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The ISIS-Iran Revolving Door

William Mehlman

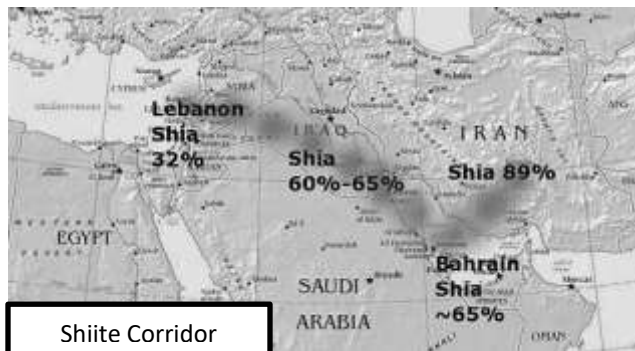
Benjamin Netanyahu's late August trip to Sochi, his fourth Russian sojourn over the past 16 months, had nothing to do with the amenities at Vladimir Putin's Black Sea summer retreat. Accompanied by Mossad chief Yossi Cohen, newly appointed National Security Council director Meir ben Shabbat and Knesset Speaker Yuli Edelstein, doubling as his personal translator, the prime minister provided Putin with what *Times of Israel* correspondent Raoul Wootliff described as "sensitive, credible and very disturbing intelligence" on Iran's continued military presence in Syria.

The three hour-plus meeting, in brief, is reported to have gone something like this:

Israel has its "red lines" in the matter of Iran's role in Syria, the reddest of them being its unqualified objection to Iran's occupation of strategic positions abandoned by a defeated ISIS to create a "land bridge" linking Tehran, via Iraq and Syria, to its missile-armored Hezbollah subsidiary in Lebanon. It is a link that could put the Ayatollah's troops on Israel's northeastern Golan border. The Israeli delegation is said to have made it "clear" it will take whatever measures may be necessary to prevent that link from being forged, failing Moscow's unwillingness or inability to rein in its Iranian partner.

In a column entitled "What Israel Hoped to Gain," *Jerusalem Post* diplomatic correspondent Herb Keinon defines Netanyahu's "hope" as "knowledge of what Israel will do impacting on Russia's decisions regarding its post-war arrangements with Syria." He points to the "millions of dollars and enormous political capital" Moscow has expended on keeping Bashar Assad in power. If Israel is drawn into a war with Syria that investment could go up in smoke." [Netanyahu] wants the Russian leader to ask himself one question," Keinon avers. "Is Iran worth the risk to his massive investment?" The answer, as he notes, rests on Putin's evaluation of the credibility of Israel's threat, but it has certainly given Putin pause for contemplation.

The same, regrettably, cannot be said of a U.S. defense/diplomatic team presented with duplicate evidence by Mossad a week earlier in Washington of Syria's move to "Lebanize" Syria. The Israelis came to Washington looking for an American commitment to halt that process. They didn't get it. While Russia may not be indifferent to Israel's concerns, in the view of Jonathan Spyer, director of the Rubin Center ID Herzlia, "the U.S. does not seem to wish to be a player in this arena."



In fact, the only country immediately capable of interdicting Iran's Shia "corridor of power" from Tehran to Beirut has braked that effort in favor of a policy of "deconfliction" with Iran's Syrian puppet. It speaks to what experts see as a strategic disconnect between the State Department and the White House. It was most startlingly displayed in the course of a Q and A between Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Chris Wallace of Fox News in which Tillerson

conceded that he and President Trump might be said to be on somewhat separate wave lengths regarding policy in the Middle East. The potential conflict was encapsulated in an email exchange between the anti-ISIS coalition partners in Syria and Col. Joseph Scrocca, director of CJTF-OIR, the U.S. arm of that coalition. "The coalition," Scrocca wrote, "has no fight with the Syrian regime or its allies [Iran and Russia] in the counter Daesh [ISIS] fight. The coalition will not support any operations that are not against Daesh." That's as clear as it gets. The U.S. has no strategy for stopping Iran and Iranian backed militias from filling the voids in Syria created by the departure of ISIS.

Jonathan Schanzer, Senior Vice President for Research at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, argues that the Trump Administration is “aware of the Iranian threat in Syria, but is seeking a policy consistent with its values.” That translates, in his words, to embedding only a “light footprint” on the ground, while “crafting an overarching Iran policy” open to the contribution of “others” and avoiding the conduct of an expensive war. It all sounds suspiciously like a replay of the “leading from behind” Obama strategy that resulted in Moscow’s accession of a starring role in the future of a Middle East once the exclusive province of the United States.

America’s faint appetite for involvement with the Iranians in Syria is understandable. Having donated millions in resources and pools of Hezbollah proxy Shia blood to the survival of Bashar Assad; having blown on missile factories in northeast Syria and installations snaking down to the Eurphrates their half billion dollar American gift for a nuclear recess that’s left their military activities free of inspection, the Ayatollahs aren’t about to pick up and go home just because ISIS has been sent packing. It’s payback time and they intend to cash in their chips not just via proxies, as is the case in Lebanon and Gaza, but with Iranian forces on the ground, in the air and at sea. The object: amplification of their threat to destroy Israel via a powerful third front on its northeast border. Dissuading them of that notion is going to be expensive.

How much skin the U.S. is prepared to invest in that process is still uncertain. We’ll get a better fix on the subject this month when President Trump is presented with his third 90-day opportunity to decertify America’s further participation in a 2015 JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan Agreement) cobbled together by the P5+1 (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany) that endowed Iran with a cornucopia of financial, military and geopolitical benefits in exchange for minimal, largely unverifiable and reversible restraints on its nuclear weapons program. Under State Department pleading that it wasn’t diplomatically ready for a course change, Trump reluctantly recertified JCPOA in April and July.

This was another one of those “agreements” fan-danced around the Senate approval process by Barack Obama that Trump promised to ax at his first opportunity. As seen by Eric Mandel, director of the Middle East Political and Information Network, a third failure to decertify would “flash a green light for an Iranian march to the Syrian-Iraq border, a final nail in the coffin of any further attempt to stop an Iranian land corridor to the Mediterranean.”

