

 Jerusalem 6:38; Toronto 8:01

Events...

Wednesday May 5, 7:30 - 9:30pm
Town Hall meeting "Global

Terrorism: Is Canada at Risk with **Stewart Bell**, at North York Central Library, Auditorium - Second Floor, 5120 Yonge Street., enter off Beecroft.

Commentary...

Disengagement from Genuine Peace By Natan Sharansky
The disengagement will not solve Israel's security problem or bring it into the world's embrace. It will only encourage the terrorists. The solution is to help forces of change among the Palestinians attain leadership.

The idea of transferring the Palestinian population makes me shudder in horror. The idea of Jewish soldiers dragging entire families from their homes, throwing them onto trucks, and evacuating them over the border is so horrible and unethical that I cannot start to imagine it. The idea also horrifies me when it involves Jews. The idea of evacuating entire communities from the homes and fields for which they cared lovingly despite the Katyusha rockets, uprooting children and young people from their schools, yeshivot, and pre-military training programs, and displacing three generations from their land is terrifying.

However, despite the horrible pain it would cause, I would have considered voting in favor of the Prime Minister's plan, had I believed that it would solve the problems of terror, our international isolation, and the heavy burden of running the lives of others. If only I believed that the disengagement could solve all these problems, as the Prime Minister promises, I would be willing, despite the heartache, to face the horrible reality of evacuating settlements. However, I am certain that the disengagement plan will not accomplish any of these things. It will not bring security or even calm but only more war, bloodshed, and suffering. There is no greater reward for terrorism than success, no greater encouragement than victory.

We are giving the terrorist organizations a chance to operate openly in the Gaza Strip and to import weapons freely and are fulfilling their greatest dream - destroying Jewish settlements and turning the area "judenrein". Will they have any reason to despair of fighting against us? Won't it give them even more motivation to continue the murderous terror attacks?

I assume that even the Prime Minister does not really think that the disengagement will end terror or even decrease it. He does believe that after we leave the Gaza Strip, we would be able to close the border. The Palestinians will be able to work in Egypt and we, at long last, will be able to wash our hands of what happens there. In short, we'll send Gaza to hell.

He also thinks that as long as the terror continues, we will not be asked to make any further concessions and that the world, seeing the dramatic steps we have taken, will ask nothing more and give us their full support. Doesn't that sound familiar? That is what we thought after the Oslo Accords. That was what we thought during the Camp David era, when Barak offered the Palestinians everything they desired. But it didn't happen.

We withdrew from 40% of the territory and ceased our rule over 98% of the population. In return, we received exploding buses. The world demanded more. We offered the Palestinians everything, the works, and in return, we received the cruelest terror. The world responded by treating us like lepers and war criminals. Why should the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip be any different?

As long as the Palestinian problem is not solved completely, and the disengagement plan will not solve it, the world will continue to hold Israel solely responsible for the situation that has been created. The world we continue to demand that we, and no one else, take additional steps and make more concessions. No matter what concessions we make, the terror will continue. The dream that withdrawing from the Gaza Strip will relieve us of responsibility is unfounded. No letter from Bush, as important or precedent setting as it might be, will change this.

I do agree with the Prime Minister on one point. The status quo is not to our benefit. Therefore, we must create change. However, abandoning the field and leaving it to the terrorist organizations will not do it. Change will occur only

ISRAEL NEWS

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

when we, with the help of the international community, are wise enough to completely transform the government system and the political climate within the Palestinian Authority, giving new forces, which truly desire the prosperity of their people, a chance to reach positions of power.

It will not be easy, as the American experience in Iraq has demonstrated. However, it is definitely possible, especially if the strongest power in the

world considers it the only way that the free world can deal with terrorism. What a waste it is that, instead of supporting the United States' lead, we are working in exactly the opposite direction. We will run away from the Gaza Strip and leave it in the terrorists' control. You can be sure that they will not grow lettuce there.

As long as the government of the Gaza Strip does not work to move the refugees out of the camps and improve the life of their people; as long as the government there does not consider the industrial areas a means for growth, not a corridor for terror and murder; as long as the government of the Gaza Strip does not use the media and educational system for progress and enlightenment, not brainwashing and fostering hatred; as long as the Palestinian government doesn't change, disengagement will not lead to any positive change.

