

Graffiti for intellectuals



SIMON SAYS



AUGUST
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2006



By Si Frumkin

SO WHY HAVEN'T YOU HEARD ABOUT THIS?

Here are two quizzes. The second one is at the end of this article. The first one is right here:

"Everything that Christians have come from the Jewish people. The Word of God: every word in the Bible is written with Jewish hands. The Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were Jewish. The Prophets: Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Danie - all of them are Jewish. The first family of Christianity: Mary, Joseph, Jesu - Jewish. The Disciples, the Apostles, were Jewish. Jesus said 'Salvation is of the Jews.'

"The point is if you take away the Jewish contribution to Christianity, there wouldn't be a Christianity. Therefore it's time for the Christians to stop praising the dead Jews of the past — Abraham, Isaac and Jacob — while resenting the Jews across the street."

Q.: Who said this?

1. A famous Zionist who has for 25 years promoted the annual "Nights to Honor Israel" nationwide.
2. A Texan media mogul, who has donated \$8.5 million to Israeli hospitals and orphanages, helped bring 12,000 Russian Jews to Israel and speaks of Israel on 120 stations on 5 networks?
3. A Christian minister.
4. All of the above.

The answer is number 4.

The quote is by Rev. John C. Hagee, pastor of the over 18,000-member Cornerstone Church in San Antonio. In his most recent book, "Jerusalem Countdown", he warns of nuclear Iran: "There is a new Hitler in the Middle East. He's talking about killing Jews. He will soon have the ability to do so with nuclear weapons."

Hagee's love affair with Israel began in 1978, after he "went there as a visitor and came home a Zionist". In June 1981, Israel attacked and destroyed the Iraqi Ossirak nuclear reactor. Pastor Hagee was shocked at the vicious criticism of Israel by the U.S. media and government spokesmen. His responded by calling a press conference and organizing an event he called "A Night To Honor Israel". It was a difficult task: Jewish community leaders were suspicious of his motivation; Christian pastors were indifferent, even hostile.

During the next 25 years Pastor Hagee's pro-Israel stance was accepted by hundreds of evangelical congregations throughout the U.S. During that time Pastor Hagee met with every Israeli Prime Minister, addressed the Knesset, prayed at the Wall, was interviewed by all major Israeli media and has cultivated close ties with American Jewish organizations, including the California-based Israel Christian Nexus. Hagee's ideas have become a force for Israel among the 40 – 50

million Evangelical Christians in the U.S. and Central America.

Early in 2006, Pastor Hagee went on to expand his pro-Israel activity by creating the non-profit foundation "Christians United For Israel" (CUFI). It is an umbrella organization for all Christians who accept that God, "Will bless those who bless the Jews and curse whoever curses the Jews" (Genesis 12:3). CUFI's slogan is from Isaiah: "For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's



Pastor Hagee at a "A Night to Honor Israel" event

sake I will not remain quiet..."

A CUFI inaugural meeting was scheduled for July 18 in Washington, D.C. A banquet hall that could seat 1000 guests was reserved for the supporters who were going to lobby their Capitol Hill representatives the next day. After a few days it was obvious that the hall couldn't accommodate all those who wanted to participate. An additional hall was reserved and a few days later, yet another one.

In the end, by July 18, over 3500 Christian pastors and leaders came to Washington to speak for, act for, defend Israel!

They sat through a 4-hour banquet for a video greeting from Israeli P.M. Ehud Olmert, appearances by dozens of Senators and Congressmen and an impassioned speech by Rev. Hagee who demanded of Condoleezza Rice that "Israel not be restrained in

destroying the Hezbollah", in language that Jewish leaders are usually too cautious to use. Later, late that night, there was a briefing session with office addresses, talking points, maps, appointment procedures, even what to wear, for the 3500 Christian clerics who were going to take the Hill by storm in the next two days.