That despite mounting evidence of violation, this deal with the world’s foremost exporter of terror is coming onto its third Trump administration encore speaks volumes about what has been going on in the State Department. Trump’s determination to sever America’s commitment to the deal was reinforced by German intelligence reports of “illicit Iranian nuclear and missile weapons procurement attempts” in that country, much of it documented in a 189-page report compiled by Baden-Wurtenburg Southeastern State Intelligence. But its scuttling was twice interdicted by Tillerson and a couple of Obama administration holdovers on whose advice he apparently relies. In a scene related to him by a contact close to the action, Matthew R.J. Brodsky, Senior Fellow at the Washington-based Security Studies Group, informs that Tillerson essentially told the president in July “We just aren’t ready with our allies to decertify.” To which the president is reported to have replied “Isn’t it your job to get our allies ready?” Tillerson’s reported answer was, “Sorry sir, we’re just not ready. We’ll get ‘em next time.”

“Next time” is knocking on the door but still highly unclear is the State Department’s amenability to putting paid to a mistake that will inevitably nuclear weaponize a rogue nation pledged to Israel’s disappearance and irreparably damage America’s ability to shape events in the most volatile corner of the globe. In the end, of course, the decision to be made will be Donald Trump’s decision. One can only hope his compass has remained in working order.

William Mehlman represents AFSI in Israel.

From the Editor

Kafka at State

The State Department has announced that it has decided to return Jewish archives to Iraq. They had been rescued in 2003 by U.S. forces from a flooded basement in Iraqi secret services headquarters



in Baghdad and restored by the National Archives in Washington. As Caroline Glick points out, this collection of tens of thousands of documents, from sacred texts to 16th century school records, is property looted from the Jewish community by successive Iraqi regimes. As recently as 1948 Jews were the largest minority in Baghdad, a third of the population of Basra. In 1948, 900 Jews were murdered in a week long pogrom known as the “Farhud” and over the next three years 130,000 Jews were forced out of the country, most obtaining refuge in Israel. The remaining community was relentlessly persecuted until, by the time Saddam’s regime was overthrown in 2003, barely a dozen Jews remained.

It’s not that those with a legitimate claim to the documents, namely members of the former Jewish community and their descendants, have not made it. But as Glick reports, as far as the State Department is concerned, they have no claim to what the Iraqi government seized from them—this despite the fact that the Iraqi government’s claim to ownership is no stronger than the German government’s claim to ownership of Jewish property looted by the Nazis would be. Asked how the U.S. could be sure the archive would be properly cared for by Iraq, State Department spokesman Pablo Rodriguez said “the State Department will urge the Iraqi government to take the proper steps necessary to preserve the archive, and make it available to members of the public to enjoy.” Only trouble, as Glick observes, is that the “members of the public” who wish to “enjoy” the archive are all out of the country, most of them in Israel, and would visit Iraq at peril of their lives.

This writer has a suggestion: why not send to Iraq our unwanted Confederate statues, with maybe a few of Columbus thrown in, to decorate the squares from which the statues of Saddam have been removed? It makes as much sense as sending the Jewish archive to a country without Jews that hates Jews.

Terrorists Can Run for German Parliament

Bruce Bawer reports that in a remarkable decision taken in August, Germany’s Interior Ministry declined to bar the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) from campaigning as a political party in the September 24 elections to the Bundestag—this despite the fact that the PFLP is listed as a terrorist organization by the United States, Canada, the European Union and Australia. The PFLP, after Fatah the largest faction in the PLO, is a hybrid of the world’s worst ideas, calling both for Israel’s destruction and international communist revolution (which is why it is running jointly with Germany’s Marxist-Leninist party).

The PFLP’s hijacking of an El Al plane in 1968 marked the beginning of modern international Islamic terrorism. On a single day in September 1970 its members hijacked three passenger flights headed from Europe to New York. From hijacking airplanes the PFLP went on to mass murder, its most high profile acts the killing of 28 people in the Lod Airport Massacre of 1972 and assassinating Israeli Tourism Minister Rehavam Ze’evi in 2001. More recently it has been murdering Israelis in Jerusalem and

firing rockets on Israel from the Gaza Strip. Its most famous operative is Venezuelan terrorist Carlos the Jackal, now serving a life sentence in France.

No, it didn't win any seats.

But if the PFLP can run for the Bundestag why not Al Qaeda?

Israeli Hits and Misses

A hit: The Israeli air force struck a missile and chemical weapons facility near Damascus being transferred to Hezbollah—and did so from Lebanon so as not to be blocked by Russian defense systems that would have endangered her planes if they came in a different way. It was a welcome sign that Netanyahu's announced red line on such shipments would be upheld.

A miss: At the start of his meeting with President Trump in New York City on September 18, Prime Minister Netanyahu said "We will discuss the way we can seize the opportunity for peace between Israel and the Palestinians and between Israel and the Arab world." That same day Fatah and Hamas announced they are moving ahead toward "reconciliation" based on non-recognition of Israel and support for the use of terror against her. Netanyahu may think he's smart to tell Trump what he wants to hear, but he plays a very dangerous game. A major miss.

Welcome Refugees—Or Else

The European Court of Justice has ruled that EU members have no right to reject orders by the European Commission to take in their "fair share" of asylum seekers (many, if not most of them, young able-bodied economic migrants). As Soeren Kern writes, the dispute dates back to September 2015, the



height of Europe's migration crisis, when two thirds of EU member states voted to relocate 120,000 migrants from Italy and Greece to other members of the bloc (plus 40,000 the bloc had voted to distribute two months earlier).

Even those that voted for the agreement have been dragging their feet on implementation. Only Latvia and Malta have taken in their full quotas, a combined total of 469 migrants. Overall, only around 25,000 of the 160,000 have been relocated. And given a chance, the refugees/migrants themselves vote with their feet, hundreds fleeing to Germany from low benefit Eastern European countries to which they have been sent.