In 1993, the song Farewell to Gaza was played on the radio. It expressed the Israeli belief that we had left Gaza behind us. Very quickly, it became clear that we could not leave Gaza the way it was, without it chasing after us. We must learn from our mistakes. Instead of trying to send Gaza to hell, we should try to guide Gaza to genuine, substantive change. If we do not, if we choose to run away or "disengage," we will not disengage from terrorism, responsibility, or suffering. We will disengage from only one thing: the opportunity for genuine peace.

The writer is Minister of Jerusalem Affairs

Likud Decides on Israel's Soul By Michael Freund

For a nation that rightly prides itself on its humane treatment of its enemies, Israel needs to start taking a long, hard look at how it treats its own citizens.

This coming Sunday, the fate of some 8,000 Jews will hang in the balance, when members of the Likud cast their ballots on Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's proposal to withdraw from Gaza and northern Samaria.

It is a vote laden with significance, in political as well as diplomatic and strategic terms, one whose outcome will have far-reaching repercussions, both locally and on the international scene.

But amid all the debate and discussion regarding the various aspects of Sharon's proposal, there is one key question that has been largely ignored: What kind of society is Israel becoming?

After all, it is not every day that a liberal Western democracy considers the mass expulsion of thousands of its citizens from their homes, barring them from living in a certain area because of their ethnicity and religion. Nor does it happen very often that an entire community finds its right to exist called into question, thereby implying that it is somehow less legitimate or less equal than others.

Put aside for a moment your thoughts about the wisdom of Jews living in Gaza, and consider this: What does it say about a society when it is willing to countenance the forcible eviction of Jews?

And how does such a possibility mesh with the age-old vision of Zionism, or the modern day conception of the individual's right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness"?

The vote this Sunday, then, is more than just a referendum on Jews living in Gush Katif. It is a vote for Israel's soul, a fateful verdict on the nature of what Israeli society and morality have become, and what they wish to be.

Because deep down, we all know that if Gaza's Jews were Palestinians, this would never be happening.

Indeed, if a government in Israel arose which sought to put the question of evicting Arabs up to a vote, it would rightly be denounced as racist and immoral. But when it comes to Jews, it seems that a double standard is too often applied.

Take, for example, the issue of prayer on the Temple Mount. Week in and week out, thousands of Palestinians stream to Jerusalem's Old City for

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Friday prayers. Yet Jews who wish to do the same, tax-paying citizens of this country, who seek to exercise their basic right to freedom of worship, are subjected to all sorts of restrictions and limitations.

When Palestinians suspected of terrorism are placed into administrative detention, the defenders of freedom and human rights raise a hue and a cry, denouncing the government for resorting to extra-judicial means.

And yet, when the very same tool is used against a Jewish settler, an Israeli citizen ostensibly safeguarded by all the rights and protections that civil society affords him, the voices of concern suddenly fall silent.

The obsession in certain circles with ensuring Palestinian rights has inevitably led to a lack of resolve when it comes to protecting Jewish rights. Indeed, although the Left likes to assert that the "occupation" is corrupting Israel's soul, the only thing that has truly been tarnished is Israel's treatment of its own citizens.

And so, because Jews are not Palestinians, the government feels free to do things to them that it would never even consider doing to our foes.

It is time for this to change, before a further erosion in our fundamental rights as citizens takes place. To begin with, the very idea of expelling Jews from their homes should be ostracized and removed from the political dialogue. It should be denounced and condemned and hurled aside with no less force than that with which the question of transferring Arabs has been sidelined.

And the notion that Israel's being a Jewish state somehow grants it the right to do things to Jews that would otherwise be denounced elsewhere has also got to go.

If Jews were forbidden access to a synagogue in London, Paris or New York because it upset their Muslim neighbors, the outcry would be deafening, and justifiably so. Why, then, should it be any less forceful when it comes to the Temple Mount, in the heart of our ancient capital?

If a Jew were to be imprisoned without trial anywhere in the world, rallies and protests would be convened, petitions would be signed, and appeals would be sent to the US State Department.

But when an Israeli Jew is taken into detention, denied access to a lawyer or even the right to see the evidence against him, little, if anything, is done on his behalf. However odious his views, or even his actions, he too has the right to a fair trial, and we should expect nothing less from the government of Israel.

In recent years, the media and others have done their best to demonize and delegitimize certain sectors of society, chief among them the Jewish residents of Judea, Samaria and Gaza. Whatever their failings might be, we must never forget that they are no less deserving of precisely the same liberties and protections as their brethren in Tel Aviv, Holon and Beersheba.

