

OUTPOST

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Reforming Israel's Courts

Herbert Zweibon

"To hear John Roberts define judges as 'servants of the law, not the other way around' could only trigger acute envy in those Israelis who watched the televised Senate Judiciary Committee sessions," observed Sarah Honig in *The Jerusalem Post*.

Israel's Supreme Court, which in the early years of the state narrowly interpreted statutes and deferred to the decisions of the Knesset and executive, now fashions the law to suit its universalist ideology. In *Coercing Virtue: The Worldwide Rule of Judges*, Robert Bork declares: "Pride of place in the international judicial deformation of democratic government goes not to the United States, nor to Canada, but to the State of Israel...Imagine, if you can, a supreme court that has gained the power to choose its own members, wrested control of the attorney general from the executive branch, set aside legislation and executive action when there were disagreements about policy, altered the meaning of enacted law, forbidden government action at certain times, ordered government action at other times, and claimed and exercised the authority to override national defense measures."

Viewing themselves as representatives of some kind of World Court rather than a Jewish state, the judges' decisions are consistently unbalanced: in favor of Arab rights, indifferent to Jewish rights.

A few examples. In January 2003 the Supreme Court overturned a decision by the Central Election Commission to disqualify the Balad Party and its leaders Ahmed Tibi (a long time adviser of Arafat) and Azmi Beshara from running for the Knesset. The Commission had based its decision on "Basic Law: the Knesset" which disqualifies those "who negate Israel's right to exist....or support an enemy state or terror organization's armed struggle against the state."

In March 2000 the Supreme Court ruled that Arabs had the right to buy land within Jewish communities. Zionist Organization of America head Mort Klein protested that the decision "challenges the very purpose of establishing Zionist institutions such as the

Jewish National Fund and the Jewish Agency."

In July 2004 the Supreme Court ruled that an eighteen mile section of the separation barrier being constructed by Israel had to be rerouted because it separated Arabs from their agricultural lands, which "injures the local inhabitants in a severe and acute way, while violating their rights under humanitarian international law." But when the Jewish communities of Gush Katif appealed to the Supreme Court for relief from the expulsion orders against them, the Supreme Court found nothing wrong with the government's total destruction of their communities.

But perhaps most revealing of the Supreme Court's contempt for human rights is the case of 14 year old Chaya Belogrodsky and a number of other young religious Jewish girls who participated in a non-violent demonstration against the expulsions from Gaza. The girls were imprisoned, for days not permitted to contact their parents or a lawyer. Although the probation officer urged that the girls be released to house arrest (while the case against them went forward), the judge refused on the grounds that these were "ideologically motivated criminals" and so more dangerous than others. Incredibly the Supreme Court upheld this decision even though, if convicted at the end, the most the girls faced was a monetary fine.

The girls were finally released (after 40 days) as a result of public protests. The Public Defenders Office issued a devastating report, accusing judges of "selective enforcement of the law based on political affiliation."

What can be done to check Israel's runaway Supreme Court? Step no. 1 is for the Knesset to change the way members of that body are selected; as long as the Supreme Court has the power to choose its own members, nothing will change.

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From the Editor

From Agee to Libby

The ironies in the indictment of Scooter Libby have been missed by press and pundits with a short memory. The law of which he has run afoul, the Intelligence Identities Protection Act of 1982 (a la Martha Stewart he is not even accused of violating the law but of being less than candid about who said what to whom in his grand jury testimony) was passed as a result of the activities of Philip Agee, a former CIA agent turned enemy of the West. "I aspire to be a communist and a revolutionary" Agee told *Esquire* in June 1975. He was even blunter in an interview with the *Tagesanzeiger* of Zurich: "The CIA is plainly on the wrong side, that is, the capitalist side. I approve KGB activities, Communist activities in general, when they are to the advantage of the oppressed." In line with his views, Agee published *Inside the Company: CIA Diary* with 26 pages of CIA employees and contacts around the world and followed it up with *Dirty Work* and *Dirty Work II*, that named over 2,000 CIA employees. Understandably, Congress was eager to deter others from following Agee's example.

Now an unquestioned patriot is caught up in the dragnet of a law intended for our enemies.

Black Humor of the Month

President Mugabe of Zimbabwe was invited to address the UN Conference on Hunger in Rome. There would have been no one more appropriate to address a league of Third World dictators on such subjects as "How to Turn a Thriving Agricultural Economy into a Wasteland," "The Political Uses of Food Aid," or "How to Cut Your Population in Half." Given the conference's aim of reducing hunger, the choice of Mugabe was, in a horrible sort of way, funny.

Competing in the ludicrous department, the BBC has denied it harbors pro-Israel bias. That's right, not the anti-Israel bias with which it reeks, but bias in favor of Israel. What happened was that the Muslim Council of Britain attacked the BBC as "pro-Israel" for showing a documentary that pointed up the Muslim Council of Britain's support for terror groups (while claiming to oppose terrorist acts).

Outrage of the Month

A poem applauding the Nazi extermination of the Jews, included in a book of children's poetry called *Great Minds* (!), is being distributed to schools in England. Sample lines: "Make them take many paces for being one of the worst races, on their way to a gas chamber, where they will sleep in their manger...I'll be happy Jews have died." The publisher's defense is that the poem is written from Hitler's perspective and shows the young author's ability to feel empathy.

Norwegian Teacher Fights Back

Meanwhile, in Norway, a school that showed its multicultural sensitivity by banning a teacher from wearing a small Star of David around his neck, is in the news, as the targeted teacher contemplates a lawsuit. Last year Kjeli Gislefoss, who heads an adult education center, told teacher Inge Telhaug to stop wearing the Star of David because it "provokes the many Muslim students at the school...." Telhaug, who is not Jewish, protests: "I see it [the Star of David] as the oldest religious symbol we have in our culture, because without Judaism there would be no Christianity."

Correction

In "The Silence -- and Worse -- of American Jews" (September 2005) we incorrectly said Mortimer Zuckerman had been opposed to the "disengagement" from Gaza. We gave him too much credit. Our thanks to Mort Klein of ZOA for pointing out that Zuckerman had been a steadfast proponent of Sharon's plan within the President's Conference. This writer had jumped to her mistaken conclusion because Zuckerman's *U.S. News and World Report* had published an article sharply critical of disengagement, which was highly unusual in the mainstream press.

