

OUTPOST

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Destroying The Ethical Temple

Herbert Zweibon

The most shameful act in modern Jewish history, the uprooting of flourishing Jewish communities by a Jewish government, was carried out, with horrible fitness, on Tisha Be'av, which commemorates the destruction of both the First and Second Temples. A Connecticut rabbi has characterized this as the destruction of the Ethical Temple.

It was done at the whim of one man, Ariel Sharon, who betrayed his convictions, his campaign promises, his party, his supporters in the communities of Judea, Samaria and Gaza, who had believed in him, and his country. Why did he do this? Reluctant as we are to admit this, the only possible explanation is the one most Israelis, left and right, now accept: Sharon saw this as a way to avoid looming indictments of himself and his son by the Attorney General on corruption charges.

In the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee the normally reticent Uzi Landau, a rare voice of conscience in the Likud, finally turned on Sharon in passionate indignation: "You are a liar, a swindler and cruel. The time has come to resign. You have brought Israel to the peak of corruption. You are not worthy of being a leader."

But the responsibility goes well beyond Sharon. The Likud voted against the disengagement plan and Sharon promptly broke his promise to abide by the results of that vote. Why then did 27 out of the 40 members of the Likud tamely "follow the leader," voting in the Knesset for the plan the party had rejected? If they had rejected it (as a mere 13 Likud Knesset members properly did), Sharon could not have cobbled together his coalition of leftists to ram his plan through.

Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee chairman Yuval Steinitz has been warning against the catastrophic security consequences of "disengagement." Recently he pointed out -- he called this a "bombshell revelation" -- that Egypt will now be free to arm the PA with tanks, armored personnel carriers and other heavy weaponry. It will be under no

legal obligation to prevent the influx of advanced arms into Gaza. With Israel turning over control of the border to 750 Egyptian troops, Steinitz warned that Israel would "seriously damage the most significant achievement of the peace treaty with Egypt: the demilitarization of the Sinai." So why did Steinitz repeatedly vote for the plan whose lethal results he saw so clearly?

Benjamin Netanyahu, in a shameless display of cynical opportunism, waited until the uprooting of communities was virtually underway to position himself as its opponent. He resigned from the cabinet with an eloquent letter detailing the ways in which the disengagement would "endanger the security of Israel, divide the nation, and set the principle of withdrawal to the '67 lines that are not defendable." All this was of course obvious from the beginning, while Netanyahu continued to vote for it.

Israel's only hope for survival is in a clean broom that sweeps away all the failed politicians and the mechanisms that allow Prime Ministers to operate more like African "Big Men" than democratic leaders. Politicians need to be responsible to a geographic constituency, not a party caucus. Fundamental systemic change is necessary if Israel is to address a host of its most pressing problems: corruption, a runaway Supreme Court, police brutality, a disintegrating education system, to name only a few. Above all there must be a breed of new leaders who believe in the rights of the Jewish people to the land of Israel and are willing to stand up to pressures, foreign and domestic, to secure those rights.

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From the Editor

Renaming Gaza communities

The Palestinian Authority is planning to re-name the 24 Gaza communities Israel has ethnically cleansed of Jews. While the PA says it is certain that one settlement will be called "Arafat" it is mulling over proposals to name Netzarim or Kfar Darom after slain Hamas leader Ahmed Yassin and Atzmona after a Palestinian "martyr." We at AFSI have come up with additional suitable suggestions: for Nevei Dekalim (the largest of the Jewish communities) Bin Ladenville, for Netzer Hazani, Qaedatown and for Elei Sinai, Jihadville.

A New Base for Al-Qaeda?

While President Bush fantasizes about liberal democracy coming to Gaza, in the real world al-Qaeda is setting up shop there. On *World Net Daily* Aaron Klein reports that a group called *Jundallah* or "Allah's Brigade," which boasts of close ties to al-Qaeda, claimed in May that it had begun operating in Gaza. It is composed primarily of former Hamas and Islamic Jihad members who believe Palestinian terror groups are "too moderate."

Klein quotes former Israeli military intelligence chief Yaacov Amidror: "It's becoming clear Hamas will take over Gaza when Israel leaves...The Gaza Strip will become a paradise [for terror groups] because it will be an area in which the population and the terror groups in power, especially Hamas, share the same ideology as Al-Qaeda. Today, one of the weaknesses of Al-Qaeda is its lack of a safe haven in the Middle East....Al-Qaeda isn't seeking control of Gaza. Hamas emphasizes the war against Israel...Al -Qaeda would use its Gaza base to fight against infidels around the world."

Judea and Samaria Next

As Hamas and al-Qaeda prepare to take over Gaza, the Popular Resistance Committees, an alliance of armed militias now in Gaza, has announced it would move operations to "the West Bank" immediately after Israel's Gaza retreat. Jamal Abu Samhadaneh, commander of the group, wanted by Israel for his role in a series of terror attacks, says he is mulling over an offer by the Palestinian Authority to assume a senior position in its Military Intelligence Force.

Samhadaneh reports that the Israeli pullout from Lebanon "enhanced our belief that the option of resistance can succeed, especially through qualitative operations against the occupation." ("Qualitative operations" are his euphemism for the suicide bombings, drive-by shootings and rocket attacks employed by Hezbollah.) "We learned from Hezbollah and started establishing armed cells that have carried out special operations against settlements....Thank God, the with-

drawal [from Gaza and northern Samaria] has been achieved through the blood of our martyrs."

Now Samhadaneh promises his group will use the same "fighting tactics" in Judea and Samaria. "We will transfer all our fighting methods and capabilities to the West Bank."

Ending Hope

The following is from an article by Ariel Sharon "Truth in the Wilderness" in *The Jerusalem Post* (International Edition) of March 10, 1995: "There's just one ray of light in the national camp, and that's the Judea, Samaria and Gaza Settlers' Council. I have been part of their campaign for years, setting up an information network in the US and Europe. For years the settlers have been defamed by the government, as well as by the media here and abroad...the great majority are quiet, strongly motivated, idealistic and self-controlled. And as long as they're there, there's hope."

