



Jerusalem 7:04 Toronto 8:40

Quote of the Week...

"You're out of Gaza? There'll be quiet [there]. You'll leave Judea and Samaria? There'll be quiet [there]. And if you leave Tel Aviv, then there will be quiet altogether!" - Former IDF Chief of Staff Moshe Ya'alon, predicting that there will be a new wave of terror after the disengagement from Gush Katif and Northern Shomron if the Arabs see that Israel is not withdrawing further.

Commentary...

A Cry of Despair By Esther Wachsmann

I haven't figured out yet whether we live in Chelm, the fictional town known for its obtuseness; Sodom, the biblical town known for its wickedness, or the Orwellian country of 1984, where lies are truths, enemies are friends, and wrong is right. Maybe it's all of the above.

When did all our engraved-in-stone values become a joke? When did our Zionist ideology become "post?" When exactly did our enemies, determined to obliterate us, become friends to whom we are expected to make gestures of good will?

When did our Jewish hessed, caring for our weak, helping our poor, our orphans and widows – many of them in that position due to terrorist bloodbaths – go by the wayside? Not to mention our disabled, elderly and immigrants, the latter being our country's justification for existence. It certainly wasn't in 1969, when I came to this country, my homeland.

But we now seem to be living in a country of corruption, lies, greed, apathy; doing the right things for the wrong people, and the wrong things for the right people.

I must quote my dear, late friend Sam Orbaum, of The Jerusalem Post, who, interviewing me in my home, said that to him, "there was no Right and Left, only right and wrong."

Sam, we haven't lived up to your noble, straight thinking.

Everything has changed. We now find it "right" to woo our enemies in return for nothing, to starve our poor, to ignore our disabled, to humiliate our old and our new immigrants.

Some are proceeding with almost a sense of glee to remove fellow Jews from their homes. We mock as irrelevant issues like family values (replaced by violence), proper education, where teachers teach and students learn (replaced by students stabbing or shooting teachers and each other), and loving our Land (replaced by giving as much of it as possible away).

In this "me" generation we no longer have regard for our fellow Jews, our heritage and our Jewish culture. It is considered at best pass, at worst, "racist."

IT HAS been said before, but needs to be said again: There can be no present or future without a past – a base, a foundation – which we seem to be masochistically chiseling away.

While murder, rape and robbery abound, our police force are meticulously arresting 12- and 14-year-olds in "orange." Indeed, our attorney-general has made these "criminal" arrests a top priority, crying for the full force of the law to be executed.

When a young Palestinian terrorist refuses to leave prison with his 398 freed comrades (his brother stayed with him) because he wishes to take the math matriculation examination, while a young imprisoned Israeli girl is forbidden to take that very same exam, something is very rotten in the State of Israel.

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*

When the celebration of the reunification of Jerusalem exactly 38 years ago is just another day in many people's lives, it is time to ask some serious questions.

What is our purpose in living in this land, where we are surrounded by those who hate us? Gush Katif is merely a microcosm of our entire society.

Are we here only because we speak Hebrew? If not for the biblical promise that this land was given to the Jewish

people as its homeland forever, what are we doing here?

Every one of our sons and daughters who goes to a caf , a theater, a stadium, gets on a bus or walks in the streets is risking his life. Why? If you don't know the answer, if indeed if you are asking these questions, then I am afraid all is lost. (Jerusalem Post Jun 8)

The writer is chair of the Nachshon-Chai Fund at Shalva for mentally challenged babies, children and young adults.

In Our Eternal, Undivided Capital By Caroline Glick

Yesterday we celebrated Jerusalem Day, commemorating Israel's liberation of eastern and southern Jerusalem from Jordanian occupation 38 years ago. As usual, our political leaders pledged their undying and sincere commitment to the continued unity of the city as the "eternal, undivided capital of the Jewish People." Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, always one to flaunt his commitment to Jerusalem, pledged to protect the city's unity by transferring NIS 40 million in budgetary funds to the municipal budget.