Christians within Islam

In Egypt 5,000 Muslim rioters rampaged through two largely Christian neighborhoods in Alexandria, following a week of protests over a stage play performed two years earlier (!) at St. George's Coptic Church, one of seven churches attacked. The play told the story of a young Christian who converted to Islam and became disillusioned.

In supposedly tolerant Indonesia, three Christian girls had their heads chopped off. More and more churches are being forced to close. Jim Jacobson, president of Christian Freedom International, says: "Religious persecution targeting minority Christians in Indonesia, particularly in West Java, is both systemic and systematic." He reports that at least 35 churches in Bandung and neighboring regions have been closed by Islamic mobs during the past 12 months alone.

(continued on page 12)

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The Trouble With Hillel Halkin

Rael Jean Isaac

(Editor's note: All references in this article will be to essays Halkin wrote in Commentary.)

Hillel Halkin is a fine translator, an elegant literary essayist – and an inept political analyst. Unfortunately it is in the last capacity that he now dominates the pages of two important journals in the United States supposedly representing a vigorous defense of Israel's rights and a tough-minded analysis of Israel's enemies – *Commentary* and the *New York Sun*.

While Halkin is emphatic that he is not a member of Israel's peace camp, the difference lies in tone, not substance. Unlike the peace camp's intellectuals, most of them embittered self-styled "post-Zionists" (read opposed to Zionism and, often, Judaism) whom he vigorously criticizes (e.g., "Israel Against Itself," November 1994), Halkin is proud of Israel and his Jewish heritage. He writes (May 1980) that "the idea of a Palestinian state alongside Israel in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is not one that I contemplate with particular pleasure....and I fear that in relinquishing any part of Palestine I must relinquish a part of myself."

Nonetheless, for the last thirty years, while veering wildly in his policy prescriptions, Halkin has been consistent in his underlying premise: Israel must give up Judea, Samaria and Gaza both because it is necessary for Israel's welfare (a democratic Israel would be swamped by their huge Arab population) and because it is morally just (Palestinian Arabs have the right to self-determination).

What Halkin misses is the nature of the Arab-Israel conflict; indeed, reading Halkin's essays, one would be hard put to know there was one. There is no discussion of the determination of the Muslim states of the Middle East to wage *jihad* against the Jewish state until its dissolution, no recognition that Israel's existence constitutes a theological scandal to its neighbors who believe the proper role of Jews is as *dhimmis*. Halkin has swallowed the Arab propaganda line which, after the Six Day War, redefined the conflict (for Western consumption) as one between Israel and a newly discovered Palestinian people.

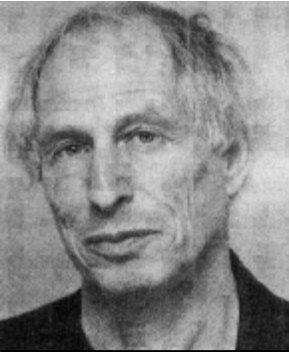
For Halkin, Jews are pitted against Palestinians in "a complex and terrible drama in which no one is totally right, no one totally wrong, and no one totally beyond sympathy or reproach" (May 1980). According to Halkin "No Solomon could possibly judge between these two claims." But would such a judgment really be beyond the capacity of a Solomon? It is only because Halkin falsely treats the Arabs of Palestine as if

they had no connection to the Arabs of neighboring states that he is unable to see what to Vladimir Jabotinsky was obvious seventy years ago: the claims of the Arabs were the claims of appetite (even more so today when the Arabs have 22 states) compared to the claim of starvation of the Jews, for whom this was their only national home—and at that time, in 1937, their only hope for survival. (Not until January 2004, "Beyond the Geneva Accord," does Halkin finally take note that the Arabs of Palestine are "culturally, linguistically and religiously no different from Jordanians.")

Turning a blind eye to the depth and nature of Arab hatred, Halkin comes up with a fantasy-formula worthy of Shimon Peres. He first advanced it in a January 1975 essay "Driving Toward Jerusalem." Driving through the West Bank, Halkin engages in an imaginary dialogue between a proponent of Jewish rights to the Land of Israel and a proponent of returning the territories to the Arabs. But then the exchange takes an unusual turn. The advocate of Jewish settlement (clearly representing Halkin) is not a proponent of Jewish control. "I said that the Jewish people had an unconditional right to live in all of Palestine. I didn't say anything about ruling there." His erstwhile opponent says: "Now you're confusing me. You mean that Jews should live in the West Bank as part of..." The Halkin stand-in replies: "A Palestinian state? Why not? There are several hundred thousand Palestinian Arabs living in a Jewish state today, and we accept it as a matter of course."

The dialogue continues as Halkin fleshes out his proposal. Israel would return to the 1949 borders in the West Bank "without exception." Yes, Arab Jerusalem would also go to the Arabs, says the Halkin stand-in. In the meantime, he says, settlement activities by Jews in the territories should be stepped up – the more Jews live there, provided everyone knows this does not entail Israeli sovereignty – the less likely the area is to become *Judenrein* in a peace agreement. By the same token any Arab would have the right to buy property in Haifa and Tel Aviv, though not to have an Arab government there. The borders would "remain absolutely open." Halkin's foil declares "So we're back to the old bi-national state idea of the 30's!" No, says the Halkin stand-in, that "was based on the utopian expectation that Jews and Arabs could share one sovereignty...now we're talking about two distinct sovereignties, each of which will have to make certain inviolable commitments to the citizens of the other."

The toughest objection Halkin's foil comes up with is that "there will have to be a long process of gradual reconciliation that will take several years." Nothing better illustrates Halkin's utopianism, his total failure to understand implacable Arab hostility, than



Hillel Halkin

that phrase, a long process of several years!

Given Halkin's belief that Israel could not, and should not, retain control of Judea, Samaria and Gaza, one would have expected him to welcome the Oslo Accords of 1993. But in an essay written after the Rabin assassination ("Israel and the Assassination: A Reckoning," January 1996) he tells us that although he voted for Labor and Rabin in 1992, he has been angry for the last two years – and grown angrier still after the assassination -- at the Labor Party and the Israeli left.