Despite living under siege from Palestinian terrorism, Israel has gone to great lengths to ensure that the rights and dignity of innocent Palestinians are not harmed. It must now do the same with regard to the Jews, and stop undercutting their freedoms. (Jerusalem Post Apr 28)

America-Hatred among the Arabs By Jeff Jacoby

Hosni Mubarak, the president of Egypt, had some unhappy tidings to deliver the other day. The US occupation in Iraq, he said, has turned the Arab world against the American people. "In the beginning, some people thought the Americans were helping them," Mubarak told the French newspaper *Le Monde*. "There was no hatred toward Americans." But "after what has happened in Iraq, there is an unprecedented hatred."

Well, if anyone should be up on the latest Arab scuttlebutt, it would be Mubarak, ruler of the world's largest Arab nation. But one can't help wondering -- why didn't he break this bad news a little earlier?

After all, a week before his interview with *Le Monde*, he was being hosted by President Bush in Crawford, Tex. Shouldn't he have told him then, face-to-face, just how things stand in the Arab world? When Bush opened their joint press conference on April 12 by hailing "the bonds of friendship" between America and Egypt -- when he called Mubarak "my good friend, Hosni" -- shouldn't the Egyptian ruler have set him straight?

Then again, Mubarak might have had good reason to hold his tongue. Bush probably wouldn't have taken kindly to being told a baldfaced lie like "There was no hatred toward Americans" before the Iraq war. Egypt's strongman may not have wanted to give the president an excuse to point out that four of the Sept. 11 hijackers, including mastermind Mohammed Atta, were Egyptian -- as is Ayman al-Zawahiri, Osama bin Laden's top deputy.

Maybe Mubarak confined himself to diplomatic pleasantries in Crawford so as not to provoke any rethinking of the nearly \$2 billion a year that Washington pours into his coffers. Since 1975, Egypt has received more than \$50 billion in US foreign aid -- more than any other country except Israel.

"Why should America keep showing such generosity to the world's leading Arab state," Bush might have asked if Mubarak had started talking about Arab hatred, "if it is going to be repaid with resentment and violence?" The president might have pointed out that while Israel routinely supports the US position in international forums like the United Nations, Egypt almost always votes against it. If Bush were to demand an explanation for such rank ingratitude, what could Mubarak say?

"There was no hatred toward Americans." What a preposterous falsehood. Arab regimes have been inciting hatred toward Americans for years, and few have done so more consistently than the crude autocracy of Mubarak, who has ruled

Egypt under an "emergency" decree for the last 23 years.

For example, it was Al-Ahram, a newspaper controlled by the Egyptian government, that claimed in October that US pilots flying over Afghanistan were dropping "genetically treated" food into areas booby-trapped with land mines -- hoping not only to make Afghans sick but to cripple or kill those who attempted to gather the food. It was Al-Akhbar, another regime-sponsored daily, that declared in August: "The Statue of Liberty . . . must be destroyed because of the idiotic American policy that goes from disgrace to disgrace in the swamp of bias and blind fanaticism. . . . The age of the American collapse has begun."

Examples of the anger engendered by the Iraq war? Hardly. Al-Ahram and Al-Akhbar published those statements in October and August of 2001.

Earlier that year, Al-Akhbar had sneered that Secretary of State Colin Powell "has the brain of a bird" and acts "like a stupid teenager." Ground Zero was still smoldering less than a week after 9/11 when a writer in Al-Arabi, a Nasserist weekly, cheered the attacks: "In all honesty, and without beating around the bush," Ahmad Murad wrote, "I am happy about the great number of American dead. . . . I have a right to be filled with happiness; the Americans are finally tasting the bitterness of death." (Quotes are courtesy of the Middle East Media Research Institute, whose invaluable web site -- www.memri.org -- contains a vast array of material translated from the Arab and Iranian media.)

It isn't only Egypt's media that whip up anti-American animus. Cairo's influential Al Azhar seminary, a government-backed institution, urged Muslims more than a year ago to wage "jihad" against the United States. A popular Egyptian singer has recorded a song accusing the United States of perpetrating the 9/11 attacks. ("Hey, people, it was only a tower," the lyrics run, "and I swear by God that they are the ones who pulled it down.") A former Egyptian minister of war compares Bush's policies to Nazism. And Mubarak himself, as the *Washington Post* recently observed, aggressively opposes the Bush administration's campaign for democracy in the Middle East, denouncing it as an outside imposition.

