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QUARTERLY

ISRAEL: REFUGE AND RENAISSANCE



Lela Gilbert on Jews and Christians in the Holy Land | **Jennifer Tzivia MacLeod** and **Megan E. Turner** on JNF's Projects to Develop Green Spaces | **Uri Naaman** on Israeli-NATO Relations | **David Koren** on Governing Jerusalem | **Yoram Ettinger** on the Jewish State's Demography | **David M. Weinberg** on Israel's Winning Diplomacy | **Albert H. Teich** on U.S.-Israeli Technological and Research Cooperation | **Pnina AGENCYAHU** on Making Aliyah from Ethiopia | **Eric Rozenman** on How an Israeli Institute Trains Future Leaders | **Sean Durns** on the Media's Israel Narrative | **Gadi Shamni** on Diversity in the IDF | **Shoshana Bryen** reviews *Jerusalem: The Biography*.

Featuring an Interview with Ambassador Danny Ayalon

LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

The First Jewish Commonwealth was destroyed in 586 BCE; the Third established in 1948 CE – making Israeli self-government both very old and very young. By comparison, the French squeezed five Republics into just 225 years.

In modern times, the remnant that never left was joined by Zionist pioneers. They welcomed home the devastated survivors of Nazi rule and then 700,000-plus impoverished brothers and sisters expelled from the Arab/Islamic world. Then Yemenite, Ethiopian, and Russian Jews came as refugees. Comprising 20 percent of the population, Arab Christians, Muslims and Druze are part of the civic, religious, and cultural spectrum. Together, the people of Israel are building a high-tech, secure, democratic, wealthy and socially open country.

At 70, Israel is truly a country of “Refuge and Renaissance.”

In this issue, we are pleased, first and foremost, to bring you the thoughts and energy of Israel’s former Ambassador to the United States, Danny Ayalon.

Lela Gilbert recounts her experiences in Israel as an outsider – and an insider. Sean Durns takes on the unrelenting and undeserved hostility of the international media. Megan E. Turner and Jennifer



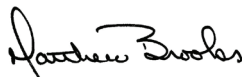
Tzivia MacLeod highlight Israel’s ecological prowess – building a river in a desert. Al Teich writes about U.S.-Israel cooperation in scientific research, and Uri Na’aman about Israel’s cooperation with NATO. Yoram Ettinger is enthusiastic about Israel’s demographic future and Gadi Shamni is enthusiastic about the skills young Israelis bring to the IDF.

Pnina AGENCYAHU discusses the integration of the Ethiopian community, while David Koren explores the sensitive governance of Jerusalem as it relates to its Arab residents. David M. Weinberg recounts Israel’s recent diplomatic victories.

Shoshana Bryen reviews Simone Sebag-Montefiore’s book, *Jerusalem: The Biography*.

If you appreciate what you’ve read, I encourage you to make a contribution to the Jewish Policy Center. As always, you can use our secure site: <http://www.jewishpolicycenter.org/donate>.

Sincerely,



Matthew Brooks,
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My Sojourn Among the Saturday People

by **LELA GILBERT**

In January 2006, I was standing on a beach at a Sinai resort called Nuweiba. It was a gorgeous sun-drenched day, crisp and cool. I watched as a white camel and his rider splashed through the surf, with the mountains of Saudi Arabia forming a backdrop behind them. We were only about 40 miles from the Egyptian-Israeli border — it was visible on the horizon just ahead.

As I stood there, a kind of excitement stirred in me, something that I can only describe as a personal epiphany. I knew in an instant that I was going to Israel; that somehow I needed get myself there. And the sooner the better.

And so it was, just half a year later, that I flew from Los Angeles to Israel's Ben Gurion airport for the first time in my life. I managed to arrive in the midst of the Second Lebanon War, with more than 4000 Hezbollah rockets raining down on northern Israeli cities — more than 100 a day — while air and ground battles raged inside Lebanon.

Night and day, tens of thousands of Israelis were rushing in and out of bomb shelters. Thousands more had fled the North altogether and were sleeping on relatives' couches, or glued to TV sets in hotels, or camped out in a sprawling tent village along the coast.

My family and friends quietly agreed that I was insane for going to Israel at such a time. But war or no war, I had no intention of changing my plans. I intended to stay in Jerusalem for four months. I had rented a little Jerusalem apartment online, and once the war was over, I hoped to settle down and absorb my new surroundings.

■ *Arriving in Jerusalem*

That initial journey was primarily one of curiosity. I'd heard about Israel from my father, who loved the stories of the Jews' regathering in their ancient homeland and their ensuing against-all-odds military victories. In his view, those were stories were all about miracles.

Like me, my father was a Christian believer, but his interest in Israel was not altogether religious. I think, most of all, it was the unlikely success story of Israel's founding, the glory of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), and the "desert blossoming like a rose" that intrigued him most.

By 2006, my own interests about Israel had to do with history and archeology, including the locales surrounding various Biblical stories. I also sought to better understand Jewish beliefs and religious traditions; to see how modern Israel manages to flourish in the shadow of such hateful neighbors.

Most of all I wanted to become acquainted with Israeli people — to live among them and not just catch a glimpse of them through a blurry tour bus window.

I didn't know a soul in Israel when I arrived, but it didn't take long to meet some remarkable new friends. At the same time, unusual opportunities materialized, and I even found myself writing my first impressions of Israel for *The Jerusalem Post*.

And as it turned out, that opened up one door after another for interviews with experts, moving conversations with wounded warriors, and discoveries about what truths lay behind an array of ridiculous news media fictions.

Before boarding the plane, I had devoured numerous books. I read

everything I could lay my hands on about Jewish and Israeli history, Zionism, Christian-Jewish relations, and current events.

I quickly discovered, however, that I had a whole lot more to learn.

■ *The Lies Around Me*

Clearly, there were continuous lies being told about Israel on a regular basis in the international media. Perhaps the most startling of all was Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat's declaration to President Bill Clinton that there had never been a Jewish Temple on the Temple Mount.

Fortunately, living in a geographically small country like Israel, it's relatively easy to find experts who actually know what they are talking about. A few phone calls led me to famed archeologist Gabriel Barkay, who has spent many years sifting through tons and more tons of dumped soil from the Temple Mount, removed illegally during an expansion of the al-Aqsa Mosque.

I met with Barkay for several hours at his home in a conversation which led to another article for *The Jerusalem Post*. That was later expanded into a chapter of my book *Saturday People, Sunday People: Israel through the Eyes of a Christian Sojourner*.

Another false statement — one I'd barely heard about when I arrived in Israel — was immortalized by Jimmy Carter's book title *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*. One of my new friends in Israel was a South African Christian pastor, Malcolm Hedding, who was by then the Executive Director of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem (ICEJ).

It didn't take long to discover that Hedding himself – a white man – had been forced to flee South Africa because of his fiery anti-apartheid sermons, preached at his racially integrated church. He was outraged with apartheid accusations against Israel. He knew better – he himself had found refuge in the Jewish State.

Meanwhile, a lunch date at Jerusalem's Mamilla Mall made the same point. A friend and I were waiting to be seated on a terrace, where tables overlooking the Old City were in great demand. All at once the spot we had our eye on was snapped up by two chic young Arab women. Their heads were covered in de-

I was stunned by the beauty and variety of the tiny country's landscapes...unmatched in photogenic appeal.

signer scarves and their well-fitted jeans and sunglasses were upscale. They sat at table next to an "ultra-Orthodox" Jewish family in their own distinctive attire. And next to them was a table full of middle-aged American tourists in cargo shorts, souvenir T-shirts, and a clutter of cameras, GPS gadgets and fanny-packs.

No, Israel is not an apartheid state.

Another discovery – BBC, CNN, Al-Jazeera and other dishonest news sources to the contrary – was that Israelis, not Gazans, were the long-suffering victims of endless rocket launches into civilian neighborhoods. Thousands of Israelis of all ages living in the "Gaza envelope" were unable to sleep through the night for weeks at a time due to "Red Alert" air raid alarms; every adult I spoke to was taking anxiety medications. Most of their children were bed-wetters.

It was also eye-opening to become acquainted with people who lived "beyond the Green Line" in Judea and Samaria, better known as the West Bank. No, they weren't religious Zionist fanatics. In fact, the patriarch of the first family I met there was a world-weary soul who

quickly informed me that he remains a devout atheist after losing his faith, along with more than 40 family members, in the Holocaust. He and innumerable other "settlers" live in those disputed territories for one simple reason: they've been able to afford homes there.

Of course, all these new insights didn't all happen during the four months I'd initially intended to spend in Israel. I extended my visa, three months at a time, again and again. By the end of my sojourn, I had lived in Israel for ten and a half years. And happily, throughout that time, my lessons weren't entirely focused on controversies.

■ *The Appeal of Israel*

For one thing, I was stunned by the beauty and variety of the tiny country's landscapes and vistas. From deserts to farmlands to golden, sunlit cities; from tidy farms to rugged cliffs to bird sanctuaries and waterfalls, from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea to snow-capped Mt. Hermon, it is a land unmatched in its photogenic appeal.

And I was impressed (and a bit intimidated) by the intellectual quality of even the most casual conversations with friends. And this extended well beyond my circle: I heard about the devoted persistence of Israeli medical researchers, the genius of hi-tech innovators, and the richness of Israel's world-class music, theater and film production. Israel absolutely throbs with intelligence, imagination and curiosity.

Later in my stay, after the so-called Arab Spring began in 2010, and the subsequent launch of the horrific Syrian war, I was surprised to find out about the emergency medical treatment that Israel has provided for years, offering expert medical care to wounded Syrians who

arrive at the border. No matter who they are, or how they sustained their injuries, they are treated and then discreetly returned to their homeland.

Similarly, Israeli field hospitals, which even the United Nations admits are the best in the world, are urgently flown to sites of earthquakes, hurricanes and other emergencies. They are set up and running within 24-hours, delivering sophisticated, life-saving treatment.

As holidays came and went, I was touched by the sight of pilgrims, who arrived in colorful attire from every corner of the world to pray at the Western Wall or the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, to walk alongside the Sea of Galilee, and to explore ancient landmarks in what is to many, quite literally, the "Holy Land."

However, as months turned into years, the most stunning discovery I made about Israel occurred seemingly by chance. During an international conference, I happened upon a workshop about "The Forgotten Refugees." A film of that title was being introduced, focusing on the expulsion of some 850,000 Jews from Muslim lands between the mid-1940s until around 1970.

■ *Jews from Muslim Lands*

I sat transfixed as I heard women and men relate story after story – some spoke tearfully, some with deep anger – about their parents and grandparents, brother and sisters and more, who had fled for their lives, often with only the shirts on their backs and perhaps a single suitcase.

From Iraq and Egypt, from Syria and Morocco and Libya, Tunisia and beyond, nearly a million Jews were driven out of ancestral homelands where they had lived in for centuries, some even for millennia. Their businesses and lands were confiscated. Their synagogues and educational institutions were shuttered or torn down. Their friends and loved ones disappeared without a trace, never to be found.

More than 600,000 made their way to Israel.

It was not a happy ending for a while.

In those days Israel was a poor country, and the new arrivals were hurriedly settled in primitive tent cities, with poor sanitation and little food. They were safe, but it was a devastating transition. Many spoke only Arabic; few spoke Hebrew apart from their formal prayers.

Of course, I'd heard a great deal about the deprivation of Palestinian refugees, who had fled Israel during the 1948 War of Independence. But now it was abundantly clear that there may have been more Jewish refugees than Arabs. Why wasn't this a well-known story?

Still, those Jewish immigrants did not present themselves to the world as victims or refugees. Instead, they and their children found a way – through sheer determination and exhausting effort – to start over. It wasn't pretty and it wasn't easy. But today more than 50 percent of Israel's population is comprised of those Jews who found their way across North Africa and the Middle East to their new homeland.

For me, this discovery was a turning point. I started seeking out people who had made that terrible journey. I listened to their stories, visited their homes and sampled their exotic foods.

And I started writing about them.

■ *First Saturday, Then Sunday*

Meanwhile, a friend told me about some cryptic graffiti that had been painted on a wall in Bethlehem. It said in Arabic, "First comes Saturday, then comes Sunday."

I couldn't grasp the meaning, even after it was explained to me that Christians were at risk of violence, too. Months later, I saw a far clearer and more ominous version of that same sentiment. It was embossed on a Palestinian flag which had been confiscated during the First Intifada.

In Arabic it announced, "On Saturday we kill the Jews; on Sunday we kill the Christians."

In fact, one of the Egyptian Jewish women I interviewed told me that when she and her family were about to flee



A man in the Judean Desert.

their home, a Coptic Christian neighbor brought food to them. As she offered her tearful goodbyes, she also said, "We know very well that after you Jews are gone, they'll come after us next."

Before long, the reality was all too evident. In 2014, I flew to Iraq and visited the thousands of Christian refugees in Erbil. I saw before my eyes the same kind of heartbreaking losses I'd been hearing about from Israelis who had fled Muslim lands.

By the time I left Israel permanently in early 2017, the Islamic State's murder of thousands of Christians in Iraq and Syria was officially designated genocide. At the same time, Islamist attacks on Egyptian churches had also increased exponentially.

It should not go unnoticed that less than a dozen elderly Jews remain in each of those countries: Iraq, Syria or Egypt. And they aren't the only places in which the Saturday people have moved away, and the Sunday people are now at risk.

Historically, the Jews endured centuries of abuse and violence at the hand of hostile, ignorant Christians. Today, fortunately, an increasing number of Jews have found their way into genuine friendships with some of us.

We actually have a lot in common.

As for me, more than a decade after the decision I made on that Nuweiba beach, I'm grateful beyond measure for all I've learned from my Israeli friends: lessons of life and death, fear and courage, truth and lies, faith and scripture, as well as the deeper wisdom offered by centuries of Jewish writers, historians, translators and commentators.

I believe a common hope for both Christians and Jews is crystallized in a few words from the Book of Lamentations. Their message is recalled year after year at Tisha b'Av – the day of fasting that memorializes the destruction of the ancient Jewish Temples. In our increasingly turbulent world, where dangers abound for us all, may they remain an affirmation of hope and faith.

It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning:

Great is Thy faithfulness.

LELA GILBERT is editor of Newsmax's weekly *Faith and Freedom* column, an adjunct fellow at Hudson Institute, and the award-winning author of *Saturday People*, *Sunday People: Israel through the Eyes of a Christian Sojourner*.

The Jewish National Fund You Should Know Today

by **MEGAN E. TURNER** and **JENNIFER TZIVIA MACLEOD**

Jewish National Fund (JNF-USA) is probably best known for trees – after all, JNF has planted 260 million trees throughout Israel over the last 116 years. However, many people remain unfamiliar with JNF’s long history of accomplishments in developing the land of Israel and its vision to build and revitalize the Negev and Galilee. While JNF’s work continues to evolve and adapt as new necessities arise throughout the country, it remains undisputedly the largest environmental organization in Israel, and its environmental work acts as a catalyst in community building and even in facilitating and fostering coexistence among neighbors.

One of JNF’s greatest achievements in community building through environmental work can be seen in the city of Be’er Sheva, the capital of the Negev Desert.

The Be’er Sheva River Park and the popular River Walk surrounding it have become an integral part of this sprawling desert city. Residents and visitors alike flock to the Danielle A. and Irving J. Grossman Jewish National Fund Amphitheater for big-name concerts and events. Families gather on weekends to picnic at Bell Park or barbecue on the banks of the river. And then there’s the excitement over what will be Israel’s largest man-made, recycled water lake within the park, and the beautiful residential area that will sit on its banks.

A few decades ago, one would have been hard-pressed to find any semblance of greenery, not just in Be’er Sheva, but in many industrialized Israeli cities. With the fledgling state’s focus on rapid development in the 1950s and 1960s, waterways and rivers throughout Israel

were seen as sources for urban and industrial needs, not as natural resources and ecosystems in need of protection and preservation, and became conduits for municipal sewage and repositories for garbage and refuse.

“As a child, I remember the river was full of trash and basically a giant dump,” recalled Be’er Sheva native Anat Haliva-Nachshon, 40. “During the winter, the water would rise, flooding and cutting off the Neve Noi neighborhood from the rest of the city with disgusting, smelly water. The Be’er Sheva River was a place we weren’t proud of; no one wanted to invest in cleaning it up.”

Dvora Zak, 35, also grew up in Be’er Sheva and was warned to stay away from the river. “The river was in such bad shape that it was infested with flies. There was no water flowing through it, only sewage, and we were told to not go near it because it was a real health hazard.”

ecosystem could be rehabilitated and brought back to a healthy state, it would have a positive effect on the residents and city of Be’er Sheva and potentially see the return of local wildlife.

“When we started this project, I understood that cleaning up the river was something for the benefit of the public,” said Shachaf. But he dreamt bigger—Shachaf also wanted to build a park around the river, one that would not only increase the value of the immediate surroundings, but also attract tourists and new residents to the city. The dream was bold and it needed an equally bold partner to bring it to fruition.

Jewish National Fund was a natural fit to realize this dream, and already had a history of successfully rehabilitating other rivers and waterways in Israel—such as the Alexander River in Israel’s Hefer Valley. What caught JNF’s attention was Shachaf’s ambitious plan

Endless stretches of dusty desert that once surrounded the river have been replaced with vibrant greenery...

For many, the Negev’s neglected waterways were not a primary concern, but one person thought differently. In 1997, Dr. Nehemya Shachaf was appointed head of the Shikma-Besor Drainage Authority, the body responsible for the cleaning up and rehabilitation of over 60 million dunams of waterways in the Negev. Shachaf’s attention quickly turned toward the Be’er Sheva River, believing if the polluted waterway and its weakened

to revitalize and breathe new life into Be’er Sheva through nature: restoring and having clean, recycled water flow through the Be’er Sheva River and building a large lake surrounded by a massive green park. The partnership became an essential element in Jewish National Fund’s Blueprint Negev initiative, which focuses on developing southern Israel to attract 500,000 new residents to the area.



A gardener with JNF prepares to plant foliage in Israel. (Photo: Jewish National Fund)

With JNF's matching grants and collaboration, as well as support from regional and government partners, Shachaf's dream began taking shape. In the early 2000s, the first section of the larger Be'er Sheva River Park—containing a promenade along the southern bank of the river and the lush green Bell Park—opened to the public. A 12,500 seat amphitheater (that can accommodate a staggering 30,000 spectators including the surrounding park) was built, and headlining acts from around the world began performing in Be'er Sheva. The beautiful Pipes Bridge—a pedestrian walkway connecting the Neve Noi neighborhood to the Old City—was built to help facilitate foot traffic, while historic sites like Beit Eshel, the Turkish Bridge, and Abraham's Well, were all renovated to attract more tourists and reopened to the public.

