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## ISRAEL NEWS

*A collection of the week's news from Israel  
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Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation*

### Commentary...

**Careful, Mr. Sharon** By Ellen W. Horowitz

You'd have thought an invitation to Crawford Ranch would have included room and board at the president's place. But it seems Prime Minister Ariel Sharon had to settle for the Waco Hilton.

Weird venue. You remember Waco. That's where FBI agents, back in 1993, botched up a six-week stand-off with members of the Branch Davidian sect. The end result was 83 dead (including a lot of women and children) in an inferno of gunfire and flames.

This week Sharon was shootin' from the lip and spoutin' words of war in the Lone Star State. But he done got his enemies mixed up. He told an NBC interviewer: "The tension here, the atmosphere here looks like the eve of civil war.

"All my life I was defending the life of Jews. Now, for the first time, I am taking steps to protect me from Jews," our premier told the Today show.

Imagine that – slanderin' your own people before the international media. Why is it that some pro-disengagement advocates seem to be salivating over the prospect of civil war? The media is yapping over reported dissension within settler ranks, and the security services are howling about doomsday scenarios.

In point of fact, a bloody civil war is not something the anti-disengagement crowd is plotting. What the government is currently facing, and will continue to face, is a nonviolent, popular movement of Zionist-oriented civil disobedience.

Yep, we plan to take the country back and keep it safe and secure for our posterity (something Ariel Sharon has failed to do). The anger has to be and will be expressed, but our collective response is intended to be solid, unwavering, intensely passionate, creative, spirited, timely and wise. That would apply to our street protests as well as our written and spoken presentations.

And that's how it should be for anyone who values the people, Torah and Land of Israel, and intends to lead this nation in the future.

I'll let you in on something else. We will be here in Eretz Israel long after Sharon, Shimon Peres, Mahmoud Abbas, George W. Bush and Kofi Annan have passed from the scene (that's a fact, not incitement). But we're going to resist Sharon's plan as if there were no tomorrow, knowing full well that, as Jews, we're immersed in an ongoing struggle.

It's the awareness that there will be a tomorrow – and the next day, and the next – that will give us the stamina to endure this struggle indefinitely; whereas the rest of you will be all tuckered out. Our goal, as always, is to hold the ground we have while moving forward by choosing life and being active participants in evolving Jewish history.

Our challenge is to survive physically, mentally and spiritually, as individual Jews and as a collective Jewish people.

Now a word of warning to Mr. Sharon. Be careful about that civil war talk. I'm on record for being an extremist when it comes to nonviolence (so please don't drag this mama off for questioning – at least not until I clean my freezer for Pessah). Don't create mythical monsters in order to discredit legitimate opposition. And don't take the most productive and finest segment of the population, demonize them, push them into a corner and trample them.

Ten months ago I penned an op-ed in The Jerusalem Post entitled "No to civil war among the Jews." I wrote: "Ariel Sharon is the second prime minister in a decade who has brought the Jewish nation to the brink by employing questionable, undemocratic and callous means to push forth a contentious agenda. The opportunity for civil debate has been frustrated due to corruption, lies and betrayal within the system... The prime minister has chosen to use the security apparatus and media to orchestrate a direct confrontation with those adhering to Zionist values."

Now it's alleged to be 10 weeks and counting to D-day. It is essential that anyone engaged in this struggle, as well as those opposed to our efforts, understand fully that we are fighting for our way of life. Moreover, many of the nation's top security experts have also questioned the prime minister's wisdom and plans. We have borne witness to the government's mistakes of the past and we citizens, as well as our soldiers, have paid a tremendous price in blood for

those mistakes.

Violent civil strife is an offensive concept to the religious Zionist segment of the country which was raised and nurtured on the values of unity and Ahavat Yisrael. We have all but exhausted the diplomatic, legislative, judicial, communicative and scholarly approach to avoiding civil disobedience. Yet we have a prime minister who has scoffed at and dismissed our efforts and suggestions, and who has now used an

inappropriate foreign venue and public forum to promote the fear of civil war in Israel.

