



Jerusalem 4:18; Toronto 6:02

Commentary...

The Voice of Sanity

By David Wilder

There are a multitude of subjects to write about: Three soldiers shot down in cold blood last night; tens of thousands visiting Hebron during the Succot holidays; the "Geneva Accords." But today I think there is one subject which tops the list.

Yesterday the Israeli cabinet, voting 11 to 5, refused to append a suggested law outlawing all advertising on so-called 'pirate radio stations,' including Arutz 7. Lawbreakers could be fined up to one hundred thousand shekels and/or jailed for one year.

Early this afternoon a Jerusalem Magistrate Court convicted directors and broadcasters of the Arutz 7 radio station of illegal broadcasting. Among those convicted were Rabbi Zalman Melamed and his wife, Rebbetzin Shulamit Melamed, Ya'akov Katz, better known as Ketzele, Yoel Tzur (who lost his wife and son, both of whom were murdered by terrorists almost three years ago), and internationally renowned film-maker and Arutz 7 broadcaster, Adir Zik. They could receive a maximum sentence of three years in jail and a three million shekel fine.

It is written in the Talmud that a sage, resuscitated after having been 'clinically dead' was asked what he had seen 'there.' His response, speaking about viewing this world from the next world: "An upside-down world." My friends, things have not changed in two thousand years. Our world is still upside down. But not only. It is also convoluted, warped and twisted.

Perhaps my generalization is not fair. So I will limit my definition, not to the entire world, rather only to the State of Israel. Oh, upside-down it is!

For the past ten years – no, since 1948, but more recently, since the middle of the 1980s, Israel has been involved in a 'hot war' for survival. The last decade, the "Oslo Era" has witnessed the deaths of over 1,100 Israelis. The past three years, the beginning of the Oslo War, has seen almost nine hundred victims. During this time the only reliable media outlet, the only radio station which broadcast the total, uncensored, truth, was Arutz 7. Virtually all of Israel's political leadership, including many left-wing politicians, voiced their opinions on this station. When Kol Yisrael – the mislabeled "Voice of Israel," actually Kol-Smol Yisrael, "The Left Voice of Israel" was using every technique possible to batter Bibi Netanyahu during the 1996 elections, Arutz 7 stood to Netanyahu's right, offering an alternative to the vile left-wing propaganda. So too during Ariel Sharon's campaign. All people who access the Arutz 7 internet site or receive their daily email news updates know and understand the vital importance of Arutz 7 in getting the truth out, around the world – in multiple languages. This, despite numerous attempts by the left to prevent broadcasts and to close down the station.

Today, temporarily, they have succeeded. Arutz 7's management has decided to stop all radio broadcasts, from five o'clock this afternoon. However, internet broadcasts will continue.

It is virtually impossible to comprehend what is happening in Israel. For the past ten years Israeli leadership has negotiated with terrorist killers, meeting and shaking hands with them in Jerusalem. Israel has abandoned major portions of the heart of our land to terrorists, leading to killing after killing. Israel, negotiating with Hizballah, is on the verge of releasing over a thousand terrorists for the release of an alleged Israeli criminal and the bodies of three murdered soldiers. In response to American pressure Israel is still 'easing up' on the 'innocent palestinian population.' The list goes on and on.

Of course, the heart of the problem I have yet to mention. That is, freedom of speech – the right to freedom of expression. Yesterday I visited one of my wife's uncles in Jerusalem. Way back in pre-state Israel, Uncle Meir was a member of the Etzel – the right-wing Jewish underground working to expel the British from Eretz Yisrael. He told me that later, after the founding of the state, when a Teudat Zehut – an identity card was issued to all Israeli citizens, all members of the right-wing underground movements received numbers beginning with 19. This was used to identify all 'opponents' of the state, i.e., the left, in order to badger them and prevent them from reaching any position of power within Israel. Fifty four years later, things haven't changed. Voicing opinions that directly oppose those of the ruling junta just cannot be allowed. Even at the cost of freedom of speech.

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*

Unprecedented legal maneuvering has prevented the legalization of Arutz 7. Israeli law forbids private radio stations from broadcasting. A law attempting to resolve problems dealing with Arutz 7 and other religious radio stations was struck down by the Supreme Court. Despite the huge costs involved, Arutz 7 broadcast from a ship located outside the legal territorial borders of Israel. However, after a five year trial, a court today ruled that the station is illegal.

