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# OUTPOST



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## The Gun on the Table

William Mehlman

The elections to Israel's Supreme Court of Jerusalem District Court of Judge (and rabbi) David Mintz, resident of Dolev, deep in the heart of Samaria, and Haifa District Court Judge and self-professed "religious Zionist" Yael Willner, offer dramatic evidence of what Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked has wrought in her penetration of the most guarded bastion of post-Zionist theocracy in the Jewish state. Indeed, what might have been considered a "breakthrough" on its own just a short time past, the election of center-right Haifa District Court President Yosef Elron to the third of the four High Court posts being vacated under mandatory retirement, was being regarded as a "thrown-in" favor to Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon, his champion on the nine-member judicial nominating committee. No. 4, Christian Arab George Kara, a Tel Aviv district court judge, rounds out the quartet that will be replacing High Court President Miriam Naor, Elyakim Rubinstein, Salam Joubran and Zvi Zilbertal, solid liberals to a robe.

The political charge set off by Shaked's breach of the unbreachable had a "Bastille Day" quality unseen in Israel since Menachem Begin's 1977 termination of 30 years of socialist hegemony. Las Vegas casino magnate Sheldon Adelson's tabloid *Yisrael Hayom*, the country's most widely read Hebrew daily, called it nothing short of a "revolution," while "Israeli Right Wins Historic Fight over Supreme Court Justices" topped the lead story in the *Jerusalem Post*. "Shaked Has Her Day in Court," declared *The Times of Israel* even as a contrapuntive *Yediot Aharonot* headlined its story "Now You Don't Need a D9," referencing newly anointed Supremo David Mintz's Dolev neighbor's call for a bulldozer to level the High Court over its decisions to raze "illegally-built" Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria.

"The Legal Forum for the Land of Israel" unsurprisingly hailed the Court's new profile as a "great victory," echoing Agriculture Minister Uri Ariel's (Bayit Yehudi) view that the face-lift "will better reflect Israeli society and the public's trust in the legal system." What is likely to be the justice minister's most cherished kudo, however, came from out of deepest left field in Meretz Party chairwoman Zehava Golan's prediction that "Shaked will be responsible for this shameful situation for years to come."

More low-keyed than her admirers but ready to tell it like it is to her detractors, the lady in question portrayed her successful challenge of a quarter century of judicial inbreeding as an "historic day," in an interview with Army radio. "The flagship boat of our judicial system changed direction tonight, and yes, we can put it on the table and say openly that it will strengthen the trust of the Right in the Supreme Court." Putting it "on the table," something nobody has successfully dared in the 26 years since Supreme Court Chief Justice Aharon Barak declared the High Court the unchallengeable arbiter of "justiciability" in an Israeli universe in which all things had become "justiciable," informs the impact of Shaked's victory. What she "put on the table," in Miriam Naor's own words was a "gun" – the threat to legislatively undo the veto power granted the three sitting justices on the nine-member nominating committee over the selection of new justices. The remaining six include a four-member Knesset contingent and two representatives of the Israel Bar Association. The election of new justices requires a 7 to 2 majority, thereby affording the three sitting justices, voting as a bloc, an automatic veto of any nominee of whom they disapprove.

Shaked's threat to push a bill in the Knesset allowing the future election of Supreme Court nominees by a simple majority – the "gun on the table" – triggered a Naor breakoff in negotiations in November. She was back at the table in January "convinced," as the *Jerusalem Post's* Yonah Jeremy Bob put it, "that Shaked was ready to follow through on the threat and that the Court no longer had a real champion in the government coalition that would fight for it." So Naor cut a deal, at least theoretically preserving the Court's veto prerogative at the cost of standing aside as conservative justices were added to the mix.

All of which leaves an intriguing question hanging out there. Did the justice minister settle for a one-shot victory over the arbiter of all matters in Israel justiciable when she might have sealed a permanent historic change in the governance of the Jewish state by granting the liberal judicial establishment its final veto and forging ahead with her bill making the future election of qualified Supreme Court nominees subject to a simple majority vote of the nominating committee? Simply stated, why wasn't "the gun on the table" fired? If in the end Shaked deemed the odds against getting her bill through the Knesset too formidable to overcome, then she probably did the right thing in cementing a limited victory. Justice Naor, her adversary, obviously thought otherwise. In the interest of preserving the judicial bloc's veto power for another day, a more accommodating government, she opted to put it in storage. Indeed, Justice Naor's delicately scripted expression of congratulations to the nominating committee in having "selected four justices who are skilled professionals and have extensive and rich experience in the court system," resonated with the impression that the loss of a skirmish did not mean the loss of a war.

That feeling was markedly evident in the editorial and news page treatments of the Supreme Court story by *Ha'aretz*. Though as *The Times of Israel's* Adiv Sterman playfully notes, Israel's "newspaper of record," in emulation of its New York model, "sometimes takes care to avoid mixing reports and opinions," this wasn't one of those times. Amidst dire warnings that Shaked's coup would "change the face" of Israeli jurisprudence, Editor-in Chief Aluf Ben saw in the justice minister's tactics a calculated move to advance a right wing agenda. "According to the right wing and the justice ministry, he wrote, "the judges must back the government and not involve themselves in its [the Court's] decisions. The justices are expected to perpetuate the Occupation, while expanding the Settlements without granting citizenship to the Palestinians."

Over on the news side with a slightly more measured view of the High Court upheaval, Sharon Pulwer under the headline "Too Soon to Say How Conservative Israel's New High Court Bench Will Be," offers Hebrew University Professor Yuval Shinai's observation that the Court had already begun veering more conservative over the past few years. He characterized its somewhat altered composition as "continued movement in an already existing direction, so it's not clear that this was a revolution."

Asserting that "it's still too early to know," Shinai's Hebrew University colleague, Professor Barak Medina, an authority on constitutional and administrative law, advances the possibility that Shaked might ultimately be disappointed with the new Supreme Court crop. "I don't think any of them is clearly against human rights or judicial activism," he avers. "These are people whose records don't include intensive involvement in the issues." Another academician opined that the Court's new makeup – now risen to six conservatives vs nine liberals – might even alter its image as a "collection of Ashkenazi, anti-Settlement elitists divorced from the Israeli mainstream...The question is whether it will undermine the basic objective of the Court, which is to defend human rights from the tyranny of the majority and the rule of law."