I think that makes him a thoughtless and reckless leader. If there are any responsible members left in our Knesset, I implore them to strongly censure the prime minister upon his return, and seriously question his ability to continue to lead this nation. (Jerusalem Post Apr 12)  
*The writer and her family live on the Golan Heights. She is a painter, columnist and author of the upcoming book, The Oslo Years – A Mother's Journal.*

### Is the Forcible Removal of Israelis from Gaza Unprecedented?

By Daniel Pipes

My column last week, "Ariel Sharon's Folly," noted the likelihood that more than 8,000 Israelis living in Gaza will soon be removed by their own government, with force, if necessary. I called this step historically unprecedented and then challenged the reader to name "another democracy that has forcibly removed thousands its own citizens from their lawful homes."

Not surprisingly, readers took up the challenge, both by posting comments (such as here, here, here, and here) and sending me e-mails. Their responses fall into three main categories:

\* Eminent domain, a government prerogative properly used "to build roads, public works and the like" but often abused these days to encourage commercial projects. As a writer puts it, "American state and local governments, through a commonplace abuse of eminent domain, displace thousands of American citizens each year. Not exactly the same as Sharon's proposal, sure, but just as insidious for its creeping power over property rights." Three correspondents specifically refer to cases where their own families were evicted: the Tennessee Valley Authority which in 1933-35 forcibly evicted thousands of citizens to build the Norris Dam; Boston, in the 1960s, when hundreds of homes were seized to make way for a highway; and a Los Angeles project to build a shopping center. The case of the Navajos in the Joint Use Area with the Hopis in Arizona is also mentioned, as is the use of eminent domain in Australia.

\* Japanese internment in the United States during World War II: "The United States removed many American citizens of Japanese descent from their lawful homes and placed them in camps during World War II."

\* Cases of "ethnic cleansing," where a population perceived as foreign is thrown out of its homes and even out of the country. Examples include the American Indians, the victims of Nazism and apartheid South Africa, Germans after World War II, Muslims in India in 1947, and Russians in the Baltic States in 1991.

I don't see either any of these categories comparable to the case at hand. As one commentator says about eminent domain, it "applies to ALL citizens regardless of skin color, nationality or creed that live and own property in the area which is to be used for public development. ... nothing of the sort is scheduled to happen [in Gaza]. Instead ONLY JEWISH residents are to be forcefully removed." Another reader concludes: "There is no conceptual equivalence whatever between what 'eminent domain' means in terms of its core concepts of 'development' and 'benefit,' and what Sharon is planning." Precisely.

As for the Japanese internment, this involved the temporary relocation of citizens, not a permanent move nor the razing of their houses. Again, there is no comparison with what Sharon is doing.

ethnic cleansing is hardly comparable to the Gaza situation, if only because the government and the evicted citizens are alike ethnically, and Israeli citizens are being returned to the heartland, not expelled.

Two other suggestions bear notice. General Charles de Gaulle, "elected under the slogan of *Algerie française*, immediately after his election began the withdrawal of French troops, thereby laying the basis for Algerian independence." This would count as a very close precedent had de Gaulle

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required French citizens in Algeria to leave, but he did not do that. In fact, the French government did not expect the exodus of nearly a million pieds noirs and Jews in just a few months in 1962:

The motto among the European and Jewish community was "Suitcase or coffin" ("La valise ou le cercueil"). The French government had not planned that such a massive number would leave, at the most it estimated that maybe 200,000 or 300,000 may chose to go to metropolitan France temporarily. Consequently, nothing was planned for their return, and many had to sleep in streets or abandoned farms on their arrival in metropolitan France.

De Gaulle let the French citizens in Algeria decide their own future, whether to stay or leave; this is a policy, incidentally, that I have recommended to the Israeli leadership for Israelis in Gaza.

The best analogy proposed was the razing of Africville, Nova Scotia. The authorities in 1965 bulldozed this, Canada's oldest and largest black settlement, to the ground, but it was done in the name of slum clearance, not relocation.

Reviewing these replies to my challenge confirms me in my view that what the Israeli authorities are about to do to their citizens in Gaza has no historical precedent. (FrontPageMagazine.com Apr 11)

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### **A Chilling Pattern of Harassment** By Michael Freund

After listening to the joint press conference between President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon on Monday, I curled up in front of my laptop ready to pen a blistering critique of the premier and his plan to withdraw from Gaza. But as the words began to flow, so did my perspiration, as I began to consider some of the heavy-handed tactics now being used against critics of the withdrawal.