For fifteen years Arutz 7 has been the voice of sanity in Israel. Their broadcasts have included Torah, current events and love of Eretz Yisrael. This is, undoubtedly, the reason why the government and the left have worked so hard to bring it down. It won't surprise me if soon, the Knesset passes a bill outlawing love of Eretz Yisrael. For anyone who cherishes this land is at odds with the government, which still believes that dividing the land is the solution to all our problems.

It is clear that the tremendous opposition to Arutz 7's continued existence is due to the immense support the station has around the world, and also, to its magnificent success. Had Arutz 7 been a small, inconsequential radio station, no one would have lifted a hand against it. The fact that Arutz 7 is so influential attests to the attempts made to shut it down. I hope and pray that public uproar, in Israel and around the world will reach such proportions that will force the reopening of the station.

Arutz 7 is the Israeli voice of sanity. The repression of Arutz 7 can only be described as total insanity. Sanity will win out. (Jewish Community of Hebron Oct 20)

Free the Airwaves Jerusalem Post Editorial

Earlier this week Arutz Sheva was finally felled. It was defeated via a lawsuit submitted by Labor's Eitan Cabel to the Jerusalem Magistrate's Court, which upheld his assertion that it was broadcasting illegally.

Yet two decades ago Israel's Left mounted an aggressive campaign, both within and without the Knesset, to legalize Abie Nathan's Voice of Peace shipboard radio broadcasts.

The argument was that Nathan proved his enterprise a commercial success, had an audience and several years in the business. He deserved, it was ardently argued, special consideration. It would have doubtlessly been granted, had Nathan not succumbed meanwhile to severe medical and financial problems.

But the very same arguments raised in his favor are even more cogent for Arutz Sheva, which alone gives voice to settlers and their supporters. Without Arutz Sheva, that portion of the population popularly dubbed "the national camp" is effectively silenced. This station fills a niche and a need, which no other does, far beyond anything that Nathan could remotely claim.

So it's no less than dismaying that the very Left which so enthusiastically lobbied for Nathan now so fervently fights Arutz Sheva's right to voice the opinions of its many adherents.

It's difficult to escape the impression that what's really wrong with Arutz Sheva isn't that its ship didn't distance itself sufficiently from Israel's territorial waters or that studios in Beit El were used. What differentiated it from Nathan's venture was politics.

Thus after 15 years on the air, during which the station proved itself financially viable, professionally capable, and exceptionally popular, it was silenced. Its loyal audience wasn't limited to the settlements. It was avidly listened to within the Green Line, as most taxi passengers can verify.

Particularly disconcerting was Justice Minister Yosef Lapid's outburst against ministers who pleaded Arutz Sheva's case, warning that they'll have "blood on their hands" if a plane crashes due to radio interference. With all due respect, such scare-mongering is demagogic. Arutz Sheva never endangered aviation. Those who do are numerous small-time pirates with home-based transmitters, often operated by reckless teens. There are plenty of laws against such delinquents. They need only be enforced.

Equating Arutz Sheva with them is a cynical red herring. Arutz Sheva has become a staple of popular culture and we consider it grossly imprudent to close it precisely because it satisfied proven demand for its journalistic product. Denying the public what it wants and had grown used to will inevitably give rise to charges of politically motivated muzzling.

No amount of legalistic sanctimony will erase this perception.

This country urgently needs legislation to democratize the airwaves.

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This is the case elsewhere in the free world. It's time we live up to our liberal pretensions. A phenomenon like FOX Television would be impossible here. Nothing, however, prevented a television network with a different ideological bent from giving itself an electronic media platform in America.

It's time our regulations tolerated radio offerings that appeal to a range of political and ideological preferences, as they do to musical tastes. There's no reason an outfit like Arutz Sheva should not be able legally to obtain a broadcasting license. At present this is nearly a mission impossible. Red tape and demands for competition in a tender load the dice.

Entries for local radio tenders repeatedly feature varying combinations of the same groupings and individuals with identical political slants. Arutz Sheva is unlikely to prevail against them. With its record, it shouldn't now be forced into a contest.

The uniqueness of Arutz Sheva's audience must be recognized. Likewise, there'd be no harm if the haredi community, the kibbutz movement, or any reincarnation of the Voice of Peace were also awarded radio licenses.

Ideological pluralism must be promoted in a polarized society such as ours. A silenced plurality isn't in democracy's best interest. Those who do not wish to see extremism flourish ought to be the first to make sure that sizable segments of opinion, on the Right and Left, are allowed free expression.

