

Events...

Toronto One Israel Missions

With Aish Hatorah October 12-20

Visits throughout Yeshu, Shabbat in Hevron, For info: 905-764-1818 x228.

With BAYT Brotherhood November 3-10

Visits throughout Yeshu, Shabbat in Jerusalem, For info: 905-886-5642.

Quote of the Week...

The Bad Fight

"Bill Clinton--who...took frenzied steps to avoid Vietnam--may go to war yet. Or so he said at a Zionist dinner in Toronto on July 29. If the Jewish state were really threatened, Clinton said, he'd "grab a rifle and get into the trench and fight and die" for Israel. These words brought the crowd to its feet. Well, Israel is in peril--or at least the lives of Israelis are--and one of the reasons is Bill Clinton, who blessed (and even funded) the emerging terrorist protostate that he now implicitly vows to take up arms against. But our former president would surely be of little service in uniform to Israel or any other country. Far more appropriate would be a simple apology." (The New Republic Aug 21)

A Message from Arutz 7...

As the Oslo War enters its third year, we at Arutz-7 sense that though there has been an improvement, most of the world community still does not quite understand or identify with Israel's plight. Israel's desire to live in peace amidst a hostile set of neighbors; the Jewish People's religious and historic claims to this land; Israel's significant contributions to rejuvenating a desolate land and improving the quality of life of all its citizens, whether they be new immigrants from Africa or Moslem Arabs; the strivings of Israeli society to build a just social framework based on Torah principles; the true story behind the Oslo Agreements - these are just some of the points that are still not receiving a "fair hearing" in the all-important media front around the world.

As you know, Arutz-7 strives to publicize and promote understanding of Israel and its goals in the above spirit. We therefore ask you, our loyal readers, to help us "spread the word." Permit us to request of each of you to identify ten friends, co-workers, relatives or acquaintances, and recommend that they sign up for a free subscription to Arutz-7 e-mail news. Send them an e-mail, possibly including a sample report, and direct them to "<http://subscribe.IsraelNationalNews.com>" or, by e-mail, to subscribe@IsraelNationalNews.com. Hebrew, Russian and French editions are also available. Sincerely, Arutz-7's Internet News Staff

Commentary...

Crying Peace, Peace, When There Is No Peace By Midge Decter

When it comes to the matter of the sheer volume of human blood spilled, surely no century in all of human history can compete with the 20th.

For that 100-year period witnessed two massive world wars and God alone knows how many smaller ones, an almost unimaginably murderous revolution in Russia and numerous smaller imitations of same, along with the unprecedented horror of a newly devised "scientific" project to wipe out the Jews.

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

places.

It has been solemnly intoned in countless books and newspaper columns.

It has been invoked in words of prayer, and sung and shouted from the podiums of demonstrations. National and international movements and committees have been created to promote it.

Political leaders who promise to achieve it are often raised up high among their people (and are sometimes presented with a much-honored and much-coveted international prize bearing its name.)

In Washington, D.C., an official government institute is named for it, and in New York, there stands on the shores of the East River the home of the United Nations, once declared by many serious people to be its true harbinger (and now likely to be its official mausoleum.)

How can this nearly century-long contradiction between idea and reality have escaped recognition by so many among us? From the peace of Versailles to Chamberlain's "peace in our time" to the Paris peace accords of 1973 that allegedly settled the war in Vietnam, all the way to Yitzhak Rabin's "Give peace a chance" (and did Rabin know when he intoned this mantra that it had been borrowed from the American "kids" of the late 60s and 70s who meant by it that they refused either to honor or serve their country?) each of these declarations ended in what might otherwise have been avoidable slaughter.

Not necessarily immediately, but slaughter all the same just as the slaughter of the so-called Al Aksa Intifada was the somewhat belated result of Oslo-cum-Camp David-cum-Taba.

Nor is there in the early years of this new millennium any reason to suppose that expressions the old 20th-century demand for peace will, or could, have any other kind of result.

For the truth is that those who continue to cling to the idea are at bottom not interested in either the real world around them or the real human beings who inhabit it.

They are people who, consciously or not, harbor the hope for some kind of ultimate freedom from the messy quotidian affairs of the world, some settlement of their country's or the world's affairs that will free them from having to pay that old, drearily earthbound, and frequently unpretty attention to the requirements of the everyday.

