



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*

militias that American Leftists hysterically imagine to be stalking the land.

Even worse, Obama claims that "for the next three decades, Israel would engage in a succession of conflicts with its Arab neighbors." One would get

no hint from his account of the fact that Israel "would engage" in all these conflicts not out of some imperialist or supremacist impulse, but because each and every time, Arab forces carried out an unprovoked attack against the Jewish state. But Obama appears determined to portray Israel as the aggressor, trusting in the general ignorance of his readership.

Obama's animus toward Israel is so great that he even calls the Temple Mount "one of Islam's holiest sites," without ever mentioning its central importance in Judaism.

A Promised Land thus includes a concise primer for Leftists to remind them of why they must hate Israel. As Obama's dotty old puppet prepares to enter the Oval Office, this is not a good sign for America's alliance with Israel, or for peace in the Middle East. (FrontPageMag.com Dec 28)

The writer is the director of Jihad Watch.

Commentary...

Barack Obama Hates Israel and Wants You to Hate It Too

By Robert Spencer

Great news: Barack Hussein Obama is now not only a Nobel laureate, but he has opened up a big lead among the presidents as the one with by far the most autobiographies. The marvelous narcissist now leads all other presidents who have written autobiographies by two, as he has written three, compared to a number of his peers who are tied at one. However, his latest one, *A Promised Land*, is more than just an update on the trials, tribulations, and triumphs of the Most Undeservedly Celebrated Man on the Planet; it's a full-on apologia for his policies as president, and a program for his impending third term, aka the Biden administration.

The weighty 768-page tome not only tells you more about His Wonderfulness than you ever thought you wanted to know; it also provides a potted Leftist history of Israel that abundantly illustrates how Leftists see our most reliable ally in the Middle East, and why they hate it with such focused laser-beam intensity.

Obama portrays Britain and then Israel as occupying powers in Palestine, without ever explaining who actually owned the land they were and are supposedly occupying. He makes no mention of the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine. As *The Palestinian Delusion* explains in detail, the Mandate directed the British to encourage "close settlement by Jews on the land" for "the establishment of the Jewish national home." What gave the League the right to do such a thing? The dying Ottoman Empire had ceded Palestine to the League in 1918. Jews had lived in that land from time immemorial, and it was otherwise sparsely populated. It was a perfect place for the Jews who faced discrimination, harassment and worse in Europe and elsewhere to settle.

Thus the common assumption, which Obama fosters, that the Israelis are illegitimate occupiers of a land that belongs rightly to the Palestinians, founders on the facts. There never was a Palestinian state. No Palestinian king, or emperor, or president. There never was a Palestinian nationality or ethnicity distinct from the nationality and ethnicity of the Arabs of the region. Palestine, like Staten Island or Georgetown, was always the name of a region, not a nation-state or ethnonational home.

Obama also claims that the Jews "organized highly trained armed forces to defend their settlements," without mentioning that in 1919, a Muslim leader, Amin al-Husseini, a member of a prominent Arab clan in Jerusalem, orchestrated a series of attacks on Jews all over Palestine. The following year, he instigated riots in Jerusalem during Passover. Amid mass looting and rapes, six Jews were murdered and over two hundred more injured. A court of inquiry found that "the Jews were the victims of a peculiarly brutal and cowardly attack, the majority of the casualties being old men, women and children."

This violence was ongoing. In August 1929 in Jerusalem, rioting Arabs murdered 133 Jews and injured over two hundred more, many in their homes. In Hebron, they murdered another sixty-seven Jews, and in Safed, twenty more. The British government-appointed Shaw Commission found that the riots "took the form, in the most part, of a vicious attack by Arabs on Jews accompanied by wanton destruction of Jewish property." Obama mentions none of this.

His description of the birth of the State of Israel is no more fair or accurate: "As Britain withdrew, the two sides quickly fell into war. And with Jewish militias claiming victory in 1948, the state of Israel was officially born."

The "two sides" were actually tiny Israel against the giant massed forces of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Transjordan, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia. They didn't "fall into war"; the Arab League declared war immediately after Israel declared its independence. Obama's use of the term "militias" to describe the Israel Defense Forces is doubtless chosen for its resonance with the right-wing, racist, white supremacist

Court Speaks on Palestinian "Pay for Slay," and Ottawa Must Take Heed

By Michael Mostyn

Like a bolt from the blue, Canada's Federal Court issued a stunning rebuke to the Palestinian Authority in December.

