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Leading from Behind

William Mehlman

Triggered by his “Israel, we’ve got your back” slam-dunk applause line served up to attendees at the recent AIPAC conclave in Washington, Barack Obama’s efforts to domestically reframe Iran’s race to atomic bomb capability as a “Jewish” issue has become one of the more dismaying aspects of an already surrealistic quadrennial election scene.

Its traction cuts across party lines. An extended segment of the Arizona Republican primary debate devoted to the Iranian nuclear threat found Romney, Gingrich and Santorum dutifully regurgitating the notion that the “protection” of Israel was the primary justification for American pressure on the mullah dictatorship. Not at any point in the discussion did either of the three (Ron Paul was doing his trademark 1930s isolationist turn) raise the specter of a Middle East nuclear arms race certain to ensue from Tehran’s acquisition of the bomb – the world’s most lethal weapons in the hands of the world’s most unstable regimes – and the threat it posed for the West at large. It took House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, who isn’t running for President, to inject some sense of real-time national concern into the post-debate discussion. “It’s not about Israel, “ he asserted, “It’s about our vital interests in the region. It’s about the United States.”

Of course, burying the Iranian nuclear menace under a column headed “Israeli Protection” comes with a price tag. Discounting, if we may, the ever-raised antennae of the pathological Israel-haters, the numbers posted on that tag by an American electorate war-weary enough to have turned Dr. Paul into a serious presidential candidate, could prove disconcertingly high.

Portents of what may be in the offing were evident in reader responses to a *New York Times* op-ed by Bill Keller, its former executive editor, entitled “Falling In and Out of War.” It’s a fairly straightforward discourse on what Keller deems the justifying principles for American military action, encapsulated in his answers to five questions. These run the gamut from cost-benefit analysis to the strategic and diplomatic considerations that must inform any decision to take up arms. From a cost-benefit perspective, the writer didn’t think an American strike at Iran made the cut. Unlike Iraq and Libya there would be no allies to share the expenses. Besides, in his view, the economic sanctions imposed on Tehran “show signs of working” and should be given more time.

But for a single interjection, Keller would have been home free even with those who might have taken exception to some of his rationales. It came in response to the question on his list entitled “Is this [Iran] our fight?” Without mentioning Israel, but in obvious reference to the Jewish State, he averred that “we may feel an obligation to defend an ally,” cost-benefit considerations and diplomatic fallout notwithstanding. It was enough to precipitate a barrage of letters to the editor, the greater portion of them focused on that solitary interjection.

“I think there is a question missing,” declared the subtlest of the responders: “Who stands to gain?” From that point it was all downhill. “What would it take for you to want to send your children to occupy Iran or Sudan?” asked another responder totally oblivious to Keller’s text. “Or for that matter, willingly lay down your life for Israel?” Yet another demanded that “he [Obama] should make continued support of Israel conditional on an understanding not to attack Iran.”

None of the irate responders to Keller’s article so much as hinted at the wider dangers inherent in allowing Ahmadinejad & Co. to develop a nuclear strike capability. From a castigation of the “juveniles at AIPAC and Benjamin Netanyahu [attempting to] draw us into a foolish war against Iran,” the tenor of some of the letters veered sharply into murky conspiratorial territory. Reviving the old but ever durable canard about “Israeli interests” having dictated the U.S. invasion of Iraq, one reader wanted to know whether we have “done everything possible to make sure that *our foreign policy is not being hijacked once again* [emphasis added] by a friendly foreign nation and its feverish American drummers, whose

interests may not be aligned with ours and may, in fact, be inimical to the vital interests and integrity of the U.S, as was clearly the case in Iraq.”

What is certainly clear from this and at least one other letter in the same vein is that the myth of Israeli-American Jewish influence on George W. Bush’s decision to rid the world of Saddam Hussein is alive and well.

If responses of this nature can be evoked from the supposedly sophisticated readers of the *New York Times*, one hesitates to imagine the reaction Keller’s piece may have received in less elite circles. To be sure, President Obama’s attempt to tie Israel’s hands on Iran at least until the final returns are in on November 6th has already begun to pay off. The Associated Press reports that certain unnamed “senior Israeli officials” have come around to the White House-U.S. Defense Department view that “no final decision to build an atomic bomb has been made by Iran.” This in the face of Tehran’s boast barely a month ago that it is now in possession of more than 100 kilograms of 20 percent enriched uranium, sufficient, with further relatively quick and easy processing, for four atomic bombs.

With the alarm bells over Iran’s determined march toward nuclear weaponry set off by the International Atomic Energy Agency crew at the UN still clanging in our ears, Mr. Obama, eyes fixed on the gasoline pump prices that could decide his tenure, continues to push for yet more unconditional blah blah with the Tehran mullahcracy, accusing all who differ of “loose talk of war.” Meanwhile, Israel’s chances of laying the Iranian nuclear nightmare to rest grow dimmer and dimmer.

Bill Mehlman leads AFSI in Israel.

From the Editor

Remembering Herbert Zweibon

It is hard to believe that over a year has gone by since Herbert Zweibon, the modest visionary who led AFSI for so many years, passed away. On Feb. 7, 2012 members and supporters of AFSI gathered at the Lisker Synagogue in Manhattan to pay him tribute on the first anniversary of his death. Helen Freedman, AFSI’s executive director, who organized the event, said of Herb: “Tu B’Shevat, the holiday of trees, is so appropriate a time for remembering this giant of a man who contributed so much over a period of 35 years to the safety of Israel.” Many who loved and worked with Herb—including his son Mark—spoke of his dedication to Israel and his humanity. Charlotte Wahle, a long time AFSI volunteer, recalled that on her last visit to Herb in the hospital, his concern was not for himself but for what was happening at the office.

Boycott and Divest

After reading that Israel has developed a simple blood test to detect cancer cells in the body long before symptoms occur, long time AFSI supporter Mimi Kaplansky came up with a splendid suggestion. The signers to the various boycott and divest from Israel manifestos should be denied access to those tests. Furthermore, she observes, to uphold their own principles, they should throw away their cell phones which contain parts made or developed in Israel’s silicon valley.

