

Graffiti for intellectuals



SIMON SAYS



MARCH
4
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By Si Frumkin

CAIR-LESS? YES, BY MORE THAN 90%!

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I don't usually get upset when bad things happen to bad people. I believe that the evil ideologies, organizations, mobs or individuals that support and spread hate should be despised, isolated, held in contempt and, if possible and necessary, punished.

But I do get upset when justice is not served, when there is no punishment and, furthermore, the bad guys are respected rather than despised. O.J. Simpson is just one specific example but I would add many others, like contemporary pseudo-music rappers and their hate and violence filled pseudo-art, film and cable TV's graphic violence and pornography and CAIR.

Let me explain my last selection. CAIR stands for Council of American-Islamic Relations. It describes itself as a civil liberties organization that claims to be an "advocacy group for Muslims in North America"; its professed goals are to "enhance understanding of Islam, promote justice and empower American Muslims." It was an unindicted co-conspirator in the case brought by the government against the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, a charitable organization accused of providing funds to terrorist groups. The case ended in a mistrial even though authoritative expert testimony was provided by, among others, Steven Emerson and an Israeli Mossad agent who was permitted to testify out of view and under an assumed name.

I should admit that I was always a little jealous of CAIR. This is an organization that was – and still is - recognized by our media as the representative and spokesman for the 3 to 6 million strong (depending on who is counting) American Muslim Community. It is a vocal proponent of the Palestinian cause and a defender of the right of Muslims to be offended and turn violent because of cartoons in Denmark, phony accusations of Korans in Guantanamo toilets, and what-

ever else may be needed to call attention to supposedly constantly oppressed and very easily offended Muslims. It also urges understanding, excusing and condoning the violence, riots, murder and persecution of infidels – of any age, sex, color, race or religion - by Muslims in England, Spain, France, Indonesia, Philippines, and wherever else it erupts.



CAIR habitually preaches that Muslim extremists in the U.S. and elsewhere are a tiny minority compared to the overwhelming majority of their peaceful coreligionists. It doesn't explain why this majority is practically never heard from and has never organized or called for mass demon-

strations against Muslim riots and excesses in Europe, murders of other Muslims in the Middle East and Darfur, or the ongoing oppression and persecution of Christians in most Moslem countries.

Throughout, CAIR was the dominating Muslim voice in our mass media. Their point of view and analyses were featured on TV and print media – not an easy thing to achieve. I recall that when I was active in the Soviet Jewry movement several decades ago, it was difficult to get news coverage by sending a press release or holding a press conference; sometimes our press conferences pulled just one or two reporters or TV cameras, more often no one showed up. CAIR was - and is - much more successful in disseminating its message and yes, maybe I was just a little jealous. But aside from vehemently disagreeing with their point of view I too had no doubt that it was shared by the majority of America's Muslims.

And now, in a little noticed investigative report in the Washington Times – not, as

usual, in the mainline media - it is revealed that CAIR, the supposed voice of the millions of American Muslims really isn't the voice of anyone at all!

Here are the facts: according to income tax statements that are required to be filed by non-profit tax-exempt organizations, membership of CAIR has declined by more than 90% since 2001 when CAIR had 29,000 dues-paying members! By 2006 CAIR's membership dropped to less than 1700! It didn't help that dues were lowered from \$35 to \$25 per year – income from dues was \$732,765 in 2000 and just \$58,750 in 2006.

1700 members! Are you kidding? This is less than the attendance at a college or high school basketball or football game, it is less than the membership at a medium-sized temple or synagogue, and about 1/10 of daily Disneyland attendance! And with 1700 members they claim to speak for millions of Muslims in the U.S.A.? I reluctantly admire CAIR for the (pardon the expression) *hutzpah* for claiming to represent 6 million (their count) or 2 1/2 million (my count) American Muslims.

Final thought. So with the falling revenues where do they get their money from? Good question!

Well, according to the IRS, in 2001, 26 contributors gave more than \$1.6 million. In 2006, 26 gave more than \$2.6 million; in 2003, 24 gave more than \$2 million; in 2004, 20 gave more than \$1.4 million; and in 2005, 19 gave \$1.3 million.

So who are all these dedicated givers who gave all those millions? Another good question but there is no answer. The IRS removed their names from the report they are supposed to make available to the public. They will probably never be known.

And why did the IRS do this? Well, that's another very good question...

And the final good question: so why do the media still talk, listen, quote, respect and take CAIR seriously? ☆

THREE WEEKS IN ISRAEL 15 YEARS AGO part 1

By Si Frumkin

Once in a while nostalgia overcomes me and I start going through the old files and closets in search of memories. This time I wanted to write about an old friend I first met about 25 years ago when a small group of us gathered in front of the Israeli consulate to protest yet another terrorist outrage that had happened that week in Israel. We weren't many – most of them familiar faces that I could always count on – and I am embarrassed to say that I no longer even have a recollection of what exactly it was that we were protesting; there were so many outrages over the decades.