If Americans are hated in the Arab world, much of the blame can be laid to the influence of thugocracies like Mubarak's. Which is one good reason to stop supporting those thugocracies. The man Bush calls "my good friend, Hosni" is responsible for a good deal of cruelty and repression within Egypt's borders. If we truly want to neutralize the anti-American venom that has poisoned so many Arabs, we could begin by breaking off our embrace of the autocrats who oppress them. (Boston Globe Apr 25) *The writer is a columnist for The Boston Globe.*

EU vs. Hamas By Joshua Muravchik

Israel's doing what so many other nations signed on to do.

Israel's assassination earlier this month of Hamas chief Abdel Aziz Rantisi stirred gusts of indignation from European governments. As in previous cases, the critics largely rested their case on international law, a refrain also heard often from the continent's critics of American counterterrorism measures and of the war in Iraq.

British Foreign Minister Jack Straw asserted that "targeted killings of this kind are unlawful [and] unjustified." The French foreign ministry issued a statement saying that Israel's right to self-defense "should not be exercised against international law." The foreign minister of Ireland, which currently holds the presidency of the European Union, declared that "extrajudicial killings are contrary to international laws." Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson called Israel's action "illegal and disgusting." Spokesmen for the governments of Germany, Italy, Austria, Portugal, and Russia made similar comments.

If the law is what these Europeans say it is, then, as Dickens's Mr. Bumble put it, "the law is a ass" because the moral case for Israel's counterattacks on Hamas is overwhelming. But even in strictly legal terms, Israel's actions have sound justification. Ironically and shamefully, it is not Israel but these very critics of Israel who are in flagrant dereliction of their legal obligations.

Each of these European states is a party to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide. Unlike, say, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the genocide convention is a treaty, with the force of law. It is one of the oldest, and perhaps the most widely subscribed piece of international human-rights legislation, and arguably the one with the soundest legal foundation, codifying what the Nuremberg tribunal and the U.N. General Assembly in its very first session found to be existing customary law.

Article One of the convention obligates every party "to prevent and punish" genocide as "a crime under international law." The convention goes on to define genocide as, inter alia, "killing" intended "to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group."

By this definition, it is clear that Hamas is an organization devoted to genocide and has been working busily at this mission for years. Hamas's goal is the complete destruction of the Jewish state. As the late Rantisi himself affirmed: "By God, we will not leave one Jew in Palestine." Nor did Rantisi leave doubt about what would become of these Jews. Asked by an interviewer "what do you see ultimately happening to the people [of]

Israel?" Rantisi replied: "They killed thousands of Palestinians.... so I think it is just to do with them as they did with us."

Nor are Hamas's intended targets limited to Israeli Jews. Hamas's covenant boasts: "HAMAS regards itself the spearhead and the vanguard of the circle of struggle against World Zionism [and] the fight against the warmongering Jews." It makes clear that there is to be no end of killing: "The Day of Judgment will not come about until Muslims fight the Jews and kill them. Then, the Jews will hide behind rocks and trees, and the rocks and trees will cry out: 'O Muslim, there is a Jew hiding behind me, come and kill him.'"

In short, Hamas's and Rantisi's platform is as clearly formulated a project of genocide as we have had since Mein Kampf. And indeed, Hamas has expressed a solicitousness for Hitler's project. As Rantisi put it, to compare Zionism to Nazism is "an insult to Nazism."

Nor can this all be dismissed as mere rhetoric. Hamas sends a constant stream of bombers to blow up buses, restaurants, markets, any place, in short, where Jews can be slaughtered. For every one whose murderous deed is achieved, handfuls of others are stopped along the way by Israeli security.

What this means is that France, Sweden, and the rest are under a legal obligation to do what they can to destroy or cripple Hamas and to assist in the arrest and prosecution of its leaders and members. What have they done to fulfill this responsibility?

Until six months ago, the EU allowed Hamas to work freely in Europe, as if it were just another NGO. The rationale was a specious distinction between the organization's "political" and "military" wings, much like the distinction between Hitler's Nazi party and his storm troopers. (Indeed, this distinction was drawn, leading the Times of London to applaud the "night of long knives" on the grounds that Hitler was bringing the "radicals" in his movement to heel.)