Why should that be, given that he says he still holds to the plan he proposed in 1975? It's because the Labor Party lied to the public, says Halkin: its 1992 platform ruled out negotiations with the PLO. The Labor Party, says Halkin, was obligated to prepare and then consult public opinion. It should have required the PLO to help change public opinion by declaring a moratorium on terror or repealing the provisions of its Charter calling for Israel's destruction. And then the government should have called for new elections to ask for a mandate. Since the government had failed to do any of these things, "as the Rabin government continued to keep secret from its own people what its aims were in the peace process, including the borders it planned to insist on and its conception of the fate of the tens of thousands of Jewish settlers living beyond them, much of Israel felt like passengers on a ship that had been hijacked by its own captain and crew, who were now piloting it through a dense fog and mined waters, with the consent of half of those aboard, toward an unrevealed and perhaps calamitous destination."

Given that every one of his objections to Rabin's behavior applied with even greater force to Sharon's actions, Halkin should have been even more offended by Sharon's "disengagement" from Gaza. Sharon had been elected with a huge majority on a platform that flatly rejected unilateral withdrawal from Gaza (advocated by the rival Labor Party). After he abruptly decided to follow the policy he had denounced, Sharon agreed to subject his "disengagement plan" to a vote by the Likud rank and file and to abide by the result. The plan was decisively defeated on May 2, 1004. Now Sharon reneged on his explicit promise. When members of his cabinet refused to go along, he fired them and brought in the Labor Party. When opponents of disengagement then argued for new elections prior to carrying out a specifically voter-rejected policy, or at least a referendum,

Sharon brushed away the demands. In "Does Sharon Have A Plan?" (June 2004) Halkin says Sharon's problem was that he could not be open about his real plan – "to withdraw not only from the Gaza Strip but also, once construction of its security fence is finished...from most of the West Bank; to evacuate all Jewish settlements beyond the fence."

Clearly then, in Halkin's view, the Sharon government, like that of Rabin, was "keeping secret from its own people what its aims were in the peace process, including the borders it planned to insist on and its conception of the fate of the tens of thousands of Jewish settlers living beyond them." And presumably the public would again have every reason to feel "like passengers on a ship that had been hijacked by its own captain and crew."

Yet far from assailing Sharon, Halkin champions his eviction of the Gaza settlers. He throws over his own principles with the same reckless abandon that the politicians he earlier criticized threw overboard their promises to the public. In the May 1996 *Commentary* Halkin outlines his bedrock "conditions" for a Palestinian state—among them, that the PA engage in an all out fight against terror, total and permanent demilitarization, retention of all Jewish settlements in the Palestinian territories, establishment as a prerequisite for statehood of a "genuine, Western-style democracy...and the same civil freedoms that exist in Israel, Europe and America.")

But a few years later in "Intifada II" (December 2000) Halkin seems to give up on coexistence: Palestinian Arab society is "so conformist; incapable of distinguishing truth and falsehood or subjecting itself to the slightest degree of self-criticism" that living together with these people was impossible. He now raises the prospect of Israel's drawing her borders unilaterally.

Typical of Halkin, two years later he was back to the utopian drawing board. In a June 2002 article "Why the Settlements Should Stay," he declares the settlements "express a deep Jewish imperative that cannot be challenged without calling to question the Jewish historical attachment to Palestine that validates the state of Israel" and reiterates the benefits to both sides if each people lives in its own state and under its own government while together inhabiting one country that is an "indivisible geographic and historic unit and inalienable to the memories of both. What matters most to Jews is not that they rule over an undivided land of Israel, but that they be allowed to be freely at home in it." Reflecting once again his determined ignorance of Arab goals, Halkin adds: "What matters most to Arabs in Palestine, one trusts, is the same

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thing.”

In 2004 Halkin is back to unilateral separation and fully embraces Sharon’s “disengagement” scheme. In “Does Sharon Have a Plan” Halkin says that disengagement “is the right policy.” In March 2005 “The Settlers’ Crisis, and Israel’s” Halkin jettisons not only the Gaza communities, but the entire settlement movement, whose vital importance to the Zionist enterprise he had proclaimed a mere three years earlier. He dismisses the Gaza communities breezily, saying “Gaza itself has little strategic value, and even less of a history of Jewish life.” (Halkin is wrong on both counts. As for the first, here is one of innumerable statements by Sharon himself on Gaza’s strategic value: “The Strip is—and was—a hostile zone, thrusting out of the Sinai area towards Israel’s very heart. It enables any potential enemy to deploy forces or station artillery and rocket launchers of the sort long owned by all terrorist organizations, and certainly by all armies, only 13 km. from Ashkelon, 30 km. from Ashdod port and 55 km. from Gush Dan....So long as Gaza was in Arab hands, it was the most dangerous security element along our frontiers and the chief base for terrorist activity.” *Jerusalem Post International edition*, Oct. 3, 1992. As to Gaza’s role in Jewish history, while admittedly not central like Judea and Samaria, see Erich Isaac “Gaza Reconsidered” in *Outpost*, March 2004).

Halkin now rejects the entire settlement enterprise as rooted in “a Kookian faith.” Halkin is referring to the ideology of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Hachohen Kook who saw Zionism as redemptive in its goals and who embraced secular Zionism as willy nilly bringing redemption closer. Whether or not Halkin intends the nasty pun, he dismisses the settlers as a species of false messianists, similar to the followers of the messianic pretender Sabbatai Zevi. No longer do the settlements “express a deep Jewish imperative that cannot be challenged without calling to question the Jewish historical attachment to Palestine that validates the state of Israel” (Halkin’s words back in 2002); now they represent a “messianic bubble” about to burst.

What is particularly striking in this article is the harsh tone. Halkin’s essays usually are notable for the empathy they display for all sides, for Arabs as well as Jews, for the peace camp as well as the settlers. Now he views the intensity of the opposition to the dispossession of “a mere 8,000 people” as “out of all proportion.” Halkin shows no concern that these are people who built their lives here, created flourishing communities and thriving farming economies on what had been empty sand dunes, who were urged to settle and re-

main by every Israeli government, Labor and Likud alike (each and every government convinced that Israel’s security required a buffer between Egypt and the Gaza Strip). Halkin, whose moral antennae quiver when it comes to Arab rights, sees no problem with Israeli citizens being treated like pawns to be shuffled around, their communities arbitrarily bulldozed to the ground by their own government. To someone of Halkin’s sensibilities, the uprooting of these communities should have seemed like something out of a horror movie.