That is why, no matter how many diplomats were to punish their countrymen and the world at large with their delusions, it is not likely that the true peace-lovers would ever learn from the hard experience that has by now already been vouchsafed untold millions of their fellow humans. For they are, God help them and us idealists. And it is the very definition of a political idealist that he is someone who invests his heart along with his mind in precisely a hope of what cannot be.

He is like the donkey in the old fable who stands in middle of the road with hay piled up in the fields on either side of him and, refusing to compromise by moving in either direction, starves to death.

There is no such thing as "making" peace. Nations who are friendly do not need to do so and nations or peoples who are hostiles cannot do so. The latter, to be sure, can live without direct open warfare, on the basis of the rational calculation that there is too much to lose the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War being prime examples of this. And perhaps though at a cost of how many millions of lives already spent? India and Pakistan may now prove to be another.

It is also theoretically true, though history offers few instances of it, that nations who were formerly hostile could become genuine friends (Britain and the United States, cultural parent and offspring, being a prime and rare exception.)

Or former enemies could simply become too worn out with centuries of

warfare not to give up the ghost of their enmity (Britain and France, and perhaps, or so we are nowadays permitted to hope, France and Germany, and there are no doubt others.)

But peace the word "peace" conjures the idea of some blessed stasis when the world has been made "safe for democracy," say, or when all nuclear weapons have been "abolished." It is an unholy, unreal unholy because unreal monstrously greedy demand for something that life, especially the life of nations, does not yield up.

It is enough to ask for the absence of war we may not dare to ask for more than the absence of war between ourselves and our enemies. And to achieve that requires us not to dream and devise great unworkable solutions but to engage in logging, wearying, and endless work.

For example, it involves deterrence, an expensive, unsexy, uncelebratory, and hence often unpopular policy. Nor do the idealists of the world offer any kudos, or much-cherished prizes, for engaging in it. And sometimes there is, quite simply, the need to fight.

Thankless and unpretty as they may seem to be, deterring or fighting when it becomes necessary to do so are the best the only protections on offer to ordinary mortals. Anything else is delusion, and narcissistic delusion at that.

How much have the world's ordinary people been required to pay in order that the world's peace-mongers be able to look into the mirror each morning and see reflected there an oh-so-gratifying nobility?

To cry peace, peace, when there is no peace, as the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel taught us long ago, is not the expression of a hope. It is, on the contrary, a reckless toying with the minds and feelings of an already weary and beset people whose very future depends, as it does for the Israelis, on their capacity to do three things: keep their eyes wide open, keep their minds clear of cant, and perhaps above all, keep their powder ever dry.

The writer, who founded and headed the Committee for the Free World, is a social critic and author. Her most recent book is An Old Wife's Tale My Seven Decades in Love and War. (Jerusalem Post Aug 30)

A Complex People By Rabbi Stewart Weiss

We Jews, G-d bless us all, are a complex people. Not complex in the sense of being complicated, or intricately wired (though we certainly are that, too). Rather, complex in the sense that we are have more than our fair share of complexes, syndromes and phobias.

Take the "Edifice Complex," for example. We seem to be obsessed with building; bigger, better, newer, larger buildings. I just returned from a tour of Italy, where I visited two of the most magnificent synagogues in the world: the Great Synagogues of Florence and Rome. Both of these domed, palatial structures were specifically erected in order to show the non-Jewish population that Jews are full-fledged citizens who need not take a back seat to anyone when it comes to imposing edifices. Never mind that 90% of the visitors to these shuls are foreign tourists, and that they are guarded 24 hours a day by machine-gun wielding policemen. What counts is that OUR houses of worship rival those of the Gentiles!

And near Chicago, I stopped in to see a \$7 million, white-marble, state-of-the-art Temple-on-the-lake, whose shamash told me that services are held only on weekends because they can't get a minyan during the week.

Then there is the Armchair Quarterback Syndrome, whereby every Jew absolutely MUST have an opinion on virtually every subject, particularly regarding the programs and practices of the State of Israel. Latest member of this illustrious team is Jonathan Sacks, chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth, who recently remarked that many of Israel's policies are "inconsistent with Jewish ideals" and threaten to "corrupt" our culture.

