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# OUTPOST



March 2015—Issue #285

PUBLISHED BY AMERICANS FOR A SAFE ISRAEL

45<sup>th</sup> Year of Publication

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## Mixed Deal

William Mehlman

If Benjamin Netanyahu had thrice the 45-60 minutes he'll be allotted for his March 3rd address to a joint session of the U.S. Congress--assuming that address hasn't been sabotaged by the time these words appear--he'd be hard pressed to give full scope to the dimensions and potential consequences of the "get-out-of-jail" card the P5+1 (the U.S., Britain, France, Russia and China plus Germany) appears ready to award Ayatollah Khamenei sometime between now and the March 24th deadline for a "framework" agreement to a resolution of the Iranian nuclear weapons threat.

Putting this nine-year global drama in perspective, there's an outside chance the March 24th run-up to a projected final June agreement with Tehran on the suspension of uranium enrichment will go the way of two previous "deadlines," established and disestablished, since Iran signed on to a November, 2013 six-month deadline on a resolution of its enrichment activities (illegal under six separate UN Security Council Chapter VII rulings) and a halt to further work on its heavy water Arak plutonium reactor. We are now in the 15th month of that original six-month agreement. "It will depend on difficult decisions the Iranians will have to make" regarding concessions integral to the conclusion of a deal, a senior Israeli diplomat observed. For the P5+1, he adds, "it may be hard to see the possibility of overcoming an Iranian demand, purely on the basis of a rough-edged 'framework' agreement, for the immediate lifting of all the sanctions currently in place."

Against this outside chance of another stalemate looms the greater likelihood of a framework deal with Iran by March 24th, principally because P5+1 leader President Obama wants it to happen. Despite Iran's being caught red-handed trying to buy parts for its plutonium reactor and performing tests on an advanced IR-2 uranium centrifuge, both in violation of the November 2013 interim agreement, top U.S. nuclear negotiator Wendy Sherman told the Senate Foreign Relation Committee in July that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) "has verified that Iran has complied with its commitments. It has done what it promised to do." IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano begs to differ. Iran had "not provided any explanations that enable the Agency to clarify the outstanding practical measures" related to its suspected work on nuclear weaponization. Or as Bret Stephens more succinctly phrased it in the *Wall Street Journal*, "Iran pretends not to cheat; we pretend not to notice."

"Is the price the U.S. has paid to reach this elusive deal too high?" asks Jeffrey Goldberg, one of the Administration's staunchest journalistic supporters. Apparently not if you go along with the White House-State Department theory that ending Iran's "isolation" will somehow moderate its hegemonic impulses and persuade it to keep a lid on the simmering Islamic pots across a sphere of influence that now extends from Syria and Iraq to Yemen. No way, Goldberg submits in an *Atlantic* blog headed "Iran is Getting Away With Murder." Finding "no proof that Iran's rulers are looking to form an international order whose norms are defined by the United States and its allies," he asserts that "Ayatollah Khamenei has made it clear he is not interested in normalizing relations with the Big Satan."

"It appears likely that we may be confronted with a very bad deal sometime soon," Eric Edelman, Distinguished Fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments and co-Chairman of JINSA's "Iran Task Force" warned in a January 27th deposition before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. "The Administration has retreated from a succession of red lines on uranium enrichment to the point where Iran could be allowed to retain the majority of its existing uranium infrastructure. Keeping thousands of centrifuges in place, many a flip of a switch from becoming operational would seriously complicate the IAEA's ability to monitor Iranian compliance." Separately, he added, "the Administration has relinquished its effort to shut off Iran's plutonium path to a bomb..."

Labeling a nuclear Iran an uncontrollable challenge threatening the "elimination of Israel, the security of the Gulf states and the stability of the global economy," Edelman goes eyeball to eyeball

with the military option. He believes the U.S. has “sufficient capability in theater” to carry out a strike on Iran’s nuclear-industrial complex, particularly given its ample supply of GBU-57 super bunker-busting bombs capable of penetrating the deepest buried of the Islamic Republic’s bomb-making facilities. Moreover, he recommends generating additional leverage against Iran by publicizing the GBU-57s and transferring a substantial portion of them to Israel.

Prime Minister Netanyahu has called the anticipated framework deal with Iran a “danger to Israel, the region and the world.” With Israel’s Eros-B satellite having now all but nailed down the presence of an ICBM in Ayatollah’s arsenal, that “world” may very soon include the United States, not to mention Europe. It is a fact the House and Senate must certainly be made aware of on March 3rd.

*William Mehlman represents AFSI in Israel.*

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## **From the Editor**

### **Divesting from America**

It was bound to happen. Bursting with moral fervor, eager students hunting down miscreants from Israel to Israel to Israel have found an additional target—the United States of America. The University of California Student Association board, representing all 233,000 students enrolled in the UC’s ten campuses, approved a resolution calling on the university to financially divest from the United States.

The resolution outlines alleged U.S. “human rights violations” from drone strikes to a racist justice system to mistreatment of immigrants to propping up dictatorships.

The students have vowed to take their fight now to the UC Regents, the board governing the University of California.

There is an obvious first step the students could take toward implementing their program—renounce all Pell grants and demand an end to all federal funding for research throughout the university’s campuses. But to no one’s surprise this does not seem to have occurred to the social justice mavens of the Student Association Board. Indeed one can be confident they would howl with rage if any of their government benefits should be touched. Financial divestment from the federal cash cow for themselves or their faculty allies, one can safely say, is the last thing they have in mind.