If it took Halkin three years to throw overboard Israel’s religious and historical rights in Judea and Samaria, it took him only a few weeks to distance himself from the disengagement. In “Israel After Disengagement” (October 2005) Halkin announces it was necessary for the disengagement to take place “for the strategy behind it to be revealed as unworkable.” Why unworkable? Because continuing the process would be too expensive (60,000 settlers rather than 8,000, as Halkin draws the future boundaries, would have to be compensated); more soldiers and police would be needed than Israel could muster to enforce the process; the opposition will be more intense because the settlers of

Judea and Samaria are more ideologically “hardcore” than those of Gaza; the Gaza withdrawal had already produced uneasiness in the broad Israeli public upon whom it had dawned that the bulldozers that so easily and quickly destroyed Gush Katif might one day do the same to all of Israel; further massive withdrawals would be too divisive for the country to bear.

Note that Halkin, in speaking of the failure of the strategy, makes no mention of the security consequences for Israel, although it became immediately apparent that what Sharon had forecast back in 1992 was coming to pass: heavy arms have been flooding into Gaza from Egypt; terror groups, including al Qaeda and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (formerly headquartered in Syria) are setting up shop there; rockets have been lobbed at Jewish towns within the old Green Line, a prelude of the long-range missiles and much else to come. Nor does he make any mention of security perils that would flow from the radical withdrawals he contemplates in Judea and Samaria.

Given that Halkin’s bottom line is always that there must be somehow, somewhere, a method to retreat, it turns out that Sharon’s strategy is not so unworkable after all – it simply needs a little tweaking. Halkin comes up with the required “tweak”: the Israeli public will rally around a broad disengagement policy if

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the United States president makes a statement saying that since Israel is prepared to withdraw from 90% of the West Bank, to the security fence it has built, the U.S. will regard this withdrawal “as constituting full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 242, and will recognize the new line as Israel’s border with the Palestinian Authority.”

Halkin’s notion that both internal opposition and external threats will melt away if president Bush pronounces these magic words is so breathtakingly silly that this writer must confess that on coming to this passage, she laughed out loud. That the U.S. will endorse borders that remove no more than 60,000 Jewish settlers (out of 250,000 exclusive of East Jerusalem) is scarcely more likely than Halkin’s lion-lying-down-with-the-lamb visions of intertwined Jewish and Arab communities. Indeed Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on October 19 told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that Israeli construction between East Jerusalem and the nearby suburb of Maaleh Adumim (both of which Halkin assumes remain within Israel) is against Bush administration policy and the U.S. would be cutting financial aid to Israel. Moreover, even if a U.S. President were to make Halkin’s statement, it would have no impact on Arab terror, the Arab determination to destroy Israel, the worldwide delegitimation of Israel, or any of the other problems Israel faces. But for unfathomable reasons, Halkin thinks the U.S. President need only pronounce the magic words – and henceforth, even if Arab irredentism does not vanish and there is not a “total end to terrorism” Israel, he says, “should be able to contain it effectively.”

P. David Hornik writing in *Frontpage* about this most recent article by Halkin, attributes what he gently calls Halkin’s “unrealistic proposals and dubious claims” to “a sense of panic, possibly founded on guilt toward the Palestinians.” It would be more accurate to say that for the last thirty years Halkin has been in a permanent state of moral panic, unable to admit the possibility that Israel might need to retain any control in Judea, Samaria and Gaza. This explains his long advocated pie-in-the-sky “resolution” of conflicting claims of Jews and Arabs to the Land of Israel. When Halkin finally woke up to the unreality of this fantasy, it was Jewish rights to live in the Land of Israel that he sacrificed. Once deemed non-negotiable by Halkin, these rights were now scorned as Kookian messianism. Halkin’s moral panic that Jews rule over another people has persisted even though Israel has long relinquished control over the Arab population to the Palestinian Authority.

The trouble with Hillel Halkin is not so much Halkin himself. Befuddled though he may be, a fountain of rationalizations for Israeli retreats, he is a much

more sympathetic figure than most in the Israeli peace camp. Halkin cares deeply about the survival of Israel. In “After Zionism: Reflections on Israel and the Diaspora” (June 1997) Halkin concludes with a passionate cry: “[I]f Israel should ever go under –and I do not find it inconceivable--I would not want the Diaspora to continue. I would not want there to be any more Jews in the world. It would be too shameful. That is the only word for it that I can think of.”

No, the real trouble is with the editors of both *Commentary* and the *Sun* who have made Halkin their chief analyst of Israeli policy. For the last twenty years, Israel’s supporters in this country have counted upon *Commentary* to provide the most thoughtful discussion of Israel’s options and actions, including sharp criticism of the ill-considered accords with Arafat. The *New York Sun*, a recent entry in the media market, was welcomed as an antidote to the *New York Times*, with its relentless bashing of Israel, on the news pages, editorial pages, op-ed pages, cultural pages. It is true, as this essay has made plain, that *Commentary* has published Halkin for thirty years. But much of what he wrote consisted of literary essays, and during the two decades that *Commentary* was known for its hard-hitting articles on Israel, Halkin muted his calls for retreat in its pages (he was, after all, unhappy with Oslo, even though his reasons had to do with how it was done, not what was done). Moreover, the vast majority of articles on Israel were by people like David Bar Illan, Douglas Feith, and, clearest and most trenchant of all, Norman Podhoretz.

How does such foolishness get past *Commentary* editor Neal Kozodoy, famed for his tough editing, his demand for logic and firm reasoning?

There are innumerable outlets in this country for head-in-the-sand spokesmen of the Israeli peace camp. Why do we need *Commentary* and the *Sun* to provide yet more fatuous fantasies dressed up as political analysis? How does such foolishness get past *Commentary* editor Neal Kozodoy, famed for his tough editing, his demand for logic and firm reasoning? There is no shortage of first-rate political analysts in Israel. To name only three, Carolyn Glick, Evelyn Gordon and Sarah Honig would illuminate the issues confused and clouded by Halkin.