With all due respect to the esteemed Rabbi, just who made him the final word on "Jewish ideals," two of which - living in Israel, and refraining from ever casting aspersions on the Holy Land - he seems to have conveniently forgotten? How many sons of his have risked their lives in defense of the Jewish homeland, and how many terror attacks has he personally experienced? Jolly good of you, sir, to point out all our glaring deficiencies, but you might rather turn your moral cannons on your OWN government, which harbors Sheiks and Imams who call upon their faithful to murder Jews, and which recently embargoed arms for Israel, since they were being used for defense against the "civilized" Palestinians.

And then there is the "Messiah complex," a recurring condition among the faithful. It seems that untold numbers of observant Jews are prolonging their lives in the Exile and postponing their Aliyah "until the Moshiach comes." Our ancestors prayed for the opportunity to come to Eretz Yisrael, our loved ones saved their pennies to purchase land here, dunam by dunam. Yet now that the doors are wide open and the chance to realize the age-old dream of the Jewish People is at hand, hundreds of thousands of Jews prefer to sit tight and wait until the Messiah leads them - willingly or not - to the Holy Land.

Now, it's no crime to be a "waiter," but it's no great honor, either. So I have

a "tip" for all you waiters out there: Come to Israel NOW. Now is when we need you, not when the Utopia arrives. Now is when the path of Moshiach is being paved, by all the brave soldiers and pioneers and Yeshiva students and mothers and builders who have heroically chosen to CREATE the future, rather than have it imposed upon them.

Abraham didn't wait for his house to be built on the Mediterranean before he made Aliyah; he picked up and left when he got the word. Moses didn't wait for the Egyptians to come around to the idea of justice and fair play; he forced the issue by demanding our redemption, and liberation to our own land.

History belongs to those who shape it. Alas, those who wait are usually left at the gate.

The year about to (mercifully) end has been filled with trauma and terror for the Jewish People, particularly for those of us who live in the Jewish homeland. But we are still here, thank G-d, and we know the year ahead will be better. We are sure of it. If only all the wonderful waiters and critics and builders and planners the world over would decide to ply their trade AMONG us, rather than apart from us - what a New Year's resolution THAT would be!

I can't think of anything more consistent with Jewish ideals and more certain to bring the Moshiach. (Jerusalem Post Sep 1)

The writer is director of the Jewish Outreach Center of Ra'anana.

Five Hundred Meters and Five Minutes By David Wilder

Shalom.

Yesterday I experienced one of the most bizarre events I can remember.

Deputy Minister of Construction and Housing, Rabbi Meir Porush of Agudat Israel arrived to visit Hebron. Meir Porush is a very good friend of Hebron and was quite instrumental in the past, providing assistance for major building projects. Before attending a working lunch, the deputy minister toured the Jewish community of Hebron. However, this tour was set apart from other such tours because it began, not in one of Hebron's neighborhoods, rather in the hills overlooking Hebron's neighborhoods.

Our first stop was none other than the Shalhevet Hills, otherwise known as Abu Sneneh. I haven't been on top of these hills for almost six years, since Hebron was abandoned to the terrorists. Way back when we used to take groups up to the hills, looking down on Ma'arat HaMachpela and the Avraham Avinu neighborhood, letting the view do the talking. The targets were crystal clear. It was just a matter of time before we became sitting ducks in a pond.

Unfortunately, of course, our fears materialized. Not because we are prophets, but only because we have eyes in our heads, eyes that are open, and we know who our neighbors are.

The IDF has been back in the hills for the past few months, and yesterday, in the company of Deputy Minister Meir Porush, we went up to visit. And you know what? It still looks the same. With only a few exceptions, all the buildings are still there, the same roads, and looking down below, the same targets.

Following our tour of Abu Sneneh, which is just south of the community, we took a short trip to the north, and ascended the Harat a'Shech hills, which overlook the Beit Hadassah neighborhood, Beit Romano and Tel Rumeida. I had never before visited this part of Hebron. When we stopped and left our cars, I looked down and could not believe my eyes. Right there in front of me, maybe five hundred meters away, were the windows of my apartment in Beit Hadassah. Five hundred meters and five minutes, because that's how long it took to reach the lookout from Beit Hadassah.

Across the way, the Tel Rumeida caravan homes, just waiting for a terrorist to take aim and fire. A good high-powered rifle with a telescope is all that's needed to easily hit these homes. And get hit they did, time after time after time.

