

Harold Weisberg

## The Unending Hatred

By any rational standard, journalistic or common sense, the local papers have devoted an extraordinarily disproportionate amount of space, <sup>to</sup> ~~all on one side~~, the terrible situation in the Middle East in ~~the form of~~ a long and apparently endless series of columns by Roy Meachum.

These began shortly after the inspired Arab violence in the Gaza strip and continued regularly. Unable to comment on them as they appeared, when I had a few moments I prepared and mailed four commentaries addressing some of the propaganda and plain misrepresentations and misstatements in them. These were regarded as too long and were not published.

One of the matters I addressed ~~in them~~ is selective quotation, his use of only some of what appeared in his sources and his disregard of ~~other~~ public sources when they ~~disproved~~ what he wanted to say. One ~~of these~~, a learned article by an Arab, identified the two forces responsible for the Arab violence that, whatever one thinks of Israel, it is <sup>required</sup> ~~bound~~ to try to end <sup>to protect the majority</sup> ~~in the interest of all these~~ not participating in the violence and often ~~it~~ the victims of that violence. One of these forces is <sup>the Abu Nidal</sup> ~~the terrorists~~. Mr. Meachum insists are only patriots, <sup>Their</sup> ~~the Abu Nidal~~ terrorists whose patriotism consists in bombing airports at Vienna and Rome, in piracy and the cold-blooded killing of <sup>an</sup> ~~the~~ aged and crippled American Jew and even in assassinating all its members who decided to quit and all the ~~other~~ PLO people who wanted to talk to Israelis.

Thus the papers' readers ~~not only~~ <sup>got</sup> Mr. Meachum's preaching of hatred and distortions and misrepresentations. They also were denied any understanding of the <sup>background</sup> ~~background~~ actualities of the present situation ~~because of the papers' policies~~. Without question, the papers have the right to make their own policies. I believe, however, that readers ought ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> be a captive audience and by policy denied more than <sup>Mr. Meachum's explanatory</sup> ~~one~~ side of this <sup>situation</sup> ~~terribly complicated matter~~.

On March 9, which by the past will be quite some time before this can appear, Mr. Meachum had another column that is just loaded with untruths, distortions and misrepresentations, so many it is not possible to even try to address them all. ~~All~~

consistent with his long and undeviating record, <sup>they were</sup> ~~are~~ <sup>incite</sup> ~~designed to preach~~ race hatred.  
~~I'm keeping this column an can, if desired, return to these questions that really~~  
~~raise basic considerations of credibility and intent. Because of this limitation,, over-~~  
~~which have no no influence or control, I herein comment on just two.~~

<sup>He said</sup> ~~One is~~ <sup>Americans</sup> that we are responsible for the present killings and other great sufferings because "we give arms and money to Israeli hard-liners." <sup>like</sup> ~~That~~ <sup>=</sup> most of the aid was before the Likud coalition (which <sup>did</sup> happen not to agree with, and was not to any "hard-liners." ~~is a fact.~~ Unless Mr. Meachum regards all Israeli governments as hard-liners.

This raises a question of intended unfairness. Where else have we given military and other aid that was used <sup>abuses in</sup> to kill people? Has he ever commented on Chile and Argentina and all the many other ~~places where~~ military dictatorships, often put into <sup>power</sup> by U.S. governments, and have slaughtered a great many? Not once. They are not Jews so they are not worthy of his condemnation.

In El Salvador more people have been killed than in ~~the open war in~~ Nicaragua. The situation in Guatemala and <sup>H</sup> ~~H~~ <sup>e</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> almost as bad, worse in Guatemala, where a ~~the~~ democratically elected government was overthrown by ours. <sup>all these</sup> We are responsible for ~~all these~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~worst~~ <sup>killings?</sup> in Nicaragua. <sup>It</sup> In fact, when the morning Post was giving major attention to the deaths of two Palestinians, it gave no attention at all <sup>to</sup> ~~the~~ that day's news, that some of <sup>the Contras</sup> ~~these~~ we arm and pay had kidnapped a number of rural civilians, wounded more than a dozen, killed four (which is twice the number of killed Palestinians, but again, they were not killed by Jews) and once again they had kidnapped an American representative of a religious group. This was not quite as drastic as their previous record of killing American relief <sup>and religious</sup> workers, with <sup>our</sup> "our" money and "our" arms.

Indeed, at about the same time, the PLO announced that it had intended <sup>of State</sup> ~~getting~~ <sup>assassinating</sup> Secretary Schultz with a massive car bomb that, fortunately, the Israeli police <sup>intercepted</sup> caught. This was buried in a news story <sup>or columnists</sup> and was not the subject of any righteous editorial <sup>indignation</sup>. But again, the PLO is not Jews so it isn't all that bad. The intended victim

was, after all, only the American Secretary of State, not an Arab, and he was only there in a futile effort to bring peace to that area.