We can only hope that the editors of *Commentary* and the *Sun* come to their senses and offer their readers the sober clear-headed analysis so sorely needed -- and that *Commentary*, at least, not long ago provided. And by all means, let both continue to publish Halkin’s beautifully crafted book reviews and literary essays -- like “Sailing to Ithaca” in this month’s *Commentary*.

Rael Jean Isaac is editor of Outpost.

In Pursuit of False Messiahs

William Mehlman

False messiahs have been the bane of the Jewish people since the fall of the Second Temple. In the two millennia of dispersion that followed on that catastrophe, they flowered like poisoned weeds in an untended garden. We are no longer a stateless people but the poison remains pervasive as we begin our journey into 5766 and the fateful imprint it seems destined to leave on Israel.

False messiahs. Diaspora Jewish history is pockmarked with them. Its students could hardly forget the Frankists or the Shabbtai Zvi, that megalomaniacal pied piper who led tens of thousands into a spiritual abyss from which they never emerged. The "Haskala," the so-called Jewish Enlightenment that evolved from these tragedies -- abetted by Napoleon's eradication of the ghettos of western Europe -- was a messianist disaster almost equal to the calamities which inspired it. As untold numbers of Jews concluded that imbibing large helpings of European *kultur* (washed down by a visit to the baptismal font) was the yellow brick road to acceptance by the great world outside, Torah, tradition, 4,000 years of peoplehood were flushed down the drain. It didn't work, of course. While the Haskala produced its inevitable crop of Jewish intellectual superstars from among the liberated sons and grandsons of the Pale, it never penetrated the crust of 2,000 years of immutable European Jew-hatred. Meanwhile, the Jewish identity of millions was erased.

The effects of the Haskala are still with us, but it has long given way to other messianist illusions. Over the past century, we have sampled joyously of the elixirs of socialism, Zionist socialism, communism, Canaanism, secular humanism and, most recently, a brand of theocratic "democracy" which defers all major American Jewish positions -- spiritual and temporal -- to the canonical jurisdiction of the American Civil Liberties Union.

In Israel, the land that gave birth to messianism, the most recent and durable in the long line of bright, glowing messianic frauds is something called

In Israel the most recent in the long line of bright glowing messianic frauds is something called the "peace process."

the "peace process." Its relentless promotion by a fanatical elite fixed on the notion that peace with an Arab world openly dedicated to the termination of Jewish national existence will flow from the systematic surrender of Israel's material and strategic assets and the creation of an enemy state within its borders must surely rank as the chef-d'oeuvre of all Jewish messianic delusions. Among the blessings it has already conferred on us is suicide bombings, rocket bombardments, a 50,000-man Palestinian army equipped with everything from Kalashnikovs to Sagger anti-tank missiles, the loss of control over nearly 40 percent of the West Bank, the ruination of 25 Jewish communities and the lives of their 10,000 inhabitants in Gaza and northern Samaria and the creeping demoralization of an Israel Defense Force, increasing numbers of which are no longer sure what they're supposed to be fighting for.

Unsullied by so much as a hint of peace, the "peace process" has written a new chapter in Arab anti-Semitism, historical revisionism and undisguised bloodlust. From the mosques, to the media, to the markets, to the kindergarten classrooms of Ramallah and Jenin, never has the dream of cleansing the Middle East of the Jewish people and their state been more blatantly trumpeted. And every fresh Israeli concession adds gasoline to the fire.

Even as it threatens to burn the ground beneath their feet, the instigators of this conflagration seem deaf to all but the tinkling bells of their messianic mirage and the flattering "right-on's" of American and European claquees to whom Jewish national existence has as much value as a pawn in a chess game,

If there is anything to be drawn from this messianic madness, it must surely be the tragic realization that with the fulfillment of the "peace process," the string of Jewish false messiahs will finally have run its course. So, in all likelihood, will the history of the Third Jewish Commonwealth. There is still time to write another ending to this story, but not much.

William Mehlman chairs AFSI in Israel.

Pinter Saved My Life

Jack Engelhard

They could have picked a number out of a hat, like Bingo, and come up with something better than Harold Pinter for this year's Nobel in Literature.

But we come not to bury Pinter, but to praise

him, more or less - though, as in Bingo, door prizes are awarded to contestants who check in with credentials that avow hatred for America and loathing for Israel. Bad writing also helps. Elfriede Jelinek was last year's winner.

So why am I so indebted to Harold Pinter?

Off we go to a time when we were young and there I was, just coming off a job as doorman at the



Harold Pinter

Bitter End nightspot in Greenwich Village. Ten bucks a night, but Bob Dylan had been making even less at the nearby Café Wha?, passing around the hat for nickels and quarters. Anyway, we were all broke in those days.

I wasn't married, not even close, but I was dating this girl, Carol I think her name was, and Carol was an ice skating princess. She traveled around the globe with a group of fellow ice champions and checked back with me when they got back to New York.

I had not seen her for about a year when she phoned to say she was in town AND she had tickets for a Broadway show. Yes, Harold Pinter's "The Homecoming." People were talking about Pinter and this marvelous play. Carol was excited.

We agreed to meet in the lobby of the Music Box Theatre and it turned out she had reservations all right but that I had to pay for the tickets.

The curtain went up, the play got started, and I got finished. I don't need car chases but I do need dialogue, actual words, when I go to a play. I tried, I really tried, but fifteen minutes into the performance I told Carol "I've got to get the hell out of here."

In fact, the aisles were clogged with people rushing for the exits. Soon, we had the theater pretty much to ourselves. But Carol insisted we stay. Something is bound to happen up there on stage. She said I ought to appreciate the "heated silences" between the characters.

Heated silences? That's when you're sitting in the living room with your mother-in-law watching a movie that suddenly veers into porn.

I told Carol that I'm off to the lobby for a smoke and that I'll meet her in the lobby at halftime, or intermission, as they say. At intermission I said let's leave and she said no, something is still bound to happen in the second half of the play. She went in, I went out, and that was the end of Carol.