Looking down at Beit Hadassah I had trouble keeping my composure. I could clearly see the window hit by terrorist sniper fire about a year and a half ago, gunfire that missed two of my girls literally by inches. It was astounding.

What was even more astounding was that for over a year and a half terrorists shot at us from these two hills, from Abu Sneneh and Harat a'Shech, five minutes from our homes, and the IDF was not allowed to do anything to stop the shooting. From these hills Shalhevet was murdered. From these hills the Meshulam boys and David Struk were shot and wounded. From these hills thousands of rounds were aimed at us - from a distance of five minutes, and the IDF was not permitted to climb those hills and stop the shooting. Today, there aren't a great number of Israeli troops on the hills. But the very fact that they are there is enough to prevent continued attacks.

However the most incredible part of our tour was the fact that there are

those in the Israeli government, namely the Defense Minister and very possibly the Prime Minister, who are willing to give the hills back to the terrorists, pulling out our troops and again leaving us at the mercy of Arafat, Dahlan and the rest of the them. There are no words to express the sensations of total disbelief. It is just unbelievable.

I photographed the view from these two hills, and later, looking at the pictures, almost had to pinch myself to convince myself that what I was looking at was real.

But, in truth, the problem isn't here in Hebron. The problem is throughout Israel. We are caught up in a Catch 22. Why did Israel retake the cities in Yesha? Because they were being used as terror bases by the PA, used to plan attacks and later, as refugees. As soon as Israel retook the cities, most of the terrorism stopped. Now, after a couple of weeks of relative quiet, the politicians are saying, "things have quieted down, now we can leave the cities and restart the negotiations." But everyone knows, as soon as we leave the cities, the terror will inevitably start again. And when the terror starts, it hits not only Hebron, rather Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and the rest of the cities in Israel. We've been on this road before - the first time we weren't wrong, and this time we won't be wrong either.

The only answer is to stay in the cities - of course for security reasons, but more importantly, because they are an intrinsic part of Eretz Yisrael, of our homeland and our heritage.

The current 'deal' called "Bethlehem and Gaza First," supposedly to be followed by Hebron and the rest of the cities in Yesha is an attempt by the left to again ignite Oslo - to try and revive the dead. No, not to revive the over 600 people who have been killed over the past two years - we have to wait for G-d to do that. Rather they want to resuscitate the process that was the ultimate cause of these deaths.

As we approach the Jewish New Year and the high holy days, let us hope that our leaders will take stock of what has happened and look forward to where we are going, and then, using very simple common sense, will leave Oslo dead and buried in the past rather than trying to play politics with the lives of their people in the present and future.

Let me take this opportunity to thank Arutz 7 for all the wonderful work they do, and to wish all of you a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year.

Shana Tova - with blessings from Hebron. (Arutz 7 Radio Sep 2)

Build a Museum of Terror By Michael Freund

Though nearly a year has passed since the September 11 terror attacks, a small, makeshift memorial in New York's Grand Central Terminal continues to attract crowds of silent onlookers. It is a simple shrine, consisting of several white panels, all of which bear the names, photos and stories of people missing or unaccounted for in the wake of the attacks.

There is the young man with the disarming smile who had just started working in the World Trade Center on September 10. Or the loving father of two, whose young children will never again enjoy a day at the park or a visit to the zoo with their dad, thanks to Osama bin Laden's evil act.

Reading the stories, and glancing at the pictures, obviously has an enormous impact on those gathered around the ad-hoc monument. Families, and even strangers, have written on the boards, covering every available empty space with their thoughts, hopes and feelings, vowing never to forget and pledging their determination to persevere.

After reading about a young firefighter who lost his life, a tall, rather tough-looking man in work clothes turns away, his eyes red with tears, which he fights hard to keep from flowing freely. Nearby, a middle-aged African-American woman silently weeps as she reads about a young secretary whose life was snuffed out in her early 20s.

Clearly, America will not soon forget the horrific events of September 11, 2001, for the trauma has become seared in the nation's consciousness.

Israelis, by contrast, have been living with terror far longer than their counterparts across the Atlantic. Even prior to the establishment of the State, Jewish communities in the Land of Israel were the targets of unrelenting Arab terror, a phenomenon that sadly continues to this day.