But talk is cheap. In the Arab sections of the city, the people tell a different tale. In recent months, they have come to live under the shadow of terror and intimidation by the Palestinian Authority. After an absence of four years, the PA, under the leadership of "democratically elected" chairman Mahmoud Abbas, has been reasserting its presence in the city.

The moment they are convinced they will not be directly quoted and no indication of their identity will be published, residents in neighborhoods like Silwan and Sheikh Jarrah all tell the same story: Hundreds of Arab Jerusalemites who hold Israeli identity cards and enjoy Israeli welfare benefits and health insurance, travel daily to Ramallah and Jericho to train in the various Palestinian

security services. There they don their uniforms and wear their weapons. At the end of the day they return to Jerusalem and intimidate their neighbors.

These law-abiding Jerusalemites are threatened with abduction, torture, loss of livelihood and worse if they turn to Israeli authorities for any assistance other than welfare. If squatters move onto their land, they are not allowed to complain. If a husband beats his wife, she cannot turn to Israeli authorities for help. The address for all their grievances has now become the Palestinian militiamen - many of whom hold the ranks of colonel and general - living next door, in Jerusalem, the eternal, undivided capital city of Israel to which Sharon has pledged his undying commitment.

Arab participation in Jerusalem's municipal elections has, since the establishment of the PA, dwindled to near insignificance. This too is the direct result of intimidation. Since 1996, the PA's appointed mufti at the Temple Mount, Sheikh Ikrama Sabri - a Jerusalem resident himself - has ordered Arab Jerusalemites to boycott the elections.

Sabri has done more than that. Aside from preaching the genocidal destruction of Israel and the conquest of the US by Islamic fundamentalists, he has issued three death sentences for Arabs who sold land to Jews. Recently, he announced his intention to approve the death sentences issued by the PA for 15 people accused of assisting Israel in its counterterrorism efforts. Any lawyer worth a penny would say that in so acting, Sabri is guilty of murder. And yet no charges have been brought against him by the Israel's State Attorney's Office.

The issue of land sales to Jews is one of the most disturbing indications of what the PA's true goals are in its dealings with Israel. When the PA was

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The Bar Mitzvah of Zev Lewis
By Stuart, Carolyn, Arielle, Danya and Orly Lewis.
Mazal Tov!

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first established in 1994, one of the first laws "promulgated" by then "justice" minister Freih Abu Meddin was to make the selling of land to Jews a capital offense. In short order, Arab land dealers started showing up dead in dumpsters in Ramallah and Jericho. Two were murdered in Jerusalem. Dozens of other Jerusalemites underwent torture at the hands of the PA militias.

IN 2001, after the massacre of 21 teenagers outside the Dolphinarium discotheque in Tel Aviv by a Palestinian terrorist, the government, in its one political move against the PA throughout the entire war, announced the closing of Orient House in Jerusalem and a clamp-down on all PA military and political activities in the city. Until that date, heads of state on official visits to Israel would make it a point to also visit the PLO's headquarters in the city, paying homage to its aspiration to take over Israel's eternal, undivided capital.

Since then, and until Abbas, the "reform" leader took power last November, the PA has gone underground in Jerusalem, and its Arab residents breathed a sigh of relief. But with the new legitimacy conferred on Abbas by the US and Israel, the PA is again asserting its terrorist authority over the residents of the city.

The newest victim of the PA's power grab is not an Arab at all, but the recently excommunicated Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church, Irineous I.

Since the PA was established, it has worked diligently to bring all the various Christian sects under its direct control. In the 1990s this involved terrorizing priests and nuns into submission. In Jericho and Hebron, the PA took control of the convents and churches of the White Russian churches and transferred them to the pro-PLO Red Russian church. In 2002, Fatah terrorists laid siege to the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and held the priests hostage for weeks while ostentatiously desecrating the holy site.

