



## Events...

**Monday May 5, 8:00PM**

*Caroline Glick will speak at Holy Blossom.*

**Tuesday, May 6, 8:00 PM**

*Westmount Shul presents Rabbi Seth Mandell speaking on "Insanity or Inspiration: Why Risk Living in Israel?" at their closing program for "60 Days for 60 Years: Israel", at BAYT*

**Wednesday May 7, 7:30PM**

*Communal Yom HaZikaron Commemoration and Yom HaAtzmaut Celebration at BAYT.*

## Commentary...

**Israel's Traditional Elites** By Caroline Glick

As Israel's 60th Independence Day swiftly approaches, considerations of Zionism and its discontents come to mind.

The revolutionary notion that Zionism introduced into the Jewish mindset, informed by 19 centuries of powerless statelessness, was that Jews could, and indeed ought to stand up for themselves. From the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, until the advent of modern Zionism, such a notion seemed absurd. Throughout the centuries of exile, Jews understood that their survival depended on the kindness of strangers. Zionism came and said that was no longer the case. We Jews would take care of ourselves from now on.

Given this basic Zionist assertion, it is little wonder that the Jewish elites in the Diaspora opposed the movement. Their positions in their communities were based on their ability to thrive in powerlessness. A Zionist success in rebuilding the Jewish homeland in the Land of Israel would render their skills, if not irrelevant, than far less necessary than they had been.

In a sad twist of fate, Israel's current elites are the direct descendants not of their Zionist predecessors, but of the exile elites their predecessors fought. Sixty years after statehood was declared, Israel is led by men and women who oppose Jewish power and embrace instead the Diaspora model of ingratiating themselves with foreigners through appeasement.

TAKE SYRIA for example. Last week we learned two things. We learned, definitively, that with North Korean assistance, and Iranian collusion, Syria was illicitly building a plutonium based nuclear reactor that if permitted to reach completion, would have been capable of producing nuclear weapons. We also learned that Prime Minister Ehud Olmert is conducting secret talks with Syria through the Islamist and anti-Semitic government of Turkey. If those talks are "successful," they will lead to an Israeli surrender of the strategically vital Golan Heights in exchange for a peace treaty with Syria.

Syrian dictator Bashar Assad is often described as a weak fool who enjoys hanging out with murderers like Hizbullah chief Hassan Nasrallah and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to prove his manliness.

Assad may be foolish, but he certainly knows his enemy well enough to play the Israeli elites like a virtuoso violinist.

The day before CIA Director Michael Hayden informed Congress of the details of Israel's Sept. 6 raid in Syria, Assad began deluging the Arab airwaves with declarations of his earnest efforts to convince Israel to give him the Golan Heights in exchange for a peace agreement. Olmert, for his part, didn't deny Assad's claims, and so seemed to accept them.

Being the radical leftwing trumpets they are, the Israeli media seized on the story. The TV, radio and tabloid elites ignored the strategic implications of the raid and opted instead to badger politicians who think it would be a bad idea to surrender the Golan Heights - and with them, Israel's ability to defend itself

# ISRAEL NEWS

*A collection of the week's news from Israel  
From the Bet El Twinning / Israel Action Committee  
of Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation*

בס"ד  
- in exchange for a piece of paper from Assad.

The media ignored completely that Syria's decision to build that nuclear facility placed it in open breach of its treaty obligations to the international community as outlined in the Nuclear Nonproliferation treaty of which it is a signatory. How can Assad be trusted to keep his word to Israel when he was just caught breaching his obligations to the entire international community in

such a profound way? Moreover, the local media ignored what the North Korean-built, Iranian-financed nuclear reactor revealed about the nature of Assad's regime. That nuclear proliferation cooperation demonstrated clearly that Syria is not a peaceful nation but a full member of the Iranian-Syrian-North Korean axis of evil.

THE ELITISTS' passion for pieces of paper - or even just negotiations about them - is a general one. Anyone who is willing to talk about signing one, whether they are American presidents or Syrian dictators, is a friend and a partner. And anyone who questions the elitists' stubborn belief in agreements as Israel's ultimate goal in all things is an enemy of peace.

