

Events...

Wednesday May 28, 7:30pm

Canadian Jewish News Town Hall Meeting with Gil Troy, at the Barbara Frum Library, 20 Covington Road.

Sunday, June 8, 2:45pm

March and rally against anti-Semitism., from the SW corner of Bloor and Avenue Rd to Queens Park.

From the PA Media...

A Self-Portrait of Abu Mazan

Based on Abu Mazen's own statements, the four terrorist attacks committed by Palestinian terrorists over the weekend that killed nine Israelis are all legitimate according to the Abbas doctrine. This doctrine includes such principles as: "The use of arms against Israeli civilians within Israel should be stopped for a year due to its current ineffectiveness... The use of arms against Israeli civilians within the Disputed Territories should continue." Such "territories" include French Hill in Jerusalem, where seven Israelis were murdered in a recent suicide bombing, says Marcus, as the PA claims that land as its own. Furthermore, Abu Mazen supports the flooding of Israel with Arab "refugees" and has denied that the Holocaust ever occurred. Abu Mazen's statements detailing his doctrines and beliefs, include the following:

"The armed struggle necessitates certain conditions and opportunities that do not exist for us in Palestine. We cannot equate what is happening in Palestine with what is going on Lebanon or Algeria. Therefore, military activities under these circumstances and means are ineffective. For this reason, we stated that we have no choice but to stop it [i.e. military activities] for a year, which is not a submission from our point of view." [A-Sharq Al-Awsat newspaper, March 3, 2003]

Regarding the possibility of continued Hamas terrorism, Abu Mazen said: "The Authority will convene and decide what would be appropriate while avoiding internal conflict, as we maintain our internal unity." [Al-Quds, February 25, 2003]

On terrorism in Judea, Samaria and Gaza: "The Intifada must continue, along with the right of the Palestinian people to rise up and use whatever it can to protect its existence and being. I add and say that if the Israelis come to your land to establish a settlement, it is within your rights to protect what is yours. with every means and weapons, when they come to your homes. This is the right of uprising." [A-Sharq Al-Awsat, March 3, 2003]

As for the long-term arrangement with Israel, PA television news reported, on February 2, 2000, that "Abu Mazen referred to the right of the refugees to return to the homes from where they were expelled in 1948. He stated that the PLO possess five million files that contain detailed information on the refugees, and these documents will be made public at the right time. The PLO will not sign any peace agreement that does not include the restoration of all the rights of the Palestinian people."

Abu Mazen has also made it clear that PLO leader Yasser Arafat is still the authority behind the PA, by his very existence. If Israel expels Arafat, Abu Mazen said, "I do not think that they will find people, not even one person to form a new Authority.... It is important to stress that any harm done to President Yasser Arafat, or any statements regarding the reduction of his authority or his removal, will spell destruction for the Authority." [Al-Quds, February 25, 2003]

As for Mahmoud Abbas' Holocaust revisionism, "The Other Side: The Secret Relations Between Nazism and the Leadership of the Zionist Movement" by Mahmoud Abbas, 1983, (translation by the Simon Wiesenthal Center, Los Angeles) says:

"A partnership was established between Hitler's Nazis and the leadership of

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*

the Zionist movement... [the Zionists gave] permission to every racist in the world, led by Hitler and the Nazis, to treat Jews as they wish, so long as it guarantees immigration to Palestine.... Having more victims meant greater rights and stronger privilege to join the negotiation table for dividing the spoils of war once it was over. However, since Zionism was not a fighting partner -- suffering victims in a battle -- it had no escape but to offer up

human beings, under any name, to raise the number of victims, which they could then boast of at the moment of accounting.... Following the war word was spread that six million Jews were amongst the victims and that a war of extermination was aimed primarily at the Jews.... The truth is that no one can either confirm or deny this figure...." (Palestinian Media Watch IsraelNationalNews.com May 19)

Personal Accounts...

Two of Afula's Victims

Two and a half years ago lethal terror fueled by blind hatred was unleashed upon our people in this sparsely populated region of Northeastern Israel. After the past several weeks of relative calm we thought that the worst was behind us. This illusion was cruelly shattered.

