sympathetically depicts the lives of two Palestinian terrorists, won the Golden Globe and was nominated by the Academy of Motion Pictures in Hollywood for the best foreign film Oscar.

How is it possible, I ask myself, that such a film is acclaimed by people of culture? The main reason is that terrorists active against Israel are regarded by many as freedom fighters whose motives should be understood.

One word has transformed Palestinian terrorists into sympathetic figures in certain quarters and has tainted all political discussion surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: That word is "occupation."

All land not part of Israel until 1967 is deemed "occupied territory." And in dealing with supposedly stolen land all means are justified.

By these criteria there can be no negotiations about Gush Etzion or other settlement blocs, no discussion about a united Jerusalem. These areas are illegally occupied and have to be given back.

The term "occupation" also reminds people of the German occupation of Europe during WWII. This allusion to Nazism makes Israel's transgression even worse. It is only a small step from the "occupation" to a full-scale comparison of Israel to Nazi Germany. In this context, who can deny the Palestinians the right to fight the "occupation"?

Calling the West Bank "occupied" is irresponsible and unjustified. Let's remember that Israel didn't initiate the war in order to conquer land. Israel was attacked in 1967.

Israel didn't take any land from a sovereign state. The West Bank and Gaza were illegally in the hands of Jordan and Egypt respectively.

The disputed areas were promised for Jewish settlements by the League of Nations in 1922, and all the resolutions of this body were transferred to the UN under Article 80 of the UN charter.

THERE IS no parallel case in history that treats territories captured in a defensive war as occupied. Moreover, for most Arabs all the land of the state of Israel is stolen ("the occupation started in 1948") and those who speak now about "occupation" of the areas beyond the Green Line play into the hands of the Palestinians and their anti-Israel propaganda.

The soft treatment by many in the international community we are now seeing of the soon-to-be Hamas-led PA - which declares that all Israel has to be "liberated" by terrorism from "occupation" - is the proof for that. All use of the misleading term "occupied territories" encourages the double standard whereby many nations treat the various terror groups such as al-Qaida one way and the Palestinian terror groups another way.

IF THERE will come a time for a peace agreement between Israel and a reliable Palestinian partner, many concessions will have to be made. But to declare in advance that all these areas don't belong to Israel, that they are part of an illegal occupation, makes no sense. Does the Old City of Jerusalem, which was attacked in 1948, not belong to Israel? Are areas like Gush Etzion not part of the Zionist enterprise? Have the survivors of the Jews brutally killed in the Hebron pogroms no right to return to their historical Jewish center?

Those who declare that great parts of Israel are occupied territories also indirectly support the Arabs' claim that the Jews really don't have any true roots in the Holy Land at all.

One sixth-grade Palestinian school book put it this way: "The argument that the Jews have historical rights in Palestine is the greatest lie in human history."

The ugly efforts of the Arab propaganda to rewrite Jewish history, by saying for instance that the Temple never existed, are indirectly supported by those who speak flippantly about "occupied territories."

By declaring that the West Bank is "occupied" we are also supporting the peculiar idea that they must become Judenrein - free of Jews. If more than one million Palestinian Arabs live in Israel, why is it unthinkable that Jews would live under the Palestinian Authority?

AS FOR the ownership of the land, almost all Jews who settled beyond the Green Line built their homes on public land and not on privately owned Arab property.

If Israel's demand for security lacks a basis in law, justice and morality, if Israel does not stress its rights in the Land of Israel, if it basically justifies the Arab position that large parts of Israel belong only to them and are forcibly stolen, the Jewish state and its supporters cannot wonder when we see so many students on American university campuses embracing the Palestinian propaganda narrative. We cannot be surprised that so many writers and media people speak out against Israeli policies; we cannot wonder when major churches tell their congregants they are divesting from Israel; and we cannot wonder when a prestigious award is given to a film that shows understanding, even a certain admiration, for anti-Israel terrorists. (Jerusalem Post Mar 22)

*The writer is the Academy Award-winning producer of numerous films, including [The Garden of the Finzi-Continis](#) and [One Day in September](#).*

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## *From the Blogs...*

### **What Does it Say about Canada When Terrorists 'Love' Us?**

By Lorne Gunter

Mark Budzanowski, a 57-year-old aid worker from Toronto, was taken hostage Tuesday in the Gaza Strip by members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. He and 10 other westerners were grabbed in retaliation for the Israeli army's storming a West Bank prison in search of Ahmed Saadat and five other terror suspects being held by the Palestinian Authority.

Budzanowski was released Wednesday when his captors figured out he wasn't an American. "When they were certain I was Canadian, they were very disappointed. Then, they told me, 'We love Canada,'" he told the Globe and Mail.

Things might well have turned out very much worse for Mr. Budzanowski had his kidnappers not loved Canada so much. But how good is it for the rest of us that they do?

The PFLP is radical even by Palestinian standards. Yet they love Canada. Why?

Because we let them operate freely within our borders, raising funds and recruiting thugs and murderers for their cause? Because we're an easy mark, a good bet for any group seeking to set up a base of operations for an attack on Western targets?

Maybe it's not that nefarious. Maybe they love us for our squishy anti-Americanism and lax refugee policies.

Whatever the reason, I'm not pleased they love Canada.

And theirs is not some abstract affection for a distant, unknown place.

Even after the PLPF gang found Budzanowski's passport in his pockets, they suspected he was an American spy in disguise. But after "the men in the masks" had quizzed him "about specific shops near Mr. Budzanowski's residence on Carlton Street in Toronto," they were convinced he was who he said he was -- a Canadian.

But how do a group of masked men, standing around in a basement in the Gaza Strip, know about "specific shops" in downtown Toronto unless they have been there? And what were they doing there? Whether scouting out safe houses or looking for post-terrorism careers in a new land, I don't care. I don't want my country to make these murderers and terrorists feel welcome. Yet obviously it does.

It's unsettling. (NationalPost.com Mar 16)

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