It all started out as a run-of-the-mill immigration case, but its effects could — and should — be far-reaching.

Khitam Khudeish, a long-time employee of the Palestinian Embassy in Baghdad, came to Canada in September of 2016, claiming refugee status on the basis of religious persecution.

Our country's tribunals and courts review thousands of similar cases each year.

This case, however, was different.

It turned out that, for 22 years, Khudeish had been doling out funds on behalf of the PLO through its "Palestine Martyrs' Families Foundation" (PMFF.)

The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration became involved, suggesting that by aiding the PMFF, Khudeish made herself ineligible for refugee status under article 1(f) of the Refugee Convention, which bars those engaged in crimes against humanity — including terrorism.

The Minister argued — and the tribunal and Court agreed — that the PMFF exists for the primary purpose of encouraging terrorism against Israeli civilians.

Indeed, known more colloquially as "pay for slay," the PMFF provides surviving terrorists and their immediate family with generous stipends, far in excess of the average Palestinian wage.

The Court affirmed that the PMFF "was created by the PLO to fulfill the criminal purpose of incentivising acts of terrorism against Israelis," and even added that "the PLO had a criminal purpose." The refugee claim was denied.

The Government of Canada cannot hide from this unambiguous result.

It is fond of saying that "Canada is a friend and ally of the State of Israel, and a friend of the Palestinian people," but what sort of friend pays its people to murder the citizens of an ally?

One wonders whether friendship of this sort is, or should be, sustainable.

It is certainly inconsistent with any notion of a rules-based international order.

In March of 2018, the United States adopted the Taylor Force Act, named after an American victim of Palestinian terrorism, which blocks American aid to the Palestinian Authority until the PLO ends pay for slay. (The Palestinian Authority is practically synonymous with the PLO, and Mahmoud Abbas chairs both.)

Australia and the Netherlands followed suit.

Since 2013, Canada has redirected its aid to the Palestinians away from the Palestinian Authority and toward independent NGOs and UNRWA instead — though those options also have their pitfalls.

Still, Canada must make its voice heard against the evils of pay for slay.

Firstly, Canada should designate the PMMF as a terrorist entity under the Criminal Code, to ensure that none of its funds reach terrorist relatives residing in this country.

Secondly, Canada should publicly clarify that it will never restore aid to the Palestinian Authority, the PLO or any of their institutions until pay for slay is abandoned.

Thirdly and finally, if pay for slay is not quickly brought to a close, Canada should consider downgrading the status of the Palestinian General Delegation in Ottawa.

Normal diplomacy is simply not possible with those who distribute cash incentives for murder and terrorism.

The Palestinian pay for slay program is a blight upon the Middle East, ironically continuing even as Arab states rush to normalize relations with Israel. To safeguard its principles, Canada must act against pay for slay. (Toronto Sun Dec 29)

The writer is the Chief Executive Officer of B'nai Brith Canada

Latest New York Times Rant about 'Israeli Settler Colonialism' is Seen as Sign of 'Mental Breakdown' By Ira Stoll

A professor at the University of Southern California and Pulitzer-Prize-winning novelist is out with a 2,000-word essay in The New York Times exhorting his fellow writers to “denounce Israeli settler colonialism and speak out for the Palestinian people.”

The seemingly innocuous headline, “The Post-Trump Future of Literature,” is paired with a subheadline that asks “What will writers do when the outrage is over? Will they go back to writing about flowers and moons?”

The author, Viet Thanh Nguyen, a Times “contributing opinion writer,” expresses hope that poets and novelists will tackle the topic of the Palestinians, rather than “flowers and moons.”

“What will 2021 bring forth from the literary world? Nguyen asks. He answers: “Hopefully more poems like Noor Hindi’s 2020 clarion call ‘F--k Your Lecture on Craft, My People Are Dying,’ which simultaneously attacks M.F.A. culture and crosses the brightest red line in American politics: Palestine.”