### **What the Meaning of “Is” is**

The administration is apparently confusing Israel with ISIS. We’ll cut Secretary of State Kerry some slack given that he is what might be termed “intellectually challenged.” But President Obama, who boasts of his academic credentials? That he should barrel down on Israel as if it were our main antagonist? Perhaps it’s because both ISIS and Israel begin with “IS.” Those nefarious letters could also account for Obama appointee Benjamin Wagner, U.S. attorney for California’s Eastern District, revealing in an interview (reported by Lloyd Billingsley) that he was more concerned with Islamophobia than ISIS.

### **Rachel Corrie Redux**

Alas, Kayla Mueller, the idealistic young girl from Prescott, Arizona who fell victim to ISIS—and has been widely extolled as one who committed her life to assisting those in need—had earlier fallen victim to the lure of anti-Semitism packaged as freedom fighting.

In *Pajamas Media*, Ron Radosh points out that prior to her unwise venture into Syria, Kayla had worked in Israel and the PA controlled areas with the International Solidarity Movement, the infamous

group supporting Hamas and Hezbollah with which Rachel Corrie had affiliated herself. Kayla bragged in her internet posts of participating in anti-Israel demonstrations in East Jerusalem. She supported rock



throwing against Israelis. In the words of one of her “eloquent” posts, “resistance is nestled in the cracks in the wall, resistance flows from the minaret 5 times a day and resistance sits quietly in jail knowing its time will come again...Though it is sometimes hard to see and even harder sometimes to harbor, resistance lives. Do not be fooled, resistance lives.”

As Radosh points out “those words are not that of a humanitarian aid worker, but of a propagandist for the supporters of worldwide jihad who seek Israel’s destruction.” Kayla Mueller fell prey to the overtures of leftist revolutionaries and in taking the path she did, says Radosh, “died on behalf of those who believe in violence and world-wide revolution, beginning with the destruction of Israel.”

### **A Diplomatic Breakthrough!**

*The Wall Street Journal* of Feb. 14-15 reports that the Ayatollah Khamenei has been corresponding with President Obama. It quotes an excited former U.S. official briefed on the correspondence: “You don’t know how important it is for the Supreme Leader of Iran to actually write a letter to the U.S. It’s a sign he recognizes the country.”

Now there’s an earth-shaking development. The Ayatollah recognizes the existence of the United States of America. Surely that mighty concession by the Supreme Leader alone should be grounds for endorsing whatever he demands in the nuclear negotiations.

### **In Memoriam: Richard von Weizsaecker**

Richard von Weizsaecker, president of Germany from 1984-1994, has died at the age of 94. He followed in the tradition of Germany’s first post-war Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in insisting that Germans recognize their guilt and responsibility for their enormous crimes against the Jews.

Although the presidency was a largely ceremonial position, von Weizsaecker gave it moral significance. In a famous May 1985 speech marking the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Nazi Germany’s defeat, he spoke to the West German parliament: “All of us, whether guilty or not, whether young or old, must accept the past. We are all affected by its consequences and liable for it....The 8<sup>th</sup> of May was a day of liberation. It freed us all from the system of National Socialist tyranny.”

In October 1985 Weizsaecker made the first visit to Israel by a West German head of state. Israel’s then President Chaim Herzog said that Weizsaecker’s speech had won him “a special place in the history of your people.”

### **Catch the Jew**

*Catch the Jew* is the title of Tuvia Tenenbom’s highly readable and informative expose of the rank anti-Semitism permeating the European-funded NGOs active in Israel and the territories. Tenenbom also slices and dices Israel’s plethora of self-hating Jews (refreshingly, he is not afraid to call them what they are) and recounts the bald lies fed to him by “Palestinian” professors and assorted spokespersons. The title refers to the goal of the vast number of do-good organizations—it is to catch the Jew in doing something bad (and to stage and make it up when necessary). The motivation is pure and simple hatred of Jews.

Tenenbom’s personal history—whatever one may think of it—fits him perfectly to take on the role he assumes to write this book. Born and raised in B’nai Brak in an ultra-orthodox (anti-Zionist) family, he rebels, goes to the United States and then Germany. Coming to Israel after many years, he

Tenenbom and Jibril



passes himself off as a non-Jewish German journalist and as such is warmly welcomed by the assortment of haters he interviews—a number of whom express their sorrow that his countrymen did not finish the job when Hitler was in charge. Tenenbom clearly enjoys the challenge in being “under cover,” courting danger in establishing a friendship with Fatah commander Jibril Rajoub. (Sentenced to life in prison Rajoub was one of the 1150 released for three Israeli prisoners in Israel’s idiotic 1985 prisoner “exchange”).

Fortunately Tenenbom’s cover was never blown—but it’s doubtful if he could write a sequel.

### Columbia Leads All the Rest



Columbia

It’s a tough competition, as campuses vie with each other in anti-Semitic activity, but Columbia leads all the rest. That is the conclusion of David Horowitz’s Freedom Center, which gives Columbia pride of place in its list of the 10 U.S. campuses with the worst record in 2014. According to the Center, universities in the top 10 “played host to numerous incidents of anti-Jewish acts” on university property that were often supported by university funds, despite the fact this was forbidden under campus codes of conduct.



Univ. of Georgia

The other nine, in order of infamy, were George Mason University, Loyola University in Chicago, Portland State, San Diego State, San Francisco State, Temple, University of California at Los Angeles and Vassar.

Columbia’s very large number of Jewish students appear to do nothing to combat the situation. Contrast this with the pro-Israel resolution recently passed by the student government of the University of Georgia. Although the university has relatively few Jewish students, its student government, in a show of solidarity, calls for the university to expand opportunities for study in Israel on both the undergraduate and graduate level across all fields of study.