However noble the defense of human rights from the alleged "tyranny of the majority" might be deemed, it is hardly the overriding image of the reshuffled High Court Ayelet Shaked intends to project. To the fear enunciated by the Zionist Union party's Tsipi Livni, her predecessor as justice minister, of the Court becoming "cowed by populism," Shaked looks to the reconstituted judicial body as "humane, judicious and above all serving as a mirror for the Israeli people." Let's just say, she adds, "that in the Tsipi Livni era I don't recall that any conservative judges were selected. That's how it works." How "it works" after the Shaked shakeup compels us to stay tuned.

*William Mehlman represents AFSI in Israel.*

## Zionism101

**Chaim Weizmann Part 3: Ouster and Return**” is now available. You can see it via the following link:

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"Chaim Weizmann Part 3: Ouster and Return" depicts Weizmann's increasingly tenuous position as head of the World Zionist Organization. In 1931, he is forced out by rank-and-file Zionists angry at his accommodating policy toward the British. But with the rise of Hitler, the Zionist leadership determines they need Weizmann back at the helm.

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### From the Editor

#### Bensoussan: The Verdict



Last month we reported on the trial of Georges Bensoussan, the Jewish Moroccan born historian brought to trial in a French court on the charge of “incitement of racial hatred” for having paraphrased the words of Smain Laacher, an Algerian Moslem sociologist. The sociologist had said that Moslems were taught by their parents from a very young age to despise Jews; Bensoussan, in a TV debate, quoted Laacher as saying they sucked in anti-Jewish prejudice “with mother’s milk.”

That a Moslem outfit would bring suit on the grounds Bensoussan was claiming anti-Israel hatred was genetic in Moslems, while absurd, goes with the territory. What made us draw attention to the case was that all France’s avowed “anti-racist” organizations joined in the lawsuit against Bensoussan, including—and this is worthy of being included in Ripley’s Believe It or Not-- the Jewish International League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism (LICRA). (Incidentally, the fact that Bensoussan is a leftist, a member of J Call, a movement promoting “creation of a viable Palestinian state” did not protect him from the “anti-racist” pack.)

On March 7 the court ruled to acquit Bensoussan. Although the wording differed, the judges said, “the idea expressed by Smain Laacher is almost the same, or even identical to that expressed by Georges Bensoussan.” It’s a mark of the ridiculous lengths to which protection of Moslem sensitivities have gone that the ruling is considered a key moment for freedom of speech in France.

The Islamist Collective Against Islamophobia (CCIF) has vowed to appeal. It remains to be seen if LICRA will sink to yet more shameful depths by joining that appeal.

#### Et Tu, Canada

The same insanity pervading France is apparent in our northern neighbor.

On the website *TruthRevolt* M.J. Randolph reports that a group of Canadians took signs and banners to a mosque in downtown Toronto to protest what the imam within was preaching: namely the desire that Jews be killed one by one. The police reaction? To announce they were investigating the

protestors. Constable Allyson Douglas-Cook explained to the Canadian Broadcasting Company Toronto that the police wondered if the protesters had perpetrated a hate crime.

This venture into the other side of the looking glass fell flat when it turned out someone inside the mosque had filmed the proceedings including the injunction: “Spare not one of them.” The police decided not to pursue the protesters. No word, Randolph notes, about investigating the people inside the mosque (although advocating genocide is a criminal code offense in Canada).

### **A Soft Boycott**

In this space we often provide examples of Israeli medical achievements from Michael Ordman’s blog *Amazing Israel*. A revolutionary treatment for prostate cancer called Tookad (activated by light), the result of over fifteen years of research by Avigdor Scherz and Yoram Salomon at the Weizmann



Institute of Science in Rehovoth, has now made news around the world. It uses lasers and a drug made from deep sea bacteria to eliminate tumors without causing severe side effects. Trials on 413 men, published in *The Lancet Oncology*, showed nearly half had no remaining trace of cancer.

But as Stephen Pollard reports in *The Jewish Chronicle*, while the BBC made much of the discovery, there was something missing in the story—where the research was done. He calls it “the soft-boycott strategy.” It’s a step below the BDS movement, with its nakedly anti-Semitic singling out the Jewish homeland alone in the world for boycott; instead it ignores anything remotely positive about Israel. Writes Pollard: “So the huge and entirely disproportionate number of Israeli scientific breakthroughs are reported as if they have simply happened by magic, with their Israeli origins ignored.” The Weizmann Institute only managed an understated complaint to *The Jewish Chronicle*. “We were naturally disappointed that the media coverage of game-changing treatment for prostate cancer managed to avoid any reference to Israeli scientists’ fundamental role in this breakthrough treatment.”

### **A Christian Voice from Nazareth**

The only Middle Eastern state in which the Christian population is growing is Israel. You’d never guess this from the loudest Christian voices coming from the Middle East, which are venomously anti-Israel. That includes the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, which plays a central theological role for pro-Palestinian campaigns in churches worldwide and the Bethlehem Bible College, whose biennial conferences “Christ at the Checkpoint” are devoted to demonizing Israel.

Which makes it all the more refreshing when someone rejects the miasma of self-destructive hatred to speak up simply and honestly. Father Gabriel Naddaf of Nazareth, speaking at the annual Proclaiming Justice to the Nations International Prayer and Dinner event for Israel at the World Center in Orlando, Florida, declared: “As one of the few surviving Christians in the Middle East, I praise God daily for the blessing of being able to call myself an Israeli.”

### **Suicidal Jewish Leaders**

Jews are also awash in self-destructive leaders, lay and spiritual. Here are some excerpts from Isi Leibler’s warning about their impact. (Leibler was a leader in the campaign for Soviet Jewry and until his resignation in 2004 Chairman of the Governing Board of the World Jewish Congress.)

