

Letters to the editor  
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Your column "Shattered hope," published on the eve of Passover, relating to old matters and hung on a peg of a week earlier, is beautifully timed to reflect your solicitude for the feelings of Jews as they remember one of the innumerable abuses they suffered throughout recorded time at the hands of those now known as Muslims.

As usual, in your one-sided presentation you take liberties with history and with fact.

Of the event that is the peg, more of the casualties that will not end as long as the uprising in the holy land continues, you say, "In this instance no blame can be attached to Prime Minister Shamir, who was still in the United States."

Whatever may have prompted this <sup>first</sup> ~~one~~ other than defamatory opinion you have published about Shamir, and the notion that it was to pretend the balance that has always been lacking is obvious, it is not correct. There is no way in which the head of any state can escape responsibility for what his government does. Shamir is responsible.

Speaking of the Camp David accords you say, "Realistically, the proposition (that they be implemented) comes too late. The Camp David accords were signed ... 10 years ago."

You do not say why they were not implemented or that that they were lived up to by Israel, which returned the Sinai, which it had captured and developed, to ~~the~~ Egypt. The Arabs refused to live up to that agreement. As they to now have rejected all offers of settlement that permitted a speck of earth to be called Israel.

You talk about <sup>the</sup> brutality against Arabs," and select for condemnation Druses "who are considered heretics by other Muslims. The name Druse has been written <sup>large</sup> in the civil wars that have destroyed Lebanon."

This concatenation of distortions begins with the Druses because they sided with the Jews when Israel was established. If Khoumeni considers them heretics, I say up with the Druses! But to represent that the Druses were a major factor in or cause of the

present aggrivies in Lebanon is to deceive and mislead your readers.

The immediate trigger was the PLO. It had just been kicked out of Jordan when King Hussein decided he would not let them throw him out and ~~he~~ take that 70 percent of the original Palestine Territory over. They <sup>PLO then</sup> terrorized and took over major hunks of Lebanon. Then Syria moved in and still controls major parts of that agnished state, which it has never hidden it wants to make its own. The casualties as non-Druse Arabs have slaughtered other Arabs in <sup>Lebanon</sup> have been astronomical and have never been the topic of any of your self-proclaimed expert commentaries. On many single days these casualties have exceeded the <sup>total</sup> of lives lost throughout the entire intifada.

(May I commend your expert on finally learning how to spell <sup>"intifada"</sup> ~~this word?~~)

Israel's use of Druses among its border police in which <sup>they</sup> they are a minority is, you say, "the Bhamir regime's desparatioj. It can be said to represent a last gasp effort to eliminate the Palestinians and their 'problem.'"

Perhaps you can explain how Druses used in Lebanon is going to eliminate Palestinians outside of Lebanon! Or how you and your eminent expert can conceive that it is at all possible, assuming anyone had the intent you assign, to eliminate all the Palestinians, ~~(by which you mean only arabs, of course, even if you don't say so.)~~

Given your and your expert's record I think it is appropriate and honest of you to mark the Passover as you have.

When will you begin serializing the Proctocols of the Learned Elders of Zion?

This pre-Hitler fabrication is currently available throughout the entire Muslim world in new editions being published there so your expert ought have no trouble getting a copy for you.

Harold Weisberg





## Roy Meachum



# Shattered hope

Israeli border police gunfire came before dawn one week ago today in the West Bank farming village, Nahalin. When the shooting was over, five Palestinian youths were lost. As many as 50 may have been wounded.

With the *intifada* (uprising) well into its 17th month, journalists have learned there is no way to verify casualties, not exactly. Unlike Vietnam, officials want to hold down the body count. The growing number of Palestinian deaths is not in the occupying power's best interest.

In this instance no blame can be attached to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir who was still in the United States. Mr. Shamir lingered on after his White House visit to rally support for his proposition that the time had come to implement Camp David's call for "free" elections in the occupied territories.

While the prime minister's proposition was received enthusiastically in expected quarters, including official Washington, it earned him little humanitarian credit elsewhere. He reportedly received a chilly reception at the annual meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, where a Midwesterner branded the Shamir government's treatment of Palestinians as "despicable."

Realistically, the proposition comes too late. The Camp David accords were signed at the White House 10 years ago: The anniversary was celebrated last month. Mr. Shamir's attempt to resurrect the accords now may be the *intifada*'s greatest single victory.

Under present circumstances, the prime minister offers too little. In proposing the elections, Mr. Shamir rejected all suggestions that the voting be supervised by international observers, or by the United States alone. He insists that Palestinians go to the polls under the guns of his occupation army.

Furthermore, the prime minister forbids any speculation that the elections might represent an interim stage in any plan for a Middle East comprehensive peace, as Camp David intended.

The greatest single lesson taught by the *intifada* is there can be no real peace without separated status for

the occupied territories. Mr. Shamir wants no more than limited autonomy, leaving the Palestinians encircled by Israeli armed forces, capable of swooping down on anyone who cries out for independence. Limited autonomy would naturally limit rights, including free speech.

In the prime minister's behalf, it should be stated that he may be willing to yield more for the sake of peace than part of his cabinet which last weekend refused to endorse unanimously his proposal announced in Washington. The proposal was tabled, at least temporarily.

Not incidentally, the same day Israel's government announced the delay, three more Palestinians were killed, including a 10-year-old boy.

The three deaths Sunday resulted

from demonstrations on the first anniversary of the assassination in Tunisia of Khalil Wazir, a prominent PLO figure, by Israelis who believed the murder would weaken the *intifada* which the Shamir government blamed on "outside agitators."

Instead, the assassination provided more fuel to the uprising. The Tunisian murder touched off increased rioting in the occupied territories, bringing on further official suppressions which gave added cause for the revolt to continue. It takes no great prophet to foresee the cycle of violence endlessly feeding itself.

Once again, the boy's death Sunday refutes the assertion of their care for human life, made by the occupation authorities. They say their troops shoot only at specific targets. And then, only in life-threatening situations.

How much threat to a helmeted soldier, wearing a bullet-proof vest, can be posed by any rock a 10-year-old has the strength to throw?

And yet the bloody repressions go on, while the United States clucks and blinks its eyes, pouring out billions that pay the occupation's cost. Washington's studied silence confirms Americans' collective guilt in specific cases, such as the pre-dawn massacre in the farming village.

Nahalin survivors told reporters that the border police sprayed their

streets with assault rifles on fully automatic. News stories said evidence for the charge can be found embedded in buildings. The human casualties could have easily been much higher.

Although a complete investigation was promised, its outcome was forecast by the West Bank's military commander who pronounced himself satisfied that no guilt was attached to the border police. The pronouncement came while the general supervised punitive actions against the villagers, for the killing and maiming inflicted on them.

In any event, remember the name: Nahalin. You will hear it again, despite Washington's silence on its fate. The Palestinians will not forget.

Among all Israeli forces, the border police have an unequalled record for brutality against Arabs, in part because their ranks include large numbers of Druses, who are considered heretics by other Muslims. The Druse name has been written "large" in the civil wars that have destroyed Lebanon.

Thrusting Druse border police into the *intifada* is but another measure of the Shamir regime's desperation. It can be said to represent a last gasp effort to eliminate the Palestinians and their "problem."

In a West Bank village last week, gunfire broke more than the pre-dawn stillness. In the streets of Nahalin, the last hope was shattered that the people in the occupied territories will agree to any peace that leaves them subservient to the Israeli government.