

Editor
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Dear Editor,

Were they not so ugly and evil, Roy "eachum's intemperate diatribes against Israel would be ludicrous because of the public spectacle he makes of himself with *his* the flaunting of ignorance in the area of his greatest claim to expertise, because he makes most of it up as he goes and because he is so unashamedly ~~mendacious~~ mendacious. "Land/Day" is no exception.

"Israel has sealed off the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip from the rest of the world." False. Reporting is by pool, not in any sense abnormal.

"Israeli hardliners argued, successfully, that without TV cameras, Palestinian demonstrations would dry up." Thus he made an "Israeli hardliner" of our own Secretary of State who, on Meet the Press ten days earlier said that the presence of TV cameras tended to incite ^{that} the violence ~~there~~.

"...the current ban is aimed not at the media or Palestinians, but seeks to control the demonstrations inside the country's 1967 borders." Obviously false because Israel proper is crawling with foreign reporters and cameramen and the restriction ^{to pool coverage} on the flood of reporters is limited to the West Bank and Gaza.

He refers to Israel's "several post-1948 wars against its neighbors," certainly a dishonest way to say that those neighbors ^{attacked} invaded Israel.

Israel, he says, refuses "all (its) citizens their ~~freedom~~ freedom." False. Arabs have by law and in actuality all rights Jewish citizens have except that most ~~Arabs~~ are exempt from ^{compulsory} service in the armed forces because all its wars have been ~~against~~ with Islamic countries.

In this disgraceful outpouring of hatred he has pretended that Israel is just abusing innocent Arabs and violating their human rights. He also boasts of reading the Washington Post and quotes it selectively, only when he can seem to advance a dishonesty he decided on in advance. His failure to report in all these outrages against decency what our own State Department said on this point, published in the Washington Post

March 30, condemns him and exposes his intended dishonesty:

"The State Department's top human rights official said yesterday that Israel 'not only has the right but the obligation' to restore order in the violence-torn occupied territories and to 'use appropriate levels of force' to achieve this goal."

That same day's news included deaths he has yet to shed a single journalistic tear over, of ^{Muslims Killed} ~~muslims~~ by muslims, adding more than 1,000 muslims to the uncountable thousands killed lately by other Muslims, this time by poison gases used by both Iran and Iraq. His selectife misuses of news bears on his personal and journalistic integrity and condemns him and his purposes as thoroughly.

Sincerely,



Harold Weisberg

Roy Meachum

3/30/88 Land Day



Coming off the bloodiest weekend (10 dead) since the Palestinian uprising began 15 weeks ago, the Israeli government has sealed off the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip from the rest of the world.

This time around reporters are not the target. Excluding media has become standard procedure. Invoking reasoning familiar from South Africa and other dictatorships, Israeli hardliners argued, successfully, that, without TV cameras, Palestinian demonstrations would dry up.

In fact, without the media's watchful eyes, security forces have stepped up their use of live ammunition, as the weekend fatality rate testifies.

However, the current ban is aimed not at the media or Palestinians, but seeks to control demonstrations inside the country's pre-1967 borders.

Twelve years ago today the Israeli government struck a fatal blow to the notion it is a Western democracy. It seized 6,000 acres in the Galilee region from its Christian and Muslim "citizens." Most of the land had belonged to the same families for generations and generations.

It is important to understand that these people no longer described themselves as "Palestinians." They carried Israeli passports. By taxes, they supported the state that took their land away. Because the law forbade them service in the military, they were deprived of a range of government benefits, including mortgages and business loans. (The Druse sect was exempted from the prohibition; its members can enlist in the armed forces and receive the rewards.)

Nevertheless, it is fascinating to note that in none of its several post-1948 wars against its neighbors did Israel face an espionage or sabotage problem from its Muslim and Christian citizens.

More than coincidence must be attached to the fact that the massive land grab took place in an atmosphere in which Israeli occupation of the West Bank appeared a prelude to early annexation. In 1974, the Middle East tide seemed on the side of hardliners Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir.

Reading the *New York Times* from 12 years ago, it is remarkable how the stories parallel current events. Palestinians demonstrated. They were shot down by security forces. News reports noted Washington's surprise that the "normally docile" Arabs were willing to brave bullets and battering clubs.

What made March 30, 1976, different was that on this day five Israeli Arabs met their deaths. (A sixth died later of his wounds.) These were not Palestinians, let me repeat, but men and boys from families who had chosen to throw in their fate with the Jewish state. Their seized land was planned for a massive resettlement that never took place. Today, the Galilee remains overwhelmingly Arab, Christian and Muslim, in the majority.

