

Graffiti for intellectuals



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APRIL
23
2007



Si Frumkin

OCCUPATION? OPPRESSION? LOOK AGAIN!

In wounded

Palestine, the resistant Palestinian people are still suffering from oppression and occupation, deprived of their right to independence and to have a country.” King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, 3/28/07

Oh, yeah...??

Actually, the people living there have been living under occupation for many centuries. For the last several hundred years, under the Ottoman Turks, then, after World War I, under the British. Between 1948 and 1967 the West Bank and East Jerusalem were occupied and ruled by Jordan, and the Gaza Strip by Egypt. There was never “independence or having a country”. It was never mentioned, discussed, demanded or offered. This was the situation for about 20 years, until 1967.



ruled by the cruel, racist and tyrannical Zionists. This should have been exposed as evil and ridiculous nonsense a long time ago because it is just that: nonsense! But it was – and still is - believed by millions of intelligent but ignorant people. This isn't really surprising; in the Middle East facts do not create reality, rhetoric and fantasies do.

During the 1970s, the West Bank and Gaza constituted the fastest growing economy in the world – ahead of such “wonders” as Singapore, Hong Kong and Korea, and substantially ahead of Israel itself. The GNP expanded tenfold between 1968 and 1991 from \$165 to \$1,715 – compared to Jordan's \$1,050, Egypt's \$600, Turkey's \$1,630 and Tunisia's \$1,440. By 2000, Palestinian per-capita income was almost double Syria's, more than 4 times Yemen's, and ten times that of Jordan.

During that time there was no trade or other contacts between the two

But man doesn't live by bread – or earnings - alone – what



sides. Arabs did not have jobs in Israel, visit Israel or buy Israeli goods. All Jews who had lived in the West Bank, Gaza or East Jerusalem were expelled without compensation and banned from even praying at the sacred Jewish sites in Jerusalem.

But all of this has been forgotten. What is acknowledged – this is what you read in the media, see on TV and learn in college - is that in 1967 Israel won the 6-Day War and occupied the territories whose populations – henceforth known as “Palestinians” - were oppressed, impoverished, persecuted and

human stupidity; and I am not sure about the universe.” The Middle East is often described as the place where civilization was born and wisdom was generated. The problem is that all of that wisdom was used up over the millennia and the region is now the ultimate repository of inexplicable, boundless and incomprehensible stupidity.

So, let's take a look at the facts of the oppressive and cruel Israeli occupation, OK?

In 1967, when the “cruel occupation” began, most of the working age population in the territories was unemployed, living on international humanitarian handouts.

Within 20 years, close to 2000 industrial plants, employing almost half of the work force were established. The number of Palestinians employed in Israel rose from zero in 1967 to 66,000 in 1975, and 109,000 by 1986; this accounted for 35% of the employable population in the West Bank and 45% in Gaza.



Gaza hothouses before Israeli withdrawal

about health, education, living conditions?

During Israeli occupation, mortality rates fell by more



than 2/3rds. Life expectancy rose from 48 years in 1967 to 72 in 2000 (compared to 68 in all Middle East and North Africa). Infant mortality was reduced from 60:1000 live births in 1967 to 15:1000 in 2000 (Iraq-64; (See “OCCUPATION? contd. on page 2)

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Egypt – 40; Jordan – 23; Syria – 22).

In 1986, 92.8% of West Bank and Gaza had electricity around the clock as compared to 20.5% in 1967; running water in dwellings: 85% in 1986 and 16% in 1967; gas ranges: 83.5% in 1986 and 4% in 1967.

The number of school children grew by 102%, number of classes by 99% - while the population grew only by 28%! By 1990, there were 7 universities where there were none before and illiteracy dropped to 14% of adults (*Morocco-69%; Egypt – 61%; Tunisia – 45%; Syria – 44%*).

And so on, and so forth – life was better, people were healthier and better off – so what's the problem, you may ask? Is this what a cruel and oppressive occupation is?

And how have things changed since the current *intifada* began?

Here is a quote by Salam Fayyad, the minister of finance in the Palestinian unity government in a L.A. Times column on



Gaza's sewage flood - no money for sewage disposal, schools, hospitals...

March 31, 2007: "Today, almost two-thirds of the Palestinian population lives in poverty, with per-capita income at 60% of its level in 1960." So wasn't it stupid to kill the Israeli goose that was laying gold eggs for the Arabs?