And now another quizz to complement the one that began this column:

If 3500 Christian pastors and community leaders come to Washington to act on behalf of Israel, **and, if** they represent 40 to 60 million American voters who take their views very seriously, **and, if**, they are part of an organization that was created just 5 months ago, **and, if** this organization is likely to greatly expand within a year or so, in time for the next elections, and will control many millions of votes, what should the news media do about it?

1. Run front-page stories and give them prime-time TV coverage.

2. Ignore it as if it never happened because, after all, this is just a bunch of religious fanatics and politically incorrect and ignorant right-wingers who shouldn't be given exposure. Let's face it – these people are not nearly as interesting as anti-Bush film stars, gay activists, environmentalists or self-appointed black leaders who can get headlines by just being there.

If you are one of the hundreds of millions of Americans who didn't read about the Christians United for Israel conference in Washington in your newspaper – L.A. and N.Y. Times, Washington Post, etc., etc., - seen it on any of the national TV news channels and are now learning about this for the first time – well, answer #2 is correct.

Sad, isn't it? And why do you think this is? ✨

I WANT FALWELL IN MY FOXHOLE

By Zev Chafets, L.A. Times, July 23, 2006

MISSILES AND rockets are falling all over the Galilee. A bomb even hit Nazareth, where it killed two small Muslim kids (Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, commander of the Religion of Peace, Hezbollah branch, apologized for the mistake; he had been aiming at Jews). But through it all, peace and tranquillity have reigned over Kibbutz Megiddo. This is bad news if you're one of those people who happen to be looking forward to the end of the world.

To the untrained eye, Megiddo is just another Israeli farm community attached to an archeological dig and tourist gift shop. But tens of millions of evangelical Christians know it as Armageddon, the biblical battleground for the coming war between Jesus and the anti-Christ.

Is the fighting that now rages between Israel and Hezbollah a sign that the final battle is nigh? I asked Connie Wilson, when I reached her on her cellphone.

"I don't know if this is the time or not," said Pastor Wilson, an American-born Pentecostal who lives in Jerusalem and specializes in keeping an eye on the End of Days. "But you can feel the breath of God from the Book of Ezekiel."

"Amen," I said, my usual response when I don't know what she's talking about.

Exactly a year ago, she and her husband, Bill, a retired brigadier general in the Georgia National Guard, took me on a tour of Armageddon. Connie read aloud obscure biblical prophecies about the apocalypse, taken from the Old Testament books of Ezekiel and Daniel and the New Testament's Book of Revelation. Later, Bill pointed out the military terrain in the Jezreel Valley, where he expects 2 billion enemy soldiers to gather against the forces of good. He wasn't sure what God's strategy would be, but applying military principles, he envisioned something like Sherman's capture of Atlanta, or so it seemed to me.

Secular liberals find this scenario preposterous. On the other hand, many of these same scoffers profoundly believe that high-octane gasoline and the profligate use of electric home appliances will heat planet Earth to a doomsday temperature last experienced 420,000 years ago (when, presumably, gas was a dime a gallon and it was OK to leave the TV on all night).

For true believers of any apocalyptic religion, the issue isn't merely how the world will end, but when? Here, even the most devout generally take an agnostic view. Jerry Falwell, for example, is a pre-millennialist Christian of the greatest piety,

but that hasn't stopped him from launching a long-term building program at his Liberty University, where Tim LaHaye, author of the Book of Revelation-based "Left Behind" series of novels, recently donated millions of dollars for a hockey rink. With similar optimism, Al Gore is apparently thinking about a presidential run in 2008, regardless of global warming.

"We know end times are coming," Connie Wilson said. "We just don't know when. So we live our lives the way we imagine God wants them lived."