Given Syria's radicalism, it is not clear how long the elites will be able to keep up their fiction of Syrian good will and credibility. But whereas many in Israel do not trust Syria, almost everyone in Israel trusts America. So to the extent they heard, it no doubt came as a shock to many Israelis that the Bush administration is trying to cancel President George W. Bush's signed 2004 pledge to then prime minister Ariel Sharon to accept, and so support Israel's right to maintain many of the communities that it has built in Judea and Samaria and in Jerusalem since the 1967 Six Day War.

In 2004, Sharon was faced with a difficult political reality. After trouncing the Left in the January 2003 elections by denouncing Labor leader Amram Mitzna's plan to unilaterally withdraw from Gaza, in December 2003, Sharon shocked his party and coalition members by announcing that he was adopting Mitzna's reviled plan as his own.

Sharon was unable to argue with his critics who asserted that an Israeli withdrawal would mean a terrorist takeover. Israel would be handing Fatah and Hamas terrorists their biggest victory ever and convincing them that there is no reason for them to accept Israel's right to exist and sue for peace.

Since Sharon had no answers for his critics, who were merely stating the obvious, he worked to change the subject by linking the withdrawal to a piece of paper. He begged Bush to write him a letter stating that the US would not expect Israel to throw out all of the 500,000 Jews who live in Judea, Samaria and post-1967 Jerusalem neighborhoods in the framework of a peace treaty with the PLO. And in April 2004, Bush presented Sharon with a letter, which while qualified, was sufficient for him to claim a diplomatic victory that could justify the withdrawal. Bush wrote, "In light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli population centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949." The letter was never the stunning endorsement that Sharon and his defenders in the local media made it out to be. But it was something. Today however, the Bush administration, which has sought to bar all Jewish building in both post-1967 neighborhoods in Jerusalem and all of Judea and Samaria including major population centers, is trying to disavow Bush's signed pledge entirely.

According to last Thursday's Washington Post, Bush administration officials are doing everything they can to try to get out of the President's commitment to Sharon. Justifying the letter as an insincere piece of political maneuvering used to help Sharon expel the Jews from Gaza and Northern Samaria in 2005, they explain that the letter is no longer politically necessary. It served its purpose of drumming up domestic Israeli support for the now completed withdrawal and expulsion and ought to be set aside.

As National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley gently phrased it, "The president obviously still stands by that letter of April of 2004, but you need to look at it, obviously, in the context in which it was issued."

In a breathtakingly inconsistent claim, former secretary of state Colin Powell asserted that while the administration issued the letter specifically in order to lead Israeli voters to believe they had won an American concession, he never anticipated "that Bush's letter would be perceived as a green light by Israel for adding to the settlements."

All of this was eminently predictable. Times change, interests change and

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policies adapt to new conditions. This is a basic and iron rule of politics. But Israel's elites refuse to accept it no matter how many times events bear it out. Take for example the Six Day War.

The Six Day War might never have happened if the US hadn't breached the signed commitment president Dwight Eisenhower made to Israel in 1957. After forcing Israel to withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula, Eisenhower pledged in writing that if the Egyptians ever closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping, the US would come to Israel's aid. But when, in 1967 Egypt did just that, the US had more important things to attend to. And so Israel was forced to fulfill the Zionist vision and defend itself.

IN 2005, against the advice of the IDF General Staff, Sharon opted to vacate Gaza's international border with Egypt. Abrogating Israel's responsibility to secure the lives of its own citizens in the Western Negev and beyond, Sharon amended the peace treaty with Egypt to allow Egyptian forces to deploy along the border in the hopes that Egypt would guard the border for Israel. While Egypt was only too happy to deploy its forces in the Sinai, it has refused to take effective action to prevent Gaza from becoming a hub for international terror that is armed to the teeth with advanced weapons that have flooded in since Israel withdrew from the international border. And not only do they not help Israel, those Egyptian forces further complicate the task of Israeli military planners trying to figure out how to defeat Hamas.

Israel opted to lose the Second Lebanon War in 2006 by leaving Hizbullah intact in exchange for a never serious promise that UN forces would do what the IDF failed to do - namely, secure the border and prevent Hizbullah from rearming and reasserting its control over south Lebanon. And now, lo and behold, even the UN admits that UNIFIL has failed in its mission. Hizbullah is fully rearmed, retrained and based in force south of the Litani River.

