

What Zionism - racist ploy? Two rebuttals

this...

If one likes one's facts upside down and inside out, that "analysis" by the Arab Information Centre - "The Old Zionism - Racism Ploy", Gateway, Jan. 6 - must be reckoned a pretty good effort. Not up to the high standards set by the late and unlamented Dr. Joseph Goebbels and his cohorts at the Nazi ministry of propaganda during the 1930's. But all the essentials of the "big lie" technique are there; and with a little more practice, the Arab Information Centre might even surpass Dr. Goebbels.

As always, of course, rebuttal in limited space is difficult, partly because the truths about Zionism and modern Israel lie in the history of the last 75 years. And it's only because few people know the history or are now willing to acquaint themselves with it, that such obscenities as calling the PLO terrorists "freedom fighters" or labelling Zionism "racist" could surface at all. Even the "Palestinian entity" and "Rights of the Palestinian People" are largely figments of Arab imagination which have little correspondence in reality. (The Arabs themselves did not "discover" the "Palestinian People" until 1967). However, a few comments might help set the record straight.

1. Whether Arabs (and others) appreciate it or not, Zionism IS an integral part of Judaism - and, indeed, part of the essence of Judaism. (See (a) the Bible, from Joshua and the Book of Judges to the Books of the Prophets, and (b) Hebrew prayer books and Jewish liturgy

which have remained unchanged in substance for the last 2000 years). "If I forget Thee, oh Jerusalem..." is as much at the core of Jewish consciousness now as it has been since the first destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.

2. Yes, of course there are anti-Zionist Jews - both among "assimilated" reformists and among some of the ultra-orthodox. (They have reasons of sorts: the ultra-orthodox, for example, believe we must all wait for the Messiah to come and ought not help ourselves in the meantime.) But they no more represent the mainstream of Judaism than, say the Canadian Nazi and Communist parties represent the mainstreams of Canadian society. There are, incidentally, also many thousands of Arabs who support the State of Israel. (The grandfather of King Hussein of Jordan, the late King Abdullah, was in fact instrumental in helping to lay the foundations for the State and was therefore

subsequently assassinated on order of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. And King Hussein doesn't seem averse to living in peace and friendship with Israel - if he could be independent of the oil sheikhs' money.)

3. As regards "rights to Palestine"; history, from the conquest of Canaan by the Hebrews some 3000 years ago until now, records no "Palestinian people" other than the Jews. And if that conquest was "immoral", how much more so was the later conquest of Britain by the Anglo-Saxons; the take-over of America by Europeans; and the conquest (and suppression) of non-Russians by Russians in the territories of the present Soviet Union - not to mention the USSR's imperialist ventures in Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968) and Angola (now). As for the Arabs' attachment to Palestine: that is well illustrated by the condition of the land before early Jewish settlers began to reclaim it from the desert.

4. As regards Israel being a "racist, theocratic State": In all 19 Arab states, the official state religion is Islam; and at least in Saudi Arabia, Lybia and Kuwait, non-Moslems cannot be citizens, let alone hold public office. (In Kuwait, even Arabs from other lands - including Palestinian "refugees" - cannot be citizens!) Are these countries not far more racist than Israel, where Arabs are members of the Israeli Parliament, where an avowed Arab communist and foe of Israel was recently elected mayor of Bethlehem; and where only membership in the PLO disqualifies a person from running for public office?

5. As regards the Arabs' desire for a "democratic, secular state" in Palestine: Perhaps Arabs could begin to demonstrate their new-found dedication to personal liberty, democratic institutions and secularism in the 19 states which already constitute the Arab world. In none of these states do existing social in-

stitutions and political practices inspire confidence.

Besides, Israelis well remember Arab devotion to peaceful coexistence among neighbours: they well remember the terrorist gangs which the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem organized and financed in the 1920's and 1930's to murder unarmed Jewish villagers.

Incidentally, the Grand Mufti and members of his clan, the Jerusalem Husseins, spent most of World War II in Berlin from where they recruited Arabs to fight with the Germans in North Africa. That should say something about the nature of anti-Semitism!

6. That there has been a shift of power in the UN is obvious - if only through the odious actions recently taken by that body. But what kind of a shift? Idi Amin of Uganda, and his counterparts in Chad, Mali, Sudan, etc. - many of whom make a hobby of genocide - are "friends" I am happy to be without, even if they came to me without my having to buy their support with petro-dollars (as the Arabs did).