Citizens who feel stifled, marginalized, and delegitimized aren't likely to espouse moderation. (Jerusalem Post Oct 22)

Palestinian Death Cult By Mark Steyn

One of the most enduring vignettes of the Great War is the story of its first Christmas December 1914 when Germans and British put up banners to wish the other the season's greetings, sang "Silent Night" in both languages, and eventually scrambled up from their opposing trenches to play a Christmas Day football match in No Man's Land and share German beer and English plum jam. After Christmas, they went back to killing each other.

The many films, books, and plays inspired by that No Man's Land truce are all convinced of the story's central truth that our common humanity transcends the temporary hell of war. When the politicians and generals have done with us, those who are left will live in peace, playing footsie, singing songs, as they did for a moment in the midst of carnage.

Now cross to Haifa on Saturday, when 19 diners were killed in a busy restaurant by a 23-year-old female suicide-bomber, her hair attractively tied in a western-style ponytail, to judge from the detached head she left as her calling card. Try to find the common humanity between the participants in this war. Try to imagine the two sides kicking a ball around, swapping songs. The only place in the modern Middle East where Arabs and Jews coexist is in Israel, especially in Haifa. The restaurant young Hanadi Jaradat blew apart had been owned by an Arab family and a Jewish family for 40 years. It would be interesting to know whether it was targeted for that very reason, in the same way that, in Northern Ireland, the IRA took to killing the caterers and cleaners who worked at army bases. But the intifada is too primal for anything that thought out. It's more likely that once Miss Jaradat had slipped into Israel proper through a gap in the unfinished security fence the European Union and Colin Powell so deplore any target would do. She was busting to blow.

The Palestinian death cult negates all the assumptions of western sentimental pacifism: If only the vengeful old generals got out of the way, there'd be no war. But such common humanity as one can find on the West Bank resides, if only in their cynicism, in the leadership: old Arafat may shower glory and honor on his youthful martyrs but he's human enough to keep his own kid in Paris, well away from the suicide-bomber belts. It's hard to picture Saeb Erekat or Hanan Ashrawi or any of the other aging terror apologists who hog the airwaves at CNN and the BBC celebrating the death of their own loved ones the way Miss Jaradat's brother did. "We are receiving congratulations from people," said Thaher Jaradat. "Why should we cry? It is like her wedding day, the happiest day for her."

I spent a short time on the West Bank earlier this spring. I would have spent longer, but to be honest it creeped me out, and I was happy to scam across the Allenby Bridge and on through Jordan to Iraq. Say what you like about the Sunni Triangle and RPG Alley, but I never once felt I was in a wholly diseased environment. On the West Bank, almost all the humdrum transactions of daily life take place in a culture that glorifies depravity: you walk down a street named after a suicide bomber to drop your child in a school that celebrates suicide-bombing and then pick up some groceries in a corner store whose walls are plastered with portraits of suicide bombers.

Nothing good grows in toxic soil. You cannot have a real peace with such people; you cannot even have the cold peace that exists between Israel and Jordan, where King Abdullah, host of the Arab-American-Israeli summit at the start of the road map, did not dare display the flag of the Zionist Entity, lest it provoke his subjects.

The problem is not the security fence, but the psychological fence a chasm really that separates a sizable proportion of the Palestinian population from all Jews.

AT THE time of that summit, I supported the road map because it seemed to me the best thing to be done was to thrust a state upon the Palestinians as quickly as possible. The present neither-one-thing-nor-the-other Palestinian Authority gives Arafat and company all the advantages of controlling their own territory with none of the responsibilities. Its anomalous status enshrines the Palestinians' victim status and means Israel gets a far worse press internationally than if it were dealing with a sovereign state.

But the main reason for conjuring up a Palestinian state would be to call their bluff. For six decades, nothing the Palestinians have done has made sense if the objective is to secure a state of their own. But, if the objective is to kill Jews, it all makes perfect sense. That's why, in West Bank towns, you see no evidence of nationalist fervor, only of Jew-killing fervor.

The Arab League's decision three decades ago to anoint a murder organization as the sole legitimate repository of Palestinian aspirations was perhaps the critical move in the terrorist annexation of whatever legitimacy this cause once had.

Today Arafat is received by the UN as a head of state, subsidized by the EU and, under Oslo, physically installed in a pseudo-presidential compound. Yet he shows absolutely no desire to run anything other than a murder operation. Ten years ago, the Palestinian Authority was given powers that fell somewhere between those of the Province of Quebec and the Irish Free State. In 1922 in Dublin, the shrewder chaps recognized that the dynamic in the situation would only move one way: once you proved you could run an all-but-fully-independent state, the all-buts would quickly fade away, as one by one they all did. Not in the Palestinian Authority. Arafat is a head of state in no hurry to get a state to head: having to attend to trade and highways and so forth only cuts into his core business. That may be all the more reason to burden him with it.