Two dedicated and experienced surgeons; Dr. Doron Koppleman and Dr. Shmuel Yurfost, had worked together in Ha'Emek Medical Center's Surgical 'B' Department since the beginning of the intifada. Together with the accomplished physicians in Ha'Emek's Surgical 'A' Department (led by chief surgeon Dr. Yoel Syphon), as a team they saved countless lives and operated on many of the more than 700 victims who were senselessly struck down. Passing below their skilled hands on the operating tables have been innocent Jews and Arabs, women, children, men, soldiers, the elderly and even some terrorists. Beneath the sterile sheets all humanity is equal and our surgeon's mission in life is to heal.

Yesterday at noon Dr. Koppleman and Dr. Yurfost sat together planning the next day's surgeries. They parted with a handshake, a smile and an Israeli nod of the head. A few hours later, Dr. Yurfost himself was seriously wounded when another suicide murderer blew herself up at the entrance to a shopping mall in Afula - killing 3 and injuring scores of others. When the 48-year-old soft-spoken physician arrived in Ha'Emek's Emergency Room, covered in his own blood, nobody at first even recognized him. Only when he spoke and asked about his eyes did the horrible reality become apparent. Our beloved surgeon lost one eye and the fate of his other eye is in question.

His colleague and friend, Dr. Koppleman, was aware of the ensuing tragedy when he was operating on the young woman security guard who blocked the path of the murderer. For the next eleven hours Dr. Koppleman struggled to mend her broken body, working through the tears & tears for Dr. Yurfost, for the young woman and for our people.

Ha'Emek Medical Center, Israel's Hospital of Peace, is still reeling from yet another terror atrocity & what we have come to refer to as mass-casualty events. Yesterday afternoon a suicide killer struck at the entrance to Afula's shopping mall, taking with her 3 innocent lives and sending more than 70 injured to our hospital. One of the most critically injured was Hadar Gitlin, the 21-year-old female security guard who blocked the terrorist's path with her own body at the entrance to the mall. This is her story, as told to me by her mother.

It was Hadar's second day at her new job as a security guard. Having recently joined the swelling ranks of the unemployed, the young woman could not bear the thought of sitting at home doing nothing. The company responsible for the mall's security needed women as well as men and Hadar eagerly took the job. Her mother, Sarah, suggested that she look for something less threatening, but Hadar was confident and enthusiastic to work.

Hadar responsibly closed her mobile phone during work hours and she was to finish her shift at 16:00. When Sarah could not reach her earlier that day, she left Hadar a message saying that their car was parked close by and

Yasher Koach and thank you to our supporters. Thank you also to Continental Press for their ongoing support.
Readers are requested to please mail contributions to: BAYT - re: Israel News, 613 Clark Avenue West, Thornhill, Ontario. L4J 5V3
Annual Rates: Friend - \$36, Supporter - \$50, Benefactor - \$180. Dedications are welcome at \$120/week.
Call (905) 886-3810 for further info. Israel News can be viewed on the internet at www.bayt.org

for her to drive it home. Hadar was to be relieved at 16:00 by another guard, but due to an unforeseen delay she needed to stay on for a while longer. At 17:00 the terrorist struck.

At 17:10 her mother heard on television the first report about an attack in Afula. Knowing that Hadar finished work at 16:00 she was not particularly worried. When there was no answer on her daughter's mobile phone she was sure that was due to weak batteries and that Hadar was on her way home. They live about twenty minutes from Afula. When at 18:00 Sarah had still not heard from her daughter, she asked a friend to see if their car was still parked in Afula. It was and just after that they heard on the radio that a female security guard was killed in the attack.

Mother and father were then together and desperately seeking information at the scene of the bombing. The special police task force set up at the mall had no definitive facts and someone then told them that they heard that 'a woman' had been rushed to Rambam hospital in Haifa. When they spoke with Rambam by phone they were told that their daughter was not there. That is when they came to Ha'Emek to face their fate.

A social worker accompanied the distraught parents to a private room and showed them a ring that was taken from a female victim who was then in surgery. It looked familiar but they could not be sure. Any identifying clothing or papers did not survive the blast. At 19:00 a friend escorted them to the waiting area outside the operating room and volunteered to go in and see if Hadar was there. When the chief surgeon, Dr. Doron Koppleman, heard that the parents had arrived he immediately went out to speak with them.