Until the sacking of Irineous last month, the Greek Orthodox Church was the only church operating in Israel and the PA that retained its independence from the PA. Before Easter, Ma'ariv published a report that Irineous had committed the "crime" of leasing church property by the Jaffa Gate of the Old City to Jews. Seeing an opportunity, the PA immediately pounced on Irineous. As columnist Nadav Haetzni reported in Ma'ariv on Friday, PA ministers and militia commanders, equipped with Israeli VIP travel documents, descended on the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and organized attacks against Irineous, who was immediately condemned as a "traitor" and a "collaborator."

Irineous was summoned for an interrogation by PA Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei. His lawyer's arm was broken and his financial adviser was brutally beaten. Under the gun of PA intimidation, the church's Holy Synod convened and excommunicated Irineous last month. The PA took over the church's finances and incited an international scandal which brought Greece's deputy foreign minister to Ramallah, where he apologized to Qurei for Irineous's terrible crime.

As all of this was happening, Israel's government sat quietly on the side and did nothing. The attacks against Irineous were organized by a PLO-sponsored Arab Israeli priest, Theodosius Atallah Hanna. Hanna has repeatedly glorified suicide bombers and, indeed, called for Palestinians to become bombers in interviews to the Arab press. He is positioning himself to become the first Arab patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church since the 16th century.

Aside from the fact that the current Arabization of the Greek Orthodox Church will signal the complete takeover of all Christian churches by the PA, it also has strategic significance for Israel's national security. The PA has now made clear that the prohibition of land sales to Jews extends even to foreigners. As well, the Greek Orthodox Church owns vast land tracts throughout Israel. In Jerusalem alone, the Knesset, the President's House and large swathes of Rehavia are owned by the church. With the church under PLO control, what will become of these lands when their current leases expire?

Jerusalem is the indivisible and eternal capital of the Jewish people. But from the passivity of the government in the wake of PA encroachment on the city, it seems that, rhetoric aside, our leaders are abandoning their duty to defend it. (Jerusalem Post Jun 7)

Anti-Semitism at 'Le Monde' and Beyond By Tom Gross

A landmark ruling by a French court finds its leading paper guilty of slandering Israel and Jewish people.

A French court last week found three writers for Le Monde, as well as the newspaper's publisher, guilty of "racist defamation" against Israel and the Jewish people. In a groundbreaking decision, the Versailles court of appeal ruled that a comment piece published in Le Monde in 2002, "Israel-Palestine: The Cancer," had whipped up anti-Semitic opinion.

The writers of the article, Edgar Morin (a well-known sociologist), Daniele Sallenave (a senior lecturer at Nanterre University) and Sami Nair (a member of the European parliament), as well as Le Monde's publisher, Jean-Marie Colombani, were ordered to pay symbolic damages of one euro to a human-rights group and to the Franco-Israeli association. Le Monde was also ordered to publish a condemnation of the article, which it has yet to do.

It is encouraging to see a French court rule that anti-Semitism should have no place in the media—even when it is masked as an analysis of the Israel-Palestinian conflict. The ruling also makes it clear that the law in this respect applies to extremist Jews (Mr. Morin is Jewish) as much as to non-Jews.

Press freedom is a value to be cherished, but not exploited and abused. In general, European countries have strict laws against such abuse and Europe's mainstream media are in any case usually good at exercising self-censorship. Responsible journalists strenuously avoid libelous characterizations of entire ethnic, national or religious groups. They go out of their way, for example, to avoid suggesting that the massacres in Darfur, which are being carried out by Arab militias, in any way represent an Arab trait.

The exception to this seems to be the coverage of Jews, particularly Israeli ones. This is particularly ironic given the fact that Europe's relatively strict freedom of speech laws (compared to those in the U.S.) were to a large extent drafted as a reaction to the Continent's Nazi occupation. And yet, from Oslo to Athens, from London to Madrid, it has been virtually open season on them in the last few years, especially in supposedly liberal media.

"Israel-Palestine: The Cancer" was a nasty piece of work, replete with lies, slanders and myths about "the chosen people," "the Jenin massacre," describing the Jews as "a contemptuous people taking satisfaction in humiliating others," "imposing their unmerciful rule," and so on.