Irredeemable Shimon

Peres outdid his usual appalling performance on his recent trip to the U.S. Interviewed by the dependably politically correct Charlie Rose at New York’s equally dependably politically correct 92nd Street Y, Peres declared Barack Obama “a great President and a great friend of Israel.” He further

announced that he meets with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salim Fayad and that in his opinion Israel and Palestinians "agree on almost everything." (Editor's note: Except on the minor point of Israel's existence)

At a meeting with Obama after the AIPAC conference, Peres provided more material for Obama's election campaign, declaring "We have a true friend in the White House and I am certain of President Obama's deep commitment to Israel." As for Obama's speech at AIPAC, Shimon enthused "This was the most pro-Israel speech that I have ever heard from an American President." Obama's payback: a Presidential Medal of Freedom to Peres this coming spring. (We are thus assured another acutely embarrassing visit to these shores by Peres with more campaign gems for Obama.)

In the real world (on the other side of the looking glass where Peres permanently resides), here is Jennifer Rubin on her *Washington Post* blog: "Less than 48 hours after trotting out new, tougher language on Iran, President Obama revealed in his press conference how little substance lies behind his words." Rubin notes that pressed by ABC News's Jake Rapper on what he meant by his comment that we "have Israel's back," the president declared this was not intended as "a military doctrine" but "a restatement of our consistent position that the security of Israel is something I deeply care about." In other words, what he said meant nothing at all.

Combating Islamophobia

Writer Phyllis Chesler notes that even as Muslims torture, murder and exile Christians in Arab lands, as Hamas bombards Israeli civilians with rockets launched from Gaza, as Iran threatens to send "caravans of tens of thousands" of Iranians to march on Jerusalem, Rabbi Marc Schneier is passionate about a different danger--Islamophobia. With media partner Imam Shamsi Ali (with Chelsea Clinton Mezvinsky as celebrity moderator), Schneier held forth on the subject at an upper West Side Jewish Community Center. He described his outfit, The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding (which raked in almost 4 million between 2006 and 2010, not bad for a wholly counterproductive enterprise) as "the international address for Muslim-Jewish relations."

Chesler describes Imam Ali as a charmer who describes the rabbi and himself as engaged in a "jihad for peace." The imam replaced as spiritual leader of an Islamic Center the fire-breathing Sheik Muhammad Gemeah who said "only Jews" could have been responsible for 9/11 and "if it became known to the American people, they would have done to Jews what Hitler did." Has his flock become less Jew-hating under Imam Ali? If so, a skeptical Chesler notes, the imam is indeed a miracle worker.

Chesler sums up: "Rabbi Schneier is a dangerous Court Jew who is profiting from the gravy train of the 'interfaith business.' He is profiting from his fiddling while Israel and the world burns."

Nicky Larkin Learns

In making a film about Israel's mini-war in Gaza in December 2008, Irish film maker Nicky Larkin has learned about more than the Arab-Israel conflict--he has learned about the penalties for pushing back against the tide of hate-Israel orthodoxy.

Larkin is candid. "I used to hate Israel. I used to think the Left was always right." Imbued with righteous anger over what he saw as the Israeli "massacre" in Gaza, Larkin applied and obtained funding from the Irish Arts Council to make a film. But when he actually went to do the film, he found his notions of Palestinians engaged in "non-violent resistance" totally out of whack. He began to empathize with Israel.

And when he returned with a film that he called "Forty Shades of Grey" he discovered his peers expected an all-out attack on Israel and nothing else was acceptable. Larkin notes: "An Irish artist is supposed to sign boycotts, wear a PLO scarf, and remonstrate loudly about The Occupation." In August 2010, Larkin writes, "the Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign got 2165 Irish artists to sign a pledge undertaking to boycott the Israeli state. As an artist I have friends on this list--or at least I had."

Larkin has some uncomfortable questions for his fellow artists: "Why have Irish artists surrendered to group-think on Israel? Could it be due to something as crude as career-advancement? Aosdana, Ireland's state-sponsored affiliation of creative artists, has also signed the boycott. Aosdana is a big player. Its members populate Arts Council funding panels. Some artists could assume that if their name is on the same boycott sheet as the people assessing their applications, it can hardly hurt their chances."

Of course this pattern of group think and behave-to-get-paid is not confined to Irish film-makers. Nor is it confined to film-making or to the Arab-Israel conflict. Do you believe scientists are less susceptible to group think and a flood of government research funds? Think again. The heavy commitment of so many scientists to the global warming apocalypse, with its potential to bankrupt the western world in pursuit of an absurd effort to roll back the climate, is proof they are not.

A Dark Passover

Rita Kramer

When families gather around the Seder table, many recall the dark Passover of 1943 and the climax of the months-long battle in which the small number of men and women remaining in the Warsaw Ghetto rose up against the Nazi murderers. They knew they were doomed but they were determined to go down fighting. We honor them as heroes.

There are many ways to be heroic. Because of tradition and circumstances Jews were not bred to be fighters. They were thinkers, readers, writers. And among the most heroic of those trapped in the Warsaw Ghetto was a historian named Emanuel Ringelblum, who determined to record life in the Ghetto in its reality, not as it might be misrepresented later in elegiac memorials or accusations of passivity by those who would not know what it had been like.



In the interwar years Ringelblum had been one of the leading historians of Jewish life in Poland from the earliest times of settlement to the present, when a renaissance of learning and cultural creativity was taking place among the Jews of cities like Vilna, Lodz, and Warsaw. At the time, the greatest number of Jews anywhere in the world lived in Poland. And Warsaw, the largest Jewish community in Europe, was their intellectual center.

The movement from the isolated world of the market-town shtetlech to the cities, to acquaintance with past and present secular learning, resulted in the flowering of a vibrant culture in both Yiddish and Hebrew. The Jewish intelligentsia produced poetry, novels, plays on the one hand, scholarship on the other. All this would be destroyed by the middle of the twentieth century along with the men and women who had created it--except for the records created and left behind under the shattered buildings of the Ghetto, to be recovered only decades later.