Endless stretches of dusty desert that once surrounded the river have

been replaced with vibrant greenery, and there's daily progress being made on the Be'er Sheva River Park Lake. Known as Neve Midbar, or "desert oasis" in Hebrew, the 23-acre lake will be Israel's largest man-made lake. More importantly, the lake will double as a reservoir to irrigate and care for the park's needs. Water for the reservoir will be supplied by treated and recycled sewage and waste water from the city so as to not waste precious and scarce fresh water.

The lake's construction will continue to transform Be'er Sheva into an even more attractive city for younger

Israelis and their families, living up to its name as the crown jewel of JNF's Blueprint Negev initiative. Once completed, plans are in place to build eco-friendly residential high-rises, a bike and walking path around the lake, restaurants, shops, galleries, and more. The lake has also interested bird-watchers with the prospects of attracting oasis birds, such as Arabian babblers, desert larks, and scrub warblers. Although it is not certain that the lake will directly increase

Water for the reservoir will be supplied by treated and recycled sewage and waste water from the city so as to not waste precious and scarce fresh water.

Be'er Sheva's wildlife, JNF's success in restoring the Hula Lake in northern Israel, which has attracted the return of

migratory cranes and has become a major tourist destination, has residents optimistic about the lake's potential positive ecological impact.

"The Be'er Sheva River Park is one of the main anchors of the city of Be'er Sheva, and it serves as a green lung in the heart of the Negev," said Mayor Ruvik Danilovich, Be'er Sheva's young and dynamic mayor, who has been a big proponent of the environmental initiatives brought forth by JNF and the Drainage

Accords, the Institute's motto is "Nature knows no borders," and it proudly strives to hew to this policy in its programming and projects. The Institute welcomes students from around the world, including Israel, the Palestinian territories, Jordan, Europe, and North and South America, to learn about shared resources and protection from desertification, as well as environmental and cross-border cooperation.

Amgad Hijazin, a Jordanian student, came to the Institute in 2014 to study

many Israelis working towards peace and has also gained a better understanding of his own country. "I'm part of this conflict. We, in Jordan, are part of it. Environmental and ecological issues persist despite a border here or there."

Dr. Clive Lipchin, an expert on water resource management at the Institute, credits the Jewish National Fund and its support for the successes in cross-border relationship building and education with students from neighboring states, as well as an increase in mutual cooperation. He claims that this assistance helps the Institute engage Palestinians, Jordanians, and Israelis while promoting mutual cooperation through improving or protecting something that affects all of them—the environment. "JNF is an essential partner in helping us achieve that mission."

While the Arava Institute pursues many environmental rehabilitation projects, one focus now is tracking and mitigating damages following a massive oil spill in the Arava's Evrona Nature Reserve in 2014. Viewed by many as Israel's greatest ecological disaster, approximately 20,000 barrels of crude oil gushed from a breach in the Trans-Israel pipeline, contaminating the soil, threatening plants and wildlife, and affecting the health of and hospitalizing over 80 people in Israel and Jordan.

Three years later, cleanup efforts continue and researchers are studying the long-term consequences of the spill

JNF's success in restoring the Hula Lake in Northern Israel ... has attracted the return of migratory cranes and has become a major tourist destination...

Authority from the start. "I am delighted to see what was once a hazardous environmental site become a center for recreation, leisure, culture, and tourism. I have no doubt that with Jewish National Fund's help, the park will continue to be developed and so will Be'er Sheva."

Farther south, another Jewish National Fund-supported initiative is creating change by setting politics aside and bringing people together to collaborate on shared environmental issues.

Israelis, Palestinians, and Jordanians gather in Israel's Negev Desert to talk about the one thing they all have in common: the planet. It may sound like a joke—only without the rabbi, priest, and imam—but this in fact does happen in the most unlikely of places—the Arava desert, a stretch of land straddling the Israeli-Jordanian border from the port city of Eilat in the south to the Dead Sea to the north. It is there that the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies, a Jewish National Fund-supported research institute, is transcending national and political differences for the greater good, conducting research on the importance of plants and animals, and learning to manage the region's precious water resources.

Founded in 1996, following the Oslo

more about cross-border environmental cooperation between neighboring states, particularly on environmental matters shared by Jordan and Israel. Before coming to the Arava, Hijazin worked at the Jordanian National Research Center, an environmental research organization based in Amman, and like many students he had reservations about coming to the Jewish State for his studies.

To help ease this transition, all new students attend the Peace-Building Leadership Seminar. This mandatory seminar is designed to help create mutual understanding, empathy, and friendship among students from varying back-

grounds. "In the beginning, students came together to talk about the conflict," Hijazin said. "We were discussing difficult topics, and even though it was hard at times, that's when you become friends." Today, Hijazin says he has met

on the Arava's fragile ecological system and local species, such as the doum palm and acacia trees. "Animals can outrun the effects of a spill," Dr. Lipchin said, "however, there's a greater concern for vegetation, especially the acacia."

Israelis, Palestinians, and Jordanians gather in Israel's Negev Desert to talk about the one thing they all have in common: the planet.



Children in Be'er Sheva's riverfront park. (Photo: JNF)

As part of his research and studies, Hijazin—who decided to stay in Israel to pursue a master's degree from Ben Gurion University—has been involved in the oil spill cleanup. He also shared Dr. Lipchin's concern that the spill's main effect has been on the second generation of plant life. Based on tracking and measurements over the last three years, he believes older acacia trees can be saved through soil remediation and other measures, but he's also seeing fewer young trees in the area now than there should be. The spill didn't cross into Jordan, but Hijazin has noticed a decrease in new acacias on the Jordanian side as well. "In Jordan, the acacia is one of the main food sources for desert animals and it is also important for people, as it provides shade and charcoal," he said.

Residents in the Central Arava have noted that the iconic tree has been facing problems over the last decade. Acacias are classified as a "keystone" species, meaning that they not only anchor the soil and prevent further

desertification, but they also enrich it. They are a type of legume, similar to beans or clovers, adding nitrogen to the soil, which in turn helps other species grow and thrive. When residents began noticing the trees were vanishing, the Central Arava Regional Council, along with JNF, stepped in and created the Adopt-an-Acacia program.

The Council and JNF began the project by asking local residents to collect seeds from trees already growing on and around their properties. The seeds were germinated and raised in a nursery, then returned to the areas where they had been collected. As part of his research into the acacia's decline, Hijazin has been collecting seeds and experimenting with four types of germination treatments to find the one best suited for Jordan's dry climate. He is hopeful of replicating the successes seen in the Arava in his country once he returns.

Although the spill continues to have long-lasting effects, it has sparked an increase in cross-border cooperation. "We

have launched the Track II Environmental Forum in order to bring decision makers from the area together," said David Lehrer, executive director of the Arava Institute. "The forum will help advance cross-border environmental agreements between Israel, the PA, and Jordan—we all share the same ecosystem and its health is important, especially with such events."

Protecting the environment and acting as guardian of the land are part of JNF's DNA. Be'er Sheva's revitalization and the promotion of environmental collaboration among neighbors are just two examples of the dozens of projects and programs Jewish National Fund spearheads to ensure a bright, prosperous, and secure future for all who call Israel home.

JENNIFER TZIVIA MACLEOD is a freelance writer for Jewish National Fund. MEGAN E. TURNER is a clinical social worker who regularly writes for Jewish National Fund projects and about the organization's development in Be'er Sheva and the wider Negev.

Israel and NATO: History and Progress

by COLONEL URI NAAMAN (Ret.)

To enhance relationships with non-member states, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization initiated the Mediterranean Dialogue framework as a forum of cooperation between itself and seven non-NATO states from North Africa and the Near East, namely: Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, Morocco, Israel, Mauritania, and last to join, Algeria. Further along, a similar forum was initiated with other European countries – the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. Meetings held within the Med-Dialogue framework with NATO were usually conducted in an orderly and topical manner.

Israel immediately responded positively to NATO's request to join the Med Dialogue as part of the country's principled and strategic approach to join regional cooperation frameworks, like those developed by the European Union.

Preliminary years of the Med Dialogue did not lead to significant progress of the Israeli-NATO relationship, and members of the forum were provided with relatively minimal opportunities for cooperative activities such as courses, trainings and collaborative exercises.

Israeli attempts to promote specific collaborative activities were minimally reciprocated and were generally slow to materialize. For example, official agreements with NATO in the areas of disaster management and logistical engagement were delayed for years at a time.

■ *NATO's Mission Changes*

NATO actively entered the protracted war in Afghanistan and embraced the fight as its core organizational mission. With this pivot away from the obsolete

Soviet threat and toward Afghanistan came changes related to NATO's regional cooperation in the Middle East and its perception of threats related to terrorism and radical Islamism.

Israel stepped up and was willing to provide support and assistance for the organization and its individual member states that had sent troops to the region and required assistance preparing for counter-terrorism and warfare in a desert context. Several NATO member states conducted exercises in Israel to prepare for warfare in Afghanistan and to emulate the rocky desert terrain.

During the 2004 NATO Summit in Istanbul, the Alliance expanded the Middle Eastern and regional folder and launched the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI), a cooperative framework focused on Persian Gulf state membership. Six countries were invited to join, but only four became active members: Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and the United

with NATO, which was progressing slowly at the time.

There was one successful cooperation of note. NATO offered Israel the opportunity to participate in a naval operation in the Mediterranean Sea with the objective of interdicting illicit arms, drugs, and terrorists. The operation, titled Active Endeavour was run out of Naples, Italy. It proposed to assign a dedicated Israeli representative to the mission. Israel agreed, and since the beginning of 2008 an Israeli presence has been on board this mission, since renamed Sea Guardian and transitioned to Britain. Both NATO and Israel benefitted from this valuable relationship and enjoyed reciprocated morale-boosting and high-quality substantive contributions.

Participation in maritime operation was Israel's first engagement in a multinational operational team and has raised discussions about the inclusion of Israeli Navy ships in this specific operation.

NATO offers Israel access to ... training opportunities, conferences, information exchange and added value in countering terrorism.

Arab Emirates. Saudi Arabia and Oman remained on the fence.

Israel appreciated the opportunity for facilitated engagements, conferences and summits with Northern African and Gulf countries with which it did not have a standing formal relationship, and simultaneously worked to promote and deepen the general relationship

In the 2010 NATO Summit in Portugal, it was decided to change the cooperation mechanism with non-NATO member states to expand activities offered. All non-NATO member states were transitioned to the One Tool Box approach. In principle, all external partners to NATO receive the same offer of support and assistance with regard to a



Joint press conference with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and the President of Israel Reuven Rivlin in June 2016. (Photo: NATO)

NATO work plan – which significantly increases the activities offered to Israel as well, particularly when compared to previous years when other members received greater support.

Additional improvements were implemented including, *inter alia*, the opening of an Israeli permanent office and presence in the NATO headquarters, participation of Israeli navy ships in maritime operations, ratification of the individual and bilateral IPCP agreement with NATO, and so forth.

■ **Fallout from Mavi Marmara**

Concretely and operationally, a majority of the new areas of cooperation were blocked later in 2010 due to the crisis in the Turkish-Israeli relationship in the aftermath of the Mavi Marmara flotilla incident, in which Turkish vessels attempting to run Israel's maritime blockade of the Gaza Strip were stopped and nine Turks, fighting Israel commandos, were killed.

Usual and procedural decision-making in NATO is consensus-driven and Turkey invoked its right to veto within NATO, practically preventing Israel from making any progress within the organization – operationally or otherwise.

NATO's Secretary General at the time assured Israel of fairness as he maintained a policy of non-discrimination and worked to prevent agenda items that attempted to further isolate Israel and prevent cooperation.

Israel's limited activism within NATO continued from 2010-2016 due to ongoing tensions with Turkey. In 2016, an agreement between Turkey and Israel was achieved and Turkey agreed to remove its veto on Israeli participation in NATO activities. This is the current situation.

Despite Israel's limited NATO activism over the course of those six years, Israel continued to provide partial assistance and support, for example during emergencies or natural disasters – earthquakes, firefighting response etc. NATO's situation room supported Israel during the mega-fire in the Carmel Forest in 2010 and coordinated emergency responses from NATO member states and non-member states alike.

With the withdrawal of Turkey's veto in 2016, the individual cooperation agreement (the IPCP) between Israel and NATO was finalized, and the Israeli office at the NATO HQ was set up. This office is not an embassy, but rather serves

a liaison function, meant to increase the presence and meetings of Israeli representatives with counterparts from other countries and functions of NATO. Once again, participation of Israeli navy ships as part of the Sea Guardian operation was discussed.

■ **Benefits for Both**

The potential benefits gleaned from a thriving relationship for Israel and NATO are great for both. Israel's comparative advantage and high competence in NATO's core activities related to counter-terrorism, cyber, intelligence, missile defense and so on are desirable. NATO offers Israel access to a global network and platform of cooperation with shared interests including relevant courses, training opportunities, conferences, information exchange and added value in countering terrorism.

Israel struggles with promoting its ties with multi-lateral organizations as it has historically focused on developing bilateral relationships on a more "intimate" basis. This strategic shift in the Israeli approach is not without growing pains and requires a lengthy and ongoing process. Israel is now more open to the benefits it stands to gain from an enhanced relationship with NATO, including improving its global standing and legitimacy and the ability to establish some form of deterrence, based on its partnership and cooperation with the organization.

As this article was being completed, Israel, after years of negotiations and delays, has signed an important agreement with NATO's logistics agency, the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA). Today, Israel is focused on promoting and finalizing various agreements and accords with NATO that will lead to enhanced and fruitful future cooperation with the organization well into the future.

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The End of an Era for Jerusalem's Arab Residents

by **DAVID KOREN**

The struggle for sovereignty in Jerusalem has transitioned from the “Jerusalem of Above” – in the sense of the political summits of Oslo and Annapolis – to the “Jerusalem of Below,” in the sense of daily life in the city. The real limits to control and sovereignty are not determined in clandestine talks between unnamed high-ranking officials, but rather by demarcating areas of activity for the municipal street cleaner, the youth counselor at the local community center, the building inspector, road engineer, policeman and social worker, who provide services for the residents and are clearly identified with Israeli institutions. Governance and sovereign rule in eastern Jerusalem requires a quantum leap in the level of services provided by Israel, alongside effective community policing efforts.

The Arabs of eastern Jerusalem are caught in a vortex of emotions and mixed feelings of despair and hope, fatigue and vigor, envy and pride, dream and reality. The contrast between the strong national and religious symbolism that Jerusalem (or al-Quds, in Arabic) holds for its Arab residents on the one hand, and their accelerated integration into Israeli society, both in the city and elsewhere, on the other has entangled them in a thicket of contradictions.

Among them: Palestinian national identity alongside an unprecedented demand for Israeli citizenship; stone throwing at Hadassah Hospital on Mount Scopus but valuing the care Arabs receive there; protesting the enforcement of planning and building laws in Arab neighborhoods while calling for an increased police presence there to maintain public order; campaigning against “normalization” with Israel in tandem with a tremendous interest in learning Hebrew

and an increasing preference for an Israeli rather than Palestinian matriculation certificate; flying the flag of Palestine and spray-painting nationalist slogans in praise of Fatah on the walls of buildings while expressing vicious criticism of the head of the Palestinian Authority (PA), Mahmoud Abbas, on social networks.

And, alongside the growing power of conservative Islamist forces in the public domain, there is also greater sexual permissiveness in the private domain and a growing laxness in the observance of family values and tradition.

In this sense, eastern Jerusalem Arabs are at an historical crossroads, no longer able to straddle the fence between the PA and Israel, bringing to a head a decision between the alternative senses of belonging.

Arab population of the newly united Jerusalem in 1967 was about 70,000 (alongside 197,000 Jews), constituting 26.5% of the city's population.

Residents of eastern Jerusalem have the legal status of “permanent residents,” which in practice is the same as that of foreign nationals who reside in Israel. The Arabs have the right to live and work in Israel (unlike Palestinians of Judea and Samaria). They also have benefits under the National Insurance Law and the National Health Insurance Law. As permanent residents, they are eligible to vote in municipal but not national elections. If they leave the country for more than seven years they risk losing this status.

Research studies and public opinion surveys reveal that safeguarding their

Eastern Jerusalem Palestinian youth are torn between ... colleges providing Hebrew classes and advanced professional training, and Fatah sports and cultural clubs...

■ *Eastern Jerusalem: Context*

“Eastern Jerusalem” is the term applied to the neighborhoods within the municipal jurisdiction of Jerusalem beyond the 1949 armistice line (also known as the Green Line or the pre-1967 line). The term is somewhat inaccurate from a geographical perspective since it also includes territory north and south of the city.

These neighborhoods cover about 70 square kilometers. In fact, the area of pre-1967 Jordanian Jerusalem was only 6.4 sq. km., in the Old City and its immediate environs. After the 1967 Six Day War, Israel annexed an additional 63.6 sq. km., consisting mainly of 28 Arab villages. The

permanent resident status and remaining eligible for national insurance benefits and healthcare, rank high among the reasons for the Palestinians' preference for living within the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem, even though they could probably find cheaper and better housing elsewhere.

Permanent residents can apply for full Israeli naturalization, which requires them to swear allegiance to the state, submit proof that they do not hold any other citizenship (many residents of eastern Jerusalem hold Jordanian citizenship), and demonstrate some fluency in Hebrew.

Thousands of eastern Jerusalem Arabs apply for the permanent status of



A merchant at Mahane Yehuda Market in Jerusalem, Israel.

“citizen” in place of their temporary “resident” status. But the slow process, owing to the lack of qualified officials in Israel’s Population Authority, makes them ponder why such a core identity step on their part is met by such a weak Israeli response.

Permanent residents currently number some 320,000 (plus about 50,000 illegal Arab residents), constituting about 37 percent of the city’s population and 20 percent of the Arabs within Israel’s borders. Jerusalem is home to the largest concentration of Palestinian Arabs between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean (excluding Gaza). By comparison, the population of Ramallah is about 280,000 and of Nazareth, the largest Arab town in Israel, 75,000. Regarding religion, the majority are Muslims, with only a small minority of Christians (10,000-15,000).

About 120,000 eastern Jerusalem Arabs live in neighborhoods that lie within the municipal boundaries of the city but are on the other side of the security fence (constructed around Jerusalem between 2002 and 2007). These neighborhoods are marked by severe overcrowding and extensive illegal construction to a much greater extent than the neighborhoods inside the fence.

The fence has cut off the Jerusalem

Arabs who live within it from Ramallah and the West Bank, and intensified their links to the employment, welfare, healthcare, and economic infrastructure of western Jerusalem, and consequently to the city’s Jewish sector.