But the bloody toll of Saturday's bombing reminds us that there's another consideration. Before the Iraq war, I didn't give a hoot about WMD or any of the other lines peddled by Blair and Bush when they were auditioning justifications at the UN. The only reason for getting rid of Saddam was that America couldn't afford not to get rid of him: it was necessary to prick the Middle Eastern terrorist bubble, of which he was the most successful manifestation. There's a similar calculation to be made here: if America is serious about confronting Middle Eastern terrorism, it's hard to see what possible interest it has in rewarding the Arafat squat with nationhood.

Indeed, just as toppling Saddam pour encourager les autres is all the reason you need, so the fact that the sewer regimes of Araby use the Palestinian question as a catch-all excuse for their own failures ought to be the only reason you need for not buying into it. The Palestinian Authority is part of America's war on terror in exactly the way Saddam was: whether or not there are any specific links to al-Qaida is irrelevant; it's part of the same murky waters.

Unfortunately, few members of the Bush administration and no members of the British government recognize that.

So there will be more suicide bombings, and more condemnations of Israel's fence. (Jerusalem Post Oct 17)

The writer is senior contributing editor for Hollinger Inc.

Palestinian Terror, American Blood By Jeff Jacoby

Three Americans -- John Branchizio, Mark Parson, and John Martin Linde -- were murdered last Wednesday when Arab terrorists in Gaza bombed the diplomatic convoy they were riding in. News accounts immediately described the attack as a first -- "an unprecedented deadly attack on a US target in the Palestinian territories," to quote the Associated Press. But Branchizio, Parson, and Linde were not the first Americans to be murdered by Palestinian Arab terrorists. They were the 49th, 50th, and 51st in the past 10 years alone.

A few hours after their deaths, the White House condemned "the vicious act of terrorism" that had killed them, extended "heartfelt condolences to the families," and promised "to bring the terrorists to justice." The families of the many previous US victims of Palestinian terror might reasonably wonder why there was no such presidential concern when *their* loved ones were massacred.

The president did not vow to see justice done, for example, when Dr. David Applebaum and his daughter Nava died, on the eve of what was to be Nava's wedding day, in the bombing of Jerusalem's Cafe Hillel last month. Or when Cleveland native Alan Beer was killed in a Palestinian bus bombing in June. Or when four Americans -- Marla Bennett of California, David Gritz of Massachusetts, Benjamin Blutstein of Pennsylvania, and Janis Coulter of New York -- lost their lives in the bombing of the Hebrew University cafeteria last year. Or when Shoshana Greenbaum, a New Jersey tourist, was among the 15 innocents slaughtered in the horrific Sbarro pizzeria attack of August 2001. Or when, three months earlier, 14-year-old Kobe Mandell of Silver Spring, Md., was one of two boys stoned to death in the cave where Palestinian terrorists found them hiking. Or in April 1995, when Brandeis University student Alisa Flatow was murdered in a Gaza terror attack.

Americans have been dying at the hands of Palestinian Arab terrorists for decades, yet the US government and media rarely if ever portray Yasser Arafat and his lieutenants as avowed enemies of the United States. The State Department does not demand the extradition of Palestinian killers of Americans, not even when the killers' identities and whereabouts are known. President Bush has never given the Palestinian Authority the same ultimatum he gave the Taliban in Afghanistan: Hand over the terrorists or be destroyed.

Instead he issues incoherent declarations like the one he made on Wednesday -- blasting the Palestinian Authority for refusing "to fight terror

in all its forms," while assuring Americans that the US is "working closely with the appropriate officials" -- i.e., the selfsame Palestinian Authority -- to find and prosecute the terrorists responsible for the latest butchery. As if it isn't those very officials who have been aiding and abetting such butchery all along.

To hear Bush tell it, the deeper tragedy of terrorist acts like Wednesday's is that they are "an obstacle to achieving the Palestinian people's dream of statehood." What kind of state does Bush imagine would be created by the people who danced for joy on Sept. 11? How long is he going to keep up the pretense that terrorism represents a failure, rather than a core element, of Palestinian governance?