“Today, in what must be described as self-destruction, a substantial number of irresponsible leaders of the most successful and powerful Jewish diaspora community seem to have gone berserk and are fueling anti-Semitism....”

“The facts are that liberal Jewish leaders have declared a hysterical war against the Trump administration. Led initially by the Anti-Defamation League but rapidly joined by the Reform and Conservative wings of the Jewish community, many Jewish community leaders have exploited their positions to endorse a vicious campaign in which Trump is portrayed as a satanic anti-Semite promoting fascism and racism, representing the antithesis of Jewish values. This, despite the reality that his presidency highlights an unprecedented acceptance of Jews at the highest levels of government. ...

“[S]ome progressive rabbis, usually without a mandate from their constituency, organized fasts and days of mourning in their synagogues and, donning prayer shawls and kippot, they paraded at the forefront of anti-Trump demonstrations that vulgarly undermined the presidency, emphasizing that their political stance was a product of their religious Jewish values. Furthermore they supported and participated in demonstrations led and hijacked by vicious anti-Israel Muslim activists such as Linda Sarsour and even convicted Palestinian terrorist Rasmia Odeh. In a similar vein, the ADL continues to promote Black Lives Matter despite its hatred of Israel and support for the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement.

“The reality is that today, the prime global anti-Semitic threat emanates not from neo-Nazis but from the witches brew of far-left and Muslim anti-Jewish incitement, which has transformed many American university campuses into hotbeds of anti-Semitism....

“A large proportion of Trump supporters are Christian evangelicals whose passionate support for Israel more than compensates for liberal Jews who are more concerned about Muslims, a substantial proportion of whom hate and would kill Jews, endorse jihadism and support the destruction of the Jewish state. Obviously, witnessing Jews purporting to be upholding Jewish values by engaging directly in the demonization of their president must outrage them....

“Unless this tide of official Jewish anti-Trump demonization is reversed or halted, there will be major long-term negative ramifications on the standing and influence of the American Jewish community.”

## **Mesmerized**

It's not only Israel that makes “the world community” turn reality on its head (in the case of Israel by treating it as the world's chief oppressor). Tony Thomas in the Australian journal *Quadrant* describes how the Australia Academy of Sciences seeks to suppress information harmful to climate change alarmism on the assumption, in the words of one of its officers “any adverse findings do great damage to the credibility of climate scientists as a whole, especially in the current climate of almost religious opposition to the acceptance of climate change science.”

It's hard to imagine a neater reversal of reality. Climate change is at bottom a religious millenarian movement, a version of the apocalyptic visions that Thomas Costain describes in *The Last Plantagenets*: “Fear of the end of the world hung heavy over the people of medieval days. It was coming to pass soon. Its imminence was preached from every pulpit and all the expected signs were being detected in earth and sky and in the course of human events.” Today's apocalypse differs only from its many forebears in its scientific veneer, making it acceptable to the modern mind. But disproof (of which there is already much, for example, the failure of the predicted climate cataclysms to come to pass) is not likely to dissuade the climate faithful any time soon. Benjamin Franklin remarked after a commission investigating Mesmerism demonstrated that the then hugely influential “treatment” was a fraud: “Some think it will put an end to Mesmerism but there is a wonderful deal of credulity in the world and deceptions as absurd have supported themselves for ages.”

## **Origins of the Second Intifada**

It is still an article of faith in the media that the Second Intifada of 2000 was the result of Ariel Sharon's “provocative” visit to the Temple Mount. So it is worth revisiting Matthew Kaminski's

interview with former Mossad spy Mosab Hassan Yousef, better known as The Green Prince, in the *Wall Street Journal* of March 6, 2010. Yousef was dubbed the Green Prince in the Mossad because green was the color of Hamas and as the son of the imam Sheikh Yousef, a founder of the organization, he was Hamas royalty. From Kaminski's account: "According to Mr. Yousef, Arafat decided he needed another uprising to win back international attention [after he had turned down Israel's offer of statehood on 90% of the West Bank with East Jerusalem as its capital at Camp David]. So he sought out Hamas's support through Sheikh Yousef, writes his son, who accompanied him to Arafat's compound. Those meetings took place before the Palestinian authorities found a pretext for the second Intifada. It came when future Prime Minister Ariel Sharon visited the Temple Mount in Jerusalem."

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## Two Netanyahus Meet Two Trumps

Rael Jean Isaac

One of the most widely accepted misconceptions concerning the Arab-Israel conflict (a subject awash in misconceptions) is that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is a "hard-core right winger." There is nothing in his behavior as Prime Minister during his first years in that role (1997-99) or in his more recent period in office, beginning in 2009, to support this belief. On the contrary, like his predecessors, he has made repeated dramatic territorial and other concessions, including acceptance of the so-called "two state solution."

In Jan. 1997, still in the first year of his first term, he signed the Hebron Protocol with the Palestine Authority, turning over most of Hebron, after Jerusalem the most important city in Jewish history, to the PA. Netanyahu did so little to change Labor's disastrous post-Oslo policy that erstwhile supporter Benny Begin (Menachem's son) derided him at a Likud Party meeting in March of that year. "Arafat releases terrorists and so does Israel. Arafat smuggles in weapons and we give him assault rifles to round off his stores....We have government offices in Jerusalem [supposedly the unified capital of Israel] and so do they." The following year, under President Clinton's prodding, Netanyahu signed the Wye River Memorandum in which he promised to turn over 40% of Judea and Samaria to Arafat, a safe corridor between these areas and Gaza, even an airport in Gaza. It is true Wye was not implemented, but that's only because (predictably) Arafat promptly reneged on his commitments under the agreement.

That same year Netanyahu embarked on secret negotiations with Syria in which he offered to return the Golan Heights. Was Netanyahu prepared to go back to the 1967 border (which Clinton and Dennis Ross assert in their respective memoirs) or did Netanyahu, according to other reports, hold out for several kilometers beyond the international border line? Although Assad backed out, according to widespread reports in the Israeli press, in 2010 Netanyahu tried again, this time with Bashar Assad, offering to return to the June 4, 1967 lines. Fortunately the negotiations collapsed with the onset of the rebellion against the Syrian ruler. (One shudders to think what "success" would have meant for Israel, with Hezbollah and/or ISIS embedded on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.)