Ringelblum, born in a small Galician town in 1900, grew up amid the often antagonistic worlds of the socialist Yiddish-speaking labor Bund; the Marxist/Zionist Poalei Tsiyon, the party to which he became attached; and the Hasidic rebbes who retained their traditions and their way of life. By the time he arrived in Warsaw in 1919 he had defined his future as a historian and political activist. He joined YIVO, the new research institution devoted to scholarship in Yiddish. Ringelblum saw Yiddish as the living language of a nation, not as the jargon of an impoverished religious group. And he set out, with YIVO, to encourage the Jewish masses to gather (zaml) documents of the everyday life of the Polish-Jewish poor, workers as well as entrepreneurs, to "democratize" their history. He saw his mission as developing a sense of Jewish national identity through historical consciousness.

He supported the establishment of modern Yiddish secular schools, wrote articles for the Yiddish press on Yiddish culture and its threatened loss through assimilation, joined street demonstrations against the British White Paper of 1939 limiting Jewish immigration to Palestine, and attended the Zionist World Congress in Geneva, returning to Poland just days before the outbreak of World War II.

Although Jews in Poland considered themselves Polish and had willingly fought alongside Poles in World War I in the service of their common country, relations between them had not been without prejudice and rancor. But nothing prepared the Jews for what awaited them at the hands of the Nazis once they had subdued and entered Poland. Nazi strategy in the war against the Jews was based on secrecy, lies, and surprise, and was carried out in stages, little by little.

In November 1940 a wall topped with barbed wire was constructed around an area of the city, and all Jews were required to live within its boundaries. Those who lived in other parts of the city were forced to move until all 450,000 thousand of Warsaw's Jews had been packed into the densely overcrowded space in which about 1,500 Poles had lived. Jews had met persecution before, and there was no obvious reason in 1940/41 to suspect that this time would be different. It would mean hard times, but then the war would end and life would begin again, as before...

At first, efforts were made to construct as normal a life as possible in the Ghetto. Committees were formed in apartment buildings, schools were opened, lectures were given, plays and concerts were performed. Soup kitchens were set up to offset the starvation rations permitted by the Germans, smuggling food from the Aryan side flourished, and underground bunkers were built as hiding places. But food was increasingly scarce, hunger and disease soon prevailed, and random killings by the Nazis accompanied the herding of Jews at the *Umschlagplatz*, the space beside the railroad station from which men, women, and children, young and old, were shipped east for "resettlement."

From the beginning, Ringelblum was involved in the self-help organizations (*Aleynhif*) that sprang up. He determined to go on working on his history of the Jews in Poland and in addition decided to record daily life in the Ghetto for posterity. He called his group of memoirists *Oyneg Shabes*, the Joy of Sabbath, because they met on Saturday afternoons. He recruited not only former journalists, writers, and teachers, but also ordinary people, *zamlers*, to write about their observations and experiences. Thousands of pages were produced, collected, and hidden, recording first-hand the efforts to stay alive in the face of starvation, overcrowding, and rampant contagion, the threat of random German brutality, and the increasing number being rounded up for transport in boxcars to the unknown. Everything was described. The corruption of the Judenrat, the official Jewish leadership body; the cruelty of the Jewish Police--nothing was left out. There were acts of heroism as well as betrayals, suicides as well as helpless children left behind when their parents were seized.

By early 1942 the truth of the "resettlement" trains' destination was revealed. Escapees from Treblinka had surfaced to tell the story of what awaited at the end of the line. Members of the various youth groups turned from discussions of the future to plans for resistance in the present. Then in July 1942 the Nazis announced the Great Deportation, making it clear that they intended to destroy the Ghetto and everyone in it.

The resisters were led by a twenty-four-year-old member of the socialist-Zionist group Hashomer Hatzair named Mordecai Anielewicz. They had few arms, no help could be expected from the Polish Home Army and hardly any from the Polish Underground. It was clearly a hopeless cause. But handguns and a few other small arms were procured somehow from the other side of the wall and attempts by German officers to enter the Ghetto were finally met with fire and their surprised retreat. Sporadic raids continued until September when there was a halt--temporary, as it turned out--to the deportations.

Vastly outgunned and outnumbered, the Ghetto fighters hid in bunkers, emerging at crucial moments to fire on the Germans while the women fighting alongside them threw homemade bombs. It

was clear that the end was near. The Nazis were bent on the destruction of the Ghetto and the extermination of all those who were left. During these last days Ringelblum and the remaining members of the *Oyneg Shabes* group worked frantically to sort and pack the archive in metal boxes and milk cans, the best they could do against the future ravages of moisture and seepage, and bury them beneath what would soon become the rubble of the buildings in which they had lived for three years in fear and suffering, hope and despair. Now they sent their last message to the outside world--This is what mass murder was like. Remember us.

To those who after the war accused the Jews of going "like sheep to the slaughter," the answer lies in the secrecy, the slow insidious weakening through starvation and disease, the demoralizing presence of emaciated corpses dead of starvation or typhus that lay in the Ghetto streets, the daily humiliations of de-lousings and beatings, the tiny orphaned children begging for food when there was none. There was the hope of outliving the war, and reluctance to take action that would result in brutal mass retaliation on fellow Jews. It was a miracle that there was any resistance at all by the spring of 1943.

On Sunday, April 18, the eve of Passover 1943, the last battle took place. Ringelblum, the recorder of the vibrant Polish-Jewish culture, witnessed its destruction as he sat, still writing, in the corner of an underground bunker. The Germans had destroyed the intellectuals, the writers and teachers, and the only traces that were left of the Jewish experience in Poland were stuffed into around twenty tin containers in the ground. An escape plan was offered to Ringelblum but he would not leave his wife and young son. Their hiding place was betrayed and they disappeared into the common void with the rest of his people, including young Anielewicz, dead in the fighters' command bunker in May 1943.