Yet it is no worse than thousands of other news reports, editorials, commentaries, letters, cartoons and headlines published throughout Europe in recent years, in the guise of legitimate and reasoned discussion of Israeli policies.

The libels and distortions about Israel in some British media are by now fairly well known: the Guardian's equation of Israel and al Qaeda; the Evening Standard's equation of Israel and the Taliban; the report by the BBC's Middle East correspondent, Orla Guerin, on how "the Israelis stole Christmas." Most notorious of all is the Independent's Middle East correspondent, Robert Fisk, who specializes in such observations as his comment that, "If ever a sword was thrust into a military alliance of East and West, the Israelis wielded that dagger," and who implies that the White House has fallen into the hands of the Jews: "The Perles and the Wolfowitzes and the Cohens ... [the] very sinister people hovering around Bush."

The invective against Israel elsewhere in Europe is less well known. In Spain, for example, on June 4, 2001 (three days after a Palestinian suicide bomber killed 21 young Israelis at a disco, and wounded over 100 others, all in the midst of a unilateral Israeli ceasefire), the liberal daily *Cambio 16* published a cartoon of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon (with a hook nose he does not have), wearing a skull cap (which he does not usually wear), sporting a swastika inside a star of David on his chest, and proclaiming: "At least Hitler taught me how to invade a country and destroy every living insect."

The week before, on May 23, *El Pais* (the "New York Times of Spain") published a cartoon of an allegorical figure carrying a small rectangular-shaped black moustache, flying through the air toward Sharon's upper lip. The caption read: "Clio, the muse of history, puts Hitler's moustache on Ariel Sharon."

Two days later, on May 25, the Catalan daily *La Vanguardia* published a cartoon showing an imposing building, with a sign outside reading "Museo del Holocausto Judío" (Museum of the Jewish Holocaust), and next to it another building under construction, with a large sign reading "Futuro Museo del Holocausto Palestino" (Future Museum of the Palestinian Holocaust).

Greece's largest newspaper, the leftist daily *Eleftherotypia*, has run several such cartoons. In April 2002, on its front cover, under the title "Holocaust II," an Israeli soldier was depicted as a Nazi officer and a Palestinian civilian as a Jewish death camp inmate. In September 2002, another cartoon in *Eleftherotypia* showed an Israeli soldier with a Jewish star telling a Nazi officer next to him "Arafat is not a person the Reich can talk to anymore." The Nazi officer responds "Why? Is he a Jew?"

In Italy, in October 2001, the Web site of one of the country's most respected newspapers, *La Repubblica*, published the notorious anti-Semitic forgery, "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion," in its entirety, without providing any historical explanation. It did suggest, however, that the work would help readers understand why the U.S. had taken military action in Afghanistan.

In April 2002, the Italian liberal daily *La Stampa* ran a front-page cartoon showing an Israeli tank, emblazoned with a Jewish star, pointing a large gun at the baby Jesus in a manger, while the baby pleads, "Surely they don't want to kill me again, do they?" In *Corriere Della Sera*, another cartoon showed Jesus trapped in his tomb, unable to rise, because Ariel Sharon, rifle in hand, is sitting on the sepulcher.

Sweden's largest morning paper, *Dagens Nyheter*, ran a caricature of a Hassidic Jew accusing anyone who criticized Israel of anti-Semitism. Another leading Swedish paper, *Aftonbladet*, used the headline "The

Crucifixion of Arafat."

If the misreporting and bias were limited to one or two newspapers or television programs in each country, it might be possible to shrug them off. But they are not. Bashing Israel even extends to local papers that don't usually cover foreign affairs, such as the double-page spread titled "Jews in jackboots" in "Luton on Sunday." (Luton is an industrial town in southern England.) Or the article in Norway's leading regional paper, Stavanger Aftenblad, equating Israel's actions against terrorists in Ramallah with the attacks on the World Trade Center.

Grotesque and utterly false comparisons such as these should have no place in reporting or commenting on the Middle East. Yet although the French court ruling—the first of its kind in Europe—is a major landmark, no one in France seems to care. The country's most distinguished newspaper, the paper of record, has been found guilty of anti-Semitism. One would have thought that such a verdict would prompt wide-ranging coverage and lead to extensive soul-searching and public debate. Instead, there has been almost complete silence, and virtually no coverage in the French press.