That near miss with disaster has not prevented Netanyahu from continuing to offer major concessions. In the wake of Obama's Cairo speech, Netanyahu agreed to adopt the "two state solution" as his government's policy. Moreover, retired Brigadier General Michael Herzog (brother of Israeli Labor Party head Yitzhak Herzog), who has participated in almost all Israel's peace negotiations since Oslo in

1993, writes in *The American Interest* that Netanyahu in the Obama years offered such large withdrawals that he could not admit their scale to the Israeli public or his coalition partners.

And contrary to the widespread perception, fostered by the media, that Netanyahu has peppered the landscape of Judea and Samaria with Jewish settlements, Israel has not built a new settlement in 25 years. The much publicized on and off settlement freezes to which Netanyahu has agreed applied to existing communities, the “freezes” meaning there was no building even to accommodate natural population growth within them.

So what accounts for Netanyahu’s reputation as an unbudging hawk? The reason is that he knows better than he acts with the result that his rhetoric differs from his policies far more than has been the case with other Israeli leaders. Prime Minister Shimon Peres seems clearly to have believed in the mirage he concocted of a New Middle East. Prime Minister Olmert appears to have genuinely felt the emotions which in 2005 (in a speech to the Israel Policy Forum) he attributed to the people of Israel as a whole: “We are tired of fighting; we are tired of being courageous; we are tired of winning; we are tired of defeating our enemies.”

But Netanyahu sounds very different. He has a long history of realism about the Arab-Israel conflict. As far back as 1978, fifteen years before Oslo, Netanyahu went to what remains the heart of the matter: “The real cause of the conflict is the Arab refusal to accept the state of Israel.” In a January 28, 1985 interview with the *New York Post*, Netanyahu, then Israel’s UN ambassador, said of Judea and Samaria: “We’re not going to survive if we get out of that territory—we’ll die.” In September 1993, as Oslo was being celebrated by a country dizzy with the hopes for peace Rabin and Peres had promised, Netanyahu addressed Peres in the Knesset: “You are much worse than [British Prime Minister Neville] Chamberlain, because Chamberlain threatened the security and freedom of another nation, while you are threatening the security and freedom of your own.” One could go on and on quoting from Netanyahu’s eloquent speeches, articles, books and interviews focusing on the delusory premises and devastating consequences of the so-called “peace process.” Obama’s betrayal at the UN, orchestrating Resolution 2334 in the last days of his administration, provoked Netanyahu into a fresh burst of honesty as he declared that the PA had no intention of living beside Israel but was determined to replace it.



Caroline Glick

The fact that Netanyahu obviously comprehends and is able to articulate Israel’s situation so well—along with his genuine success in pushing through economic reforms that have propelled Israel from socialist basket case to technological powerhouse—have won him considerable wiggle room with those who might normally be expected to sharply criticize his policies. But even his long-time staunch defender Caroline Glick has balked at Netanyahu’s most recent failure of political courage and resolve, arguing that if you refuse to act on your knowledge of the enemy, you will lose your war against him. Glick observes that “it is deeply destructive for Israel to continue paying lip service to the fake peace process. And yet, that is precisely what Prime Minister Netanyahu is doing.” In Glick’s view the advent of Trump, well-disposed toward Israel and the first President in decades not wedded to the delusory two state solution, offered Netanyahu an opportunity to explain why it could not succeed and an alternative approach was essential—and he had squandered it.

If there are two Netanyahus, complicating matters further, there are also two President Trumps. In striking contrast to Obama, the first Trump, in word and deed, is strongly supportive of Israel. Early on, Trump departed from precedent in stating that he did not think Israeli settlements were a barrier to peace. In the transition period before taking the oath of office, at Netanyahu’s request, Trump sought to derail Obama’s farewell assault on Israel at the UN by persuading Egypt’s al Sisi, who had officially proposed the anti-Israel resolution, to withdraw it. (Obama promptly found other sponsors for his knife



in Israel's back Resolution 2334, so it passed anyway.) Trump promised to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem and although he has not fulfilled the promise thus far, he seems to have genuinely wanted to do so. When Trump met with Netanyahu on February 15 at the White House, he suggested he would not be bound by the past sacrosanct allegiance to the two state solution: "I'm looking at two state and one state formulations."

Newly appointed ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley blew such a breath of fresh air into its see-no-evil-but-Israel culture that the *New York Sun* dubbed her Haley's Comet. She denounced the obsession with attacking Israel and declared the U.S. would cease any participation in the UN Human Rights Council until it cleaned up its act. *The Washington Free Beacon* quotes a senior administration official calling the Human Rights Council "morally bankrupt" and saying "We've wasted enough time and money on it."

Trump appointed two strong supporters of Israel (including of the much maligned settlements) to prominent positions, David Friedman as ambassador to Israel and Jason Greenblatt as Special Envoy for International Negotiations. Indeed Friedman was such a strong supporter that he set off a major effort among such anti-Israel Jewish groups as J Street to block his appointment in Congress.

However, there are worrisome signs of another Donald Trump. On Nov. 22, 2016, not long after his election, in an interview with *New York Times* editors, he said "I would love to be the one who made peace with Israel and the Palestinians. That would be such a great achievement." He proposed sending his Jewish son-in-law Jared Kushner to lay the groundwork. And on Feb. 15, at the White House, after the words quoted above "I'm looking at two state and one state formulations" he added "I'm very happy with the one both parties like." All this suggests a dangerous ignorance about the nature of the Arab-Israel conflict. There is no conceivable formulation Kushner or anyone else can come up that "both sides like" because Abbas and the PA want to replace Israel, not live in peace beside her.