David Graber helped to bury the boxes and included his own message in one of them. It read in part:

"What we were unable to cry and shriek out to the world we buried in the ground....So the world may know all....We would [have been] the fathers, the teachers and educators of the future....But no, we shall certainly not live to see [the recovery of the archive], and so I write my last will. May the treasure fall into good hands, may it last into better times, may it alarm and alert the world to what happened...in the twentieth century....We may now die in peace. We fulfilled our mission. May history attest for us."

David was nineteen years old. He was one of those who fought their battle with words, their only weapons, hoping to win in the far-off future.

Who Will Write Our History? is the title of Samuel D. Kassow's detailed account of Ringelblum's *Oyneg Shabes* record of life and death in the Warsaw Ghetto (Indiana University Press, 2007). Years before, the journalist and novelist John Hersey had written a best-selling novel, *The Wall*, about the Ghetto uprising, based largely on the facts known at the time. But Hersey's well researched and well written fiction (like the popular *Mila 18* by Leon Uris) pales almost into invisibility next to Kassow's account, rich in historical context and told largely in the voices of the men and women actually living through the moments, days and years they are writing about. They seem to live again, individuals with faces and feelings, as we read their words. And in bringing them to life again in their reports, poems, letters, notes, diaries, memoirs, photographs, and artifacts, Kassow, like Ringelblum before him, joins the line of historians who have kept our past before us in order that we may better know ourselves.

Rita Kramer has written for the Wall Street Journal, The New York Times Magazine, and other newspapers and magazines in the U.S. and abroad. Her most recent book is a novel When Morning Comes.

The Meaning of Criticism

Edward Alexander

A 2009 addition to the ever-burgeoning genre of books instructing Israel on the most suitable method (one-state solution, no-state solution, final solution) of ceasing to exist was adorned by a blurb from Noam Chomsky: "Hilliard raises very critical issues...and unless those who call themselves 'supporters of Israel' are willing to face these moral and geopolitical realities, they may in reality be supporters of Israel's moral degeneration and ultimate destruction." It is a commonplace that moral passions are far more imperious and impatient than self-seeking ones, and who could have a stronger sense of his moral rectitude than a man who has been an apologist for Pol Pot in Cambodia, a collaborator with neo-Nazi Holocaust-deniers in France, and with anti-Semitism-deniers everywhere? "Anti-Semitism," Chomsky has declared, "is no longer a problem... but it's raised because privileged people want to make sure they have total control, not just 98 % control; That's why anti-Semitism is becoming an issue..." Beautiful and touching words, but words by no means unusual in the parlance of those who deem Israel uniquely evil and, with its "supporters," responsible for the unredeemed state of mankind, perhaps even for global warming. (Clare Short, a member of Tony Blair's cabinet until 2003, charged that Israel is "much worse than the original apartheid state" because it "undermines the international community's reaction to global warming.")

Chomsky is generally (and mistakenly) identified as "a critic of Israel." But he is hardly the only beneficiary of the euphemistic redefinition of "criticism" where Israel is concerned. A Vassar professor (writing in *Judaism Magazine*!) refers to Intifada II, during which Palestinian Arab suicide bombers and lynch mobs slaughtered over a thousand people and wounded thousands more, as "a critique of Zionism." A Panglossian writer in *Chronicle of Higher Education* assures readers that "calls to destroy Israel, or to throw it into the Mediterranean Sea...are not evidence of hatred of Jews," but merely "reflect a quarrel with the State of Israel." When questions were raised in 2003 about the indecency of Harvard and Columbia honoring and hosting Oxford poetaster, blood libeller, and *London Review of Books* regular Tom Paulin after he had urged that Jews living in Judea/Samaria "should be shot dead" and announced that he "never believed that Israel had the right to exist at all," his apologists in Cambridge and Morningside Heights defended his right "to criticize Israeli policy." But the prize for redefinition of the term "criticism" where Israel and Jews are its object goes to Swedish Chancellor of Justice (Goran Lambertz) who in 2006 ruled that repeated calls from Stockholm's Grand Mosque to "Kill the Jews" by dispatching suicide bombers to Israel and other Jewish population centers were not unlawful racial incitement to murder. Rather, ruled this Swedish Solomon, they "should be judged differently and ... regarded as permissible because, although highly critical of the Jews, they were used by one side in an ongoing and far-reaching conflict where calls to arms and insults are part of the everyday climate in the rhetoric that surrounds it."

Just what, then, does "criticism" mean? Matthew Arnold defined criticism as "the attempt to see the object as in itself it really is." Writing in 1865, he was still living in the shadow of the French Revolution and Reign of Terror, but also in the new age of science. He wanted criticism to emulate the disinterested observation of science, not the fierce political partisanship derived from the Revolution: like science, criticism should espouse no party or cause, except the cause of truth. Its proper aim is to see the object as it really is, not to destroy the object. Dickens, in *Tale of Two Cities* (1859) had encapsulated the murderous aspect of French politicalicide by mocking its two favorite slogans: "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity—or Death" and "Sois Mon Frere, ou Je Te Tue." (Be my brother, or I'll kill you.)

The "critics of Israel" who deny its "right to exist" and threaten it with destruction if it fails to dance to their tune may be dishonest, despicable, consumed with blood-lust; but let us not deny them their triumph. In the war of ideas, they have beaten us at almost every turn; and by "us" I mean those

for whom the foundation of Israel was one of the (few) redeeming acts of a blood-soaked and shameful century. A widely-publicized 2007 BBC poll of 28,000 people in 27 countries shows Israel as “least-liked” country in the entire world, and, among Europeans polled, most disliked in Germany; yes, in the very country where the Jews’ “right to live” was once a popular topic, Israel-haters outpolled Israel-admirers by 77% to 10%. Still greater triumphs than those in the war for public opinion may yet await these “critics.” Their threats to Israel are not idle ones. On their own, the Chomskys, Paulins and Finkelsteins cannot visit upon Israel the terrible fate they think it deserves; but they know they have a powerful ally named Iran, under the leadership of someone bent not merely, like the “critics,” on politicide but on genocide; someone who daily promises to “remove Israel from the map” with nuclear weapons and watches with glee as the international noose tightens around Israel’s throat and the umbrellas go up in Europe and Washington.