### Beyond the Law

The Danish born Arab assassin of the Jewish volunteer security guard at a synagogue and a Danish film director lived in what the *New York Times* describes as the “shabby-chic” area of Copenhagen known as Nørrebro. The following is a description of Nørrebro from Chapter 8 of Norman Berdichevsky’s 2011 book *An Introduction to Danish Culture* (available on Amazon).

“A few days after my visit to Faaborg, I was strolling through contemporary Copenhagen in the bustling Nørrebro neighborhood. I could see how a major traffic thoroughfare reserved for bus traffic only and where parking for motorists was strictly forbidden, had been expropriated as a No-Go area for ‘ordinary citizens’ (i.e. the non-Muslim majority). The lane along a stretch of the neighborhood’s major thoroughfare, Nørrebrogade, has been taken over by parked cars that are utilized by shop owners (all Muslim) to store their wares (predominantly fruit and vegetables) or simply expropriated by ‘passers-by’ who have illegally parked, knowing full well that the Danish police and parking officials will not uphold

the law against Muslims. This is nothing less than the existence of a separate law for those who now constitute a parallel culture under protection of their own Sharia law that are off limits to all others.

“A few years ago, such a development would have been unimaginable. Even taxis are forbidden to use the special bus lane reserved for ‘collective traffic’ and drivers violating the edict are subject to stiff fines. Actually parking in the lane would have been an inconceivable affront to public order. Many American tourists still marvel at how most Danes are so law abiding that they wait an extra minute or two at crossroads where the light has not yet turned green even though there is no traffic visible on the horizon. Many motorists park in legal zones in the center of Copenhagen and pay up to 26 kroner (more than \$5) an hour for the privilege. Today, any vehicles on police or fire fighting duty in several immigrant areas are accompanied by extra protection if called on to provide emergency service.

“Danes returning to Copenhagen from nearby Malmø where Muslims constitute a significant proportion of the population can tell their neighbors that the Swedish police no longer use wheel-locks on illegally parked vehicles for fear of provoking a major incident among Muslim residents. Apparently Denmark is still somewhat behind Sweden with regard to acknowledging a ‘parallel Muslim society’. The conclusion is however inescapable. The Muslim minority of immigrants and their children/grandchildren feel increasingly emboldened to act beyond the law.”

### **Michael Ordman’s Amazing Israel**

Israel’s new Sorek desalination plant is now at full capacity, producing 627,000 cubic meters of drinking water daily. With the lowest rate of energy consumption in the world, its water is the cheapest of any large-scale desalination plant.

In a rare positive mention of Israel, CNN describes the exoskeleton from Israel’s ReWalk that is changing the lives of paraplegics. People previously confined to wheelchairs can now walk upright once again.

Ben-Gurion University is hosting “Light and Blindness,” a day-long exhibition of research-and-development activities in Israel designed to improve the quality of life for people with visual impairment.

### **Zionism 101.org: Herbert Zweibon’s Last Project**

Online now: [British Mandate IV: Illegal Immigration](#)

*Illegal Immigration* describes the desperate efforts of Jews to reach Palestine even as the British cruelly bar the country’s gates. Indeed, the first two people killed by the British on the opening day of World War II are not Nazis, but two Jews aboard the SS Tiger Hill.

There are already 40 videos on the site, covering everything from Zionism’s founding fathers to Christian Zionism.

[Zionism 101.org](#) is free. You need only register to see the videos and to be informed when the next video is available.

## Hell on Earth

Mordechai Kedar

Islamic State publicized a horrifying twenty minute video this week, the high point of which was the execution of a Jordanian pilot, Maaz al-Kassasbeh, by burning him alive. The film attempts to justify the punishment by describing Jordan's part in the war against ISIS, using photos of ISIS dead, including women, children, men and mainly those burned to death.



The entire film is meant to justify the scene that is shown near its end: the burning alive of the Jordanian pilot. The event is carefully staged: the pilot is put in an iron cage so that he has no chance of escaping the fire, and the orange clothes which he wears throughout the film are soaked in gasoline. Even the sand under the cage is full of gasoline and a rivulet of gasoline-soaked sand reaches the spot where a soldier stands carrying a stick to which a gasoline-soaked rag is attached. Another soldier lights the rag, it sets the rivulet on fire, the flames advance towards the cage and set the gasoline under the pilot's feet ablaze and after the pilot dies in excruciating agony, a bulldozer arrives and covers the cage with rocks.

What the film presents is nothing new to anyone who is familiar with Islamic sources, those that tell about how Ali ibn Abi Talib, the cousin of Mohammed who married his daughter Fatima and became the fourth Caliph, burned two heretics to death. There is a dispute among Islamic religious figures about whether that is allowed, opponents claiming that only God is licensed to condemn heretics to the flames – that is, to burn in Hell. Islamic State – which sees itself as the force that will reestablish the original Islamic State – uses Ali's precedent on the burning of enemies, and allows punishment by fire on earth.

This point is extremely important to those in charge of the ISIS propaganda machine: the message the film conveys is that anyone who attacks Islamic State will be condemned to a living Hell – and if he is unsure about how Hell looks and about what happens to the wicked there, he now has a movie that answers both questions. Just for comparison's sake: several months ago, the web was full of ISIS fighters talking about Yazidi girls that they were going to have their way with, and that, too, was a clear message: that is, instead of waiting for 72 virgins, whoever joins ISIS gets to enjoy Paradise on earth.

Another reason for burning the pilot to death is the Islamic legal principle of mutuality – the punishment must fit the crime. In the case of the Jordanian pilot the video takes pains to show ISIS victims, including children, burned in coalition attacks. This presentation of burned victims is meant to justify the method by which the pilot is executed, based on the mutuality principle.

