

## "A RIGHT AND A DUTY"

"In an all-out effort to suppress the facts," our learned commentator declares, "the media, foreign and domestic" were prevented from covering the disturbances in Gaza. He faults our media for its failure to report (he knows even of castrations I have not seen reported elsewhere) and he condemns, "in the name of" his "children and grandchildren," our abdicated "leaders, political and spiritual," but his "own conscience will not permit" him to forget."

He has warnings for those who write commentaries: They will suffer the "heat" for "editorials and commentaries on the Middle East, unless virulently pro-Israel." Not just pro-Israel - they get this "heat" unless they are "virulently" pro-Israel.

As from their graves he saw Dr. King and Hitler's Jewish victims of the Warsaw ghetto supporting his beliefs in contradiction to those for which they lived and died, so also did he see editorials and commentaries I did not see and he knows of their authors being punished when that did not happen. So it is with great minds.

His conscience, what he does in the name of his children and grandchildren, his oft-repeated dedication to the great tradition of American journalism, and even his quotations from other sources, some out of context where not unfaithful and some not existing at all, like Israeli "imperialism" extending to the Euphrates River far to its east, soared so high they missed what was readily available to him. And about just the things he blusters about. Like those forgotten earlier 20 years of <sup>Egypt's</sup> Gaza's <sup>ob</sup> occupation and the rights of those peoples, then and now, rights he says they only now do not have.

Charles Krauthammer, editor, TV and Washington Post commentator, after noting that none of the Arab nations was willing to absorb any Arab Palestinian refugees, wrote,

"Take Gaza. During its 20-year rule of the Gaza Strip, Egypt not only

refused to absorb Palestinian refugees, it kept them stateless and homeless. They were denied passports. They were not even permitted to travel or to work in Egypt. Even today, Egypt makes work and travel very difficult for the 1 percent of Palestinians who live on the Egyptian side of Gaza. ... If the Arab countries had any interest in Palestinian refugees other than as a means to discomfit Israel they would have absorbed them 40 years ago rather than let them sit in squalor and frustration."

Particularly, I would add, the 18 percent of them who have, in the uncited statistics of our pundit, some college education, in contrast to Israeli Jews, only 14 percent of whom, he says, have been to college. What country in the Islamic world cannot find use for those who have been to college?

Of all the displaced people since World War II, Krauthammer writes, "only the Palestinians have been so cynically manipulated by their fellow nationals and coreligionists. How cynically? In the mid-1970s Israel tried to give new housing to some of the Palestinian refugees living in the Gaza Strip. It moved them out of the camps into more livable houses nearby. Whereupon the U.N. General Assembly, urged on by the Arab states, passed Resolution 32/90 condemning Israel's forced relocation of these refugees and demanding their return 'to the camps from which they were removed.'"

In discussing the concern that Arafat and Abu Nidal, the terrorist our seer hails as not a terrorist, only as a patriot, will use this territory to "continue their war against a greatly weakened Israel from there," Krauthammer continues, "it is a conviction grounded in fact that Arafat and the PLO say explicitly that recovery of the West Bank ~~(to which I return next)~~ is simply stage 1 of the struggle to liberate all of Palestine." Here he refers to one of the places demonstrators "chanted 'death to the Jews.'"

Addressing the fact that this Arab violence against Israel is not new and has nothing to do with the deplorable conditions in Gaza, he recalls that

"it was 23 years ago that Fatah sent men to blow up the waterworks of Bet Shean." There then "were no occupied territories ... None of the current pretexts for Palestinian violence even existed when Fatah began its war against Israel. The issue, then as now, was not Israel's occupation but Israel's existence."

This is why of all the Islamic states only Egypt agreed to a peace treaty with the Israel they all combined to attack 40 years ago, to wipe Israel and Israelis out, a provision of the PLO's charter and a reason Israel refuses to have anything to do with the PLO.

Writing for the op-ed page of the New York Times from Jerusalem, David Bar-Illan, a concert pianist who is also director of a private New York and Jerusalem antiterrorist institute, wrote that, although the condition of the refugees in Gaza is "unconscionable, blaming Israel" for it "is even more unconscionable. Israel has consistently offered to provide housing for the refugees nearby. But all its efforts have been cynically shot down not only by the Arabs, who seem to prefer that the refugees fester and remain a political problem, but by the whole world community."

What our local sage never addresses, how to resolve this terrible situation by political means, is precluded, Bar-Illan says, because Arabs make that impossible. He cites that when Jordan's King Hussein was about to accept an Israeli proposal that he and representatives of the Palestinians other than the PLO begin to negotiate, he backed off "under pressure from Syria and the Soviet Union. ... His own grandfather (King Abdullah), as well as many others, big and small (including Egypt's Sadat and Lebanon's President Gemayel) have been assassinated for considering compromise and coexistence with Israel."

The intensity of this Arab determination to wipe Israel out is illustrated, he says, by the refusal of Egypt, now at peace and the only Islamic state formally at peace with Israel, "to allow maps contributed by Unicef (of the UN) into Egyptian schools because they included the name Israel - and this



only 10 years after Anwar Sadat's visit to Jerusalem."

Suffer, little children, in the land where our local man of conscience says 25 percent of the people have been to college, Egypt.

It does seem strange that, for all his sense of duty, for all his conscience and what he does in the name of his children and grandchildren (again, suffer, little children), he repeated many irrelevancies, like saying that American Jews defeated Illinois Republican Senator Charles Percy and persuaded our own Mac Mathias not to seek reelection (which mere yokels believed was because of the opposition to them of the right-wing extremists in the GOP). He found this appropriate for repeating in this series on the Middle East, which he began after this violence erupted there, even though he had been corrected earlier.

Perhaps his all-knowing mind, carrying so heavy a burden, could not encompass the simple English and uncomplicated fact in the sources I quote above.

Why else would nothing at all of this nature - and what I quote is but a small portion of what has always been readily available if one wanted to find competent sources - appear in all those many columns of conscience, duty and principle?

As his column title says, there is "right" and there is "duty."

There are also different drummers to whose beat writers step.

Lest it be feared that I cite only non-Islamic sources, As'ad AbuKhalil is next.