For millions of American evangelical voters, living right includes supporting Israel. Last week, Pentecostal televangelist Rev. John Hagee of San Antonio, one of the rising forces in American Christian Zionism, convened a meet-



ing in Washington of Christians Unified for Israel. Hagee sees the newly formed group as an evangelical American-Israel Public Affairs Committee, dedicated to lobbying on Israel's behalf, especially in states where Jews are few and far between. Republican presidential hopeful Sen. Sam Brownback of Kansas attended Hagee's rally. So did Pennsylvania GOP Sen. Rick Santorum (who is running for his political life). Republican National Committee Chairman Ken Mehlman was there. So was the Israeli ambassador, Daniel Ayalon.

Jewish Democrats often decry Republican evangelical support on the grounds that these Christians only want to missionize Jews (and if they do, so what? It's a free country) or use them as cannon fodder at Armageddon (which matters only if you believe in Armageddon in the first place).

In fact, the main motive for Christian Zionism is not devious. As Hagee said, paraphrasing the Book of Genesis, Chapter 12:3, "God will bless those who bless the Jewish people."

Now, if you don't believe in the literal truth of the Bible, this probably sounds like

a Christian Hallmark card sentiment. But if you do, it's a marching order.

The idea of militant evangelicals mobilizing for Israel frightens those who believe fundamentalists are trying to push the United States into a war to hasten Armageddon. But they miss the point. One of the central attributes of conservative evangelical Christianity is its eschatological passivity. End times will come when God is ready, and there is nothing anyone can do — not give your old clothes to the maid, join the Sierra Club or even go on a Nation magazine Caribbean cruise — that will hasten Paradise.

This resignation once led to evangelical political quietism. But a new generation of leaders, like Falwell and Pat Robertson, taught evangelicals that if they can't "fix the world" (in the charmingly modest phrase of the liberal religious left), they can at least support causes they find consistent with biblical teaching.

Now, in my personal opinion, some of these biblical principles are very good (honor your father and mother; don't steal your neighbor's ass), some less so (for details, contact my former wives). But one principle — supporting Israel in the face of a genocidal Islamic fascism — is excellent

This support takes practical forms. The International Fellowship of Christians and Jews is an American group led by Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein that raises tens of millions of dollars from evangelicals for Jewish causes.

It is now giving money to update the bomb shelters of the Galilee. Sure, some of these donors may see this as part of a vast cosmic drama. Why not, they're entitled.

They may have odd ideas about the end of the world, but the evangelicals' ideology has made them into militant anti-fascists (which is more than I can say for some of my best friends). The truth is, in this war, I'd rather be in a bomb shelter — or a foxhole — with Jerry Falwell than with Jerry Seinfeld.

Zev Chafets, the author of nine books of fiction, media criticism and social and political commentary, is at work on a book about Christian evangelicals, American Jews and Israel.

THE SWASTIKA AND THE SCIMITAR

By Jonah Goldberg, National Review, August 18, 2006

THE JEWS everywhere are "the Muslim's bitter enemies," said a prominent Islamic leader. Throughout history, the "irreconcilable enemy of Islam" has conspired and schemed and "oppressed and persecuted 40 million Muslims," he said. In Palestine, the Jews are establishing "a base from which to extend their power over neighboring Islamic countries." And, he proclaimed, "this war, which was unleashed by the world Jewry," provided "Muslims the best opportunity to free themselves from these instances of persecution and oppression."



Moslems celebrate synagogue burning—Gaza, 2005

Sound like Hezbollah leader Sheik Hassan Nasrallah? Or perhaps Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad? Nope. It was the grand mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin Husseini, in 1942. An ardent Nazi supporter, Husseini delivered his speech at the opening of the Islamic Institute in Berlin,



Heinrich Himmler inspecting Moslem SS Brigade—1943

one day after the Allies denounced the Nazis for "carrying into effect Hitler's oft-repeated intention to exterminate the Jewish people in Europe." Husseini's address was approved by Nazi Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop, and Joseph Goebbels was in attendance. The Reich press office widely distributed the comments.

