

*Harold W. Wisberg*

TWO FACED HATE

Two extremes of anti-Semitism and Israel-bashing are face to face in the December 6 papers, sophisticated, pretend<sup>ly</sup> informed and authoritative and subtle in Rpy Meachum's <sup>column</sup> article and grossly inaccurate in Louis E. Willhauk's flight into LaLa Land.

In the on-going and apparently never-ending Meachumite rewriting of current history he actually blames the Islamic hostage-taking on Israel by the sinister device of inventing the beginning of this hostage-taking alleg<sup>e</sup>ly by Israel in 1970.

Always the victim of prejudice and ignorance he protests that his "license [sic] to do international commentary" was "lifted" for five years because of his version, ~~As~~ he now puts it:

"The first story about hostage-taking that crossed my desk ... had to do with nine Lebanese ~~sold~~ soldiers taken (hostage) by the Israelis, who objected to the movement of Palestinians (sic) from out of Jordan and onto their northern borders."

In all his innumerable columns that, like this one, amount to propoganda, he has yet to inform his readers that as of 1970 and with the single exception of Egypt, as of today, the entire ~~w~~ Muslim world persists in staying in a state of war with Israel, part of its first unhidden and recently ~~scarely~~ hidden determination to wipe the State of Israel out, a determination unchanged in the charter of the PLO.

While "movement of Palestinians" is d~~e~~signed to suggest in peace, perhaps women and children too, in fact it was terrorists and they had to cross Syria to get to Lebanon. For years they inflicted ~~consl~~ <sup>in my</sup> considerable casualties on Israeli citizens across the Lebanese border, not infrequently when their murder squads crossed it and then returned to Lebanese sanctuary.

Note that while with a state of war insisted upon by Lebanon it makes little difference in the ~~leg~~ legality of taking prisoners, not "hostages," our local ~~Caliph~~ <sup>C</sup> is careful not to assure his readers that they were ~~got~~ aken prisoner inside Israel or not themselves caught in inflicting or attempting to inflict harm on innocent Israelis going about their normal lives.

Lebanon was responsible for permitting its territory to be used for warlike purposes ~~as it knew~~, and for the consequences of it.

He ~~continues~~ <sup>ea</sup> his false pretense ~~pretends~~ that as of this day there are no such murderous incursions from Lebanon, as there have been, ~~despite his previous~~ <sup>he refers to</sup> reference to the "so-called security zone" in southern Lebanon, over which he expresses his "disgust."

Lebanon abounds in terrorist bases and the papers carry the reports when in retaliation against terrorist acts Israel bombs them. What "disgusts" Meachum has save<sup>d</sup> many lives and is necessary as a means of frustrating murders and maimings to the degree they can be frustrated.

Some of this concoction that does build to an astounding conclusion is sophomoric:

"Jordan's King Hussein went to Sandhurst. While his grandson studied at Britain's West Point, old King Abdullah was hardly likely to ruffle London's feathers."

There were real reasons, not this fantasy, for Abdullah's not provoking Britain.

Britain organized, financed, led and controlled Abdullah's army. British General Sir John Glubb led it when that Arab Legion joined the other Arab states that attacked Israel when it was founded. Abdullah was not about to bite the hand that fed him after installing him as king over the country that Britain itself created.

Hussein was not king when he studied in England. He became king <sup>with what Meachum</sup> ~~over what this~~ column never troubles <sup>its</sup> ~~its~~ readers to know, <sup>Abdullah's</sup> ~~his~~ assassination by Arabs who suspected he was willing to discuss peace with Israel. This is exactly what happened to Egypt's Sadat when he made peace with Israel. It is what every Muslim ruler has to fear if he decides to really make peace with Israel.

This column apparently expects its readers to be entirely ignorant of recent events in the Islamic world. How else could it even dream of saying, "Violence against the defenseless simply has no place in Islam."

Beginning with Saddam, Meachumized into a "man of god" at the beginning of the gulf war and since neither <sup>repented</sup> ~~repented~~ nor apologized for, perhaps the single most tragic truth in the troubled Islamic world is the exact opposite of this whopper. Saddam is still taking horrible vengeance against "the defenseless" in Iraq, ranging from those he merely dislikes to the Kurds and other minorities. Kuwait, too, has been strongly condemned by Amnesty International and many other groups for precisely what we are to believe "has no place in Islam" in which it has for years been prevalent.

Syria's Assad, President Bush's new ally while <sup>Syria</sup> ~~he~~ is still on the official list of terrorist states, has wiped out as many as 5,000 <sup>in a single day</sup> ~~of~~ his own "defenseless" for the imagined crime of not liking him.

Another of President Bush's new allies, Saudi Arabia, in the recent past chopped off the hands of those suspected of stealing. Its more modest "violence against the defenseless" that got extensive attention was jailing and otherwise punishing women who dared to drive an auto.