■ **“Rejected Child” Matures**

The Arabs of eastern Jerusalem feel trapped between Israel and the PA. They are the “rejected child” of “warring parents,” Palestinian and Israeli, each of whom is devoted to their other, “preferred” children.

After 50 years of transience, the “rejected child” is at the height of adolescence and wishes to challenge his parents. This process has generated on the eastern Jerusalem street an intense desire for “permanence,” which is at the heart of sharpening power struggles between pro-Palestinian elements and those seeking to realize their rights as equal residents vis-à-vis the Israeli authorities. These inter-communal struggles include physical violence, threats, and intimidation, especially by supporters of the Palestinian side.

Eastern Jerusalem Palestinian youth are torn between a growing number of colleges providing Hebrew classes and advanced professional training, and

Fatah sports and cultural clubs with a revived budget by the PA.

There is a struggle between parents’ committees that support the introduction of the Israeli curriculum for schools in eastern Jerusalem with the aim of broadening their children’s educational and professional horizons, and parents’ committees affiliated with the PA who wish to preserve the Palestinian curriculum due to its national characteristics even though its benefits for access to higher education and better employment are low.

To further complicate matters, the Israeli government appears not to have decided whether it wishes to view this community as an integral part of Israeli society or as residual leftovers.

In recent years, the Jerusalem municipality has undertaken a major effort to reduce disparities in the eastern part of the city and increase enforcement and governance levels, in coordination with and with the assistance of the district police. The government also recently passed two resolutions allocating a large-scale budget for eastern Jerusalem, some of which is already being realized, to the benefit of the residents.

However, for a significant improvement in the poor standard of living in



Jerusalem's light rail system has been subjected to a hail of stones by Palestinian rioters precisely because it is a symbol of the unity of the city. (Photo: Navot Miller)

most eastern Jerusalem neighborhoods, a vast investment of billions of shekels is needed in all areas of life, particularly infrastructure. It seems that the State of Israel has yet to realize that the struggle for control and sovereignty in Jerusalem, which was conducted in the past by high-level international summits and closed forums, is now managed on the ground.

■ **Terror and Incitement**

Terrorist attacks and the wave of stabbing incidents led by eastern Jerusalem Arabs also express, in their own mind, an attempt to delineate the borders of the “Palestinian territory” in Jerusalem with blood and terror. Internal discourse among Jerusalem Palestinian youth on the social networks – alongside the glorification of “shahids” defending al-Aqsa mosque – includes political discourse emphasizing that deterring the Jews from reaching the city’s “seam lines” between east and west also demarcates the Palestinian area of Jerusalem.

The intense effort on the ground over the past year to move on from the intermediate status has created a sense of urgency on the governmental side, both Palestinian and Israeli, to take a clear stand on governmental investment in eastern Jerusalem and upgrading the level of on-site enforcement and policing. In response, the Israel Police announced a new security concept that advocates enhanced police presence in eastern Jerusalem and establishing integrated policing centers – which will provide both policing and civilian community services to these neighborhoods.

The past year has also seen a marked trend in the PA boosting its dimensions of sovereignty in the city. A reflection of this is the Palestinian government’s budgetary plan of a total of NIS 25 million (of which it is unclear how much, if any, will materialize) for eastern Jerusalem.

This includes enhancement of the symbolism of building and renovating houses in Jerusalem by the PA (in the

Palestinian narrative, Israel demolishes Arab homes in Jerusalem); a focus on the Old City in an effort to prevent “Judaization”; encouraging the establishment of sovereignty symbols competing with Israel’s, such as Palestinian hospitals and emergency medical services; and encouraging Palestinian higher education over Israeli.

Alongside the political struggle, the struggle over the Temple Mount (“Haram al-Sharif” in Arabic) has become more acute. The “metal detector crisis” reflects an almost-exact realization of this author’s assessment from the spring of 2017 regarding the strengthening of the Muslim Brotherhood axis at the expense of the PA axis in the Palestinian arena in general and in eastern Jerusalem in particular.

Social media pages affiliated with the Islamic Movement showcased their blatantly inflammatory incitement against the metal detectors, while in the Palestinian news agencies identified with Abbas this issue was marginalized.

But events unified all the various streams and segments of the population and consolidated the sense of internal unity, which was severely impaired in recent years by the Hamas-Fatah conflict and the geographic separation (Gaza – Judea and Samaria). As the events on the Temple Mount subsided, the Palestinians of eastern Jerusalem felt a sense of victory that was probably their first in 50 years of Israeli rule.

Moreover, in the eyes of the Palestinians, a new worldview was forged in the Palestinian struggle against the Israeli regime, namely, civil resistance (mass prayer in the streets as an example), which led to more significant achievements than those of violent resistance.

Developments reflect the entry of the Jerusalem Arabs into the power parallelogram operating in the city. The Temple Mount is no longer a sacred site for which decisions are shaped by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Waqf officials, but a site on which the Arabs of Jerusalem can have significant influence.

■ *The Intermediate Situation*

Against the backdrop of the political stalemate, the components of real sovereignty will be dictated by actions on the ground (bottom-up) rather than by top-down planning. Local factors are shaping a political reality rather than a political rationale shaping the situation – as would have been expected to occur in such a central and sensitive place.

If Israel wants to secure its sovereignty in Jerusalem, it must implement a widespread plan to boost its governance in the eastern part of the city by providing services and efficient enforcement and policing. “Soft” governance, which is expressed in the provision of civil services, does not relate only to the world of distributive justice and equalization of living conditions between the different parts of the city, but is related to the very core of the political experience of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Anyone wishing to affect the nature of this conflict at its Jerusalemite core and the reality of coexistence between Arabs and Jews in Israel, will no longer be able to marginalize the issue of the civic engagement of eastern Jerusalem Palestinians.

In recent years there has been significant progress in realizing this obligation (especially by establishing schools and developing road infrastructure), but there is still a long way to go.

■ *Islamic and Foreign Actors*

Other important players are the Islamic organizations and some international actors. Consider Turkey’s efforts to expand its circles of control in eastern Jerusalem.

Turkey is injecting tens of millions of dollars in the areas of culture, welfare, education, and sports in eastern Jerusalem, while attempting to establish its status as guardian of eastern Jerusalem Palestinians against the “Judaization” of the city. The EU and UN auxiliary bodies also finance several projects in the areas of education, welfare, infrastructure, and so on, on a broader scale and at a higher level of visibility than in the past.

The increased foreign presence in the heart of Israel’s capital touches the deepest chords of the issue of Israeli sovereignty in the eastern part of the city. Those who believe that Israel should not impose its sovereignty on eastern Jerusalem might welcome this foreign presence. However, they must also take into account the security implications of the murderous anti-Jewish ideology that some agents of this presence are instilling in the 320,000 Palestinians who live alongside 550,000 Jews.

On the other side, those who condemn the foreign presence because it undermines Israeli sovereignty and/or

neighborhoods have a mixed population of Jews and Arabs. Daily interchange between the two groups has been facilitated by the road and public transportation networks that link Arab and Jewish neighborhoods.

The strongest opposition to the first proposal will be voiced by the Palestinian residents themselves. They view the PA as a corrupt and failed regime that has no commitment to provide decent services to citizens. Hence implementation of this plan might lead to an outflow of Palestinians to the Jewish neighborhoods that come under the jurisdiction of the Jewish municipality.

...dialogue based on mutual trust with Arab leaders in the areas of education, business, and community life in normal times proved to be invaluable for moderating violence...

due to its grave security implications must be aware that attempts to eliminate this presence, whether through security or diplomatic channels, are not enough. Some of these foreign organizations provide services required by the residents; their expulsion would require Israel to fill the void, and this would have major budgetary repercussions.

■ *Israeli Policy Alternatives*

Two plans for partition of the city have been floated recently.

The first, which enjoys the support of various Palestinian elements, would create a municipal separation including the establishment of a Palestinian municipality to manage the affairs of the Arab neighborhoods, but would not create a physical barrier between the two parts of the city. A joint committee or agency would coordinate between the two city halls, in conjunction with Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

A look at the map of the city makes plain that the Arab and Jewish neighborhoods are interlocked and sometimes only a few meters apart and some

A 2011 survey polled eastern Jerusalem residents, posing the following question to its participants: “Should your neighborhood become subject to Palestinian sovereignty, would you choose to move to another neighborhood in Jerusalem or another city in Israel?” Around 40 percent of the responses were positive.

Additionally, it is predictable that in the case of Jerusalem, significant difficulties would arise in coordinating the municipalities where the shared life is at such intense and close levels. The municipal separation plan will also raise many difficulties in dealing with emergency and security issues in the delicate interface between the two municipalities.

The second proposal calls for a unilateral Israeli pullback from the Arab neighborhoods, and the construction of a wall between the two parts of the city. Most of the Arab villages incorporated in 1967 would be de-annexed, their 200,000 residents removed from the municipal boundaries of the city, and their permanent resident status revoked. The situation in the rest of the eastern part of the city – the Old City, the Holy Basin,

and the Jewish neighborhoods – would remain as at present.

This plan has fatal flaws from the Israeli standpoint.

On the security front, there is a risk in handing over territories to the Palestinians without coordination, with the inevitable boost to terrorist organizations and dissident PA elements. Building a barrier through Jerusalem would repeat the experience of the previous decade, which made life very difficult in the Shuafat refugee camp and Kafr Aqub, which in turn impacted the security levels in the nearby Jewish neighborhoods, especially Pisgat Zev.

...simplifying the naturalization process for Arab residents of Jerusalem ... could not only alleviate their sense of frustration and alienation but also encourage a sense of belonging.

From the political perspective, the Achilles' heel of the plan is its total disregard of the role and character of the Palestinian actors who would control the neighborhoods on the eastern side of the barrier. The rise of Hamas on the eastern Jerusalem street raises the possibility that this force might gradually gain control of the villages, with all this implies from a security and political standpoint.

■ *Living Together*

Life in a shared city with no barriers between the two groups creates a real security challenge, especially in periods of religious and political tension, as exemplified by the knife intifada of the last few years, a challenge which the Jerusalem police managed to overcome.

The experience of recent years has shown that success on the security front requires not only ingenuity by the security agencies but also the enlistment of all civilian elements in the effort.

The intimate dialogue based on mutual trust with Arab leaders in the areas of education, business, and community life

in normal times proved to be invaluable for moderating the violent friction between the two sides during times of crisis. Methods taken from the world of education, such as lengthening the school day and keeping children and teens within a protecting and supportive educational environment, are another proven way to lower the level of violence.

Finally, the world of social networks, which played a major role in triggering the violence, also turned out to be a place for positive action. This involved the dissemination of updates and calming messages on the mayor's Facebook page in Arabic, which has around 30,000 followers, mostly

eastern Jerusalem Arabs. It also involved the refuting of disinformation about the Temple Mount, to curb and counter the incitement propagated by many websites.

An analysis of the civic aspect of the united city suggests that unity is a partial positive at best for Palestinian residents. Constantly exposed to the immensity of the gulf between the two sides of the city and the disparate living standards of the two population groups, they feel alienated from the Jewish sector and its institutions.

In recent years there has been a quantum reduction in these gaps and an improvement in the Arab residents' standard of living in many domains, including education, social services, roads, and leisure time activities. But the gap remains vast and closing it would require another major increase in government investment in eastern Jerusalem.

Israel should take steps to increase eastern Jerusalem Arabs' sense of belonging to the city and the state.

On the basis of the many conversations held with various prominent

figures from among the Palestinian population, this author surmises that broad sectors of the Palestinian public hold a pragmatic attitude about the Israeli authorities, despite their Palestinian national identity. They see Israel not only as the culprit to be blamed for their predicament as individuals and as a community, but also as the only possible source for solving their problems and turning their lives around.

Simplifying the naturalization process for Arab residents of Jerusalem, along with increased access to Israeli matriculation tracks and Israeli institutions of higher education, could not only alleviate their sense of frustration and alienation but also encourage a sense of belonging.

There are many Palestinians in eastern Jerusalem who have reached the instrumental level of exploiting the advantages offered by the western half of the city and would now like to participate in Israeli society at a deeper level – learning from it, integrating into it, and even encouraging the growing number of eastern Jerusalem teenage boys and girls who perform civilian service after high school in eastern Jerusalem.

Israel's encouragement of this trend has strategic implications not only for the unity of the city but also for the mid- and long-term security perspective. In another decade or two, the teenagers who engage more deeply with Israeli society today will be the moderates and pragmatists who restrain Palestinian society.

During the spate of violence in 2014-2016, teachers and principals went out into the streets to retrieve their pupils and to urge them to curb their emotions and avoid harming innocent persons, both Arabs and Jews. In another decade, perhaps these teachers will be joined by businesspeople, community activists, and cultural figures who would endeavor to introduce mutual respect and sensitivity to the turbulent reality of Jerusalem.

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Jewish-Arab Demography Defies Conventional Wisdom

by **YORAM ETTINGER**

In contrast to conventional demographic wisdom, the Jewish State is not facing a potential Arab demographic time bomb. In fact, Israel benefits from a robust Jewish demographic tailwind.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, Israel's Jewish-Arab demographic balance was dramatically transformed from six more births per Arab woman in 1969, to 3.11 births each in 2015, and the first Jewish edge of 3.16 to 3.11 births per woman in 2016.

In 2018, Israel is the only advanced economy and Western-style democracy endowed with a relatively high fertility rate (number of births per woman), which facilitates further economic growth with minimal dependency on migrant labor. Moreover, Israel's thriving Jewish demography also strengthens national security, with larger classes of military recruits, and a more confident foreign policy.

The systematic Westernization of Arab fertility – from 9.5 births per woman in 1960 to 3.11 in 2016 – reflects the accelerated integration of Israeli Arab women into modernity, and their enhanced social status within the Arab society.

For instance, as it is among the Arabs in Judea and Samaria (West Bank), whose fertility rate has declined from 5 births per woman in 2000 to 3.27 births in 2017 – and unlike their social standing a generation ago – almost all Arab girls in Israel, Judea and Samaria complete high school, and increasingly enroll in colleges and universities. This process has delayed the wedding-age and the reproductive process – which used to start at the age of 15-16 – to the

age of 20 years old and older. It has also expanded the use of contraceptives.

According to the Population Reference Bureau, women in the Palestinian Authority rank second (72 percent) – following Morocco (78 percent) and together with Jordan (70 percent) – among Muslim users of contraceptives and general avoidance of pregnancy.

In addition, Arab women in Israel, Judea and Samaria are increasingly integrated into the employment market, becoming more career and social-oriented, which terminates their reproductive process at the age of 45, rather than 50-55, as it used to be.

Furthermore, an intense urbanization process has transformed (especially the younger) Arabs in Judea and Samaria, shifting from a 70 percent rural society in

Algeria – 2.7, Jordan – 3.2, Iraq – 3.4, Egypt – 3.5 and Yemen – 3.6, etc.

Contrary to the “demographers of doom” in Israel's academia and government, the demographic trend has recorded an unprecedented Jewish tailwind. For example, the number of Jewish births surged, impressively, 74 percent, from 80,000 in 1995 to 140,000 in 2017, while the number of Israeli-Arab births grew, moderately, 22 percent from 36,000 in 1995 to 44,000 in 2017. In 1995, the share of Jewish births in Israel was 69 percent of total births, surging to 76.5 percent in 2017.

The significant rise in the rate of Jewish fertility has occurred, even though the ultra-Orthodox fertility rate has subsided, slightly, due to enhanced integration into the employment market,

Israel is the only advanced economy and Western-style democracy endowed with a relatively high fertility rate...

1967 to a 75 percent urban society. In other words, from a society which provided a convenient environment for a multitude of children – who were considered an essential labor force – to a society which does not require, and does not lend itself, to many children.

A systematic and dramatic decline in Islamic fertility rate has taken place throughout the Muslim world, except for the sub-Saharan countries: Iran – 2 births per woman, Libya – 2, Saudi Arabia – 2.1, Morocco – 2.11, Tunisia – 2.2, Syria – 2.5,

academia and even the military. The rise of Israel's Jewish fertility rate is due to an unprecedented contribution by the secular Jewish sector, including the yuppies of cosmopolitan Tel Aviv. It has been a derivative of the high level optimism and patriotism, the attachment to national roots and a sense of collective/communal responsibility, as well as a substantial reduction of the choice of abortions.

Moreover, the Arabs of Judea and Samaria have experienced annual net-emigration since the Jordanian occupation

of April 1950, except for 1993-1995, when some 100,000 Palestinians arrived from terrorist camps in Tunisia, Yemen, the Sudan and Lebanon on the coattails of the September 1993 Oslo Accord, assuming the top positions in the Palestinian Authority. Also, during the mid-80s, King Hussein curtailed migration across the Jordan River in order to demonstrate his clout to the Palestinians. The extent of Arab net-emigration from Judea and Samaria has been around 20,000 annually in recent years.

At the same time, Jewish immigration (aliyah) has persisted since 1882, featuring major waves every 20 years (e.g., one million during the 1990s and the early 2000s) and a 20,000-30,000 annual average in recent years. The huge potential of aliyah – from France, Germany, Russia, Ukraine, additional European countries, and Argentina - awaits a pro-active aliyah policy, which has not been undertaken since the end of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's administration in 1992.

In contrast with conventional wisdom, the annual number of Israeli emigrants (staying abroad in excess of a year) has decreased substantially from 14,200 in 1990 to 8,200 in 2015, during which time the population almost doubled from 4.5 million to 8.6 million, respectively.

■ ***Palestinian Manipulation***

The head of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), Hassan Abu-Libdeh, submitted the results of the first population census at a February 1998 press conference: "We counted 325,000 persons living outside the Palestinian lands for more than one year." According to international regulations, people who are away from their home-country for over a year must be deducted from the count, until they return for, at least, 90 days. This number is expanding systematically as a result of births (which always exceed deaths).

The unwarranted inclusion of overseas residents in the Palestinian census was also documented, in February 1998, by the website of the PCBS: "The de-facto



Israeli Children in Jerusalem.

approach was adopted with some exceptions: All Palestinians studying abroad irrespective of the study period.... Palestinian who live abroad for more than one year, and who have a usual place of residence in the Palestinian territories..."

The Palestinian Central Election Commission issued a press release in October 2004 stating that 200,000 overseas residents (over age 18, which was then the median age) expanding the number of illegally counted persons to 400,000 were included in the list of voters for the 2005 election.

A former head of the PCBS, Louie Shabanah, stated during a June 8, 2005 debate at the Haifa Technion Ne'eman Institute, when confronted with lower birth numbers published by the Palestinian Ministry of Health: "Unlike the PCBS, the Palestinian Ministry of Health excludes overseas births..."

The Palestinian Authority Undersecretary of Interior, Hassan Ilwi, pointed out in October 2014, as reported by Ma'an, the Palestinian news agency: "Since 1995, we have registered about 100,000 children born abroad."