If not for Harold Pinter, I may have ended up with this girl, yes, Carol I think her name was. I would not have gotten as lucky as I did, years later. As it turned out, Pinter's "The Homecoming" got mostly raves. The highbrow reviewers called him "another Beckett." Still today, that's what they say about Pinter--another Beckett.

Really. If we already have one Beckett, why do we need another Beckett? What was wrong with the first Beckett?

At the time, I only knew that Pinter was a terrible writer. I did not know that he was so political. I did not know that he hated America and that he also, of course, hated Israel (although that came later), despite being the product of Jewish parents (as we say of Jews who would rather abstain).

Accordingly, abstainers such as Amos Oz, David Grossman, and A.B. Yehoshua have a shot for next year's Swedish Bingo - writers who have made the honey bitter and turned the milk sour. But thank you, Harold Pinter. They gave you the Nobel but that can't compete with what you gave me.

Jack Engelhard's most recent novel, the newsroom thriller The Bathsheba Deadline is running as a serial on Amazon.com His novel, The Days of the Bitter End is being prepared for movie production.

Head-counting in Iraq

Hugh Fitzgerald

Democracy in the Western sense requires much more than mere head-counting. It requires the sense of being a citizen of a nation-state, and owing one's primary allegiance to that nation-state. It requires getting used to the idea, and enshrining in the law, the rights of minorities. It requires a belief in the legitimacy of government being derived from the consent of the governed. It requires all sorts of things, all of which are missing in Iraq.

Who are the Shi'a who marched off to vote in favor of the Constitution? Many of them cannot read, most of them have not read, and almost all of those who have read that Constitution have little idea of its full significance or whether or not it has permanent significance. They voted yes because they were told to do so.

The word "democracy" is tossed about by some in the Administration in a display of bland indifference, or deliberate confusion, as to what that word

means in the United States, or the United Kingdom, or Australia, as compared to what it means, and must mean, to those within Islam -- unless those within Islam have for a very long time been subject to a regime in which Islam is deliberately constrained and pushed as far as possible out of its traditional political and social role (as in Turkey, where it is Kemalism that is now shaky, and Islam that is back, as it must be, with a vengeance).

While the Shi'a marched off dutifully to ensure that they will rule, the Sunnis were divided. They were divided not on ultimate aims, but on means. Many abstained, not wishing to recognize that the Old Order not only passeth, but had passed, and there was nothing they could do about it. Many voted not in order to support the Constitution (though there may have been a few) but in order to defeat it. It was not a question of differences in attitude, but in goals. And according to reports, many Sunnis are convinced that they, the Sunni Arabs (leaving aside the Kurds, who are Sunni Muslims), constitute fully 42% of the popula-

tion, when their numbers are in reality not half that. It is the kind of crazed belief that arises naturally, like all sorts of conspiracy theories, among people for whom critical thought and the habit of skepticism is crushed by the atmospherics and attitudes of Islam, so that what is true is never believed, and what is false will always find believers, from the street crowd insisting that the Americans deliberately lured children with candy in order to murder them, to those who believe that the Americans have engaged in a vast and clever plan to dismember Iraq when, as we all know, the Americans have tried in every way they can to make Iraq hold together.

The very idea of elections may inspire a few of those who would like, in other Arab countries, to somehow get rid of their local despots, whether in Arab "republics" (as all non-monarchies are called in that world) or in monarchies. But for everyone inspired by those "elections" there are twenty who are horrified because the "election" in this case, in Iraq the Model, is merely bringing to power the Shi'a -- and they, of course, have no right in Sunni eyes to rule. It is the Sunni Muslims, being the real thing, the realer or realest of Muslims, who must rule -- even if one does not always go so far as to agree with the Wahhabi view (and not only the Wahhabi view) that Shi'a are not only Infidels, but are even worse, as "Rafidite dogs," than ordinary Infidels.

Meanwhile, the Kurds voted for the Constitution, but with a turnout (60-70%) that was far less than last January, when during the elections (my, elections after elections after elections, Democracy Is Surely On the March in Iraq the Model) more than 90% of the Kurds voted. This was probably because they were voting at the same time, in their own referendum, on whether they wanted an independent Kurdistan: 98% voted yes, but you will not have read much, if anything, being said about this by the Administration. The Kurds voted for the Constitution because at the moment it fits what they can demand, but that vote should not be misinterpreted as meaning they have given up the desire for independence.

Of course the Bush Administration would like to read this differently. Still, it has managed to curb its enthusiasm but not, apparently, its determination to continue to work in Iraq for the very things that, from the point of view of those who understand the full menace of Islam, make no sense. Instead of allowing the Shi'a to deal with the Sunni who have a history of oppressing them, and whose attitude shows they have no intention of accepting Shi'a dominance, and believe that they have a perfect right to continue, by hook or by crook, to rule, we want to make everyone make nice. American soldiers now are being killed and

wounded in order to make Sunni and Shi'a collaborate in an Iraqi nation-state.

Instead of seeing an independent Kurdistan, which should be if not openly encouraged at least covertly encouraged, the American government seems to have put that idea out of its head. One assumes this reflects its own fear that it cannot, simply cannot, deal with Turkey. But this is silly. Turkey is alone. Turkey needs the United States more now than ever. Its most intelligent class realizes that it will be difficult, or impossible, to get into the EU, and also knows that the supposed lure of a link with the Islamic world -- the despised Arabs -- would undo whatever progress Turkey has made since the 1920s. They also know that the Kurdish population in Turkey cannot necessarily be trusted to remain passive should Turkey attempt to squash an independent Kurdish state, with all the significance that holds for Kurds outside the state.

A Kurdish state will do much to heighten consciousness of the problem of Arab supremacist ideology, and of the suppressed cultural and linguistic and political rights not only of Kurds, but of Berbers in North Africa, of black but non-Arab Muslims in Darfur, and even of disaffected Iranians. The Persian contempt for Arabs can be enrolled in the more important task (for Iranians who have experienced the Islamic Republic of Iran and never want to have such an experience repeated) of delegitimizing Islam as something inflicted by desert Arabs on civilized Iranians.

What should Washington do? Simply declare that with the next election, it will be time to leave. It will be time for the "Iraqis themselves" to take charge. It will be time to end the "dependency" that this "proud people" in this "ancient and historic land" (go ahead if you wish -- pile on the nonsense yourself) might otherwise "develop" if we Americans, "who wish Iraq and the Iraqi people well" do not now leave, "at long last, having accomplished so much" and "trained so many Iraqis," and "given them new hope to forge their own destinies."