In recent weeks especially, there have been a growing number of incidents in which those opposed to the plan, or even those merely assumed to hold such views, have found themselves and their most basic of freedoms trampled upon.

Take, for example, the mass arrest of dozens of Orthodox Jewish youth this past Sunday after protesters blocked Tel Aviv's Ayalon highway for several minutes.

According to various reports, many of those detained by the police had nothing to do with the demonstration. They were arrested simply because they were religious and happened to be in the vicinity of the protest. This included a 10-year-old boy wearing a kippa, and a religious soldier in uniform.

Several teenage kids in the area were said to have been taken to police stations and held incommunicado for hours without their parents receiving notification, as required by law.

There have also been a number of instances in which people standing on street corners and holding signs against the Gaza withdrawal were taken away by police - for no apparent reason other than exercising their right to protest peacefully.

In one case, a 14-year-old girl was arrested a few weeks ago and held for 24 hours in police custody without being allowed to see her parents. She was denied access to her medications, even though she suffers from chronic asthma and was at risk of a potentially dangerous asthma attack.

With less than 100 days to go until the proposed Gaza withdrawal, something terribly frightening is happening here in Israel. Some of the tactics being employed by the authorities simply have no place in a democratic society, calling into question their underlying commitment to that most fundamental of civil liberties - the right to disagree with government policy.

Now I don't consider myself an alarmist; nor do I belong to the category of those who employ frenzied language to get a point across. But I don't think it is exaggerating to say that many people opposed to the withdrawal are starting to wonder whether they can truly express themselves without fear.

Earlier this month, late one night, a prominent activist involved in organizing buses for people to visit Jewish communities in Hebron and Gaza was arrested at his home in the center of the country and held into the early hours of the morning. It remains unclear why he was taken into custody, other than to frighten and intimidate him.

Things have reached the point where even people who "look" like they might be going to a protest can find themselves receiving special attention from the security forces.

This past Monday evening, a busload of Jews from Samaria was stopped by police as it made its way toward the Gush Dan area to deliver Pessah goods to needy families. According to eyewitnesses, the police refused to let the bus continue on its way, claiming that it posed a "potential threat that may lead to the blocking of roads and other protest actions."

Only after being held up for 90 minutes were the 50 passengers allowed to continue with their charitable undertaking.

Say what you will about Sharon's plan to withdraw, there can be no excuse for such tactics. If it were just a matter of an isolated incident or two, it could perhaps be dismissed as an aberration. But the sad fact is that there is a clearly a pattern at work, one in which innocent Israeli citizens are being harassed and/or silenced because of their political views.

Of course, you won't read a great deal about this in much of the mainstream media; and don't expect to hear any of Israel's myriad human rights groups speaking up against this worrisome phenomenon. Their commitment to principle seems to extend only to those who share their liberal point of view.

But that should not deter the rest of us from speaking out, if only to ensure

that Israel's democracy remains vibrant and strong. Just because someone wears a kippa, or holds a placard opposing the withdrawal from Gaza, it does not make him an "extremist" or "threat" to the country's future.

I thought twice about whether to submit this column, but realized in the end that I simply had no choice. Because if we ever reach a point where we can no longer legitimately criticize the prime minister and his policies without fear of reprisal, something will truly have gone wrong in Zion.

The only way to ensure that never occurs is to stand up without fear for what we know in our hearts to be true - that the Land of Israel belongs to the people of Israel, and to no one else. (Jerusalem Post Apr 14)

*The writer served as an aide to former Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu.*

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### **Bush-Sharon Summit - Guide for the Perplexed** By Yoram Ettinger

While the Bush-Sharon Summit focused on mutual threats (e.g. Iran and Islamic terrorism), it has highlighted a few basic misunderstandings - in Israel - concerning the US political system, US-Israel relations and Disengagement.