Only late last year were French objections overcome in the face of a particularly deadly bombing, and Hamas was banned in the EU, its financial assets frozen. But under the genocide convention, Europe's legal obligations (and those of all the other parties to the treaty) go well beyond belatedly closing its own territory to Hamas operations. They include doing what can be done to bring a halt to the genocide and punish the perpetrators. By killing the likes of Rantisi and Yassin, Israel is doing what all the other nations ought by law to be doing, too. Since they are blithely indifferent to their own solemn undertakings, Israel is left alone to defend the law and itself. (National Review Apr 27)

The writer, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, is author of Heaven on Earth: The Rise and Fall of Socialism and, most recently of, The Intifada and the Media.

The Traffic Jam That Saved Eretz Yisrael By David Wilder

Yesterday morning we left Hebron at about 10:30. The car was full – my wife, daughter and her two small children. The others were on one of the two Hebron buses. The destination: Gush Katif.

THE referendum is scheduled for next week – Sunday, May 2. Ariel Sharon is worried. The Hebrew daily Maariv quoted the prime minister as saying, "Whoever votes against the 'disengagement' is voting against me." In other words, Sharon is transforming the referendum into a 'no-confidence vote.' Arutz 7 posted an article saying that Sharon is considering resigning should the referendum be defeated.

In yet another article, Associated Press correspondent Ramit Plushnick-Masti writes: Sharon Plan would remove up to 100 west bank settlements. "Senior Israeli officials and government advisers acknowledge privately that many – if not all – of these isolated enclaves may eventually be taken down, even without a peace deal, if they become increasingly indefensible."

Arutz 7 reports: "In the meantime, Sharon and his staffers are hiding the truth from the public regarding the depth of his planned pullback from Judea and Samaria. "If the Likud members would know what Sharon is really planning," Likud leaders told Yossi Elituv of Mishpachah [Family] magazine, "they would be storming his office and demanding his immediate resignation." The Likud seniors told Elituv that Sharon has given the order to "hide the evacuation from Judea/Samaria, and concentrate only on the pullback from Gaza. His purpose is to lull the Likud members, obtain their consent for the disengagement from Gaza, and then to use that to move on to the next stage - a massive evacuation of Judea and Samaria.'"

Yet it is vital to note that Sharon does not represent all of the Likud leadership.

Speaking at Mt. Hertzl on the eve of Israel's 56th independence day, Speaker of the Knesset Rubi Rivlin, basing his speech on the famous words of Theodore Hertzl, "If you will it, it is no legend," said, "These words beat in its heart and drove its wheels, as Zionism succeeded, achieved the impossible, time after time.

When we willed it - the legend became reality.

When we willed it - the scattered exiles of Israel were gathered in.

When we willed it - from a small, fearful community, we became a proud nation.

And when we willed it; when we really willed it - the Land was conquered, and nobody stood in our way.

But the story has not yet ended.

Even today; on the one hundredth anniversary of Herzl's death; in the fifty-sixth year of the Independence of Israel; nothing is self-evident.

Even today, every day, we must continue to will it, we must continue to

believe."

Speaking before lighting the traditional, honorary torch of honor:

I, Reuven Rivlin, son of my father and teacher, Professor Yosef-Yoel Rivlin, may he rest in peace, researcher of Semitic languages, and translator of the Koran into Hebrew, and - may she live long - my mother and teacher, Rachel, who today, 6th Iyar, is exactly one hundred years old; seventh generation in Jerusalem; descendant of the Aliyah to Jerusalem, one hundred years before the vision of Herzl, by the disciples of the Gaon, Rabbi Eliyahu of Vilna; Speaker of the Sixteenth Knesset; am honored to light this torch, of the fifty-sixth Independence Day of the State of Israel.

In honor of - The Knesset, the legislature of Israel, and the temple of democracy!

In honor of - the pioneers, the vanguard of those who came to settle the Land of our Fathers, who redeemed the land - from Hanita - to Kfar Darom; from Negba - to Kiryat Arba, that is Hebron!

In honor of - The heroes of all branches of the security forces.

In honor of - Jerusalem, our holy city, our eternal capital and the heart of the nation.

And for the glory of the State of Israel!

Rivlin's initial speech most certainly alluded to the challenges of Zionism and the will to overcome – not only 100 years ago, not only fifty-six years ago, but also at the present. Rivlin's words, coming from the Speaker of the Knesset, articulating 'the pioneers, the vanguard of those who came to settle the Land of our Fathers, who redeemed the land - from Hanita - to Kfar Darom; from Negba - to Kiryat Arba, that is Hebron!' reflect the true Likud ideology, the true Zionist ideology, which Ariel Sharon has so grossly warped. And Rivlin is not alone.