Well, if you believe Einstein, human stupidity can be infinite, especially in the Middle East. In a recent article I quoted the joke about the man who is upset that his neighbor has a cow and he doesn't. He asks God for help? When an angel shows up and asks if he would like God to give him a cow he scoffs: "No. Just kill the neighbor's cow, OK?" The joke is much more sad than funny because it is so very true.

There was a recent "feces tsunami" in Gaza. A sewage reservoir collapsed and flooded the area. People drowned in their own feces because the system hadn't been repaired or maintained. I now expect a campaign to blow up Israeli waste proc-

essing plants in retribution. I also am sure that the offer of help from the Israeli army will not be accepted or appreciated, and



Gaza terrorists shelling Israel—lots of money for rockets...

that expensive weapons, rockets, antitank mines and explosive devices will continue to be purchased while the population drowns in its own toxic waste.

Another recent evidence of infinite stupidity is the destruction of hothouses built and managed by Israel that provided flowers and fruit for export to Europe and elsewhere. They were purchased by well-meaning American Jews and transferred to the Palestinians in pristine condition only to be destroyed, mutilated and stripped when the Israelis withdrew.

Israeli withdrawals and corrupt self-rule brought the conditions almost all the way back to where they were prior to 1967, when occupied by their Arab Muslim brothers. Currently, a major complaint by Palestinians and their supporters is that Israel will not permit them to freely work in Israel where they tend to blow up innocent Jews. Hardly anyone asks how they coped during the time when not one Arab from the territories worked in Israel, enjoyed Israeli medical help, or attended Israeli universities.

No one asks why Jews are not allowed to live, work and provide jobs in Arab territories – it is taken for granted that this is so obvious that it needs not be discussed. And there is international criticism when Israel builds a fence to protect its citizens from suicide bombers and uses foreign workers from Africa, China and Philippines to replace the Palestinians who had overwhelmingly elected a terrorist organization to lead them.

It is sad indeed that the Arabs appear to prefer losing the cow they already had, in fact, one that was given them by Israel, in order to, at any cost, destroy the Israeli cows.

Einstein was right. Human stupidity is infinite. Ω

Some are more equal... Continued from page 4

showed the soldier's religion; a Jew had an "H" for "Hebrew" – the Red Cross never went there. And the Jewish GIs at Berga and elsewhere were starved and worked to death. (For more info you can Google "Berga") I guess some American soldiers also were more equal than others.

Currently, the International Red Cross visits Guantanamo to make sure that the conditions there are humane, that prisoners have access to legal advice, prayers, medical care, physical exercise and a choice of menus that are meticulously prepared to conform with religious requirements – they can have regular or vegetarian or vegetarian with fish!

The Red Cross also regularly visits Israeli prisons to make sure that imprisoned terrorists – who had been tried and found guilty in open court - are treated humanely and are visited regularly by their families.



This is only fair and just. But why isn't this standard applied to prisoners of Islam? And why isn't the Red Cross calling for U.N. sanctions, why is there no pressure from the public, the

media, from civilized nations?

I don't mean to imply that Red Cross is an anti-Semitic organization. Yes, the Red Star of David – *Magen David Adom* - is still not recognized as an international symbol unlike the Red Cross and the Red Crescent. The Magen David is not quite equal but recently, after much deliberation, the organization accepted a Red Crystal – sort of a rectangle with its point down - as a substitute for the Magen David.

But all this may be just a coincidence and any day now the world will react. The American Red Cross and the U.S. government will stop giving money to this hypocritical international body, the U.N. will call for openness in the treatment of Israeli prisoners, and Israelis will be allowed to help saving lives in disasters all over the world – at this time they are doing it anonymously – under the banner of a Red Star of David.

Are you laughing yet? Ω

PEACE=CAPITULATION

The neverending process.

By Saul Singer, Jerusalem Post, February 22, 2007

It must be hard to be Condoleezza Rice. Being the umpteenth envoy assigned to bang your head against the wall called "Mideast peace" is hardly enviable. Each trip, she must hold up the flimsiest straw — last week, the fact of a meeting — and call it progress.

One wonders if she and other top diplomats who, with great sincerity, dedicate themselves to this thankless task, ever consider that they may be on the wrong track. Not regarding the goal of peace, or even the two-state vision, but with respect to the underlying paradigm on which all such diplomacy is based.