Jews, who have clung to our religion and our traditions against all odds for thousands of years, are without a doubt a stubborn people. And Israel's Diaspora mentality elitists are anything if not tenacious in their belief that Israel is better off at the mercy of others.

But of course, the elites are not the entire country. They aren't even the majority, just a powerful minority. There can be little doubt that in due time the stubborn Zionist Jews will force our elitists from power and secure our country for the next 60 years. (Jerusalem Post Apr 28)

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### **Carter's Folly** By Hillel Halkin

Is Jimmy Carter a racist, as Israeli ambassador to the United Nations Dan Gillerman labeled him last week after his trip to Damascus to meet Hamas head Khaled Meshal? Well, no. Although he has never given the impression of liking Israelis, Israelis do not constitute a race.

Is he gullibly ego-driven? Easily manipulated? A diplomatic shill? Well, yes.

Mr. Carter's meeting with Mr. Meshal was not a disgrace because it took place. Although there may be good reasons for refusing to meet with the head of an organization that is a sworn enemy, not only of Israel, but also of America, the country Mr. Carter was once president of, there are no hard-and-fast rules about such things. There can be justifications for talking to enemies.

There can be none, however, for pandering to them, swallowing their lies, and allowing oneself to be used by them. This is exactly what Mr. Carter has done in coming back from Damascus to tell the world that Hamas is prepared to live in peace with Israel, and that he has wrung major concessions from it that could serve as a basis for future negotiations. Any ordinary newspaper reader, which Mr. Carter apparently is not, could have told him he had been hoodwinked.

What are these "concessions"? As a result of his talks with Mr. Meshal, Mr. Carter announced, Hamas is now ready — so the former president put it yesterday in a New York Times op-ed column — to "accept any agreement negotiated by [Palestinian Authority president] Abbas and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel provided it is approved either in a Palestinian referendum or by an elected government."

The "two-state solution," according to Mr. Carter, is now within reach. All that has to be done is to get Israel and the Palestinian Authority to hammer out an agreement, which Hamas, traditionally the leader of the "rejectionist" camp within Palestinian ranks, now pledges not to reject.

But this is nonsense. Had Mr. Carter been minimally informed, he would have known that Hamas has for years been ready to "accept" a Palestinian state subject to certain conditions — which is what it means when it says that this state must be approved by a Palestinian "referendum" (to be torpedoed by Hamas if its conditions are not met) or a Palestinian "elected government" (ditto). These conditions, which Mr. Carter did not get Hamas to retreat from one iota, are, firstly, that Israel pull back to its 1967 lines with Jordan, including those that divided Jerusalem, and, secondly, that Israel admit all descendants of 1948 Palestinian refugees who wish to live within its borders.

What Hamas has not been ready to accept, is still not ready to accept, and has never told Mr. Carter is that it is ready to accept is the state of Israel itself. At the most it is willing to agree to a hudna, an Islamic truce, with Israel. And

as any student of Islam knows, a hudna is by definition temporary. It can be for a longer time or a shorter time, but it is basically a breather separating one round of confrontation with the infidel from another.

To put it in plain language: Once Israel agrees to surrender half of Jerusalem, uproot hundreds of settlements and hundreds of thousands of Jewish settlers from disputed territories beyond the 1967 lines, and grant residence rights to possibly millions of Palestinians who have never lived in it before, Hamas will call off its campaign for the Jewish state's destruction for X number of years, after which it will be free to resume hostilities.

By then, of course, there will be little left of a Jewish state to destroy, the influx of Palestinian refugees having eliminated the country's Jewish majority. These are the "concessions" that Mr. Carter, with his self-vaunted skills as a negotiator, has managed to extract from Hamas and is now trying to peddle as a significant achievement.

Mr. Carter has been taken — not for the first time in his career, it must be said — for a ride. Were he alone in the delusion that Hamas can be brought into Israeli-Palestinian peace talks as a constructive partner, this would not matter very much. In the three-ring circus of Middle Eastern diplomacy, he simply would be one more clown balancing bowling pins on his nose or pedaling a unicycle backwards.