Linked, however absurdly, with the question of whether “criticism” comprises not merely the effort to see an object as it really is but also the exhortation to destroy it, has, for decades, been another question. Should liberals or “progressives” themselves be exempt from criticism when they “criticize” Israel in a manner that draws heavily upon ancient canards of anti-Semitism—flagrant calumnies, licentious equations, and the premise that the world’s only Jewish state is the only state in the world guilty by its very existence.

Already in 1950 Lionel Trilling called attention to the “conformity of dissent” among liberals, a conformity bolstered by the quaint premise that liberals should not only have the right to go their own way, but to do so without being asked any questions. This premise became the subject of heated dispute in 2006 following publication of a booklet by Alvin Rosenfeld called “‘Progressive’ Jewish Thought and the New Anti-Semitism.” It recounted the varied attempts by Jewish progressives to depict Israel as the epitome of apartheid, the one genuine inheritor of Nazism, evil incarnate. The booklet was widely and furiously attacked for trying to “silence critics of Israel by calling them antisemitic.” These critics (defamers might be a better word) were soon repeating, as if by rote, the charge that Rosenfeld was trying to “silence” them by pointing out the licentious character of their equations between Israel and apartheid South Africa or Nazi Germany. But how was his criticism a threat to free speech or strategy for closing down debate? So pervasive was the bizarre notion that entering a debate is equivalent to trying to shut it down—Rosenfeld called it a “scam”—that I myself, offering to reply to a *Jerusalem Post* broadside against Rosenfeld by a Columbia journalism professor named Freedman, was scolded by the *Post* editor Elliot Jager, as follows: “Why would you want to argue in favor of censorship?”

Bernard Harrison then took up the cudgels in a defense of Rosenfeld entitled “Israel, Anti-Semitism, and Free Speech.” He asked how, exactly, does the “forensic sophism, the dialectical scam,” whereby people like John Judis, Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer, Jimmy Carter, and George Soros turn a debate about Israel into one about free speech, work? In reply, he offered a classic definition: “One advances some ‘anti-Zionist’ thesis out of the ‘Nazi analogy’ box—some defamatory thesis, call it Td, which would be hard to make stick by normal processes of argument—while at the same time suggesting in an undertone that more people would be prepared to say ‘these things’ if they were not so afraid of the Israel Lobby. Up pops some Jew, preferably a distinguished one, right on schedule, to point out...that Td is defamatory and stinks of anti-Semitism. This gives the author of the proposition exactly what he was after in the first place: namely, empirical evidence that there is indeed a Jewish Conspiracy to suppress ‘the truth’ about Israel. The press raises a hue and cry and, like a pack of hounds diverted from the scent by a trailed sack of aniseed, hares off on this new tack. The debate is turned from one about Israel into one about free speech, and Td, the original bit of defamation that started it all, doesn’t have to be defended after all. Game, set, and match to the ‘anti-Zionist.’”

Just how, asked Harrison, does the “silencing” of such (very audible) figures as Soros, Carter, and Waltheimer work? Would the *LRB*, *NYRB*, *BBC*, and *NPR* suddenly fold their hitherto welcoming

arms to Israel's accusers? The question has only to be asked for the absurdity of its premise to be revealed. To put the absurdity in its proper perspective, let us conclude with a statement about being "silenced" by a writer who understood what that meant. In 1932 Isaac Babel published his *Red Cavalry* stories to considerable acclaim; but he soon came under attack by the Soviet literary bureaucracy and stopped writing. In 1934 he spoke at the first Soviet Writer's Congress, where he announced that he was practicing a new literary genre, of which he proclaimed himself the master: "I am the master of the genre of silence." In 1937 Babel was arrested; he died in a concentration camp in 1939 or 1940. That is what it really means for a writer to be silenced.

This essay is an excerpt from the author's forthcoming book, The State Of The Jews: A Critical Appraisal (Transaction Publishers).

Once Upon a Time There was A Lovable Little Country Named Israel

Steven Plaut

Once upon a time there was a lovable little country named Israel. It was a unique country of Jews. It was a thriving young country. The lovable little country also had a government, consisting only of the wisest of leaders.

Then, soon after it was born, these wise leaders of Israel granted the right to hundreds of thousands of Arab refugees, later calling themselves "Palestinians," to return to live within the borders of Israel from the neighboring countries to which they had fled during the War of Independence. And so the portion of the country's population composed of Jews declined.

After the Six Day War, large numbers of "Palestinians" living in the West Bank and Gaza managed to attain the right to live in Israel's territory from before the war, and other "Palestinians" were granted the right to move into the West Bank and Gaza from other places where they had been living. And so the portion of the country's population composed of Jews declined.

Later the wise leaders of the country granted Vietnamese "boat people," ethnic Chinese refugees escaping Vietnam after the communist takeover, the right to live in the country. After all, said the wise leaders, who knows better than the Jews the tribulations of being a refugee. And so the portion of the country's population composed of Jews declined.

When the civil war broke out in Lebanon, the wise leaders of the country granted some Lebanese the right to escape their strife-torn country and move to Israel. And so the portion of the population composed of Jews declined. Later the members of the Southern Lebanese Army, after Israel under Ehud Barak betrayed them and abandoned them to their fates in Lebanon, were granted the right to live in Israel. And so the portion of the country's population composed of Jews declined. When civil war tore Bosnia to smithereens, the wise leaders offered some of the Bosnians refuge in the lovable country, including Bosnian Moslems. And so the portion of the country's population composed of Jews declined.

When things got tough in the Sudan and Sudanese of different creeds and races were massacring one another, the wise leaders of the country granted huge numbers of them the right to move to Israel. The wise leaders turned a blind eye, as countless thousands slipped across the unguarded border of the lovable country to make their homes in Israel. They of course had to pass through Egypt to reach Israel, and no one was murdering them in Egypt, but they were allowed into Israel anyway. And so the portion of the country's population composed of Jews declined. When other Africans learned of the deal, thousands of them joined in the trek to the lovable country, sometimes pretending to be Sudanese. And so the portion of the population composed of Jews declined.