Another important detail that appears in the movie is a long list of Jordanian pilots, some accompanied by a photograph and a home address, the point of which is to encourage Jordanians who identify with ISIS to take revenge on these pilots as well as to deter Jordanian pilots from taking part in the air battles against ISIS. Without a shred of doubt, the ISIS psychological war machine invested much time and talent in producing this movie, using graphics and other techniques to get its message across.

Some commentators are engaged in a contest over who can demonize ISIS more, and the expressions heard in the last few days are justifiably harsh, but this is exactly what the ISIS fighters want to hear. They want to plant fear in the hearts of their enemies, so that demonizing them plays right into their hands by heightening the fears of other populations, especially in the West.

The right way to react is to carry out an in-depth, objective and balanced analysis of the activities of ISIS and the words of its spokesmen in an effort to get to the bottom of the cultural and

religious sources of its leaders - this, so as to find their weak points and use them. For example: ISIS fighters believe that if a woman kills them, they will not be *shahids* and will not be sent to Paradise. The Kurdish army in northern Iraq, the Peshmerga, made use of this belief by enlisting women fighters who would shout and ululate as they approached ISIS positions. When the ISIS fighters heard the Kurdish women's battle cries, they fled to prevent their being killed by a woman.

As soon as the barbaric murder of the Jordanian pilot became known, Jordan retaliated by hanging a man and woman who were members of Al Qaeda and whose death sentences had not been carried out for several years.

King Abdullah the Second gave a short speech to his citizens in which he vowed to avenge the blood of the pilot in the war against Islamic State.

The king must go out to war against Islamic State or he will suffer strong criticism from the Bedouin tribes for whom avenging the blood of their brother pilot is a holy mission. The message that went out to the Bedouin and the empathy with their pain were tangible in the red Bedouin keffiyah that the king wore on his head while giving his speech.

On the other hand, the king must also give a clear signal to those Jordanians who identify with Islamic State – and there are more than a few of those – that his long arm will catch up with them and deal with them harshly. If there is an escalation of hostilities between Jordan and ISIS, the Jordanian police will probably arrest a significant number of citizens suspected of ISIS sympathies, especially those living in the southern city of Maan and the Syrian refugees in the Alzatri camp in northern Jordan.

Israel must follow the war between Jordan and ISIS closely, because its results will determine who stands opposite her on the other side of the Jordan River - a sovereign country with which we have a peace agreement or a terror organization par excellence, totally devoid of ethical limitations.

Israel and Jordan are in the same pit today in the war against an organization that wants to bring the fires of Hell to the Middle East so as to destroy whatever is not in line with their world view.

*Dr. Mordechai Kedar is a senior lecturer in the Department of Arabic at Bar-Ilan University. This appeared on February 4 on IsraelNationalNews.com.*

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## **We Can Kill Our Way To Victory**

Daniel Greenfield

“We cannot win this war by killing them,” Marie Harf said on MSNBC.

Reversing thousands of years of battlefield experience in which wars were won by “killing them”, the State Department spokeswoman argued that you can’t defeat ISIS by killing its fighters.

“We cannot kill our way out of this war,” she said. “We need in the medium and longer term to go after the root causes that lead people to join these groups, whether it is lack of opportunity for jobs.”

War is one of the few things in life we can reliably kill our way out of. The United States has had a great track record of killing our way out of wars. We killed our way out of WWI. We killed our way out of WWII. The problem began when we stopped trying to kill our way out of wars and started trying to hug our way out of wars instead. Progressive academics added war to economics, terrorism and the climate in the list of subjects they did not understand and wanted to make certain that no one else was allowed to understand. Because the solution to war is so obvious that no progressive could possibly think of it.

Harf’s argument is a familiar one. There was a time when progressive reformers had convinced politicians that we couldn’t arrest, shoot, imprison or execute our way out of crime.



We couldn't stop crime by fighting crime. Instead the root causes of crime had to be addressed. The police became social workers and criminals overran entire cities. The public demanded action and a new wave of mayors got tough on crime. While the sociologists, social workers, activists and bleeding hearts wailed that it wouldn't work, surprisingly locking up criminals did stop them from committing crimes.



Marie Harf

It was a revelation almost as surprising as realizing that it does take a good guy with a gun to stop a bad guy with a gun. Addressing root causes won't stop a killing spree in progress. (That's another one of those things we can and do kill our way out of.)

But bad ideas are harder to kill than bad people. And stupid ideas are the hardest ideas of all to kill.

The same plan that failed to stop street gangs and drug dealers has been deployed to defeat ISIS. Heading it up are progressives who don't believe that killing the enemy wins wars.

General Patton told the Third Army, "The harder we push, the more Germans we kill. The more Germans we kill, the fewer of our men will be killed." That kind of thinking is passé. General McChrystal, Obama's favorite commander (before he had to be purged for insulting Obama) had a much better plan.

"We will not win based on the number of Taliban we kill," he said. "We must avoid the trap of winning tactical victories—but suffering strategic defeats—by causing civilian casualties or excessive damage and thus alienating the people."

Under Obama's rotating shift of commanders, we avoided the trap of winning tactical victories. Instead of following Patton's maxim, American casualties doubled. The Taliban struck closer to Kabul while US soldiers avoided engaging the enemy because they wouldn't be given permission to attack unless the Taliban announced themselves openly while avoiding mosques or civilian buildings.

"We will not win simply by killing insurgents," McChrystal had insisted. "We will help the Afghan people win by securing them, by protecting them from intimidation, violence and abuse."