Arafat and the Palestinian Authority were quick to distance themselves from the murder of the three Americans. But violence against Americans is routinely celebrated by the PA. "During the war in Iraq," notes Itamar Marcus, the director of Palestinian Media Watch, "the PA actively endorsed the killing of Americans, and even produced a music video celebrating the deaths of US soldiers that was broadcast repeatedly on official PA TV." (An extensive compendium of anti-American hatred in the Palestinian media is posted at www.pmw.org.il.)

For years, sermons preached in Palestinian mosques and aired on Palestinian radio and television have rhapsodized about inflicting pain on the United States. "Oh, Allah, destroy America, for she is ruled by Zionist Jews," proclaimed Sheik Ikrima Sabri, the Arafat-appointed mufti of Jerusalem, in one such sermon. "O God, destroy the Jews and their supporters . . . destroy the United States and its allies," implored Sheik Ibrahim al-Mudayris in another. And from a third, Sheik Ahmed Abu Halabiya: "Have no mercy on the Jews, no matter where they are, in any country. . . . Wherever you meet them, kill them. Wherever you are, kill those Jews and those Americans who are like them."

A few months ago, Palestinian officials renamed the central square in Jenin after Ali Jafar al-Na'amani, the Iraqi suicide bomber who killed four US Marines at a checkpoint in Najaf on March 29. *That* is what Arafat and the Palestinian Authority think of spilled American blood.

There is only one rational response to the murder of Branchizio, Parson, and Linde last week: the destruction of the Palestinian Authority, a network of killers masquerading as a government. If that doesn't happen, this much is sure: the 49th, 50th, and 51st Americans to lose their lives to Palestinian terror will not be the last. (Boston Globe Oct 19)

Jeff Jacoby is a columnist for The Boston Globe.

Egypt's Responsibility Jerusalem Post Editorial

No one initially claimed responsibility for the bomb that killed three Americans on their way to interview Palestinians in the Gaza Strip for scholarships. Identifying the culprits sometimes takes time, just as it took time for al-Qaida to start boasting of what it did on September 11, 2001. But this anonymity is in any case fitting, because it points to what Richard Perle calls the "unity of terror." Whether it was Hamas, Islamic Jihad, or perhaps even al-Qaida itself matters little and in fact tends to distract from what the West knows but often does not like to admit: The tentacles all belong to the same enemy.

Soon after 9/11, there was an attempt even in the US to draw a distinction between terrorists with "global reach" and a presumably separate local variety. Intentionally or not, this distinction implied a division of terrorism into different moral categories. Terror with "global reach" had to be snuffed out, while terror in the service of some local cause, however condemnable, had to be seen through a different lens.

Similarly, a slew of other distinctions have divided the world of terror into supposed fiefdoms. There are the "secular" and the "religious"; the Shi'ite and the Sunni; and, most significantly, the Palestinians and everyone else.

It has since become clear that Shi'ite Iran is partnered with Sunni al-Qaida, to the extent that, according to The Washington Post, it is hosting Osama bin Laden's son and heir apparent. "Secular" Saddam saw no trouble funding the fundamentalist terror of Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Nor did the "secular" Fatah see a problem with emulating and allying itself with its "religious" counterparts.

Such analytical distinctions have turned out to be too sophisticated by half, ending up being more misleading than helpful. But at least they did not involve any real moral distinction that would serve to excuse terror.

Not so in the case of the effort to distinguish between Palestinian terror and terror with "global reach." Here the clear implication is that all terror is bad, but some terror is in the name of a good cause. This is the distinction that must be erased if the war against militant Islam is to be won.

US President George W. Bush has emphatically rejected the idea that any cause justifies terror, but there is more to be done. One practical step would be to immediately demand that Egypt shut down the tunnels that emanate from its territory through which the explosives for Wednesday's bombing were likely smuggled.

This week, Brig.-Gen. (res.) Zvi Poleg, in an interview on Israel Radio, charged that Egypt is violating its treaty obligations in allowing the smuggling of weapons, explosives, and ammunition to the Palestinians through those tunnels. He noted that Egypt is well aware that its soldiers have been involved in the smuggling and has not acted to stop them. Israel has destroyed some 60 tunnels in the last year.

According to military historian Col. (res.) Meir Pa'il, who is not known as a hawk, "There is no question that if Egypt wanted to it, could put an end to the weapons smuggling immediately, but it doesn't want to. It wants to support the Palestinians."

Whatever efforts have been made to solve this problem through quiet diplomacy have not worked. It is unconscionable that the message that there is no acceptable terror has not reached Cairo, but now it must be sent in a way that cannot be misunderstood. (Jerusalem Post Oct 19)

Peddling Zionism Without Zion By Nadav Shragai

It's arguable if there is much point entering any substantive debate with the architects of the Geneva Accord. Thirty years after the Yom Kippur War, those who devised the Oslo process have again proved - this time through a Swiss negotiating channel - that petrified thinking can be truly destructive.