Armed with the new legal ruling, the European Commission is free to impose massive financial penalties on those countries, notably Poland, Hungary and Slovakia that refuse to accept any migrants. Hungary's Victor Orban has been by far the most forthright in articulating objections to the EU plan. "Let us not forget that those arriving have been raised in another religion and represent a radically different culture...Is it not worrying in itself that European Christianity is now barely able to keep Europe Christian?" He warns: "The Islamization of Europe is real." Ironically, Hungary has offered entry to someone whose claim was turned down by asylum-mecca Sweden. She's an Iranian actress who had converted to Christianity and argued her life was in danger if she was forcibly returned to Iran where apostasy is a capital offense. "Taking in persecuted Christians is our moral and constitutional duty all at once" said Hungary's Deputy Prime Minister. Of course, as far as EU gatekeepers are concerned, this is heresy to multicultural orthodoxy.

It has doubtless also crossed the minds of balky East European countries that the EU's Counterterrorism Coordinator recently estimated that 50,000 *jihadis* are now living in Europe and even

if their proportionate share of that number would be small, those *jihadis* can wreck vastly disproportionate damage on the societies which take them in.

Hijacking Jewish Culture

The Center for Jewish History (umbrella to what it calls five “partner organizations” including the American Jewish Historical Society, the American Sephardi Federation, the Leo Baeck Institute, YIVO and the Yeshiva University Museum) has selected as its new head David M. Myers, a man of whom Daniel Greenfield aptly says: “There is hardly an organization in the anti-Israel network where Myers hasn’t left his fingerprints.”

Greenfield assembles a list. Myers is listed on the Academic Advisory Board of Jewish Voices for Peace (a misnomer if ever there was one), which to cite just one examples of its “pro-peace” activities,



has sponsored talks by Alison Weir, who had claimed Jews drank Christian blood and engaged in ritual murder of Christian children in the Middle Ages. Naturally, JVP’s campus chapters vigorously promote the BDS movement. Myers is also on the advisory council of J Street, listed on the Academic Council of Open Hillel (open to BDS voices, that is) and is on the board of the New Israel Fund which provides money to BDS promoting outfits. Bizarrely, given that it would be easy to confuse ADL for an advocacy group for the Democratic Party rather than an organization devoted to

Jewish interests, Myers signed a letter claiming the ADL was a “well-known rightwing group.”

And while Jonathan Sarna, professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis, in announcing the appointment praised the “breadth” of Myers’ “scholarly work,” Greenfield notes that “anti-Zionism is the crux of Myers’ scholarship.” Sarna declares that Myers is “the very embodiment of what the Center should be.” According to whom? And there’s the rub, underlining why demonstrations in the works, by AFSI, JCC Watch and others, are not likely to have much effect. Myers was appointed *because* of his views, not in spite of them. Key figures at the Center for Jewish History (CJH) and American Jewish Historical Society are anti-Israel activists. Writes Greenfield: “CJH and some of its associated organizations have been hollowed out by a left-wing network. Some of its members openly support BDS. Others covertly aid BDS activists and supporters. Its members sign the same petitions and support each other because they share a common agenda. That is how David N. Myers, an anti-Israel activist unfit for any role in the Jewish community, ended up heading the Center for Jewish History. Myers is the tip of the iceberg. The radical activists appropriating and hijacking Jewish culture, thought and history to pursue an anti-Israel agenda are the iceberg.”

Exactly 40 years ago, in 1977, AFSI published its first pamphlet, *Breira: Counsel for Judaism* documenting the anti-Israel credentials of many of Breira’s leading figures. Breira called for an “alternative” (breira is the Hebrew for alternative) to what it described as the rubber stamp approach of Jewish leadership to Israel’s government in favor of “vigorous independent criticism.” Breira itself did not survive long, in part because of the broad based antagonism it encountered in mainstream Jewish organizations. Those organizations are now enfeebled, in good part because of the success of Breira’s descendants in infiltrating and shaping them.

Jews Over the Top on AfD

Given the vituperative Jewish reaction to the third place showing of Alternative for Germany you’d never guess that it’s the most pro-Israel party in Germany, and that includes its membership, not just its leaders.

World Jewish Congress President Ron Lauder calls AfD “a disgraceful reactionary movement which recalls the worst of Germany’s past and should be outlawed” while Charlotte Knobloch, former

president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany calls it “a nightmare come true”, accusing the AfD of aggression, contempt for humanity, conspiracy theories, *volkisch* nationalism, neo-Nazism, Holocaust denial, anti-Semitism, racism, violating the Constitution (and that’s only a few items on her long list of the party’s evils).

The AfD’s stance against Muslim immigration especially worries Germany’s Jews who claim that whoever targets Muslims will soon come after Jews. Only Jews could be so blind as to fail to see that the chief threat to their survival in Germany (and in the rest of Europe) comes from precisely the Muslim immigrants whose cause they champion.

Admittedly, there is much to cause anxiety about the AfD, including its desire to downplay the Holocaust and to refurbish the image of German soldiers in World War II. There can be little doubt that neo-Nazis lurking in today’s Germany voted for AfD. But rather than going ballistic, Jews should view the party at this point as a mixed bag. Raphael Ahren in the *Times* of Israel brings this home, noting that a wide-ranging poll commissioned by a group promoting German-Israeli relations found most AfD politicians professing to care deeply about Israel’s security. The poll also found that members of no other party were as strongly opposed to the BDS movement. Seventy-seven percent of AfD members polled agreed anti-Zionism is a form of anti-Semitism, 88% said Israel’s coming 70th birthday was a reason for Germans to celebrate and 86% supported German arms exports to Israel. AfD members scored considerably higher than members of other parties on these and similar Israel-related issues.

To the AfD Israel is a bulwark against Islam, which the party (thanks to Angela Merkel’s throwing open German borders to more than a million Muslims) views as a threat to German identity. It’s hard to disagree with either proposition.

The Counterfeit Arabs

Victor Sharpe

They are the Arabs who call themselves Palestinians.