*Of Dr. Meachum's*  
~~The other ~~mis~~ misrepresentation I address is his version of the accuse of the rioting that ~~is the only cause of the deaths~~, *is no more than* his version is that the violence was only an attempt by "Palestinians to deal themselves in." If this means anything at all, it means that the Palestinians ~~wanted~~ *sought* their own state by these means.~~

~~After~~  
At the end of the first World War Great Britain divided Palestine, having promised homelands to both Jews and Palestinians. A little more than half ~~of~~ ~~Palestine~~ was placed under the control of King Abdullah and was called "Trans-Jordan." It is the part of Palestine across the Jordan River. Abdullah started talking to Israelis and was assassinated for it, making ~~him~~ *Hussein shortened the name to "Jordan."* Hussein king. *It* Egypt's Sadat also was assassinated after he made the only Islamic peace with Israel, another indication that other than Israel, none of the *countries in that* people ~~of the area~~ really want peace. All the *power* other Islamic ~~powers~~ are still in a state of war with Israel after 40 years and four *of* ~~defeats~~ *in wars with Israel.*

The truth about "dealing themselves in" is that regularly and often Arabs have refused their own state in the part of Palestine not included in Jordan. *They want to wipe Israel out*

Mr. Meachum praises, recommends and takes as his authority a book by a novelist. With this precedent I take as my source not a novelist *gentile* but an eminent British historian, Paul Johnson. His "A History of the Jews" is currently available, published by Harper & Row.

*He has yet to lament the murder of Jews.*  
~~Because Mr. Meachum has all this outrage because Arabs are killed when their violence is opposed, I note that~~ *seven* Mr. Johnson states that in only the first ~~ten~~ years after Israel was established "over 1,300 Israelis were murdered during Arab raids." *Most* ~~many~~ were infants, ~~and~~ *Arab* small children, ~~weem~~ women and old men. The rate of ~~murder~~ *murder/in-*creased when Islamic powers provided the PLO with more arms *and money.* *Islam used them*  
*insert here ->* Why are there all these Arab refugees? Because ~~that was the Islamic means of~~ *Mr. Johnson* using them to end the state of Israel. He quotes Egypt radio: "The refugees are the

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on p. 3

In Historian Meachum's version, "before Dec. 9, 1987 there were only demonstrations, strikes, riots and the like, quickly put down by security ~~of~~ forces." He had shed no tears for any <sup>Jewish</sup> victims of Islamic terrorism, not even for the Islamic victims of it, who greatly outnumber those killed in <sup>the</sup> wars and <sup>current violence</sup> ~~an effort to end violence~~ by Israel.

cornerstone in the Arab <sup>struggle</sup> against Israel. The refugees are the armaments..."

Israel has accepted all the <sup>Jewish</sup> refugees who could get out of Islamic countries <sup>but</sup> ~~the~~ ~~the~~ Islamic states <sup>resulted taking the</sup> would not take Arab refugees. <sup>In</sup> In fact, they blocked planned Israeli improvements in the Gaza strip, which is under Israeli occupation only because Egypt would not have it. Despite this, Israel has created better conditions than ever existed in Gaza, and in what is called the West Bank, it created four Arab universities and other improvements not put in place during the 20 years Jordan occupied it.)

There is no space <sup>to mention</sup> for all the many times an independent <sup>Palestinian</sup> Arab state was rejected <sup>by the Arab</sup> in all instances without any discussion at all <sup>by the Arabs</sup>.

In July, 1937, before Israel was created, the British Peel Commission proposed giving the Arabs 80 percent of what remained of Palestine. The ~~Jews~~ <sup>Jews</sup> agreed but the ~~Arabs~~ <sup>Arabs</sup> ~~refused~~ turned it down, "without discussion."

The UN's <sup>1947</sup> proposal, which included an independent Arab state, <sup>of</sup> giving Arabs 75 percent of what Arabs didn't already have of Palestine, <sup>of</sup> Arabs turned down, "without discussion."

"Despite... Arab unwillingness to negotiate, the Israelis attempted, on the basis of the 1949 armistice lines, to get agreement on permanent frontiers. This would have meant the surrender of some territory. ... The Arabs refused direct talks with the Israelis."

This and much more like it is readily available in the last chapter of Historian Johnson's respected work, from which I quote.

I learned from this book what I'd not known, that Hitler's is only the most dramatic of holocausts. By a century and a half after the birth of Christ more than 6,000,000 Jews had been murdered or disappeared without trace <sup>Christ's</sup> but as of the time of his birth Jews were 10 percent of the Roman empire.