And leave. With only some weaponry, possibly, "pre-positioned" at a base in -- Kurdistan. And only there. And then see what happens.

Will the "Iraqi people" be "true to themselves?" I think so. And will Iranian "volunteers" and money help one side, and Sunni volunteers and money help the opposing side, thereby using up at least some of the energy, attention, and discretionary income that goes into such things as WMD projects, and support for terrorism and that other instrument of *Jihad, Da'wa* (the Call to Islam) world-wide?

One can only hope.

Hugh Fitzgerald is a frequent contributor to Outpost.

A Kurdish state will do much to heighten consciousness of the problem of Arab supremacist ideology.

The Hunter (and Hunted) at Rest : Simon Wiesenthal, 1908–2005

A. M. Siriano

After reading that Simon Wiesenthal had died, I asked my teenage daughters if they had heard of him. I knew, of course, what the answer would be: no. I then asked if they had heard of Elie Wiesel, and this time an equally expected answer: yes.

My daughters are good students enrolled in a highly rated public school district, where they get an ample dose of Holocaust-ed. I am glad of it, but I realized, just this year, that they have been desensitized by overexposure to victimology. This wasn't so 30 years ago. When I first read Wiesel's *Night*, for example, I remember being in a state of shock and revulsion for days, but when one of my own teenagers read it for summer assignment, she was indifferent, as if she had been thumbing through the Sunday comics.

That was disheartening, of course, so I asked my children's friends of their own thoughts on the book and on the Holocaust. The collective answer was, "We don't think about it, really. The teachers shove it down our throats and we're really sick of it."

That should make us all sick, but even more so the fact that Wiesenthal's books, which are more important than Wiesel's, are not often found in our schools' reading lists. Where is *The Murderers Among Us*, in which Wiesenthal warned passionately against apathy, that freedom cannot exist without justice, and that evil can rise again if it is not confronted, and confronted relentlessly? Where is *The Sunflower*, with its posed ethical question: Should a Jew—should the world—deny forgiveness to the Nazi, even if he were to ask for it with obvious signs of penitence?

Wiesenthal did more than his share of confronting, which earned him the title of "Nazi Hunter." In Ira Levin's science-fictional tale, *The Boys From Brazil*, the personality of Wiesenthal was captured in the character of Ezra Lieberman (played by Lawrence Olivier in the film version): the indefatigable tracker who refused to give up on justice, but also refused to shelve morality for the sake of revenge.

By all accounts, Mr. Wiesenthal lived quietly and humbly, while attending to his very tedious work, which was to dig up evidence in order to help authorities capture the guilty. Thanks to this one man—at times obsessive to a fault—over a thousand Nazis paid for their crimes in some form or another, including Adolph Eichmann, Hitler's logistician of extermination, who met up with his own "final solution" at the end of a rope; Karl Silberbauer, who arrested Anne Frank, knowing she would be executed; and Hermine Braunsteiner, "The Stomping Mare," who loved to use her boots on old women and toss children by the hair into trucks on their way to the gas chambers.

Perhaps of equal importance was the fact that

thousands of Nazis, trying to conceal their pasts, were forced to live life on the run, without peace, without forgiveness, thanks to Wiesenthal.

So, if Wiesenthal was so great, why is he not being taught in the schools? Why is the name of Wiesenthal not preeminent?

The answer returns us to the "victim mentality"

that pervades our society, a mentality that insists on inaction, which was not in the nature of the Hunter. Victimology drives our educators away from Wiesenthal and endears Wiesel to them. While Wiesel is not an advocate of the victim mindset, the overriding theme of *Night* is not to chase down the perpetrators, but to grapple with the violence itself. This must not be discounted completely—even if it is being

used as a sort of regression therapy—but it is easy to see why it is palatable to those who have little time for quaint ideas like "justice," the number one theme of Wiesenthal's life.

One New York City English professor, Thomas E. Thornton, attempting poetry, wrote about dropping *Night* on his students "like bombs on sleeping towns": "No, I cannot teach this book./I simply want the words/to burn their comfortable souls/and leave them scarred for life."

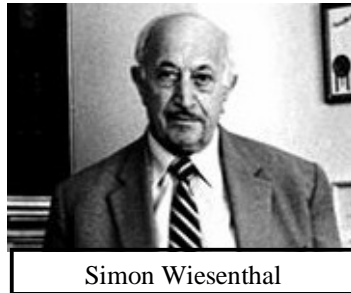
Indeed, I remember those literary bombs and scars well, but scars are easily forgotten when those who inflict them are "forgiven" by way of anonymity. Wiesenthal knew that "healing" cannot come when evil is allowed as much freedom as those who have chosen a higher path ... and so he pursued and pursued.

When Wiesenthal was not being hated, he was being ignored. He seemed to be perfectly fine with that. His detractors, not surprisingly, were anti-Israel, pro-Palestinian radicals, along with historical revisionists and, of course, the Aryans. Surely they are happy that he is gone, but so is the rest of the world, secretly, who felt his presence as one feels a sliver in one's finger.

We will all, for a time, sing his praises, however guardedly, but then we will resume with a Holocaust that requires nothing of us, with its annual, innocuous lessons that confirm our suspicions, that the world is full of victims that need to be remembered and pitied. But right wrongs? What for! As one of my ill-taught and apathetic young acquaintances remarked, when I lamented Wiesenthal's unfinished business, "All the old Nazis will be dead soon anyway, right?"

True enough. But too bad Simon Wiesenthal couldn't have helped them all to the gallows before his mission on earth was complete.

A.M Siriano's blog site is <http://www.amsiriano.com>



Simon Wiesenthal

Some Reflections on the Anniversary of Kristallnacht

Ruth King

In late October of 1938, 20,000 Jewish residents of Germany who were of Polish origin were rousted in the middle of the night and deported. However, Poland declared them non-citizens and closed the borders. The Jews, men, women and children, were finally herded to a border town and they remained there stranded in abominable conditions. Most of them were subsequently sent to the Warsaw Ghetto.