Some 330,000 Jerusalem Arabs are either Israeli citizens or permanent residents, and are therefore included in the

Israeli census, but they are also in the Palestinian census. Thus, they are doubly counted, and their numbers grow through births.

While the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics claims zero net-migration, there has been a documented rise in net-annual Arab emigration from Judea and Samaria since 2000, averaging 20,000 annually in recent years. A 280,000 net-emigration of Judea and Samaria Arabs has been documented by Israel's Border Police (which supervises Israel's international passages) since the 1997 Palestinian census.

Over 100,000 Arabs from Judea and Samaria (mostly) and the Gaza Strip married Israeli Arabs, received Israeli ID cards, and therefore were double-counted, and their numbers grow through births.

A 32 percent inflated number of births, claimed by the Palestinian Authority, was documented in September 2006 by a World Bank study.

The 2007 PCBS census included Arabs born in 1845 – yes, 1845 – attesting to the traditional minimization of death-reporting. In 2009, the PCBS reported 1,900 deaths in Gaza, while claiming that the number of Arab casualties during

Operation Cast Lead was 1,391.... A June 10, 1993 study by Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics echoed the unreliability of Palestinian population registration, stating: "If the Palestinian population registration is accurate, then Palestinian life expectancy is higher than life expectancy in the USA...."

In 2017, the number of Arabs in Judea and Samaria Arabs was 1.85 million, not three million, as claimed by the PCBS.

■ No Demographic Doom

In 2018, there are seven million Jews in Israel, in contradiction to conventional wisdom and the demography of doom.

For example, in 1898, a leading Jewish demographer/historian, Shimon Dubnov, ridiculed Theodore Herzl, the founder of modern Zionism, for attempting to establish a Jewish State, which would have no more than 500,000 Jews by 1998, a tiny minority surrounded by a vast Arab majority: "The reconstruction of the Jewish State in the Land of Israel – with a sizeable Jewish popula-

demographic establishment (led by disciples of Prof. Bacchi), Prof. Bacchi erred in dismissing the prospects of aliyah (Jewish immigration) waves, attributing to Arab fertility permanent mythical rates, assuming that Jewish fertility would be reduced to European levels, ignoring the eventual Westernization of Muslim demography in general, and Palestinian demography in particular with Jewish demographic trends exceeding expectations (3.11 births per woman, and 3.3 when both Jewish spouses are Israeli-born).

During the late 1980s, Israel's demographic establishment dismissed Prime Minister Shamir's goal of bringing one million Jews from the USSR to Israel. However, these one million Jews arrived and played the key role in catapulting the Jewish State scientifically, technologically, economically, militarily and demographically.

In 1946, David Ben Gurion submitted to the "Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry" a document - "No Arab

in both locations; overseas residents were included in each census.

Should one accept the official British Mandate statistics, the conclusion would be that the Arab natural increase in the Land of Israel was, ostensibly, the highest in human history, dramatically higher than the natural increase in the Arab world.

■ The Demographic Reality

In 2018, notwithstanding the official Palestinian numbers, which are re-gurgitated – without due diligence – by the international community, there are seven million Jews in Israel, next to 1.85 million Israeli Arabs and 1.85 Arabs in Judea and Samaria. This is a 65.5 percent Jewish majority, benefitting from an unprecedented robust tailwind of Jewish fertility and net-immigration, compared with a 9 percent Jewish minority in 1900 and 39 percent Jewish minority in 1947 in the combined area of pre-1967 Israel, Judea and Samaria.

The misrepresentation of the demographic reality is designed to afflict Israel and its allies with unwarranted demographic pessimism/fatalism, cajoling the Jewish State into a reckless retreat from the mountain ridges of Judea and Samaria, which dominate Jerusalem, Ben Gurion Airport, Tel Aviv and the 8-15 mile sliver along the Mediterranean (pre-1967 Israel), which is the home of 70 percent of Israel's population, transportation, industrial, educational and medical infrastructures.

Against the backdrop of the aforementioned demographic documentation, anyone ignoring Israel's unprecedented demographic tailwind, who suggests that an Arab demographic time bomb is haunting the Jewish State, is either dramatically mistaken or outrageously misleading.

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...unlike their social standing a generation ago - almost all Arab girls in Israel, Judea and Samaria complete high school, and increasingly enroll in colleges and universities.

tion – is impossible politically, socially and economically.... Political Zionism is utopian...." Dubnov was off by more than five million Jews.

In 1944, Prof. Roberto Bacchi, the founder of Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, and a globally renowned demographer/statistician, lobbied David Ben Gurion, Israel's founding father, against declaring independence on demographic grounds. According to Bacchi, by 2001 there were supposed to be 2.3 million Jews in Israel, a 34 percent minority. Prof. Bacchi was off by about 3.5 million Jews.

Like Israel's contemporary

Majority in the Land of Israel" by Israel A. Trivus, highlighting the fundamental flaws of the British population census, some of which persist today. For example, most forms were filled and submitted by Arab clan (Hamula') leaders, whose interest was to maximize their political clout and benefits and therefore their numbers, at the expense of truth; the registration of the Arab inhabitants was never scrutinized; the registration of nomad Arabs (Bedouins) was intentionally inflated; the population registration suggested that death was rarely reported; migrants from rural to urban areas were double-counted

Israel is Worthy and Winning

by DAVID M. WEINBERG

There are competing narratives about Israel: that it is flying-high, or that it is heading towards disaster. Wise and important actors around the world are coming to the conclusion that the first assertion is true. Israel is an anchor of sanity and a source of ingenuity in an unruly world. Israel's strategy of vigilance, patience, and looking over the horizon for new partnerships is working.

A deep dissonance between competing narratives about Israel has become evident; between the Israel-is-flying-high narrative, and the Israel-is-heading-towards-disaster narrative.

Several relatively recent news items reflected the debate: Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' latest retrogressive and hostile speech, President Donald Trump's decision to partially defund the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), dissent over Israel's plan to deport African infiltrators, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's celebratory visit to India.

■ *Good News is Not in Vogue*

The lead item about Israel in the local and global media should have been, in my view, the "royal" visit to India. The splendidly strong embrace of Israel by India significantly boosts Israel's regional and global standing. It is an alliance of enormous strategic importance. It is a gargantuan counter-weight to the pathetic predictions of Israeli diplomatic isolation. Yet, aside from *The Jerusalem Post*, the news media gave miserly attention to Netanyahu's India coup. Good news stories about Israel's fortunes, or

those that highlight Netanyahu at his best, apparently are not in vogue.

Instead, journalists and politicians around the world were seized by the 50 percent cut in American funding for the uber-corrupt, super-sinecure organization that purposefully perpetuates the Palestinian war against Israel, UNRWA. They played this as some sort of grand humanitarian crisis; as a great dislocation that would threaten global peace and security.

They were oblivious to how ridiculous this claim is when the Palestinian Arabs receive more than \$3 billion a year in global aid, and especially when nobody in the world has done much to alleviate the plight of two million Syr-

ian refugees. The latter crisis is indeed a great dislocation that is rocking multiple counties in Europe and the Middle East and truly threatens global peace and security.

Western journalists and politicians purposefully played ignorant of the valuable political message signaled by the U.S. aid cut; that Palestinian leaders have to get real about compromise with Israel; that the United States will no longer subsidize an everlasting struggle against Israel anchored in self-images of permanent victimhood.

Belgium certainly didn't get the message. It rushed to increase its

contributions to UNRWA to fill some of the shortfall. So much for helping to drive the Palestinians toward political realism!

Then there was Abbas' speech against Washington and against Zionism; a horrid two-hour harangue filled with lies, curses, and racist references; a rant that rolled back three decades of effort towards Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation.

■ *The Palestinian Tantrum*

Abbas explicitly denied the Jewish people's indigenous roots in the Land of Israel; asserted that establishment of the State of Israel was a criminal venture, and that anybody who helped it rise was guilty of war crimes; and he revived classic anti-Semitic tropes about

Israel is an anchor of sanity and a source of ingenuity in an unruly world.

Jews/Zionists poisoning Palestinian wells and drugging Palestinian kids. And of course, he evinced no willingness to compromise with Israel in order to secure a better future for his people and for ours.

Abbas's tirade was news in Israel but not so much elsewhere. This enormously frustrated Israeli public diplomacy professionals, who want the world to recognize – finally – that it is Abbas and his fellow old-time Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) rejectionists who are the obstacle to peace, not Netanyahu or Israel.

They correctly pointed out that had Netanyahu given a speech



U.S. Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Nikki Haley meets Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem on June 7, 2017. (Photo: U.S. Embassy Tel Aviv)

one-one-hundredth as critical of the Palestinian Arabs, or one-one-thousandth as dismissive of Palestinian rights, or one-one-millionth as hostile to world leaders, he would have been excoriated internationally at the highest levels for weeks on end.

Netanyahu would have been tarred-and-feathered in immediate emergency session of the UN Security Council. Israel would have been convicted of killing the peace process. Sanctions would have followed. European foreign ministers would have been tripping over themselves to compete for the coveted title of most-aggressive Netanyahu-basher.

But when Abbas unmasks the deepest Palestinian decrepitude and blows all hopes for a stable peace out of the water – nada. The world is silent or not paying attention.

■ *That's Just Fine*

My view is that this is just fine. Israel doesn't need to draw attention to Abbas' sad last words. I sense a new maturity on the part of global observers with regard to the relative non-importance of the Palestinian plight.

In the grander scheme of things, given the tectonic changes sweeping

across the region and the grave threats to world security (such as the Iranian drive for Mideast hegemony and totalitarian Islamist terror attacks), the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a sad but manageable problem.

It's terrible that Abbas is blocking any movement toward peace – indeed it's tragic for Israel – but we are all rightfully seized by more urgent challenges, and indeed greater opportunities elsewhere.

Which brings me back to India and Israel; China and Israel; Africa and Israel; Central America and Israel; North America and Israel; the moderate Sunni Arab States and Israel. Wise and important actors around the world are beating a path to the prime minister's doorstep in Jerusalem (yes, in Jerusalem!) seeking opportunities to cooperate with Israel, not to isolate her.

They have come to accept a central strategic assertion made by Netanyahu: that Israel is an anchor of sanity and a source of ingenuity in an unruly world. They recognize that Israel should be judged on its central role in promoting regional stability, and its leadership in advancing globally-useful partnerships in the fields of education, democracy, hi-tech, bio-tech and cyber-tech, etc.

– rather than on failures in peacemaking with, alas, intransigent and radicalized Palestinian adversaries.

So, there is an Israeli grand strategy of sorts, and it has been largely successful. It involves caution, vigilance, patience, and looking over the horizon for new partnerships. It has led to what Col. (Res.) Dr. Eran Lerman of the Jerusalem Institute for Strategic Studies calls an *anno mirabilis*, a “year of wonders,” with a string of Israeli strategic and diplomatic achievements.

Unfortunately, some self-styled progressive activists and politicians prefer to ignore Israel's impressive achievements, and instead assert a narrative of Israeli blemish and blunder. They are fixated on Palestinian rights despite the objective problems, and on the rights of African infiltrators in Israel, on the rights of Bedouin in the Negev, on the rights of non-Orthodox Jewish religious denominations in Jerusalem and so on.

All of the above are serious issues that require respectable attention and responsible policymaking. But they have become “intersectional” causes, around which some people rally, lovingly and less-lovingly, to confront the Israeli government with the explicit threat that unless the government bends their way across the board, Israel will lose global support and become an “immoral” or “apartheid” state.

That is an unacceptable way to relate to Israel. It generally involves gross simplification and misrepresentation of the delicate issues at hand. It easily leads to special pleading on behalf of the Palestinian side including silence over Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, dismissal of Israeli rights and invoking “social justice” to cloak antisemitism. Sober and caring leaders should reject this approach and cheer up – because Israel is worthy and winning.

DAVID M. WEINBERG is Vice President of the Jerusalem Institute for Strategic Studies; the Institute published a version of this article.

Other Embassies Will Follow U.S. to Jerusalem

An *in*FOCUS Interview with Ambassador DANNY AYALON

Ambassador Danny Ayalon is an Israeli diplomat, columnist and politician. He served as Deputy Foreign Minister and a member of Israel's Knesset. He served as Israel's Ambassador to the United States from 2002 to 2006. He frequently writes in Israeli and international newspapers, notably in *The Jerusalem Post* and *The Wall Street Journal*. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Amb. Ayalon worked to expand Israel's social media diplomacy by helping the ministry maintain over 100 Facebook pages, including "Israel speaks Arabic." *in*FOCUS Editor Shoshana Bryen spoke with him recently.

***in*FOCUS: ISRAEL IS TURNING 70; IT'S ALSO 3,000 YEARS OLD. HOW DO YOU AS AN ISRAELI, PARTICULARLY ONE WHO REPRESENTED ISRAEL ABROAD, FEEL ABOUT PRESIDENT TRUMP'S DECISION TO RECOGNIZE JERUSALEM AS ISRAEL'S CAPITAL?**

Amb. Danny Ayalon: Israel is 3,000 years old as a nation, starting when King David established sovereignty over the land of Zion – Judea, Samaria, and of course Jerusalem. We are 4,000 years old as a people, starting when Abraham came to the land and started us as a people. Every inch of the land shows 4,000 years of rich Jewish culture, civilization, and presence. Israel was reestablished as a modern state 70 years ago. The terminology is very important in the age of political warfare that the Palestinians are waging against us.

We are very proud. We have a thriving, dynamic country in so many fields: agriculture, high tech, education, now even energy. Israel is very strong militarily and economically – and culturally as well. But there was always this travesty – that our historical, natural capital was not recognized by the other nations. We are the only country that is discriminated against in this area.

President Trump not only did the right thing, the moral thing, the politically correct thing, he made a very historic move. For that he will forever be

appreciated by the Jewish people.

I believe that following this, many other countries will join suit. We already know that Guatemala is going to put its embassy in Jerusalem on the same day, Israel's Independence Day. I hear also some other countries in Latin America, and hopefully the other continents will do the same. This is very, very significant. As the president said, it just recognizing the obvious. When people ask why President Trump moved the American embassy to Jerusalem, it's the wrong question. The question is why did it take so long?

iF: PRESIDENT TRUMP ALSO CUT FUNDS FROM THE U.S. CONTRIBUTION TO UNRWA. ESSENTIALLY, HE TOLD THE PALESTINIANS, "YOU HAVE TO MAKE CHANGES IN HOW YOU DO THINGS IN ORDER TO HAVE THIS MONEY." THAT'S NEW FOR THE UNITED STATES. WOULD YOU TALK ABOUT HOW NEGOTIATIONS - IF THERE ARE EVER GOING TO BE ANY WITH THE PALESTINIANS - COULD BE STRUCTURED; WHAT THE PALESTINIANS WOULD HAVE TO DO TO MAKE IT WORTH DOING; AND WHETHER OR NOT YOU THINK IT'S POSSIBLE TO TALK TO THEM AT ALL?

Amb. Ayalon: That's a very good question; especially given the very intractable Palestinian position. Not only of Hamas;

Hamas openly says that its goal is to destroy the Jewish state. The Palestinian Authority (PA) and its parent organization, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), do not say in so many words, but when you check and judge their actions in terms of glorifying terrorists, financing them, and encouraging them to kill Jews – and look at their school curriculum, where they teach their children that they must claim the entire land. Not just Judea and Samaria, but also the Negev and the Galilee and everywhere else – they are refusing to accept and recognize Israel as the Jewish State.

All these things, of course, are very, very troubling. They are not prepared for peace; basically, they're not even prepared to build their own state. More than they want to build their nation, they want to destroy ours. Of course, we will never let them do that. In terms of whether they are capable of running their own affairs in a responsible, accountable way, I'm not sure at all. If it wasn't for the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] presence in Judea and Samaria, I am not sure that the Palestinian Authority would even last one day. What happened in the Gaza Strip in 2006, 2007, after their elections? Hamas overpowered the Palestinian Authority in one day.

The same thing would happen in Judea-Samaria without our presence there. It is clear they are not ready. And running prematurely to set up some

kind of independent entity for the Palestinians would end up with the same terrorist state – prey to ISIS, al-Qaeda, and Hamas. And, of course, to Iranian influence as well. Then, it will become a launching pad. Not only against Israel, but also against all the other Arab countries. I'm not sure that there is much desire among the Arabs for a Palestinian state. Of course, the rhetoric is, for obvious reasons, different.

As for UNRWA, it is unique. All refugees – we're talking about millions of refugees in the world today – are all handled by one organization, UNHCR [the UN High Commission on Refugees].

But there is one organization, UNRWA, specifically dedicated to Palestinian refugees. This is part of the political war against Israel, the result of the automatic Arab majority in the UN, which really renders the organization a rubber stamp for the Palestinians. UNRWA, unfortunately, unlike UNHCR, does not help any refugees resettle. Quite the contrary. UNRWA has perpetuated refugee status through the generations – which is contrary to international law. According to international law, second generation displaced people who are born in a host country are to have all the civil and human rights, naturalization, and everything else that enables them to become a citizen of their new state.

iF: WHICH IS WHY ARABS WHO REMAINED INSIDE THE STATE OF ISRAEL ARE NOT REFUGEES; THEY'RE CITIZENS OF ISRAEL.

Amb. Ayalon: Absolutely. The outrage here is that we're talking about third and fourth generation "refugees." They're not refugees. When you talk about the "right of return," in reality, there is no right and there is no return. The refugees are kept in really inhumane or poverty-level conditions in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and others. The outrage is that even under the control of the Palestinian Authority in Judea and Samaria, or whether it's Gaza under Hamas, they



Ambassador Danny Ayalon

still keep them in refugee camps.

Palestinians keep those Palestinians in refugee camps, although they receive billions of dollars to rehabilitate them. It is obvious that they keep these poor refugees as pawns and use them to delegitimize Israel; to claim what's euphemistically called the "right of return." As I said, there is no right in terms of return. And it shows you again the irresponsibility of Palestinian leadership. In order to further their objective of destroying Israel, they're willing to subject their own people to that misery.

iF: YOU ARE A DIPLOMAT. YOU'VE WORKED TO ESTABLISH GOOD RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL'S NEIGHBORS. I WANT TO ASK YOU FIRST ABOUT TWO WITH WHOM YOU HAVE PEACE – EGYPT AND JORDAN – AND THEN ABOUT COUNTRIES THAT YOU WORK WITH WHERE YOU DON'T HAVE FORMAL RECOGNITION – SUCH AS SAUDI ARABIA AND OMAN. CAN YOU TALK TO ME ABOUT HOW ISRAEL OPERATES TODAY WITH JORDAN AND WITH EGYPT?

