

OPINION and ANALYSIS

Vol 1, Number 3: 3 February 2012

**A selection of some of the more challenging and thought-provoking
local and international writings on the Middle East**

<http://www.sazionfed.co.za>

1. *Isi Liebler*

The True Face of the PA

Abbas and his spokesman Saeb Erekat utter soothing statements in English, endorsing peace to the gullible international community. Yet they speak with forked tongues because in Arabic to their own people, they deny Israel's right to exist and promote vicious hatred against Jews.

2. *Asaf Romirowsky and John R Cohn*

BDS and Academia

A close look at the BDS movement shows not legitimate criticism but a racist and anti-Semitic program

3. *Shoshana Bryen*

Israel and the US perspectives on Iran at odds

The Americans believe there is still time to dissuade Iran and while they're working on it, they don't want Israel goading the regime and perhaps provoking an unintended violent reaction.

4. *Abraham H. Foxman*

Iceland's foreign policy: alone and adrift

The result of Iceland's mistaken decision is that its diplomacy now mirrors its geography: far removed from Europe and alone at sea.

The True Face of the PA

Isi Liebler, British Israel Group, 1 February 2012

<http://bigarticlesoftheweek.blogspot.com/2012/02/true-face-of-pa.html>

We are told, day after day, that Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas is a genuine moderate committed to achieving a peace settlement with Israel. In addition to the international community, even some Israelis – admittedly a dwindling minority – also chant this mantra.

Abbas and his spokesman Saeb Erekat bolster this theme by uttering soothing statements in English, endorsing peace to the gullible international community. Yet they speak with forked tongues because in Arabic to their own people, they deny Israel's right to exist and promote vicious hatred against Jews.

They also claim to have reneged violence. But the PA never conceded that terrorism was immoral. They simply concluded that having failed to achieve their objectives by violence, their goals could best be promoted by temporarily suspending terrorism in order to gain Western

support. Abbas made it clear that he "had the honor of firing the first shot in 1965" and was only opposed to terrorist attacks "at this time" for tactical reasons and that "in the future things may change." Yet, even within this framework, Fatah has still succeeded in killing more Israelis than Hamas.

The true objectives of the PA are reflected in the poisonous hatred against Jews and Israel inculcated to their people through the broad range of institutions they control, permeating every level of society– from kindergarten and upwards.

This can be traced to the very inception of the Oslo Accords. Before that, the relationship between Palestinians and Israelis, whilst far from ideal, was certainly better than now, when polls indicate that 84% of Palestinians endorse the murder of Israelis.

In addition to denying Jewish sovereignty, the PA from the outset indulged in the most horrendous demonization, describing Jews as the descendants of apes and pigs, comparing them to Nazis whilst simultaneously praising Hitler, accusing them of stealing Palestinian body parts, using human blood during Passover, promoting AIDs, and many other loathsome blood libels.

This defamatory torrent impacts directly on Israel's diminished standing in the international community.

In response to this, an important book compiled by Itamar Marcus and Nan Jacques Zilberdik titled "Deception: Betraying the Peace Process", has just been released. It meticulously documents the poisonous behavior of the Palestinian Authority during 2010 and 2011 throughout the broad range of institutions they control. It will become an important source for pro-Israeli activists and provide irrefutable evidence in response to those denying the criminality pervading Palestinian society.

Itamar Marcus founded Palestinian Media Watch (PMW) in 1966 as a nonprofit organization to monitor the Palestinian media. Its documentation of Palestinian behavior, including systematically taping State Palestinian TV, became important sources for parliamentarians and serious journalists throughout the world. His briefing of U.S. legislators was a major factor contributing towards the prevailing pro-Israel orientation of Congress and the American people.

The book and the PMW website

(<http://click.icptrack.com/icp/relay.php?r=68624789&msgid=961022&act=SOIL&c=365152&destination=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.palwatch.org%2F>) chronicle obscene examples of incitement, especially in the wake of the release of the terrorists in the Schalit exchange. Chairman Abbas, who publicly embraced these mass murderers, summed up the PA approach when he stated "every prisoner is for us a saint and we must exult him". He subsequently appointed Mahmoud Damra, a notorious terrorist, as his advisor.