For example, front page headlines in the Israeli dailies have concluded that - resulting from the Summit - a \$600MN Disengagement financial assistance package will be provided to Israel by the US. The headlines ignore the \$800MN promised to Barak by Clinton in 2000, in order to expedite the Disengagement from Southern Lebanon. Israel disengaged, Hizballah's terrorism was significantly and regionally upgraded, Palestinian terrorism was inspired and escalated to an unprecedented level, but the \$800MN is yet to be granted. US Presidents do not have the authority to write checks; they can ask Congress - which possesses the Power of the Purse - to appropriate funds. Congress is currently alarmed by a growing all time high budget deficit, and Israel's leading friends have recommended that Israel refrains from requesting special financial assistance. Cheney and Rumsfeld, two of Israel's hawkish allies, are concerned that a special assistance to Israel would nibble into the stretched defense budget. Each financial request must go through Congress, which would entail a legislative process. But, some Israeli officials have pre-maturely briefed (and possibly misinformed) the media, in order to sooth opposition to Disengagement...

The Israeli public has been told since the April 2004 Bush-Sharon Summit that the US Administration has given up on the 1949/67 Cease Fire Line. However, the blunt call - by President Bush - to freeze construction in ALL settlements, has clarified that Israel should not expect any settlement-bonus, from the US, for the disengagement from Gaza and Northern Samaria. In fact, disengagement - just like any retreat in face of pressure and terrorism - would generate more Palestinian terrorism and more pressure by the Department of State, the CIA, the Europeans and the UN, which expect further sweeping Israel concessions. President Bush's statements at the summit, just like those made by Secretaries Powell and Rice since April 2004, clarify that the US has not change its position on the Green Line: no recognition of Israeli sovereignty beyond the 1949 Ceasefire Line, and no recognition of Israeli sovereignty over any Jewish community in the post-Green Line area in Judea & Samaria, Jordan Valley, Golan Heights and Jerusalem (e.g. loan guarantees are reduced by the amount spent by Israel in post-Green Line neighborhoods in Jerusalem). Wishful-thinking (sinking?) concerning a disengagement-driven diplomatic bonus have been shattered in Crawford, Texas.

Bush's proclamations suggest that disengagement from Gaza and Northern Samaria would be the first in a series, leading to the 1949 Lines (unless otherwise mutually-agreed by Israel and the Palestinians). They indicate that the post-April 2004 celebrations were based on wrong assumptions and on misrepresentations, by Israeli politicians, of the President's statements. The April statements by Bush were neither unprecedented, nor do they bind him or his successors. On June 19, 1967, President Johnson stated that an Israeli withdrawal to the pre-1967 Lines "is not a prescription for peace, but for a renewal of hostilities." President Reagan said on September 1, 1982: "In the pre-1967 borders Israel was barely 10 miles wide...I am not about to ask Israel to live that way again...It is clear that peace cannot be achieved by the formation of an independent Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza." These statements were not binding, since they were not ratified or legislated. Bush's statements were approved, by Congress, as a Non-Binding Resolution, which is (as suggested by its title) non-binding.

Israeli observers urge Prime Minister Sharon to freeze construction in all settlements, in order to avoid a costly US pressure. They do not comprehend the US - and especially the Texas - state of mind, which admires winners and not losers, which respects gumption, the overcoming of odds and defiance of pressure. On a rainy day, the Texan President would rather have an ally, in the Mideast, "which can roll in the street with the Dobermans, rather than stay on the porch with the Poodles." And, indeed, during 1948-1992, from Ben Gurion to Shamir, Israel's Prime Ministers usually - and frequently - defied US pressure. As a result they were subjected to short-term inconveniences, which were promptly replaced by a long-term strategic esteem. For instance, in 1948/9 Ben Gurion faced a US pressure to postpone declaration of independence and accept a UN Trusteeship. The US imposed a military embargo, contemplated economic sanctions, accused Ben Gurion

of leading the Jewish People toward another Holocaust, demanded an end to the "Occupation of the Negev", the internationalization of Jerusalem and the absorption and compensation of Palestinian refugees. Israeli Prophets of Demographic Doom pressured Ben Gurion to refrain from independence, lest the Jewish population be overwhelmed - by 1968 - by Arab majority. Ben Gurion defied the pressure, established the Jewish State, increased construction in the Negev, relocated government agencies from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, which was declared the capital of Israel. Consequently, the US upgraded its attitude toward the Jewish State, whose image was transformed - by Ben Gurion's defiance - from a powerless democracy into a promising strategic entity. Will Prime Minister Sharon resurrect the legacy of Ben Gurion and his successors which characterized Israel's leadership up to 1992, or will he sustain the Oslo-State-Of-Mind which has afflicted Israel since 1992? (Ynet Apr 13)

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### **Middle East Mythology** By Caroline Glick

Tuesday the 2004 Arab Human Development Report was released by the UN Development Project. The report placed a large chunk of the blame for the Arab world's lack of economic progress and political freedom on Israel's creation in 1948 and US support for Israel's continued existence, as well as the US military presence in Iraq.