Nguyen falsely writes, “The only Americans — many of Palestinian descent — getting canceled by being fired, denied tenure or threatened with lawsuits are the ones who denounce Israeli settler colonialism and speak out for the Palestinian people.” Actually, at The New York Times opinion page, it’s the Zionists who are getting canceled, and the anti-Zionists who are getting promoted.

A list of canceled people with stories that do not include denouncing Israel is easily available.

Writer Jesse Singal asked about the “only Americans...getting canceled” claim, “How does a sentence like this that is just completely, obviously false, and which is debunkable with about two seconds of Googling, get published in the Times?”

Good question. Maybe because the opinion section editors who would have red-flagged it in the past have all been forced out as part of the Stalin-style ideological purges underway during the A.G. Sulzberger regime at the paper?

The Nguyen article claims, “The United States, as a settler colonial society that disavows its settler colonial origins and present, sees a like-minded ally in Israel.” That’s also false. The “colonial” powers in the land that is now Israel included the Ottoman Empire and the British; Jews have lived there for thousands of years, as recorded in the Bible.

Even one of Nguyen’s own New York Times colleagues issued a Tweet with a link to the Nguyen piece and a comment that suggested the Times article was crazy. “A good rule for individuals or societies is: if you start imagining that your mythic antagonists are Jews, you’re having a mental breakdown,” tweeted Matti Friedman, who, like Nguyen, is a Times contributing opinion writer, though who knows for how much longer given the way things are headed at that paper.

The Nguyen article fits a recent pattern of Times opinion coverage falsely suggesting that pro-Palestinian or anti-Israel speech is taboo and that contemporary Israel resembles apartheid-era South Africa. The repetitiveness of the theme at The New York Times undercuts the veracity of the claim. If these claims are so unspeakable, how is it that they appear in the Times so frequently? Their shock value diminishes like the profanity in the title of Noor’s poem. (Algemeiner Dec 23)

Contemplating Imaginary Palestine By Yisrael Medad

Dedicated to the late Saeb Erekat, who declared: “I am the son of the Natufians. ... I have been there [in Jericho] 5,500 years before Yehoshua Bin-Nun.”

In the artificially conceived world of the imagined “Palestine,” there is an alternative constructed history—the result of an ideological creationism I will term “Palestinianism.” This flies in the face of all known history and the known evidence—literary, archaeological or otherwise recorded—is denied, then altered, and finally, repackaged. Moreover, when events cannot be denied, a totally obverted version of the occurrence and why it happened is then presented, as when the Palestinian Authority tweeted out this Christmas in direct denial to what is recorded in the book of Matthew: “Merry Christmas from the birthplace and land of the son of Palestine Jesus Christ.”

The Christian Scriptures has it that his birthplace was the province of Judaea in the town of Bethlehem in the Land of Israel. Why would the P.A. leadership presume they could be so blatant in their propaganda messaging?

Moreover, the truth is a total disconnect from this effort by proponents of Palestinianism. Faced with simple and plain proof that what is being purported is not factual, a vigorous campaign of maligning and deprecation will take place. I would suggest, too, that the only reason any of the claims put forward by this Palestinianism are accepted is a latent anti-Jewish emotional approach to Judaism, Jewish national identity and its political framework: Zionism.

In this imaginary Palestine, Nov. 29—the day the Arabs of Mandate Palestine, the geopolitical entity that originally was to become the reconstituted Jewish National Home, rejected a partition that further stole more of the Jews’ historic homeland and inaugurated an intra-communal war—becomes the International Day of Solidarity for a “Palestinian people.”

In Jerusalem—the city the Jews have considered their capital for 3,000 years and wherein they worshipped at two temples, a city where archaeological artifacts proving that connections are discovered year after year—Sheikh Ikrima Sabri, an imam of Al-Aqsa, can say, “It is our duty to clarify our strategic position, that Al-Aqsa is for Muslims alone, and the Jews have nothing to do with it.” Jews who enter the compound are “intruders ... aggressor[s].” There is a Temple denial effort.

As part of their political self-imagination, they promote, as American-born Israeli writer David Hazony has noted, an “aspirational sovereignty.”