President Bush undoubtedly didn't have any of this in mind this week when he dubbed our enemies in the war on terror "Islamic fascists." But his comments — analytically flawed as they may be — added some much-needed moral clarity to our current struggle. They also helped to illuminate a much-overlooked point: Islamic fundamentalism and Nazism are historically and intellectually linked. (When the Israelis caught Adolf Eichmann, an architect of the Final Solution, a leading Saudi Arabian newspaper read: "Arrest of Eichmann, who had the honor of killing 6 million Jews.") Perhaps unsurprisingly, Bush's remarks seem to have struck a nerve.

The Saudi government warned "against hurling charges of terrorism and fascism at

Muslims without regard to the spotless history of Islamic civilization." Of course, no civilization is without sin, but it takes particular chutzpah for Saudis to preen, considering their civilization is as spotless as a leopard.

Still, the point isn't to dredge up ancient history about Muslims and Nazis. Many Swedes got along swimmingly with the Nazis but who worries about the Swedes today? The Muslim world is another matter. And unlike the Swedes, the similarities between Nazism and Islamic fascism are not all in the past. In what may be the most important book on the Holocaust in a generation, historian Jeffrey Herf explains why.

According to the standard Holocaust narrative, the Final Solution was the product of "hate" or racism or, often, both. Anti-Semitism became popular in the 19th century; the Nazis expanded on it, constructing a pseudo-scientific biological racism that saw the Jews as a "cancer" on the body politic and the Holocaust as an attempt to excise the tumor. Herf does not so much debunk this version of history as cut



Grand mufti of Jerusalem inspecting Moslem SS in Germany—1943

through it. In "The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda During World War II and the Holocaust", he concedes that hatred and racism

were important, but he argues that they don't explain Germany's unique efforts to destroy the Jews. It's not as if no one hated the Jews until the 1930s. The real answer isn't hate, but fear. Poring through miles of speeches, private comments, journal entries, party memoranda and all 24,000 pages of Goebbels' diaries, Herf concludes that the Nazis really believed that the Jews ran the world and wanted to destroy Germany. They believed that Jews controlled not only the Bolsheviks to the east but the capitalists to the west. President Franklin D. Roosevelt was a



Hezbollah leader Nasrallah—2006

mere pawn of his Jewish friends and advisors. The British Parliament, Goebbels wrote in one diary entry, was "in reality a kind of Jewish stock exchange." The "Jewish-plutocratic enemy" was everywhere, benefiting from, and responsible for, every piece of bad news for Germany. In fact, the

Nazis were sure that the Jews had declared war on Germany first, giving them no choice but to respond to the Jewish campaign to "exterminate the Germans." This paranoia led the Nazis to believe that



Synagogue burning—Kristallnacht, Germany, 1938

rounding up millions of Jews and gassing them was an act of self-defense.

What is so frightening is how similar this is to the sounds from the Middle East today. Ahmadinejad — dismissed by "sophisticated" academics as a blowhard — calls the Holo-

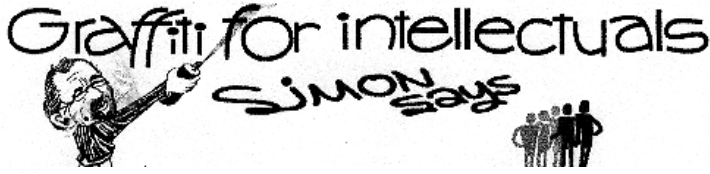
caust a myth. Indeed, there is no Jewish conspiracy theory too outlandish in the Muslim world. Huge numbers of Muslims — even 45 percent of British Muslims — believe that the Jews were behind 9/11. Theories that the Mossad is behind every bad headline, from the Indonesian tsunami to



Grand mufti Haj Amin Husseini visiting with Moslem SS -1943

bad soccer performances, are common on the Arab street. According to Herf, this is only the second time the world has seen this sort of radical anti-Semitic paranoia. And, again, too many in the

unspotless West are saying, "They can't be serious." Ω



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BUFFET AND HEZBOLLAH, Thomas L. Friedman, N.Y. Times, August 9, 2006

Warren Buffett. The most important thing you need to know about Israel today and how it has performed so far in the war with Hezbollah is Warren Buffett.