The report's conclusions about Israel and the US were immediately rejected by the US and Israel. Greg Sullivan, the spokesman for the US State Department's Near Eastern Bureau said, "We think it's misguided to blame Israel for the problems and the challenges that the Arab world faces."

Mark Regev, the Foreign Ministry spokesman, was equally blunt, "For too long too many people in the Arab world have used Israel as an excuse to justify behavior that cannot be justified. You can't have democratic elections because of Israel and you can't give equal rights to women in Saudi Arabia because of Israel. This is of course a cop out."

The American and Israeli denunciations of the report were, of course, wholly reasonable. The notion that 300 million Arabs live under the jackboot because some 5 million Jews in Israel live in freedom and America supports our right to live in freedom is patently insane. So too, it is simply delusional to believe that 300 million Arabs are so bent out of shape by the fact that 2.3 million Palestinian Arabs purportedly have their freedoms curbed by Israel, that they willingly accept their regimes' right to enslave and impoverish them economically and spiritually.

Yet the greatest irony that is brought to the surface by the UNDP report is that in spite of both the American and Israeli governments' ability to differentiate between spit and raindrops, in point of fact, both Israel and the US are basing their policies towards the Palestinians specifically and the Arab world generally on an internalization of the UNDP's ridiculous claims.

How does this manifest itself?

The view among American policymakers and Israeli Foreign Ministry types, both egged on by their ideological bedfellows in Europe and the international Left is based on two presumptions. The first is that the Palestinian conflict with Israel is the cause of the Arab conflict with Israel. The second is that the Palestinians are weak and the Israelis are strong and that the way to solve the conflict is to strengthen the Palestinians and weaken Israel.

The second presumption is what leads both Israeli and American foreign policy elites to advocate Israeli surrender of land and rights to the Palestinians and to support Palestinian acquisition of arms, money and sovereignty.

The first presumption is what leads both Israel and the US to ignore the direct dependence of the Palestinian conflict with Israel on outside support by Arab League member states led by Egypt. Egypt, like the rest of the Arab world has never accepted Israel's inherent right to exist as a Jewish state in the Levant. Yet over the years, the rhetorical focus shifted from overt calls for Israel's destruction through war to overt calls for Israel's destruction through the establishment of a Palestinian state and unlimited immigration of millions of foreign born Arabs to Israel. These calls are obfuscated to a degree by a public fixation on the perceived weakness and actual misery of the 2.3 million Palestinians in Judea, Samaria and Gaza - both of which are blamed on Israel.

Yet the reality on the ground is vastly different from the picture painted by UN reports whose basic presumptions, though wrong, form the foundations of US and Israeli policy in the region. The squalor in which Palestinians reside is wholly premeditated. As far back as 1949, the Arab League decided that no member state would grant citizenship to the Arabs who left the Land of Israel as a result of the Arab invasion of the nascent Jewish state. And so these miserable people and their children and grandchildren have been incarcerated in the squalor of UN internment camps for nearly 60 years. When in the early 1980s then prime minister Menachem Begin tried to dismantle the camps in Gaza and Judea and Samaria and provide permanent and decent housing for their residents, the "refugees" were warned, on pain of death, by the pan-Arab and PLO leadership to reject Israel's offers.

The reason for this was clear: If the Palestinians had been allowed to freely develop, a core myth - that Jewish sovereignty is tainted with an original sin - a myth which was created to justify the continued Arab rejection of Israel, would disappear. And so it remains the case that despite the fact that in the last ten years the Palestinian Authority has received more international aid per capita than any national authority in the history of international aid, the Palestinians today remain in abject poverty. More to the point, their standard

of living went into freefall shortly after the PA was established in 1994. Yasser Arafat and his deputies thwarted development efforts by stealing the billions they were given.