During the next 10 hours of surgery, Dr. Koppleman periodically came out to update Sarah and her husband as to Hadar's condition. Her mother seemed to know exactly what questions to ask and focused on the most critical aspects of her daughter's health. They trusted and believed in the gray haired surgeon with warm sympathetic eyes.

At 05:00 this morning with the highly complex operation completed, a tired Dr. Koppleman sat with them in the corridor. Hadar's condition was critical and she was on her way to our Intensive Care Unit. He was curious to know how Hadar's mother knew what questions to ask. Her unemotional answer was, "In 1995 Hadar's older sister, Mor, was critically wounded in the devastating double terrorist bombing at the Beit Lid intersection. You see, doctor I've been here before". (Larry Rich, Director of Development, Ha'Emek Medical Center)

Commentary...

Israel's Unshakable Allies By Jeff Jacoby

Pat Robertson, the founder of the Christian Coalition and the Christian Broadcasting Network, has long been a bogeyman to much of the American Jewish establishment.

When the Anti-Defamation League published "The Religious Right: The Assault on Tolerance and Pluralism in America" in 1994, a third of its 193 pages were devoted to Robertson and the Christian Coalition. "Robertson's repeated references to America as a Christian nation," it said, "insults not merely Jews but all who value religious freedom."

Writing in *The Forward* a year or so later, Leonard Fein, a prominent Jewish activist, allowed as how "it would be frightfully upsetting, but not very surprising, were [the Christian Coalition] one day to propose that Jews ought not be hired as teachers in the public schools." Going even further, the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism denounced the Christian Coalition in 1997 for trying to "diminish fundamental constitutional liberties" by "undermining the Constitution" and "blurring -- or erasing -- the precious separation of church and state."

So when Robertson agreed to speak at Temple Beth Shalom in Framingham, Mass. last month, it came as no surprise that a number of local Jews complained. "It's scary," Renee Abramson told the *MetroWest Daily News*. "I mean, this guy uses his show to wage war on whomever he chooses." Outside the synagogue, Robertson was greeted by protesters carrying signs that read "Jews saying No to the Christian Right" and "Robertson is no friend to the Jewish people."

But the Jewish people inside the synagogue certainly seemed to regard Robertson as a friend. They repeatedly interrupted his remarks with applause, and gave him a standing ovation when he finished. That may have been because they heard him say things like this:

"I had a praying mother who was an evangelical Christian, and I can remember her always saying . . . we must love and support the Jewish people."

And this:

"I went back to the Mount of Olives" -- he was speaking of a 1974 visit to Israel -- "and I said before God and the assembled group: 'I am making a personal vow. However difficult it may be for me, however unpopular it may be for me, I and those with me are going to stand with Israel in her time of distress and we will be a faithful friend of Israel from this moment on.'"

And this:

"The love that evangelicals have for Israel does not depend on [politics or foreign policy]. We feel that we are part of the heritage of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and that we share the same faith and the same principles and the same commandments and the same heroes as the people of Israel."

Remarkable? Not at all. American evangelicals and fundamentalists -- the so-called "religious right" -- are among the most tolerant and respectful friends the Jewish people have. And when it comes to support and sympathy for Israel, America's beleaguered democratic ally in the Middle East, Christian conservatives are if anything even more ardent and unshakable than American Jews.

Skeptics sometimes claim that evangelicals only support Israel because they believe it will hasten Jesus' Second Coming. But when that challenge was put to Robertson, he didn't hesitate to repudiate it. "I'm sure some people think that -- but I'm not one of them," he replied. "I think there's a visceral, heartfelt love in the heart of evangelicals for Israel and the Jewish people."

Indeed, evangelical solidarity has become a hallmark of pro-Israel activism. For instance, this weekend's important Interfaith Zionist Leadership Summit in Washington, a project of Boston's Zionist House, is being co-sponsored by a phalanx of conservative Christian organizations. In addition to the Christian Coalition and the Christian Broadcasting Network, the list includes the Apostolic Congress, Christian Friends of Israeli Communities, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, and the Religious Roundtable. Among the speakers are such prominent American evangelicals as Gary Bauer and Janet Parshall.