Rice is operating on a straightforward assumption: Palestinians are not embracing peace because they don't believe it is possible, or that it is attractive enough. The West's task, then, is to draw with increasingly vivid colors the "political horizon" that is the Palestinians' for the asking.

From Rice's point of view, the situation must seem quite absurd. She must ask herself, don't the Palestinians realize that if they just stop "struggling" they can have the state they are struggling for? Perhaps she wonders: why don't Israelis see that, if they just put their cards on the table, the Palestinians are exhausted and ready for a deal?

The assumption is that both sides want the same thing, yet are too hampered by historical baggage to take the other side's yes for an answer. But what if this assumption is wrong?

This reigning hypothesis is unconsciously based on a misunderstanding of the Arab side. As hard as it is for us to comprehend, we must accept that in the Arab mind, peace with Israel — far from success — still represents capitulation, humiliation and defeat.

Since the 1967 war, which ended with U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 establishing "land for peace" as the paradigm for ending the conflict, the West has assumed that the Arab world in fact favors such a deal. We tend to forget that in 1967, the Arab states were about to invade and destroy Israel, which at that time did not control a single grain of the West Bank, Gaza, and even East Jerusalem. Resolution 242 essentially said to the Arabs, "you wanted to destroy Israel, you lost, so now make peace and be happy you are getting the land you just lost back." Though the Arabs were defeated and weak,

they said no.

Now, Israel is militarily and economically much stronger than it was in 1967. Even diplomatically, just about all the countries that broke relations with Israel during the 1973 Arab oil boycott have restored ties. The U.N.'s "Zionism is racism" resolution, passed in 1975, was revoked in 1991.

Given this strength, it is not crazy for the West to keep trying the waters, hoping that the Arab world is ready to give up its century-old refusal to accept any Jewish state, however minuscule. What makes no sense is to forget that the Arab-Israeli peace that is a shining prize in Western eyes would be a source of shame and mourning for much of the Muslim world.

A poll taken a few months ago in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and United Arab Emirates — all considered moderate Arab states — found that the most admired leaders there were, in order of popularity: Hezbollah's Hassan Nasrallah, French President Jacques Chirac, and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

In 2004, when people in these same countries were asked why the US had invaded Iraq, the answers were perhaps even more revealing. "Controlling oil" and "protecting Israel" were cited by a large majorities, with "desire to dominate the region" and "weakening the Muslim world" named by slightly smaller majorities.

In Western eyes, peace is so obviously desirable that the idea that it could be seen negatively is rarely considered. But try, for a moment, to look at the situation through Arab eyes. Peace would be the ultimate ratification of Israel's existence. It would be seen as an abject surrender to the West's bid to dominate the Arabs.

In October 1995, when Yitzhak Rabin was prime minister and Oslo was in its heyday, Nizar Qabbani, the most popular poet in the Arab world, mourned the accords thus: "In our hands they left / a sardine can called Gaza / and a dry bone called Jericho / ...they gave

us a homeland smaller than a single grain of wheat / a homeland to swallow without water like aspirin pills..."

Today, Hamas leaders openly say that their dreams of Israel's destruction are closer to fruition than any time since 1967. They see the struggle as not only, or even primarily, one of military strength, but of legitimacy. And if it is suddenly and increasingly more legitimate to speak of a world without Israel, why should the Arabs, at this very moment, throw in the towel?

In this context, what we think of as a "political horizon" designed to tempt Arabs has the opposite effect. How does dressing up defeat make it more tempting?

Unfortunately, there is no direct way to change the fact that, to the bulk of Arab opinion, peace equals capitulation. All that can be done is to tip the scales of inevitability: from a world where it seems that Israel can be waited out, to one in which Israel is not only growing in strength but in legitimacy.

It may be counterintuitive, but the Palestinians' many allies who think they are promoting peace by vilifying Israel are doing the opposite. The same goes for Western governments who assume that "evenhandedness" advances peace.

The most pro-peace policy is the one that most convinces the Arabs of Israel's permanence. Even the U.S. is far from such a policy, since it will not routinely reject the currently favored backdoor means to Israel's destruction, the Palestinian demand for a "right of return" to Israel.

