

Letters to the editor
Frederick News-Post
Frederick, MD 21701

9/15/93

If I were not a Jew I would still be outraged at Roy Meachum's indecency in marking these holy days with more of his blind, unthinking, always biased and untruthful anti-Israel and anti-Semitic propaganda. I hate to use the word but some of this rotten commemoration of a period so sacred to so many is just plain lies.

"...peace cannot be realized unless you are willing to talk to your enemy. It was a principle ceded by Mr. Arafat, ^{in 1988,} when his organization first recognized Israel's right to a peaceful and secure existence...." (First? When at all?)

To this the hate-mongering propagandist adds, nothing omitted in quotation, "on ~~the~~ land that once belonged to Palestinians." That very land first belong^{ed} to Jews, and this propaganda line is unrelated to the gross misrepresentation that precedes it.

In 1983, when the Bush administration was pressuring Arafat to recognize the right of the State of Israel to live at peace and within secure borders, the words of the UN resolutions, Arafat's "organization" met in North Africa and refused to do just that. On his part, as usually mumbling ~~it~~ out of all sides of his mouth, Arafat avoided this also but his substitute was greeted by the administration and all pro-Arabs as though he had. I challenge your ~~poor~~ pontificator Meachum to get and quote Arafat's exact words. He did not mention the State of Israel. For one of Meachum's pretensions of vast knowledge of the area, this is a lie, not just a mistake.

"For the United States and Israel to stick their heads in the sand, refusing to admit the existence of the mainstream Palestinian movement, never made sense."

That "mainstream Palestinian movement" refused to recognize the existence of the State of Israel and as of today its charter calls for wiping all Israelis out. All Arab lands, ~~have~~ Egypt still refuse to recognize the right of the State of Israel to exist, all remain in a state of war with it, not one recognizes it, and it ~~is~~ is Israel and the US that have their heads in the sand, refuse to recognize? For Shame! To so mislead trusting readers.

Meachum refers to "native Arabs' right to their grandfathers' land" when many

of those Arabs immigrated after the State of Israel was established. And how can anyone with any knowledge of the history and of fact say that the land ⁱⁿ question, which is where all Jews originate, is only the land of those Arab grandfathers? Many times in history the Jews were ^{driven} driven out of their own land and always many in the end returned. When they could. The last major expulsion was by Mohammed, and that is how it became Arab land. Anyone at all familiar with the Bible knows that Judea and Samaria, renamed "the west bank" for reasons Meachum never tells his readers, was the Jewish homeland.

At the end of ~~the~~ World War I there was an agreement that what ~~the~~ then, if I recall correctly, was first called "Palestine" would be divided between Arabs and Jews. British antisemites prevented that part that was to be the Jewish state from becoming that state. ^{It} was the land west of the Jordan, and it includes what is now called "the West bank." ^{On} What was the east bank, then given the name further confirming what I say, "Trans-Jordan," was established as the Arab state created from the Arab share of that until-then Turkish territory Britain took over. *It is more than 70% of the original territory*

To obscure the reality, Hussein changed his state's name by elimination ^{of} the "Trans." Since then it is "Jordan."

Meachum also quotes Sadat, who did not survive his own recognition of the State of Israel, as Hussein's grandfather, Abdullah, did not survive the suspicion *that* he had that in mind, as saying there would be no peace until it was made directly with ~~the~~ ^{the} Palestinians. This ignores the state of war against Israel that has existed since the UN created it and the refusal of all Arabs as of that time to recognize Israel. Meachum, as usual, turns it all round. *He* knows very well that those kinds of talks cannot be held without recognition, withheld by all Muslim powers, or with a ~~state~~ of war, in which they persisted and persist in remaining.

And this is how he shows his respect for what he terms these "Days of Awe."

What is really awesome is that he can be so callous, so indecent, so much the persisting McCarthyite in his writing about that area.

I ask him as McCarthy was asked, "Have you no shame?"