This and the many similar statements from Sharon over the years explains why the Gaza communities felt so staggered by his betrayal. Sharon, by his own account, is destroying Israel's hope for survival.

Winston Churchill on Islam

Our thanks to Andrew Bostom M.D, author of the new book *The Legacy of Jihad* for bringing the following passage from an early Churchill book to our attention:

"How dreadful are the curses which Mohammedanism lays on its votaries! Besides the fanatical frenzy, which is as dangerous in a man as hydrophobia in a dog, there is this fearful fatalistic apathy. The effects are apparent in many countries. Improvident habits, slovenly systems of agriculture, sluggish methods of commerce and insecurity of property exist wherever the followers of the Prophet rule or live...The fact that in Mohammedan law every woman must belong to some man as his absolute property, either as a child, a wife, or a concubine, must delay the final extinction of slavery until the faith of Islam has ceased to be a great power among men. Individual Moslems may show splendid qualities...but the influence of the religion paralyzes the social development of those who follow it. No stronger retrograde force exists in the

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The Silence--and Worse--of American Jews

Rael Jean Isaac

Ariel Sharon's morally indefensible and strategically suicidal policy has been implemented, uprooting long-established prosperous communities, creating deep fissures in Israeli society and giving enormous impetus to Arab terror groups, which rightly see this retreat as their victory.

At the very least, as Michael Freund has pointed out in *The Jerusalem Post*, one would have expected a furious debate among American Jews. After all, even Israel's far-left Avraham Burg, former speaker of the Knesset, declared "this is not a genuine plan, because it was a momentary caprice of the prime minister" and "the process by which the plan was approved smashed to smithereens what little remained of Israel's political culture...the prime minister gave the boot to every political convention...the disrespect shown by the prime minister and his associates for resolutions passed by his own party – their contempt and utter disregard—destroyed the basic concept of political life."

Surely these are issues sufficiently profound to engage American Jewry. Yet the reaction of organized American Jewry and the overwhelming number of Jewish opinion leaders has been silence or worse yet, active endorsement of Sharon's bulldozers.

First to the few honorable exceptions. Americans for a Safe Israel, the Zionist Organization of America, Chabad Lubavich and a few small ad hoc groups that sprang up to support Gush Katif vigorously denounced the evictions, Sharon's betrayal of his supporters and the undemocratic process by which he railroaded through his cruel and arbitrary decision to destroy the very communities that he had repeatedly said were strategically vital to Israel's future. Among American Jewish newspapers, *The Jewish Press* has been vocal in denouncing Sharon's actions. Washington based MEMRI [Middle East Media Research Institute] provided a steady drumbeat of warning by translating Arab media and pronouncements of the various terror groups, which described the approaching destruction of the Gaza and Samaria settlements as their victory and promised much more terror to come, with the announced goal of soon eliminating Israel from the planet.

But otherwise? An indifferent silence, acceptance (at best reluctant, i.e. it's too bad for the people who lose their homes, but it had to be done), or wholehearted approval. The Anti-Defamation League took out full page ads fawning over Sharon's supposed "vision and courage," lauding "the risks you are willing to take at this crucial time." In California, even as the

terrible process of uprooting and destruction began, the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles and the Board of Rabbis of Southern California ran ads in support of "disengagement." James Tisch, then chairman of the largest American Jewish umbrella organization, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, announced "We unequivocally support disengagement."

Freund rightly finds the silence of the Orthodox leadership most perplexing and disturbing, for as he notes, their constituency "has perhaps the strongest ties of any group to the Jews of Gush Katif." But for all their outspoken stands on a range of issues, Orthodox leaders preferred to sidestep the expulsion of Jewish communities from Gaza and northern Samaria. Writes Freund: "And so, in recent months, the Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) chose to release just one statement regarding the withdrawal, the same number of statements that were released on issues such as downloading material from the Internet and utilizing gambling as a fundraising tool in the Jewish community." But while the RCA at least took a stand against gambling, its single statement on destroying the Gush Katif communities did no such thing: all it said was that "if an evacuation occurs, it should be done with the greatest sensitivity and honor." The Orthodox Union (OU), the voice of Orthodox Jews in the U.S. and Canada, did little better: while it voiced disapproval of the Sharon government's "indifference to civil liberties," it refused to condemn the expulsion itself, citing a "diversity of views" within the membership.

The silence of the large Jewish "liberal" left comes as no surprise, even though many of the issues raised by both the policy itself and the Sharon government's methods should, in theory, have mobilized this community. Was not the destruction of communities of Jews because they were Jews an example of much excoriated "ethnic cleansing?" If Israel had uprooted thousands of law-abiding Arabs from communities within Israel, would the American Jewish liberal community have been silent? And what about the singling out of religious Jews, who were pulled off city buses simply because they wore kippot and therefore were more likely than others on the bus to be planning to join some demonstration? How does this differ from much-denounced "profiling?" And what about the young children illegally detained to assert pressures on their parents? What about the Sharon govern-

For all their outspoken stands on a range of issues, Orthodox leaders preferred to sidestep the expulsion of Jewish communities from Gaza and northern Samaria.

ment's undermining of democratic norms that even someone like Burg finds shocking? Predictably, since the victims were Jews, the policy surrender, and the beneficiaries Arab enemies, Jewish American liberals found nothing to criticize.

To this writer, what has been most astonishing – and painful – has been the acquiescence of the Jewish intellectual right, those who should have been counted upon irrefutably to reveal the perils of Sharon's policy both for Israel's survival and the West's battle with Islamic terrorism. With the honorable exception of a very few, of whom Daniel Pipes is the best known, the record is dismal. Intellectuals who assailed the Oslo accords when the American Jewish leadership flocked to the White House lawn to celebrate the infamous handshake between Rabin and Arafat have lost their critical faculties.