But I remember that a tall, handsome man took the mike and spoke passionately about his love for Jerusalem and the land that the Lord had bequeathed to the people of Israel. Someone told me he was a Christian pastor who published a pro-Israel newsletter and I introduced myself. His name was Frank Eiklor. In the years to come we became good friends. I spoke a few times on his radio and TV programs, had dinner at his home, was impressed by his love for Israel and the Jews, and appreciated that his seemed to be the only program that featured stories about Jonathan Pol-



PASTOR FRANK EIKLOR

lard and the injustice that was done to him. We didn't see each other all that often – he traveled all over the world speaking on Israel and Zionism to Christian audiences. He had gone to Africa, South America, all over Europe and, of course, Israel. Then he moved to another part of California, we lost track of one another, and finally met again just a few months ago when he was invited by the Israel Christian Nexus to speak at a Los Angeles temple, and explain to a Jewish audience what motivated Christian Zionists.



SI GOT A GUN!

Frank hadn't changed much. He is still ramrod straight – just like he was decades ago when, as a young Marine, he fought in World War II, still the same twinkle in his eye, a few grey hairs in his moustache, but the same enthusiasm, same dedication to Israel.

As I listened to him I remembered an episode in my life. In 1993, I had spent two

weeks in Israel, working as a volunteer in an army camp. On the day we were to fly home, the colonel commanding the base came to say good bye to the foreign volunteers and thank us for helping out. He asked if any of us were from California. A few hands went up. "Does anybody know a pastor from California, Frank Eiklor?" he said.

"I know Frank," I said. "He is a friend of mine."

A smile lit up the colonel's face. "You are a friend of Frank's? A great man, a good man. Tell him I said hello, will you?"

He told us that during the war, in 1982, when few tourists were coming to Israel, Frank had brought a planeload of Christian tourists to work on army bases while the soldiers were off fighting. Since then he came every year bringing dozens of people to help.

"A good man, a good man," he repeated. "I wish there were many Jews like him."

And now, 15 years later, thinking of Frank Eiklor I realized that I had written about my two weeks on an Israeli army base in 1993, but that it was way too long – I try to keep my columns at about 800 words or so; I was told by an expert that today's readers don't have the patience to read anything longer than that – so I put the project aside and never got to it.

I dug out my old photos and notes I had written so long ago – I didn't have a beard then, just a moustache that was long enough to twirl, I was about 20 lbs lighter and in much better shape, and in the camp I heard a rumor that some of the other volunteers thought that I had been a commando or in the special

forces in the U.S. I ignored the rumor but I didn't deny it either – some of the cute Israeli girl soldiers appeared impressed by the mystery about me and the fact that I took a cold shower every morning. (I did, but there was no mystery about that: there was no hot water.)

Anyway, I rewrote what I hadn't written long ago and here it is. I enjoyed my two weeks in Israel for reasons that still aren't quite clear – the food

was lousy, the conditions were primitive, the work was boring and depressing, and the best breakfast we had was when I managed to buy some instant oatmeal in a Tel Aviv market, used a chainik of hot water I sneaked from the



THE TIRED AMERICAN



WAITING FOR BREAKFAST AT THE KITCHEN

kitchen and shared a hot breakfast with all the guys in my barrack. But I was never sorry and will share my memories with you in my next column.

PUTIN'S TORTURE COLONIES - Contd. From page 4

line up, equipped with special means -- rubber truncheons and dog handlers with work dogs. . . . During the time of the run, each employee hits the prisoner running by with a truncheon. . . . The convicts run with luggage, which significantly complicates the run. At those [places] where employees with dogs are found, the run of the convict is slowed by a dog lunging from the leash."



second leg."

Not surprisingly, suicide attempts at these colonies are common. One convict, named Mishchikin, sought to commit suicide by swallowing "a wire and nails tied together crosswise." As punishment, he was denied medical assistance for 12 days. Another convict, named Fargiyev, was held in handcuffs for 52 days after stabbing himself; he never fully recovered motor function in his hands. Even the smallest of prisoner infractions can be met with savage reprisals. In one case, authorities noticed the smell of cigarette smoke in a so-called "penalty isolator"

cell where seven convicts were being held. "A fire engine was called in. . . . The entire cell, including the convicts and their personal things, was flooded with cold water." The convicts were left in wet clothes in 50 degree Fahrenheit temperatures for a week.

As a legal matter, the torture colonies don't even exist, and Mr. Ponomarev doubts there has ever been an explicit directive from Mr. Putin ordering the kind of treatment they mete. Rather, for the most part the standards of punishment are determined at the whim of colony commandants, often in areas where the traditions of the Gulag never went away.

That doesn't excuse the Kremlin, however. Under Yeltsin, the prison system had operated under a sunshine policy, as part of a larger effort to distance Russia from its Soviet past. "But when Putin came

to power, a new tone was set," Mr. Ponomarev says. "The sadists who had previously been 'behaving' simply stopped behaving."