Without a single real democracy in the entire Islamic world "violence against the defenseless" is inevitable and widespread.

After <sup>his</sup> ~~the~~ tirade of disinformation and misinformation and the incitation of <sup>instead of</sup> ~~Israel~~ for his trumped-up charge of beginning recent Middle East hostage-taking, Meachum prates that "any attempt to speak rationally about the Middle East runs into a buzz saw of vented spleen and hate."

If this is an illustration of "rationality" we'd ~~have to~~ be better off with irrationality. It simply is a contrived vehicle for hate, and that is not rational.

After these "buzz saws" of "spleen and hate" there is the unhidden irrationality and

the fantasies presented as fact and undisguised racism of Willhauk's "Thoughts on Israel."

He begins it modestly, if history is ignored, the history in which 100% of the Muslim world refused to "come to the peace table" with any Israelis until Sadat lost his life for doing that, by a simple and by now obvious untruth, referring to "Israel's reluctance to come to the peace table." It was at Madrid, <sup>Israel</sup> ~~is~~ has been insisting that the conferences be in the <sup>local</sup> area of all the participants, and it has stated that it would attend those in Washington four days after the date arbitrarily set by the Bush administration, claiming it needed more time to prepare.

Because it was there and will be there again and again this is Willhauked into "reluctance" to be there.

He then uses, inside <sup>of quotation marks</sup> quotes, "jewishness" that in context is attributed to the Israeli government. Neither it nor Jews <sup>in general</sup> use this invented word. All refer to Jewishness" and not as Willhauk uses it, as an <sup>anti-Semitic</sup> epithet.

His contrived justification is the canard that "Israel is one of the most racist and discriminatory regimes in the whole region" because it - ~~is~~ and I doubt that he knows what he is taking about - "reject(ed) about 3,000 Ethiopian refugees whose 'credentials' were insufficient to prove the proper degree of 'jewishness'."

Any person, Ethiopian or other, with a Jewish mother is according to Israel <sup>law</sup> a Jew. There are no "degrees." Israel has run great risks and added materially to its national debt to rescue Ethiopian Jews, 20,000 at a clip one time, and is feeding and housing and educating them because most have no way of making a living.

Willhauk "wonder(s) if all the cutbacks ~~exists~~ in the return of federal revenues to the states is not fueled by a concern that we have enough money to send to Israel." This is stark, raving made and another anti-Semitic incitation. There is no <sup>relevant</sup> connection at all <sup>to</sup> the reduction of money returned to the states that began in the Reagan administration.

Where he really zooms into LaLa Land is in saying of "the so-called Budget crunch" (if it isn't real enough for him nothing in this world can be!) that "There is no lack of funds, just a lack of proper priorities for the distribution of those funds, most blatantly at the federal level and working its way down."

Anyone who can say this can say anything. Come to think of it he does!

The income of all governments, local and national, is down enormously. In addition, a bankrupting percentage of this greatly-reduced income goes to service the national debt. Essential services have been cut and will be cut more.

To say that there is no lack of money is to see cows jumping over the moon that is made of green cheese while hearing shrimps whistle.

Once again the anti-Semites, overt or covert, the Israel-bashers, invent what they say and once again those not well-enough informed <sup>are misled and invited to hatred.</sup> have their beliefs formed by this evil.

## Roy Meachum



### 12/6/79 Still hostage

Terry Anderson free?

All Americans can rejoice. But the joy in the nation's newsrooms could scarcely be contained.

Media critics no doubt took some delight that Associated Press's chief Beirut correspondent was held until the very end. They may not have noticed another journalist, Alann Steen, received a similar honor; he was next to last.

A former editor, Mr. Steen went to Lebanon to teach both the art of newspapering and the meaning of a free press. His first press conference on release this week was doubly sweet. Besides his freedom, he had the pleasure of fielding questions from former students, now working reporters.

When news surfaced about Mr. Anderson, my first thoughts reached out for several younger journalists I had met abroad since his kidnapping. They were yanked from Beirut by their publications — *Time*, *The Washington Post and Newsweek*. Their distant editors and insurance companies were more fearful of death threats than the men on the spot.

In part, I know they felt guilty for having left Terry Anderson behind. His name came into every opening conversation. Now he's freed. They remain my profession's Flying Hollander, condemned to wander other posts — Paris, Cairo and Mexico City — while longing for Beirut.

But the story's not over.

There is no way to pinpoint exactly when taking hostages became part of the modern Middle East. The practice existed in antiquity.

Conquering pharaohs ordinarily brought back eldest sons of vanquished kings. Alexander the Great requested daughters for himself and his victorious generals. The Romans continued the custom, adding the children of wealthy notables.