The level of argument in *Commentary Magazine*, earlier a forum for the most cogent policy analysis, has become embarrassing. In an article resembling the old Norman Podhoretz only by its length, the "new" Podhoretz announces Sharon's policy has his support. Why? Because it has the support of President George Bush and he "trusts" George Bush. That's all, folks! Nor has *Commentary* opened its pages to a genuine debate, permitting others to lay out the evils of "disengagement." Rather we are saddened with the perennially addled Hillel Halkin.

Emotional investment in this president -- and commitment to the war in Iraq as its troubled course leaves him increasingly embattled -- seems to be the underlying reason for the otherwise inexplicable failure to analyze the transparent flaws of Sharon's policy. How else explain the tortured mental processes of the normally incisive Charles Krauthammer? He embraces the surrender of Gaza on the grounds that it is part of Sharon's broader strategy of constructing "a fence" to wall off terror and will permit Sharon to say this is "the end of the concession road for Israel." The absurdity of the terror-ending-fence overwhelms Krauthammer even as he writes and he concedes that fences don't stop the rockets which Palestinians have been steadily firing from Gaza into towns within what he calls "Israel proper," i.e. Israel in the armistice lines of 1949. Krauthammer's answer is for Israel to fire automatically five rockets for every rocket launched at it. Two at the launch sites and three at assets of the militias.

And when a rocket aimed at Israel falls harmlessly and the five Israel launches inadvertently kill women and children? What will be the world's response? As for Israel standing pat, waiting for a transformation of Palestinian Arabs, before the destruction of the Gaza communities was even done, Secretary of State Rice was announcing this was merely the begin-

ning of territorial concessions that must now be stepped up. As for President Bush, his comment on the Gaza evictions at his August 14 news conference suggested he had stepped through the looking glass to join Shimon Peres: "I can understand why people think this decision is one that will create a vacuum into which terrorism will flow. I happen to disagree. I think this will create an opportunity for democracy to emerge. And democracies are peaceful."

People like Podhoretz and Krauthammer have an importance transcending their impact on their own readers for they serve as touchstones for conservative non-Jewish opinion makers who wish Israel well. If people like columnists Rich Lowry (who edits *The National Review*) and Emmett Tyrrell, who also edits *American Spectator*, were not intimidated by those whom they view as possessing the highest credentials when it comes to Israel, they would surely educate their own influential readership concerning the folly of Sharon's government both in imperiling the future of Israel and in paving the way for a terrorist "Hamastan" or "Hezbollahstan." To be sure there are Christian supporters of Israel who refused to be blindsided, evangelicals like Cal Thomas (his blunt article was called "The End of Israel?") and Joseph Farah, and others like radio host John Batchelor (who actually went to Gush Katif), the always clear-seeing Frank Gaffney, blogger Jack Wheeler, Sean Hannity and *Washington Times* editor Wes Pruden.

Even those few Jewish newspapers with intelligent, normally sober editors—like *The Jewish Exponent* in Philadelphia and the *Connecticut Jewish Ledger*--refused to criticize Sharon's shameless betrayal of his commitments both to the public which elected him and to the Gaza communities he had so long supported. *The New York Sun*, edited by Seth Lipsky (who purports to be a disciple of Jabotinsky!) was equally disappointing. Thus an August 5 editorial forcibly outlined the consequences of an American retreat in Iraq, quoting Bin Laden's 1996 *fatwa* in which he spoke of Somalia and Lebanon and of Americans who "left the area carrying disappointment, humiliation, defeat and your dead with you."

Exactly a week later its editorial on Israel's surrender of the Gaza and northern Samaria communities was a wishy washy endorsement arguing it was a retreat "a Jewish democracy has decided...needs to be made." Yet, as celebrating Hamas terrorists joyfully emphasized, Israel was carrying "disappointment, humiliation, defeat" and yes, the exhumed bodies of those who died there. The *Sun's* confused editorial page failed to see the blatant contradiction in its warnings against a terror victory in Iraq and its endorse-



ment of that same victory in Israel. *The Sun*, for all its merits in many areas, has been a disappointment on Israel, where it has not been the bracing antidote to the *New York Times* many had hoped it would be. Instead of offering columns by clear thinking Israeli writers like Carolyn Glick, Evelyn Gordon, Sarah Honig or Naomi Ragen, *The Sun* is the platform for Hillel Halkin, an endless fount of rationalizations for Israeli retreats.

Most disappointing of all is Mortimer Zuckerman, former head of the Conference of Presidents, who actually sharply criticized the "disengagement" in his *U.S. News and World Report*. Incredibly, he followed this up by raising \$14 million in 48 hours via phone calls to his old boy network of fellow Jewish billionaires to buy the Gaza greenhouses, in order to donate them to the Palestinian Authority (this at the request of current White House Middle East envoy James D. Wolfensohn). The PA is awash in money (most recently \$3 billion from the Europeans, propelled by British Prime Minister Tony Blair) but specifically refused to buy the greenhouses on the grounds it wanted no money to go to Jews.

Jews have become refugees in the Jewish homeland. They have lost their homes, their synagogues, their livelihoods. Families of ten have been put up by the Israeli government in single hotel rooms. Some, desperate, highlighted their plight by setting up a tent city along the highway to Tel Aviv. Yet as

AFSI's Ruth King observes: "What do these numbskulled Jewish philanthropists do instead of helping Jews? This is so sickening it is beyond reprehensible. It is the bottom in Jewish *dhimmitude*."

With such "leadership," and the well-nigh total absence of debate, it is little wonder that the average Jew babbles absurdities. Patrons of a kosher deli in White Plains, New York, asked by a local Jewish paper for their views on "disengagement" came up with infantile responses including "It's definitely a step toward peace," "if their [the settlers'] misfortune can bring peace then it's a small sacrifice," "eventually disengagement will work."

Soon the blinders will be off, much more quickly, indeed, than the recovery from the Oslo delusion. The terrible consequences of "disengagement" will be obvious as the front lines move forward to population centers within the old green line, world pressures for more destruction of thriving Jewish communities intensify, the fissures within Israeli society deepen, terrorism grows in every part of the Land of Israel and the threat from the entire Arab world becomes yet more serious.

When the history of this period is written, the current paralysis of American Jews, left and right, will be a source of incredulity -- and deepest shame.