But the delusion is more widespread. It is being voiced today from more and more quarters. Without Hamas, the argument goes, no Israeli-Palestinian process is possible; ergo, Hamas must become part of the process for it to succeed. Now, the first half of this argument is certainly correct. Hamas is politically and militarily strong enough today, not only in the Gaza Strip, but in the West Bank as well, to thwart any agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority that it does not approve of. It is just that the "ergo" does not follow, for the simple reason that Hamas cannot and will not approve of any agreement that could possibly be acceptable to Israel. It does not have the ideological leeway or flexibility to do so, and no one can say that it has not been ideologically consistent over the years.

Does this mean that no Israeli-Palestinian peace process can succeed at the moment? Alas, this is precisely what it does mean. Some of those who, like Mr. Carter, find it impossible to live with this truth will go on making fools of themselves in order to deny it. Let's just not let them make fools of us. (NY Sun Apr 29)

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### **With Friends Like These...** By Isi Leibler

It's disconcerting and sad to see American Jewish "progressives" frenziedly lobbying the American administration to pressure Israel for further unilateral concessions to the Palestinians.

To make matters worse, they understate - even obfuscate - their real game plan. They describe themselves as "pro-Israel," "Zionist" and "moderate." They lay claim to being the true custodians of peace, portraying other Jewish leaders and AIPAC as neoconservatives and extremists. While tempting to dismiss their behavior and Orwellian doublespeak as naïve and inconsequential, recall that the sham Soviet peace fronts succeeded in duping many gullible well-meaning liberals into endorsing campaigns promoting totalitarianism.

It's all the more bizarre because no one would suggest that the current Israeli government is "hawkish." On the contrary, the Olmert government has lost the confidence of its people precisely because of unilateral concessions which undermine Israel's security and embolden terrorists. His government is an amen chorus which capitulates to every demand imposed on it by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. It has provided weapons to the Palestinians which will almost certainly once again be redirected against Israel; it has released and granted amnesty to terrorists; and despite bitter opposition from the IDF, it has closed checkpoints and acceded to demands compromising security which have already resulted in Israeli casualties.

Yet like a replay of the odious behavior of Haaretz editor David Landau, who told Rice that it would be his "wet dream" for the US "to rape Israel" for its own good, American "progressives" are urging their government to exert pressure on Israel for further unilateral concessions.

THIS IS not a new phenomenon. For years the Israel Policy Forum (IPF) has been lobbying the White House to get tougher with Israel. They claim that in 1993, prime minister Yitzhak Rabin appreciated their support for his efforts to reach a peace settlement with Arafat. They fail to mention that in contrast to Olmert, Rabin did stand up to US pressure. Rabin would have exploded had he encountered Jewish organizations exploiting his name as a means to justify lobbying the US administration to exert pressure on Israel.

As far back as 2005, IPF president Seymour Reich boasted how his organization had successfully persuaded Rice to force Israel to make concessions on the Gaza border crossing - concession that have since resulted in the loss of Israeli lives.

More recently the IPF shamelessly lobbied the White House to press Israel to negotiate directly with Hamas. Reich wrote to Rice on March 21 that "no progress can be made if Hamas - the governing body in Gaza - is totally

excluded from the process." M.J. Rosenberg, IPF's policy director, urged the U.S. to "be extending carrots and not just slapping them [Hamas] with sticks".

The Progressive Jewish Alliance, another self-styled "pro-Israel" body, promotes exhibitions on US campuses of photo montages alleging the dehumanization of Palestinians by the Israeli army. They insist that their demonization of the IDF represent an expression of their love for Zion.

Now with great fanfare and endorsement by much of the US liberal media, we have a new "progressive" initiative: an amalgam of various far-left organizations and individuals spearheaded by "Americans for Peace Now" and "Brit Tzedek V'Shalom" to establish "J.Street," a political action committee. Although proclaiming their intention to espouse "moderation" and bring "balance" into American Jewish leadership, their actual intent is to further US pressure on Israel and to undermine AIPAC, the highly effective pro-Israel lobby.

Such behavior is especially unconscionable since - aside from permits for extra housing to cope with natural growth in the densely Jewish populated settlement blocs implicitly endorsed by President Bush - the Olmert government has conceded to all US government demands. It has even discouraged AIPAC and American Jewish leaders from trying to neutralize State Department pressures on itself for fear of antagonizing the administration.