Yesterday, some 150,000 Israelis voiced their opinion, not in words, but in actions, expressing themselves with their feet and with their tires.

According to police reports, 70,000 people arrived yesterday in Gush Katif. Our experience has taught us that the 'official estimate' is about a half of the 'real thing.' According to Gush Katif spokesman Eran Sternberg, over 100,000 people managed to get into Gush Katif. Tens of thousands of others, including yours truly, were crowded out. Traffic authorities said this morning on Israel radio that they have never before witnessed a traffic jam as large as yesterday's, tens of kilometers long.

We left Hebron at 10:30 in the morning for a two hour ride to Gush Katif. I managed to drive the last 20 kilometers in about an hour and a half and we were still about 10 kilometers from our destination. After not moving for over an hour and having spent a grand total of five hours in the car we decided to pull into a nearby kibbutz, found a nice place for a picnic barbeque (not too far from some Bedouin tents), and camped out for a few hours.

But you know something. No one complained. And I'm not talking about us. I'm talking about thousands and thousands of people stuck, just like us. Many of them were more daring than I was – they parked their cars on the side of the road and walked, 10 or more kilometers, in order to reach Gush Katif and participate in the main event at 3:30 in the afternoon.

No one really cared how long it took to arrive, because the message was clear. Gush Katif is part of Eretz Yisrael and we have no intentions of leaving, not now, not ever. Over 100,000 Israelis shouted out to Ariel Sharon – "Go ahead, just try and evacuate Gush Katif, go ahead, just try to evict over 7,000 Jews from their homes. Because if you so dare, you will not be evicting 7,000 Israelis – you will have to evict hundreds of thousands of people!!!"

Have not doubt: the almost 200,000 Likud members who will be voting on Sunday saw and heard yesterday's events. Many of them participated. I expect that early Monday morning the results will be self-evident.

History will definitely remember Ariel Sharon from many diverse angles. But perhaps one of the most unique will be just this: Ariel Sharon initiated the greatest traffic jam in Israel's history, a traffic jam which may turn out to have saved Eretz Yisrael. (Jewish Community of Hebron Apr 28)

The Arab Lie Whose Time Has Come By David Gutmann

To back up its demands for full repatriation to Israel of Arab refugees and their descendants, the Palestinian leadership has-for over fifty years-busily spun the story of their "Naqba," their catastrophic flight from Palestine during 1947-48, in all the media available to them. This version of events-replete with Jewish brutality and Arab victimization-is a lie whose time has come, one now almost universally believed by Gentile and Jew alike.

It has become the latest Blood Libel against the People of the Book; and like the others it will never go away. Nevertheless, many Jewish Peaceniks-both Israeli and American-have signed on to the Naqba narrative, and Jewish authors and intellectuals now number among its leading proponents. One such piece of Jewish "Naqba" P.R. is "The Roots of the Palestine Refugee Problem-Revisited" by the Israeli Leftist Benny Morris. In the book, Morris focuses particularly on Operation Hiram, the Israeli campaign undertaken to clear the Galilee of the foreign fighters who had infiltrated the Arab villages there. He claims that these villages were the sites of multiple massacres, expulsions and rapes committed by Jewish forces.

Morris has recently turned somewhat to the Right, in that he justifies the expulsions that he reports: in his current view, the infant Israeli State could not have survived unless it was purged of a hostile Arab population. But realistically, it matters not whether Morris is Left or Right, Hawk or Dove. Whatever his politics, the Palestinian propagandists will cherry pick what they need from his report to substantially bolster their Myth of Naqba and their radical demands for repatriation of all refugees and their descendants into the heart of Israel.

I was a witness to the Naqba times, and am compelled to challenge such Israel-bashing by the Palestinians and their Jewish allies. As a trainee with the Palmach and then with the regular Israeli forces during the Independence War, I had neither military skills nor fluency in Hebrew, and was probably more trouble to my units than I was worth. My real usefulness to Israel may only become evident 53 years later. Because of that youthful service, I can now-when the Palestinian myth is being legislated into hardened truth, even for Jews-bear an elder's witness against the Naqba lie.

Some facts I can swear to:

A. The Palestinians initiated the war that led to their Naqba. Troops from Tel-Aviv eventually conquered Jaffa, but it was Arab fighters in Jaffa who, from the towers of their mosques, first fired into Tel-Aviv, and turned the intercity border areas into a battleground.