And few elsewhere will have heard about it. Reuters and Agence France Presse (agencies that have demonstrated particularly marked bias against Israel) ran short stories about the judgment in their French-language wires last week, but chose not to run them on their English news services. The Associated Press didn't run it at all. Instead of triggering the long overdue reassessment of Europe's attitude toward Israel, the media have chosen to ignore it. *The writer is a former Jerusalem correspondent of the Sunday Telegraph and the New York Daily News.* (The Wall Street Journal Europe June 2)

In Arafat's Footsteps By Rachel Ehrenfeld

"Abu Mazen talks about how important it is to stop terrorism, however, he considers all terrorists that have committed atrocities against Israel, as heroes," said Brig-Gen. Yossi Kupperwasser, Chief Intelligence Analyst for the IDF, yesterday morning. He continued, "He [Abu Mazen] says that terrorism is not good, however, he takes no actions whatsoever to stop terrorism." In fact, the Palestinian Authority (PA) under Abu Mazen "is not interested in implementing arrests, disarming terrorist groups from their weapons, punishing terrorists, or stopping the smuggling of weaponry." Indeed, according to Prime Minister Sharon earlier this week, "terrorist activities have not yet ceased. The smuggling of weapons and arms production continues, and there is no real prevention of terrorist actions."

Moreover, Mahmoud Abbas, who is better known under his nom de guerre, Abu Mazen, is continuing in Arafat's footsteps and has done nothing to change the culture of hatred towards Israel that prevails in the Palestinian territories and encourages continuing terror attacks against Israel. According to Amnesty International's recent report, "Palestinian armed groups have repeatedly shown total disregard for the most fundamental human rights, notably the right to life, by deliberately targeting Israeli civilians and by using Palestinian children in armed attacks."

Even the reforms of the PA's thirteen Security Services/terrorist organizations which were demanded by the United States, did not result in the dismantling of these terror organizations. Instead, Abbas continues to protect the terrorists by legitimizing them and by funding their activities from the PA's budget. By combining the thirteen Security/terrorist organizations, Abbas has now created three military forces, which like their predecessors, continue to engage in terrorism, firing rockets almost daily on Israeli communities in the Negev.

The reform of the financial mismanagement of the PA is not fairing much better, despite years of demands for reform by the US and the EU. According to James Wolfensohn, the outgoing World Bank chief and the special envoy of the Quartet, the "Financial management within the Palestinian Authority...needs to demonstrate...security of management and...prudence of management and...transparency in expenditures..." But if the past is any indication, do not expect that the donors will stop financing the PA. Only last month, former commissioner Christopher Patten's assistant Emma Unwin disclosed that "when we started giving direct budgetary assistance at the end of 2002 [after the start of the Intifada], we were dealing with a Palestinian Authority that had a very untransparent system of financial management." This, however, did not prevent them from giving the PA's "untransparent system" more than \$2.5 billion of European taxpayers' money, which in turn enabled the Palestinians to continue with their Intifada.

Observing the situation, one cannot escape the conclusion that we have seen and heard all this before. The only difference is that then it was Arafat and now it is Mahmoud Abbas that is giving us the run-around; and like the world did with Arafat before, it is giving Abbas a leeway, hoping that he, unlike Arafat, will fulfill his promises. But, judging by Abbas' performance thus far, one should have little doubt that Abbas is nothing more than Arafat's clone, only better spoken and better dressed.

Prime Minister Sharon stated, "Progress towards the Roadmap can be achieved only after the terrorist organizations are dismantled. Appeasing the terrorists and engaging them into the Palestinian political system will only strengthen them."