In the colonial era both the French and the English managed variations

on the theme, coercing the best connected among their subjects to avail themselves of educational opportunities in the home country.

Jordan's King Hussein went to Sandhurst. While his grandson studied at Britain's West Point, old King Abdullah was hardly likely to ruffle London's feathers.

And so it went.

The first story about hostage-taking that crossed my desk happened in February, 1970. It had to do with nine Lebanese Army soldiers taken by the Israelis, who objected to the movement of Palestinians from out of Jordan and onto their northern borders.

My television commentary questioned the wisdom of grabbing Lebanese regulars when the quarrel was with Arab guerrillas. I wondered what good taking the nine men prisoner could do, particularly since some 900 Palestinians were already in Israeli jails.

Most of all, my sense of logic was offended. I expressed confusion as to how taking hostages could do Israel any long-term good. I doubted whether the kidnappings (by whatever name) accorded with the

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principles of Judaism.

My questioning and wondering, confusion and doubt found little echo in the audience. Switchboards in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington and other stations exploded. Within 24 hours my license to do international commentary had been lifted. Another five years were

required to get it restored.

At any rate, for over two decades I have never understood how either side in the Middle East tragedy profited from imitating the pharaohs, the great Alexander or the Romans.

When Iran's ayatollah authorized his followers' seizure of Tehran's U.S. embassy, his claim to the Muhammad's mantle fell apart for me. Violence against the defenseless simply has no place in Islam.

My disdain for Iran's allies in Beirut's back alleys can only be approached by my disgust with Israel's insistence on a so-called security zone in Lebanon, manned by mercenaries who are paid, at least indirectly, by U.S. taxpayers.

Both Israel's mercenaries and Iran's fundamentalist allies have led the way over the past 10 years in keeping the ancient hostage custom alive.

At this writing, the fundamentalists continue to hold a pair of German relief workers, while the mercenaries sit on a couple hundred Lebanese and Palestinians.

The Israeli government says one of its young men, an air force navigator, remains a prisoner. His jet went down over Lebanon. Heaven only knows how many thousand Palestinian women and men sit shivering in Israeli detention camps, deep in the Negev desert.

Of course, most Americans don't give a damn what happens to these other human beings. They are foreigners, after all. Don't we have enough problems here at home?

Moreover, any attempt to speak rationally about the Middle East runs into a buzz saw of vented spleen and hate. As I discovered in 1970 not for the first time, there are people in this country bound and determined America's role in that part of the world conform to ancient prejudice.

In any event, this is the season when the nation's Jews commemorate their ancestors' liberation from captivity in the miracle of the eight-day menorah and Christians prepare for Christmas, the most joyful feast on their calendar.

Certainly, there should be enough leftover charity to inspire prayers for those hapless men and women still prisoner for reasons of birth or religion, like Terry Anderson and his former mates.

Loujs E. Willhauck

11/6/91

## Thoughts on Israel, veterans, the

**R**ecently I have been contemplating a letter concerning one issue, then when the paper arrives, another jumps out at me from your pages. I suppose this is great, since it means that you are doing part of your job well by stirring thought on the issues of today.

One issue concerns the several letters that attempt to defend Israel's reluctance to come to the peace table with its Arab neighbors, and how we should be solidly behind Israel. I would like to point out that Israel is probably one of the most racist and discriminatory regimes in the whole region. Didn't they reject about 3,000 Ethiopian refugees whose "credentials" were insufficient to prove the proper degree "jewishness"? While we struggle locally to (forget expand and improve) merely maintain the status quo of services to our own citizenry, and with homelessness here in the United States, how can we justify \$10,000,000,000 (count the zeros) in "home loan guarantees" to Israel? Nothing I have read or heard can realistically justify our continuing to prop up Israel the way the U.S.S.R. propped up Cuba. I mean, Israel is a foreign country after all, as Mr. Shamir repeatedly reminds us; and not the 51st state, yet our own federal government, with our tax dollars, is spending more on a non-U.S. entity and cutting more from its own citizens. I guess we need to send our homeless to Israel; we know they will be given a home there if this "home loan" deal goes through.

It makes me wonder if all the cutbacks in the return of federal revenue to the states is not fueled by a concern that we have enough money to send to Israel. One of my friends remarked to me that taxes to the federal level are more appropriate than local taxes because from there, through the vehicle of revenue distribution, a more equitable overall effect can be achieved. I agreed with that point, but my response was, it's not

working. People and institutions locally are suffering on a "real-time" basis from the so-called budget crunch. There is no lack of funds, just a lack of proper priorities for the distribution of those funds, most blatantly at the federal level and working its way down.