The state-controlled Palestinian media sanctified the murders committed by the released terrorists. Thus Ahlam Tamimi, the woman who orchestrated the suicide bombing at the Jerusalem Sbarro restaurant which killed 22 civilians including seven children, was quoted proudly proclaiming she would do it again; Abbas al-Sayed who perpetrated the Passover suicide attack at the Park Hotel in Netanya which killed 30 Israelis was described by Abbas as a "hero" and "symbol of the Palestinian Authority".

Only recently, whilst commemorating the 47th anniversary of Fatah, the Mufti Muhammad Hussein, the PAs highest religious authority appointed by Abbas, proclaimed that the killing of Jews was a major Islamic goal required before the Islamic Resurrection. The moderator introducing him, reiterated that "our war against the descendants of apes and pigs is a war of religion and faith".

And just last week PMW reported how the PA State TV conveyed "greetings" to Hakim Awad, the

barbaric and unrepentant murderer of the Vogel family which included a 4 month infant and children aged 3 and 11 years. His mother was honored on the program and conveyed "greetings to dear Hakim, the apple of my eye, who carried out the operation in Itamar, sentenced to 5 life sentences". His aunt also related to "Hakim Awad, the hero, the legend". How can people claiming to be promoting human rights conceivably associate themselves with a regime which adulates such monsters on its controlled TV outlets?

The book itself chillingly provides documentation demonstrating how an entire generation is brainwashed into absorbing a culture of death and slaughter. The Palestinian children's programs promoting hatred and evil are incorporated into textbooks, music videos and summer camps all blatantly indoctrinating the sanctity of Shahada (martyrdom) and murder of Jews.

Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, purportedly the most moderate of all Palestinian leaders, is cited for his speech praising four terrorists and sponsoring of a Palestinian children's summer camp in which the participants were divided into groups labeled with the names of terrorists including a notorious bus hijacker.

Marcus and Zilberdik point out how, in the course of one day, a Palestinian child can walk on a street named after the mass murderer Abu Jihad, to a school named after the founder of Hamas, where he will read hate-filled textbooks, work in a computer room named after a suicide bomber, spend the afternoon at a soccer tournament with the teams named after suicide bombers, go in the evening to the Abu Iyad community center, the orchestrator of the massacre of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics, and finally return home to view anti-Semitic cartoons on TV before going to bed.

After reading this book, a number of questions come to mind.

The U.S. Congress was considering terminating the funding of the PA general budget unless it terminated incitement, glorification of suicide bombers as heroic role models, payment of over \$5 million a month for "salaries" to 5500 terrorists in Israeli prisons, and pensions to the families of terrorists. Why did Prime Minister Netanyahu ask them to desist?

Why does Prime Minister Netanyahu so frequently pay lip service to Abbas as a peace partner and, other than very recently, fail to systematically highlight the criminality of the Palestinian leaders? If our Prime Minister agreed not to publicly highlight these evils in order to placate President Obama, we are likely to pay a bitter price. If the civilized world is made aware of the culture of death and hatred which permeate Palestinian society, we would be in a far stronger position in the ongoing war of ideas.

And finally, how can President Obama and Western countries justify their repeated vitriolic condemnations of Israeli construction in Jewish suburbs of Jerusalem and yet have so little to say about a society which indoctrinates its children with such a barbaric worldview? How can Secretary of State Hillary Clinton validate her silence over these issues after having so passionately condemned Palestinian incitement against Israel when she was a Senator?

After reviewing these horrific texts which document such a savage state-imposed Jihadi culture, it is surely delusional to view the current Palestinian leadership as peace partners. Such a calculated policy of deception reflected by the disparity between reality and duplicitous statements designed for foreign consumption is not merely an expression of malice. It is a manifestation of a determined policy to poison the people against any possible accommodation with Israel. It provides a devastating response to the question raised in the introduction to the book. Was a genuine peace process ever intended?

BDS and Academia

Asaf Romirowsky and John R Cohn, *Jerusalem Post*, 31 January 2012

<http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Op-EdContributors/Article.aspx?ID=255797&R=R1>

A self-proclaimed National Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Conference is set to take place at the University of Pennsylvania, an Ivy league institution in the heart of Philadelphia, during the weekend of February 4. Last held in 2009, according to the organizers, the BDS movement intends to focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by demonizing Israel while propagating the Palestinian victimhood status in order to gain global sympathy.