Likewise, hundreds of Christians will be taking part in Sunday's "Adopt-A-Family" walkathon in Framingham to raise funds for Israeli families victimized by terrorism. A project of the same synagogue that hosted Robertson, the walkathon is co-sponsored by 17 Jewish organizations -- but also by nine Christian ones, including Grace Evangelical Christian Church of Framingham, Christian Renewal Church of Salem, and New England Aftercare Ministries.

Evangelicals are not the only Christians who support Israel or reach out to Jews, of course. (Three Catholic churches are involved in the Framingham walkathon, for example, and one of the sponsors of the Washington summit is the Episcopal-Jewish Alliance.) And no doubt there are some on the Christian right who are indifferent or even hostile toward Jews and the Jewish state.

But there is no denying the obvious: Devotion to Israel and warmth toward Jews are powerful forces in American evangelical life. At a time when antisemitism is on the rise around the world, the friendship of the Christian right is something every Jew should cheer.

The writer is a columnist for The Boston Globe. (Boston Globe May 15)

Jewish Cognitive Dissonance By Irwin Savodnik

One evening in 1996 my wife and I were sitting in a French bistro with a physician and his wife we had known for years. I told them I was entering the Republican congressional primary, and, since we were both doctors and concerned about health care, they might have some interest in the campaign.

We were greeted with a tirade. My friend's face reddened as he screamed that he would do everything he could to see that I was trounced at the polls.

My wife and I were stunned.

"You're a Jew and a Republican," he proclaimed to the entire restaurant. "That's despicable." We have not spoken since.

I'd like to say this was a singular experience I'd like to, but I can't. When I mentioned to one woman at our synagogue that I was running for Congress she refused to talk to me, and to this day has snubbed us during High Holiday services.

One internist who had been to our home and had just opened her practice slammed down the phone when my wife called her.

"It's impossible to be Jewish and Republican," one maven on Jewish life exclaimed after services. "It's a shanda."

Anyone who has read the edict of excommunication against Spinoza would have a good idea of the chill that surrounded us every time we entered the synagogue.

TODAY HOWEVER there is a quiet, if seismic, realignment beginning to take shape.

Consider the signs: It should be obvious that most of Israel's unflinching friends are on the Right from Reagan-era ideologues to George W. Bush neoconservatives to the growing chorus of evangelicals whose religious interests intersect with Israel's geopolitical goals.

More recently a one-term Jewish congressman from Virginia the only Jewish Republican member of the House Eric I. Cantor, has leapfrogged into the majority leadership, becoming chief deputy whip.

Cantor is a fervent defender of Israel and, unlike his Jewish compatriot in the Senate, Arlen Specter, a self-confident conservative who speaks openly about his Jewishness and his politics in the same breath.

The Republican Jewish Coalition, once a diminutive political presence whose members could barely eke out a minyan in 1985 (the year it was founded), now has 15 chapters around the country, including Birmingham, Alabama, Kansas City and Palm Springs.

Perhaps most importantly, Jews have been willing and able to topple politicians deemed hostile to the Jewish state. Most notably, Atlanta's Cynthia McKinney, and Birmingham's Earl Hilliard learned last year that sympathizing with Palestinian terrorists cost them at the polls. That these were Democratic primaries should not obscure their significance to both parties.

As a psychiatrist and former liberal I can empathize with the struggle inside the Jewish psyche. The values at stake are at the heart of Jewish identity in America, and represent a long and noble collectivist tradition.

But that tradition rooted in the struggle of organized labor to win basic rights for workers has become an anachronism in the post-industrial, hyper-digital 21st century. Relinquishing this tradition and all its parental-cultural trappings is nearly unimaginable. Turning your back on this fight feels like rejecting your family, your community and your whole world view.

All of which leads me to infer that US Jews are in the midst of an identity crisis not unlike adolescence. The dynamics of this loosening up of old belief systems can be summed up in a single phrase: cognitive dissonance.