Yet the U.S. is pressuring Israel to continue to appease the Palestinians despite the complete lack of action on the Palestinian's side to fulfill any of their commitments to Israel. Moreover, when President Bush meets with Abu-Mazen tomorrow, he is about to offer more money directly to the still opaque Palestinian Authority. So now, American taxpayers' money, too, is about to join the money that goes from the Europeans to the Palestinians to advance the unchanged and yet unchallenged terror agenda of the PA. One would have expected that President Bush had learned from his previous experience of trusting Abbas and giving him money. Soon after the President waived the law that banned direct US aid to the PA, showing confidence in Abbas' administration in 2003, the terror and violence continued and Abbas had to resign. With Arafat gone, Abbas is unlikely to resign now, but there is little doubt that the violence will continue. (Front Page Magazine May 26) *The writer is Director of the American Center for Democracy (www.public-integrity.org), author of Funding Evil: How Terrorism is Financed - and How to Stop It, and a member of the Committee on the Present Danger.*

No More Taboos By Jonathan Rosenblum

A Jewish friend from the UK recently described the difference between American and British Jews: US Jews at least consider the possibility that they will one day need Israel as a place of refuge; British Jews do not even consider the possibility. And that despite the steepest rise in anti-Semitic incidents in Europe last year.

Given this general complacency, British Jews will heave a sigh of relief over the rescission of the Association of University Teachers boycott of Israel, and conclude that the matter was a tempest in a teapot.

Not so.

The mere fact that so few academics could bestir themselves to actively oppose the initial resolution, whose chief sponsor linked her Web site to neo-Nazi videos attacking Israel, is cause for concern. Less than 100 votes, out of a membership of 40,000, secured passage.

And on the revote, a resolution to curtail the academic freedom of Israeli professors still gained 25% support from members of a union formed to protect academic freedom. A similar boycott of any other country would not have garnered even a handful of votes. Thus the impression was reinforced that Israel's presence beyond the 1949 Armistice Lines constitutes "the worst occupation in recent history," in the words of the University of Haifa's Ilan Pappé, one of the chief instigators of the boycott.

Taboos against the open expression of Jew-hatred in England have fallen because the elites responsible for maintaining those taboos are themselves infested with anti-Semitism.

Such elite failure can be lethal. An unlettered sign painter and his beer-hall followers could never have taken over the most civilized nation in Europe had Germany's traditional elites not capitulated so totally. Those elites were rife with the same anti-Semitism as Hitler's lumpenproletariat followers, and thought they could use the latter.

Penelope Wyatt reported in the Spectator, a few years back, being told by a liberal peer, "Thank God, we can once again say what we want about the Jews." And Melanie Phillips relates how a liberal commentator recently tried to reassure her that there has been no upsurge in anti-Semitism. No, he explained helpfully, that's always been there. "We are just so relieved that we don't have to worry about the Jews anymore. Ever since the war we were told that because of their suffering, the Jews were above criticism."

MATTERS BEGIN with the BBC, the voice of sweet reason to itself and most Britons. On BBC discussion shows, like Question Time, defenders of Israel are inevitably outnumbered three or four to one, if they can be found at all. Even an innocuous observation that Israel is the Middle East's best functioning democracy is guaranteed to set off vicious hissing and jeering from the studio audience.

Prior to the boycott revote, the BBC carried a report on the College of Judea and Samaria, which it matter-of-factly describes as being located in an "illegally occupied settlement on Arab land." Viewers would never have learned that 300 Arabs from neighboring villages study there, or that 20% of the University of Haifa's student body, and many department heads, are Arabs. The BBC's Orla Guerin, who once described the arrest of a retarded teenage Palestinian suicide bomber as an Israeli stunt to gain favorable publicity, was on the Queen's most recent birthday honors list.

It is not just the left-wing British magazines that write of the Zionist cabal in Washington, or feature glaring covers with the Star of David piercing the union flag. Simon Jenkins, leading columnist at the conservative Times, can find no other possible explanation for ousting Saddam Hussein than that

Washington and London are controlled by Jews whose "first commitment [is] to the defense of Israel."