But there is no such thing as a Palestinian people; no such thing as a Palestinian history; and no Palestinian language exists.

The present-day so-called “Palestinians” are an Arab people sharing an overwhelmingly Muslim Arab culture, ethnicity and language identical to their fellow Arabs in the Middle East and North Africa, with few if any distinctions. They are primarily the descendants of those itinerant Arabs who illegally flooded British Mandatory Palestine from Arab territories as far away as Sudan, Egypt, Syria and what was Mesopotamia (modern Iraq). They were attracted during the early decades of the 20th century by new employment opportunities provided by the Jewish pioneers, whose heroic efforts were turning the desert green again and restoring centuries of neglect that the land had endured under a succession of alien occupiers.

Britain, during its Mandate over the territory, turned a blind eye to the flood of illegal Arab aliens entering, while at the same time often arbitrarily limiting Jewish immigration into their ancestral homeland. This was a betrayal of the Mandate given to Britain to facilitate a Jewish Homeland in the geographical territory known as Palestine.

Yasser Arafat, the Egyptian born arch-terrorist, was fond of creating the absurd myth that Palestinian Arabs were descended from the Canaanites and the Philistines.

Canaanites, without doubt, were the first known inhabitants of the Land of Israel before the first Hebrews, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their wives, settled there, and before Moses brought their descendants back to the Promised Land during the Exodus from Egypt.

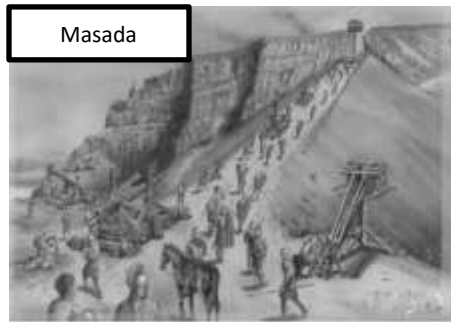
The Canaanites lived both along the coastal plain and in the mountain regions, which run like a spine down the biblical territory of Samaria and Judea. Their language was similar to Hebrew and their territory stretched north into present day Lebanon and included the present day Golan Heights.

The Canaanites were finally subdued during the reign of King David. Most Canaanites were gradually assimilated into the Jewish people and were no longer a distinguishable people.

The 'Philistines' were non-Semitic peoples who had entered the land from their homes throughout the Aegean Islands in general and from Crete in particular. These ancient Cretans arrived in Southern Canaan and along the Egyptian coastline and were known as 'Pelestim and Keretim' by the Hebrew tribes.

It appears that their first settlement may have been Gaza. Later they settled in Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gat and Ekron: the Pentapolis.

Their territory was primarily along the coastal Mediterranean. They attempted at different times to invade Judah but were turned back by the various Jewish biblical heroes and finally defeated by King David. From that time onwards they were diminished as a threat and as a separate people, finally disappearing from history. Any 'Palestinian' Arab claim to a lineage with them is as absurd as that of links with the early Canaanites.



Moving fast forward to 73 CE, the first attempt of the Jews to reclaim their independence from the repressive yoke of Roman occupation ended when Jewish warriors and their families fled to the fortress of Masada from Jerusalem. The Romans had destroyed the Jewish capital city Jerusalem, along with the Second Jewish Temple. Masada is where the heroic last stand took place and where the surviving warriors and their families took their own lives rather than be sent as slaves throughout the mighty Roman Empire.

The Land where these stirring and epochal events took place was in the province known as Judæa. There is absolutely no mention of any place called 'Palestine' before that time.

After the suppression of the Second Jewish Revolt in 135 CE against the continuing Roman occupation, the Emperor Hadrian replaced the name of Judea (Yehuda in Hebrew from which the name Yehudim, Jews, originates) with Syria-Palæstina after the 'Philistines' who were the ancient enemies of the Israelites. Hadrian did so with the explicit purpose of effacing any trace of Jewish history.

No such name as Palestine occurs in any ancient document. It is not written in the Bible, neither in the Hebrew Scriptures nor in the Christian Testament, not even in Assyrian, Persian, Macedonian, Ptolemaic, Seleucian or other Greek sources. There is no 'Palestinian' people ever mentioned, not even by the Romans who invented the term.

Why is there no 'Palestinian' rebel group mentioned, as for example the Jewish Zealots are? Why does every historic document mention the Jews as the native and aboriginal inhabitants, and the Greeks, Romans and others as foreigners dwelling in Judea while there is no mention of a 'Palestinian' people, neither as native or as foreigner?

What is more, there is no reference to any 'Palestinian' people in the Koran, although Muslims claim that their prophet was once in al-Aksa (meaning the farthest place) which Muslims, for political purposes, chose to be Jerusalem--an event not even mentioned in the Koran.

Saladin, a Kurd, knew the Jews and invited them to resettle in Jerusalem. He had no trouble in recognizing Jerusalem as their capital city and the territory as their rightful Homeland. But he did not know any so-called Palestinians and to claim that Palestinians are the original people of Eretz Yisrael, the Land of Israel, is not only counter to secular history but is also opposed to Islamic history.

The so-called 'Palestinians' who claim Jerusalem want it so that they can take it away from the Jews for whom Jerusalem, known also as Zion, is the eternal, 3,000 year old Jewish capital.

Perhaps what links the modern day Arabs who call themselves 'Palestinians' with the ancient Philistines is that both are invaders.

The Philistines wanted to take from the Israelites the Holy Ark of the Covenant, while today's so-called 'Palestinian Arabs' want to take from the Jewish people the Holy City of the Covenant--Jerusalem.

So let me close, beginning with the words of a Christian Arab, Joseph Farah, in *Myths of the Middle East*. Farah has made his home here in America and knows of what he writes:

"There has never been a land known as Palestine governed by Palestinians.

"Palestinians are Arabs, indistinguishable from Jordanians (another recent invention), Syrians, Iraqis, etc. Keep in mind that the Arabs control 99.9 per cent of the Middle East lands. Israel represents one-tenth of one per cent of the landmass. But that's too much for the Arabs. They want it all. And that is ultimately what the fighting in Israel is about today....No matter how many land concessions the Israelis make, it will never be enough."