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When Bashar Assad started massacring his own people, tens of thousands of Syrians were allowed to enter the lovable country on grounds that this was the humane thing to do, and that a country of Jews could not turn its back on refugees escaping tyranny and seeking safety. Israel became the largest home for Alawis in the world. When there were proposals to repatriate the Alawis back to Syria, the lovable country's poets, writers, journalists and professors all objected. How can Israel expel Alawi children? they cried. These innocent children had lived for years as Israelis and knew no other life. It would be inhuman to deport them, almost as inhuman as were similar efforts earlier to deport the Sudanese. And so the portion of the country's population composed of Jews declined.

When the Iranian regime was annihilated in Operation Alexander, with American, NATO, and other allied forces destroying the country's nuclear stockpiles and liquidating the Islamofascist ruling class there, hundreds of thousands of Iranian civilians trekked across the deserts to demand refuge and warm beds in Israel. The wise leaders of the Jewish state insisted that no Jew could turn down the pathetic sufferers. And so the portion of the country's population composed of Jews declined.

When the North Korean regime was overturned in a bloody revolt and civil war, millions of starving refugees arrived by the shipload at the ports of the lovable Jewish state. We demand to be allowed to enter, they wailed. They were joined by millions more Tibetans, escaping the ethnic cleansing that the Chinese regime was implementing against them. Along with them came hundreds of thousands of Kurds escaping oppression, myriads more Burmese, Congolese by the bus load, Greeks escaping the enormous taxes implemented to extract that country from bankruptcy, Gypsies from all over Europe, and the entire population of Moldova.

And after helping so many groups of people, after absorbing so many sets of refugees, after solving so many of the world's problems, there were no longer any wise leaders to govern the lovable little state. Because the lovable little state had ceased to exist altogether. It had humanitarian-ized itself into oblivion.

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A World of Refugees

Daniel Greenfield

The old paradigm that a country has the right to decide who enters it has been decisively overturned in Europe. It's under siege in such first world countries as America, Canada, Australia and Israel by the creed that says it's the human rights obligation of every nation to accept every refugee.

Given the chance, a sizable portion of the third world would move to the first, a minority because of oppression and a majority because the opportunities and freebies are much better there. Even low ranked first world nations still find themselves swamped with refugees looking to move in.

International law does not assign any priority to a nation's citizens over any person who happens to stray across the border. At the ground level that means the end of borders and the end of citizenship which is why immigration isn't just a touchy issue in Arizona, it's a touchy issue in Sydney, Tel Aviv and Birmingham. You can hardly open a newspaper of the liberal persuasion without being treated to another group of refugees in some troubled part of the world walled up behind fences and trying to get over to London, Sydney or New York.

This sort of thing can't be called immigration anymore, it's a straightforward migration and it has no apparent limits. However many you take in, there will be more waiting and always burdening you with an unsolvable crisis.



One approach is to try and stabilize whatever crisis they are supposedly escaping from. Too many Libyans running away to Italy? Just bomb their dictator and they'll go home again. At least that's the theory; it doesn't work too well in practice. For one thing Libya is more dangerous and unstable than it was under Gaddafi. Stabilizing it would require an Iraq level investment of money and manpower, and Iraq isn't stable either. And London is still full of Iraqi refugees dating back to the 1980s.

The disparities that make migration aren't fixable, but nor is mass migration a viable option. There's a reason that the refugees are running away and they are often part of the problem. Every nation is troubled in its own way and mass migration imports those troubles. It's why beheadings have come north of the border and the Jihad has set up shop in countless Western cities.

The melting pot myth was that people leave their identities behind to join in a mass identity. That worked only marginally back in the day; it doesn't work at all today when the refugees are immersed in their Little Mogadishus, which have popped up in a frightening amount of American cities foretelling the day when those cities will become as violent and broken as the original Mogadishu.

In place of the melting pot is the No Go Zone, which is the inverse of integration--it sets up tribal encampments in major cities which run on the laws of the tribe. That sort of thing has always been around in one form or another and it is survivable in limited numbers so long as those zones don't also become factories of violence. That's the difference between Amish Country and a Muslim banlieue. It's also the difference between separatism and supremacism.

The United States has had its Fenian raids, its assorted wars being waged by immigrants from its soil, and the attitude toward those conflicts has been mixed, depending on whose ox was being gored. But there's a fundamental shift when those wars are being waged against *it*. That shift from immigrants using it as a conflict base to becoming the target of their conflicts is a recent one whose full implications have still not been absorbed.

Across the southern border the U.S. faces mass immigration from a country whose history is riddled with old scores to settle and whose politicians use it as a whacking post for their national troubles. And to the east and the west it faces mass migration from the Muslim world, which is operating on its own form of manifest destiny, settling Europe and European colonies, the way that European colonists once settled America.

The news is no better in Canada or Australia and it's certainly no better in Europe where the EU sees mass migration as a convenient way of completing its project of dissolving national identities. Encouraging separatism at the regional level is one way of doing it, but mass fragmentation of nations gets the job done even more thoroughly and comprehensively.

The EU is working off another melting pot model, much like the national governments who think that they can create a pliable left-leaning electorate by opening up the borders. What they actually end up creating is chaos and chaos eventually becomes order. The only question is whose order it will be. It isn't likely to be their order, which leaves few options.

If nations are meaningless, then national identities are equally meaningless. All that's left are clans, religious and ethnic groups in the borderless multicultural globe. A chaos that sorts itself out through the old reliable means of brute force, accompanied by a dollop of deceit and coalition building. The coalitions that the left built up to consolidate its rule are being hijacked and used by the Brotherhood as the building blocks of their rule instead.

In a chaotic environment, tribalism and a compelling ideology can combine to carve out an expanding sphere of order. That is how Islam got its start, that is how it is operating now. In a fragmented environment, it has a leg up because it is organized and it has the money and vision to move forward, which is more than the natives or most of the other immigrants have.