Meanwhile, at the prestigious Royal Court Theatre, the beatification of Rachel Corrie, who was once photographed leading a group of frenzied Palestinian children burning the American flag, is complete. Only one reviewer of My Name is Rachel Corrie described the play accurately as a piece of crude agit-prop. None of the other reviewers even blanched at Corrie's description of the vast majority of Palestinians as "engaging in Gandhian non-violent resistance." A printed version of the play is being readied for distribution to British schoolchildren.

David Pryce-Jones documents, in the current Commentary, the pervasive anti-Semitism of the urbane, highly intelligent men of letters who have populated the French Foreign Service for more than a century. The French ambassador to England's description of Israel as "a shitty little country" is but a mild example.

Eventually, this studied disgust with Jews became linked to a perceived French interest in unleashing Arab nationalism, including a postwar alliance with the notorious Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, as a means of sticking it to the hated Anglo-Saxons. France is today dealing with the noxious results.

In England as well, elite disgust with Jews and Israel is linked with perceived self-interest. Arab voters outnumber Jewish voters by over five to one, and the major parties have calculated the advantage of appeasing Arab opinion. Labor campaign posters showing the Conservative Party's Jewish leader Michael Howard posed as Fagin reflected a conscious decision to eschew old taboos against anti-Semitic stereotypes.

British Jewry has no cause for complacency. (Jerusalem Post Jun 7)

Getting Killed Wherever Necessary By Israel Harel

One of the recurrent questions in the public discourse is what a person in Israel is prepared to - and should - be killed over. And the opinion, at least the one expressed in the media, is usually that only a few are willing to be killed over defending the settlements.

Aluf Benn put it well ("What we'll be killed over," Haaretz, May 25): "What is so vital about Ariel and Ma'aleh Adumim and Efrat and Kiryat Arba, that it is worth getting killed for them?" And people will be killed there because "in the coming years the battle over the annexation of the blocs and East Jerusalem will be at the center of the conflict... and many will pay with their lives."

Thus, even the neighborhoods of East Jerusalem and the blocs, a credo in the Israeli consensus, are not worth sacrificing lives over. And if the objective is not worthy, there also will not be anyone willing to fight, certainly not to sacrifice his life for these places, Benn and others claim.

Similar things were said and written some five years ago, in the dark days of the beginning of the terrorism war. But the various refusenik movements that clung to them - and preached to soldiers not to defend the settlements, that is, to defect from their units in the midst of war - failed dismally.

As in the past, so in the future the troops will fight in Efrat, because they know what those preparing the ideological platform for refusal in the next round of the terrorism war are trying to blur - that if they do not fight there, the war will reach Tel Aviv. And even there, those who now preach against fighting in Ariel will not fight, but rather leave the job to those for whom every place in the Land of Israel is worth fighting to defend.

From talking to soldiers who protected travel along the lethal roads in Yesha (the Hebrew acronym for Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip), I learned that, whether secular or religious, immigrants or native-born Israelis, their motivation is high and that the debate "what is worth getting killed over" takes place primarily in the media, not among them.

Another thing also became apparent: only a few of them were members of kibbutzim, residents of Ramat Aviv Gimmel or other affluent neighborhoods. Among these, the military service evasion rate is apparently one of the highest in the country.

It is hard to know what sort of refusal the prophets of the next round of refusal are predicting. Perhaps the refusal which they, their sons, or those in their geographic and spiritual surroundings have been a part of for some time. In other words, draft dodgers who masquerade, for glory's sake, as refuseniks. In the combat units, Amos Harel recounted in Haaretz, the percentage of kippa-wearing officers exceeds 50 percent. And at least another 25 percent come from what are still called the "development towns."

Here - despite constant incitement regarding the supposed discrimination compared to the settlements - identification with the settlements is no less than among religious troops. Thus, the prediction that even at crunch time there will not be anybody to fight to defend the settlement blocs is baseless.

The service evasion by the members of the old, decaying elites began after the Yom Kippur War, and has nothing to do with the fact that most of the fighting today is in Yesha. Quite a few studies of this phenomenon have been conducted by scholars and the Israel Defense Forces' Department of Behavioral

Sciences. The source of the dodging is primarily the negative personal example set in many affluent homes and in the decadent environment, as well as in some schools.