They believe that if universities, companies and even countries boycott, divest from and sanction Israel it will pressure the government to change its so-called “hard nosed” policies toward the Palestinians and in addition to give up land Israel supposedly “stole” from the Palestinians in 1948 and 1967.

A closer look at the BDS movement and its methodology shows not legitimate criticism but actually a racist and anti-Semitic program. In a world where refugees have been created and resettled by the tens of millions, including over 900,000 Jews that fled Arab states, BDS targets only Israel. Its stated goals vary but all include the “right” for descendants of Palestinian “refugees” to “return” to a country they have never seen, thus bringing about the end of Jewish Israel.

The movement takes care to give the impression that ending specific Israeli policies such as the “occupation” or “apartheid” will also bring an end to efforts to ostracize Israel. Their maximalist demand – the elimination of Israel as a Jewish state – is carefully hidden but readily apparent to a careful examiner.

It is a matter of great concern that respected universities lend their space and name to such conferences in addition to the participation of their faculty and others from around the country. In North America, whatever goes on in a classroom is deemed protected by “academic freedom,” whether it is academic or not. Only sexual harassment appears exempt from this blanket protection. Gradually, campuses have become an “academic freedom” zone where protests and other activities now qualify as academic “speech.”

This freedom to critique is, predictably, directed mostly at the twin Satans, Israel and America, although efforts to curtail speech that academics find unpleasant and unacceptable have been longstanding in the form of “speech codes” and restrictions on “hate speech.” Clearly academic freedom is a one-way street; only those having the correct opinions may claim it.

As such, we commend the University of Pennsylvania for clarifying it does not support or endorse the BDS movement, as well as for its clear statement that “The University of Pennsylvania... has important and successful scholarly collaborations with Israeli institutions that touch on many areas of our academic enterprise.”

Universities which should be bastions of critical thinking and opposition to fallacies of argument have become fertile ground for myth, fantasy and lies about history. North American college campuses have been suffering from an significant increase in anti- Israelism. This new situation has demonstrated the need for a clear and inclusive definition of anti-Semitism and an answer to the question of whether anti-Israelism constitutes anti-Semitism.

The apparent dilemma has been that anti-Israelism itself is not blatantly or even necessarily anti-Semitic but rather may appear merely critical of “Zionist policies,” thus distinguishing between Jews and Zionists. This well-worn distinction has enabled the anti- Israeli camp to pose as legitimate critics. What has actually emerged, in effect, is a new form of anti-Semitism, because the state of Israel acts as a proxy for Jews at large.

To the extent that it becomes harder to make a case for Israel on campus and in the Jewish community in general, the environment has become increasingly hostile to the pro- Israel community.

All of this has lent legitimacy to those who advocate for BDS. This paradigm is unique to the debate about Israelis and Palestinians and cannot be found in any other academic discipline. No university would host an "academic" conference on whether blacks are biologically inferior to whites, but even though the BDS movement makes a similar outrageous comparison one is considered acceptable and the other not.

Moreover, the involvement of Jewish individuals in such forums has become another indicator that this "genuine debate" deserves to be explored. In the US, politicized writing and teaching have often displaced scholarship, and academic freedom has been redefined as the liberty to dispense with academic standards. In response, hiring token Israeli Jews who subscribe to the anti-Israel narrative and support the BDS movement has become common practice on American campuses, thereby eliminating debate while providing the illusion of balance and using their Jewishness as a *carte blanche* to criticize Israel and question its existence.

Combating BDS has become complicated and confusing especially for those who want to believe that there is room for debating the "facts" presented by the BDS movement. What makes this battle so arduous for the pro-Israel community and so attractive for the antagonizers of Israel is the umbrella of academic freedom that argues that it is legitimate to debate all aspects of Israel, from specific policies to its elimination, in contrast to racial and gender discussions where such unsupported slanders are correctly and forcefully rejected by university communities.

Many in the Jewish community in their naïveté are willing to engage in these debates precisely because they are cloaked in academic freedom, which gives them the impression of legitimate criticism rather than racism.

On a positive note, the racist nature of the BDS movement has redrawn the lines of acceptable discourse. We are now seeing a sure but steady understanding of the real threats BDS and its sympathizers represent to not just the pro-Israel community but to honest academic discourse on the Middle East. The hope is that rejection of their hateful message will catch on.