That the rejection of Israel still forms a solid basis for Arab and Islamic unity was again made clear in a conference this week in Malaysia devoted to "Peace in Palestine." The conference gave itself a psychological warfare boost by inviting five anti-Israel Israeli and Jewish activists to participate in the proceedings. Led by Malaysia's Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi the participants called for an international "anti-Israeli apartheid" campaign demanding a total international boycott on Israel until a Palestinian state is established with Jerusalem as its capital and Israel becomes a non-Jewish state as a result of unlimited Arab immigration. The fact that the Arab and Muslim, (and Jewish) participants expressed views that were even more extreme than the rhetoric emanating from the PA is indicative of the source of the continued pressure for the indefinite prolongation of the Palestinian conflict with Israel.

Let us return now to the presumptions that form the basis of American and Israeli policy towards the Palestinians specifically and the Arab world generally. We see that by internalizing the view that the Palestinian conflict is the source of the Arab conflict with Israel and that the way to solve the Palestinian conflict is to empower the Palestinians at Israel's expense, both Israel and the US are initiating policies that distance rather than advance their stated goals of peace and security through the democratization of Palestinian society and the Arab world writ large. This is so because the guiding presumptions themselves are not simply wrong, but are the polar opposites of the facts on the ground.

These facts are that the Palestinian conflict with Israel is largely a direct result of the Arab world's rejection of Israel's right to exist. And weakening Israel, by strengthening the Palestinians or in any other manner advances none of these goals.

Arab strength is based on Arab control of the world's largest oil reserves; irredentist Arab immigrant communities throughout the Western world and specifically in Europe that demand their host governments' adopt stridently anti-Israeli foreign policies or face violence and instability at home and in global oil markets; and Arab Islamic terrorism and militarism which is financed and engendered in the oil-rich, authoritarian Arab world.

The fact that it is Arab power rather than Palestinian weakness that is fuelling the conflict is made clear by the EU's Middle East policies. As Bat Ye'or, the noted scholar of jihad ideology and Arab-European politics makes crystal clear in her new book *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis*, Western European abandonment of its early support for Israel came not in the wake of Israel's stunning victory in the 1967 Six Day War, but in the aftermath of the OPEC oil embargo in 1973.

It was the concerted pan-Arab attack on the economies of Western Europe in 1973, not Israel's acquisition of territory in 1967 that caused Europe to embrace the cause of the Palestinians. And it is the power that immigrant voters and activists wield against the European electorate and the threat of violence wielded by Arab terrorists that ensure that year in and year out regardless of the brutality of Arab rhetoric and violence, the Europeans remain faithful to the ideology of Israeli criminality and Palestinian victimhood. (Jerusalem Post Apr 8)

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### **Religious or Social?** By Dan Gerstenfeld

The Supreme Court's decision on Monday that making Shabbat the nation's official day of rest does not violate the freedom of employment law was seen by some commentators (wrongly) as an attempt to balance last week's decision to recognize Reform conversions.

While President Aharon Barak stated that setting a rest day is important from a national-religious standpoint, he added that it is also important from a social perspective.

In our opinion, the attempt to limit the scope of the decision to a question of church and state flatly contradicts what the court meant.

This becomes clear on reading what President Barak said: "The [rest and labor hours' law] was legislated for a just cause - a social cause which is carried out in a way that fulfills a national religious consideration."

What the court has actually stated is that Israeli workers have the right to get a rest day on Saturday in which they can spend time with their families or do whatever they wish, whether they are observant or not.

The decision is primarily driven by social requirements, so turning it into a religious statement is out of place.

THE COURT'S decision was taken following a petition submitted by furniture company Design 22. The company, which employs 18 workers and has been fined for having them work on Shabbat, had asked the court to cancel the law forbidding the employment of Jews on the Sabbath.

It claimed that the prohibition violated the freedom of employment law and caused the company and its workers substantial economic damage. The company therefore asked that it be allowed to choose when its workers get time off.

All this amounts to little more than an attempt to violate workers' rights under the guise of an anti-religious battle.

Even without visiting any of the shopping centers which are open on

Shabbat, it is clear that the people who work in such places don't represent the strongest elements of Israeli society. Moreover, it is questionable whether they are getting fairly compensated for working extra hours on the official day of rest.