Now reports of torture are systematically ignored or suppressed while regional governments refuse to act on evidence of abuse. Commandants at "general regime" colonies can always threaten misbehaving convicts with transfer to a torture colony -- a useful way of keeping them in line. The Kremlin, too, benefits from the implied threat. "The correct word for this



INSIDE THE PENAL COLONY

is Gulag, even if it's on a smaller scale," warns Mr. Ponomarev. "This is the reappearance of totalitarianism in the state. Unless we eradicate it, it will spread throughout the entire country."

Readers interested in a closer look at what is described above may do a You-



Tube search for "Yekaterinaburg Prison Camp." The short video, apparently filmed by a prison guard and delivered anonymously to Mr. Ponomarev's organization, is a modern-day version of "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich." It isn't

easy to watch. But it is an invaluable window on what Russia has become in the Age of Putin, Person of the Year.

★

The prison gantlet is just the welcome mat. At IK-1, a prisoner with a broken leg named Zurab Baroyan made the mistake of testifying to conditions at the colony to a staff representative of the Human Rights Ombudsman of the Russian Fed-



PUTIN—THE POLICEMAN'S FRIEND!

eration. "After this," Mr. Baroyan reported, the commandant of the colony "threatened to rot me in the dungeon.



KHODORKOVSKY—A FORMER BILLIONAIRE, NOW IN PRISON

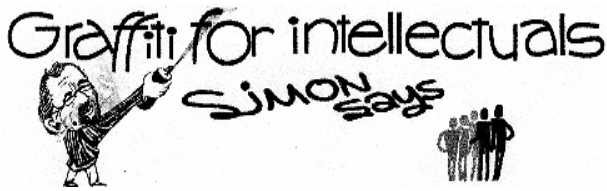
They did not complete treating me in the hospital. The leg festers [and] pus runs from the bandage. . . . The festering has crossed over to the



ARREST OF A DISSIDENT



"Russian evolution" - German cartoon



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PUTIN'S TORTURE COLONIES

By Bret Stephens, Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2008

The protest began after OMON [riot police] had been brought to correctional colony No. 5 (Amur Oblast, Skovorodino Rayon, village Takhtamygda) and started massive beatings of the prisoners. People in camouflage and masks were beating with batons inmates taken outside undressed in the freezing cold. . . . As a protest, 39 prisoners immediately cut their veins open.

"Next day, on 17 January, the 'special operation' was repeated in an even more humiliating and massive form. At that time, about 700 inmates cut their veins open. . . ."

The description here comes from a report received by the Moscow-based Foundation for Defense of Rights of Prisoners. The time reference is to 2008 -- that is, last month. This is not Alexander Solzhenitsyn's Russia. It's Vladimir Putin's. And correctional colony No. 5, located not far from the Manchurian border, does not even make the list of the worst penal colonies in the country.

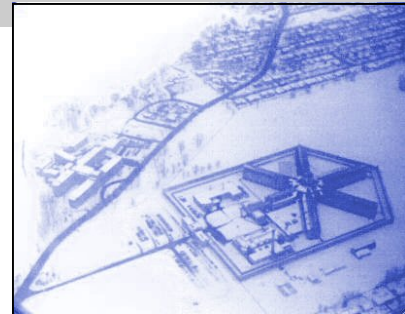


That distinction belongs to the newly revived institution of *Pytochnye kolonii*, or torture colonies. After all but disappearing in the 1990s under the liberal regime of Boris Yeltsin, there are now about 50 pytochnye kolonii among the roughly 700 colonies that house the bulk of Russia's convict population, according to FDRP cofounder Lev Ponomarev. And while they cannot be compared to the Soviet Gulag in terms of scope or the percentage of prisoners who are innocent of any real crime, they are fast approaching it in terms of

sheer cruelty.

The cruelty to prisoners often begins prior to their actual sentencing. "When people are transported from prisons to courts to attend their hearings, they are jammed in a tiny room where they can barely stand. There's no toilet; if they have to relieve themselves, it has to be right there," says Mr. Ponomarev. "Then they are put on trucks. It's extremely cold in winter, extremely hot in summer, no ventilation, no heating. These are basically metal containers. They have to be there for hours. Healthy people are held together with people with tuberculosis, creating a breeding ground for the disease."

Once sentenced, prisoners are transported in packed train wagons to distant correctional colonies that, under Russian law, range from relatively lax "general regime" colonies to



SNOWBOUND PENAL COLONY

"strict," "special," and (most terrifying of all) "medical" colonies. Arrival in the camps is particularly harrowing.

According to prisoner testimonies collected by Mr. Ponomarev, in the winter of 2005 convicts from one torture colony in Karelia, near the Finnish border, were shipped to the IK-1 torture colony near the village of Yagul, in the Udmurt Republic, about 500 miles east of Moscow.



"The receipt of convicts from the [truck] in which a newly arrived stage [of prisoners] is brought... employees of the colony

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