They quote UNSC 242 from November 1967, but neglect to mention that neither “Palestine” nor “Palestinians” is mentioned in the text. The resolution calls for peace that will allow “every state in the area [to] live in security,” yet no Palestine state existed then or ever in history. Moreover, it allows for “the establishment of demilitarized zones.” Could that apply to administrating Judea and Samaria, legally?

P.A. spokespersons and their supporters whip up charges of Israel as an “apartheid state.” The reality, however, is that if there is any genuine separation in place, it is that which disallows Jews to worship at their holiest site, the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. P.A. law denies Israelis the right to purchase property in its territory.

Another imaginary charge is that of ethnic cleansing. When the war the Arabs launched—one of aggression in violation of U.N. decisions—ended in 1949, there were no Jews left in Jerusalem’s Old City, its neighborhoods of Shimon HaTzaddik, Nahlat Shimon, and its environs of Atarot and Neveh Yaakov, the Gush Etzion Bloc’s four kibbutzim and the Dead Sea kibbutz of Bet HaAravah. Between the years 1920-1947, Jews had been ethnically cleansed by the Mufti’s terrorist gangs from Hebron, Bethlehem, Shechem, Gaza and other locations as the Jerusalem neighborhoods of Sham’a and Shiloach.

And in a follow-up, the Christian exodus from “Palestine” is blamed on Israel’s military administration and their end is in sight with Israel tagged as making war on Christians. Yet somehow, Islamic militancy is overlooked, as is the persecution of Christians throughout the Middle East while a Palestinian Liberation Theology has developed. Again, all imagined as what is real are the attacks on Christians, usually women, on their businesses and their expression of faith.

Palestinianism is a project of national and cultural identity theft,

determined to rob Jews of our history, our religious essence and our rights. That is the first blow we suffer from Arabs projecting themselves as Palestinians. Engaging in such deceit should undermine their own claims, their moral justification and their ability to make gains although too many diplomats, intellectuals, media people and politicians are willing to let them get away with it all. And that is the second blow. Even the outright anti-Semitism of the P.A. is ignored.

Even the P.A. is an imagined government. Hamas rules in the Gaza Strip, and if "democratic" elections would be ever held, they would overthrow the Fatah faction. This is a modern-day reincarnation of the deadly Qays and Yaman internecine strife in the Arab world.

Palestinianism was always disintegrating because it very well may be that their identity is imagined. While, as noted here, "Palestinians have always had to adjust their ways to the demands and political needs of outside powers," cannot we consider that they lack a resilient "inside"? If we compare their history to the Jews, and our 1,800 years of exile and persecution, there is no true comparison. And yet, they consistently fail to maintain national progress and success. Indeed, as D.R. Divine analyzed there, the Arabs of this region existed more to fight among themselves:

No uniform process of legitimizing a single source of political power existed for any Palestinian. ... Palestinians opposed one another, their rivalry rooted in the different social networks to a large extent sustained by the presence of Ottoman power.

Indeed, their declared "democracy" is a repressive regime against their own as-it-were citizens. No personal freedoms, no true liberties. No transparency in governmental institutions on the one hand, and on the other, embezzlement and other instances of authoritarian rule. There is no genuine concern for the populace; rather, they are seen as throwaways to be exploited for an imagined goal which, based on the experiences of this past century of strife, is simply to deny Jews our national rights.

Foreign diplomats, human-rights activists, religious leaders and all others concerned about the Arabs living in the territory of the historic Jewish national home should temper their enthusiasm and realize the limitations of their efforts in pursuing the goal as a second (after Jordan) Arab-dominated state in the region of Palestine. Supplementing and encouraging a national imagination can do no good. (JNS Dec 29)

Welcome Home, Jonathan By Miriam Adelson

Jonathan Pollard has finally come home, and like many homecomings, this day is both happy and sad.

This day was a very long time coming—decades in the making. The years of Jonathan's imprisonment, and later his release under restrictions that did not allow him to leave New York, were excruciatingly long. While his spirit never faltered and his Jewish pride never waned, his body weakened.

Now, after prolonged anticipation, he can build a home in Israel with his beloved wife, Esther, but her failing health will overshadow everything. She needed special, strict medical conditions to make the journey and they are still facing trials and tribulations until, God willing, she will grow stronger and heal.