When a person finds his or her long-held beliefs that the Left is the fount of social progress in conflict with a reality in which the most vocal anti-Semites in America are left-wing, from black Jew-haters like Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson to anti-Zionist academics like Noam Chomsky and Edward Said, that individual feels destabilized, even hurt, and may try to explain away the dissonant belief.

Such explanation usually amounts to little more than a rationalization that denies reality.

Examples of this denial when it comes to Israel fall into three roughly construed camps:

First, debase and attack the Jewish state by claiming it has been taken over by a bunch of right-wing thugs personified by Ariel Sharon and Binyamin Netanyahu.

Second, elevate the Palestinians to a freedom-loving band of would-be democrats whose fight mirrors that of the Jews circa 1947.

Third, with nearly psychotic hutzpa, refuse to acknowledge that the Left is anti-Israel at all. The result of this noxious state of mind is an identity crisis.

Now, though, Jews are faced with surrendering their prevailing ideology and transcending long-established myths about both political parties. Can they do it?

Yes, but for American Jews, changing political parties is akin to religious conversion.

As for my friend, were he to approach me, I would say: "Judaism is not politics. One can't supplant the other. You're free to choose without relinquishing your spiritual inclinations." (Jerusalem Post May 15)

The writer is a psychiatrist based in California.

America's Next Move By Max Boot

The war on terror will be won not only on the battlefield but in schools.

There is some irony, though not of the pleasant sort, in the fact that last week's suicide bombing in Riyadh occurred shortly after it was announced that the remaining American troops would be withdrawn from Saudi Arabia. This move was designed to remove one of the grievances held by Al-Qaeda and its ilk. But Washington seemed to overlook the fact that no matter what happens with the troops, 40,000 American civilians remain in the country.

Perhaps these, too, can be evacuated (though only at the cost of crippling the Saudi monarchy). But what about the Americans in Kuwait? Or Indonesia? Or, for that matter, Britain? Pretty much all of the estimated 3.8m Americans living abroad are inviting targets for terrorism. So are the 291m at home.

There is nothing that the US and its allies can do to mollify Islamist terrorists.

Their fundamental objection is not to this or that policy; it is to the very existence of a modern, secular West, whose leading champion is the United States.

Since appeasement won't work, the West must seek victory. But how? The obvious, if ambitious, answer lies in transforming the Middle East, the breeding ground of this particular brand of savagery. And that is precisely what the Bush administration has set out to do.

In the administration's view, we are in a war, and, while a few battles (Afghanistan, Iraq) have been won, the conflict is far from finished. This is not a war like the second world war that will be won entirely on the battlefield. It is more like the cold war, which must be won by a combination of measures, only some of them military.

The first and most pressing priority is to develop an alternative to the dictatorships that paralyze development in the Arab world. Iraq presents the best opportunity to achieve that goal—but only if the occupation proves as effective as the war that preceded it.

So far, the outlook is far from positive. The Bush administration did astoundingly little planning for the post-war environment. The result is violence and chaos. To its credit, the administration fairly quickly recognized that things

were off course and brought in the tough-talking former diplomat Paul Bremer to replace the soft-spoken former general Jay Garner as viceroy.

But tangled lines of authority remain a problem: Bremer promised last Tuesday that U.S. troops would start shooting looters, only to be contradicted the next day by U.S. generals. This is symptomatic of a larger problem: the American military's deep reluctance to undertake peacekeeping, which it views as sissy's work.

American generals complain that they don't have enough troops to police Iraq even though they have more than 160,000 allied soldiers, including 45,000 in Baghdad.

Contrast this with the heyday of empire, when there were never more than 79,000 British soldiers to guard all of India, which is 10 times bigger than Iraq.

Yet even as the coalition struggles to transform Iraq, it cannot lose sight of its neighbors. Iran and Syria are two of the leading sponsors of terrorism in the world and both are said to be acquiring weapons of mass destruction—chemicals and germs in the case of Syria; nukes, chemicals and germs in the case of Iran.

The Bush administration's post-war sabre-rattling may already have had an impact on them. Damascus appears to have reduced its attempts to hinder U.S. forces in Iraq. Tehran is still trying to exert its influence over the Iraqi Shiites, but it is doing so peacefully; it has not started a terrorist campaign against coalition troops.