In Paris, a seventeen year old boy, Hershel Grynspan, the child of a couple among those dislocated and suffering Jews, received a note from his desperate family detailing the suffering and anguish of the group. On November 7th, enraged and helpless, living a life which he later described as worse than a dog's, he took a pistol to the German embassy and shot to death an official named Ernst Von Rath.

Two days later, Germany erupted into an evening of vandalism and brutality which lasted for almost twenty four hours. When it subsided, nearly 200 synagogues were burned, 815 Jewish-owned shops were demolished, warehouses and homes were set on fire and 30,000 Jews were sent to concentration camps.

There were some, even among Jews, who thought this pogrom was occasioned by Von Rath's murder. In fact, the plans for "the night of shattered glass" were conceived several months earlier as a warning to the Jews.

Many years later, a friend of my parents who lived through that night described the events of the next day in Berlin. He was a physician, a "dozent" professor, a disciple of Roentgen, and well respected in the academy. The picture of the perfect Teuton, he affected the closely shaven head of the Germans and had a "messerschnit" — a fencing scar on his cheek. He was convinced that at the university, in his mind the bastion of liberal thought, of the pursuit of truth and justice, he would be welcomed by commiserating colleagues appalled by this violent national tantrum.

When he arrived at the University, his colleagues turned their backs on him, the students jeered and he was summarily dismissed. He was fortunate to leave Germany on one of the last ships from Hamburg.

On the fiftieth anniversary of Kristallnacht I attended a memorial at which was screened a documentary on "The Night of Shattered Glass." The late Cardinal O'Connor attended in spite of a high fever. He had, for many years, placed a memorial candle on the window of the residence in St. Patrick's Cathedral to remind passersby of the terrible events of that night. The frail Cardinal, calling himself a "fellow Semite," said that for him that particular evening was extremely important. Even though many worse events were to

take place, Kristallnacht was the warning that should have been heeded by the civilized world.

Nonetheless, the "civilized world" went about its business. In America and Canada the authorities were tightening immigration laws against Europe's Jews. In England, where the infamous Munich Pact was signed only eight weeks earlier on September 29th, the gates of Palestine, slated by British law to be the safe harbor for the world's Jews, clamped shut, trapping millions of European Jews. In Russia where millions of Jews lived a miserable existence, a non-aggression pact with Hitler had been signed in August 1938. Most painful of all, the Evian conference of July 6th, 1938 found no takers for any sizeable number of Jewish refugees among the Western nations, with the exception of Rafael Trujillo, the dictator of the Dominican Republic. (Unfortunately, due to the rapid escalation of the war against the Jews, only 900 Jews actually got there.)

I am lately obsessed with these events. I ask myself: How would Kristallnacht be covered by the media today? Outrage? Perhaps, but the "root cause" theorists would soon bring up the murder of Rath, even though these events were already on course long before Grynspan's fateful visit to the embassy. After all, the apologists for the murderous spree known as the *Intifada*, which has claimed the lives of over one thousand innocent civilians, routinely blame it on a perfectly legal visit Prime Minister Sharon made to the Temple Mount.

And, what of the academies today? They should be bastions of liberal thought and the pursuit of justice and truth. Are they? Melanie Phillips has described England's "descent into madness" as its academics boycott and viciously malign Israel. Here in America, Columbia University is given irrefutable evidence of anti-Israel bias in a classroom. After an "investigation" the culprit professor is given a rap on the wrist and offered tenure! On October 21, 2005, Yale University hosted a crackpot "historian," Holocaust denier and blackbelt hater of Israel, Norman Finkelstein. The audience of about sixty persons included generally sympathetic faculty members, while the students were evenly split between detractors and sympathizers. Like a student making the college circuit, Finkelstein is now off to lecture at Harvard and doubtless other Ivy League schools will line up to invite him.

At Harvard, President Summers and law professor Alan Dershowitz fought off the movement to divest from Israel...but for how long? The movement continues to gather steam. The increasing and shrill anti-Israel rhetoric and campaigns at universities is



international. Historian Ephraim Karsh has labeled it the "Academic Intifada."

Mainline churches here and in England parrot the Arab line and promote divestment, the code word for economic sanctions against Israel. Even modern day blood libels such as the Al-Dura scandal are given a wide and credulous audience.

And what about entertainment and the media? A new movie screened in Germany supposedly dealing with the Arab/Israel conflict is described as violently anti-Israel; the BBC routinely slanders Israel; even the Munich terrorists will be given a human face in a forthcoming movie by the very same producer who is a founding member of the Shoah foundation. Movies show moral equivalence between monsters and victims. Everyone has a legitimate "grievance" and the most fashionable "grievance" of all is that of Israel's Arab enemies.

The mainline newspapers -- even those in states like Great Britain, Holland and France -- all directly threatened with *Jihad*, do not lessen their

daily anti-Israel screeds.

Again, I dwell on the harbingers of Kristallnacht. Something is happening now. There is a war within a war. While the entire Western world and our civilization are threatened by Islam and *Jihad*, the war against Israel strengthens. By now, one might think that only a person living on Mars would fail to see the trajectory between systematic delegitimation of Israel and overt anti-Semitism. Only pachyderms do not feel the sting and continue to strut their disdain for the "occupation," feeding the enemy that would consume them.

This is not the work of Islam alone. Moslems, like the Nazis, are tapping into a rich vein of the ancient hatred of Jews and they are finding accomplices. The Jews of Israel and Eurabia are in peril.

The night of shattered hopes is descending.....

First the Saturday people....

Ruth King is a member of Outpost's editorial board.

(Continued from page 2)

How Wrong Can You Be?

The following gems are culled from President Bush's interview with *Al Arabiya*, which was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 24.

"President Abbas showed me something in the Oval Office, which is, one, a deep desire to defeat terror and promote democracy..."

"I've been very impressed by the caliber of the Palestinians I've met, and I've met quite a few...And they're peaceful, they really are peaceful."

"I talk to Jim Wolfensohn [the President's emissary to Gaza] a lot. Now, there's a practical man. And the greenhouse is a good example of practical application of U.S. desire to help get the economy going." [The President makes no mention of Palestinian mobs destroying the just-purchased-for-them greenhouses while PA police stood by.]

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