B. The first refugees were not Arabs but Yemenite Jews, from the Tel Aviv-Jaffa No-Man's Land that Arab aggression had created. Unlike the Palestinians, theirs was only a temporary refugee status. Instead of packing them away and forgetting them in squalid refugee camps, their Ashkenazi compatriots took them into their own neighborhoods. For the most part the Yemenites camped out in Tel Aviv apartment lobbies, and used the cooking and sanitary facilities of the permanent residents. When Jaffa fell to Irgun soldiers, they went back home.

C. The Palestinians fled for many reasons and from many threats, both real and imaginary, and that thousands upon thousands fled when nobody pushed them. As an example, when my unit occupied the abandoned British police station at Sidn'a Ali in the Sharon Plain, British troops were still stationed in the vicinity, and we had to train and patrol with our few guns (antiquated or homemade) concealed. Nevertheless, the Arabs of Sidn'a Ali were long gone, way before we could have pushed them out, and while the Brits were still in place to protect them from us. Needless to say, in the absence of any Palestinian targets (save for some abandoned camels) we committed no rapes.

I don't know why the Sidn'a Ali people fled, but they did leave a caretaker in place, as a sign that they intended to return once those pesky Jews had been ethnically cleansed. They did not flee because they feared Jewish thugs, but because of a rational and reasonable calculus: the Jews will be exterminated; we will get out of the way while that messy and dangerous business goes forward, and we will return afterwards to reclaim our homes, and to inherit those nice Jewish properties as well.

They guessed wrong; and the Palestinians are still tortured by the residual shame of their flight. Their shame is so great because in their eyes running from Jews was like running from women; and because there were so many Sidn'a Alis. To relieve their shame they stridently and continually demand that their unsavory history be rewritten and reversed.

While I witnessed no Israeli atrocities in the coastal Sharon Plain, Ralph Lowenstein, an American volunteer in '48, and now a professor of Journalism at the University of Florida refutes Morris' claims that Jewish troops, engaged in Operation Hiram, committed massacres and ethnic cleansings in the Galilean Hills. Prof. Lowenstein was a young half-track driver in the 79th Battalion of the 7th Brigade, the formation that spearheaded Operation Hiram. Like myself, he refutes Morris' allegations of Jewish war crimes: "I never saw anything like this, either while it was allegedly going on or after it had transpired. After the mixed Christian/Muslim town of Jish, the first place we attacked, I did see virtually every Arab village on a line between Safad and Kadash on the Lebanese border during Operation Hiram, and the pattern was: villages occupied by Christian Arabs unharmed; Muslim villages deserted, long before any Israeli troops got there.

There were rumors at the time that a massacre had occurred in one village, and a week after we had returned from combat a directive in English and Hebrew was distributed to each army post mentioning such rumors and warning of the dire consequences to any enlisted person or officer who could be convicted of engaging in such incidents. There were no rumors of rape or ethnic cleansing, only of one isolated massacre committed in the heat of battle."

Parenthetically, the Israeli appetite for rape and slaughter that Morris discovers was not matched or fueled in '48 by any racist or demonizing language- none of the "Slap the Jap" stuff that we Americans indulged in during WWII. In fact, I was surprised by the neutrality and impersonality of the terms used to describe the enemy: only "Aravim" (the Hebrew plural of "Arabs"), and the like. The same terse understatement is the Israeli norm today.

Any misdeeds committed by IDF troops during the War for Independence came against the backdrop of the Holocaustic acts and appetites of the Arabs themselves. We were only a few weeks into the first, irregular phase of the war when the slaughters began: the wholesale murder by their Arab fellow workers of some 40 Jewish workers in the Haifa refineries; the massacre of Hebrew university medical faculty and nurses on the road to Mt. Scopus; the killing of many captured Palmach fighters and kibbutzniks in the Etzion Bloc; the decimation of the truck convoys to Jerusalem. And after the killing, the real fun began. The Arab way of war is to quite explicitly "feminize" the enemy. And in

'47-'48, the Aravim castrated and mutilated, in ways that I will not describe here, the fallen or captured Jewish soldiers. Incidentally, the "portraits" of their Jewish victims-both boys and girls-were afterwards peddled in Arab Jerusalem.