In Their own Words

Pre 1967:

"There is no such country as Palestine. 'Palestine' is a term the Zionists invented. There is no Palestine in the Bible. Our country was for centuries part of Syria. 'Palestine' is alien to us. It is the Zionists who introduced it." *Auni Bey Abdul-Hadi, Syrian Arab leader to British Peel Commission, 1937.*

"There is no such thing as Palestine in history, absolutely not." *Professor Philip Hitti, Arab historian, 1946*

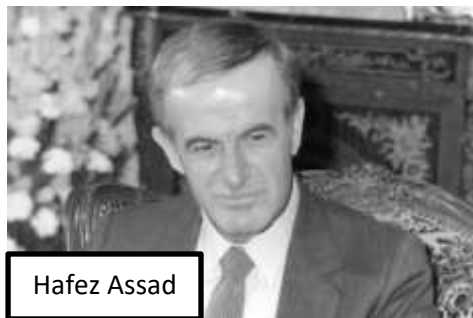
"It is common knowledge that Palestine is nothing but Southern Syria." *Representative of Saudi Arabia at the United Nations, 1956*

Concerning the Holy Land, the chairman of the Syrian Delegation at the Paris Peace Conference in February 1919 stated:

"The only Arab domination since the Conquest in 635 CE hardly lasted, as such, 22 years."

Post 1967:

"There are no differences between Jordanians, Palestinians, Syrians and Lebanese. We are all part of one nation. It is only for political reasons that we carefully underline our Palestinian identity....the existence of a separate Palestinian identity serves only tactical purposes. The founding of a Palestinian state is a new tool in the continuing battle against Israel." *Zuhair Muhsin, military commander of the PLO and member of the PLO Executive Council.*



"Never forget this one point: There is no such thing as a Palestinian people, there is no Palestinian entity, there is only Syria. You are an integral part of the Syrian people, Palestine is an integral part of Syria. Therefore it is we, the Syrian authorities, who are the true representatives of the Palestinian people." *Syrian dictator Hafez Assad to the PLO leader Yasser Arafat.*

"As I lived in Palestine, everyone I knew could trace their heritage back to the original country their great grandparents came from. Everyone knew their origin was not from the Canaanites, but ironically, this is the kind of stuff our education in the Middle East included.

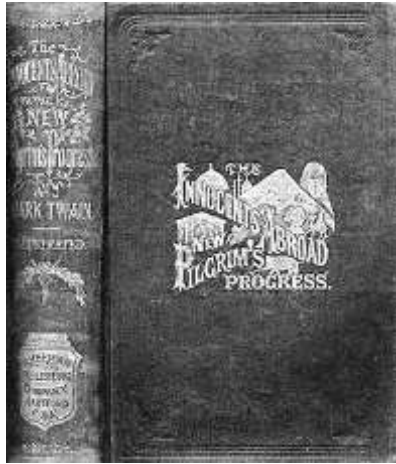
"The fact is that today's Palestinians are immigrants from the surrounding nations! I grew up well knowing the history and origins of today's Palestinians as being from Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Christians from Greece, Muslim Sherkas from Russia, Muslims from Bosnia, and the Jordanians next door.

"My grandfather, who was a dignitary in Bethlehem, almost lost his life at the hands of Abdul Qader Al-Husseni (the leader of the Palestinian revolution) after being accused of selling land to Jews.

“My father used to tell us that his village Beit Sahur (The Shepherds Fields) in Bethlehem County was empty before his father settled in the area with six other families. The town has now grown to 30,000 inhabitants.” *Walid Shoebat*.

Reports from travelers to the Holy Land before its rebuilding by modern Zionism:

“There is not a solitary village throughout its whole extent (valley of Jezreel, Galilee); not for thirty miles in either direction....One may ride ten miles hereabouts and not see ten human beings. For the sort of solitude to make one dreary, come to Galilee....Nazareth is forlorn....Jericho lies a mouldering ruin....Bethlehem and Bethany, in their poverty and humiliation....untenanted by any living creature



“... A desolate country whose soil is rich enough, but is given over wholly to weeds....a silent, mournful expanse, a desolation....

“We never saw a human being on the whole route....Hardly a tree or shrub anywhere. Even the olive tree and the cactus, those fast friends of a worthless soil had almost deserted the country... Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes....desolate and unlovely...” *Mark Twain, “The Innocents Abroad”, 1867.*

In 1590 a ‘simple English visitor’ to Jerusalem wrote: “Nothing there is to be seen but a little of the old walls, which is yet remaining and all the rest is grass, moss and weeds much like to a piece of rank or moist ground.” *Gunner Edward Webbe, Palestine Exploration Fund.*

“The land in Palestine is lacking in people to till its fertile soil.” *British archaeologist, Thomas Shaw, mid-1700s.*

“Palestine is a ruined and desolate land.” *Count Constantine François Volney, 18th century French author and historian.*

“The Arabs themselves cannot be considered but temporary residents. They pitched their tents in its grazing fields or built their places of refuge in its ruined cities. They created nothing in it. Since they were strangers to the land, they never became its masters. The desert wind that brought them hither could one day carry them away without their leaving behind them any sign of their passage through it.” - *Comments by Christians concerning the Arabs in Palestine in the 1800s.*

“The country is in a considerable degree empty of inhabitants and therefore its greatest need is of a body of population.” *James Finn, British Consul in 1857.*

“The area was under populated and remained economically stagnant until the arrival of the first Zionist pioneers in the 1880’s, who came to rebuild the Jewish land. The country had remained ‘The Holy Land’ in the religious and historic consciousness of mankind, which associated it with the Bible and the history of the Jewish people.