But it's not enough simply to deter Iran and Syria from overt acts of aggression.

The West can never breathe easy as long as such criminal regimes remain in control of such vast resources. And it's not just our enemies that represent a problem. So do our ostensible friends, like Egypt and Saudi Arabia, whose citizens seem to make up the bulk of al Qaeda's recruits.

There is only one solution to this problem, and it is called liberal democracy.

Spreading freedom in the Arab world is no easy task, of course, but if democracy could take root in eastern Europe, east Asia and Latin America, there is no theoretical reason why it shouldn't work in the Middle East.

This will ultimately be up to the local people, but America can give them a helping hand, as it has helped other democrats from Poland to the Philippines. The West should heed the eloquent plea issued last week by the Egyptian dissident Saad Eddin Ibrahim to "assist the democratic transformation of the region".

Many people, including apparently Ibrahim himself, seem to think this means emphasizing the Israeli-Palestinian "peace process", but that would be a big mistake. The vaunted "road map" leads nowhere. Or rather it leads precisely where the Oslo process did: to mutual recriminations.

Those who think that Israeli concessions can buy peace from Islamic Jihad and Hamas (or even from Yasser Arafat's own al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades) make the same mistake as those who think that US or British concessions can buy peace from al Qaeda.

The fundamental problem in the Palestinian Authority is the same as in the rest of the Middle East: lack of liberalism. Developing democratic institutions isn't as sexy as pushing a "peace process", but it must be the West's primary emphasis in the region. Sometimes this will involve forcible regime change, as in Iraq. More often, subtler measures are called for.

Here's one example. Saudi Arabia is notorious for spreading Wahhabism, the most intolerant, hateful breed of Islam, around the world. It spends an estimated \$3 billion to \$4 billion a year on activities that give rise to terrorism. Many poor parents in the Islamic world send their children to Saudi-funded madrasah schools, which preach Wahhabism, simply because they have no alternative education system.

Riyadh can afford to do this because it's rich (GDP: \$241 billion). But America is much, much richer (GDP: \$10 trillion). Why doesn't the US use a few odd billion dollars to pay for secular schools in the Islamic world that teach the skills needed to succeed in the modern world?

This is the kind of unconventional strategy that America must pursue if it is to win this long war against Islamist terror. Military success is important, but it's not enough. (Sunday Times May 18)

The writer is Olin senior fellow at the influential American government think tank the Council on Foreign Relations and author of "The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power."

Hebron Revisited: Ending settlement activity. By Barbara Lerner

What must Israel do to advance the cause of peace in the Middle East? If you don't know the State Department answer, you're really not listening, because they've been repeating it, over and over, forever: "End settlement activity." It's a standard plank in every peace plan — Oslo, Mitchell, Four Powers Roadmap, whatever. Secretary Powell is pushing Israel to do it now, and why not? From a distance it looks like a modest, reasonable demand: a small, first step on that ever-receding road to peace.

I wanted to see what "ending settlement activity" looked like up close, on the bloody ground, in places like Hebron and Kiryat Arba — where the people say no to it, and are petitioning their government for permission to expand their "settlements." So I went back to Hebron to look around, and to ask: Why now?

The first time I went there in December 2001, I took one of the many crowded buses from Jerusalem. When I returned in February 2003, there was only one bus a day, and it left before I did. The taxi driver, a Moroccan Jew, blanched when I told him where I wanted to go, but for 100 US dollars today, no Israeli driver refuses. The tourist trade died when the Oslo terror offensive began in September 2000 — four months after the retreat from Lebanon, Israel's Vietnam. And in its 29th month, signs of the terror offensive's success were apparent.

After the first 20 minutes, we were the only cars on the road. Checkpoints were reassuring — lots of soldiers with machine guns at varying heights — but I saw only two of them. Makeshift walls to shield the road from snipers were more common; we passed at least six. I asked Max if they made him feel safer. "No," he said. "They put them up where traffic has been hit before, and snipers in the hills shoot down over them." He looked to be in his 40s, so I asked if he had fought in Lebanon. "Yes," he said, "14 months." Trying to get the pained look off his face, I said: "Then how scary can this be?" "It's worse." "Aw, come on," I protested, but he persisted. "In Lebanon, I wasn't alone. I was in a good unit, with good allies." "Arab allies?" "Yes, Arab allies." He scowled. "And then we left them. This," he gestured toward Hebron, "will be the same." When we got there, he parked between military vehicles in the outermost square, and wouldn't get out of his cab.