But we couldn't protect the Afghan people without killing the Taliban. Civilian casualties caused by the United States fell 28 percent, but the Taliban more than made up for it by increasing their killing of civilians by 40 percent. Not only did we avoid the trap of a tactical victory, but we also suffered a strategic defeat. American soldiers couldn't kill insurgents, protect civilians or even protect themselves. We've tried the McChrystal way and over 2,000 American soldiers came home in boxes from Afghanistan trying to win the hearts and minds of the Afghans. Many more returned missing arms and legs. The Taliban poll badly among Afghans, but instead of hiring a PR expert to improve their image, a Pentagon report expects them to be encircling key cities by 2017.

Unlike our leaders, the Taliban are not worried about falling into the trap of winning tactical victories. They are big believers in killing their way to popularity. As ISIS and Boko Haram have demonstrated, winning by killing works better than trying to win wars by winning polls.

Now the same whiz kids that looked for the root cause of the problem in Afghanistan by dumping money everywhere, including into companies linked to Al Qaeda and the Taliban, think that the way to beat ISIS is with unemployment centers and job training. Many of the ISIS Jihadists come from the social welfare paradises of Europe where there are more people employed to find the root causes of terrorism through welfare than there are people working to fight it. So far they haven't had much luck either.

The Europeans were still searching for the root causes of Muslim terrorism back when Obama was smoking pot on a dirty couch. They're still searching for them even while newspapers, cafes and synagogues are shot up. Meanwhile unarmed police officers lie on the ground and beg for their lives.

Obama's real ISIS strategy is even worse than his Afghan strategy. He doesn't have a plan for beating ISIS. He has a plan for preventing it from expanding while the sociologists try to figure out the root causes for its popularity. American air power isn't there to crush ISIS. It's there to stop it from launching any major advances and embarrassing him too much. Meanwhile hearts and minds will be won. At least those minds that haven't been beheaded and those hearts that haven't been burned to ash.

We won't be falling into the trap of winning victories. Instead we'll be figuring out how to create jobs so that all the ISIS fighters go home to Copenhagen and Paris where they won't be Obama's problem.

But while it's tempting to believe that stupid ideas like these are solely the realm of lefties like Obama, it was Mitt Romney who announced during the final debate that, "We can't kill our way out of this mess."

"We're going to have to put in place a very comprehensive and robust strategy to help the world of Islam and other parts of the world, reject this radical violent extremism," he insisted, calling for education and economic development.

"Killing our way out of this mess" has become an orphaned strategy. Neither Democrats nor Republicans want to take it home with them. But killing our way out of wars used to be a bipartisan strategy.

Truman believed in a plan to "kill as many as possible." Eisenhower could casually write, "We should have killed more of them." But why listen to the leaders who oversaw America's last great war when we can instead listen to the architects of the social strategy that turned our cities into war zones?

What did Eisenhower and Truman know that Obama doesn't? They knew war.

Truman cheated his way into WWI, despite being an only son and half-blind. He took the initiative and took the war to the enemy. They don't make Democrats like that anymore. They do make Democrats like Barack Obama, who use Marines as umbrella stands and whose strategy is not to offend the enemy.

In Afghanistan, the top brass considered a medal for "courageous restraint". If we go on trying to not kill our way out of Iraq, that medal will go well with all the burned bodies and severed heads.

*This appeared on February 25<sup>th</sup> on <http://sultanknish.blogspot.com/>*

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## **The Hack's Guide to Covering Israel**

Matti Friedman

*This is excerpted from a speech before the Britain Israel Communication & Research Centre in London on January 26.*

I have been writing from and about Israel for most of the past 20 years, since I moved there from Toronto at age 17. During the five and a half years I spent as part of the international press corps as a reporter for the American news agency The Associated Press, between 2006 and 2011, I gradually began to be aware of certain malfunctions in the coverage of the Israel story--recurring omissions, recurring inflations, decisions made according to considerations that were not journalistic but political, all in the context of a story staffed and reported more than any other international story on earth. When I worked in the AP's Jerusalem bureau, the Israel story was covered by more AP news staff than China,

or India, or all of the fifty-odd countries of sub-Saharan Africa combined. This is representative of the industry as a whole.

In early 2009, to give one fairly routine example of an editorial decision of the kind I mean, I was instructed by my superiors to report a second-hand story taken from an Israeli newspaper about offensive T-shirts supposedly worn by Israeli soldiers. We had no confirmation of our own of the story's veracity, and one doesn't see much coverage of things US Marines or British infantrymen have tattooed on their chests or arms. And yet T-shirts worn by Israeli soldiers were newsworthy in the eyes of one of the world's most powerful news organizations. This was because we sought to hint or say outright that Israeli soldiers were war criminals, and every detail supporting that portrayal was to be seized upon.



Matti Friedman

Much of the international press corps covered the T-shirt story. At around the same time, several Israeli soldiers were quoted anonymously in a school newsletter speaking of abuses they had supposedly witnessed while fighting in Gaza; we wrote no fewer than three separate stories about this, although the use of sources whose identity isn't known to reporters is banned for good reason by the AP's own in-house rules. This story, too, was very much one that we wanted to tell. By the time the soldiers came forward to say they hadn't actually witnessed the events they supposedly described, and were trying to make a point to young students about the horrors and moral challenges of warfare, it was, of course, too late.