Rael Jean Isaac is editor of Outpost and author of Israel Divided and Party and Politics in Israel

A Note on Kfar Darom

Erich Isaac

While the destruction of Jewish communities in Gaza and expulsion of their population proceeded remarkably peacefully, the dramatic exception, involving a bitter clash with the forces sent to evict the residents, took place at Kfar Darom.

Kfar Darom carries a special resonance for Jews, stemming from both recent and ancient history, which may have contributed to the resistance being focused in that community. While part of Gush Katif, its roots went deeper. Modern Kfar Darom was established at the close of Yom Kippur in 1947. A group of religious youth (*ha-Noar ha-Dati*) founded it as a kibbutz located a mile and a half from the Deir el Balah railroad station. It was a risky venture given Arab hostility, fanned at that time to hot hatred by the Arab leadership. These young people named the kibbutz Kfar Darom after the ancient Jewish regional center whose name derived from the geographic designation "darom" or "south."

Within a year the invading Egyptian army struck at Kfar Darom. For an amazing seven weeks the small group of villagers held out under repeated attacks. Finally, with supplies gone, breastworks and trenches all but demolished by Egyptian fire, the remaining defenders withdrew one night in a well-nigh

miraculous escape through enemy lines. Twenty years later, after the Six Day War, the village was re-established and when, after the withdrawal from Sinai, the Israeli government created a buffer settlement bloc in the Gaza Strip, Kfar Darom became part of that settlement bloc, which became known as Gush Katif.

But Kfar Darom's connection to Jews goes back much further. In the period of classical prophecy "Darom" was applied to the south of Israel in general (e.g. "...oh mortal, set your face towards Teman and proclaim to Darom," Ezekiel 21:2). Today's (now destroyed) Kfar Darom was the heart of an area that in Talmudic times was recognized as a center of *halachic* thought. The second generation *Tana* (Mishnaic sage) Rabbi Eliezer bar Yitzhak taught there before the Bar Kochba uprising. The Talmud often simply attached the appellation Daromna to the name of sages from this area, e.g. Rabbi Ya'akov Daromna; R. Joshua Daromna etc. In the Gemara it was said that he who searches for wisdom ought to go to darom ("Yadrim" B.b.25). The term *Ziknei Hadarom* (Sages of Darom) became a term for a category of rabbis, whether from the environs of Kfar Darom, or by extension, elsewhere.

Thanks to Ariel Sharon, Kfar Darom will now be renamed in "honor" of Arafat or some Hamas murderer of Jews.

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The Unbearable Ease of Destruction

Asher Ragen

As family after family is evicted from a home and a community, as the synagogues are emptied and the nurseries abandoned, the scale of destruction and suffering seems overwhelming. Equally overwhelming is the ease with which four decades of work and love invested in communities can be effaced. Is it really that easy to destroy what we have built? Is nothing about this state permanent?

Destruction on this magnitude demands an explanation. Yet search as one might through the "critical" analysis of the barrage of experts and pundits, no rational explanation is to be found. Hopefully the magnitude of suffering witnessed now daily will warn us of those flippant, vacuous answers heard too often. One needs to do better than callously remark, "Well, we couldn't stay there forever." None of us will live forever, either. The "forever" argument, intimating a knowledge of a future decades away, sounds doubly strange coming from a leadership that lacks a vision for the coming January, let alone "forever." It does not explain why this had to happen; why now? Why in this manner? Why was this done without elections? Why did the people not even get a chance to plead for themselves?

Surely if forever is our time scale, a few more months would hardly matter.

Perhaps sometimes it is necessary to destroy. But the previous occasion—the destruction of Yamit—should serve as a yardstick. When Yamit was destroyed, it was done for the sake of a peace agreement with the largest Arab nation and the bitterest of enemies.

It was done after Sadat arrived in Jerusalem, and after the peace agreement was ratified by an overwhelming majority in the Knesset. There was a real sense that the Middle East was about to change forever. Against such a background, the pain and suffering experienced in Yamit could be contextualized. It offered such tremendous benefits to the entire state, that it truly seemed wrong to let the settlements of Yamit stand in the way.

But what benefits are being offered here? The Palestinians have patiently explained, repeatedly, that this will change nothing. On the contrary, they are now assured of two crucial facts: Terrorism works, and there is no limit to what Israel will give. Some people believe that "at least no soldiers will have to die in Gaza". While I admire a fervent belief in the powers

beyond our control, such religious zeal should really not interfere with rational security considerations. When the Qassam missiles fall again in Sderot and beyond (and fall they will), Israel will initially wait until there are significant civilian casualties. It will then threaten to really, really, retaliate. And when (surprise!) this threat is ignored, it will once again send soldiers into Gaza. Except this time they will face a well armed and prepared enemy, intent on exacting the highest price. And as for Sharon's threats — well, not everyone is as frightened by the old man as his party yes-men.

The final straw being grasped at simply illustrates the disengagement from logic that this process entails. We are now told that we must leave Gaza because of the "demographic threat." Demography never killed anyone, however. And drawing artificial lines in the sand will not reduce the number of Arabs intent on murdering Jews. Slice and dice the state of Israel as you like, the Jews will remain a miniscule minority in the Middle-East. And at any rate, demographic threats" materialize over generations. Or not. If one insists on looking for a rationale within the confines of academia, he would do better to turn to the Department of Psychology.

Because not everyone watching the scenes from Gush Katif is moved to tears. Some people have complaints about the aesthetics of the deportation. These multiple "Miss Manners" have very clear ideas about the etiquette of being thrown out of your home. They lament the "barbaric" lack of decorum exhibited by parents who have just had everything taken from them.

Perhaps this reaction is the most revealing of all. It comes closest to explaining why this is all happening. The rational underpinnings for the "disengagement" are slim indeed. But the irrational, violent hatred aimed at the victims of this madness compensate adequately.