The above may read like "Huns Rape Nuns" propaganda, and I myself never did see a mutilated Jewish corpse. But I have seen photographs; and I can say that our Palmach officers-men given to understatement rather than hysteria-instructed us, when in action, to always save a bullet or a grenade for ourselves, so as not to fall alive into the hands of Arab irregulars. Capture was not an option. Prof. Lowenstein gives independent confirmation: "All of us knew at the time that if we foreign volunteers were captured, our lives would be worth little. Arab atrocities were expected, as well as committed."

In short, barely three years after the cessation of the Holocaust, the Palestinian Arabs, led by Hitler's Holocaust consultant, Haj-Amin Al-Husseini, Mufti of Jerusalem, gleefully promised a wholesale genocide-not just population transfer, but genocide-and showed us, quite dramatically, that his followers had the capacity and the appetite to carry it out.

The Jews of Palestine responded as an outnumbered and outgunned people should answer: they "cleansed" the Arab communities that had become-or threatened to become-the instruments of the revived Holocaustic enterprise. Some examples: They drove out the occupants of Tireh, who had the bad habit of shooting up Jewish traffic on the Haifa-Tel Aviv highway, and they drove out the occupants of Kastel and other villages that bloodied the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv road. So as to open up the sea roads to the arms markets and refugee camps of Europe, they took the seaport of Haifa; to free Tel-Aviv from continual gunfire, they took Jaffa; to cut the Palestinians off from their Lebanese and Syrian armorers, they conducted operation Hiram and took the Galilee.

The second great context enfolding Israeli action was of course war itself. In war, the power of the individual conscience is conceded to the state, which requires killing as a moral duty, while the pleasure in killing is reserved for the individual soldier. The upshot: one can slaughter with a clear conscience. That is the human rather than the Jewish recipe for the routine massacres of war. We have seen this scenario before. Thus, as WWII progressed, the RAF wreaked a hell on German cities that far outweighed everything that the Luftwaffe had ever done to London, to Rotterdam, to Coventry, to Warsaw, and to Guernica combined. No complaints though from the Brit population, not even from the Left. No frenzied rallies demanding an end to the fire-bombing of Hamburg, Dresden or Berlin. And why not? Because the war and the practice of terror-bombing had been started by Hitler, and the Bloody Germans were only getting what was coming to them.

By the same logic, the firebombed and atomized Japanese cities were accepted in the U.S. as partial payment for Pearl Harbor. This same grim context also underwrites Israeli "war crimes": Our Palestinian Cousins started the '48 war, and in so doing released the warlike appetites of a nation of survivors, a people with no place to run, who had repressed their rage for millennia, and had now earned full title to it. Again, Prof. Lowenstein: "Many of our troops were recently Displaced Persons, Holocaust survivors, who had little respect for the niceties of civilization, if not for life itself."

It was only three years after the Holocaust, and we were still learning the full extent of the horror from the mouths of children coming to us from the DP camps of Europe, the prison camps of Cyprus, and the graves of countless Anne Franks in the Polish sky. Their voices mixed with the chatter of the Palestinians, as they eagerly detailed, with that innocent glee that they bring to the contemplation of slaughter, what they were going to do to this particular pack of Yids. And now, fifty-five years later, all the "noble souls"-the Quakers, the Unitarians, the Society of Friends, B'Tselem-are all so disappointed with the Israelis of '48. Why? Because, as a nation of victims, they didn't "show empathy," they "didn't feel the Arab's pain." Damn well right they didn't. The really strange thing is how relatively restrained the Jews actually were.

Finally then, it is not copping a plea to say that the Aravim, who unleashed the war dogs in the first place, bear the ultimate responsibility for the killing on both sides. To ignore these contexts of the Independence War, while only deploring Jewish "war crimes," is to demonize the Israelis. Absent these imperious contexts, the Israeli killings stand alone. As unique crimes, they dominate the historic landscape. They join the other Blood Libels: the Jew as Christ Killer, the Jew as the baker of bloody matzos, the Jew of the Protocols of Zion ("Heeere's Shylock! And he's armed!"). But when we restore the contexts of war, what in their absence stand out as exclusively Jewish horrors, new murders of Christ, are reduced in scope, to become part of the generic human landscape, which is in all its parts slippery with blood.

Any people that enters history in an active role will dirty its hands. But the dirtiest hands belong to those Great Souls whose pristine consciences will not allow them to fight even their own murderers. Let them look to their own morality, and not burden the embattled Israelis with their twisted pieties. (FrontPageMagazine.com Apr 21)