J Street also publicly opposes the use of force to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear capabilities, which undermines Israel's campaign to pressure Iran from going nuclear. In addition, J Street supports a swift withdrawal of US forces from Iraq, calls for direct dealings with Hamas and urges Jews to boycott Christian Zionists - Israel's strongest allies. J Street intends to raise funds to provide \$50,000 for selected Congressional candidates supporting these aims.

Aside from a number of respectable personalities under the illusion that they have associated themselves with a "moderate" body seeking to promote peace between Israelis and Palestinians, J Street is mainly supported by prominent far-left Americans and Israelis like Ron Pundak, architect of the Oslo Accord. One of its principal theorists is Daniel Levy, a former adviser to Yossi Beilin who trivializes Palestinian incitement to murder Israelis.

Former Jewish Agency chairman Avrum Burg, who has compared Israelis to Nazis and has urged the former to follow his lead and obtain European passports, is another notable J Street supporter. Burg's ranting against his country is so vile that even most of his Israeli associates distanced themselves from him. Writing this week in Haaretz, Burg pushed the envelope further and provided a gift to anti-Semites everywhere by accusing AIPAC of imposing "dual loyalties" on American Jews and of "institutionalizing near-treason and turning it into an enormous octopus of a political mechanism with enormous dimensions and numerous victims."

Another key Israeli supporter is David Kimche, a leading figure in Israel Policy Forum. Kimche was director general of the Foreign Ministry under Yitzhak Shamir, where I had regular dealings with him. In those days, not only was he a hawk, but he even had the reputation of savagely roasting any Jewish leader who dared question Israeli government policies. "We live and die by our decisions, while you sit and pontificate from your armchair," he would say. Today he identifies with the extreme left. The Israel Council of Foreign Relations, which he heads, recently hosted a meeting in Jerusalem for ex-president Jimmy Carter, obliging the sponsor, the World Jewish Congress, to formally dissociate itself from the event.

The "progressives" will also try to capitalize on the fact that the Barack Obama campaign has embraced former ambassador to Israel Daniel Kurtzer and appointed him Obama's adviser on Middle East affairs. Kurtzer, a Jewish dove, previously urged the Administration to take a tougher line with Israel. In his just-released book - Negotiating Arab Israel Peace - Kurtzer refers to the withholding of loan guarantees from the Shamir government by the first President Bush as an example of how an American government can effectively bring Israel into line. He accused Dennis Ross - the Clinton-designated Middle East representative - of having been biased in favor of Israel. He even castigates the Clinton and Bush Administrations for not employing sufficient Arabists in the State Department.

The US is the only country capable of withstanding pressure from Arabs and their allies to isolate and delegitimize Israel. Thankfully, US public opinion and Congress has never been more favorably disposed towards Israel than today.

Yet over the past year, the Bush Administration has tilted from its former policy. Nor can we exclude the possibility of a future US administration distancing itself further from Israel.

It is therefore imperative that American Jewish leaders not underestimate the damage "progressive pro-Israel" groups can inflict, especially in light of the mainstream liberal media support J Street has enjoyed at its launch.

In the face of existential threats, Israel needs the support of America Jewry more than ever. While all are free to express their opinions, "peaceniks" who have the gall to call on the US to put the heat on Israel to act as they believe best, rather than what the citizens of that democracy have decided is, must be

exposed as fringe groups outside the Jewish mainstream. (Jerusalem Post Apr 28)

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### The Myth of Palestinian Moderation By Michael Freund

Even for a president prone to misusing the English language, George W. Bush outdid himself last week. Sitting next to Mahmoud Abbas at the White House, Bush gushed and swooned over the visiting Palestinian leader, describing him in terms usually reserved for heroes and saints. "The president is a man of peace," Bush assured the gaggle of reporters who were present. "He's a man of vision. He rejects the idea of using violence to achieve objectives, which distinguishes him from other people in the region."

While Bush's grammar may have been uncommonly accurate that day, his description of Abbas was anything but. For even a cursory glance at some of the Palestinian president's outbursts in recent months reveal a man wholly undeserving of such praise.

On March 1, Abbas had the gall to insult the memory of the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis when he declared that Israel's counter-terror operations in Gaza were "worse than the Holocaust" (Jerusalem Post, March 2). And in an interview with the Jordanian newspaper Al-Dustur on February 28, Abbas boasted that he had been the first Palestinian to fire a bullet at Israel after the birth of the PLO in 1965.