Also in those same months, in early 2009, two reporters in our bureau obtained details of a peace offer made by the Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, to the Palestinians several months before, and deemed by the Palestinians to be insufficient. The offer proposed a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza with a capital in a shared Jerusalem. This should have been one of the year's biggest stories. But an Israeli peace offer and its rejection by the Palestinians didn't suit *our* story. The bureau chief ordered both reporters to ignore the Olmert offer, and they did, despite a furious protest from one of them, who later termed this decision "the biggest fiasco I've seen in 50 years of journalism." But it was very much in keeping not only with the practice at the AP, but in the press corps in general. Soldiers' vile t-shirts were worth a story. Anonymous and unverifiable testimonies of abuses were worth three. A peace proposal from the Israeli prime minister to the Palestinian president was not to be reported at all.

Vandalism of Palestinian property is a story. Neo-Nazi rallies at Palestinian universities or in Palestinian cities are not--I saw images of such rallies suppressed on more than one occasion. Jewish hatred of Arabs is a story. Arab hatred of Jews is not. Our policy, for example, was not to mention the assertion in the Hamas founding charter that Jews were responsible for engineering both world wars and the Russian and French revolutions, despite the obvious insight this provides into the thinking of one of the most influential actors in the conflict.

Over time, I came to understand that the malfunctions I was witnessing, and in which I was playing a part, were not limited to the AP. I saw that they were rather part of a broader problem in the way the press functioned, and in how it saw its job. The international press in Israel had become less an observer of the conflict than a player in it. It had moved away from careful explanation and toward a kind of political character assassination on behalf of the side it identified as being right. It valued a kind of ideological uniformity from which you were not allowed to stray. So having begun with limited criticism of certain editorial decisions, I now found myself with a broad critique of the press.

Eventually, however, I realized that even the press wasn't the whole story. The press was playing a key role in an intellectual phenomenon taking root in the West, but it wasn't the cause, or not the only cause -- it was both blown on a certain course by the prevailing ideological winds, and causing those winds to blow with greater force. Many journalists would like you to believe that the news is

created by a kind of algorithm – that it’s a mechanical, even scientific process in which events are inserted, processed, and presented. But of course the news is an imperfect and entirely human affair, the result of interactions between sources, reporters, and editors, all of whom bear the baggage of their background and who reflect, as we all do to some extent, the prejudices of their peers.

In the aftermath of 2014’s Gaza war, and in light of events in Europe in recent months, it should be clear that something deep and toxic is going on. Understanding what that is, it seems to me, will help us understand something important not only about journalism but about the Western mind and the way it sees the world.

What presents itself as political criticism, as analysis, or as journalism, is coming to sound more and more like a new version of a much older complaint – that Jews are troublemakers, a negative force in world events, and that if these people, as a collective, could somehow be made to vanish, we would all be better off. This is, or should be, a cause for alarm, and not only among people sympathetic to Israel or concerned with Jewish affairs. What is in play right now has less to do with the world of politics than with the worlds of psychology and religion, and less to do with Israel than with those condemning Israel.

The only group of people subject to a systematic boycott at present in the Western world is Jews, appearing now under the convenient euphemism “Israelis.” The only country that has its own “apartheid week” on campuses is the Jewish country. Protesters have interfered with the unloading of Israeli shipping on the West Coast of the United States, and there are regular calls for a boycott of anything produced in the Jewish state. No similar tactics are currently employed against any other ethnic group or nationality, no matter how egregious the human rights violations attributed to that group’s country of origin.

The human costs of the Middle Eastern adventures of America and Britain in this century have been far higher, and far harder to explain, than anything Israel has ever done. They have involved occupations, and the violence they unleashed continues as I speak here this evening. No one boycotts American or British professors. Turkey is a democracy, and a NATO member, and yet its occupation of northern Cyprus and long conflict with the stateless Kurds – many of whom see themselves as occupied – are viewed with a yawn; there is no “Turkish Apartheid Week.” The world is full of injustice. Billions of people are oppressed. In Congo, 5 million people are dead. The time has come for everyone to admit that the fashionable disgust for Israel among many in the West is not liberal but is selective, disproportionate, and discriminatory.

There are simply too many voices coming from too many places, expressing themselves in too poisonous a way, for us to conclude that this is a narrow criticism of the occupation. It’s time for the people making these charges to look closely at themselves, and for us to look closely at them.

Naming and understanding this sentiment is important, as it is becoming one of the key intellectual trends of our time. We might think of it as the “Cult of the Occupation.” This belief system, for that is what it is, uses the occupation as a way of talking about other things.

As usual with Western religions, the center of this one is in the Holy Land. The dogma posits that the occupation is not a conflict like any other, but that it is the very symbol of conflict: that the minute state inhabited by a persecuted minority in the Middle East is in fact a symbol of the ills of the West – colonialism, nationalism, militarism, and racism. In the recent riots in Ferguson, Missouri, for example, a sign hoisted by marchers linked the unrest between African Americans and the police to Israeli rule over Palestinians.

The cult’s priesthood can be found among the activists, NGO experts, and ideological journalists who have turned coverage of this conflict into a catalogue of Jewish moral failings, as if Israeli society were different from any other group of people on earth, as if Jews deserve to be mocked for having suffered and failed to be perfect as a result.

The cult and its belief system are in control of the narrative, just as the popular kids in a school and those who decide what clothes or music are acceptable. In the social milieu of the reporters, NGO workers, and activists, which is the same social world, these are the correct opinions.

So prevalent has this kind of thinking become that participating in liberal intellectual life in the West increasingly requires you to subscribe at least outwardly to this dogma, particularly if you're a Jew and thus suspected of the wrong sympathies. If you're a Jew from Israel, your participation is increasingly conditional on an abject and public display of self-flagellation. Your participation, indeed, is increasingly unwelcome.

What, exactly, is going on?

Observers of Western history understand that at times of confusion and unhappiness, and of great ideological ferment, negative sentiment tends to coagulate around Jews. Discussions of the great topics of the time often end up as discussions about Jews.