In short, cynical employers are using the Shabbat issue as an excuse to abuse their workers. Obviously, a worker who has been asked to work on Shabbat in fact has little choice, and it can be safely assumed that the weakest employees are the ones who end up doing so. This view is also shared by the court, which stated clearly that "a settlement which allows the worker to choose a weekly rest day as he wishes is a settlement which carries, or at least potentially carries, compulsion. If the law allows each worker to choose a rest day for himself, in many cases the real choice will be in the hands of the employers and not the employees."

THE WAY the whole question of work on Shabbat has been treated in recent years is hypocritical. Local businessmen, primarily interested in maximizing profits, are trying to disguise this goal as an effort to fight religious coercion. Instead of openly admitting that they are after even more money, they prefer to present themselves as civil rights heroes.

While one may argue that the law requiring Israelis not to work on Shabbat seems to stand in stark contradiction to other basic rights, the court has clearly stated that in this case the workers' right to a day of rest (and the religious importance of the Shabbat) supersedes other rights.

In its decision the court has clearly stated that at least as far as the Shabbat is concerned, there is no contradiction in Israel's aspiration to be both Jewish and democratic. The court's ruling is not only a victory for Orthodox Jews, but for Israeli laborers in general. (Jerusalem Post Apr 10)

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### The Emperor's New Clothes By Asher Meir

Provocative advertisements are not exactly a recent invention, nor an Israeli one, but a particularly daring effort by a leading local clothing chain has reinvigorated an ongoing public discussion about the proper limits of modesty in public advertising.

One dimension of the discussion is the "local standards" idea: people shouldn't be forcibly exposed to ads which they find offensive, even if the content is not inherently problematic. Hindus may not mind if beef products are aggressively advertised in Argentina, but it is not very thoughtful to force these images on them. But this column is going to focus on universal, substantive ethical problems with sexual images in advertising.

Once upon a time, provocative images in ads were almost always of women. Feminist groups were among the first to generate public recognition that these images demean and objectify women's bodies. Women in advertising were portrayed not as people, but as objects, specifically as sex objects. Objectors claimed that advertisers were discriminating against women.

The advertising profession nobly took this criticism to heart, and from then on (my recollection is that this gathered steam in the late 70s) began, though not in equal measure, to demean and objectify men's bodies as well.

Why do these ads work? The basic idea is that they convince the viewer that he or she is not merely buying a car, a garment, an appliance etc.; he or she is actually buying sex, something which many people consider more desirable than cars, garments or appliances.

So the ethical objection to provocative advertising is closely related to a classical objection to prostitution: objectification. For example, in his book *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Immanuel Kant tried to distill all of ethics into a "practical imperative" which states: "Act as to treat humanity, yourself or anybody else, always as an end and never as a means."

And in *The Science of Right*, he claims that selling sex violates this imperative: "In this relation, the human individual makes himself a res [object], which is contrary to the right of humanity in his own person."

A few paragraphs later Kant relates to slavery, which is the ultimate objectification of a human being, relating to him or her as a mere commodity. Judaism also recognizes the connection between license and a slave mentality; the Talmud tells us that "A slave is content with licentiousness".

The problem only begins with the objectification of a particular model. The more serious problem is that these ads have a tendency to depict all romantic relations as shallow and exploitative. They present a demeaning approach to relationships which Jerusalem's Yaakov Fogelman has called "sex as a snack."

Not every immodest image is automatically exploitative. Profound human relationships do have a physical aspect which is sometimes depicted in a sensitive way in serious works of art or literature. And it is arguably difficult to advertise swimsuits without displaying some epidermis.

In these cases we wouldn't automatically condemn the images; we would judge them based on community standards, appropriate audience, and so on. (Posters at bus stops or on public streets are not serious works of art, and if they are immodest they offend lots of people.)

But the gratuitous use of provocative images to sell everyday consumer goods is a truly dangerous and demeaning phenomenon. In this Pessah season, when we are preparing to celebrate our freedom as a people, we should strive to identify all the ways in which we find ourselves still subject to an exploitative, slave mentality. (Jerusalem Post Apr 10)

*The writer is research director at the Business Ethics Center of Jerusalem (www.besr.org), an independent institute at the Jerusalem College of*

*Technology. He is also a rabbi.*

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### The Fool's Last Refuge By Sarah Honig

In his 1968 classic *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (on which the movie *Blade Runner* is based), American sci-fi author Philip K. Dick asserted that "reality is that which, when you stop believing in it, doesn't go away." Very uncooperative of reality really, especially when you consider all the effort invested in embellishing and/or evading it.