Amb. Ayalon: Yes. relations have never been better because of our mutual interest in security, in fending off terror attacks, which are designed to destabilize the sitting regimes in Cairo and in Amman – turning them into extreme ones, under the Muslim Brotherhood, which is, of course, the umbrella organization of Hamas. We work very well with the Jordanian and Egyptian governments. Also, these two countries now are getting Israeli natural gas. The gas arrangement has been in place with Jordan for quite some time. A few weeks ago, a major deal – \$16 billion – for energy supplies was signed between Israel and Egypt. Israel supplies Jordan with water also. Relationships are developing very, very well. Unfortunately, the population there still is still quite hostile to Israel because there is incitement in the media and in schools.

iF: DO YOU SEE ANY CHANCE THAT A COUNTRY LIKE SAUDI ARABIA WILL ULTIMATELY HAVE OPEN RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL? PEACEFUL RELATIONS?

Amb. Ayalon: Unfortunately, no. The Saudis are very mindful of what we call “the sentiment of the street.” This is what the Palestinians have been doing through the years; they very much control the sentiment of the Arab street through their incitement. Just as they tried to topple of the regime of King Hussein in 1970 and Lebanon in 1980,

Since the deal and lifting sanctions, Iran is much more bold and brazen. It has much more money and has opened relations with many more countries. This allows it to pour money into its illegal missile program and into terrorism throughout the Middle East and beyond. Iran has to be watched very carefully. Iran is a threat, first and foremost, to

very, very smart and, in a way, cautious. They would fight to the last terrorist, to the last Afghan, to the last Hamas terrorist. But they are very careful not to engage their own forces. They know that unlike perhaps most of the Arab countries in the region, Israel has the ability to defend itself by itself, and the repercussion for Iran from an open and direct confrontation with us would be devastating for them. My take is that they will continue to encroach, especially with proxies, but they will not do it themselves. If they make that mistake, they will leave us no choice but to defend ourselves.

UNRWA has perpetuated refugee status through the generations – which is contrary to international law.

they threaten any regime that would openly recognize Israel. I am afraid that the Persian Gulf countries and Saudi Arabia will be very careful before they move and bring this relationship into the open. But, the Middle East is changing as we speak. What was unimaginable five or ten years ago may be imaginable today. I do hope that the Saudis and other countries will realize that they can gain much more than they lose.

iF: YOU MENTIONED IRAN AS THE REASON THAT THE PERSIAN GULF COUNTRIES SEE ISRAEL AS PART OF THE SOLUTION, AND PART OF THEIR SECURITY. CAN YOU TALK ABOUT IRAN IN SYRIA?

Amb. Ayalon: First of all, Israel was right to draw its two red lines. One is against the Iranians allowing their proxies in Syria to establish their military outposts, and military bases, near Israel’s borders; and, of course, weapon and missile arsenals. The second is delivering to Hamas weapons that we will not tolerate, including longer-range missiles with much more accuracy and heavier payloads than they have now. Iran, contrary to what we were told by all the supporters of the Iran [nuclear] deal in 2015, did not become more tame or responsible, or more open to the international community. Quite the opposite.

its neighbors, the Gulf countries. Iran wants to become the leader in the Middle East of all the Arab countries and, of course, to control the Gulf oil. Second, it is a threat to us. The mullahs have said openly that they would like Judaism to be destroyed.

And they have not given up their nuclear ambition. The Iran deal contains a sunset clause – which means that eight years from today the Iranians are no longer obligated by the agreement. This is something that has to be corrected. The other thing that has to be corrected and interjected into a new deal is that they will not be allowed to continue ballistic missile testing.

iF: IF YOU’RE IRAN, YOU’RE HAPPY TODAY BECAUSE YOU HAVE BURGEOING TRADE WITH THE EUROPEANS, AND MONEY, AND ALL THE REST. BUT IF YOU’RE IRAN, WHEN YOU LOOK AT ISRAEL AND RED LINES IN SYRIA, DO YOU BELIEVE ISRAEL? OR DO YOU THINK YOU’RE SAFE?

Amb. Ayalon: If I were them, I would believe Israel without question.

They’re coming closer, very close, to our borders, to our airspace. You know how we responded to the intrusion into our airspace. We will continue to do that in a very effective way. Iran, you know, is

iF: RUSSIA SEEMS TO HAVE A PRETTY GOOD SENSE ALSO OF ISRAEL’S RED LINES IN SYRIA AND SEEMS TO AGREE WITH THEM GENERALLY. CAN YOU TALK ABOUT ISRAEL’S RELATIONSHIP WITH RUSSIA, WHICH SEEMS TO BE MUCH STRONGER NOW THAN IT USED TO BE?

Amb. Ayalon: Absolutely. I think Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu deserves all the credit. The relationship he has developed with [Russian President Vladimir] Putin is very instrumental; Putin understands our red lines. Also, from a geopolitical point of view, Russia and Iran’s interest diverge when it comes to post-civil war Syria. Certainly, Russia would not want to see Syria fall prey to Iranian influence entirely. Russia has too much to lose, and too many investments. In that respect, I don’t think it should be too surprising that they acknowledge our interest there, and that they look the other way when we do what we need to do in Syria.

iF: I WAS RECENTLY ON THE TRUTH ABOUT ISRAEL WEBSITE – WHERE YOU FIGURE PROMINENTLY. I WATCHED THE VIDEOS AND THEY’RE REALLY WONDERFUL. CAN YOU TALK ABOUT WAYS, BOTH THROUGH THAT WEBSITE AND OTHER WAYS, THAT YOU CAN REACH PEOPLE SO THEY UNDERSTAND THE FUNDA-



Tel Aviv's famous beachfront.

MENTAL TRUTHS ABOUT ISRAEL? ARE THESE VIDEOS WELL SEEN? ARE THERE OTHER THINGS ISRAEL NEEDS TO BE DOING?

Amb. Ayalon: I'm very proud of The Truth About Israel (www.TheTruthAboutIsrael.org) because the videos have been seen by millions and millions of people. I didn't realize how fast they move. Today, most people get most of their information through social media. In that respect, it's very important to have not only a presence, but to level the playing field for information dominance. A while ago, the Palestinians, with their collaborators, controlled the social media. Now we give them a good fight.

My objective is that anyone who Googles the words Israel or Jewish State or Palestine, arrives at our website. The more shares, the more likes, the higher our website will go. People will get ours, not a Palestinian website. So, if I can ask your readers – the more they share and ask their friends to share with others

– the better we become at countering the lies of the Palestinians, keeping the record straight, and basically telling the truth about Israel and the Jewish people. The more we do that, the closer we are to winning the political war.

Thetruthaboutisrael.org. Go there. Look at different sections. There is the truth about Jerusalem; the truth about apartheid; the truth about refugees; the truth about the West Bank; the truth about settlements; the truth about the UN and many, many other core issues.

Israel and its friends have to be present on American college campuses and in the classic media, but that was actually the driving force to begin using social media. I realized that I would never have the resources to be present on 4,000 campuses. So, I thought, why not reach students on their keyboards? Or on their iPhones and iPads? Before even they get into the campuses. It has been very successful.

iF: AT THE SAME TIME, I KNOW THAT YOU ARE PRESENT ON A LOT OF CAM-

PUSES, AND IN A LOT OF PLACES, SPEAKING ABOUT ISRAEL. WHAT ARE THE TWO OR THREE QUESTIONS THAT ARE MOST OFTEN ASKED OF YOU? FIRST, BY JEWISH AUDIENCES. WHAT DO THEY WANT TO KNOW? SECONDLY, WHAT ARE THE QUESTIONS MOST OFTEN ASKED BY NON-JEWS?

Amb. Ayalon: Non-Jews ask, "Why don't you free Palestine?" Here I have to bring up BDS [the boycott, disinvestment, sanctions movement]. Unfortunately, many, many, I think misguided Jews joined BDS thinking it was a way to influence and change Israel's policies on settlements or whatever. This is not the aim of the BDS movement. It was formed by Omar Barghouti, a Palestinian activist. The aim is not to change Israeli policy, but to destroy Israel. The battle cry of BDS is "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free."

When I'm asked by non-Jews, "Why don't you free Palestine?" I answer, "What do you mean? Was there ever a

Palestinian state?” “Of course,” they say. Then I ask them, “If you think there was a Palestinian state in history, can you name a Palestinian king, or president, or ruler? Or any Palestinian leader before the age of television, or 1967?” Of course, they cannot.

Very basic facts are not known. Of course, not only are they not known, they are being manipulated and erased by the Palestinians. By university faculty, also. There’s a lot of very bad history in American universities.

From Jewish audiences, the question is more in the field of human rights. Are we not infringing on Palestinians’ human rights with roadblocks and taking their land, and all that? Here, of course, the answer is really very simple. There wouldn’t even be one check point or roadblock had it not been for Palestinian terrorism. We can show, in a scientific way, that every time we remove a roadblock, there is terror in that place.

I’m asked a lot about the security fence. Some call it, of course, the “apartheid wall.” This is again Palestinian propaganda. I tell them, “This extra defense was put there only after our presence there for 40 years. We put it there as a response to the suicide bombings. And it works.” The fact is that since we have the fence, we keep most of the terrorists out. Again, we have very, very good answers to all the questions.

iF: MAYBE THE BEST WAY TO LEARN ABOUT ISRAEL IS TO GO TO ISRAEL. I UNDERSTAND THAT THERE IS, FIRST OF ALL, INCREASED TOURISM IN GENERAL IN ISRAEL THIS YEAR OVER LAST YEAR. BUT ALSO, A GREAT MANY MORE TOURISTS COMING FROM PLACES LIKE CHINA. WHAT DOES THAT DO FOR ISRAEL’S RELATIONSHIP WITH CHINA?

Amb. Ayalon: It is a great asset – for Israel, and for the relationship with any country, including China. Anyone who visits Israel, certainly for the first time, finds it an emotional experience.

The Chinese have very deep respect for Jews, and the Jewish culture. Theirs is an ancient and cultured civilization just like ours, so, they respect us very much for our Nobel prizes and other achieve-

We know what happened to our people in 2,000 years of exile, when we were not home. This is not unique to us. Any people that does not have the capability to defend itself – whether it’s the Syrian

...what people should know is that we will defend ourselves by ourselves...

ments. We have many, many delegations from China, from Korea, from Japan that are looking for economic cooperation with Israel.

iF: WHAT’S THE BEST THING A TOURIST CAN DO IN ISRAEL?

Amb. Ayalon: Tel Aviv was selected by *Vogue* magazine as one of three most fun cities in the world. When people come to Tel Aviv and they can enjoy culture, and music, and the beautiful beaches. By the way, *National Geographic* magazine also selected the beaches of Israel and Tel Aviv among the 10 best in the world. You can come to Israel for culture, for food, for recreation. But also, very important, you come for a spiritual experience; especially in Jerusalem.

iF: THE BEACH FIRST – SPOKEN LIKE A TEL AVIVIAN. AS WE COME TO ISRAEL’S 70TH BIRTHDAY, WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING THAT YOU WANT AMERICANS TO UNDERSTAND ABOUT ISRAEL? ABOUT YOUR LIFE, YOUR POLITICS, ALL THE WONDERFUL THINGS THAT ISRAEL IS? WHAT DO YOU WANT US TO KNOW?

Amb. Ayalon: What’s important to understand is that Israel, with all its great achievements, still faces an existential threat. And what people should know is that we will defend ourselves by ourselves; nobody will do the job for us.

people, or in Rwanda, or Bosnia – those people are afraid of aggression and there is no remedy or help from the “international community.” The international community is very hypocritical, it is cynical, it is ineffective. If it gets there at all, it is too little too late.

This is the most important thing; defense. That we have a home now, back in our homeland.

Second, the fact that Israel is vibrant and thriving is an asset for Jews all over the world. I don’t think any Jewish community, anywhere in the world, would be able to live as securely now without the State of Israel. This has to be understood. All of us, whether we are Jews who live in Israel, or Jews who live anywhere else, we all have a stake in a very vibrant, and successful, and secure Israel.

But finally, we are vulnerable on the political front. Palestinians understand that they cannot win militarily. Thank God. They know that they cannot win through economic pressure; they tried and failed. So, they’re trying politically to isolate Israel and render it a pariah state. That’s a danger. Here, I believe, every friend of Israel everywhere can be an ambassador for the truth; an ambassador for Israel.

iF: THAT’S A GREAT ANSWER. THANK YOU FOR YOUR YOUR INSIGHTS, ON BEHALF OF THE JEWISH POLICY CENTER AND THE READERS OF inFOCUS MAGAZINE.

Israel and the U.S: Partners in Science

by **ALBERT H. TEICH**

Cornell University ranks 13th on the list of top research universities in the United States. Its research expenditures in 2016 were nearly \$1 billion, more than such research powerhouses as MIT, Yale, Columbia, and the University of California's flagship campus, Berkeley. Its distinguished faculty and alumni have received 47 Nobel Prizes. It probably wouldn't surprise many people, therefore, to know that Cornell and a partner institution were the successful bidders in a worldwide competition sponsored by the City of New York to build and operate a new high-tech university campus in New York. What might surprise some, however, is that Cornell's partner in this unique collaborative enterprise is not another U.S. institution, but the Technion, the Israel Institute of Technology.

Why the Technion? Though younger and smaller, the Israeli institution has a worldwide reputation for innovation and entrepreneurship, and the dozens of successful enterprises it has spawned are among the key reasons that Israel has become known as the "startup nation." According to *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, "Cornell Tech aims to be a different kind of higher-education institution, infused with some of the Technion's DNA, even as officials in Israel and in New York acknowledge that a lot of the Technion's culture . . . is intimately tied to its role in Israel's early Zionist past and in its current high-tech boom."

Cornell Tech, as it is known, dedicated its campus on Roosevelt Island in the East River between Manhattan and Queens in September 2017. It currently enrolls about 300 students and 30 faculty members. Heavily focused on technology

and business, it offers a Tech MBA as well as master's degrees in computer science, electrical and computer engineering, operations research and information engineering; a Master of Laws in law, technology and entrepreneurship; and Technion-Cornell dual master's degrees in "connective media" and health tech. It also offers Cornell Ph.D. programs and a novel project called the "Runway Startup Postdoc Program" that offers academic and business mentorship plus substantial financial support to help recent Ph.D.s launch high tech startups.

Although the presence of a top Israeli university in Manhattan is unique, collaboration among Israeli and American scientists and engineers is not. Neither is it new, nor is it limited to high tech. Indeed, joint U.S.-Israeli efforts in fundamental research have yielded groundbreaking results and have received world-wide recognition, including at least one Nobel Prize. Much of this research develops out of human re-

genetic background of the Jewish people. They began to work together, traveling around Israel and Southern Europe in order to recruit individuals from populations of Jews not well-represented in the United States, each supplementing the other's knowledge and techniques. Their work, which has been published in prestigious scientific journals such as the *American Journal of Human Genetics*, is contributing to a multi-institution project that is creating a genetic map of Jewish diasporas and comparing it to other Middle Eastern populations.

Their research is helping to understand the genetic basis of disorders like breast cancer in the Jewish population. And the collaborative aspect is an essential element. In Professor Friedman's words, "Having a partner who shares your goal and understands every aspect of a project of this magnitude is crucial for its success."

Support for Friedman and Ostrer's research was provided by the U.S.-Israel Binational Science Foundation (BSF), an

...joint U.S.-Israeli efforts in fundamental research
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lationships that draw together researchers both professionally and personally.

One such relationship began when Professor Eitan Friedman, founder of the oncogenetics unit at Sheba Medical Center in Israel and Professor Harry Ostrer, then of New York University School of Medicine, now at Yeshiva University, discovered their common interest in the

organization created under a historic 1972 agreement between the two nations that has been supporting collaborative research between scientists from the two nations for the past 46 years. When it was founded, the Israeli science community was clearly the junior partner. Today, although the U.S. science community retains global leadership, Israeli science in many fields is also

world class. Israeli scientists are widely sought as collaborators, and the relationship between the two nations is seen by all involved as mutually beneficial.

BSF-sponsored U.S.-Israeli collaboration reached the pinnacle of scientific achievement in 2004, when the Nobel Prize for Chemistry was awarded to Professors Avram Hershko and Aaron Ciechanover of the Technion, and Professor Irwin Rose of the University of California, Irvine, for their joint discovery of the ubiquitin system of protein degradation, which regulates the breakdown of proteins governing almost all major functions of the cell. Their discovery, a major advance in fundamental life science research, also led to an important application: the development of a new anti-cancer drug known as bortezomib (marketed in the U.S. under the tradename Velcade), an injection-based treatment for multiple myeloma, a cancer of the bone marrow that affects more than 15,000 Americans each year. The collaboration that produced this result was supported for 15 years by a series of BSF grants.

BSF supports fundamental research in more than a dozen fields of basic and applied research, from behavioral genetics to oceanography to materials science. Most BSF grants are funded by income from an endowment created by the U.S. and Israeli governments when the BSF was created in 1972 and augmented once in 1984.

Facing rising costs of research and a more or less fixed income, BSF worked with the U.S. National Science Foundation to develop a creative approach that is generating funding from outside of BSF's core program. In 2012, the two organizations signed an umbrella memorandum of understanding for joint funding of collaborative research projects. Under this umbrella, they have agreed upon specific programs in 18 areas ranging from computational neuroscience to geology. Proposals are written jointly by United States and Israeli scientists. They are reviewed and evaluated in the U.S. as a single project along with regular NSF proposals. If accepted for funding the

U.S. component is funded by NSF, while the Israeli component is funded by BSF, using special funds it receives from the Israeli government, independent of the BSF endowment. In general, the success rate of the joint proposals has been higher than that of other NSF proposals, suggesting the added value of collaboration.

In 1979, seven years after BSF was established, the two partner nations expanded the range of their support of scientific collaboration with the creation of BARD, the U.S.-Israel Binational Agricultural Research and Development Fund. Most of BARD's projects focus on increasing agricultural productivity, especially in hot and dry climates, such as that of Israel and comparable areas of the United States.

the U.S. and Israeli governments. BIRD, the Binational Industrial Research and Development Foundation, created in 1977, supports cooperation in the private sector, involving Israeli and U.S. companies, startups as well as established firms. Its model is one of risk-sharing: BIRD funds 50 percent of each company's R&D costs under conditional grants, up to a total of \$1 million. It does not take equity positions in the firms it supports, but instead requires repayment of its grant if the projects produce commercial revenues. BIRD supports 20 projects annually and reports that "the cumulative sales of products developed through BIRD projects have exceeded \$10 billion."