To Islam, Europe, America and the rest of the non-Muslim world are all Mogadishus, they are the *Dar Al-Harb*, the realm of the sword, where the faithful are destined to bring order. Every social problem proves how much the infidel world needs them to bring order and the violence that they bring raises the stakes and drives everyone toward an inevitable conflict.

Borders are created to keep things out, like invading armies and suicide bombers. The border represents security and ownership, and when you take away the border these are gone and the soft vulnerable territories within are up for grabs to the ruthless and the canny. If the borders are down, then why not go north where there's wealth and power up for grabs and take some for yourself.

National identity in the Muslim world is already weak, outmatched by religious identity on the one hand and tribal identity on the other. That set of conditions makes it quite difficult for Muslims to build and maintain functional countries of their own, but leaves them quite well adapted to using tribal and religious ties to take over regions in a state of multicultural flux.



Islam is not built for competence, it's built for conquest. Its effectiveness lies in its ability to create chaos, rather than maintain order. And every suicide bomber, every plot exposed, every riot over a cartoon demonstrates the power of that chaos and how far the local and global authorities who try to maintain order will go to appease the causers of chaos.

A West that has become increasingly secular, where nationalism is suspect and ethnic identity for the natives is taboo, is frighteningly ill-adapted to such a conflict. It has thrown away the survival skills necessary to cope with the situation and the survival skills it has are built on adapting to change by submitting to a new state of affairs, whether it's a new set of ideas, a new set of forms or a new set of laws. Change and future shock have become the way of the West. Islam's past shock follows the same narrative and makes the same demands. Adapt, learn to recite the new truisms and get on with your life.

The West has learned to forget and it no longer knows the answer to the question, "Who are we?" Who are we beyond people in an experiment to create a new and better society and then spread that wonderful society to the rest of the world? And what exactly is that society we are spreading?

Muslims, who know quite well what new and better society they are part of, have an advantage because they understand their role better than the natives. The ability to answer the big questions is a key factor in any struggle. Every battle begins with an army that has to be composed of men who have to be convinced to leave their homes and participate in a conflict that may cost them their lives. Getting them lined up and in good fighting shape is a lot easier if they understand why they are here.

Muslims are better adapted to the end of the state (because they have never truly internalized the reality of the state) than the Westerner for whom the state has become the fundamental unit of existence.

Westerners have become the ultimate refugees, lost at home, refugees in their own countries, wanderers in their own cities. The same processes that have turned their countries into superpowers are now drowning them in their own effluvia. And the citizen of the first world often finds that he seems to belong less in his own country than the refugees flooding it. He has become a displaced person, a familiar enough feeling to many of his new neighbors who are also victims of ethnic and religious conflicts. But while the conflicts they have fled are official, his conflict is not. He is the victim of a conflict that cannot be named, of a colonization that cannot be described as such and of the ethnic cleansing of his national identity and the theft of his future.

Daniel Greenfield blogs at <http://sultanknish.blogspot.com/>

Berber Autumn

Gerald A. Honigman

Decades ago, while engaged in undergraduate and graduate work in Middle Eastern Affairs, the only way I learned of the struggles of scores of millions of non-Arab peoples in the region was on my own initiative. Of all the hundreds of books in my library, hardly a jot or tittle on such subjects. And even when, on rare occasion, you might find mention of some of these folks in a book, a discussion on the subject never made it into the classroom.

Only by becoming a member of the London-based Anti-Slavery Society did I learn of problems black Africans faced regarding genocidal and 20th century slave trading Arab tormentors. The struggles of the Anya Nya and other black Africans in the south of the Sudan and elsewhere were in full bloom, yet one would never know if the academic syllabus and classroom were the sources of information. If Israel was not the alleged villain, the problem was left untouched. And so while I would be exposed to alleged Zionist fascism, racism, colonialism, imperialism, and dozens of other Hebrew sins, barely a word was spoken about the subjugation (largely by Arabs, but also by others such as Turks and Iranians) of Kurds, Imazighen ("Berbers"), Copts, Assyrians, native Jews, and so forth. To learn of Kurds back then, the Little Miss Muffet nursery rhyme provided more information than academia...and those were the wrong curds.

The situation was shameful and remains so as one set of lenses is routinely used in the scrutiny of an admittedly imperfect Israel and a far different set--if any at all--is used when dealing with the so-called "Arab" world. And so, until relatively recently, while countless volumes of print, classroom hours, United Nations sessions, State Department briefings, and so forth were devoted to the cause of the Arabs' proposed 22nd state (and second, not first, since Jordan sits on some 80% of the original 1920 Mandate of Palestine), Kurds, Berbers, black Africans, Copts, and others were literally being massacred, enslaved, displaced, and forcibly Arabized by Arabs--with barely a word spoken in protest by a vast assortment of practitioners of the double standard.

Kurds, the Amazigh and Kabyle people (the real majority population of "Arab" North Africa on lands that Arabs refer to as "purely Arab patrimony"), and others have had their own languages and cultures outlawed--and those who dared to protest were slaughtered or jailed. Yet, most academic experts could only act deaf, dumb, and blind. And outside of academia, where were the editorials in *The New York Times* regarding the plight of these peoples? What Quartet exists to promote "roadmaps" for their basic human, let alone political, rights? When will the UN session be scheduled that will vote on independence for some 35 million truly stateless Kurds?

Having said all this, there is some good news to report: A few years back, there was a revolt of sorts within academia itself.

The duplicity, lack of fair academic discourse, and intimidation in many classrooms led to the formation of a new organization, the Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa (ASMEA), with two stars at the helm, Professors Bernard Lewis and Fouad Ajami.

While it surfaced too late for some of us who were victimized in MESA-dominated classrooms, ASMEA's emergence is a blessing. Thanks to it and other organizations like Professor Daniel Pipes's Campus Watch and key studies like Professor Martin Kramer's *Ivory Towers on Sand: The Failure of Middle Eastern Studies in America*, students who expect the same lenses of academic scrutiny previously used only to study Israel will be applied to the "Arab" world can breathe a little easier. While duplicity and intimidation still characterize many classrooms, there are now more avenues to fight back and more alternatives available.