“Jewish development of the country also attracted large numbers of other immigrants - both Jewish and Arab. The road leading from Gaza to the north was only a summer track suitable for transport by camels and carts. Houses were all of mud. No windows were anywhere to be seen. The plows used were of wood. The yields were very poor. Schools did not exist. The rate of infant mortality was very high. The western part, toward the sea, was almost a desert. Ruins were scattered over the area, as owing to the prevalence of malaria, many villages were deserted by their inhabitants.” *The report of the British Royal Commission, 1913.*

That the world has fallen hook, line and sinker for duplicitous Arab propaganda speaks to the success of one of the biggest scams ever perpetrated.

Victor Sharpe is author of the two volume Politicide on the threat posed by resurgent Islam.

Muslim Reformers in Europe Need Police Protection

Giulio Meotti

Editor's note: The question is often raised "Why do not moderate Muslims speak up?" This article provides part of the answer.

Abdelbaki Essati, the imam the authorities believe was at the center of terrorist attacks in and around Barcelona, was apparently a master of deception—"too polite, too correct". He was apparently able to deceive European intelligence services by preaching a "moderate" version of Islam, while at the same time orchestrating deadly jihadist attacks.

Another imam in Europe, Seyran Ates, preaches a genuinely "moderate Islam" but needs around-the-clock police protection.

Ates, training to become an imam, seems to have thought there was no better place than Berlin to inaugurate her mosque, Ibn Rushd-Goethe. It is the first Islamic religious site open to unmarried women, homosexuals, atheists, Sufis, unveiled women—all those people that many fundamentalist Islamists have said they wish to silence or kill.

But after the flashbulbs of photographers came the death threats. Now, six German police officers are needed to protect Ates. She is not new to death threats. She closed her law firm in Kreuzberg (a Turkish district of Berlin) after almost being murdered in a terror attack. The bullet lodged between her fourth and fifth vertebrae. It took her five years to recover from the injury.

A week after the inauguration of "Berlin's liberal mosque" its prayer room was virtually empty. The number of faithful was the same as the number of security personnel. Muslims seem afraid to be seen there. Ates has received fatwas and threats from Egypt to Turkey. She says she has received "300 emails per day encouraging me to carry on", but "3,000 emails a day full of hate", some with death threats.

Her fate, unfortunately, is not unique. Germany hosts many genuinely "moderate" Muslims who must live under police protection. They are journalists and activists who have challenged terror and radical Islam. Without protection, they would become "moderate martyrs". Ayaan Hirsi Ali fled to the US after the Netherlands refused to continue protecting her.

In Germany, it is not the Muslim supremacists, such as those who preach killing homosexuals, who have to live under police protection; it is the Muslims who criticize the supremacists. The only "crime" these concerned Muslims committed was to exercise their democratic right to speak—not in Iran or Syria or Iraq—but in Europe.

These reformers try to keep alive the values of the Enlightenment—freedom of speech, separation of religion and state, equal justice under law—to break through the coerced silence of Islam, in which "blasphemy" is punishable by death.

It is they who penetrate that silence. They defend the right to democracy, to an independent judiciary, to education. The price, however, has been exile, torture, ostracism, public marginalization, and too often life itself. Where are the "moderate Muslims"? In the Muslim world, they are in prison, in

exile, in flight—when not murdered—as was Salman Taseer, his lawyer, bloggers from Bangladesh and countless others. In Europe, these genuine "moderate Muslims" have to live under police protection. Multiculturalism for them is a prison.

Hamed Abdel-Samad, an Egyptian writer and author of the book *Islamic Fascism*, is protected by the German police. The German sociologist Bassam Tibi has been under



Hamed Abdel-Samad

police guard for two years for having sponsored a “Euro Islam”: how Muslims might be assimilated in Europe, a concept opposite to the Islamization of Europe that the fundamentalists are trying to accomplish. In an interview with the German magazine *Cicero*, Tibi admitted his defeat and “capitulation”.

Ekin Deligöz, a representative of Germany’s Social Democratic Party, is under police protection as well, for having asked women to reject the veil as being “a symbol of inferiority and subjection”. Fatma Bläser, a victim of forced marriage and the author of the novel *Hennamond*, is today protected by police. She travels from school to school among young Muslims to raise awareness. Mina Ahadi, who founded the Council of Former Muslims, is also under day-and-night government protection.

When Turkey’s most courageous journalist, Can Dündar, former editor of the Turkish newspaper *Cumhuriyet*—the only Turkish media that expressed solidarity with the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*—left Ankara for Germany, he most likely would never have imagined that he would need police protection in Berlin, as well. In Turkey, the police searched his house for emails and articles; in Berlin, the police have to guard his house against the Muslim fundamentalists who want him dead. In Turkey, they wanted to kill him for criticizing political Islam; Europe is no different.

These are the real “moderate” voices in the Islamic world—unlike many supposed “moderate Muslims” such as Tariq Ramadan, who was recently caught defending female genital mutilation (FGM). These heroic Muslim reformers are far from the Islamic officials of the mainstream Muslim organizations, often funded by oil-rich Islamic dictatorships. Qatar, according to a major enquiry by the French daily *Libération*, is the main source of funds for the Union of the Islamic Organizations of France (UOIF), the most prominent Islamic umbrella group there. The UOIF also evidently receives funding from Saudi Arabia and “benevolent associations” in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf.

These brave dissidents, who need our help, have been struggling to uphold values that are the pillars of Europe’s Enlightenment—those the entire West has come to accept. But not Islam.

These men and women have even been compared to heroes of the Enlightenment, such as Voltaire. The French playwright, however, did not have a million enemies who, recognizing him from television, could then plot to behead him.

Giulio Meotti, Cultural Editor for Il Foglio, is an Italian journalist and author. This appeared on gatestoneinstitute.org on Sept 22.

When the USSR Waged War Against Israel. (No, that’s Not a Misprint.)

Karl Pfeifer

(Editor’s note: This is excerpted from an interview with Gideon Remez of the Truman Institute of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem by Karl Pfeifer, an Austrian born journalist of Hungarian Jewish origin and a member of the board of the Archives of the Austrian Resistance.)

Karl Pfeifer: The Soviet-Israeli War? Isn’t the title of your book exaggerated? It’s well-known that the USSR supported Egypt in its conflict with Israel, but was there really a direct clash between Soviet and Israeli forces at the level and duration that can be termed a full-scale war?