In one recent BIRD-sponsored col-

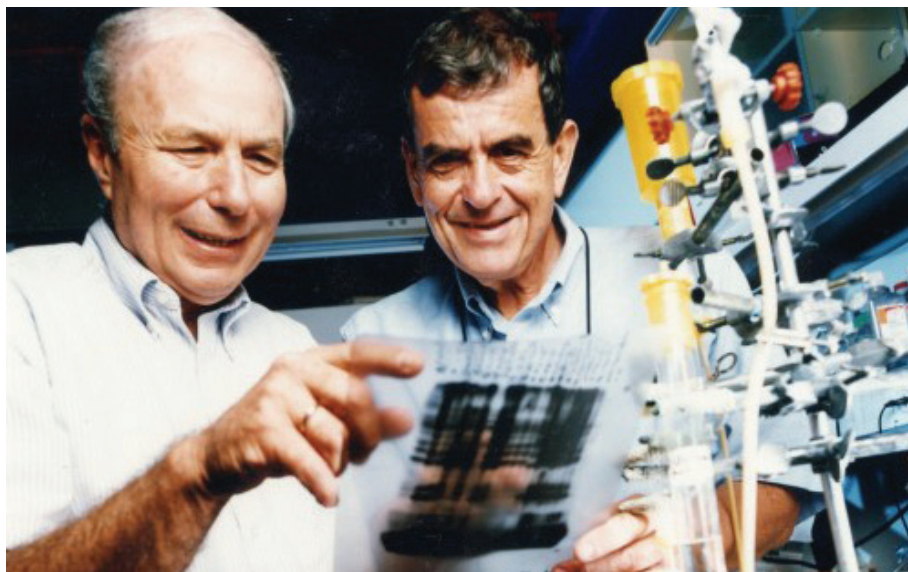
...reactions to [hostility to Israel] have led some American scientists to develop their own local initiatives to counter the BDS image of Israel...

In one collaborative effort funded by BARD, researchers at the Volcani Agricultural Institute in Beit Dagan, working with colleagues at the University of Georgia, have developed an aerodynamic/electrostatic method to deliver fine particles of either chemical or biological materials such as pesticides with exceptional precision and efficiency. BARD reported that the equipment developed under this project has been patented and is being marketed internationally by the University of Georgia. Other BARD projects include breeding heat tolerant varieties of wheat (a joint effort of Texas Tech University and the Volcani Institute), biological control of soil-borne pathogens (Hebrew University and Cornell University) and increasing the resilience of local agricultural water supplies through wastewater reuse (a collaboration of BARD, the U.S. National Institute of Food and Agriculture, and the University of California at Riverside).

A rather different model of collaboration is employed by the third of the trio of binational foundations sponsored by

laboration, Voiceitt (Technologies of Voice Interface, Ltd.), an Israeli startup, is partnering with SCJ Associates, an electronics manufacturing service in Rochester, N.Y., to develop an innovative speech recognition application that translates the non-standard speech patterns of people with speech disabilities into clear speech in real time. The technology, which has won several awards, received a \$900,000 conditional grant from BIRD. According to BIRD's announcement "Voiceitt will provide the voice technology software and SCJ Associates will be responsible for the design and manufacture of the wearable hardware for future commercialization." The BIRD grant recognized not just the commercial potential, but also the prospective social impact of the technology.

All three binationals originated through agreements between the U.S. and Israeli governments in the 1970s, long before the current political environment on many U.S. campuses spawned hostility to Israel and before the BDS (boycott, divestment, sanctions) movement. In recent



Professors Avram Hershko and Aaron Ciechanover at the Technion.

years, reactions to that hostility have led some American scientists to develop their own local initiatives to counter the BDS image of Israel by showing Israel in a positive light through scientific collaborations. In 2016, a small group of faculty members at the University of California at Davis began their own program to promote collaboration among scientists on their campus and colleagues in Israel. The Vice Chancellor for Research at Davis agreed to match the funds they were able to raise, and with that financial base they created a tax-exempt “California Israel Fund,” issued a call for proposals, and set up peer review processes at Davis and in Israel.

Thirty-eight groups, each involving U.S. and Israeli scientists, submitted proposals; eight either have been or will be funded. The organizers expect that some of these (and perhaps some that were not funded) will go on to win support from other sources, such as BSF and BARD. And, as word gets out, the Davis model may well be emulated by entrepreneurial Israel-oriented scientists on other campuses.

Institutional support as well as strong faculty and student interest is behind collaboration at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. MIT has collaborative educational programs with nearly two dozen countries through a program it calls MISTI – MIT International Science

and Technology Initiatives. Prominent among these is the MIT-Israel Program. Although much of this program is student-focused and matches undergraduate and graduate students with internship and teaching opportunities across Israel, the program also includes “Israel Seed Funds,” which support new collaborations between MIT faculty and research scientists and their Israeli counterparts. Within the Seed Funds there is a dedicated program connecting MIT and Ben Gurion University. The Seed Funds provide awards of up to \$30,000, primarily for travel of teams, including students, from the respective countries.

Projects supported by the MIT-Israel Program cover a remarkably wide range of topics. Winners of the most recent (2017-18) competition included MIT Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering Admir Masic, a former Bosnian refugee, and Elisabetta Boaretto, a nuclear physicist and head of the Weizmann Institute’s Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory. Their project is mining ancient Roman construction technologies for insights that can inform future building techniques. In the 2015-16 competition, MIT mechanical engineering professors Gareth McKinley and George Barbastathis teamed up with Professor Ibrahim Abdulhalim, electro-optical engineer at Ben Gurion University, on a project to develop “smart windows”

using nanocomposite liquid crystals that can be switched instantly from transparent to translucent.

Private philanthropy is also playing a significant role in collaboration. The Zuckerman STEM Leadership Program, announced with much fanfare in January 2016, is investing \$100 million over 20 years in U.S.-Israel science and technology collaboration. In announcing the program, billionaire publisher and real estate mogul Mortimer Zuckerman stated, “At a time when collaboration is essential to advanced scientific research, this program gives the next generations of leading American and Israeli academics the ability to work together on cutting edge research in ways that stand to benefit their fields for years to come.” The program is providing funding for outstanding American researchers to do postdoctoral work at several Israeli universities; supplementary support for Israeli postdocs at American universities; and funding to Israeli universities to help them compete for the top talent in the global marketplace. Seven top Israeli institutions are participating in the program.

Science is an intrinsically international activity and has been for centuries. The Internet, the declining cost of air travel, and the growing use of English as the international language of science have made international collaboration far easier and less costly than in the past. Recent studies have shown that there is a direct correlation between international collaboration and increased productivity in science. The mobility of both Israeli and American scientists and the cultural ties between the two nations continue to grow. The personal and institutional connections that are being built today seem certain to yield dividends for both societies far into the future.

ALBERT H. TEICH, *Ph.D.*, is a Research Professor of Science, Technology and International Affairs at George Washington University and a former member of the Board of Governors of the U.S.-Israel Binational Science Foundation.

Ethiopian Aliyah: An Identity-Building Journey

by **PNINA AGENYAHU**

During preparations for Israel's much-anticipated 70th birthday celebration, it was natural to look back with pride on the relatively young country's various success stories. When it comes to my own chapter in the decades-long story of Israel's Ethiopian Jewish immigration, absorption, and assimilation, I am flooded with the myriad thoughts and emotions that continue to indelibly shape my identity.

I departed Ethiopia at age 3 in November 1984, with my mother literally carrying me on her back for a walk of 14 days and 15 nights until we reached Israel. At the time, from 1984-1985, Operation Moses facilitated the aliyah of 6,364 Jews from refugee camps in Sudan via intermediate countries by foot, plane, and boat. In 1977, Ethiopia's Marxist dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam banned

substantial importance associated with the dignity of one's elders and with other authority figures.

■ *Questions of Identity*

My transition to Israel was challenging not necessarily because I needed to learn a new language and adjust to Israeli culture, but due to the sharp transition between the values of Ethiopia's simple world to the Jewish State's emphasis on the power of the individual. This was not taught at immigrant absorption centers. Nobody explicitly spelled out the gap that exists between the older and younger generations. As someone who immigrated to Israel at such a young age, I did not vividly remember Ethiopia, but the values of my past life were constantly present in my parents' home. Like many other immigrants, I was forced to address the gap between what was expect-

of my life also accentuated my differences. For instance, everyone had books at home, while I needed to borrow books from the public library (a 30-minute walk from my home) or from school.

■ *History of Ethiopian Aliyah*

While I was grappling with this personal transformation and with finding my place in Israeli society, thousands of my peers were either on a parallel journey or arriving anew. During the decade that followed Mengistu's rise to power in 1977, Ethiopian immigration to Israel was clandestine, and was managed by the Israeli government along with the Jewish Agency. Suffering persecution at the hands of Ethiopia's Marxist regime for holding Jewish educational and Zionist activities, many Jewish villagers became refugees.

The first wave of refugees, including my family, traveled all the way to Israel by foot with virtually no aid. Understanding the intense need, the Mossad intelligence agency, the Israel Defense Forces, and the Jewish Agency teamed to establish more effective procedures and improved conditions for Ethiopian aliyah. The IDF and Mossad began to bring Ethiopian Jews to safety in Israel, and the Jewish Agency welcomed and absorbed the refugees, housing them in youth villages and special sites established for this purpose.

Following Operation Moses from 1984-1985, a total of 15,000 Ethiopian Jews moved closer to Addis Ababa – the center for aliyah activities in Ethiopia – between 1988 and 1991. In May 1991, 14,000 Ethiopian Jews arrived in Israel

The first wave of refugees, including my family, traveled all the way to Israel by foot with virtually no aid.

Jewish immigration to Israel, necessitating efforts like Operation Moses that are known as “aliyah of rescue.”

Life in Ethiopia was very simple for my family. We grew up in a small, modest village. There was no significance attached to higher education or individual success. Life revolved around the community and the family unit, especially child-rearing. Each individual knew his or her place and function in the world and did not dispute it. There was

ed of me at home and what was waiting for me on the outside.

How did I ultimately acclimate to life in Israel? I constantly asked myself questions of identity, belonging, and self-determination—and gradually attained the answers. As a child, I wanted to understand: How could I be like everyone else? Why am I different? In school and around my neighborhood, I was the only girl of Ethiopian origin and the only black person. Small details



Ethiopian-born Israeli model and winner of Miss Israel 2013, Yityish “Titi” Aynaw visits the National Press Club in Washington. (Photo: Albert Teich)

aboard IDF, El Al, and Ethiopian Airlines aircraft as part of Operation Solomon. From 1992-1997, the Israeli government and the Jewish Agency assisted Ethiopian Jews from the Qwara Province to reach the Jewish State.

The story of mass Ethiopian aliyah appeared to close in 2013 when the Jewish Agency sponsored what had been considered its final group flight from Ethiopia and closed its Gondar center. But in November 2015, the Israeli government announced its intention to bring a new wave of up to 9,000 Ethiopians to the Jewish State by 2020. Immediately, the Jewish Agency put into place the infrastructure needed to conduct pre-aliyah services in Gondar and comprehensive absorption services in Israel. In October 2016, a group of 63 new immigrants from Ethiopia arrived in Israel and were reunited with their families.

■ **Coming Full Circle**

As an Ethiopian immigrant who now works for the Jewish Agency, the organization that helped make my community’s aliyah dreams into a reality, I have also

come full circle. Thirty-four years after my immigration—about half of the State of Israel’s history—I believe that Ethiopian olim [immigrants to Israel] have managed to bridge the gap between our generation and that of our parents. Moving forward, our children will experience the same generational challenge.

Thirty-four years ago, I was a 3-year-old girl who crossed a country with a young mother for weeks and survived in a refugee camp in Sudan under disgraceful conditions for months. Now, I am a mother myself, to children who benefit from a quality education and will not lack any food at their table. Yet questions on being a refugee continue to arise for me due to the current controversy on Israel’s policy toward African migrants and asylum-seekers. I am frustrated when my non-Ethiopian friends ask me whether I support or oppose expulsion of illegal migrants, because it is not a simple question that can be answered in an instant.

My heart aches for refugees and their plight. It is not lost on me that I, too, was once in their situation. Ethiopian immigrants like myself were once

refugees in a foreign country, and we survived. But it was not an accident. We survived because of the kindness, generosity, and proactivity of the people, and organizations who helped us.

■ **Absorption Lifeline**

Since the early 1950s, the Jewish Agency has assisted more than 90,000 Ethiopians with their aliyah—preparing the future Israelis with several months of education in Hebrew, Judaism, and Israeli culture; arranging for their immigration visas; and paying for their transportation to Israel.

Our organization also provides the immigrants’ first home in Israel: up to two years of simple, but comfortable accommodations in one of the 10 Absorption Centers for Ethiopians that are operated by the Jewish Agency. The centers are dedicated to the specific cultural needs of Ethiopian immigrants. Additionally, four Jewish Agency absorption centers for *olim* (immigrants) from around the world including from Ethiopia. In 2017, Jewish Agency absorption centers served a total of 3,800 Ethiopian immigrants.

Jewish Agency programming for Ethiopian *olim* touches all facets of their lives.

When immigrants leave their temporary accommodations in absorption centers for their own private housing, the Jewish Agency gifts them the brand-new kitchen appliances and furniture that they used in the center, so that they will have basic furnishings in their new homes.

Meanwhile, “Yesodot: Educational Services for Children of Ethiopian Immigrants” provides formal and informal educational programs for Ethiopian children and young adults who live in absorption centers, helping new immigrants from preschool through 12th grade close educational gaps they confront when acculturating to Israeli schools. In 2017, Yesodot programs reached 1,200 youths.

Yesodot’s services include: preparation for first grade via tutoring provided by experienced teachers; “Water Wings,” a formal after-school program that reinforces Hebrew, math, and English skills among children ages 6-14; educational summer camps for children ages 4-18 including field trips and other enrichment activities; a bar/bat mitzvah program that engages pre-adolescents in Jewish studies; “My First Library,” which

facilitates Hebrew literacy for Ethiopian children and their parents by encouraging reading in Hebrew through story-time events and book distribution; “My Toy Box,” which offers guided, cross-cultural activities for Ethiopian children and their parents that encourage time spent together as a family; a transitions course for Ethiopian men and women that builds cultural understanding and adaptation skills to help families thrive in their new culture; health and men-

society will ultimately emerge. The Jewish Agency is doing its part to ensure a better life for olim in need at every step of the journey, from immigration to absorption to assimilation.

It is heartwarming to me that so many young Ethiopian Israelis identify with the reality of today’s African refugees. Even the generation born with the freedoms enjoyed in the Jewish State remembers and understands that their parents were once refugees.

In Israeli society, it is precisely from each ethnic community’s differences that a more harmonious society will ultimately emerge.

tal health services such as dental care, emotional care for children, and care for children with AIDS or other special needs; and vocational training programs that prepare Ethiopian immigrants for Israel’s work culture.

■ **Appreciating privilege**

There is always room for greater integration of immigrant populations such as Ethiopian olim. In Israeli society, it is precisely from each ethnic community’s differences that a more harmonious

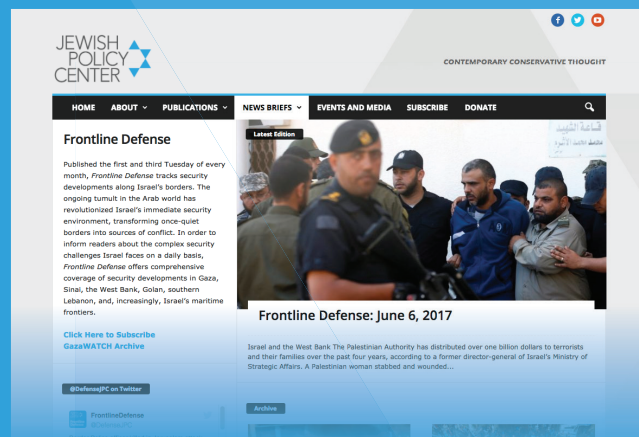
As a former refugee myself, I continue to appreciate the rights and privileges which I have as a citizen of Israel. The challenges that I experienced in order to reach this point have made me the woman who I am today.

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Israeli College Connects Globally; Institute Trains Future Leaders

by **ERIC ROZENMAN**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was well-received on his trip to sub-Saharan Africa two years ago. One reason, Dr. Joseph Shevel believes, was the work of the school he leads, the Galilee International Management Institute, also known as the College of the Galilee.

GIMI is not is not a traditional college. The institute draws its students from senior officials and experts in foreign countries—mostly African at present but including European and Asian lands as well. In 2017, approximately 1,300 trainees arrived for intensive, two-week programs in more than 20 fields from agricultural, environment and water; transport and maritime studies; economic development; to strategic studies (including national security).

Although the majority of trainees came from Africa, 360 hailed from China, another 100 from Latin America. Depending on the course, instruction may be in English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Chinese, Arabic or Russian.

When Netanyahu made his 2016 African visit, two GIMI graduates were serving in the cabinet of the new Ugandan government. Another became Ghana's minister of education. A fourth, a rear admiral, worked as policy director at naval headquarters in Nigeria.

This past January, Shevel said most African countries had at least one institute graduate serving in a cabinet post. In addition, one is a state governor in India, others hold senior positions in Caribbean and Eastern European lands.

GIMI's president, who served as a captain in the Israel Defense Forces, had been teaching economics at Haifa University when he approached school

faculty members and administrators with a proposal to start management training there. Finding a “cool” reception, he decided to launch such an institute himself.

That was in 1987. Shevel and a university colleague, who served the fledgling institute as chancellor, obtained an old agricultural school at Nahalal, not far from Haifa. A young kibbutznik named Moshe Dayan had studied there long before.

The institute was associated with the foreign ministry, Shevel says, “but not now. That makes us less restricted, easier to work.” But the ministry is aware of GIMI's projects.

Today the college has a staff of approximately 70, mostly in administration and management. “The faculty is from all over Israel,” Shevel says, with “400 or more on the roster, experts in their fields,” and a core of 30 to 40 when

Enrollees in general “learn Israeli management techniques,” the college president says. In defense and security, for example, this is “not how to shoot and bomb,” but rather how to “establish national and regional defense networks” like one that links several East African nations, each committing troops to a ready reaction force with an established headquarters.

Shevel explains that GIMI “trains foreign students to be able to go home and teach others.” It periodically sends Israeli specialists to check that local instruction by its graduates stays on track.

He says that the Sahara Desert and semi-arid sub-Saharan Sahel “is moving south with global warming.” This affects, among other places, Nigeria's Kano state, with 10 million people. The “second wave” for big refugee migration headed to Europe, after those fleeing wars in Syria and elsewhere, might be displaced farmers.

This past January, Shevel said most African countries had at least one institute graduate serving in a cabinet post.

teaching at the institute. The annual budget totals approximately \$5 million.

Many of the courses are of two-week duration. Students occasionally come as individuals, but most arrive from their home countries in groups of 10, 20 or more. Those who master the concentrated work receive certificates, not diplomas. But for an offering like a doctorate in business administration, instruction spans three years and includes three short stays at the college itself.