Trump's willingness to live with expanded Israeli building activities in Judea and Samaria seems to be evaporating as well. He sent Greenblatt to Jerusalem to inform Netanyahu that Trump would support construction in Jerusalem but wanted a quota on new building inside major Jewish communities beyond the old Green Line and no new construction in "isolated West Bank settlements." This would force Netanyahu to renege on his promise to build a new settlement for the evacuees of the now destroyed (thanks to a ruling by Israel's Supreme Court) community of Amona. According to Daniel Horowitz in *Conservative Review* the pressure is so strong Netanyahu has held off on his plans to fully annex Ma'ale Adumim, the largest suburb of Jerusalem.



Trump has also "balanced" his pro-Israel appointments with anti-Israel officials. He has retained Yael Lempert, regarded as one of the most radically anti-Israel individuals in the anti-Israel Obama administration, as the person responsible for Israeli-Palestinian issues on the National Security Council. He has retained Michael Ratney, former U.S. consul in Jerusalem, to head the Israeli-Palestinian desk at the State Department. Ratney, according to the *Times of Israel* oversaw a program "in effect setting up an armed Palestinian militia in the consulate." Typifying this "balanced" approach, Trump sent Lempert to

accompany Greenblatt in meeting with Abbas and pressuring Israel.

It's too early to know how the multi-faceted collision between the two Netanyahus and two Trumps will turn out. But one thing is certain: no genuine peace lies at the end of the road.

*This appeared in American Thinker on March 26.*

## Why a “Regional Peace Process” Will Fail

Khaled Abu Toameh

Here is a fundamental misapprehension: Arab countries can help achieve peace in the Middle East by persuading, or rather pressuring, the Palestinians to make concessions to Israel.

This misapprehension is both misleading and baseless.

Recently, officials in Israel and Washington started talking about a “regional approach” to solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In this view, as many Arab countries as possible would be directly involved in the effort to achieve a lasting and comprehensive peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. Advocates of the “regional approach” believe that Arab countries such as Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Qatar and Saudi Arabia have enough leverage with the Palestinians to compel them to accept a peace agreement with Israel.

The Palestinians, however, were quick to dismiss the idea as yet another American-Israeli-Arab “conspiracy” to “liquidate” their cause and force them to make unacceptable concessions. Chief among these “unacceptable concessions” are recognizing Israel as a Jewish state and giving up the demand for a “right of return” for millions of Palestinian refugees into Israel.

What the recent Washington-Israeli notion misses is that Palestinians simply do not trust their Arab brothers. The Palestinians consider most of the Arab leaders and regimes as “puppets” in the hands of the U.S. and its “Zionist” allies. Worse, Many Palestinians sometimes refer to Arab leaders and regimes as the “real enemies” of the Palestinians. They would rather have France, Sweden, Norway and Belgium oversee a peace process with Israel than any of the Arab countries.

In general, Palestinians have more confidence in Western countries than they do in their Arab brothers. That is why the Palestinian Authority (PA) headed by Mahmoud Abbas continues to insist on an international conference as its preferred method for achieving peace in the region and not a “regional approach” that would give Arab countries a major role in solving the conflict. Arab involvement in a peace process with Israel is, in fact, the last thing Abbas and other Palestinians want.



Hani al-Masri, a prominent Palestinian political analyst, echoed this skepticism concerning a potential role for Arab countries in the Middle East peace process. He, in fact, believes the Arabs want to help Israel “liquidate” the Palestinian cause.

He also predicted that the recent rapprochement between Israel and some Arab countries would embolden “all opposition and jihadist groups” that are fighting against the Arab regimes. According to al-Masri, it is not even clear that any Arab states, especially Israel’s neighbors, are keen on a “regional solution.” The Jordanians, for example, are worried that a “regional solution” would promote the idea of replacing the Hashemite kingdom with a Palestinian state.

Echoing this fear, former Jordanian Minister of Information Saleh al-Qallab denounced the talk of a “regional conference” as a “poisonous gift and conspiracy” against Jordan and the Palestinians.

The Egyptians, for their part, are worried that a “regional approach” would mean giving up land from Sinai to the Palestinians of the Gaza Strip — a highly unpopular idea in Egypt. The Egyptians have good reason to be worried: some Arab leaders and countries have expressed interest in this idea.

Likewise, the Lebanese are worried that a “regional solution” would force their country to grant full citizenship and equal rights to hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees living in that country. The Lebanese have for decades dreamed of the day they could rid themselves of the Palestinian refugee camps and their inhabitants, who have long been subjected to apartheid and discriminatory laws.

Another adjacent state, Syria, is far too preoccupied with its own implosion to think about peace between the Palestinians and Israel. Besides, when have the Syrians ever expressed concern for the Palestinians? Since the beginning of the civil war five years ago, more than 3,400 Palestinians have been killed and thousands injured. In addition, more than 150,000 Palestinians have been forced to flee Syria to neighboring Arab countries or to Europe. The Syrian regime does not care about its own people, who are being massacred in large numbers on a daily basis. Why, then, might it be expected to care about Palestinians? It would be a Syrian nightmare to resettle Palestinians and grant them full rights and citizenship. Like most Arab countries, Syria just wants its Palestinians to disappear.

Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and Syria are rather wary, then, about a “regional solution.” And no wonder: it poses a massive threat to their national security. So, which Arab countries would help to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? Saudi Arabia? Qatar? Kuwait? Oman? Tunisia? Morocco? Really?



Waving Palestinian flag near Ofra

Israel as a Jewish state is anathema to Palestinian aspirations. No Arab leader in the world can persuade the Palestinians to give up the “right of return” for Palestinian refugees or accept a solution that allows Israel to retain control over certain parts of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Any Arab or Palestinian leader who promotes such compromise is taking his life in his hands. And Palestinian history will record him as a “traitor” who sold out to the Jews and surrendered to American and Israeli pressure.

Moreover, Abbas and the Palestinian Authority are far from interested in any Arab-Israeli rapprochement. Abbas and his Ramallah cohorts are already up at night worrying about the talking between Israel and some Arab countries, particularly Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. This is “normalization” — plain and simple. Such “normalization”, in the view of the PA, is to be reserved for after Israel submits to its demands.