Max is not alone. Hebron makes a lot of Israelis uncomfortable. Those who still vote Left — about 20 percent in the January 28 election — demonize Hebron's Jews. They call them "fanatics," "thugs," and "racists," and the Western press echoes them, but few other Israelis believe it. Most who turn away from Hebron do so because, like Max, they see it as a lost cause and they hate feeling helpless. Many Israelis on the right don't accept that either. They think Hebron is worth fighting for because they see Hebron's Jews as democracy's canaries in the mine — and are convinced that a Palestinian state committed to denying Jews the right to live and pray in peace would never let the rest of Israel live in peace either.

David Wilder, Hebron's press guy, walked the block and a half from his office to Max's cab, and we walked back through empty streets. Last time, I saw lots of kids playing. This time there were only two small Arab boys in a big square. Last time, snipers in the Judean hills above Hebron were the main threat — eight months before my first visit, one of them had put a bullet through the head of 10-month-old Shalhevet Pas, but most days, they hit only sandbags piled up behind Jewish homes. Coming from a Jerusalem where suicide-bombers had struck twice in just the last week, Hebron was a relief, a surprisingly tranquil place — then. No more. In October 2002, the Israeli army, responding to diplomatic pressure, pulled out of the all-Arab sections of Hebron, and Arabs began attacking up close here, too, not with lone suicide bombers but with larger forces.

November 16 was the worst. Jews from Kiryat Arba were walking home from Sabbath services in Hebron, as they do every Friday night. That's why they're here: To pray at Marat HaMachpela, the Cave of the Patriarchs, in Hebron. The path they walk on — the path that joins the two communities — is called Worshippers Way, and that's where they were ambushed. A terrorist disguised as an observant Jew opened fire at point-blank range, and when security men and soldiers tried, repeatedly, to rescue the wounded, they were like ducks in a shooting gallery for terrorists on both sides of the path. Hours later, when the battle ended, 15 Israelis were wounded; 12 were dead. David's old friend, Col. Dror Weinberg, the highest-ranking IDF officer killed so far in the Oslo terror offensive, is among the dead. Other sabbath attacks followed. We talked about them, and about the Hebron-Kiryat Arba communities' response. "We want to build houses for Jewish families along Worshippers Way, to protect the sabbath walkers," David said. To turn it from a hostile no-man's land into a Jewish street: That's their "expansion plan," the diplomatically verboten "settlement activity" they want their government to permit. In the immediate aftermath of the butchery, prime minister Sharon agreed. Later, under diplomatic pressure, he backed down. Israeli police bulldozed the temporary shelters Hebron's Jews had built, and forcibly evicted them. They resisted passively, but did not fight back.

Is the Left right? Are these people "fanatics?" If you equate being a believer with being a fanatic, you can put aside the fact that most wear ordinary clothes and work at ordinary jobs, and call them all fanatics. Many so-called "settlements" are home to secular as well as religious Jews; Hebron is not. Only believers live here, because the don't-know-much-about-history crowd calls this "Arab land" and insists that Jews have no future here. That's the wisdom of the moment, but 3,800 years of history say otherwise. Abraham, the first Jew, bought this land and its cave from Ephron the Hittite then, and Jews have prayed here ever since, with only a few interruptions. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are buried here, beside their wives. David was crowned king here. He made it his first capital, and when the Romans razed Israel's second capital and drove the Jews from Jerusalem in 70 A.D., Hebron's Jews were still praying at Abraham's tomb. Life got harsher when Byzantine Greeks conquered their land in the 4th century,

but a remnant hung on, and when the armies of the Prophet Mohammed conquered it in the 7th century, life improved. Jews didn't regain their sovereignty, but they retained the right to live and worship here in peace, mostly. Crusaders drove the Jews and Arabs out in the 12th century, but Mamluks expelled the Crusaders in the 13th, and the Jews returned.