In the late 1800s, for example, French society was riven by the clash between the old France of the church and army, and the New France of liberalism and the rule of law. The French were preoccupied with the question of who is French, and who is not. They were smarting from their military humiliation by the Prussians. All of this sentiment erupted around the figure of a Jew, Alfred Dreyfus, accused of betraying France as a spy for Germany. His accusers knew he was innocent, but that didn't matter; he was a symbol of everything they wanted to condemn.

To give another example: Germans in the 1920s and '30s were preoccupied with their humiliation in the Great War. This became a discussion of Jewish traitors who had stabbed Germany in the back. Germans were preoccupied as well with the woes of their economy – this became a discussion of Jewish wealth, and Jewish bankers.

In the years of the rise of Communism and the Cold War, communists concerned with their ideological opponents talked about Jewish capitalists and cosmopolitans, or Jewish doctors plotting against the state. At the very same time, in capitalist societies threatened by communism, people condemned Jewish Bolsheviks.

This is the face of this recurring obsession. As the journalist Charles Maurras wrote, approvingly, in 1911: "Everything seems impossible, or frighteningly difficult, without the providential arrival of anti-Semitism, through which all things fall into place and are simplified."

The West today is preoccupied with a feeling of guilt about the use of power. That's why the Jews, in their state, are now held up in the press and elsewhere as the prime example of the abuse of power. That's why for so many the global villain, as portrayed in newspapers and on TV, is none other than the Jewish soldier, or the Jewish settler. This is not because the Jewish settler or soldier is responsible for more harm than anyone else on earth--no sane person would make that claim. It is rather because these are the heirs to the Jewish banker or Jewish commissar of the past. It is because when moral failure raises its head in the Western imagination, the head tends to wear a skullcap.

One would expect the growing scale and complexity of the conflict in the Middle East over the past decade to have eclipsed the fixation on Israel in the eyes of the press and other observers. Israel is, after all, a sideshow: The death toll in Syria in less than four years far exceeds the toll in the Israel-Arab conflict in a century. The annual death toll in the West Bank and Jerusalem is a morning in Iraq.

And yet it is precisely in these years that the obsession has grown worse.

This makes little sense, unless we understand that people aren't fixated on Israel despite everything else going on--but rather because of everything else going on. As Maurras wrote, when you use the Jew as the symbol of what is wrong, "all things fall into place and are simplified."

The last few decades have brought the West into conflict with the Islamic world. Terrorists have attacked New York, Washington, London, Madrid, and now Paris. America and Britain caused the unraveling of Iraq, and hundreds of thousands of people are dead there. Afghanistan was occupied and thousands of Western soldiers killed, along with countless civilians--but the Taliban are alive and well,

undeterred. Ghaddafi was removed, and Libya is no better off. All of this is confusing and discouraging. It causes people to search for answers and explanations, and these are hard to come by. It is in this context that the Cult of the Occupation has caught on. The idea is that the problems in the Middle East have something to do with Jewish arrogance and perfidy, that the sins of one's own country can be projected upon the Western world's old blank screen. This is the idea increasingly reflected on campuses, in labor unions, and in the media fixation on Israel. It's a projection, one whose chief instrument is the press.

As one BBC reporter informed a Jewish interviewee on camera several weeks ago, after a Muslim terrorist murdered four Jewish shoppers at a Paris supermarket, "Many critics of Israel's policy would suggest that the Palestinians suffered hugely at Jewish hands as well." Everything, that is, can be linked to the occupation, and Jews can be blamed even for the attacks against them. This isn't the voice of the perpetrators, but of the enablers. The voice of the enablers is less honest than that of the perpetrators, and more dangerous for being disguised in respectable English. This voice is confident and growing in volume. This is why the year 2015 finds many Jews in Western Europe eyeing their suitcases again.

The Jews of the Middle East are outnumbered by the Arabs of the Middle East 60 to 1, and by the world's Muslims 200 to 1. Half of the Jews in Israel are there because their families were forced from their homes in the 20th century not by Christians in Europe, but by Muslims in the Middle East. Israel currently has Hezbollah on its northern border, al-Qaeda on its northeastern and southern borders, and Hamas in Gaza. None of these groups seek an end to the occupation, but rather openly wish to destroy Israel. But it is naïve to point out these facts. The facts don't matter: We are in the world of symbols. In this world, Israel has become a symbol of what is wrong--not Hamas, not Hezbollah, not Great Britain, not America, not Russia.

Many people, particularly young people, are having trouble maintaining their balance amid this ideological onslaught, which is successfully disguised as journalism or analysis, and is phrased in the language of progressive politics. I would like to help them keep their bearings.

I don't believe, however, that anyone should make a feeling of persecution the center of their identity, of their Judaism, or of their relationship with Israel. The obsession is a fact, but it isn't a new fact, and it shouldn't immobilize us in anger, or force us into a defensive crouch. It shouldn't make us less willing to seek to improve our situation, to behave with compassion to our neighbors, or to continue building the model society that Israel's founders had in mind.

I was in Tel Aviv not long ago, on Rothschild Boulevard. The city was humming with life. Signs of prosperity were everywhere, in the renovated Bauhaus buildings, in the clothes, the stores. I watched the people go by: Kids with old bikes and tattoos, businesspeople, men with women, women with women, men with men, all speaking the language of the Bible and Jewish prayer. The summer's Hamas rockets were already a memory, just a few months old but subsumed in the frantic, irrepressible life of the country. There were cranes everywhere, raising new buildings. There were schoolchildren with oversize knapsacks, and parents with strollers. I heard Arabic, Russian, and French, and the country went about its business with a potent cheer and determination that you miss if all you see are threats and hatred. There have always been threats and hatred, and it has never stopped us. We have enemies, and we have friends. The dogs bark, as the saying goes, and the convoy rolls by.