Noting countries like Germany have to divert funds from foreign aid, for example, to refugee expenses, Shevel believes there's a better solution. Israeli agricultural methods, including irrigation and water-recycling know-how and arid area farming techniques could give sub-Saharan farmers the possibility of staying in familiar places rather than becoming migrants.

“When the president of the Peoples' Republic of China was in Israel, the



deputy foreign minister visited” the College of the Galilee and signed an agreement, now in effect, for 200 Chinese citizens to be trained there in agricultural fields over five years. “That’s the model,” Shevel notes, “not sending one specialist” for a period to another country.

GIMI’s students, from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Tanzania, the Philippines, Romania and other countries in addition to those mentioned above, have included Muslims. Many programs have enrolled Palestinian Arab students, and the college partnered with al-Quds University when Sari Nuseibeh, recently retired, was president. Shevel and Nuseibeh became friends, sometimes traveling together to appear at conferences.

But even in education, joint efforts sometimes encounter obstacles. A few years ago, one Palestinian student at GIMI happened to be the PA’s governor in Jenin. A terrorist shot at his home. The man “was unhurt, but died soon of a heart attack,” Shevel recalled.

Working with South Africa has been “difficult,” he acknowledged.

The ruling African National Congress Party, when it fought the previous white minority apartheid government,

accepted support from the Palestine Liberation Organization. During that struggle and even after transition to black majority rule, many in the ANC have subscribed to a far-left distortion of “universality.” This places the PLO and other anti-democratic, even terrorist movements on the side of “liberation”

government’s Development Assistance Program ultimately failed. From 1951 to 1973, in 31 non-Arab African countries, that program trained thousands in agriculture, health care, economics and other fields, according to *Myths and Facts: A Concise Record of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*. Then, threatened by Arab oil pro-

Israeli agricultural methods ... and arid area farming techniques could give sub-Saharan farmers the possibility of staying in familiar places rather than becoming migrants

and equality while indicting democratic Israel as a Jewish state with an imagined supremacist particularism.

However, Shevel noted that GIMI has been able to work in South Africa’s Cape Town province when the Liberal Party, not the ANC, has been in power. He would like to be able to find \$3 million to \$4 million to bring 200 South African students to the college over the next five years.

So far, the College of the Galilee seems to have succeeded where the Israeli

ducing countries with supply cuts and intimidated by Arab terrorist groups, the African nations severed ties with Israel.

Shevel assumes GIMI’s work would be able to better survive such external shocks. In any case, when he looks at his students and graduates today and asks, “who knows where they will be” decades from now? he has an answer to his own question: “Future national leaders.”

ERIC ROZENMAN is a communications consultant for the Jewish Policy Center.

The News Media and the Arab-Israeli Conflict Today

by SEAN DURNS

In his 1985 book *Double Vision: How The Press Distorts America's Views of the Middle East*, the American-born Israeli writer Ze'ev Chafets catalogued the ills that plagued U.S. news media coverage of the Middle East in general, and Israel in particular. Chafets, who had served as the director of Israel's Government Press Office, noted that "the choices that have shaped the American press's approach to the Middle East in recent years have been influenced by a complex mixture of inexperience, parochialism, radical chic, economic self-interest, U.S. government manipulation, and the strong-arm news-management techniques of the Arab world."

More than three decades since Chafets' book first appeared, Western media coverage of Israel has increasingly come under fire from writers, analysts and organizations that charge the Fourth Estate with an ingrained bias against the Jewish state. And indeed, there is much that the press gets wrong about Israel. In key ways, the media fails to provide readers with a full and accurate depiction of the country.

The principle problem is narrative. Like all people, journalists are not immune from having their own preconceived notions warp their analysis. As Matti Friedman, a former Associated Press reporter, noted in a Nov. 30, 2014 *Atlantic Monthly* article about media bias and the Middle East, "the news tells us less about Israel than about the people writing the news." He's right. It also tells us a lot about how the news gets reported.

As both Chafets and Friedman have observed, Israel is the victim of an obsessive media focus. The country of eight

million receives a disproportionate level of coverage thanks, in no small part, to the safety and freedom that it provides the press in an increasingly unsafe region—and world – that is filled with governments and groups who menace – and sometimes murder – reporters. As Friedman noted in an Aug. 26, 2014 *Tablet Magazine* article, the AP alone had "significantly more" correspondents covering Israel than it had in "China, Russia, or India, or in all of the 50 countries of sub-Saharan Africa combined," and higher than the total number of employees in all the countries in which the so-called "Arab Spring" erupted. This fixation has a distorting effect that is complicated by

as opposed to a catalogue of facts. The very idea that facts matter has been under constant assault in the conflict itself. For example, when asked if there was ever a Jewish Temple on Judaism's most holy site, the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, Ahmad Tibbi, an Arab-Israeli Knesset member, balked. There are but Jewish and Arab narratives, he said, and he was only subscribing to the Arab narrative, which—unlike Muslim religious authorities in Jerusalem in the 1920s—claims no Jewish Temple had ever existed.

Western media indulges the Palestinian narrative. For example, a Nov. 30, 2016 *Washington Post* article about a new museum on Yasser Arafat in the West

[There is] a pronounced tendency by the press to present the Arab-Israeli conflict as a battle of narratives, as opposed to a catalogue of facts.

a narrative that is widely embraced by many in the press.

Israel, the thinking goes, is an obstinate nation that exaggerates—and even creates—many of the threats that menace it. Israel could have peace if only it wanted to. By contrast, the Palestinian Arabs are seen as a native people oppressed by a Jewish colonial entity. Accordingly, Palestinian acts of terrorism are excused—even celebrated by some—as "resistance." This line of thinking—what Chafets called "radical chic" in the 1980s—is not new. But acceptance of it has grown.

This has contributed to a pronounced tendency by the press to present the Arab-Israeli conflict as a battle of narratives,

Bank (Judea and Samaria) described the Palestinian leader as a "revolutionary and guerilla leader...a diplomat and peacemaker."

The Post presented the longtime head of the Fatah movement and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in romantic terms; uncritically repeating the presentation of him as a "liberation" fighter turned peacemaker whose "new path earned him a share of the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize" for signing the Oslo accords.

But Arafat never reformed. Neither he, nor the entities that he led before his 2004 death, ever changed their long-term objective: Ending the Jewish nation of Israel. He spent the months and

years after Oslo's September 1993 White House lawn signing ceremony repudiating Oslo's terms, rejecting U.S. and Israeli offers for peace and statehood and supporting terror attacks.

Arafat remained a terrorist until his final days. And the institutions that he left behind also failed to reform. Yet, media accounts are insistent on portraying Palestinian leaders and organizations as something that they are not. *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *USA Today* and

a waste of time and vain endeavors." At the beginning of 2017, Hamas found itself increasingly isolated and financially strained—in part due to pressure from the Egyptian government, which under President Abdel Fattah al-Sissi has been at war with the Brotherhood—and chose to reword its charter as part of attempting rapprochement with Cairo. Although Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal told a Gaza audience "we still are in open war" with Israel and "Hamas is not chang-

By fixating on Jewish West Bank settlements instead of Palestinian leaders, the media is able to engage in false equivalency; pretending that Jews building houses is on par with Palestinian Arabs murdering Israelis.

Indeed, the Western press devotes an inordinate amount of coverage to Jewish homes being built in Judea and Samaria, but nonetheless fails to fully detail or accurately report the matter. *The Washington Post* is representative. In 2017, for example, the paper ran no less than two-dozen reports relating to settlements. This is a curious fixation considering that a March 31, 2017 *Post* dispatch was headlined "Israel set to approve first new settlement in 20 years." Yet, a reading of coverage from *The Post's* Jerusalem bureau could mislead readers into thinking otherwise, conveying the false impression that settlements are expanding, as the newspaper has reported, at a "rapid rate."

However, most of the population growth is the result of natural increase and not from new arrivals—a fact omitted in most media coverage. Similarly, most of the construction that has occurred has been in blocs that Israel is expected to keep in any future agreement. *The Washington Post's* editorial board, citing a research project by David Makovsky of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy that mapped settlements electronically, noted in a September 17, 2017 commentary:

"Of the some 600,000 settlers who live outside Israel's internationally recognized borders, just 94,000 are outside the border-like barrier that Israel built through the West Bank a decade ago. Just 20,000 of those moved in since 2009, when [Israeli Prime Minister] Netanyahu returned to office; in a sea of 2.9 million Palestinians, they are hardly overwhelming. Last year, 43 percent of the settler population growth was in just two towns that sit astride the Israeli border – and that Abbas himself has proposed for Israeli annexation."

However, in a January 30, 2018 report entitled "The road to an

By constantly using the terminology of "moderate" vs. "hardline" Palestinian leaders, many news outlets engage in false distinctions...

others, routinely describe the PLO, Fatah, the PA and their hierarchy as "moderate" or "peace partners." Yet, these entities support and praise terrorist attacks.

The desire to fashion Western-style political moderates out of anti-Semitic autocrats is so pronounced that even after PA President Mahmoud Abbas exhorted on August 24, 2017 that he would "continue to pay" terrorists killed, wounded or captured in anti-Israeli attacks "until my last day"—the Palestinian leader and his authority were still painted as peace partners in numerous subsequent editorials and commentaries. And when Abbas said that Jews are "really excellent in faking and counterfeiting history"—denying Jewish history and Israeli claims in the land of Israel—at a Dec. 13, 2017 summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, outlets like *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times* and others failed to cover his remarks—or ran a selectively-edited Associated Press dispatch that omitted his anti-semitism.

News treatment of Hamas, the U.S.-designated terror group that rules the Gaza Strip, provides another glaring example. A Muslim Brotherhood-derivative, its charter proclaims: "There is no solution for the Palestinian question except through Jihad. Initiatives, proposals and international conferences are all

ing its skin," outlets like *The Independent*, *The Guardian*, *Ha'aretz* and others nonetheless filed reports suggesting that Hamas might accept a Jewish state.

By constantly using the terminology of "moderate" vs. "hardline" Palestinian leaders, many news outlets engage in false distinctions, substituting their hopes for careful, accurate reporting. A quick look at official Palestinian media—including via easily accessible English-language translations provided by Palestinian Media Watch (PMW) or the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)—would show a society and culture in which anti-Semitic violence is enshrined. That many major news outlets fail to use these sources—or indeed, often fail to cite Palestinian media at all—is itself an indictment. As Chafets noted in *Double Vision*, what Arab leaders tell reporters in English is often quite different from what they tell their domestic audiences in Arabic. The problem then, is not new, but in an age in which translations for non-Arabic speaking reporters are abundant, it's both less excusable and illustrative of the media's bias and laziness.

Another common media narrative is the idea that settlements—not Palestinian rejectionism and violence—are at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Israeli-Palestinian peace deal is vanishing,” *The Washington Post’s* columnist David Ignatius claimed, “settlements may be the hardest problem on negotiators’ agendas.” This cognitive dissonance is readily apparent in *The Post*, whose editorials on settlements have, on a number of occasions, contradicted the paper’s own Jerusalem bureau.

The fixation on Jewish homes comes at a price paid in news space and reader understanding.

Many outlets routinely fail to profile Palestinian leaders and decisions they make. The PA has rejected U.S. and Israeli offers for peace in exchange for statehood in 2000 at Camp David, 2001 at Taba and 2008 after the Annapolis conference, among other occasions. However, despite numerous reports in 2017 about the state of the “peace process”—some with headlines like *The Washington Post’s* “The last gasp of the two-state solution”—many major newspapers failed to inform readers about this pertinent history. Indeed, shortly after President Donald Trump’s Dec. 6, 2017 announcement that he would be implementing the 1995 Jerusalem Embassy Act and moving the U.S. embassy to Judaism’s historic center and Israel’s capital, the press was awash in commentaries and reports saying that the move would hurt peace talks because Palestinian leaders wanted “East Jerusalem for the capital of a future state.” Yet, the dispatches omitted that the Palestinian side was offered—and refused without submitting a counteroffer—precisely that by then-Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in 2008. By repeatedly omitting relevant information, the media leaves itself open to charges that it is more interested in propagating narratives instead of reporting facts.

Palestinian politics similarly go underreported. For example, in February 2017 Fatah announced the appointment of Mahmoud al-Aloul, an unrepentant and convicted terrorist, to be the as deputy to the octogenarian Abbas. The appointment of a terrorist nicknamed Abu

Jihad to be next in line to lead a nominal U.S. ally and aid beneficiary should be newsworthy. But more than a year later, not a single major U.S. news outlet has noted his ascension. By contrast, Israeli politicians are routinely profiled.

The reason for ignoring Palestinian internal developments is simple: Doing otherwise would refute the narrative of helpless Palestinian Arabs at the mercy of an imposing Israel. Instead, many media outlets prefer to use Palestinian fig-

The reason for ignoring Palestinian internal developments is simple: Doing otherwise would refute the narrative of helpless Palestinian Arabs...

ures as props for their anti-Israel ledes.

But the media is changing. And one can expect coverage of the Arab-Israeli conflict to change as well. Legacy media has less and less influence. In a dramatic departure from when Chafets’ book first appeared, the narrative is no longer theirs alone to shape.

As reporter David Patrikarakos highlighted in his 2016 book, *War in 140 Characters*, social media is reshaping not only conflict in the 21st century, but also how news gets reported and disseminated. As Chafets detailed, authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and elsewhere were previously adept at shaping stories, either through intimidating journalists or controlling access to areas, participants and sources that might be of interest. Although these regimes, and non-state actors like Hamas or the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), have shown themselves to be efficient at using social media to push their narratives and propaganda, the narrative is no longer solely theirs to control.

Much of the news about the 2016-2017 protests in Iran, for instance, has come from social media users posting against regime wishes. And both the PA and Hamas, to name but two examples, have been sufficiently concerned that they’ve arrested Palestinian Arabs for

criticism posted on social networks.

The rise of so-called citizen journalism presents similar challenges; verification is more difficult, agendas can be more difficult to trace, and the possibility for spreading misinformation and disinformation is vastly greater. Although major outlets, like *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, remain the chief news aggregators, their influence is steadily eroding under more nimble competition.

The decline of advertising-based

print media and with it, budget cutbacks that have shuttered foreign bureaus and public editor positions, also has changed today’s media landscape dramatically. Without public editor positions, outlets lack a direct address for accountability. Without foreign bureaus, outlets are more reliant on local reporters and wire services—for better and for worse. These developments are particularly problematic in a Web-connected environment in which the competition to “break a story” is fiercer, and errors and disinformation more easily shared.

This presents both Israel and others concerned with fair and accurate media coverage of the Middle East with both opportunities and difficulties.

Coverage of the Middle East in general, and the Arab-Israeli conflict in particular, is, rapidly changing and more chaotic. Whether these changes will result in a move away from the Palestinian narrative-based reporting that has been regrettably embraced by the legacy media, or whether they’ll reinforce it, changing the conflict into the “virtual warfare” discussed in Patrikarakos’ book, remains to be seen.

SEAN DURNS is a Senior Research Analyst at the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA).

A Prism on the Diversity of the Israel Defense Forces

by Maj. Gen. GADI SHAMNI, IDF (Ret.)

Editor's Note: The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) not only defends the borders and people of Israel, it helps integrate newcomers into Israeli society and provides resources to diverse communities. inFOCUS editor Shoshana Bryen spoke with Maj. Gen. Gadi Shamni, IDF (Ret.) former Commander of Israel's Central Command and Defense Attaché in Washington, about the role of the IDF in today's Israeli society.

Shoshana Bryen: Considering Israel's population growth in recent decades, does the IDF still play a role as the leading institution in Israel to create a sense of national unity?

Maj. Gen. Gadi Shamni: Israel is constantly growing - and the force will also continue to grow. The IDF is always examining the best ways to utilize this human resource, the human quality that is in them. The goal is to get the maximum out of the potential of Israeli youth by directing them into military and national service; missions that reflect our - and their - understanding of the importance of the IDF and the service to the State of Israel as the superior social value.

Bryen: Do you have more young people than you can take into the military?

Shamni: I don't think we have too many. Fitting the people to the mission is more comfortable when you have a lot of candidates. It is great for the IDF now - in the past few years new units were established in the IDF and there are new needs in technology, intelligence, a lot of things. I don't think we will reach a point where there are too many young people. And if there's no need in the

military service, there is a mission in civilian service.

Bryen: All Israeli officers come from the ranks of the drafted men and women. Do you ever think about the military academies or officer training separate from the drafting process?

Shamni: We have talked about it but concluded that the right way for us is the way we do it. We bring people up from the ranks and then later in their careers we make similar investment to what is done in U.S. in military academies. We do it when they are lieutenants. Before that, when they are platoon leaders, they have mainly practical missions; they don't really need to start on big strategic issues.

Bryen: After the initial adjustment, the American military is very happy that we ended the draft and created a strictly professional military with no conscription.

Shamni: There's always a debate about

social role at the national level; the integration of different people, immigrants from different societies and cultures, into one Israeli culture. It is a practical issue.

Bryen: You formed among the first Haredi [ultra-religious] units of the IDF. How did the IDF integrate Haredim from Israel into the military?

Shamni: The first Haredi soldiers came into the IDF in 1999. When I came to it, it was under the Central Command. We had a battalion of soldiers, but the battalion was very small. The companies were not full. The soldiers suffered from a lack of legitimacy when they went back to their homes and their neighborhoods and their society.

We decided to boost the understanding that it was essential for Israeli society to have them in service, not only militarily but socially - because the percentage of Haredi people and religious people is on the rise in Israeli society. The idea that those people would not be part of the most

...we created a unique service model for [Haredi youth], which means that not only will they serve in the IDF, but they will also get a civilian, general education that they didn't get in the Yeshiva...

that. Our conclusion, after years of dealing with this issue at the tenured command level, is that Israeli society still needs the qualities and the commitment of Israeli youth in the IDF, which is still considered to be the melting pot of Israeli society. It is also true that the IDF has additional roles, not only the military role. The IDF has a

important national effort in the State of Israel was an important concern.

First, we decided to change the battalion to a full-scale battalion with four companies. We decided to invest money to keep at least a percentage of people for long-duration service, which means that they become professional soldiers. And

there was a need for that. When they came into the battalion, into the military, they saw something they really liked. They understood that they were defending their country, their homes, their family. They were totally dedicated. Many of them wanted to stay as professionals.

In addition, we created a unique service model for them, which means that not only will they serve in the IDF, but they will also get a civilian, general education that they didn't get in the Yeshiva [religious school] in order to better integrate later into Israeli society. This is much more expensive for the IDF, but I think that you can't measure the importance of the mission by counting chickens.

Bryen: When the Haredi soldiers leave the IDF, do they work in the civilian non-religious sector?