Say what? Well, the most talked-about story in Israel, before Hezbollah started this war, was the fact that on May 5, Mr. Buffett, the Berkshire Hathaway chairman and the world's most successful investor, bought an 80 percent stake in the privately held Israeli precision tools company, Iscar Metalworking, for \$4 billion — Mr. Buffett's first purchase of a company outside America. According to Business Week, as a result of the deal, Iscar's owners were "likely to pay about \$1 billion in capital gains taxes into the Israeli government's coffers — an unexpected windfall. With the Israeli budget already running a \$2 billion surplus, the government is considering slashing value-added tax by one percentage point to 15 percent."



In May, Israeli papers were filled with pages about how cool it was that Israel had produced a cutting-edge company that Warren Buffett wanted to buy. It was being discussed everywhere, pushing the Tel Aviv stock exchange to an all-time high.

That is where Israel's head was on the eve of this war — and it explains something I sensed when I visited Israel shortly after the fighting started. Nobody wanted this war, and nobody was prepared for it. Look closely at pictures of Israeli soldiers from Lebanon. There is no enthusiasm in their faces, and certainly no triumphalism. Their expressions tell the whole story: "I just don't want to be doing this — another war with the Arabs."

Israeli soldiers were napping when this

war started — that's why they got ambushed — for the very best reasons: They have so much more to do with their lives, and they live in a society that empowers and enables them to do it. (Unfortunately, the Buffett company is in northern Israel and had to be temporarily closed because of rocket attacks.)

Young Israelis dream of being inventors, and their role models are the Israeli innovators who made it to the Nasdaq. Hezbollah youth dream of being martyrs, and their role models are Islamic militants who made it to the Next World. Israel spent the last six years preparing for Warren Buffett, while Hezbollah spent the last six years preparing for this war.

"Israel was not prepared for this war," said the Israeli political theorist Yaron Ezrahi. "It came upon us like the crash of a meteorite. ... The whole focus of debate in the country before this war was on withdrawal." The Israeli Army had just taken on its own extremists, the settlers in Gaza, and removed them against their will, added Mr. Ezrahi, "and the country had just elected for the first time a prime minister who promised voters to unilaterally withdraw from the West Bank in return for nothing."

In the end, Israel will do whatever it has to do to prevail. But what is so troubling for Israelis is that this war is about nothing and everything. That is, Israel got out of Lebanon, and yet Hezbollah keeps coming. It is all about Hezbollah's need to justify its existence and Iran's need for a distraction.

What is doubly sad is that Lebanon was getting its act together. Rafik Hariri, the former prime minister, represented a whole new type of Arab leader — one who rose to power by being a builder and an entrepreneur. He understood that Lebanon, freed of Syria, was a country whose youth had the energy and skill to compete anywhere. He thought Lebanon could again be a model of how Arabs can embrace modernity. But Mr. Hariri was murdered, allegedly by Syria, and now Lebanon's democracy is being murdered by Hezbollah. Once again, in the Arab world, the past buries the future.

Israel mustn't get sucked into that same grave. Israel needs to get a cease-fire and an international force into south Lebanon — and get out. Israel can't defeat Hezbollah, it can only hurt it enough to make it think twice about ever doing this again — and it has pretty much done that. It must not destroy any more of Lebanon, which is going to still be its neighbor when the guns fall silent.

Israel wins when Warren Buffett's company there is fully back in business — not when Nasrallah is out of business. Because that will only happen, not by war, but when Arabs wake up and realize that he is just another fraud, just another Nasser, whose strategy would condemn the flower of Arab youth — who deserve and need so much better — to another decade of making potato chips, not microchips. Nasrallah can win in the long run only if he can condemn the flower of Israel's youth to the same fate. Don't let it happen, Israel. ☼