Riad Al-Malki

Abbas’s foreign minister, Riad al-Malki, made it clear this week that the Palestinians reject the idea of a “regional solution” that would give Arabs a role in the peace process. Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, he said, was mistaken to think that rapprochement between Israel and some Arab countries would produce anything good. Al-Malki denounced Netanyahu’s “regional approach” as a “twisted policy,” adding: “Netanyahu thinks that by establishing ties with Arab governments he could force the Palestinians to enter negotiations with Israel.” According to him, the Palestinians wish to see the Europeans, and not the Arabs, at their side when they “negotiate” with Israel.

The Palestinian foreign minister is saying that the Palestinians would rather have the Europeans in their court than their Arab brothers when it comes to trying to squeeze the life out of Israel. The Palestinians think that this is a better bet.

In any event, any “regional solution” involving Arab countries would be doomed to fail because the Palestinians and their Arab brethren hate each other. Moreover, even if Abbas were to accept terms dictated to him by such an alliance, his own people would reject them. Any solution offered by the Arab governments will always be regarded as an “American-Zionist dictate.”

Here is what Palestinians really want: to use the Europeans to impose a “solution” on Israel. That is why Abbas sticks to the idea of an international conference like a dog that holds for dear life onto his bone.

*Khaled Abu Toameh, an award-winning journalist, is based in Jerusalem. This article appeared in [gatestoneinstitute.org](http://gatestoneinstitute.org) on February 27.*

## False Torah and History

Alex Grobman

What are American Jews thinking?

The American-Jewish response to the [temporary immigration ban against six Muslim countries] seems to be out of sync with both the facts and experience. According to Charles Jacobs, president of Americans for Peace and Tolerance, virtually every prospective Syrian immigrant to the U.S. has been educated in institutions that portray “Jews as morally corrupt,” pit “all Muslims everywhere against non-Muslims anywhere,” and mandate violence against apostates “ as a religious duty.”

Nevertheless, American Jews who identify with the political left favor allowing as many Muslim immigrants into the country as possible, leading many other Americans, Jews and Gentiles, to wonder why the left-wing American Jews would want to admit individuals who are known to despise them and either want them killed or relegated to second-class status, *dhimmitude*, according to Shari’a law.

The left-wing Jews who favor mass Muslim immigration into the U.S. do not express moral outrage when Jewish Israelis are prohibited from entering most Muslim-dominated countries, including Algeria, Bangladesh, Brunei, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Oman, Pakistan, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Yemen, and Libya. They do not question if it is acceptable for six of the seven countries listed by President Trump in his original executive order to ban entry to holders of Israeli passports. The liberal-Jewish community has not responded as to why this double standard is tolerated.

Leaders of the Reform Movement in the U.S. justify their opposition to Mr. Trump’s executive order on immigration based on the conviction that Jews “know the impact that xenophobia and religious profiling have on all people whose lives are endangered by exclusionary laws.”

To bolster their argument, the Reform leaders cite a passage from *Vayikra* (Leviticus) 19:33: “We



have not forgotten our charge: When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not wrong him. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

First, this is a misstatement of the Scripture which refers to those “strangers” already residing in the midst of the Israelites. It does not refer to unknown prospective enemies. Furthermore, attempting to compare the “stranger” in the Torah to Muslims seeking refuge in the U.S. is simply an inexcusable distortion of the Biblical text. The “stranger” is a halachically converted Jew, living in the land of Israel, who has renounced idol worship and is now focused on Torah study. The Torah warns against disparaging converts in any way, but, rather, demands that they be embraced with love and treated as valued members of the Jewish community.

Further, the Reform misreading completely omits the Jewish concept of the “rodef,” an individual who is pursuing another for the purpose of murder. Identifying an individual as a “rodef” empowers potentially lethal action against an attacker.

In short, by “stranger,” the Torah does not refer to someone with a different religion, legal system, culture, and traditions, who wants to immigrate to the land of Israel and maintain that foreign way of life with the ultimate goal of forcing that religion on the Jewish public. Attempting to draw a universal, modern-day “humanistic” message from this passage is misleading.

Another left-wing ploy is the attempt to use the Holocaust to justify welcoming thousands of unvetted Muslim refugees into the U.S. However, equating President Trump’s executive order to the

“paper walls,” the bureaucratic and administrative minutiae used by the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt to keep Jews from seeking a haven in the U.S. during World War II, is historically inaccurate. In that case, the U.S. State Department, under Assistant Secretary of State Breckinridge Long, thwarted Jewish immigration to America by creating a quota system of regulations and obstacles that were practically insurmountable.

Widespread antisemitism, nativism, and a policy of “America First” were the primary forces behind this campaign to exclude Jews. The word “refugee,” which implied “alien” to the bureaucrats and “secret agent” to the military, were immorally and dishonestly used to rationalize barring Jews.

Additionally, some members of Congress and the American public believed Jews coming from Eastern Europe were radicals, perhaps even Communists, who would become a “fifth column” in the U.S.

In any case, there is no evidence of any terrorist acts committed by Jewish refugees against the American homeland during the period 1933-1945, rendering the alleged comparison by liberal groups moot. The European Jews who sought refuge in the U.S. did not want to transform America into a Jewish state in which Jewish laws would be the law of the land, imposed on Americans, whether they liked it or not. To the contrary, most Jews viewed America as *Die Goldene Medina* (The Golden Land), where they would be free from oppression, able to live in a democratic society, practice their religion and traditions freely, and raise their children to be good Jews and responsible citizens of the U.S.



Breckinridge Long

Nevertheless, the liberal groups’ attempt to use this comparison calls for a further analysis of exactly what happened to thwart the entry of Jewish would-be refugees into the U.S. during World War II.

On June 26, 1940, Mr. Long informed Assistant Secretary of State Adolf A. Berl and the State Department Advisor on Political Relations James Dunn that the department was able to “delay and effectively stop for a temporary period of indefinite length” the entry of Jewish immigrants to the U.S. This could be accomplished, he said, by “simply advising our Consul to put every obstacle in the way and to resort to various administrative advices [sic] which would postpone the granting of visas.”

