

Harold Weisberg

Roy Meachum: Huffing and puffing

When Roy Meachum is Roy Meachum, as in his column mistitled "Matter of Label," the result, inevitably, is misrepresentation. There is no way that reader can ascertain from this dishonest representation what I wrote or what he said. I wrote two articles, responding to his two that I characterized as anti-Semitic and anti-Israel propaganda. His were titled "Spy" and "After the Spy." Only my first article was published. Its thrust is not the single reference Meachum, characteristically, misrepresents. It is that for his propaganda purposes he combined what are not related, the Pollard spy case and the Reaganite Iran/Nicaragua mess. In his dishonest pretense of responding, Meachum ignores all but a third of a single sentence. In that I noted his untruthfulness in alleging that the Tower Report said that Israel is "instigator" of that scandalous and corrupt ploy. *It did not!*

Because he cannot respond to what I *did* say Meachum seeks to dismiss it as "a persiflage of irrelevant data culled (sic) from the paperback version of the Report." Neither my allegation of his undented anti-Semitic and anti-Israel propaganda nor my direct quotation of the *actual official* text of the Tower Report is decently or honestly described as "persiflage," which (Random House unabridged dictionary) means "a frivolous style of treating a subject." I "culled" nothing and his use of "version" (there is only *one* version) is characteristic of his lack of concern for faithful reporting. He flaunts his ignorance in saying that "the paperback version . . . was produced by the New York Times." The "production" was by the Times Books Division of Random House, co-publisher with Bantam Books, which issued the lower-priced paperback. Aside from the cover and copyright page, there is not a word that is not the *full* and *official* text of that Report. "Version" indeed!

Meachum begins his evasiveness saying that I "accused the editor of gross negligence for permitting me to report that Israel instigated the selling of arms to Iran that resulted in the White House scandal" and wanted him fired. I did not. I did not complain that Meachum "reported" anything. I objected to his false representation that the Tower Report said that Israel was the "instigator" and I said that does not appear in the Tower Report. *It does not* or he would quote it. Instead, he cites the irrelevant. What the Report actually says and is the title of the very section he quotes is, as I correctly stated, that "The Israelis Provide a Vehicle."

Not only does the Report not state that Israel "instigated" the whole stinking mess, in a part Meachum omits while quoting from both sides of it, the Report actually states that the actual "instigation" was much earlier and by an Iranian. It also says that the CIA, which "considered him neither reliable nor trustworthy, then dropped the matter."

At this point the Report also states — and Meachum also omits — that *before* there was any deal "Michael Ledeen, an NSC (White House) staff consultant" went to Israel and that "two months later, the United States received the first of three separate requests regarding Iran from the Israeli government." Again at this very point the Report notes that Israel "asked the position of the U.S. government toward engaging in a political discourse with Iranian

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officials."

None of Meachum's quotations in his attempt to explain his misrepresentations away says that Israel was the "instigator" and thus they are irrelevant. Their use is deceptive. Meachum confuses a shipment to Iran, which Israel made *in accord with U.S. desires*, with the entire mess and its instigation. He then adds to the lie by pretending it also is what the Report says, "that Israel more than instigated the Iran arms deal."

Then there is that greasy-kid stuff of his threatening me and charging me with libel. He says a lawyer he does not name so assured him — all the while being careful *not* to say *what* the alleged libel *is*. He does not say — or even suggest — what it is because it does not exist and he cannot specify it. This allegation is his kid's way of trying to defend himself and feed his clacqué.

And if any lawyer told him there is libel, that lawyer is as much in need of a refresher course in the law as Meachum is in Freshman Journalism 1.

Meachum accuses me of "malice." In the

legal sense this means "intent to do evil." While all his writing that I have addressed and refuted is malicious, designed to "do evil" to Israel and to Jews, what I have done and still again he fails to refute is show that his writing is not honest, not decent, not fair and not accurate. If he could have refuted this over so many months he would have. He is, as I said, so used to rushing to make more money and to not being checked out that he says anything that at any time appears to serve his anti-Semitic and anti-Israel diatribes.

What I actually addressed and he, with typical dishonesty, misrepresents, is what I stated in my first sentence, that he "converted two tragedies into more of his vicious anti-Semitism and anti-Israel propaganda."

That he misrepresents what I *actually* addressed in the two articles I submitted and says that a lawyer assured him it is libelous is no more than a childish threat, a silly effort to intimidate, and a "big talk" attempt to puff himself up — vintage Meachum.

Harold Weisberg, who lives in Frederick, has written frequently for this page.