Israel and the US perspectives on Iran at odds

Shoshana Bryen, American Thinker, 27 January 2012

<http://www.jewishpolicycenter.org/2736/israel-and-the-us-perspectives-on-iran-at-odds>

The kerfuffle over the postponement of the highly touted "Austere Challenge 12" joint US-Israel military exercise is over. Officials in both countries are now on the same page: it was a "joint decision" having nothing to do with finances, Iran or politics, just "technical issues." Regardless of the lid they've chosen to cover the pot, it is worth considering where and how the United States and Israel differ in their analysis of the problem posed by Iran's nuclear activity.

The US and Israel agree on the potential danger and they agree on the unacceptability of a nuclear-armed Iran. They differ, however, on how they assimilate intelligence information; how they assess the pace of Iran's movement toward weapons capability; and even over whether it is weapons that Iran seeks. The United States factors in more heavily what it believes about Iran's *intent*, which it insists remains unclear. Reflecting, perhaps, closer proximity and a smaller margin of error, the Israeli government places greater emphasis on its Iran's *capabilities*, which it believes are clear.

The discrepancy appeared as early as 2008. The Bush administration posited "weaponization" of uranium as its red line -- a position carried into the Obama administration by Secretary of Defense Gates. But neither administration appeared to believe -- or appears yet to believe -- that Iran has taken the decision to make weapons.

In May 2009, The Washington Post reported that (then) Director of National Intelligence (DNI) Dennis Blair and Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) Director Michael Maples told a Senate panel that "Iran is keeping open that option" and Iran's launch of a space vehicle "does advance their knowledge and their ability to develop an intercontinental ballistic missiles," but, according to The Post, "there may be no connection between the country's development of missiles and any ambition to have nuclear weapons." Blair said, "I believe those are separate decisions. The same missiles can launch vehicles into space."

Defense Secretary Panetta reiterated the "weaponization" standard in a recent television interview, as did current DNI James Clapper in Senate testimony. And in the meantime, however, a new construct has slipped into the American lexicon: "breakout capability," which may or may not trip the wire.

Recent IAEA revelations about the amount of enriched uranium Iran has (larger than previously thought), the regime's progress on "nuclear triggers" and discovery of a chamber to contain explosive tests may indicate that Iran is managing and organizing nuclear technology under the threshold of a weapon, but with the ability to construct one quickly when desired. That is, to "break out" of its non-weapon position, perhaps in a matter of months.

Here again, the Obama administration and the Israelis agree on what they're looking at, but not necessarily on what it means.

The Americans believe there is still time to dissuade Iran and while they're working on it, they don't want Israel goading the regime and perhaps provoking an unintended violent reaction.

That would account for Israeli Foreign Minister Lieberman's remark that the exercise was postponed by the US to avoid antagonizing Iran. It would account for the State Department's vehement denunciation of the killing of an Iranian scientist while most of the world assumed Israel was responsible. It accounts too for the American determination to be seen as demanding that Israel not attack Iran. Short of a weapons breakout, the US is determined to have diplomacy backed by sanctions as its public posture.

Israel, while supporting diplomacy and sanctions, is inclined to have both backed by a credible military threat.

"Austere Challenge 12," although defensive in nature, would have served Israel's view better than America's view. The Iranians, like the Russians, believe defensive exercises can either hide preparations for an impending attack, or make a later attack more likely because a country that thinks it can protect its major assets is more likely to be aggressive than one that believes retaliation would be beyond its capacity to cope.

The fact is that neither the US nor Israel wants to engage in a large-scale strike on Iran. They agree that the military consequences could be grave and the effort might not terminate the program; they disagree on the political ramifications. The US believes Iranians want their nuclear program as a matter of national pride and would rally around their government if it was attacked. (Others believe the Iranians are horrified by what their government has wrought and would welcome its demise under Western attack.)

Israel points instead to its 1981 strike on Iraq's Osirak reactor -- not a military model for Iran but instructive. The Israelis predicted a one-year delay for Saddam, but the French government found it politically impossible to replace the facility and changed Iraq's calculations.