Now, some may think that I am anti-Israel. No, I am pro-justice and pro-American, and I just don't see a reason for the types of double standards we profess at an official level. All I long for is the enunciation of just what is "American Policy," in complete sentences, not incoherent gibberish. We condemn the racists in South Africa, but applaud the racists in Israel. We encourage ethnic nationalism in the Soviet Union and not in Yugoslavia, yet when the Baltics declared independence, despite the fact that we never recognized the annexation of the Baltics by the Soviet Union as a result of their pact with the Nazis, we hesitated to recognize them back into the community of nations. Maybe it is political suicide to speak clearly and completely about policies, but I sure wish somebody would. It might not turn out to be as suicidal as some think.

There is much back and forth in your paper whenever columnist Roy Meachum discusses Israel or the Middle East in general, yet to me those who respond against Mr. Meachum are more narrowly focused in their outlook than what they accuse Mr. Meachum of being. Then there are others, such as Jan Thompson (letter, Sept. 4), who went to Israel and "saw but did not see." The Israeli people were going about with "gas masks" while the Palestinians whose land and lives were taken from them by the Israelis had none. It was clear to me that the "good hearted" leaders of Israel would have grieved over the death of the Palestinians from lack of what every good Jewish citizen of Israel was given free (a gas mask). We talk about how horrible it was for Saddam



Hussein to use "human shields," but tell me if Israel, by denying the distribution of masks to the Palestinians, wasn't doing the exact same thing. The result is that if Hussein would have used gas or biological weapons, the only people to be killed in great numbers in Israel would be the Palestinians.

The denial of the commonality in humanity of one group by another is one of the most reprehensible aspects of human behavior. One group's terrorists are another group's patriots (or "freedom fighters," if you will). There are two sides to every argument, and no one side has a monopoly on the truth. Obviously, this whole issue is one designed and perpetuated to give the American people a focus for their attention that is outside our own borders. I am trying to explain why we need to re-focus on domestic issues, at least to the same level of attention that we give foreign policy. If we are not able to solve our own problems, anything we do overseas is an extremely shallow effort at best. For far too many years we have been obsessed with issues foreign, not domestic.

I noticed recently that the "sunshine

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patriots" have basically put away their flags and gone back to living their lives in indifference. The Disabled American Veterans were in the mall trying to sell raffle tickets, with only a few takers as I could discern. We spent many millions on parades and extravaganzas for the self-aggrandizement of certain politicians, yet on those same days people were being evicted, businesses were going bankrupt, banks were closing, cars were getting flats by hitting unrepaired potholes, unemployment was increasing, wages of those who do have jobs frozen or decreasing, hate groups growing in strength, drugs and violence in the streets, and I could go on for pages. Let's wake-up, let's put the same unity of effort to some constructive enterprise instead. And let's do it right here in the U.S., then if there is anything left over, then we can move out beyond our borders. Or at least, let's shift the priorities a bit, so that our own citizens are not forced into slave labor and suffering for the sake of politics and foreign countries.

With the smell of gunpowder barely cleared, the knives were back out cutting, not the "big bucks" weapons contracts, no, they are cutting Veterans Administration benefits, shortening and restricting medical services for the military, both active and retired, and generally making the GI's life a little harder than before. As if it wasn't already tough enough. I wonder what the President and Congress are going to do for a pay raise for the GI, this year? See what I mean? If you take all things in perspective, in relation to the whole, you can only say that "something is very wrong here."

Another of your readers wrote about how we should be making our school system work more efficiently in order to compete with the Germans and the Japanese. I agree wholeheartedly with that gentleman's letter. I'd like to add to his comments that when my son, who is trying to pursue a track toward

computer programming as a career, got the course offerings last spring, we found COBOL programming had been dropped from the curriculum. Of course, the mechanisms that produce these decisions are only apparent after the decision is "locked in concrete." But COBOL? That is maybe one of the primary business application languages there is.

True, how can we compete? We stress the nonsense, and ignore the essential. The schools need to be able to get back to the basics of fundamental education and the parents need to get back to the basics of fundamental parenting. The lines are shifted and I sympathize with the teachers, but I also fault them, in that they have allowed themselves to become too bureaucratic and in so doing neglected their mission in life and society, that is to educate the youth of this nation. Did you know that there is only one teacher in this county, as I understand it, who has had specific training in dealing with the problems of autistic children? And did you know that even with the controversy about the school budget, they (BoE) still say there isn't enough money in the budget to get this training for anyone else . . . maybe next year? I don't buy the excuses of bureaucrats, and the school system is top heavy with them.

I think it's about time for your paper to open an investigative reporting branch. Frederick County is certainly getting big enough to justify one. Please consider the possibility of doing so, I'm sure your readers can keep you well stocked with issues, and even without depending on reader input, I'm certain that scrutiny of the press could generate some very positive results.

It was hard to know where to begin; now I guess it's time to end (even though I've got about four more pages of stuff on my mind . . .).

*Louis E. Willhauck lives in Frederick.*