The rhetorical arsenal deployed against the citizens of Gush Katif is overpowering. For the most part, these people have never been convicted of crimes, they serve in the army, run productive businesses and pay taxes. They have been described alternately as messianic fanatics, religious zealots, or violent threats to democracy. Mostly they are farmers. Throughout these difficult days they behaved with a dignity of spirit that strangely enough is uplifting.

The Palestinians are now assured of two crucial facts: Terrorism works, and there is no limit to what Israel will give.

As much as we are learning about the settlers (though anyone who spent any time with them is hardly surprised), we are learning quite a bit more about the Israeli left. To anyone who thought the people on the left simply possess a soul deeply attuned to human suffering; to anyone who believed their cries of empathy for every displaced Palestinian, every uprooted olive tree, were born of a basic human solidarity that just cannot overlook a suffering human being, regardless of the context, the evictions were an eye-opener. It seems that they are quite able to look upon human suffering and dismiss it with the quip, "Well, they had it coming."

Since the destruction of Gush Katif is not a means to anything, it must be the end in itself. There is a desire, a yearning even, to "take on the settlers" and destroy these communities regardless of any political advantage. The battle has been described by some as "Israelis vs. the Jews". This formulation is worth noting. One might think there was no dichotomy between Israeli and Jew. Israel is the Jewish State, is it not? But, for some, creating this dichotomy, this clear distinction between Israeli and Jew, is actually the purpose of this entire exercise.

To these people, the main obstacle to achieving peace is the pesky Jewishness of the conflict. Israelis, Jordanians, and Lebanese could get along just fine. It's the Jews and Arabs who can't live in peace. It is not quite that the settlers are being singled out because they are Jewish. Or that everyone who supports their eviction is somehow not Jewish. But the willingness to inflict so much pain, without even telling them why, bespeaks of a fundamental disconnect within the nation. Of people who insist on not viewing the settlers as their own people.

At its core the disengagement is a literary

move. The settlers, with their long beards and multiple children, represent the unmistakable Jewishness of the nation. The thousands of soldiers and policemen represent the nation. By manufacturing these images that pit Israeli soldier against Jewish settler, a distinction is created that can never again be ignored. It is the most painful literary exercise in history.

The irony is that on one level they are correct. The core of the problem is the Jewishness of the nation. But by seeking to rip it out of their own body, they are making the most typically Jewish move of all. In this century the assimilated Jews of Germany reacted to the virulent anti-Semitism of the Germans by attacking the uncultured *ostjuden* from Poland. It was because they insisted on being so damn different that the Germans hated the Jews. But of course when the time came, the Germans made no note of this internal Jewish hairsplitting. The Palestinians are equally unimpressed with this display of enmity that the

Jewish state has put on. They are all Jews and they are all settlers, and their fate should be the same. When Abu-Mazen speaks of marching to Jerusalem, he is not thinking of just East Jerusalem.

Among the numerous tragedies that unfolded this week, there is also this: in a year, all of the politicians who supported this plan will be gone. Just like the architects of Oslo, they will be relegated to the overflowing dustbin of Israeli political failures. But the self-inflicted wounds of this psychotic episode will continue to bleed. One can only hope that they have not been fatal.

Asher Ragen is a Ph.D candidate at Harvard's School of Near Eastern Studies and a reservist in the IDF. He sent this article as a letter to his mother, Israeli novelist and journalist Naomi Ragen.

The Blood of Martyrs

Lee Harris

Banners are flying today in Gaza that read: "The blood of martyrs has led to liberation." They are the banners of the popular militant Palestinian group Hamas, and they enunciate an unpleasant truth that proponents of the so called peace process would be well advised to ponder. Translated from the language of hagiography, the message of the banners is blazingly transparent: Terrorism works. It gets us what we want. Look what the *intifada* was able to achieve: the liberation of Gaza. Just think what more terrorism can do for our cause. If the blood of martyrs has led to the liberation of Gaza, may we not expect the blood of

martyrs to lead to the liberation of Jerusalem? As the popular Palestinian T-shirt says, "Today Gaza, tomorrow Jerusalem."

Now there may be all sorts of good reasons for the Israelis to order the evacuation of Jewish settlements in the Gaza strip, just as there may be all sorts of good reasons for the Bush administration to consider this as a step forward on the famous roadmap of what we are fond of calling the peace process. But all these good reasons notwithstanding, it is still necessary for us to grasp the fact that, from the Palestinian perspective, the liberation of Gaza is a triumph for those who were willing to blow themselves up (along with any innocent bystanders) in the name of the liberation of Palestine. Furthermore, it is equally necessary for us to realize that it would be insane for the

Palestinians to interpret the Gaza pullout as anything other than a victory for those among them who urged violent resistance as opposed to negotiated settlements.

A child who has discovered that by screaming at the top of his lungs he can bring his parents to make concessions to him is apt to continue to deploy the same policy whenever his parents attempt to thwart his will. He has learned a trick that infallibly works for him, and why should he abandon the use of this trick so long as it brings him success?

It is absurd to blame human beings, of any age or of any background, for continuing to pursue a policy that has been rewarded with success each time that it has been tried. If you have taught a dog to fetch a stick by giving him a treat each time he brings you back the stick, it seems a bit ridiculous to scold him for making the inference: "If I fetch my master a stick, I will get what I want."

Similarly, it would be nonsensical to explain to those waving the Hamas banner that the blood of their martyrs had nothing to do with the current liberation of Gaza. As the Palestinians watch Israeli soldiers removing Israeli settlers from their homes, is it possible that they cannot fail to see this as an act of national desperation on the part of Israel?

If there is a roadmap to be found in all of this, it is a roadmap that informs the terrorists that what is required in order to defeat the West is just a bit of patience and persistence -- and, of course, the blood of future martyrs. This, of course, is not how the Bush administration sees it, nor is it how the current Israeli government sees it. But it is certainly how the militant Palestinians see it -- and, in the end, it is their interpretation of the Gaza pullout that will matter.

We can tell them that it was Western goodwill

and Israeli generosity that had prompted the withdrawal; but the militants will conclude that their triumph was their own doing, brought about by Yasser Arafat's *Intifada*.