Tears are appropriate for all, not <sup>or</sup> only some of those who are killed, <sup>But</sup> and they ought not be the "yellow rain" <sup>heard this</sup> (of the "Yellow wind" column, reserved for the Arabs who brought it <sup>at</sup> themselves under the inspiration of the world's <sup>greatest</sup> most virulent terrorist who to Mr Meachum is <sup>not a terrorist but is a</sup> no more or less than a true "patriot."

Today the Palestinian uprising against the occupation army enters its fourth month.

Before Dec. 9, 1987, there were only demonstrations, strikes, riots and the like, quickly put down by security forces. Not as quickly as all that. But for casual newspaper readers, it seemed the Israeli armed forces had the Palestinian "natives" well under control. U.S. media cooperated by ignoring beatings and other injuries.

Shooting deaths fared little better. Occasionally, in the back pages of major metropolitan newspapers, buried in a world news roundup section, it was possible to read that another Palestinian had been killed. Sometimes a single paragraph would give a box score, covering several days.

No wonder the Israelis were caught by surprise when world protests erupted over their use of live ammunition. They had been shooting Palestinians for years, to no complaints from the West.

In Western eyes, Palestinians were "no problem" until three months ago, except when they surfaced as "terrorists." As a people, Americans made no attempt to link the killings of "innocents," inside the occupied territories and abroad. When Palestinians reciprocated the violence inflicted on their people by striking back at Israelis, they were branded murderers. And I agree.

But were the three young men who cut down in cold blood a widower father of three this week more guilty of murder than was the West Bank settler who shot a teen-aged boy in 1986? The young men died in a barrage of fire laid down by security forces, which also killed two other hostages and wounded eight more. When finally brought to trial last week, the settler was sentenced to six months "community service," according to the latest *Jerusalem Post*. In this country, that kind of punishment would be reserved for someone found guilty of killing another man's pet dog.

In fact, the bus hijacking and deaths on Monday happened in the Negev desert, well inside pre-1967 Israel, far removed from the scenes of the uprising. It was the sixth attempt by "outside" Palestinians to deal themselves in since December.

As in every other previous incident, the outsiders died. These are suicide missions, but neither plain nor simple. They represent the frustration of an entire generation of Palestinians to avenge the wrongs visited on their people. The three young men committed murder. But it is a blood-guilt they share with Israelis, in and out of uniform.

In all these murders, on both sides, Americans, both Christian and Jewish, are accomplices. We give arms and money to Israeli hard-liners. By our racist attitude toward Palestinians, we force young men and women into the arms of the terrorist factions.

Still, for its present crisis, Israel has itself to blame. For proof, I recommend

a small book by a leading Israeli novelist, just published in this country.

"Yellow Wind" is no work of fiction. Author David Grossman employed his novelist's gifts to capture the feelings as well as the story of people trapped inside the West Bank occupation mentality, both Jewish and Palestinians. The book resulted from a commission by an Israeli news magazine for Mr. Grossman to write on the occupied territory 20 years after it was taken from Jordan in the June 1967 war. An excerpt appeared in *New Yorker* magazine earlier this year.

In only 216 pages, Mr. Grossman captures truth about the occupation. There are no heroes. He tells of the Israeli mother killed by a Palestinian firebomb, while driving home with her family. Of the Palestinian father tied up and riddled with over 30 bullets by Israeli soldiers, while farming his grandfather's ancestral land.

The time frame of the book is exactly one year ago, seven weeks starting in the early spring and extending to the eve of Israel's 1987 Independence Day in May, seven months before the uprising began. The original article appeared last June.

There is nothing sensationalist about Mr. Grossman's reporting. The impact comes from his accomplishment in depicting the occupation's dehumanizing effect on human beings. Most chilling for me was his chapter on an Israeli military government officer. Most revealing was his account of the West Bank workers forced to live locked up in factories, schools and other workplaces every twilight, because laws forbid them to pass the night inside Israel.

Mr. Grossman makes no connection with a nuclear holocaust. It is entirely possible that the old Arab never heard of Hiroshima, yet that is the kind of destruction his vision evokes. The bus hijacked this week was headed for the facility where Israel manufactures modern thermonuclear devices, more terrible than Hiroshima's atomic bomb, more capable of littering the land with bodies and turning mountains to yellow powder.

If you doubt that there are men in Israel capable of using their modern "yellow wind" to fulfill their dream of a restored Biblical Israel, then you will not be prepared for the passion in Mr. Grossman's dispassionate prose.

In the past three months, each day has brought new pain. "Yellow Wind" adds to my sorrow for the human beings, on both sides, caught up in the sorrows of today's Palestine. For had Israel's leaders paid attention last summer, when David Grossman's reporting first appeared, the current tragedy could have been prevented. But maybe not. The horrible fear is that events have taken the play out of the hands of mortal man. There may be no avoiding the yellow wind, as the old Arab foretold.

Roy Meachum

3/9/87  
'Yellow Wind'