Gideon Remez: Well, that is precisely what our book is aimed to prove, and it does differ radically from the conventional notions about this period in this and other major respects. The Soviet military presence in Egypt is usually described as “advisers” or “technicians.” But the chief adviser, at the rank of lieutenant-general, also doubled as “commander of the Soviet forces group.” A total of over 50,000 Soviet servicemen, in integral Soviet formations up to a full air defense division, were posted to

Egypt during this period. They operated the USSR's most advanced weapons – some of them still experimental, not yet supplied even to Warsaw-Pact allies – in a head-on clash with Israeli forces, which turned the Suez Canal front into the hottest arena of the Cold War. So we think it was no less than a Soviet-Israeli war, the only time when Israel was directly pitted against a global superpower....

Pfeifer: What was the Soviets' impact on the outcome of the fighting?

Remez: It determined the outcome in large measure. The period that our book covers is conventionally considered as including three distinct wars: the Six-Day War in June 1967; the War of Attrition from March 1969 to August 1970; and the Yom Kippur War in October-November 1973. We found these to have been one continuous conflict, at varying degrees of intensity. The debacle that Egypt suffered in 1967 with the loss of Sinai to Israel was also a major setback for its patron, the USSR's standing among its clients as well as a blemish on the reputation of Soviet weapons. So within days, both leaderships – each for its own motives – resolved to score a military revanche before any political settlement with Israel. The planning, training and rearmament for this purpose went on systematically.

Pfeifer: Israel, and particularly the government of Golda Meir, are often blamed for ignoring or rejecting Egyptian initiatives for at least an interim settlement.

Remez: Israel can't be absolved of responsibility – as a result, in part, of hubris after the 1967 triumph – for not taking its own initiatives or not calling the Egyptians' bluff. But as we found, the supposed peace feelers were mostly a smokescreen for war preparations. The War of Attrition, for instance, was launched as part of these preparations for Egypt's ultimate offensive across the Suez Canal; when it did not go well for Egypt, the massive Soviet intervention (whose codename, Operation Kavkaz, we were first in the west to document) was launched, and within a few months it had achieved its purpose. Soviet SAMs were shooting down Israeli planes – and especially their irreplaceable crews – at an unsustainable rate. Israel not only had to accept a ceasefire in August 1970, but it (and the United States) could do nothing when the Soviets and Egyptians advanced the SAM batteries to the canal bank, thus creating a no-fly zone for Israel over the canal and into Sinai. This was an essential precondition for the Egyptian cross-canal offensive, which was launched three years later with full Soviet collusion and support.

Pfeifer: But didn't Egyptian President Anwar Sadat famously expel the Soviet advisers in July 1972?

Remez: That's another myth which our book debunks: that due to détente with the United States, which peaked at the Moscow Summit of May 1972, the USSR denied Egypt the offensive weaponry for the attack on Israel. This supposedly caused a rift with Sadat, who kicked the Soviets out and shifted to the US camp. But we prove that this never happened. The flow of Soviet offensive weapons never stopped. Thousands of Soviet servicemen did leave Egypt in 1972, but these were the regulars of the Soviet expeditionary force, who – as we just mentioned – had accomplished their mission and were amicably repatriated. This was negotiated for months not only between Cairo and Moscow, but also with Washington, that is with Henry Kissinger. The Soviet advisers with the Egyptian armed forces remained, to continue training and weapons induction for the offensive. Both the Soviets' own accounts and Egyptian documents prove this conclusively. The "expulsion" canard was inculcated by means of an elaborate deception exercise, which our book describes in detail. As in other cases that we address, two of the main culprits for spreading such misleading concepts as "fake news" and then for establishing them as "fake history" were Kissinger and Egyptian propagandist Mohammed Hassanein Heikal.

Pfeifer: Now that you mention the US role, this is beginning to sound like the present-day Russian reentry into Syria and US response, or lack thereof.

Remez: Indeed, Russia's action to ensure its naval bases – and now, air and land bases too – in Syria has a lot in common with its role in Egypt in the '60s and '70s, *mutatis mutandis*. In terms of a power base in the Mediterranean opposite the US Sixth Fleet, the Syrian ports of Latakia and Tartus now

are quite analogous to Alexandria and Port Said as Soviet/Russian bases. The political-propaganda cover techniques are also remarkably similar. But the focus on Syria has deflected attention from the reestablishment of a Russian military presence in Egypt too. Sadat did turn against the Soviets well after the 1973 war, when he needed the US for the peace as much as he needed the USSR for the war. But at least two of the old Soviet bases in Egypt have been reactivated in the past year, so far on a modest but not at all negligible scale. Plus ça change...

A lengthier version of this appeared in the History News Network (historynewsnetwork.org) on Sept 17.

Grapes of Their Wrath

Moshe Dann

The early Sunday morning sun was already strong when Tzvika Strook left his home in Eish Kodesh, a Jewish community a few miles east of Shilo, in the Samarian hills, to check his vineyard. He had planted it four years ago, cultivated it carefully and waited patiently for the harvest when the restricted time according to Jewish law elapsed. The grapes were high quality and when sold would reward his efforts – and feed his family of six children. It was the beginning of July. The grapes were almost ready. When he got to his field, however, instead of lush green vines he saw brown shriveled leaves. Two thousand grape vines had been destroyed on Friday night.

The police and IDF found tracks that led to the nearby Arab village of Qusra. This was not the first time that Arabs from this village, assisted by groups such as Rabbis for Human Rights, *Taayush* and *B'Tselem* had attacked the fields of Eish Kodesh and other Jewish communities in the area. Dozens of times they reported thefts and destruction, but the police and IDF were unwilling to arrest the perpetrators and risk a confrontation. Therefore, there were no investigations. Nothing was done.

Strangely, the media (with the exception of Arutz 7) refused to report the story, citing lack of time and interest. Their lack of concern, however, is difficult to comprehend since they often report Arab claims that Jews have destroyed their olive trees. Widespread theft of Jewish-owned livestock, arson and vandalism by Arabs is never reported.