The Israeli government can explain to them that they are evicting the Jewish settlers in the interest of a future harmonious relationship between a Palestinian state and the state of Israel, but what the militants are witnessing with their own eyes is an Israel that is so bitterly and profoundly divided by the Gaza withdrawal that it may lose forever the solidarity of national sentiment that is absolutely critical to its future survival. What greater boon could the militants ask for than for Jewish blood to be shed by Jewish hands in an Israeli house ferociously divided against itself?

The West may try to explain to the Palestinian militants that we are fighting a war against terrorism, but they are all aware that in this so called war against terrorism the West has decided to turn a blind eye to Palestinian terrorism, just as it turned a blind eye to the terrorism of the African National Congress. It is the West that first taught the rest of the world that one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter -- and few have learned this lesson better than the Palestinian militants.

If it ain't broke, don't fix it, as the redneck saying goes -- and that is the point of those Hamas banners about the blood of the martyrs. They are celebrations of the Palestinians' peculiar institution of terrorism which, because it is far from being broke, is equally far from ever being fixed.

Lee Harris is author of Civilization and Its Enemies. This article was published on August 16th at Tech Central Station - www.techcentralstation.com

Global Democratization: the Unmasked Questions

Lawrence Auster

Now that the democratization of Iraq has led to a constitution likely to be based on *sharia* law, perhaps President Bush and his advisors can better understand the truth enunciated by Norman Davies in his 1996 book, *Europe, A History*:

"Hitler's democratic triumph exposed the true nature of democracy. Democracy has few values of its own: it is as good, or bad, as the principles of the people who operate it. In the hands of liberal and tolerant people, it will produce a liberal and tolerant government; in the hands of cannibals, a government of cannibals. In Germany of 1933-4 it produced a Nazi government because the prevailing culture of Germany's voters did not give priority to the exclusion of gangsters."

Twenty years ago, or even ten years ago when Davies's book was published, a significant number of thinking Americans would have granted the evi-

dent validity of these observations. A democratic government, in the sense of a government chosen by popular election and therefore reflecting the concerns and values of a particular people, will also naturally reflect the moral and cultural character of that people.

Since not all cultures and peoples are equally tolerant, and since the popularly expressed will of a people can be tyrannical and oppressive toward minorities, democracy, in the simple sense of government chosen by popular election, is not a sufficient ideal. Democracy must also be liberal, meaning that it protects individual rights, and constitutional, meaning that the power of the state is limited. But, as just said, not all cultures are equally amenable to liberal and constitutional principles, and therefore not all countries will be able to form a democracy in the true sense of liberal constitutional democracy. Certainly the notion that Islamic-based Arab cultures or tribal African cultures could have liberal democracy would have been looked at askance by the leading American intellectuals 15 or 25 years ago.

How was this body of commonsense and philosophical understandings lost? It was lost as a result

of the policy President Bush adopted in response to the 9/11 attack. Speaking at West Point in June 2002, the president claimed that there is “a single surviving model of human progress, based on non-negotiable demands of human dignity, the rule of law, limits on the power of the state, respect for women and private property and free speech and equal justice and religious tolerance.”

He expanded on these ideas in the introduction to his September 2002 National Security Strategy statement:

“People everywhere want to be able to speak freely; choose who will govern them; worship as they please; educate their children—male and female; own property; and enjoy the benefits of their labor. These values of freedom are right and true for every person, in every society—and the duty of protecting these values against their enemies is the common calling of freedom-loving people across the globe and across the ages.”

With this stunning language, Bush turned a set of rights long established in America and for Americans into a requirement for all of humanity. It wasn't just that we regarded the enumerated rights as self-evidently true. It was that we regarded their practical establishment in the whole world—and particularly in the Muslim lands—as, first, a non-negotiable moral demand, and, second, as the only way to assure a world safe from terrorism. There was a specious logic in the latter argument that passed for great wisdom in some quarters. The past policy of cooperating with Arab and Muslim dictatorships hadn't prevented the growth of Muslim extremism. Therefore we had to try the opposite tack, of democratizing the Muslim countries.

In response to these assertions, obvious questions instantly arise. As desirable as democracy and freedom may be as a way of solving the problem of Muslim extremism and global terrorism, what if it's not possible to democratize Muslim countries? What if Islam and democracy—not just democracy in the sense of elections, but democracy in the larger sense of a society founded on liberal individual rights and limited government—are mutually exclusive? And if that were true, then global democratization—the universal establishment of liberal individual rights as the basis of every society, especially Muslim societies—is not practicable.

Yet among the very smart people who formed the new Bush initiative and then set about energetically promoting it, no one asked these obvious questions. There was an incredible failure of logic and imagination in assuming that simply because Muslim

dictatorship had not worked, Muslim democratization must be a viable alternative. Worse, the democratist case was asserted in such a conclusory and sweeping tone as to suggest that no reasonable disagreement was possible. President Bush and Secretary of State Rice have repeatedly stated that to doubt the likelihood of Muslim democratization is “condescending”

and even racist. As a result of these strong-arm tactics, the failure or refusal to ask rational questions about the Bush policy, which initially characterized the inner councils of the Bush administration itself, soon affected the whole society. Amazingly, no genuine public debate was ever held on the very radical and doubtful propositions upon which Bush's entire foreign policy was constructed.

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The next question is why didn't the very smart people who were articulating the Bush policy ask the fundamental questions upon which its very achievability depended?

The simplest answer is that they were functioning in the realm of practical politics, not philosophy. In the

aftermath of a horrendous attack on this country and the threat of far worse to come, they had worked out a new national security policy of global reach. To be acceptable politically, this policy needed a rationale that resonated with American principles. Freedom—which in the global context of this policy meant global freedom—was the only game in town. The Bush supporters were part of a team, and this was what the team had decided on, and that was that.