This kind of propaganda, this kind of hate-inc ^{ite} itate, to mark such holy days?

Harold Weisberg

Harold Weisberg

'Days of Awe'

Roy McEachum 5/15/93

Sundown tonight begins the holiest period in the Hebrew calendar.

In synagogues around the world the shofar horn will sound the arrival of the new year, called Rosh Hoshannah. No occasion for merriment, for Jews this is the season for examination and expiation, climaxing next week in Yom Kippur, which demands atonement.

Taken together, these religious commemorations are customarily referred to as "Days of Awe." In the sight of human beings by the millions, including non-Jews, for this one time they truly began Monday.

When Bill Clinton emerged on the White House lawn, escorting Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat, grown men could be excused for moist eyes.

The vision of the PLO chief shaking hands with the man who, as Israel's commanding general in 1967, captured Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza was much more than virtually all Middle East observers ever expected to see in their lifetimes.

Until the very moment Mr. Clinton extended a formal invitation for Mr. Arafat to participate in Monday's ceremony, the PLO and its leading figure were still officially outlaws to America. For the record, no one on the Palestinian panel, which had been negotiating with Israel in recent years, was permitted to acknowledge Mr. Arafat or admit fealty to his organization.

For the United States and Israel to stick their heads in the sand, refusing to admit the existence of the mainstream Palestinian movement, never made sense. Only radicals, whose ranks include old men notoriously resistant to change, profited.

Everyone else, especially the children, suffered. As Mr. Rabin acknowledged, peace cannot be realized unless you are willing to talk to your enemy. It was a principle ceded by Mr. Arafat in 1988, when his organization first recognized Israel's right to a peaceful and secure existence on land that once belonged to Palestinians.

For 45 years Rosh Hoshannah and Yom Kippur prayers have been clouded by the continuing tragedy of the people displaced by the Jewish return to the places that had formed their ancient home. No rationalization under the sun could remove the taint from hearts nurtured on the existential code of charity as an act of justice. No religion permits joy if gained through someone else's suffering.

Because they were stronger, in ethics as well as arms, the burden for finding a way to reconciliation and cohabitation always rested with the Israelis and their supporting hosts,

**As Mr. Rabin
acknowledged,
peace cannot be
realized unless you
are willing to talk to
your enemy.**

whose numbers included every U.S. government since Harry Truman's.

While some admired and respected people violently disagree, I have to believe Monday witnessed a singular advancement toward real peace. After all, it took over 15 years for my country to understand what Anwar Sadat told the Israeli legislature on his historic visit to Jerusalem. Over and over, on Nov. 19, 1977, the Egyptian president repeated there would always be wars until peace was made directly with the Palestinians, allowing them some space they could call their own.

This week's recognition of the native Arabs' rights in their grandfathers' land must be considered progress. Until Mr. Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Perez pressed flesh with Mr. Arafat, neither he nor his people had been accorded separate and equal status as human beings.

The protesters, both Muslim and Jewish, were absolutely right: A door has been opened that can never be closed again. For that simple fact, I have the urge to cover my head and thank God with a variety of prayers. At the same time, there is no illusion the last blood has been shed. More children will die, I am sure. Widows, Jewish or Muslim, will probably be made by the Middle East's penchant for suicidal homicide long after I am gone.

However, from this point on, disturbers of the peace on both sides can be taken for what they really are: Islamic and Israeli gangsters who commit crimes in the names of faiths they choose to defile. Terrorism has never been a Palestinian monopoly.

An epochal gesture toward the new era was bestowed with the hug and kisses shared on the White House lawn between Mr. Arafat and the Saudi ambassador to the United States. That unity the Arab "nation" could never achieve in war seems destined to come with peace.

For Israel, the prospects have never been brighter for real and enduring acceptance in the Middle East neighborhood. And on that note, to borrow a Monday suggestion from Mr. Rabin, we should all say:
Amen.