This ostensible "man of peace" then took pride in the fact that his Fatah movement had trained Hizbullah terrorists, and he did not rule out a return to the "armed struggle" against Israel in the future. And just two weeks ago, Abbas was planning to confer the Al-Quds Mark of Honor, the PLO's highest award, to two female Palestinian terrorists who took part in the killing of Israelis (Israel Radio, April 16). The event was cancelled only after it was publicized widely in the media. Need we also mention the Palestinian president's refusal late last year to recognize Israel as a "Jewish state"?

THIS OF course puts the lie to Bush's stubborn embrace of Abbas as a reasonable and judicious leader that can be counted on to forge a peace deal. If anything, the Palestinian president has repeatedly shown himself to be an intemperate hot-head. Nonetheless, that doesn't seem to stop Washington and much of the media from bestowing upon him the coveted title of a "moderate" leader that Israel can do business with.

"Abbas's moderate and Western-backed government rules the West Bank," the Associated Press (April 25) helpfully explained in a recent report.

According to Reuters (April 24), Abbas is "a pro-Western moderate," while Agence France-Presse referred to him on Monday as "moderate Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas," as though the appellation "moderate" was an integral part of his title.

All of this shameful fawning on the Palestinian thug-in-chief raises a simple, yet rarely-asked, question: why is there such a widespread insistence on deluding the public into thinking that Abbas is a "moderate" leader who epitomizes the majority of Palestinians?

The issue is more than academic. In fact, it goes directly to the core of current US and Israeli government policy. After all, the entire intellectual basis for the notion of granting the Palestinians a state rests on the dubious assumption that a majority of them are actually reasonable, peace-loving people. Too bad that all the available evidence appears to indicate otherwise.

Last week, for example, the Palestinian-run Jerusalem Media and Communications Center published the results of a survey revealing that a majority of Palestinians (50.7%) support suicide-bombing attacks against Israeli civilians. This was in line with previous polls, which have consistently shown overwhelming Palestinian backing for anti-Israel terror. Indeed, just last month, the Ramallah-based Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research found that an astonishing 84% of Palestinians supported the gruesome execution-style murder of 8 Israeli teens by a Palestinian terrorist at the Mercaz HaRav Yeshiva in Jerusalem.

And by a margin of 64% to 33%, or nearly two to one, Palestinians were in favor of continued rocket attacks against Israeli towns and cities.

THESE COLD, hard facts present supporters of the peace process with a major problem, if only because they confirm that the very idea of Palestinian moderation is a myth. It is a figment of the imagination, a flight of fantasy that bears little resemblance to reality. After all, it is not as if a tiny minority of Palestinians support the murder of Jews. The bulk of them do. And wishing it were otherwise simply doesn't make it so.

So let's stop fooling ourselves. Giving the Palestinians a state when a majority of them want us dead is both reckless and irresponsible.

It is a recipe for disaster, and will only serve to create yet another radical, terror-sponsoring state in the region. And let's cease calling Mahmoud Abbas a "moderate." Anyone who refuses to recognize Israel as a "Jewish state," makes a mockery of the Holocaust, and threatens a return to violence, is certainly not deserving of such a characterization. Instead, let's call Abbas what he really is. For if he looks like an extremist, sounds like an extremist, and acts like an extremist, chances are that he is one. And more importantly, let's start treating him as such. (Jerusalem Post Apr 29)

### **Agnon next to Haggai, Begin next to Avshalom** By Nadav Shragai

Had they not existed, the government in Israel would have to invent them: "the right-wing NGOs," a code-name for those belonging to the Zionist bubble, who insist on sticking to the classic Zionist way in its place of origin: Zion, Jerusalem.

For a long time we had not heard such good news in our city like those informing us of the expansion of the Jewish neighborhoods of Ma'aleh Hazeitim (Ras al-Amud) and the Mount of Olives.

This settlement is not an obstacle to an agreement, as it has been argued, but an obstacle against disaster, because an agreement that will divide the heart of historic Jerusalem - and Ras al-Amud is definitely part of that historic area of Jerusalem - will not only hurt the feelings and aspirations of many Jews, and the right and primacy of the Jewish people to Jerusalem; an agreement of this sort will also return the Mount of Olives - which is adjacent to Ras al-Amud and is the oldest Jewish cemetery in the world, where Jews have buried their loved ones for 3,000 years - back to the terrible days on the eve of the Six-Day War.