Yet there were deeper reasons for the failure to ask fundamental questions. For one thing, if Muslims are so different from us that they can never be expected to construct societies based on liberal individual freedom, then there is no hope for a peaceful world unified around a shared belief in democracy. Irreconcilable differences of values between Muslims and Westerners, expressed in terms of political conflict and ultimately military conflict, must be perpetual, not only internationally, but, even more frighteningly, within the West itself, where millions of Middle Eastern Muslims have settled as immigrants. In the interests of maintaining both international and domestic peace, any thought of irreconcilable cultural and religious differences must be suppressed.

Beneath the fear of irresolvable conflict, there was, and is, a deeper, ideological reason for the suppression of discussion. If liberal individualism is rejected as a matter of principle by one-fifth of the world's population who follow one of the world's major religions, then the claim of liberal individualism to be the universal truth would lose its credibility. It would mean that there was something particular about West-

ern culture, perhaps even about the peoples that had founded and created Western culture, that makes liberal individualism possible, which in turn would mean that religious, cultural, and ethnic differences matter politically.

The idea that such differences matter and need to be taken into account is, of course, the antithesis of the liberal universalist creed of contemporary conservatives, which says that all peoples are fundamentally the same and therefore equally ready

for democracy and equally assimilable into America. And this is why none of the very smart people on the Bush team ever asked the obvious question whether there was anything about Islam that would make liberal democracy unacceptable to Muslims.

Lawrence Auster is the author of Erasing America: The Politics of the Borderless Nation. His blog site is View from the Right. This article appeared on August 17th in americanthinker.com

WASPs United Against Israel

Winfield Myers

Most people who follow politics know that some of Israel's strongest supporters in America are evangelicals and Catholics who, seeing the Jewish state as a democracy surrounded by hostile neighbors, are determined not to let America's commitment to Israel waver. Against them are arrayed most members of the liberal establishment -- the mainstream media, the professoriate, foundations, and the remnants of what were once correctly described as the mainstream churches. And while there is some variation of opinion within these groups -- liberal Catholics are often indistinguishable from liberal Protestants in their suspicions of Israel, while some prominent journalists and academics are strong supporters -- they represent fairly consistent blocs of opinion.

That fact is driven home by a front-page article in the *New York Times* [Aug 6]. Titled "Threat to Divest is Church Tool in Israel Fight," it reports on a decision by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), to target several large corporations for divestment unless they cease doing business with Israel. In a failed attempt to appear even-handed, the Presbyterians placed Citibank on their list because, they say, it helped the Arab Bank transfer funds to terrorists.

The other companies are Caterpillar, Motorola, ITT Industries and United Technologies, and the case against each, along with the church's total investment, is described on the church's web pages. Here are the church's objections to United Technologies: "United Technologies is a large military contractor whose subsidiary has provided helicopters to the Israeli military. They have been used in attacks in the occupied territories against suspected Palestinian terrorists. The company also provides other military hardware."

And to ITT: "ITT Industries is a diversified manufacturer that supplies the Israeli military with communications, electronic and night vision equipment used by its forces in the occupied territories." Read through the objections, and it becomes clear that the left-wingers who run the central office of the PCUSA object, at base, to Israel's ability to defend itself against terrorists crossing over from the West Bank to kill and maim as many Israeli civilians as possible. And

that's not to mention the mortar rounds, rockets, shoulder-fired grenades, and other modern weapons systems employed by Palestinian terrorists to inflict casualties on Jews. But, according to the PCUSA, the problems in the region stem from Israel's determination not to be driven into the sea -- and not to repeat the mistake of trusting the likes of the Presbyterian leadership to protect them.

What's behind the PCUSA leadership's move? It must be stated unequivocally that part of the motivation is little more than resurgent WASPy disdain for "those people," the Jews, the trouble-makers, the folks who run the world through the neo-con conspiracy. Here the good liberals in the church are linked with far right voices, such as Joseph Sobran and the Institute for Historical Review, at whose 2002 conference Sobran said, "I am not, heaven forbid, a 'Holocaust denier.' I lack the scholarly competence to be one. I don't read German, so I can't assess the documentary evidence." [I don't read Chinese, but I have no doubt that the Cultural Revolution occurred; I don't read Russian, but I'm sure Stalin really did order the murder of millions.] Which leads us to Sobran's conclusion: "Benjamin Netanyahu has written that Israel is 'an integral part of the West.' I think it would be truer to say that Israel has become a deformed limb of the West."

And the Presbyterians? I'm not sure of their excuse, but a glance at their home page reveals what are, at best, some misplaced priorities, and it gives us a peek into what else ails them regarding Israel.

You might expect to find Christian symbols, photos of a church or two, quotations from Scripture, or perhaps some proclamations of faith: "He is risen; hallelujah!"

What proclamation will you find? A big boxed statement: "Progressive Engagement Process Begins." That would be the call for divestment. What statement of faith is put forth? Try this:

"Companies for 'progressive engagement' over role in Middle East violence named.

"The Mission Responsibility through Investment (MRTI) Committee of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) announced that it will begin its process of 'progressive engagement' with five companies it says contribute to the ongoing violence that plagues Israel and Palestine. The Committee's action is in response to a resolution passed last year by the Church's General Assembly and is consistent with the Church's

long-standing practice of ensuring its investments are used to further the Church's mission.

This is less theology than political action; food not for the soul, but for the activist. And, at heart, it's the reason the leadership of the PCUSA seems more concerned with engagement in left-wing political crusades than in winning souls for Christ. I don't mean that as a comment on Presbyterians, within and outside of the PCUSA; I was raised Presbyterian, although I haven't been a member for over 15 years. And I'm sure that my great-uncle, Z.V. Myers, who as a 1907 Georgia Tech graduate and lay missionary spent decades building roads in Mexico, wouldn't recognize the church he supported.

But any religious polity that strives for earthly

salvation rather than spiritual solace will find itself mired in temporal controversies better left to legitimate governments. That's particularly true for a body that has been as thoroughly captured by the secular left as has the PCUSA. Under the leadership of the Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick, the PCUSA has scurried to remain at the forefront of the declining liberal establishment's *cause de jour*. It has lost over a million members since the mid-1960s. And, like the main stream media, academe, and other declining institutions, it continues on its merry way, step by step into a well earned obscurity.