This day is also bittersweet because as joyous as Jonathan's homecoming is, the actions for which he was imprisoned had marred Israel-U.S. ties.

Israel has never undermined its closest ally, except to save the Jewish people. Israel has learned its lesson, to which the fact that there has never been another case like Jonathan's attests.

But the fact that this was an isolated case is exactly what sets it apart. After all, in every other aspect, Israeli-American relations are rooted in friendship and unconditional mutual trust.

For our American friends, Jonathan is a memory best left to fade, especially at a time when President Donald Trump is showing the Jews in Zion kindness in spades.

Jonathan deserves Israel's deepest and eternal gratitude. Like a wounded soldier returning from a long and difficult journey, he deserves every benefit and grant the state can offer to ensure he can live his life comfortably.

At the same time, he deserves the right to live in a country that treats its ally with respect and wisdom. A country where sensitive matters are kept secret, and whose heroes are humble.

Jonathan is this type of hero: calm, collected and confident that his

place in Jewish history needs no public relations.

Let us honor him in the same vein—quietly, with a huge sigh of relief, tears of remorse, and with a long and grateful hug.

The writer, a medical doctor specializing in chemical dependency and drug addiction. She is the publisher of Israel Hayom and, with her husband, Sheldon Adelson, the owner of Israel Hayom and the Las Vegas Review-Journal newspapers. (Israel Hayom Dec 30)

Political Warfare Again Proves too Tough for Israeli Generals

By Ronen Itsik

It seems that in modern-day Israel, no former general can make a successful transition into politics. When one reads about the latest failures of the Blue and White Party, which until recently was led by three former chiefs of staff of the Israeli Defense Forces, one cannot help but wonder: Is it that these generals specifically have lost their public and political support, or are we witnessing the general decline of the Israeli security ethos?

Until recently, Blue and White claimed to be the alternative to the disintegrating government. Now, the party is on the verge of collapse. It is very unlikely that party leader Benny Gantz and his No. 2, Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi, will stay in politics for very long. The imploding of Blue and White reflects the leadership difficulties of the two, not to mention their colossal political failure.

But Gantz and Ashkenazi are not the only former military chiefs who failed to establish political power. Their predecessors include failed Kadima chairman Shaul Mofaz, his successor in the army, MK Moshe Ya'alon, who has failed to establish an influential political platform since resigning from the Likud, and former IDF Chief of Staff Dan Halutz, who was a member of Kadima, but most likely no one even remembers that.

Since Ehud Barak, who became prime minister six years after retiring from the IDF, no chief of staff has even come close to the premiership. And even Barak held office for less than two years before being replaced by Ariel Sharon.

The historical perspective makes one understand that Gantz and Ashkenazi never stood a chance to begin with. History shows us time and time again that not only do chiefs of staff fail to reach a position of power; they leave the political arena disgraced.

There might be a few reasons for this. If you ask members of the military, they will probably tell you that military officials are honest people and they are not fit for the dirty world of politics. There might be some truth to that, but why is it that again and again, they leave the field of politics in humiliation?

The IDF possesses the highest level of public trust, or so it seems on paper. Many say they respect each unit individually, but the institution in its entirety is quite mediocre. In any case, the army has been the target of more and more public criticism in the last few decades.

The IDF has never been perfect, and perhaps it has been even less effective and efficient in the last few decades. Why is it that Yitzhak Rabin and Rafael Eitan succeeded in going from military leaders to successful politicians? If they did it, why did Gantz and Ashkenazi fail? Were the chiefs of staff more successful back then and therefore their path in the world of politics was more comfortable? Or vice versa?

Some say that Israel has become disenchanted with the IDF—that military officials are no longer considered as brilliant as they used to be, and therefore are less valued by the public and less influential.

The disenchantment of the Israeli public and the questionable political capability of the chiefs of staff have led to a decline in the added value former generals bring to politics, spelling big-time defeat.

How can Israeli society, which still defines itself as militaristic, oust its chiefs of staff in such disgrace? After all, these generals gave decades of their lives to the state and have literally put their lives on the line for our security.

The IDF is no longer the people's army. All that remains is to ask: Is the generation declining, or is it the quality of the generals that is diminishing? (Israel Hayom Dec 30)