After one security catastrophe - more than a thousand Israelis killed and thousands injured, plus the economic disaster of a lost NIS 24 billion and 80,000 jobs in the first year of the intifada against Oslo, according to treasury data - Yossi Beilin and his confederates are up to their tricks again. They are manufacturing out of the same principles another paper agreement to reward terrorism by providing it with more and more territory, and upgrading its lethal capabilities. They are putting yet more Jerusalem neighborhoods, a la Gilo, within Palestinian firing range, creating transport and urban chaos in Jerusalem, and rolling back the city's borders.

After more than 3,000 shells, bombs and Qassam rockets have landed on Gush Katif in attacks that no agreement, fence or wall can stop, Beilin and his associates are capable of returning Israel to its narrow-waisted borders of 1967, and of bringing missiles to the porches of houses in Kfar Sava, Lod and Rosh Ha'ayin.

They have overlooked dozens of declarations of steadfast adherence to the "right of return" and they ignore an endless stream of articles, speeches and commentaries articulated in the spirit of the "Hudaybiya Treaty" (the agreement abrogated by Muhammad), which prove that Oslo, Cairo, Wye, Hebron, and other agreements are tactical ploys to promote one main objective - ongoing, relentless strikes against the Jewish-Zionist entity that we built here after 2,000 years, until Israel as a whole is destroyed.

If, in view of all this, this crew that brought us the Oslo catastrophe is capable of peddling to Israel's public messages of reconciliation about "major Palestinian concessions," it can only mean that these are purblind, perhaps messianic, fanatics whose end, peace, justifies any conceivable means. All of these means have been attempted and, as it has turned out, rather than promoting peace, they delay it - in fact, they harm peace, and ourselves, and they kill peace, and ourselves. Hence there is neither a foundation, nor practical utility, in debating facts with those who plug their ears, close their eyes, and continue relentlessly to bang their heads on a wall.

So the real argument must be conducted on a normative, not factual, level. Israel's public might be nurtured by such a debate. Such discussion might give strength to those who have lost faith in their views, and whose powers of endurance have faded - these are people who have forgotten that justice is on their side.

First, such an argument about values centers on Jerusalem. Our right to this country does not stem from security considerations. Uganda, or other parts of the world, could have met such security needs. Nor is our right sustained by self-evident existential truths - it is not enough that we are here, that we were born here. If there is no added value supplementing conceptions of a natural homeland, and of the need to guarantee our survival and personal security, if a man's past and heritage is confined merely to the days of his own life, and if there is no meaning to ideas of religious and historical justice - such as our right to Jerusalem, in particular, and to the Land of Israel generally - then why should it be assumed that Jewish rights to Eretz Israel and to Jerusalem take precedence over Arab rights? After all, they were born here, just as we were born here.

We have already witnessed this spectacle of proposals to re-partition Jerusalem. Three years ago, then Prime Minister Ehud Barak almost divided the city, and almost surrendered control of the Temple Mount. He was the first to draw the main lines on the Geneva Accord map - Barak set the precedent. At the time, some 250,000 Jews stood before the walls of the Old City, to take vows of loyalty to the united city.

Among those present at this rally was former Supreme Court President Moshe Landau. Not pulling any punches, he accused Barak of undermining the foundations of Zionism, and of following a confused, errant policy path. Landau stressed the importance of symbols and history and national honor.

"Zionism," said the former Supreme Court President, driving home a point that was once self-evident, "is the aspiration for Zion, and what is Zion, if not the Temple Mount, and the Old City?" These sentiments remain valid today. So do remarks made by Avital Sharansky on the same occasion: "The liberation of Jerusalem freed the spirit of the portion of the people of Israel which was jailed behind the Iron Curtain, in the USSR ... millions of Jews who had been cast away from their country felt, for the first time, the meaning of Jewish rights."

For a vast number of Israelis, these words spoken by Landau and Sharansky are not cliches. For them, the words are statements of truth - Jerusalem and the Temple Mount are components without which Jewish identity has no hope of continuity. Without them, the justice of Jewish-Zionist claims cannot be perceived. Without Zion, without the Temple Mount, there can be no Zionism. (Haaretz Oct 20)

Not the Israel I Know By Joseph M. Hochstein

In his Oct. 7 column Richard Cohen writes about an American who lived in Israel for more than 20 years ["Israel Is Losing," op-ed]. This person has left Israel, probably permanently, Cohen writes, "because he cannot take life there any longer. . . . His business had gone to hell, his life was always in danger and he simply could not take it any longer."