At the end of the day, the United States is a very large, rich country with an almost boundless capacity to absorb and correct for mistakes. We think in grand sweeps and, if they fail, we go on to the next sweep. Whether TARP spending, bailouts, health care, nuclear disarmament or the move from diplomacy to sanctions to escalation with Iran, the United States has an enormous margin for error in which we can, and often do, change course.

Israel has almost no capacity to absorb and correct for big mistakes. And its government is responsible for the desire -- no, the demand -- of history not to permit a repetition of the Holocaust within the national boundaries of the Jewish state.

One consequence is their differing approach to Iran, and another is Israel's much greater need for reassurance by its major security partner, the United States. The postponement of Austere Challenge 12 -- for whatever reason is posited as "official" -- is more likely to reassure Iran than to reassure Israel.

Iceland's foreign policy: alone and adrift

Abraham H. Foxman, European Jewish Press, 31 January 2012

<http://www.ejpress.org/article/55926>

After Iceland's parliament voted to recognize the State of Palestine, Foreign Minister Ossur Skarphedinsson proudly announced, "Iceland is the first country in Western Europe to take this step."

"Misstep" might be more accurate.

Iceland did not set a bold example for Europe to follow when the Icelandic parliament passed the motion on November 29 in favor of a resolution to recognize Palestine "as an independent and sovereign state" based on the pre-1967 borders. Instead, it isolated itself. And the 40 percent of Iceland's parliamentarians who voted against recognition seemed to concur.

A report by the center-right minority on the Icelandic parliament's foreign affairs committee pretty much got it right.

Strongly criticizing the government's proposal to recognize Palestine, the minority accused the foreign ministry of having done no research. It assailed the reasoning behind the proposal as "significantly lacking" and unfair both to Israel and to history.

The report derisively noted that today's pro-Israel positions of Central and Eastern European states are certainly more relevant than the recognition of Palestine by their communist regimes in 1988, the latter being a central argument in the government's proposal.

The minority also felt compelled to remind the Icelandic government of a few key truths: That the conflict is fundamentally about "the mere existence of the State of Israel;" Hamas is a terrorist organization bent on Israel's destruction; the 1993 Oslo Accords specified no unilateral change in status of the territories; and Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian Authority refuse to recognize Israel as the Jewish state.

In a direct shot at Skarphedinsson, the report stated, "The Minister's assessment is at the same time in conflict with the opinion of almost all the countries that have worked hardest to promote peace in the region."

Not the Middle East Quartet, nor the European Union, nor even Iceland's non-E.U. Nordic neighbor Norway have recognized the State of Palestine, the report pointed out and it stated that "these countries have clear arguments."

What was not clear was the foreign ministry's reason for recognizing Palestine. Perhaps it was a publicity stunt to get some international notice. Unencumbered by membership in the E.U. or by any involvement in the peace process, Iceland's foreign ministry probably saw what it thought was an opportunity and took it.

It is true that important European states, including the United Kingdom and France, have dangled possible recognition as a carrot for the Palestinians and wielded it as a stick on the Israelis to push for serious peace negotiations.

While unwarranted and counterproductive, these threats are unlikely to be carried out unless the Europeans decide to ignore Palestinian obstructionism and accuse Israel of being the sole cause of a complete breakdown in the peace process.

While bilateral recognition by E.U. member-states does not require consensus at the E.U. level, uncoordinated diplomatic decisions on serious issues set back the European goal of integrating their foreign policies. And tactically, once the recognition card is played, the Europeans will have one less point of leverage for their positions.

President Obama's speech at the U.N. General Assembly made clear that the path to recognition is through negotiations. His speech and the Quartet statement issued immediately afterwards set the tone for the international community.

Recently, Thailand also moved to recognize Palestine. It is regrettable that countries like Iceland and Thailand, with no diplomatic involvement in the peace process, have chosen to strike out on their own. The E.U., as a member of the Quartet, seems to understand that it cannot act so irresponsibly.

The result of Iceland's mistaken decision is that its diplomacy now mirrors its geography: far removed from Europe and alone at sea

NOTE: The views expressed in certain articles are not necessarily those of the SAZF

Fax: (011) 640-6758

E-mail: froma@beyachad.co.za

Website: [<http://sazionfed.co.za](http://sazionfed.co.za)

PBO NUMBER: 930014277