

ED/OP

Applying a Canadian perspective to the East

In evaluating the three letters resonating through pages six and 18 of your March 12 issue, these writers demand an immediate conclusive value judgement towards their presented dilemmas in Levant.

The essence of these letters' perspective is that Palestine is a Muslim land and that the Palestinian Arab peoples are the indigenous inhabitants with a priori rights to any latter immigrants, especially elitist Jewish immigrants.

This is a plea to apply a Canadian perspective grounded in our fundamental values of our English common law. Our country is the Continent nation where we practice rule by consensus, regional pluralism, agreed procedures, and equitable due process. Seldom do we apply these desires without flaws, yet on the whole we do desire the application of these notions. In evaluating any claim here at home, we demand geographical dimensions in a regional perspective and the historical foundations upon the actualities.

(a) Geographical realities: I define the Near and Middle East as the

lands and coasts lying between latitude 10°N to 40°N within Longitude 10°E to 70°E. The total land area in question is about 6,700,000 square miles. This region is the habitat of about 70 ethnic groups. Arabic speak-

a ruined and desolate country

ing societies rule over 3 825 000 square miles of about 57 per cent of this region as 18 distinct governments. Israel is tiny within its present boundaries, a mere 10 840 square miles, about half the size of the Province of Nova Scotia; roughly one-sixth of one per cent of the region. Nor does Israel hold the entire original Mandate of Palestine. It has about 23 per cent of the territory. There is an Arab state that has jurisdiction over 77 per cent of the Mandate of Palestine called The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

(b) The Historical Record: at the Dalhousie Killam Library, there are

approximately 430 texts directly devoted to Palestine with another 1,400 incidental and indirect references about this locality known as Palestine, The Holy Land, La Terra Sainte, or Israel. About 25 per cent of this mediocre record concerns the land between biblical times till the Balfour Declaration, and all accounts testify to a ruined and desolate country in the 18th and 19th centuries. This is verified by reports from surveyors (C. R. Condar, H. Kitchener), geologists (E. Hull), and diplomats (W. Cresson, H. Picot). To put it in the words of Alexander Keith, "it was startling to see such a denuded, derelict and depopulated land." Yet from the earliest records, of which these are but a few, there is a continuous Jewish communal presence witnessed in this land.

Palestine's population began to grow only after Jews immigrated in larger numbers and slowly proceeded toward restoration. The year before Keith's visit, the Dutch Insurance Company, DeHaas, estimated the population at about 50 to 100 thousand on both banks of the Jordan,

with the 24 000 Jews living predominantly in the western part. In 1893, the Ottoman Census showed 59 431 Jews and 93 600 others in Western Palestine alone.

The Ottomans long acknowledged (from 1535 in Suleiman's treaty with Francis I) the Christian and Jewish historical claims on that locality. Moslems certainly never valued the

grace and charity towards life

land like other heritages did, and it was always insignificant when compared to Mecca or Medina, or as for that, Qom, Karbala, etc. And the proven record of their neglect pours out from the older publications of our libraries.

(c) The malice and deceit of those who draw innuendoes from the Holy Scriptures is evident to anyone who has read these great works, the cornerstone of our civilization. Despite the all so human record of treachery,

cruelty and barbarity in the great chronicle, the message stated, implied and underlying in its text is the value of grace and charity towards the quality of life. Jacob's seed is told it is the chosen people by the Almighty. This status was never seen as elitism but more as a burden; like the eldest in a family of siblings, always suffering from greater expectations and enduring the punishment to set an example for the rest, who need not suffer the same privations. The territory of the tribes of Israel was always clear cut and confined to the Jordan rift basin and the Mediterranean coast between Be'er Sheva on both sides of the river north to the Litani watershed in those olden days. This Nile to the Euphrates stuff is a promise to the House of David that only the Messiah can fulfill, not the republic of present Israel.

(d) I must clarify that Israel did not return three-quarters of the territory it captured; it returned 91 per cent of that territory to Egyptian jurisdiction in the Camp David Treaty.

L. A. Riteman

Breast is best

We as humans never seem to be satisfied with what we already have. We are well equipped to feed our babies but we would rather waste our energy and materials to come up with other ways. Let's take into consideration the method of breast feeding. The majority of women who are physically able to breast feed prefer it. There are many benefits to breast-feeding. The human milk is more easily digested by babies than is formula and it's the only food that the healthy infant needs for the first six months, with the possible exception of fluoride. The vitamin content of breast milk is sufficient. Cow's milk is a poor source of vitamin C, on the other hand it is supplied generously by breast milk.

Breast milk contains antibodies, which are substances that protect babies against some infections and diseases. Babies that are prone to allergies because of their family history are less likely to be allergic to breast milk. Breast milk is ready-to-serve, sanitary and economical.

In addition to helping the baby, breast-feeding also enables the mother to lose weight and speed up the contraction of her uterus, thus returning to her pre-pregnancy weight more quickly. Breast-feeding also helps the mother feel more relaxed and calm and, most importantly, this is a very special time between a mother and a baby.

On the other hand, bottle feeding is very expensive and always needs to be prepared. The formula is available only when the store is open, contains no antibodies and is also more likely to lead to allergic reactions. Infant formula is also conducive to constipation.

Another disadvantage of bottle feeding is the waste - plastic milk containers (holders), plastic bottles, along with the electricity it takes to heat and store milk.

I believe that if we want children we should think about the world we are bringing them up in. Thus, taking into

consideration the destruction we are undertaking by waste. As adults, we need to take extreme care of the environment. One way is to breast-feed instead of bottle-feed which would eliminate unnecessary waste, giving our children a chance to lead healthy lives and a prosperous future.

Most mothers agree that the advantages of breast-feeding outweigh those of bottle-feeding. So why don't more of us use our female power instead of buying less healthful and environmentally unfriendly products. We were given everything needed to survive, why make it more complicated?

Lynn Purcell

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