Cohen calls this American "a nonstatistic -- a living victim of terrorism." Cohen adds, "In the perpetual war against Israel, its enemies are winning."

I doubt Cohen's conclusion, but that is not my purpose in writing. Like Cohen's unidentified American, I have lived in Israel for more than 20 years. I arrived from Washington, where I published the Jewish Week newspaper for 18 years.

The Israel in which I live does not match Cohen's description. Cohen says despair is palpable in the Israeli press. But bad news is only part of the story. Recent survey research found more than 80 percent of Israelis happy with their lives, despite all hardships. The economy is in deep trouble, but the country remains a dynamic place culturally, technologically, commercially, even politically. The Hebrew press covers this, too, by the way.

Cohen reports that he rode a bus in Israel and found it "gut-wrenching." He is not the first columnist to confess to uneasiness at visiting Israel. But his is a subjective, outsider's reaction. Ordinary Israelis have to get to work or to school five or six days a week, and the country's buses carry 1 million riders every workday. Tel Aviv's central bus station is said to be the largest in the world.

We in Israel continue going out to cafes, restaurants, theaters, sports events, concerts and public festivals. The motto "life must go on" has achieved the status of an unofficial national slogan, uttered even by a child interviewed on television the other day after a 10-year-old classmate's death in a suicide bombing.

Here is a personal note. To borrow Cohen's words, I am a living victim of terrorism. A suicide bomber from the Islamic Jihad sent me to a hospital -- and nearly killed me -- a few years ago. Other, worse things happened over the years. One of my sons, a paratrooper, was killed in a Hezbollah ambush. Yet, in my view, life in Israel remains desirable.

I live in Tel Aviv, not far from where my mother was born in the waning days of the Ottoman Empire. My surviving son and daughter live in walking distance and are pursuing challenging, creative careers that feed their families. I have five grandchildren, aged one year to 12. I spend time with intelligent, stimulating and decent people. Most of us are part of an Israeli majority that, according to the polls, supports efforts to achieve peace but doesn't expect miracles any time soon.

I worry about the family's safety now and also about prospects of my grandchildren's army service in a few years. In weighing the danger, I cannot escape the thought that my immediate family and I, despite whatever hardship we have suffered, are more fortunate than our numerous relatives in France, Russia and Lithuania who were murdered in the Nazi era and who had no army to protect them. I entertain similar thoughts about our extended family in Israel, wondering what their fates might have been had they stayed in Austria, Poland, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Iran.

I am hopeful. The clash between Arabs and Jews is often violent, but it is relatively recent in origin. I and other Israeli volunteers work to bridge the political and doctrinal arguments that divide Arabs and Jews, in hope that future generations can coexist without bloodshed.

Cohen says his unidentified American lost hope. Hope is part of the Israeli character. It's the title of the national anthem, "Hatikva," which means "the hope." Without hope, it could be impossible to make it here. Fear and hope are highly subjective and personal, of course. An objective reality that U.S. journalists generally ignore is that Israel's terrorism death toll -- measured in fatalities per 100,000 residents -- is much lower than the homicide rate in the District of Columbia and dozens of other U.S. cities. But that's another story. *The writer is former editor-publisher of Washington Jewish Week and a former managing editor of Congressional Quarterly.* (Washington Post Oct 20)

Crossing All Red Lines By Isi Leibler

Yossi Beilin has again hoisted himself on his own petard. The recent negotiations with the Palestinians in Amman and the anticipated signing ceremony in Geneva demonstrate that he and his fellow Osloists have learned nothing from the decisive rejection of their policies by the vast majority of the Israeli public.

Beilin, the leader of the pack was not even re-elected to the Knesset. And so for a former minister of justice and a former speaker of the Knesset, Avraham Burg to display such contempt of the democratic society is mind-boggling. In any normal democratic country, failed leaders conducting activities akin to a government in exile during a time of war would at the very least be sent to Coventry.

Imagine the resigned UK foreign secretary Robin Cooke going off to negotiate with the Ba'athists in Iraq; or the resigned foreign secretary Lord Carrington negotiating with the Argentines during the Falklands War; or a former speaker of the US House of Representatives conducting negotiations with the Taliban. Even a radical dissident like former US attorney general Ramsey Clark would never have dared set himself up as an independent negotiator on security issues in defiance of his government.