On this Land Day, as it is called, the crisis confronting authorities is the need to isolate their own citizens from the "virus" of independence, raging in the occupied territories. But the ban comes too late. The seeds for discontent in the Galilee and other Israeli Arab communities were planted years ago by the authorities themselves, not the PLO. They refused to accord all their citizens their freedom. They continued to discriminate.

Unlike 1976, the clear message from today's stories is that Israel now faces an uprising that all their bullets and clubs cannot quell. The distrust authorities accorded the Arabs among them is now being returned in full measure. At this stage, a negotiated settlement for the occupied territories may still not bring peace to the unhappy Holy Land.

As Secretary of State George Shultz prepares to return to the Middle East, Israeli "super-hawk" Ariel Sharon rattled yesterday the thermonuclear saber, threatening war against an unspecified Arab neighbor, unless the Palestinians settle down. Here is the myopia that could turn the world into a blazing inferno. Does everyone but Mr. Sharon know the Palestinians now answer only to themselves, and their God?

In Psalm 130 it is written: "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord." Amen.

By David B. Ottaway
Washington Post Staff Writer

The State Department's top human rights official said yesterday that Israel "not only has the right but the obligation" to restore order in the violence-scarred occupied territories and to use "appropriate levels of force" to achieve this goal.

The statement, made as Israel took the most stringent measures to date to end Palestinian unrest in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, was the closest a senior administration official has come to a general U.S. endorsement of the Israeli crackdown against Palestinian protesters.

"In our view, Israel clearly has not only the right, but the obligation, to preserve or restore order in the occupied territories and to use appropriate levels of force to accomplish that end," said Richard Schifter, assistant secretary of state for human rights and humanitarian affairs.

Neither Schifter nor half a dozen members of Congress attending a special 90-minute House hearing on Israeli tactics in dealing with the unrest made any specific mention of the latest Israeli measures, which include sealing off the entire West Bank and Gaza Strip for the first time in 21 years of military occupation and a full military curfew for Palestinians living in the strip.

However, State Department spokesman Charles E. Redman said yesterday the United States "regrets" the restrictions being imposed by Israel, including those limiting news media access to the occupied territories. "We hope these restrictions will be lifted quickly and not resumed," he added.

"The continuing violent demonstrations by Palestinians and the harsh security measures taken by Israeli authorities in response are creating widespread suffering," Redman said.

The department spokesman said Israel was "well aware" of U.S. views.

There has been an international outcry over thousands of Israeli arrests and beatings, and the shooting deaths of more than 100 Palestinian civilians.

President David Sadd of the National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA) applauded Rep. Gus Yatron (D-Pa.), chairman of the House human rights subcommittee, for holding the first hearing in 14 years on reported Israeli human rights abuses.

But he said the NAAA was sending Secretary of State George P. Shultz a letter expressing its concern about the secretary's "less-than-forceful presentation" to Israel of the administration's position about the abuses.

Amnesty International yesterday called on Israeli authorities to ensure Palestinian



RICHARD SCHIFTER
... Israel has "obligation" to restore order

human rights during the three-day period the occupied territories are to be sealed off from the outside world.

The Reagan administration has been grappling with how to respond to the increasingly stiff Israeli measures both against Palestinian demonstrators and foreign news coverage of the unrest.

Interviewed March 20 on NBC's "Meet the Press," Shultz said the Israelis had "a problem of maintaining order" and that television cameras "may" incite Palestinians to throw stones. He denied he was "giving excuses" for the Israeli news media restrictions and said he was "explaining the situation they [the Israelis] are in."

Schifter yesterday sought to make a distinction between Israeli "brutalization" of Palestinian prisoners and "random beating of civilians" on the one hand and Israeli tactics in dealing with "acts of violence" and "violent protests."

He said the United States had protested "regularly and consistently" to "the highest level of the Israeli government" about the first kinds of reported Israeli abuses. But he made a clear distinction between these actions and reports of Israeli military abuses in dealing with the latter.

"There is a sharp difference between a peaceful march in which slogans might be displayed or shouted and acts of violence. While we must insist on human rights grounds on respect for the right of peaceful assembly, this does not extend to assembly for the purpose of throwing rocks and firebombs." Schifter said.

Appropriate Levels' Needed to Quiet the Territories

**State Dept. Rights Official
Defends Israel's Use of Force**

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