During the 19 years in which Jews had been absent from the mountain and the areas adjacent to it, the Jordanians and local residents smashed tens of thousands of headstones, scattered them and used them as construction materials at the local latrines, in homes and passages, and as stones for sidewalks. The enormous damage to the mountain is something that the state of Israel continues to find difficult to reconstruct.

Handing over the areas adjacent to the mountain to the Palestinians will prevent or disrupt the continued Jewish burial at the Mount of Olives, on whose land lie for eternity - next to the common folk - figures who are central to the history of the Jewish people: Rabbi Ovadia of Bertinoro, a commentator on the Mishnah; Rabbi Yehuda Hasid, who built the Hurva synagogue, which was destroyed by the Jordanians in 1948, and whose cupola decorates the horizon of the Old City; Shai Agnon; Uri Zvi Grinberg; Menachem Begin, Eliezer Ben Yehuda, Rabbi Kook the elder and younger, Pinchas Rutenberg, Yoel Moshe Solomon, the Rivlins, and according to Jewish tradition, Haggai, Zachariah, Malachi and Absalom.

The Jewish settlement at Ma'aleh Hazeitim (Ras al-Amud), which is adjacent to the Spanish "Hatzot Section," fits well with the nearby area, where until recently stood the Samaria police headquarters, as well as other complexes acquired by Jews. The land on which the neighborhood of Ma'aleh Hazeitim was built was purchased in the middle of the 19th century by the philanthropists Moshe Wittenberg and Nissan Bak, who held it as caretakers for two kolels, that of Habad and that of Wolich. It was not taken from any one.

Whoever takes a look at a map of Jerusalem will see that from the point where the police headquarters stands at Ma'aleh Hazeitim, which will soon be occupied by Jews, and in a radius of 1,500 meters, one finds the Jewish Quarter, Yemin Moshe, part of Jaffa Road, Hutzot Hayotzer, the Khan Theater, the Abu Tur neighborhood, the Rockefeller Museum, and part of the neighborhood of Morasha. There is no need for Qassam rockets or mortars here. Every single one of these points are within range of the machine guns already in the possession of the Palestinians - of the sort that they have already used for years to shoot from Beit Jala toward the neighborhood of Gilo, the minute they were given the opportunity to do so.

The Palestinians are one thing, but how bizarre are the plans of some Israelis who are both mistaken and who distort the reality, offering to give up such a point of historical and security significance, and include it as part of the future Palestinian capital.

Even Teddy Kollek, one of the sternest opponents to the settlement of Jews in the middle of densely populated Arab neighborhoods in Jerusalem, was honest enough to express an ambivalent attitude to the setting up of a neighborhood there. Once he opposed the plan, and another time he supported it, once he learned that its areas are relatively distant from the main body of the Arab village, and after he heard the testimonies of those participating in funerals, who were pelted with stones, and on occasion who came under fire, on their way to the Mount of Olives.

During the past 200 years the demographic situation in many parts of Jerusalem has been changed, and the position of the Jews has strengthened. On the Mount of Olives, the vast majority of the dead may be Jews, but place of the living Jews there has both logic and a future. (Haaretz Apr 30)

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### **A Disturbing Diagnosis** By Daniel Fink

Amidst the clangor of NGO criticisms that target Israel for its behavior it is difficult to know which ones to take seriously. Whether they allege "collective punishment" based on a simplistic calculus divorced from context, or claim that Israel is obligated to provide Gaza with the entirety of its fuel and foodstuffs, which has no basis in international law, various human rights NGOs discredit themselves with relative ease.

Despite the "halo affect" these NGOs enjoy and the credibility they are afforded in international forums, many Israelis are beginning to take these claims less seriously. But there is still one community of NGOs that the

general public has a hard time expressing skepticism towards.