Each Consul throughout the world had extensive discretion in determining eligibility of those who had applied to enter the U.S., using the limitations provided in the LPC (“likely to become a public charge”) clause of the 1917 immigration act. Under LPC, a refugee could easily be denied entry if the Consul arbitrarily decided the candidate might become reliant on the U.S. government for subsistence.

Within existing U.S. quotas at the time, more than 153,000 immigrants could have gained entry into the country annually between 1933 and 1945. Had the law been properly implemented, more than 1.8 million people would have been admitted, a far higher total than the approximately 200,000 who were actually allowed into the U.S. during that entire 12-year period. Most of the slots permitted by the quotas were left unfilled because Mr. Roosevelt supported the State Department’s determination to reduce severely the number of people entering the U.S.

Summarizing the callous and unconscionable behavior of the American government’s immigration policy during World War II, historian Henry Feingold recalled the explanation a rabbi once gave to Rep Emanuel Celler (D-NY), a Jewish member of the House Judiciary Committee: “Had six million cattle been slaughtered, there would have been some outcry, at least from animal lovers. But, in the case of fellow human beings, there was only eerie silence.”

Unlike the Muslim refugees who, at best, are seeking to enter the U.S. simply to avoid a civil war rather than join a resistance group to fight against ISIS, the Jews of Europe sought refuge in the U.S. because the Nazis—and even many of the resistance groups who opposed the Nazis—were determined to annihilate them.

Those who would learn from history must be concerned about objective truth and transmitting what actually occurred. They cannot allow individuals and groups who are either ignorant or are actively engaged in pushing their own particular agendas, to obscure a truthful understanding of what happened in the past.

*Dr. Grobman, is a Hebrew University-trained historian. This is an excerpt from his article in thejewishvoiceandopinion.com on March 7.*

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## **France's Death Spiral**

### **Guy Millière**

February 2, 2017: A “no-go zone” in the eastern suburbs of Paris. Police on patrol hear screams. They decide to check. While there, a young man insults them. They decide to arrest him. He hits them. A fight starts. He accuses a policeman of having raped him with a police baton. A police investigation quickly establishes that the young man was not raped. But it is too late; a toxic process has begun.

Riots continue for more than two weeks. They affect more than twenty cities throughout France. They spread to the heart of Paris. Dozens of cars are torched. Shops and restaurants are looted. Official buildings and police stations are attacked.

The police are ordered not to intervene. They do what they are told to do. Few arrests take place.

France is a country at the mercy of large-scale uprisings. They can explode anytime, anyplace. French leaders know it, and find refuge in cowardice.

What is happening is the result of a corrosive development initiated five decades ago. In the 1960s, after the war in Algeria, President Charles de Gaulle directed the country toward closer relations with Arab and Muslim states.

Migratory flows of “guest workers” from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, which had started a few years earlier, sharply increased. The economy was dynamic, with strong job creation. It seemed there would be no problems.

Twenty years later, serious difficulties became obvious. The immigrants now numbered millions. People from sub-Saharan Africa joined those coming from Arab nations. Neighborhoods made up of just Arabs and Africans were formed. The economy had slowed down and mass unemployment settled in. But the jobless immigrants did not go back home, instead relying on social benefits. Integration still did not exist. Although many of these new arrivals had become French citizens, they often sounded resentful of France and the West. Political agitators started teaching them to detest Western civilization. Violent gangs of young Arabs and Africans began to form. Clashes with police were common.

The situation grew difficult to control. But nothing was done to fix it; quite the opposite.

In 1984, a movement called SOS Racisme was created by Trotskyist militants, and began to define any criticism of immigration as “racist”. Major leftist parties supported SOS Racisme. They seem to have thought that by accusing their political opponents of racism, they could attract the votes of “new citizens.” SOS Racisme immediately designated those who spoke of Islamic danger as “Islamophobic racists.”

In 1990, a law drafted by a Communist lawmaker, Jean-Claude Gaysot, was passed. It stipulated that “any discrimination based on ethnicity, nation, race or religion is prohibited.” Since then, this law has been used to criminalize any criticism of Arab and African delinquency, any question on immigration from the Muslim world, any negative analysis of Islam.



The French government asked the media to obey the “Gaysot law.” It also asked that history textbooks be rewritten to include chapters on the crimes committed by the West against Muslims, and on the “essential contribution” of Islam to humanity.

In 2002, the situation in the country became dramatic.

Arab and African neighborhoods had become “no-go zones.” Radical Islam was widespread and Islamist attacks began. Dozens of cars would be torched each week. Muslim anti-Semitism was rising rapidly and led to an increase in anti-Jewish attacks. SOS Racisme and other anti-racist organizations were silent on Muslim anti-Semitism. Unwilling to be accused of “Islamophobic racism,” organizations

tasked with fighting against anti-Semitism were also silent.

Three years later, in October 2005, riots broke out across the country. More than 9,000 cars were torched. Hundreds of stores, supermarkets and shopping centers were looted and destroyed. Dozens of police officers were seriously injured. The storm stopped when the government reached an agreement to make peace with Muslim associations. Power had changed hands.

“No go zones” are no longer French territory. Radical Islam and the hatred of the West reign among Muslim populations and, more broadly, among populations of immigrant origin. Muslim anti-Semitism makes life unbearable for Jews who have not yet left France and who cannot afford to relocate to areas where Jews are not yet threatened: the 16th and 17th arrondissements, the Beverly Hills of Paris; or the city of Neuilly, a wealthy suburb of Paris.

All history textbooks are “Islamically correct”. One-third of French Muslims say they want to live according to Islamic sharia law and not according to the laws of France.

In hospitals, Muslims are increasingly asking to be treated by Muslim doctors only, and refusing to let their wives be treated by male doctors.

Attacks on police officers occur on a daily basis. The police have orders: they must not enter “no-go zones.” They must not respond to insults and threats. They must flee if they are assaulted. Sometimes, they do not have time to flee.

In October 2016, two policemen were burned alive in their car in Viry-Châtillon, south of Paris. In January 2017, three police officers fell into an ambush and were stabbed in Bobigny, east of Paris.