Winfield Myers is managing editor of American Enterprise. This appeared in democracy-project.com

Peace Perseveration

Ruth King

In psychiatry, the word "perseveration" is defined as a pathological, persistent repetition of a word, gesture, or act, often associated with brain damage.

In more common, non medical usage it is the constant repetition of a phrase or sentence in the service of dreadful policies.

Exhibit A: Tony Blair, England's Prime Minister, on the heels of an Islamic bombing in London which killed 50 and injured hundreds, perseverated when he spoke of the "road map...leading to the creation of two states living side by side in Palestine."

Exhibit B: Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice perseverates when she obsequiously refers to Holocaust denier, terrorist mastermind Abu Mazen as "Mr. Abbas, the elected president of Palestine." The Eurasians, Koreans, Cubans, Iranians, and thugs such as Venezuela's "elected" President publicly diminish and disdain her authority. Mme. Secretary shrugs off all international dangers as she props up "Mr. Abbas, the elected President of the Palestinian people." Even as Israel was engaged in the painful disengagement from Gaza, Sec. Rice issued a perfunctory message of empathy, swiftly followed by: "This is just the beginning. Israel will have to make further withdrawals in implementing the road map with President Abbas, elected leader of the Palestinians."

Exhibit C: The natty George Soros and his slovenly political twin Michael Moore perseverate. No matter what evil or calamity is presented to them they echo each other: "It's all the fault of George Bush."

Exhibit D: Moslem Imams throughout Eurabia and the Islamic world perseverate when confronted with famine, tribal genocide, AIDS, natural disasters, and even terrorism within their own boundaries. In chorus they recite: "It's the Mossad's fault."

Exhibit E: For Israel's pacifist fools...the Yossis (Beilin and Sarid), the simple Shimons, and the leftist media and academics who ape them no atrocity can occur that is not the fault of "the occupation."

Exhibit F: The late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin perseverated. Each time his ruinous policy was followed by an Arab murder spree, he called the perpetrators "enemies of peace" and the victims "casualties of peace."

Exhibit G: Our own President Bush perseverates. The Saudis are "our loyal allies" and those who murder our soldiers "the enemies of freedom"..... never Islamic enemies of infidels. The President also perseverates in his claim that "democracy" is breaking out in "Palestine" when in fact it is Hamastan that is slouching to be born there. Barbarians tend to elect barbarians, but our President won't go there. Even in Lebanon, the strength of Hezbollah may well doom democratic hopes.

Some supporters of the President have noticed the perseveration problem.. David Frum, his former speechwriter, says: "If the president's aides announce a major new campaign to rally public opinion--and then send the boss out to deliver a speech that contains nothing but old and disbelieved formulas--they fail him and the country."

The good news is that the malady is curable. George Schultz, the former Secretary of State used to perseverate when he referred to the "winds of moderation" among Israel's enemies. He was cured when the Arabs flouted the agreements and cease fires that he brokered. He came to realize that the "winds of moderation" were mere cosmetic shifts in the current of Arab and Moslem hatred of all infidels.

And now, a little perseveration of my own: The Arabs want all of Israel; not just Gaza; not just Judea and Samaria; not just the Golan, not just the Galilee; not just Jerusalem, not just Haifa. They want all of it and they want every Jew out, including the pacifist perseverators.

It is time to connect the dots.....and base our policy on recognition that the war against Israel is part and parcel of the *jihad* against civilized nations. Islam's goal is to subjugate all infidels including the perseverators. Nothing will satisfy them, not even the bitter end of the "road map."

(Continued from page 2)

world. Far from being moribund, Mohammedanism is a militant and proselytizing faith. It has already spread throughout Central Africa...and were it not that Christianity is sheltered in the strong arms of science, the science against which it had vainly struggled, the civilisation of modern Europe might fall, as fell the civilisation of ancient Rome." (Sir Winston Churchill, *The River War*, Vol. II, pp. 248-50, London: Longman, Green & Co., 1899)

Saudi Doublespeak

In February Saudi Arabia hosted an international counter-terrorism conference producing the so-called Riyadh Declaration. It spoke of "the importance of enhancing the values of understanding, tolerance, dialogue...bringing cultures together...combating any ideology that calls for hatred, instigates violence, or justifies the terrorism crimes that are denounced by all religions."

In July, on Capitol Hill, MEMRI (the Middle East Media Research Institute) showed an hour long collection of clips from the last year compiled from TV stations funded and controlled by the Saudi government. As Steven Stalinsky reports on *FrontPage*, most of the clips MEMRI assembled wound up on the cutting room floor for it would have taken all day to view the examples of hatred it had gathered from Saudi religious figures, professors, members of the royal family and assorted intellectuals. Certain themes surfaced again and again, writes Stalinsky: "calls for the

annihilation of Christians and Jews; anti-American and anti-Semitic declarations; rallying cries for *jihad* and terrorism; and incitement against American troops in Iraq."

"Victory" Poems

In *The Jerusalem Post* Khaled Abu Toameh reports on some of the popular poetry being recited during celebrations in the wake of Israel's ignominious retreat from Gaza. Here is poet Khamis Lutfi: "Today, tomorrow and the memories are ours. So are Jerusalem, Hebron, Jaffa and Haifa and the Galilee. All of Palestine is ours, from the river to the sea. O modern barbarians, go away!...We will destroy you and we will chase you forever."

Then there is Fida Awni's "Victory Wedding." "Oh Gaza, after you it will be Haifa and all the other cities. O Jaffa, we promise you that we will come."

Equally lyrical is Khalil Amr whose song describes Israel's retreat from Gaza under fire: "O brothers listen — I have something to tell you about Gaza. The enemy is being wiped out. They are leaving proud Gaza in panic and to the noises of explosions and gunshots."

And then there is songwriter Ibtisam Mustafa who calls upon all the armed groups to liberate Palestine: "O brigades be prepared, Gaza has been restored! Start preparing to liberate the rest of the land. Drive the Zionist out. O Hamas, let's liberate Jerusalem with the help of your soldiers and glorious rockets."

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