Shamni: To be honest, I don't have a survey that follows them after they leave the military. But I'm sure that they see the world differently after two years of service and the studies that they go through.

Bryen: How did you convince the rabbis to move people from what they do traditionally to do something else?

Shamni: It wasn't easy. I reached out to the chief rabbis in Israel and they supported it explicitly. And what I heard from the rabbis in the schools was that those who are the best Talmud [religious studies] students, who really took their studies seriously, would remain and study. But there are many who were not really studying hard – those should contribute to the State of Israel. So, that's how it started – by picking up those who were not best suited to being in the Yeshiva, who didn't like what they were doing. We gave them something else.

Bryen: We read here that there's an increase in Christian Arab men joining the IDF. How do you deal with Arab citizens?

Shamni: It's not easy. There aren't many



Two Israeli soldiers of Ethiopian heritage participate in a unit commander's course in 2006. (Photo: Flickr/IDF)

Arabs – let's say Muslims – in the IDF. The largest minority serving is the Druze. There are 3,500 Druze in the IDF, excellent soldiers. The rate of conscription from Druze society is the highest in Israel, if I'm not mistaken. Everyone goes to the military. The number of Arab Christians is smaller: About 200 Arab Christians serve in the IDF; about 1,300 Bedouins and Muslims; about 100 Circassians.

These are not big numbers. The Druze are all over, in all our best units: pilots, navy SEALs, everything. The rest of the minorities are more complicated. But they do serve, we encourage them to volunteer. The Bedouins see it as a place to work, a career. There are differences between the Bedouins who live in the northern part of Israel and the southern part. The IDF makes an effort to bring them in. They also get special models of service with education, professional education, support after they are released such as housing, and other things to encourage them to serve.

I think, and this is something that I don't have numbers on, but, more and more Arabs are joining the national civilian service in their communities. That's the leadership in a shift right now. They say, "Okay, we will serve." They have a problem with us calling it "national service" because it's the nation of Israel. It's politics, it's pure politics. If you talk to the youngsters, they speak differently. But

the older people, the politicians, are very problematic. They hold them back and the trend now is to volunteer to the national service in their own communities.

Bryen: That makes sense.

Shamni: It makes sense as a first step, but no doubt in the future it will have to change – you're not only supposed to support your own community. If you enjoy the benefits of the national service, you should serve the nation. And the nation should tell you where to serve. You are not supposed to choose. You should go wherever the nation wants you to go.

Bryen: How have the Ethiopian soldiers done over time?

Shamni: Ethiopian soldiers are getting better and better. The number, for example, of drop-outs among Ethiopian women was about 13 percent dropped out of service in 2014. Not from particular units, but from the IDF as a whole. In 2016 it was 7.5 percent. For Ethiopian men, in 2014 there was 24.4 percent dropout rate. In 2016, 14.8 percent.

And it is still moving in the right direction. If you take, for example, the percentage of Ethiopian soldiers who go to officer's school, it was 15 percent in 2014; in 2016 it is 24 percent.

They're moving up in the IDF, as

they move up in Israeli society. That's a good way to show that the IDF is the crucial phase in integrating into Israeli society. That's where you learn the "Israeli" language – not Hebrew.

Bryen: "Israeli" is much different than Hebrew. Can you talk about any special consideration that you give to soldiers that are gay or lesbian?

Shamni: We just treat them normally. If you need to give somebody special treatment, it means you don't see them as a normal soldier; and that's not the way we feel. We think that they can and they do contribute a lot. And at the end of the day, that's what you are looking for. To contribute, to serve, to be a good friend to your friends, to be devoted, to be committed. And if you do, you're like everybody else.

Bryen: But there are other people who are not like everybody else. There are people who have physical disabilities, or autism, or other emotional disabilities. And some of those people also would like to serve in the IDF. What do you do with them?

Shamni: The policy of the IDF is that everyone who wants to join the IDF can join – as long as he is not risking his own health, or his surroundings. So, if you have disabilities and you want to join, you can join. If you risk your health by joining, you can't join. If you risk the health or safety of others you cannot join. But otherwise, yes. And there is one more condition: you have to be independent. If you need somebody to always escort you and support you, that's usually not accepted.

Bryen: What does Israel do with kids that either fail high school, have drug problems, other issues, but still they want to join the IDF?

Shamni: The IDF doesn't check grades from high school at all, only the number of years you studied; ten years, eleven years, twelve years. And the influence of this is not crucial when defining the qualities in

order to weigh different levels of quality. We don't want to see how much you succeeded in the past; we want to evaluate your potential for the future.

Bryen: Are there still areas of the IDF that are off limits for women?

Shamni: There are a few things. Like... actually you know, we have women in tanks, infantry unit, air force, the artillery corps, intelligence, all over. I can't think of one. We don't have Navy Seals. I think that most of the tracks are open for women.

Bryen: I'm coming to the end of my questions, and here is what I've learned. We've looked at separate elements inside Israel: Haredim, Muslims, Ethiopians, gay and lesbian Israelis, women, and people with different abilities. What I hear you saying is that it is the job of the IDF to accommodate different people, different levels,

different skills, different backgrounds. You take different people from different places with different skills, and you make soldiers out of them. You make everybody feel that they're necessary to the project.

Shamni: Yes. The military is a reflection of Israeli society and you have to take into consideration that people are different. There is a lot of investment in that regard. We have to keep studying the characteristics of each new generation in order to call out and utilize the best qualities of our young men and women.

At the same time, the so-called old slogans area still relevant in Israel. "Defending your country, defending the home land, fighting for your family." The contribution to the security of the state is something that is really clear to young people before they come. The majority (there are exceptions) come to the IDF

with a very, very high levels of motivation. The challenge is to keep their motivation. When they see the real world, sometimes things look different, you know?

It's not what they saw in the movies or in the papers or video games. Sometimes life is grayer, and military life is often boring and routine, and there is a lot of what appears unnecessary that soldiers have to do. But we have to keep up their motivation and keep good soldiers with us through officer schools and beyond. There are a lot of challenges.

Bryen: Last question. How good is the IDF?

Shamni: The IDF is an excellent military. First and most important is that the IDF can take the best of everyone in our society and implement their quality wherever they're needed. So, the sky is the limit.

Second, Israelis are very advanced technologically. We use that in the IDF

The Druze are all over, in all our best units: pilots, navy SEALs, everything.

and the military is very flexible. The soldiers are young, which is an advantage and disadvantage. Advantage because they have a lot of energy and they are willing to do things older people might not. They do it. They're determined. On the other hand, it might be dangerous, so you have to balance it.

The U.S. military has a great military. But I think we are more flexible – that's the advantage of being small; our threats and challenges are relatively known. We know where our battlefields are. Not like in the American case.

And we don't deploy overseas, thank God; we don't need to. We defend the state of Israel, and that's enough.

Bryen: I think that's all you can ask is that they be best at their mission. On behalf of our members and readers, Gen. Shamni, thank you.

An Author with a Mission

review by SHOSHANA BRYEN

Simon Sebag-Montefiore brings impeccable credentials to the monumental task of writing *Jerusalem: The Biography*. A history Ph.D. from Cambridge, he has been a banker and a foreign correspondent reporting on, among other events, the fall of the Soviet Union. He is also the great-great-nephew of Sir Moses Montefiore, the international financier who was an extraordinary philanthropist, promoting education, industry, business and health services to Jewish communities in the Levant, including in Ottoman Palestine.

Lineage isn't determinative, however; mission is. Sebag-Montefiore states his. "If this book has any mission, I passionately hope that it might encourage each side to recognize and respect the ancient heritage of the Other (sic)." Any mission other than honesty in the telling of the tale is suspect.

It is also worrisome that the admission of mission doesn't appear until the Epilogue – where perhaps it was meant as an afterthought – but it isn't, it is fundamental. I put it here so you can enjoy the huge, gory, often-repulsive, but fascinating story of the Holy City with the knowledge that this biography serves an interest. Oddly, the mission posits only two sides, while he writes cogently and fluidly (blood being the most prevalent fluid) about so many sides that you need a spread sheet.

Sebag-Montefiore breaks the book into chapters based on sequential occupiers, noting that "It is only by chronological narrative that one avoids the temptation to see the past through the obsessions of the present." Meaning, no doubt, the obsessions of Israelis/Jews and Palestinians – his "each side" and "the Other." He doesn't seem to care much what Romans, Middle Eastern

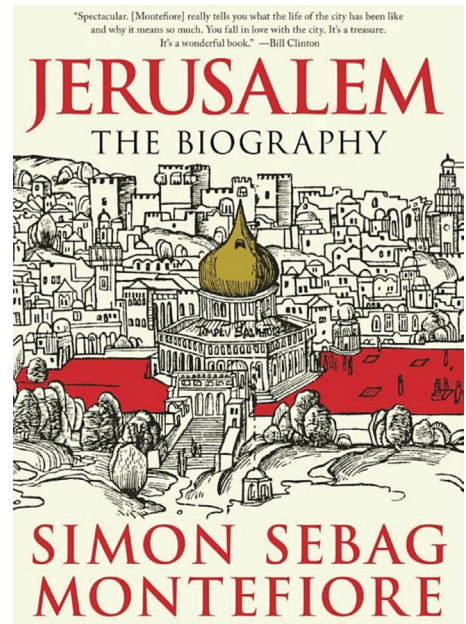
Christians, Muslim conquerors, Crusaders, Mamelukes, Ottomans, Europeans (including Napoleon and the Kaiser), Albanians, or Russians think, although he draws compelling and sometimes humorous portraits of all of them.

At the end, Sebag-Montefiore is honest. Across 548 pages of text, the Jewish side of the equation never denies the Christian or Muslim heritage of Jerusalem. The "Others" not only denied the Jews the right to worship or live in the city or live at all, they denied one another. Each conqueror claimed sole occupancy – sometimes permitting others to live or pray in the city, but only as a magnanimous gesture, never by right.

The book thematically splits into those who want to live in Jerusalem and those who want to own it. The first would be the Jews, who are rarely seen between pages 135 and 391, except as parts of piles of corpses – there are a lot of piles of corpses. The second would be everyone but the Jews – a series of mainly-religious armies wanting the holy spaces for themselves – and wanting them without interference by other mainly-religious armies. The point was to have it. And to throw others out.

Suleiman the Magnificent, for example: "His achievements in Jerusalem were so successful that the Old City today belongs more to him than anyone else." Roxelana (his wife) "liked to endow charitable foundations close to her husband's projects; she commandeered a Mamluk palace to establish her foundation... that included a mosque, bakery, fifty-five room hostel and soup-kitchen for the poor. Thus, they made this, the Temple Mount and Jerusalem, their own."

They did not; they just occupied it for a time, pushing "the Other" out of the way temporarily. "In Jerusalem where



Jerusalem: The Biography
Simon Sebag Montefiore

Weidenfeld & Nicolson
2011

Suleiman promoted the superiority of Islam and diminished the status of the other two religions with a meticulous care that still guides the city now.... The Jews, on the other hand, mattered little."

It is written so prettily that one might forget he's writing about the removal of Jews from their holiest space.

In an effort to be even-handed late in the game, Sebag-Montefiore notes that in the 1980s, "raised hopes...were dashed by the intransigence of both sides, the killing of civilians, and the expansion of Jewish settlements in Jerusalem and the West Bank. In 1981, the assassination of Sadat, punishment for his flight to Jerusalem by fundamentalist was an early sign of a new power."



Not for the first time are houses built by Jews where other people don't want those houses equated with assassination, terror, and torture. In this way, the Arab and then Palestinian desire for a Judenrein Judea and Samaria has the same legitimacy as the Jewish desire to live in the ancient Jewish spaces.

On the other hand, he acknowledges what so many won't. "All the suburbs of Jerusalem outside the walls were new settlements built between 1860 and 1948 by Arabs as well as Jews and Europeans. The Arab areas, such as Sheikh Jarrah, are no older than the Jewish ones, and no more, or less, legitimate."

The other big split in the book is on the question of "Palestinian nationalism." Although the back cover calls Jerusalem "the capital of two peoples," there is no indication anywhere inside that the Arabs – or anyone else – considered Palestine a separate governmental entity or Jerusalem belonging to anything other than the occupier of the time. In a footnote (really, it deserved more prominence!) Sebag-Montefiore writes:

The powerful Vali (governor) of the Vilayet (Province) of Damascus usually ruled Jerusalem... At other times, Jerusalem was controlled by the Vali of Sidon who ruled from Acre. Jerusalem was a small district, a Sanjak

under a Sanjak Bey or Mutasallim. Yet Jerusalem's status changed repeatedly over the next centuries, sometimes becoming an independent district. Ottoman governors ruled with the aid of the qadi (a city judge appointed in Istanbul) and the mufti (the leader appointed by the Grand Mufti of the empire, the Sheikkh al-Islam in Istanbul, who wrote fatwa judgements on religious questions) drawn from Jerusalem's Families. The Pashas of Damascus and Sidon were rivals who sometimes fought mini-wars for control of Palestine.

What is Palestine here? He notes that in 1757, "A Bedouin sheikh... carved out a northern fiefdom, which he ruled from Acre – the only time, except for short lived rebellions, when a native Palestinian Arab ruled an extended part of Palestine." Aside from the fact that Bedouins often do not consider themselves Palestinians, it was a tribal holding and Jerusalem was not the capital.

At the cusp of the 20th century, the positions of Jewish leadership and Arab leadership are clear:

Herzl dreamed that "if Jerusalem is ever ours, I'd clear up everything not sacred, tear down the filthy rat-holes," preserving the Old City as a

heritage site like Lourdes or Mecca. "I'd build an airy comfortable properly sewered, brand new city around the Holy Places." Herzl later decided that Jerusalem should be shared: "We shall extraterritorialize Jerusalem so that it will be long to nobody and everybody, its Holy Places the joint possession of all Believers."

At exactly that moment, Yusulf Khalidi of the prominent Jerusalem Arab family, told the Chief Rabbi of France, his friend:

"God knows, historically it is indeed your country" but "the brute force of reality" was that "Palestine is now an integral part of the Ottoman Empire and, what is more serious, it is inhabited by other than Israelites."

"While the letter predates the idea of a Palestinian nation... (he saw) the necessity to deny the Jewish claim to Zion, he foresaw that Jewish return, ancient and legitimate as it was, would clash with the ancient and legitimate presence of the Arabs."

Khalidi was not talking about a Palestinian state, but an Arab requirement that Arabs, not Jews, rule.

Later:

Ben Gurion believed, like most of his fellow Zionists at this time, that a socialist Jewish state would be created without violence and without dominating or displacing the Palestinian Arabs; rather it would exist alongside

reunited the city, the capital of Israel, never to part it again. To our Arab neighbours, Israel extends the hand of peace and to all peoples of all faiths, we guarantee full freedom to worship. We've not come to conquer the holy places but to live with others

■ **The Epilogue**

The book ends in 1967 with the unification of Jerusalem, but the Epilogue carries on. And in that short space, the difference between unified Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel and most of what came before emerges gracefully:

It is now one hour before dawn on a day in Jerusalem. The Dome of the Rock is open: Muslims are praying. The Wall is always open: the Jews are praying. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is open: the Christians are praying in several languages. The sun is rising over Jerusalem, its rays making the light of the Herodian stones of the Wall almost snowy – just as Josephus described them two thousand years ago – and then catching the glorious gold of the Dome of the Rock that glints back at the sun. The divine esplanade where Heaven and Earth meet, where God meets man is still in a realm beyond human cartography.

SHOSHANA BRYEN is the editor of inFOCUS and the Senior Director of the Jewish Policy Center.

...Jews...are rarely seen between pages 135 and 391, except as parts of piles of corpses – there are a lot of piles of corpses.

them. He was sure the Jewish and Arab working classes would cooperate... it did not occur to the Zionists that most of these Arabs had no wish for the benefits of their settlement.”

In the later he makes the points:

- Post-1967, “is certainly the first time Jews have been able to worship freely there since AD 70.”
- “The PLO banned Palestinian historians from admitting there had even been a Jewish Temple in Jerusalem – and this order came from Arafat himself.”
- He mentions Moshe Dayan’s post-unification note in the Western Wall and continues with his message: “We’ve

in harmony.” This is followed by a description of Dayan at al-Aqsa where, “sitting in his socks with the sheikh of the Haram and the ulema, he explained that Jerusalem now belonged to Israel but the Waqf would control the temple Mount.”

Sebag-Montefiore, then, failed in his mission. At no time in this bloody carnival of odd, colorful, and violent personages and momentous events can the reader find “each side” recognizing and respecting the ancient heritage of “the Other.” On the other hand, he’s written a fascinating biography of a city that likely will never be peaceably shared except under the sovereignty of the one side that isn’t exclusionary – the Jews.

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■ *A Final Thought ...*

UNRWA: Perpetuating the Conflict

UNRWA is a huge impediment to actionable understanding in the Arab world – and particularly among Palestinians – that Israel is a legitimate and permanent part of the Middle East. Making Israel real to people who delude themselves on that point is key to honest negotiations about the future of a Palestinian state.

In 1947-49, a lot of people believed the Arab states would erase the nascent State of Israel. In 1950, 711,000 Arabs registered with UNRWA, the newly created UN organization designed to imprison them until that happened, even if it took forever. They didn't say that. UNRWA's mission, however, is to take care of them and their children until their "status is resolved."

Arabs tried to "resolve" Palestinian status by destroying Israel. But, international Arab wars in 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, 1982; terror wars (so-called intifadas) in 1987-1993 and 2000-04; and rocket wars in 2006, 2009, and 2014 have left Israel not only standing, but economically strong, militarily strong, and with increased trade, political, and foreign aid programs around the world. Even tourism set a record in 2017. Israel isn't going anywhere and it is lunacy for a UN agency to perpetuate the fraud that 1947 will come again.

UNRWA may not believe great-grandchildren of the

original refugees will one day claim apartments in Tel Aviv, but as one of the largest UN agencies, it has an interest in self-perpetuation – which means keeping refugees destitute and lying about the "right of return" ever occurring.

Rather than trying to unwind a 67-year-old agency, the Trump administration's policies can render it moot.

First, transfer the U.S. contribution and control of the refugees to the UN High Commission on Refugees [UNHCR] – which has the mission of resettling people in countries that will have them. It doesn't have to be done all at once, but it will have the effect over time of caring for the original refugees and organizing their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren for productive citizenship.

Second, to underpin the importance of the change, stop granting "refugee" status to the descendants of the original refugees – no other population is permitted to hand down both status and stipends that way. (Material claims are something else.) Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza are in the putative State of Palestine – they are Palestinians, not refugees, not now, not ever.

And with fair and clever management, future generations of Palestinians won't be either.

– Shoshana Bryen
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