It is therefore hardly surprising that many Israelis would prefer to forget, rather than recall, the scourge of Arab terror, and what it has wrought, during the past century. Living under the threat of violence on a daily basis exacts an enormous psychological and emotional cost, and the natural human reaction is to try to shift one's attention elsewhere.

Indeed, there have been so many acts of terror over the past two years that it has become virtually impossible to remember what happened last month, let alone last year. As a result, many prefer to just block it all out, if only to maintain their sanity.

On the individual level, such a reaction is, of course, understandable. But for the nation as a whole, it is nothing less than inconceivable.

To fully appreciate the challenges this country has faced, to truly understand the complexities and the context of its struggle for survival, one has to

understand the incessant terror to which it has been subjected over the years. It is therefore essential that the government create an educational vehicle for conveying this message, both to Israelis and foreigners alike.

Hence, the government should erect a Museum of Terror, whose purpose would be both to document and commemorate Israeli victims of Arab violence. The museum would serve as a national repository of data and information, as well as a tribute to those innocent men, women and children who have lost their lives to terrorism.

Permanent exhibits could include biographical accounts of the victims, a time line of terror, and other relevant historical material, all of which would serve to underline the incalculable human suffering that terror has inflicted on Israeli society. Other displays could incorporate more provocative items, such as the remains of public buses blown up in suicide attacks, or the nails and bolts used by the bombers to maximize damage to the victims, with the point being to emphasize the wanton depravity of those who perpetrate such appalling acts.

The Museum of Terror should be placed on the itinerary of every visiting foreign diplomat and head of state, as well as every Israeli high-school student, thereby ensuring that the evil of terrorism is never forgotten.

Though a monument to victims of terror was established on Mount Herzl, where an annual ceremony is now held on Remembrance Day, much more can and should be done to honor and perpetuate their legacy.

It may seem like a grim and even depressing theme for a museum, but the reality is that Arab terror has played a central role in shaping and defining the modern history of Israel. And that sad fact is something we should not ignore, nor dare to forget. (Jerusalem Post Sep 3)

The writer served as Deputy Director of Communications and Policy Planning in the Prime Minister's Office from 1996 to 1999.

Non-Violence, in Addition to Violence By Gabriel Danzig

An innovative poll taken by Search for Common Ground has been widely reported as indicating that Palestinians support the use of non-violent methods to press for the creation of a Palestinian state. If this were true, it would be a very significant change for the better.

In the past, Palestinian Arabs and their supporters from other Arab nations have used violence against Israel not only for the sake of gaining a state, but also for the sake of destroying Israel. Obviously, non-violent methods will never destroy the State of Israel. So if the Palestinians should prove willing to give up violence, and thereby the goal of destroying Israel, there is every reason to rejoice at the news.

A closer look at the poll shows that the good news is not quite so good, however. Palestinians did not approve of non-violence instead of violence, but rather approved of using non-violent methods in addition to violent ones.

The poll indicates that Palestinians overwhelmingly approve of violence against Israeli civilians (85 percent), but also that they would be willing to use other methods, such as boycotts and strikes, as well.

In other disappointing results, while 88% believe that Palestinians who died while committing acts of violence (i.e. murdering civilians) are martyrs, only 54% would regard a Palestinian who died in non-violent action as being on the same level. In other words, all other things being equal, violence is better. In what appears to be an accurate assessment of world opinion, only 36% of Palestinians believe that acts of violence harm their image.

The pollsters would have us believe that the willingness to augment violence with other techniques – even if those techniques do not involve violence – is a significant new development.

Personally, I find nothing at all surprising about it. I find it hard to imagine that the Palestinians were committed previously to using violence in every single campaign that they undertook. While violence did pervade a surprisingly large number of Palestinian political activities – such as relations with the press, conducting elections, punishing “collaborators” and so on – there have been some activities that could not by their nature include violence.

Publishing newspapers which offer the Palestinian perspective on the Middle East, for example, is not an inherently violent activity, and it has been done. So, too, creating Web sites with information on events in the region. There have been strikes in the past, and successful attempts to create international boycotts on Israel.

Although violence is a fairly regular feature of many Palestinian activities, I am not aware of anyone who thought that Palestinians were involved in violence to the exclusion of all else. So it is hard to understand the significance of a poll which reveals that they would be willing to use effective tactics which do not involve violence in addition to violent ones.