Elections will be held in France, in April. The Socialist Party chose a candidate, Benoît Hamon, supported by the UOIF (Union of Islamic Organizations of France), the French branch of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The far-left and the communists will also have a candidate, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, an unconditional admirer of Lenin, Hugo Chavez and Yasser Arafat, and a resolute enemy of Israel.

Hamon and Mélenchon will likely each receive about 15% of the vote.

A third candidate from the left, Emmanuel Macron, is a former member of the French Socialist government under François Hollande. To attract the Muslim vote, Macron went to Algeria and said that French colonization was a “crime against humanity.” He stated several times that French culture does not exist, and that Western culture does not exist either; but he added that Arab Muslim culture must have “its place” in France.

The conservative candidate, François Fillon, promises to fight Sunni Islam, but says he wants a “strong alliance” between France, Iran’s mullahs and Hezbollah. His reputation is badly damaged by a “fake jobs” scandal. He has attacked France’s Jewish community, presumably to secure the Muslim vote. He said it does not respect “all the rules of the Republic.” He has said that Israel represents a threat to world peace.

Marine Le Pen, the far-right candidate of the National Front, may seem the most determined to straighten France out, but her economic program is as self-defeatingly Marxist as that of Hamon or Mélenchon. Le Pen also wants to attract the Muslim electorate. She went to Cairo a few months ago to meet the Grand Imam of al-Azhar. Like all other French political parties, her party supported the anti-



Pandering to Islam: candidates Fillon, Macron, Melenchon, LePen, and Hamon

Israeli positions of former U.S. President Barack Obama, as well as UN Security Council Resolution 2334, passed last year on December 23.

Le Pen will likely win the first round of the two-round election, but will almost certainly be defeated in the second round: all the other candidates will gather behind the candidate facing her, probably Macron or Fillon (if he still is in the race). Le Pen might think that in five years the situation in France will be even worse, and that then she will have a serious chance to be elected President.

A few months ago, in a recently published book, *Civil War is Coming*, the French columnist Ivan Rioufol wrote: “The danger is not the National Front, which is only the expression of the anger of an abandoned people. The danger is the ever-closer links between leftism and Islamism.... The danger must be stopped.”

*Dr. Guy Millière, a professor at the University of Paris, is the author of 27 books on France and Europe. This is excerpted from article that appeared on March 5 at gatestoneinstitute.org*

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## **The Curse of Repairing the World**

**Ruth King**

Examples abound of the way seemingly noble ideals are perverted to promote bias, libel and hatred.

The Quakers come to mind. In 1917, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) was founded on the Quaker principles of peace and justice and members of all faiths were invited to join its humanitarian efforts. In 1947 along with its companion British Friends Service Council, the AFSC won the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of Quaker efforts to heal rifts and oppose war for 300 years. In 1947 the Quakers richly deserved that prize for they had been helping Jews throughout the Hitler years and in the war's aftermath, survivors of the concentration camps.

But in recent decades, the Quakers, and most especially the AFSC, have strayed far from their original mandate. The AFSC was the pioneer in the onslaught on Israel and in promoting the terrorist PLO. As far back as 1979 AFSI published a monograph by David Kirk (who had become a Quaker and



married a birthright Quaker) with a wonderful title that summed up what had transpired: “The Friendly Perversion, Quakers as Reconcilers: Good People and Dirty Work.”

Nothing has changed since as the AFSC has woven ever more tightly an alliance with hard-left Western agitators on a myriad of issues. As recently as March 2017 in *Middle East Forum* Asaf Romirowsky wrote: “The Quakers have cultivated their image as peaceful and supremely benign. Few suspect, much less know, that one of their central missions is promoting the BDS movement that opposes Israel's existence.”

Environmentalism is another example of the effort to repair the world gone awry. Who could fault the desire to protect flora and fauna, mountains, and lakes and rivers from pollution or endangered species from extinction? But the carbon crazed anti-development, anti-industry and anti-capitalist fanatics have taken over, promulgating junk science to promote their agenda. With their crusades against insecticides which had eradicated malaria and their opposition to genetically modified food production, they have caused indescribable damage in Africa. In America, they have insisted on regulations which stall or cancel infrastructure creation and repairs, increase costs astronomically and kill jobs, all in the name of “healing the planet.”

The welcoming of massive numbers of Muslims to the United States is another example of a counterproductive effort to repair the world. Again, who could fault a desire to help refugees living in war torn areas where Arabs are killing, maiming and dislocating other Arabs? Instead of providing local shelters and safe zones or demanding that other Arab nations provide succor, “progressives” demand they be brought here. These “repairers of the world” refuse to learn from the plight of Western Europe where Germany, France and Sweden are overrun with Muslim immigrants who refuse to assimilate and among whom are too many criminals and terrorists. Jews are especially prominent among those demanding unfettered immigration, promoting the false perverse argument that the situation of these immigrants is no different from that of Jews trapped in genocidal Europe during World War 11. It merits noting that Jewish refugees harbored no intention of imposing their religion and values on their host and have contributed to American science, industry, labor unions, and culture in outsize numbers.

Jews invoke the concept of “tikkun olam”, which literally means repairing the world, as the basis of a supposed specifically Jewish religious requirement for their forays into left-wing politics, including their attacks on Israel. But as the late Steven Plaut wrote in “On the ‘Tikkun Olam’ Fetish” (reprinted in the Feb. 2017 *Outpost*) there is no such thing as a Jewish commandment of tikkun olam. The term is nowhere in the Bible. Tikkun olam is used occasionally in the Talmud as a technical term for resolution of certain judicial problems before rabbinic courts. In Jewish prayer tikkun olam appears in only one place, the Aleinu prayer, where it refers to the quest to eliminate pagan superstition. It is a theological concept, not a social, political or economic one. It is all the more outrageous then to see the term invoked endlessly by seditious anti-Zionist groups such as J Street and as the basis for Jewish support for the Boycott, Defame and Slander (BDS) movement.

Presented as a noble ideal, “repairing the world” has become a curse.

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