

Harold Weisberg

Desecration and dishonesty

Did I not know Roy Meachum better I'd believe the heading "Christmas Black" on his column of Dec. 23 to be a typographical error.

Not since the day of petty fascists, William Dudley Pelley, George Deatherage, Gerald Winrod (also known as "the Jayhawk Nazi"), Gerald L.K. Smith, W.J. Cameron and their ilk, all of whom slunk back into the slime from which they came, have I known any American who would so misuse Christmas, to corrupt the holiday of peace and good will toward men into an excuse for preaching hatred. Only Roy Meachum in our area is capable of and indulged in such desecration and the journalistic dishonesties it required.

In 23 column inches devoted to preaching hatred and anti-Semitism, he included still another defense of the terrorists who kidnapped and abused innocent Americans — preachers and educators who went to the Muslim world to be helpful and journalists who went to inform the rest of the world.

These Muslim terrorists, he says, are not criminals.

But in all this space, for what does Mr. Meachum not find space, not find time, not find interest?

For a single word about what started the newest of the endless tragic slaughters in the holy land; for what public authority everywhere does when faced with rioting.

Can it be that nobody dares edit his bile? No editor asks or can ask any question?

As those who do not depend on Meachumite regurgitation of what is in all the metropolitan papers are aware, Arabs in the Gaza Strip began a campaign of violence to coincide with Christian religious visits to the holy land.

But in this newest Meachumite debasing of the glorious traditions of the American journalist which he repeatedly claims he typifies, it came out as Israelis shooting at Arabs for no reason at all. When they searched for those responsible for this continuing violence which lasted through Christmas, in his version Israeli authorities were only being nasty and abusive. Such is his devotion to our great journalistic tradition, his creed of honesty, his love and practice of fairness, of which he boasts that Mr. Meachum makes no mention at all of the Arab fire-bombing the Israelis tried to stop.

Instead, he pretends that all of this is Israeli imperialism, "the pursuit of an empire." How great an alleged empire? "To Iraq's Euphrates River."

How "imperial" is Israel? After conquering all of Egypt to the Nile and some on the other side of the Nile, when Egypt agreed to peace, Israel returned it all, an area ever so much greater than tiny Israel. Without payment for the many improvements added.

This is imperialism?

The territories involved in this Meachumite practice are called "the west bank" and "the Gaza Strip." The latter is a small and narrow area south of Israel on the Mediterranean coast, not part of either Egypt or Israel.

What is miscalled "the west bank" is what is actually Judea and Samaria in the Bible. This is where Jews come from. From "Judea" comes "Jew."

This territory was never part of Jordan. Jordan merely took it by force of arms and Israel took it back the same way. It is on the west side of the Jordan River.

When England created Jordan out of the larger eastern part of Palestine, it was properly called Trans-Jordan because it was the part of Palestine across the Jordan.

When Britain, which took Palestine and other lands controlled by the Ottoman Empire, now Turkey, after World War I, it did not keep its promise, embodied in the Balfour Declaration, to establish a Jewish state in the rest of Palestine. When the Israelis themselves established this state, Jordan, then financed and its armies supplied and controlled by the British, along with the rest of the Arab world, attacked Israel. Jordan captured Judea and Samaria.

Abnormally, in the 40 years since Israel won that war, none of the defeated Muslim world agreed to a peace treaty until, under Sadat, Egypt did. It remains Arab policy, enunciated and persisted in by Arafat and his PLO, to drive all Jews into the sea. Their refusal even to discuss a peace treaty perpetuates this stated policy.

This is the actual boast of those Arabs Mr. Meachum loves so much, in whom he can find no fault. Their terrorists are not criminals to him even when they kidnap, torture and kill Americans. They are "patriots," his word, and for their crimes and abuses, he tells his readers, Jews and United States policies are responsible.

The actuality is that, except for Egypt, the Muslim world continues in a state of war against Israel and terrorism and murder remain terrorism and murder.

Sadat signed a peace treaty with Israel and sought to lead the Middle East into an era of peace. But any recognition of the state of Israel or its right to exist is so abhorrent — to those Mr. Meachum says are not criminal when they are, are patriots when they are terrorists — they assassinated him.

Arab assassination is what made Hussein king of Jordan. When his grandfather, Abdullah, dared to speak to Israelis, Abdullah was assassinated.

In all the Meachumite verbiage in so many, many columns, his readers have no way of knowing, not from him at least, what the actualities are, including the continuing Muslim state of war after 40 years and its inevitable consequences.

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When there is a state of war, when there is violence and terrorism, there is, as there always has been, response, and, as always, the danger both sides may cause harm, including deaths.

For the three years of Mr. Meachum's local column I can't remember a single time when he was honest, truthful or fair on this subject. His voice of hate has not informed his readers, most of whom are not experts on foreign affairs (nor is he, except in his self-concept) that there is this state of war and that the only reason it still exists is that his Muslim friends insist upon it, or that they started the war in which they were all clobbered by tiny Israel.

For years England was known as "perfidious Albion." This was never more justified than for what it did with the Palestine Territory after World War I. England promised Palestine to both Arabs and Jews — but gave territory only to Arabs, Trans-Jordan, the eastern, larger part.

Both Arabs and Jews can make claim to the land now known as Israel, Jews because it is their homeland, the land from which, going back into farthest antiquity, they came. Arabs took the lands from which the Jews were driven and on this basis they claim it.

Jordan, shortened from Trans-Jordan by Hussein to obscure this history, is and was intended to be the Arab part of Palestine. Not so long ago, Arafat and his PLO tried unsuccessfully to depose Hussein and take over Jordan. When they failed and were expelled, they moved into Lebanon where they followed the same policies, leading to that country's many agonies.

It is worse than indecent to blacken Christmas by misusing it for the preaching of any kind of hatred but I guess there is little Mr. Meachum will not do.

It is utterly shameless that he contorts the time of peace on earth and good will toward men into preaching hatred.

Meanwhile, I challenge him to print the proof he claims to have of planned Israeli expansionism and imperialism. It not only does not exist, it does not make sense, except in copying Hitler for hate and propaganda.

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