The results of this poll could only be interpreted as positive if one assumed previously that the Palestinians were a single-mindedly violent people. On any reasonable assumptions, the results are outrageous. If 85%

of any other nation favored the use of violence against civilians, that nation would be considered an outlaw nation and would be treated accordingly.

While many members of the world community dispute Israel's claim that it tries to avoid and minimize civilian casualties, the Palestinians polled by SFCG have openly admitted that they approve of aiming at civilians. There is no attempt to pretend otherwise, because Palestinians have come to accept that they can kill with relative impunity.

But these international attitudes – assuming that Palestinian violence is as natural and understandable as Israeli retaliation in defense of its citizens is unnatural and abhorrent – are only a stone's throw from open racism.

The double standard may be convenient for Palestinians interested in violence, but in the long run it creates expectations and attitudes which can only lead to the further corruption of Palestinian society. (Jerusalem Post Sep 4)

The writer is a classicist at Bar-Ilan University, specializing in political thought.

A Maestro Crudely off Key By Martin Sherman

In an interview with the Hebrew daily Yediot Aharonot last weekend, the internationally renowned conductor Daniel Barenboim flatly rejected the possibility of inviting Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, an ardent music lover, to any of his concerts during his upcoming visit to Israel.

"I have nothing to say to 'that man,' in spite of his love of music," snapped Barenboim, an allegedly loyal Israeli, about his democratically elected prime minister. "I think that 'that man' is inflicting great harm not only on the Palestinians but on the Israelis as well," he said, explaining the reasons for ostracizing Sharon, who was swept into power by an unprecedented landslide by Barenboim's fellow Israelis, apparently unendowed with the conductor's superior political acumen.

It should, of course, be noted that Barenboim's political "insight" and professed concern for Israel have led him into close collaboration with none other than Edward Said. Said, an intellectual of Palestinian origin (sic) and of doubtful integrity, who was embarrassingly caught by the camera hurling stones at IDF soldiers on the Lebanese border after the Israeli withdrawal, has over the years made a name for himself as one of Zionism's most vitriolic critics, and a fervent advocate of the elimination of the Jewish state.

One can only surmise, therefore, that, for Sharon to redeem himself in Barenboim's eyes, he would have to revert to the failed policy of concession and withdrawal of his predecessors, whom Barenboim would not have hesitated to invite to his performances. Never mind that these policies have wrought untold disaster on Israel; never mind that they resulted in the killing and maiming of thousands of Israelis; never mind that they were utterly rejected at the polls. What matters, apparently, is that they have the overriding merit of being approved by the fashionable, liberal Left.

Much of the remainder of the interview is a disturbing mixture of self-contradictory platitudes and blatant non-sequiturs. Thus, for example, Barenboim spoke in glowing terms of the accomplishments of a joint Israeli-Palestinian-Arab orchestra which he formed (together with Said) in order to promote dialogue between protagonists in the Middle East conflict. So it appears that according to Barenboimian logic, dialogue with citizens of Israel's adversaries is perfectly acceptable, even desirable; but unthinkable when it comes to the Israeli prime minister with whom he refuses to converse.

Not that Barenboim has any illusions about the nature of the heads of state in Arab countries. For when asked about the possibility of his peace-promoting orchestra performing in Jerusalem, his reaction was sharp: "Are you crazy?" he retorted, "There are members in the orchestra who come from Egypt [sic], Lebanon, Jordan [sic] and even five from Syria. I cannot possibly divulge their names. If I did, they may not be allowed home. They could even find themselves in more serious danger."

Strange how complacent and uncritical Barenboim is about the behavior of the Arab regimes – especially Egypt and Jordan – who in spite of their signature on peace agreements with Israel, still often penalize their citizens who dare to maintain overt cultural ties with the despised "Zionist entity."

But perhaps the peak of absurdity in the interview was reached when Barenboim expressed the hope of his joint orchestra performing in the near future in Damascus. It is inconceivable that he believes he could hold such an event without inviting Syrian President Bashar Assad to attend. So one must conclude that while the Israeli premier is a persona non grata at his concerts, the president of one of the most tyrannical and non-democratic states in the world is not.

Yet, in spite of his severe censure of his own country and countrymen, in spite of unquestioning acceptance of the undemocratic abuses of his country's adversaries, in spite of his liaisons with his country's fiercest critics, Barenboim still professes allegiance to Israel. "I come to this country because it is important to me," he declares. "This is who I am. This is my people."