And that brings us up to recent news...

With all that's been happening in Libya since the arrival of the "Arab Spring," it's time to repeat a favorite quote--this one from MEMRI (the Middle East Media and Research Institute) on May 3, 2007, reporting on the response of Belkacem Lounes of the World Amazigh Congress to Mu'ammar Qaddafi's denial of the existence of the Amazigh people, the "Berbers:"

"The people of whom you speak...speak their own Amazigh language daily...every day live their Amazigh identity...What worse offense to elementary rights is there than denying the existence of a people...30 million in North Africa? You menace the Amazigh, warning that whosoever asserts his identity will be a traitor... There is no worse colonialism than internal colonialism--that of the Pan-Arabist claim that seeks to dominate our people. It is surely Arabism--an imperialist ideology that refuses diversity--that constitutes an offense to history and truth."

The big question is whether Qaddafi's Arab successors will be any different when it comes to granting rights to Libya's peoples, or if the Amazigh people can expect more of the same subjugation that they have been exposed to for centuries? The Islamist groups likely to succeed Qaddafi are not known for tolerance. Ditto for the folks taking over in Egypt. Ask Egypt's twelve million non-Arab, pre-Arab Copts how they're feeling these days. Stop by a local Coptic Church for a chat. I did...several times.

As a footnote of sorts, there is some good news to report.

Another subjugated, non-Arab people finally gained political rights when the blacks of South Sudan finally gained independence from the Arab/Arabized north. The bad news is that it took the lives of literally millions over the past six decades before independence was finally achieved. And the black Nuba in the north and the blacks in the western Darfur region of the country still have no light at the end of their own nightmarish tunnels.

As with the Berbers in Libya and elsewhere in North Africa, if Assad should fall in Syria, will the Kurds be any better off? Disturbing accounts are coming in which state that more inclusive, democratic forces (such as the Syria Democratic Coalition and the Kurds) opposing Assad are being left out of plans that the State Department has for a post-Assad Syria.

Is it not time for the world, so focused on a supposed "Arab spring," to enable a Kurdish or Berber autumn? Are not other folks in that region entitled to a small slice of the justice pie?

Gerald A. Honigman is a Florida educator who has created and conducted counter-Arab propaganda programs for college youth. His website is <http://www.geraldahonigman.com>

The Treason of the Intellectuals Redux

Rita Kramer

American universities can claim many kinds of traditions. Unfortunately, not all of them are noble or praiseworthy. The current wave of anti-Israel--read anti-Semitic-- demonstrations are only the current manifestations of a long tradition of selective bigotry, from the 1930s hospitality shown representatives of Hitler's Germany to the warm welcome enjoyed by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at Columbia University in 2007. The boycott/divestment movement on campuses is only the latest example. In 1933, just as Hitler took over the chancellorship of Germany, Columbia President Nicholas Murray Butler invited the new government's ambassador to speak on campus and held a reception for him as the representative of "the government of a friendly people...entitled to be received with the greatest courtesy and respect," after which Ambassador Hans Luther gave a well-received talk on Hitler's peaceful intentions.

At Harvard, whose motto is Lux, meaning Light, Hitler's foreign press spokesman Ernst "Putzi" Hanfstaengl was an honored guest. Yale University, which added Truth to its motto Lux et Veritas, continued student exchange programs with Nazi-controlled universities long after Jewish faculty and students had been ejected, as did Princeton and Bryn Mawr. Only Williams College saw fit to end its student-exchange program with Nazi Germany.

More than twenty U.S. colleges and universities took part in a program held at the University of Heidelberg in 1936 to celebrate the 550th anniversary of a university that had by now purged its Jewish faculty, instituted a Nazi curriculum, and hosted a book-burning of volumes by Jewish authors. Columbia's delegate to the event found the reception hosted by book-burner Josef Goebbels "very enjoyable."

MIT sent representatives to a 1937 event at the Nazi-run University of Goettingen, long after Hitler's persecutions had been widely publicized and his future intentions made clear to all but the willfully blind.

Among those who seem to have suffered from insufficient light and truth were the chancellor of American University, who came back from a visit to Nazi Germany with high praise for its accomplishments, and the dean of MIT who publicly tore down posters for an anti-Nazi rally on campus.

Perhaps the most consistently light-deprived university in this country has been Columbia, whose impressive motto is *In lumine Tuo videbimus lumen*, in English: In Thy light shall we see the light, a phrase ironically enough taken from the Psalms. What is it about universities that makes them breeding grounds for disinformation? And what is it about ivory-tower-dwelling professors and administrators that makes them willing enablers of the ruling thugs of the world? An absence of moral clarity seems to characterize many of our hallowed halls of learning. Far from shedding light they disperse darkness. Perhaps their mottos ought to be changed accordingly, to *obscuritas et calumnia--darkness and lies*.

Note: Many details of these and other shameful examples of university leaders pandering to evil are described in *The Third Reich in the Ivory Tower: Complicity and Conflict on American Campuses* by Stephen H. Norwood, a professor of history at the University of Oklahoma.

<p style="text-align: center;">Outpost Editor: Rael Jean Isaac Editorial Board: Ruth King, Rita Kramer Outpost is distributed free to Members of Americans For a Safe Israel</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Annual membership: \$50.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Americans For a Safe Israel 1751 Second Ave. (at 91st Street) New York, NY 10128 Tel (212) 828-2424 / fax (212) 828-1717 Email: afsi@rcn.com</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">You are Invited to Join AFSI on our Spring Chizuk Trip To Judea And Samaria – April 22 to May 1, 2012</p> <p>See the AFSI website for reports and photos of past trips.</p> <p>The cost of the trip is \$1800 per person, double occupancy. Single occupancy is available at an additional \$400. This covers all hotels, most meals, entrance fees, private bus and driver, and guides. Flight arrangements are up to the participants.</p> <p>Call AFSI to make your reservations: 1-212-828-2424; 1-800-235-3658.</p>
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