

'After the Spy' equals Big Lie

It was inevitable, given the possibilities of a little twist here and a big lie there, that Roy Meachum would again impose upon the trust of his readers and indulgent editors who gave him more than 46 column inches: he again converted two tragedies into more of his vicious anti-Semitism and anti-Israeli propaganda. Meachum is now so certain of being published regardless of his offenses — and he has yet to address, leave alone refute, the errors I have attributed to him — that he even lies about what the Tower report says.

There is no connection whatsoever between the confession of the spy Jonathan Pollard and the Reaganite effort to bribe the terrorist Iranians with arms in a foolish and shameful hostages deal. However, because of the propaganda — as distinguished from legitimate column possibilities — Meachum made up a nonexistent connection that in itself is beyond belief. In this (along with his usual false pretense that Jews are a monolith and either subservient to or dominating Israel, whichever he thinks best suits whatever propaganda he is up to) Meachum is openly the practitioner of the Hitler doctrine about lying: make the lie big and repeat it over and over again.

The first of this pair of columns, "Spy," is largely classic anti-Semitism that Meachum either steals from standard anti-Semitic sources or makes up himself. It simply isn't true. It serves to let him lead into and to pretend there is a connection when there isn't between the Pollard spying and the stupidity, incompetence and ultimate in wimpiness of the Reagan administration as reported by the Tower board. So Meachum ends this first column with the falsehood that "the Tower panel clearly pointed out that Israel sometimes acts in ways that damage the best interest of the United States."

It is perhaps wise that here Meachum does not make up a citation for his made-up language *not in the Tower report* because he did that in the second column and I have done what apparently his editors never do, checked him out.

Perhaps because he always gets away with it and keeps getting published, Meachum carried this misrepresentation farther in his second column in which he seeks to and falsely represents that the Tower panel did hold Israel responsible for the fiasco.

"Damage to the best interest of the United States," which does not appear in the report to which Meachum's first column attributes it, by his second vilification he expanded into "Israel's role as instigator" of this scandalous and corruption-ridden Iran/contra ploy.

For Israel's alleged role as "instigator," which also does not appear in the Tower report, Meachum does have a citation. (His citations have two problems: there are no such pages and they are not to the language Meachum uses.) This citation, on Meachum's own language and punctuation, is "(Israel's role as instigator is summarized (sic) on page III-7 in the Tower report.)"

The only available edition of the Tower report is a *New York Times* "special" published by Bantam. In it the chapters, not the pages, are identified with Roman numerals and the sections of the chapters are identified with Arabic numbers. Section 7 of chapter III is titled — no, "Israel," is not even mentioned in it — "The Second Channel Is Opened But the Initiative Leaks." "Summarized," Meachum says this says of "Israel's role as instigator." "Summarized" indeed, when *Israel is not mentioned once in the entire section!*

There is, however, a section of another chapter that does mention Israel. It is only four short paragraphs in length, slightly more than a single one of those small Bantam pages with fairly large body type. Sure enough, Meachum is aware of it and he tries to misuse it in his effort to pretend that there is a link between the Pollard spying and this report which, according to Meachum, "declared Israel's objectives could be 'in conflict' with those of the United States. (Tower report, pg. IV-12.)"

There is a part IV, but it has only four sections, not 12. The

third is "The Role of the Israelis." So, at the outset, the report is not talking here about the Israeli *government* but about *individual* Israeli citizens whose connection with the mess and well publicized before the report was issued.

This section concludes by stating that the United States government "is responsible for its own conclusions. Key participants in the U.S. deliberations made the point that Israel's objectives and interests in this initiative were different from, and in some respects in conflict with, those of the United States." The report then states that "there is nothing improper *per se* about this fact," that the Israelis dealt with the Reaganites.

If there has been any official delineation of official U.S. interests other than those stated by President Reagan, I am not aware of it, and from what has been made public it is apparent that Israel did try to serve his "objectives and interests." In any event, the bobtailed Meachum version is *not* identical with the report and this language in the report refers to the opinions of those who are themselves involved in the scandal and hardly impartial, "key participants," underscored above.

This is not enough for the Meachum who fabricated the nonexistent official conclusion that Israel "instigated" the Reaganite mess. He follows this bobtailed version with the baldfaced statement that underscores the purpose of his dishonestly in saying that Israel was the "instigator." He says that the United States was merely a "participant" in its own arms-for-hostages scandal: "... the commission held the United States government entirely responsible for its participation in the arms deals." The report does not engage in Meachum's anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic propaganda for him. It says only what I quote above, that our government is "responsible for its own decisions." "Decisions," *not* "participation." This is Meachum's big lie, that Israel was the innovator and the Reaganites merely "participated" in their own scheme.

The text of this report is fewer than 100 small pages of large-size type. It has an appendix of about 450 pages. In the text there are only the short passages I refer to and subsection A3 of Part III, "The Israelis Provide a Vehicle." (This does not say or mean that Israel cooked up the whole deal or "instigated" it.)

Assuming that Meachum had some innocent and legitimate purpose in this pair of columns, and what I have not yet really addressed, his other lies about Israel, Jews and the Pollard case are neither innocent nor legitimate, what in the world impels him to lie when so much of this Tower report appeared in the metropolitan papers and within days was in the bookstores in full for only \$5.50?

Why does he lie to begin with? Why does he have to? Why this compulsion to make serious tragedies more serious and painful? Why must he phony up lies about Israel and about Jews?

What arrogance and what contempt he flaunts for all of us to him yokels when he presumes either that we are too uninterested to read such a report or that none of us would bother to see if once again he lied.

Will the time never come when the papers cease his use of them for subdued repetition of Hitlerian evil and propaganda?

Are there no local standards for decency, honesty and ethics in local journalism?

What impels the papers to indulge Meachum in his persisting evil of inciting hatred, intolerance and in misinforming those who trust the papers?

How much more often will it have to be proven that he is not honest? How much more time will pass before he is required not to pontificate but to address with specifics the specific criticism of his anti-Semitic propaganda and his factual error?

When will you realize that one who lies and abuses trust and misuses newspaper space for propaganda, especially racial propaganda, and even lies about what a readily available official report says is an explosion waiting for a short fuse?

Harold Weisberg, of Frederick, writes frequently for this page.