Look at Oslo and its even ungainlier offspring, disengagement. What haven't we been told about both? Pretty much the same, actually - that concessions would buy us respite from violence, that implacable enemies should be trusted with protecting us, that fork-tongued interlocutors could be relied upon to police their corrupt bailiwick and rein in their button-men, that we have no other alternative and that the experiment must be given a chance (regardless of incidental "victims of peace").

In all, things will come up roses, if we only believe. If we only believe and expel 8,000 Jews from Gush Katif, the year 2005 will usher in hope. We can believe that, if we only don't allow reality to butt in.

We Israelis, after all, are particularly adept at avoiding unwanted reminders of discrepancies between how we want things to be and how they are. We're unique in our capacity to ignore what doesn't mesh with our collective pipe dream and to adhere to it like no others can.

How else can anyone explain the indifference with which reports about the production of Kassam-like rockets in Jenin were met? Such manufacturing enterprises would have seriously scared folks anywhere, even in countries nowhere as threatened existentially as Israel. The equanimity here becomes all the more striking when we recall the Kassams' deadly impact on outlying Sderot, and if we realize what their introduction to densely populated central Israel could mean. The security fence around Samaria is no less surmountable than Gaza's, only with lots more sitting ducks beyond.

If they had their wits about them, Israelis ought now to be losing sleep about those rocket factories not discovered. It stands to reason that for each one the IDF found, there must be at least a few more which escaped detection.

Same goes for the Strella anti-aircraft missiles smuggled from Sinai into Gaza. This wasn't preempted by the Egyptians, whom we appoint as our anti-gunning vanguard, nor by Mahmoud Abbas's "security apparatus." This by any yardstick is his equivalent of what the Karine-A arms boat was for his predecessor Arafat. Indeed Abu Mazen's own intelligence crews are implicated in the Strella-smuggling caper, not the handiwork of renegades but of professed peace partners.

YET AGAIN the most nagging concern should be how many similar illicit rocket consignments escaped our vigilance. It stands to reason that for each one discovered at least several others were delivered undetected.

But if such disquieting revelations about breaches of the current pseudo-truce (whatever its Arab name-of-the-month may be) are ascribed to temporary isolated glitches, the in-your-face declarations of intent from one Abu Musaeb, as reported recently by Yediot Aharonot, cannot be likewise explained away.

Abu Musaeb, chief of northern Gaza's al-Aksa Brigades (also formally under Abbas's command), didn't beat about the bush. "This is a deceptive calm," he openly and unhesitatingly announced, "it cannot be real. The Koran warns us about Jewish treachery." After a few indelicate denigrations of the Jewish religion and nefarious character, Abu Musaeb promises to "show Jews horrors they haven't yet seen. We don't sit idle. We prepare surprises. This cease-fire is nothing but the fighter's repose, well utilized by Palestinian forces to rearm, regroup, regain strength and cook up new things. When the conflict is renewed, we'll return fortified as never before, with new methods and new weapons."

And lest Israelis doubt his stick-to-itiveness, Abu Musaeb vows that "I, my son and my grandson will continue fighting for a Muslim Jerusalem and a free al-Aksa even if that means an eternal war against Israel." So much for goodwill, spirit of compromise and prospects for long-term progress via that tattered road map to peace.

Israelis of course can choose - at their own peril - not to believe what they hear. Denial, after all, is the fool's last refuge. He brushes aside tangible evidence and pooh-poohs the potentially life-saving warnings which his senses keep transmitting to his cranial receptors.

In the fool's universe of profound cognitive dissonance seeing isn't necessarily believing, not until that traumatic point when it's no longer possible to downplay the unwelcome intrusions of reality as Dick defines it - the sort that won't go away no matter how much it's disbelieved.

In the case of the nation which fell for Oslo and lets disengagement happen, this mightn't occur until Strellas down a plane or two, until Kassam replicas fly out from Kalkilya or until Abu Musaeb's grandkid opens fire to liberate Jerusalem from Jewish contamination. (Jerusalem Post Apr 8)