Life was more precarious under Muslim rule the second time around — the old Arab respect for Jews as "People of the Book" had faded away. Still, they hung on, and when Ottoman Turks conquered the land in the 16th century, life improved again. It remained tolerable, mostly, until the Turks lost this land to the British in 1917. Still, Hebron's Jews managed to live peacefully with their Arab neighbors until a sudden massacre in 1929 decimated the community. They regrouped, came back in 1931, and held on until 1936 when, in response to renewed Arab attacks, the British forced them out. Jordan ruled next: No Jews allowed. When Israel defeated Jordan and the other attacking Arab armies in 1967, the Jews came back again, and here they remain — still practicing their religion in the place where it was born, as their forebears did through all the centuries before them. Call it fanaticism, if you like. I call it faith.

No matter, Israeli Leftists insist, Hebron's Jews are "violent thugs"; last year, they claimed they had the pictures to prove it: photos of a big, burly Hebron adult pushing a policeman, and of Hebron teens throwing stones at a government tractor. (The tractor had been sent to demolish another temporary settlement at Gilad's Farm, established to honor Gilad Zar, an Israeli security officer hit by 40 terrorist bullets on a bypass road.) Pictures of the push and the stoning were omnipresent on Israeli TV and in the Hebrew dailies — all controlled by the Left — and they made "the settlers" look very bad indeed. But then pictures showing what had happened before — pictures the Leftist press didn't run — popped up on the websites of Israel's alternative, conservative press. These showed Israeli teens resisting passively, and police (with their identification tags removed) poking fingers in the kids' eyes, twisting their arms into what Israel's Media Watch called "almost impossible positions," and choking them until they fainted. Looking at both sets of pictures, a fair judge might conclude that settler violence isn't at all a big problem in Israel; police brutality against disfavored Jews is.

Well, maybe, sometimes, some Leftists will concede; but the settlers deserve harsh treatment because they're "racists." To understand this charge, you have to ignore the fact that a number of Kiryat Arba's residents are black Jews from Ethiopia, and focus on the Left's Exhibit A in the racism department — the big guy who pushed a cop when the cops were abusing the kids. He's Baruch Marzel, the most demonized man in Israel, and in February, I interviewed him at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem. I couldn't interview him in Hebron because he was banned from his home there for six months as a result of the photographed push. He hasn't been convicted of anything, but he agreed to the ban because if he'd rejected it, Leftist prosecutors and judges were set to keep him in jail until his trial — in another 12 months or so. So he camps out with his parents in Jerusalem, and his wife and nine children visit on weekends.

Baruch Marzel looks even bigger in person — his belly shakes when he laughs. If his beard were white, he'd look like Santa Claus, but at 44, it's still black. He's easy to demonize because when he was younger, he was a follower of the murdered Rabbi Meier Kahane, who had advocated ejecting all the Arabs from Israel, the way the Arab states ejected the Jews — about a million of them — after Israel became a state again in 1948.

Asked if he still wanted to evict all the Arabs, Marzel laughed: "No, just the ones who want to kill me." Asked if he was dead wrong in having failed to make that crucial distinction in the past, he readily acknowledged it. Asked next about Lebanon, he said he had served in a tank regiment and got hit by 16 pieces of shrapnel. "Sounds serious," I said. "Not when you're as fat as I am," he laughed. "I think all this padding saved me." But he stopped laughing when I asked if he had had much contact with Israel's Arab allies in Lebanon, the soldiers of the SLA. "Oh yes," he said. "They were good soldiers, loyal allies, and we abandoned them. I'm ashamed of that, and of the shabby way we treat them now." "What could Israel do for them now?" I asked. "Give them automatic Israeli citizenship," he snapped, "and the same benefits every Israeli veteran is entitled to."

Some racist, huh? But his brand of "racism" is the norm on the Israeli Right. It consists of discriminating between Arab friends and Arab enemies, and wanting to treat the two groups differently — heresy to the Israeli Left, to our State Department, and of course, to the U.N. crowd. (National Review May 21

The writer is a freelance writer in Chicago who recently returned from a month in Israel.