According to Aaron Katsof, a resident of Eish Kodesh and head of the Binyamin Fund which helps Jewish communities and farmers, there is a struggle between Jews and Arabs over large areas of uninhabited and unused State land in Area C of Judea and Samaria (the “West Bank”), in which all settlements are located. Arabs and Bedouin are constantly encroaching, and in some cases claiming to own land, often supported by the IDF’s Civil Administration (CA), the judicial authority in Judea and Samaria.

Recently, Strook had planted grape vines in another area of Eish Kodesh. Arabs protested, claiming to own the land and the case was heard by an IDF military court. Although the court decided that there was no basis for the Arab claims, the Civil Administration forced Strook to uproot the vines anyway. He tried to replant nearby, but most plantings were not successful and the disputed patch remains barren. Because the IDF/CA operates with the approval of the Israeli government, however, there is no way to remedy, or appeal its decisions.

Strook’s dilemma highlights the struggle that Katsof describes where land use can be the basis for claims of ownership. Unfortunately, the government has no coherent policy and has left decisions to local IDF officers who are unequipped and untrained to deal with complex land disputes.

Several years ago PM Netanyahu appointed a Commission led by retired High Court Justice Edmund Levy and legal experts to resolve this problem. Their report was meant to provide a fair and equitable judicial administration; it has not, however, been brought to the government for discussion.

In an effort to prevent further intrusions and clashes, the IDF recently installed cameras in the area. The Binyamin Fund has established a special crowd-funding site to help the Strook family with losses estimated at hundreds of thousands of dollars: www.projector.org.il/en/projects/100

Standing alone, Strook remembers the Haftorah which is read on the second day of Rosh Hashana: "Yet again shall you plant vineyards on the mountains of Samaria." (Jeremiah, 31)

"Abba," he hears the voice of 12-year old Kinneret, his eldest child behind him, and then feels her hand grasping his. "What happened?" Her eyes search his for an answer.

Tzvika tries to speak, but words are stuck inside, won't come out.

"Qusra," Kinneret says bitterly. Tzvika nods.

Walking slowly into the field, they step over bunches of nearly ripe purple grapes and broken vines.

"Come," he says, wiping his face with his sleeve, "let's see what we can save."

Moshe Dann is a historian and journalist living in Israel.

Lights in the "Dark Continent"

Ruth King

Africa, mysterious and mostly unknown to the West was called the "Dark Continent" in the late 1800s. In fact, many Jews found beacons of light in African nations.

Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Rhodesia, Nigeria, South Africa, Congo and Ivory Coast had Jewish populations, some dating back centuries, largely unknown in the diaspora but clinging to an ancient faith.

Some migrated from the really dark corners of entrenched anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe.

Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, had a thriving Jewish population in Salisbury (now Harare) and Bulawayo where Jews from Lithuania migrated in the 1800s. A close friend of mine recently showed me a movie of children in the Bulawayo synagogue marching with stars of David embroidered on their shirts singing songs about Palestine in the 1940s.

I was in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia in the 1950s where large cities like Meknes, Fez, Casablanca, Rabat, Marrakesh, Oran and Djerba, had prominent synagogues, attended by thousands and local shops sold menorahs, candelabras and religious clothing.

When the Arabs declared war on the nascent Jewish State, Arab governments in Africa sponsored harassment of their Jewish populations and a large exodus of Jews began. Most of the small number who remained fled after the Six Day War of 1967. In many non-Arab and non-Muslim countries, decolonization unfortunately heralded coups, revolutions and tribal wars, prompting a Jewish exodus from the continent.

In the early years of decolonization, Israel reached out with targeted aid programs to what became known as the "emerging continent." But when in the wake of the 1973 war OPEC threatened African states with economic punishment if they did not follow orders to isolate Israel, most fell in line, severing or sharply curtailing relations with Israel. Indeed, African nations joined in the anti-Israel fulminations at the United Nations.

From 1984-1988 Benjamin Netanyahu, now Israel's Prime Minister, was his nation's Representative to the United Nations. During his tenure he met many representatives from Africa *ex officio* and established cordial relations with some. One of his goals was to reestablish relations with African nations by offering agricultural, technical, medical and scientific cooperation. And he has been overwhelmingly successful.

Israeli involvement in Africa has been transformational aiding in control of epidemics, treatments for infectious diseases, crop management with innovative irrigation, water purification, computer education--the list is endless. Israel has improved millions of lives in virtually every nation in Africa.



11 diplomats from seven African countries in Jerusalem guided by Zev Orenstein of the City of David Archeological Park

African students travel to Israel to learn new modalities and technology and Israeli experts assist on site in building and maintaining facilities.

Diplomatic relations with more than forty sub-Saharan nations have improved dramatically, including with Muslim countries. In 2016 Muslim religious leaders and diplomats from Africa travelled to Israel to hold meetings with their Israeli counterparts.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, and Ethiopia during the first week of July 2016, where he met with leaders of seven

African countries at a summit in Uganda to discuss cooperation in the counter-terrorism, energy, agriculture, and water technology sectors.

One can but imagine the feelings of the Prime Minister when he landed at Entebbe airport in Uganda where his brother Yonatan was killed on July 4, 1976 leading the raid to free hostages on Air France Flight 139.

This past June the Prime Minister was greeted by the leaders of Liberia, Gambia and leaders of the Economic Community of West African States. At the meeting Netanyahu stressed that a renewal of ties should be accompanied by support for the Jewish state in international organizations and in the United Nations. He told journalists: "The purpose of this trip is to dissolve this majority, this giant bloc of 54 African countries that is the basis of the automatic majority against Israel in the UN and international bodies."



Netanyahu visits Uganda

This month, the Prime Minister continues his quest with a visit to Togo to attend an African-Israeli summit with leaders of 25 African nations to discuss continuing cooperation in technology and development.

Well done! Shalom Africa. Karibu Uyahudi (Welcome Israel in Swahili)

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