When it comes to a "political horizon," the problem is not that the Arabs cannot see a Palestinian state, but that they can see a Jewish one. The Arab world will settle for a Palestinian state only when it is convinced of the permanence of Israel.

— Saul Singer is editorial page editor of the Jerusalem Post and author of the book, [Confronting Jihad: Israel's Struggle & the World After 9/11](#).





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Southern California Council for Soviet Jews publication
(affiliate member of Union of Councils for Soviet Jews)
P.O.Box 1542, Studio City, CA 91614 (web: www.sifrumkin.com)

APRIL
23
2007

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SOME ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS By Si Frumkin

The world relaxed. On April 5, 2007, the 15 British sailors and marines were released by Iran. There they were, on TV, 14 men and one woman, on British soil, smiling, talking, hurrying to meet their families.

For two weeks there was outrage. Sabers were rattled, headlines screamed, pundits and experts prognosticated, commented and analyzed: How should Britain respond? Was this a sign of Iran's weakness? Of strength? Was it incredible cunning or monumental stupidity?

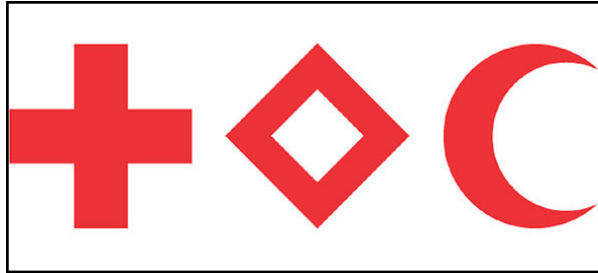
Now that it is over I want to offer a few thoughts of my own. I am, of course, happy for the sailors and their families. But in addition, I am very angry. I am concerned with one aspect of this kidnapping that apparently went unnoticed.

I looked at the Iranian tapes of the 15 captives smiling on camera, eating, playing chess and praising the kindness of their captors. A thought struck me: How lucky, how incredibly fortunate were the parents, the spouses, the children of these captives to be able to know that their loved ones were alive and well.

Of course, there was no way of knowing the future, but at least they knew that now, at this time, this day, this hour – the 15 were alive and well. How much more horrible it is *not to know even that*.

And then I thought about those other parents and the other wives who know nothing

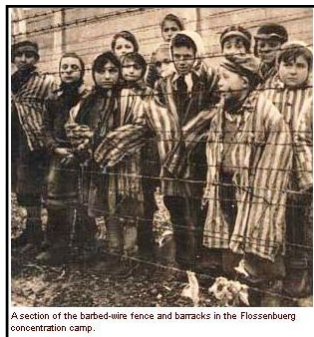
about *their* soldiers – not even if they are still alive. They would probably give anything just to see a tape, hear a voice or get a scribbled letter, just once, but there is nothing. The world that was so excited and upset over the 15 Brits doesn't seem to be very concerned about these *other* abducted soldiers.



George Orwell was right when he said in *Animal Farm*, "All animals are equal but some are more equal than others."

Some soldiers *are* less equal – when they are Israelis, not Brits, there is no media coverage and the world isn't outraged.

Here they are: Zachary Baumel, Tzvi Feldman, Yehuda Katz, Ron Arad – captured 18 years ago; Guy Hever – taken in 1997,



A section of the barbed-wire fence and barracks in the Flossenbürg concentration camp.

and the more recent Gilad Shalit, Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser kidnapped in October 2006.

Their fate is unknown. There have been no communications, no confirmed reports, nothing.

And then I thought about the International

Red Cross – the respected, revered, caring organization whose business it is to monitor and intercede when human rights are vio-

lated.

I had just one contact with the Red Cross during the 4 years I spent in ghettos and concentration camps: a month or so before the war ended, Red Cross packages were distributed to us in Dachau - a pound of sugar, two cans of sardines, biscuits and 10 cigarettes; they were individual packages but we got one for every four prisoners. Also, I know that Red Cross representatives visited the Theresienstadt concentration camp during the war and were enthused – the Nazis had cleaned up the camp, provided food and adequate clothing, even a school and a theater, for the few days the inspectors were there - but, yes, they did go there.



Red Cross did monitor the American POWs in Germany – and German POWs in the U.S.

and Britain – there was mail, food, medical care and no forced labor. There was just one exception: the Berga POW camp for Jewish American soldiers – the dog tags



(See **"EQUAL"** PAGE 2)