During a time of war when civilians are being targeted by terrorists, actions such as those of Beilin, Burg and Amram Mitzna, would undoubtedly have been considered in breach of the law in the United States.

But here in Israel everything goes. The press gave Beilin enormous coverage and predictably Haaretz even lauded the initiative, validating anarchy by describing it as a constructive act designed to break the impasse with the Palestinians. The civic immorality displayed by Beilin, Burg, Mitzna and their acolytes is compounded by the fact that they are being financially assisted by foreign sources.

In addition, orchestrating the timing for the signing ceremony with the anniversary of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin is an outrageous exploitation of his memory. Rabin had little time for Beilin. Rabin made a catastrophic blunder by allowing himself to be sandbagged into supporting the Oslo Accords. But had he lived and finally realized the extent to which Arafat had duped him and witnessed the renewal of terror, Rabin would probably have responded in a much tougher manner than his successors. He would have been appalled to see the Beilin group resurrect the discredited Taba agreements, negotiated three years ago without a mandate.

But the failed politicians whose disastrous policies were rejected in a landslide electoral defeat, have now gone further. They have agreed to grant the Palestinians jurisdiction over the Temple Mount and relinquish Ariel and Efrat, surely an act to which the vast majority of Israelis would not agree.

In return the Palestinians conceded nothing of substance. Their alleged suspension of the right of Palestinian refugees to return to Israel was immediately repudiated. So we are back again to Oslo-speak -- the act of claiming things on behalf of the Palestinians which the Palestinians have never committed themselves to.

IT MUST be clearly understood that what Beilin and his entourage have offered the Palestinians is conceptually far worse than the Oslo Accords, which have already taken such a huge toll in Israeli life and limb.

The accords were based on interim steps designed to test the Palestinian commitment to peace before fulfillment. In contrast the "Geneva Initiative" would have us jump to the end result at a time when, in lieu of making reciprocal concessions, the Palestinians are openly demonstrating their contempt of any process short of a termination of our Jewish sovereignty.

We should be under no illusions. These actions will have untold negative repercussions on our standing throughout the world. More importantly, it will reinforce those Palestinians who insist that terror does pay off. And unfortunately, should we begin renewing negotiations with the Palestinians, they and most of the world will endeavour to use the latest Beilin offers as a new benchmark.

The time has come to say enough is enough. Even if such action is not technically in breach of the law, our government would have the enthusiastic support of most Israelis if they initiated legislation to restore some order in the current chaos and bring us in line with other democratic countries.

To his credit, former prime minister Ehud Barak condemned the "Geneva Initiative" in no uncertain terms. Labor leader Shimon Peres was at first ambivalent and then endorsed it in a lukewarm manner. This is hardly surprising from a political leader who on his 80th birthday reaffirmed his faith in Oslo and publicly reiterated his faith in Arafat's Nobel Peace Prize.

Beilin is surely a man possessed. His shallow passion for his roots in Eretz Yisrael is exemplified by his repeated assertion that his grandfather, a hovevei Zion delegate to the Zionist Congress, was profoundly mistaken in rejecting Herzl's proposal for Uganda as a Jewish homeland. But beyond ignorance, arrogance and hubris, Beilin has also genuinely hypnotized himself into believing that he can come to an accommodation with those committed to our destruction.

People compare his appeasement policy to that of Neville Chamberlain. This is unfair to Chamberlain. When Munich demonstrated how misguided he was he confessed as much and supported Winston Churchill in taking over the helm.

Burg is no better. For a few months when he believed he was about to be elected head of Labor, Burg began moving toward a more centrist political position. After his defeat he began fiercely promoting his ultra-left credentials. Then blinded by ambition, he placed articles in prominent world newspapers proclaiming that Zionism has lost its soul and that "Israel is a colonial state, run by a corrupt clique which scorns and mocks law and civic morality."

The websites of enemies of Israel have been gleefully quoting and promoting him ever since. It was ironically on Succot, one of the three Jerusalem pilgrimage festivals, Burg and Beilin offered the Temple Mount to the Palestinians.

Even during a war, dissenters in a democracy are entitled to express critical opinions of Government policies. But that does not mean that they are entitled to arrogate for themselves the right to negotiate with the enemy.

Today in Israel the greatest threat facing us does not emanate from our Palestinian enemies. It is from within. Surely it is time for Israelis to express their outrage to their government and call on them to end their impotence and indolence, and in the name of democracy itself, legislate red lines, which if crossed, constitute crimes against the security of society. (Jerusalem Post Oct 22)

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