With friends like Barenboim, one might well ponder, who needs enemies?

The writer is a senior research fellow at the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya. (Jerusalem Post Sep 4)

Denying 1948: A familiar goal. By Gabriel Danzig

Israeli delegates to Johannesburg were caught off guard last week by a new and bewildering tactic. Arab delegates and fellow-travelers were blaming Israel for the conflict of 1948, claiming that the Jews are at fault for the tragic results of the Arab attempt to smother the Jewish state in its infancy. Well, if some can deny the Holocaust, why not? After all, what was 1948 except another extermination attempt?

The facts are so well known that they hardly bear repeating. But maybe they have not always been put in the right perspective. First fact: The Holocaust did happen. Many people believe the Holocaust cannot be used as an "excuse" for preferential treatment of its survivors — that they should have been treated no differently than anyone else. Since their houses had been stolen, they should have been left on the streets.

In a sense, that's what did happen. Even worse: These survivors were left in refugee camps for years while the nations of the world tried to think what to do with them. Few were willing or able to take them in. About the only people willing to help were the Jews, and only the Jews of Palestine had the political clout to take them in. Had there not been a strong Jewish population in Israel, it is impossible to say what would have happened to these unfortunates.

There was perhaps something irresponsible in the U.N. decision to allow these survivors to immigrate to Israel. After all, Israel was a small, insecure country surrounded by hostile Arab states. With their identity numbers still etched on their arms, these survivors would find that reaching Israel was only the beginning of their troubles. Far from offering the newcomers comfort, sympathy, or material help, many in the neighboring Arab states decided to kill them. And they did kill a great many of them.

But as we now know, the Arabs failed in that war. Rather than admit that it was probably not a good idea to try to murder innocent men, women, and children, many have tried ever since to make up for their initial failure with repeated attempts to destroy the country. Again and again they tried, and each time the only thing that stood between the Jews and death was their own defense forces. Even today, the Israeli Defense Forces remain the most important political force that exists for preserving the well being — and lives — of the Jewish people. For that reason alone, they deserve the admiration and support of all people of good will.

So why are some Arabs talking about 1948? Surely they don't hope to gain sympathy for this effort to "throw the Jews in the sea"? But if one can rewrite the Holocaust, why not try to rewrite 1948 as well? After all, in 1948, the Jews did have a few — very few — weapons to use. They must have killed someone with those weapons. Many Arabs became refugees because of the war. Not like the Jewish refugees — stuck in a refugee camp with nowhere to go — but still, they did lose their homes. And so: Why not blame the Jews?

And here we get to the point. Everyone knows that in war, there are unfortunately casualties. Everyone knows that in war there is damage. That is the tragic result of war, and those who start wars should be blamed. Like the Germans and the Japanese, Israel's Arab neighbors waged a cruel and vicious war, not once but several times. In each of their wars they have caused the deaths of thousands of innocent Israelis, as well as many thousands of less-innocent Arab aggressors. But they have never acknowledged guilt, and have never paid reparations. Why not?

Part of the answer may be that taking responsibility would mean putting an end to the hostilities and allowing the Jews to live in their land in peace — and this is an idea Israel's Arab neighbors have still not gotten used to. As the numerous murderers of Jews in Israel attest, the killing of Jews is still considered a good deed by many Arabs there, even among the younger generation. Which brings us back to Johannesburg.

How can you blame the Jews for 1948 when they did nothing but wage a war in defense of their own lives? You can do so only if you believe Jews don't have the right to defend their lives. And here we see the connection between the denial of 1948 and the denial of the Holocaust. Those who deny 1948 — like those who deny the Holocaust — imply not only that it didn't happen, but also that it should have happened. If the Jews invented the Holocaust, if the Jews invented 1948, then it is the Jews, and not the Nazis — Jews, and not Arabs — who are the guilty ones.

Assigning guilt where it does not belong is a very serious crime. Arguments like these serve as incentives and justifications for mass murderers both within Israel and abroad. Far from promoting peace, they help create the conditions for waging a fresh war against the Jews, with the same goal as all the previous ones. This, then, is why some Arabs have begun denying 1948: because they want to try it again. (National Review Sep 4)

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