7. As for Israeli raids into Lebanon: allegations that the Israelis dropped explosive toys, etc. are, like the odious assertion that they desecrated religious sites in Jerusalem, too disgusting to merit response. Not even the PLO office in Lebanon made claims respecting explosive toys and the like; and the recent World Council of Churches meeting in Nairobi

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...and that...

The existence of Israel as a sovereign state has of late, become an issue. *The Gateway* has, for the most part been presenting the Arab viewpoint in such articles. In the interest of maintaining the "status quo" I would like to present the Israeli position at the time of its creation. In order to do this, I have selected an extract from Michael Elkins' book *Forged in Fury*, which I hope will enlighten you.

"... at the end of 1946, the full revelations of Nazi crimes had finally moved the world's peoples to demand justice for the Jews, so this same evidence - perhaps coupled with the awareness of their own contributory sins of callous omission - led the nations to seek some just and compassionate solution to the problem presented by the half a million Jewish survivors rotting in the DP camps in Europe. Neither the new justice, nor the new compassion, nor the new awareness, impelled the nations to open their own gates. Happily, though, there was a more comfortable alternative: one that the Jews themselves demanded, and themselves made possible. Day after day, the Jews in the camps clamored to go to Palestine, day by day, Bricha smuggled them in; ... and the war-weary British people were growing unwilling to support by force a policy that had been morally indefensible since the terms of the Palestine Mandate included Britain's pledge to sponsor "the es-

tablishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people."⁹⁹

"Thus pressed, physically and morally, on April 2, 1947, Great Britain submitted the problem of Palestine to the United Nations. On November 29, 1947, the General Assembly voted to partition the mandated territory into a Jewish and an Arab state. Many factors, impelled the vote, but the record of the long debate offers sufficient evidence that the Assembly took its decision, in significant part at least, as an act of contrition.

"The British government moved to sabotage the decision it had opposed, and its malice was directed against the Jews. Although Arab irregular forces were already attacking Jewish settlements and setting ambushes along the roads in the territory allotted to the Jewish state, the British forces disarmed the Hagana units wherever they found them and confiscated the tiny stores of weapons the settlements main-

tained for their defence. The regular armies of five Arab nations ... were mobilized on the borders of the Jewish territory, awaiting only the withdrawal of the British before launching the invasion which the Arab League had pledged would end with "the extermination of the Jews."⁹⁹

"Nevertheless, the British refused to allow the Hagana to take up defensive positions; and as the British forces withdrew to their ships in Haifa port, they turned over to the Arabs their garrison forts within Jewish territory. Great Britain thus became an active accessory to Arab aggression. The rest of the United Nations played a role considerably more passive but equally sordid. In the critical six months from the General Assembly's vote until the last British forces sailed from Palestine, the nations demonstrated that the vote had been only a ritual aimed at exorcising the ghosts of the Jewish dead and at appeasing the uneasy conscience of the

world by incantations devoid of meaning or purpose.

"For despite the clear storm warnings, the UN not only failed to provide troops to enforce its decision and to maintain the peace in Palestine, but the nations rummaged through the rubbish heap of recent history and brought forth again the reeking device of "nonintervention" with which they had dug the grave of the embattled Spanish republic in 1936. They embargoed the shipment of arms to either side in Palestine, thus equating the Jewish defenders with the Arab aggressors. They did this in full awareness that the Arab invasion armies were adequately supplied from national arms stocks and that Jewish Hagana had no such resources.

"All this done, the members of the United Nations congratulated each other on their acts of enlightened statesmanship and hastened from the arena. Within that august assemblage constituting "the last great hope of

mankind there was none to remind the nations of the axiom in law and ethics that holds men responsible for the foreseeable consequences of their actions. None to point to the besmirched signposts of avoided issue and unethical expedient and to cry that these had been seen before and that they had always marked the road to ruin. The nations let war loose upon the Jews of Palestine, and in thus betraying the Jew, betrayed themselves.

"On May 15, 1948, in Tel Aviv, the National Council of Palestinian Jews proclaimed the independent state of Israel. And on that same day, the armies of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon crossed all the land frontiers of the new state. The Jews were left alone, as the Jews of Europe had been left alone not long before, to see whether they could survive this latest violent attempt at the final solution to the Jewish problem.

"... between these two final solutions, the Jews had learned that no one rescues the defenseless; had learned that a small and threatened people which looks for its survival to the conscience of the world is soon dead, and in no position to take comfort from the subsequent anguish of repentant mourners arriving, alas, late upon the scene."⁹⁹ (Pages 253-256).

⁹⁹ Azzam Pasha, secretary general of the Arab League speaking on the BBC, May 15, 1948

Elkins, Michael. *Forged in Fury*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1971. 321 pp.

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