The community of medical humanitarians is perhaps the most trusted of all NGO actors. Organizations like Medecins Sans Frontiers, Physicians for Human Rights-Israel (PHR-I), Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP UK) and others are presumed to be the most credible sources in this conflict zone. Indeed, their mandate is to "come for the benefit of the sick, remaining free of all intentional injustice" as stipulated by the Hippocratic oath. Impartiality is their *modus operandi*. However, evidence demonstrates that even these groups are succumbing to partisanship and the facile oppressor-victim paradigm of the Arab-Israeli conflict. And most disturbing is their lack of moral outrage when sick Palestinians are used as fodder by terrorist groups.

IN NOVEMBER 2007, Physicians for Human Rights-Israel (PHR-I) issued an appeal for medical supplies for Gaza, citing "the prolonged siege imposed by the Israeli government," as the sole cause for such shortages. This assertion quickly made it up the information chain and was force-multiplied when it was repeated by major international NGOs and news publications, bolstering its credibility. With no mention of the 120 Kassams launched from Gaza that same month, the international community was led to believe Israel was simply perpetrating crimes against Gazans rather than being forced into making excruciating decisions in which security interests must be weighed against humanitarian ones.

Other issues were ignored as well. Firstly, not only was Israel continuing to transfer medical supplies to Gaza, albeit in fewer quantities than before the daily barrages, but Palestinian doctors were waiting until the last minute to order supplies "so they can create the image of a crisis," according to IDF Col. Nir Press. Hamas was endangering its own people for the purpose of "spin." In March 2008, Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported that Hamas was diverting medical supplies to its own clients. In April, the Palestinian Petroleum Authority reported that Hamas was attacking fuel trucks bound for the Nahal Oz crossing and hospitals and clinics. Fuel that did not reach these destinations was taken to Hamas-controlled security installations. And yesterday Hamas gunmen stole around 60,000 liters of fuel meant for a Gaza fuel station, where hospitals receive some of their power. None of these incidents have been reported by medical humanitarian NGOs.

PHR-I went on the offensive again this month, claiming that Israel was denying entry permits for Palestinian patients seeking medical attention in Israel. (A now familiar mantra also voiced by NGO superpowers including, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch). Israel stood accused of denying entry to sick Palestinians for "arbitrary" and malevolent reasons, though this too was a distortion.

Last week, it was reported by The Jerusalem Post that Palestinians from Gaza have been bribing local doctors to declare they need urgent medical treatment in Israel. According to the Shin Bet, "there has been an increase in the exploitation of Israel's humanitarian policy by way of fraudulent medical permits in return for bribes to doctors in the Gaza Strip."

Cases in which law-abiding Palestinians are denied access to Israeli medical facilities do exist, but rarely do medical humanitarians provide nuanced analyses which consider the issues' complexity.

Take the case of Nael al-Kurdi, a Gazan who was diagnosed with cancer last spring. Despite the treatments he received in Egypt and Gaza, his conditioned worsened and he sought treatment in Israel. Israeli Security Services denied his request and al-Kurdi died in waiting.

The medical NGOs, which took up his case and others, blamed only Israel. Human Rights Watch, which often quotes PHR-I, said in November that "Israel is punishing sick civilians as a way to hurt Hamas, and that's legally and morally wrong." This ignores the real "moral wrong" when Palestinians that require genuine medical treatment in Israel are recruited by terrorist organizations after they receive entry permits (as reported by the Israeli Security Agency in January), or when Palestinian doctors' requests for supplies are deliberately delayed for political capital.

Allowing entry to all Palestinians requesting medical treatment and hoping for the best is a game of Russian roulette. In May 2007, two female suicide bombers were caught using false medical information to gain authentic entry permits into Israel in order to carry out a double suicide bombing in Tel Aviv and Netanya. This is precisely the type of behavior which forces Israel to weigh security and humanitarian concerns - a calculus fraught with moral complexity.

The medical human rights NGOs that are responsible for issuing these reports should return to their medical books and recognize these facts. Properly diagnosing a patient requires thorough consideration of "diagnostic criteria" - signs, symptoms and tests. This entails investigations, interviewing all relevant actors, and making sound conclusions based on previous behavior. Reports based on a rigorous analysis of the real factors affecting access to healthcare would be a welcome addition to the defense of Palestinian human rights. But simply repeating half-truths and partisan claims will in no way result in improved medical services for the beneficiaries whom these organization's mandates are intended to serve. (Jerusalem Post Apr 30)

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