One of the questions presented to us by the wars of the modern age is what now constitutes victory. In the 21st century, when a battlefield is no longer conquered or lost, when land isn't changing hands and no one ever surrenders, what does it mean to win?

The answer is that victory is no longer determined on the battlefield. It's determined in the center, in the society itself. Who has built a better society? Who has provided better lives for people? Where is there the most optimism? Where can the most happy people be found? One report on world happiness ranked Israel as the 11th happiest country on earth. The UK was 22nd.

Israel's intellectual opponents can rant about the moral failings of the Jews, obscuring their obsession in whatever sophisticated way they choose. The gunmen of Hamas and their allies can stand on heaps of rubble and declare victory. They can fire rockets, and shoot up supermarkets. But if you look at Tel Aviv, or at any thriving neighborhood in Jerusalem, Netanya, Rishon Letzion, or Haifa, you understand that this is victory. This is where we've won, and where we win every day.

Matti Friedman worked for the Associated Press in Jerusalem between 2006 and 2011. The full speech can be read at <http://quadrant.org.au/opinion/qed/2015/01/hacks-guide-covering-israel/>

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## Netanyahu: Steward of Israel's Destiny

Ruth King

On Feb. 15, 2015 Israel's Prime Minister said "Jews have been murdered again on European soil only because they were Jews. Of course, Jews deserve protection in every country, but we say to Jews, to our brothers and sisters: Israel is your home." The next day he repeated: "To the Jews of Europe and to the Jews of the world I say that Israel is waiting for you with open arms."

The response was less than gracious. *The New York Times* called it "insensitive and timed for political advantage."

Foreign leaders were also miffed.

President François Hollande of France told French Jews: "Your place is here, in your home. France is your country." And again: "I will not just let what was said in Israel pass, leading people to believe that Jews no longer have a place in Europe and in France, in particular." That Sunday, hundreds of Jewish tombstones were found vandalized in eastern France.

The Danish prime minister, Helle Thorning-Schmidt said: "The Jewish community is a large and integrated part of Danish society." Thanks Helle. Your nation is exploding with Muslim immigrants, who get generous benefits from welfare programs, but engage in Islamic violence and demands for Sharia law. Not a peep from you.



Helle Thorning-Schmidt

Most irritating were the responses of some Jews: Thanks for the option but we like it here was the line of some Swedish, Danish, Belgian, Austrian and French Jews.

Jair Melchior, Denmark's chief rabbi, said he was "disappointed" by Mr. Netanyahu's call. For good measure he added: "If the way we deal with terror is to run somewhere else, we should all run to a deserted island."

Shlomo Avineri, an Israeli professor of political science who just prior to the Yom Kippur War, in the pages of *Commentary*, accused Israel of harboring a "Massada complex", described Mr. Netanyahu's call as "an intellectual and moral mistake" and accused him of taking a populist stance for electoral purposes.

Have these Jews forgotten so soon what happened when Jews had nowhere to go?

Harassment, violence, and economic pressure against Jews began in Germany almost immediately after the Nazi seizure of power in 1933. By September 1935 anti-Semitism was codified by the Nuremberg Laws which disenfranchised German Jews and deprived them of all political rights.

Ancillary ordinances limited their professions and employment including in the universities and scientific and cultural institutions where they were a significant force.

The hopes of the persecuted Jews, including those in Eastern Europe, were raised when The Evian Conference was convened in July 1938 to respond to their plight.

Hitler himself promised that if other nations agreed to take the Jews he would expedite their departure.

For eight days, from July 6 to 15 at Evian, France, delegates from 32 nations and 39 private organizations and some 24 voluntary organizations met and formally discussed the issue among themselves. Two hundred international journalists attended to observe and report. Bowing to British pressure, delegates from France and the United States promised that no mention of Palestine as a possible haven would be brought up. To add to their shame they agreed to rules that demanded the words "Nazi" or "Jew" not be used--only a generic "refugee" was acceptable.

Golda Meir, the attendee from Palestine, was not permitted to speak or to participate in the proceedings except as an observer. Furthermore, she could offer no succor since the gates of Palestine were clamped shut by the British. In her biography she writes: "Sitting there in that magnificent hall and listening to the delegates of thirty-two countries rise, each in turn, to explain how much they would have liked to take in substantial numbers of refugees and how unfortunate it was that they were not able to do so was a terrible experience."

In the end, the Dominican Republic was the only state that was willing to take in 100,000 Jews. Only 1,000 managed to get there but a synagogue stands in Sosua on the northern coast with a plaque recounting their history.

The conference dashed Jewish hopes. France, England, Australia and the United States all declined to take any significant number of Jewish refugees. The British delegate apologized to the Germans for their interference. Other attendees bowed out stating that economic problems made an influx of refugees impossible.

After all the posturing and feigned concern for their plight, the Jews were abandoned and the Nazis crowed that no nation would interfere on their behalf.

Fast forward to 2015.

Benjamin Netanyahu recognizes his mandate as a Zionist and Israeli. No international conferences and no parades and flowers and candle vigils will ensure Jewish safety in today's Europe. Only this time there is Israel. This is a dazzling fact. If Netanyahu had failed to issue the invitation, what message would that have sent? The message of Evian? His invitation to Europe's Jews to come to Israel was a shining moment for Benjamin Netanyahu.

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Outpost is distributed free to Members  
of Americans for a Safe Israel

Annual membership: \$50.

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