Some of the results are the stabbings, gang rapes, mass drug use and other phenomena that stem from a values vacuum. It's no wonder that those joining combat units come largely from homes - traditional, mostly religious - that equipped them with Zionist content, including motivation to serve the people, and if necessary also to fight and get killed - wherever necessary.

The noisy attempts made at the start of the terrorism war to pulverize the legitimacy, and consequently the motivation, of the fighters and to add them to the tribe of evaders did not succeed. Witness the fact that the units involved in 90 percent of the fighting have to turn away many volunteers because they do not have enough slots to take in all those banging on their doors. (Ha'aretz Jun 8)

Perception is Reality By Moshe Arens

The outgoing chief of staff, "Bogey" Ya'alon, insists that the Palestinian terror campaign against Israel's civilian population that began in September 2000 was a war in every sense of the word - a war intended to bring Israel to its knees. There is no more fitting description for the events that brought terror to Israeli streets and homes for more than four years, that damaged Israel's economy, and that forced Israel to mobilize its military reserves, in addition to its regular military forces, to put an end to the acts of terror.

Ya'alon should know. He is the man who successfully led Israel's armed forces in this war. Politicians and journalists who prefer to treat him with sarcasm rather than with the respect due him, cannot change the facts; the credit for Israel's achievements in this war goes first and foremost to him. That is how history is going to tell it. He prepared the IDF for this war and he led the IDF in this war.

Since March 2002, the bloodiest month of the war, when the government belatedly authorized the entry of Israeli troops into Palestinian cities, the number of Palestinian terror attacks has decreased dramatically, and lately many in the Palestinian leadership, first and foremost Mahmoud Abbas, have begun to admit that the Palestinian campaign of terror against Israel has been counterproductive.

Have we been victorious in this war? Victory and defeat in war are elusive concepts and are frequently in the eye of the beholder, unless the victors on the battlefield can force unconditional surrender on those who were defeated and the perception of the outcome of the military conflict is the same on both sides. The Palestinian population, which provided massive support for the suicide bombers who blew up Israeli civilians on buses and in the streets, are certainly not thinking of unconditional surrender.

The terrorist infrastructure in Gaza and in Judea and Samaria is still in place and may yet be reactivated. There is no doubt that many among the Palestinian population see the planned Israeli unilateral withdrawal from Gush Katif and northern Samaria as the direct result of the Palestinian terror campaign, and therefore a victory for them. In the months to come, this will certainly be the narrative trumpeted by the Palestinian leadership, something that can only encourage a resumption of acts of terror.

It is inherent in the asymmetric nature of the Israeli-Arab conflict and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that most Israeli military successes have not been translated into victories in the accepted sense of the term and put an end to acts of violence against Israel, while leaving significant differences of perception regarding the outcome of the military encounters.

Successive Israeli military successes in the War of Independence, the Sinai Campaign and the Six-Day War were not perceived as the final word for further aggression against Israel. To this day, the Yom Kippur War is feted in Cairo as an Egyptian victory. However, in the light of the IDF's success on the battlefield in that war, for more than thirty years Egypt has eschewed plans for aggression against Israel, in full cognizance of Israel's demonstrated military superiority, a superiority that has grown in the intervening years. That was evidently a war that Israel won.

The unilateral withdrawal of the IDF from southern Lebanon may be advertised by some as the height of political wisdom, but it clearly created the perception of an Israeli defeat in Lebanon and among the Palestinians, and encouraged the Palestinians to commence their war of terror against Israel shortly thereafter.

Consequently, it is perception that matters. And as is frequently the case, perception and reality are not the same; certainly not in the Middle East. Israel must not lose sight of this. Jabotinsky saw it 82 years ago when he wrote his essay, "The Iron Wall." "As long as there remains in the hearts of the Arabs the smallest spark of hope that they can get rid of us, they will not sell this hope for either sweet talk or far-reaching promises," he wrote. Has anything changed? (Ha'aretz Jun 8)