

Ms. Mary McGrory
Washington Post
1150 15 St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20071

4/20/91

Dear Ms McGrory,

You expressed the hope that I read the story on proposed new Israeli settlements in the occupied territories. I did, as I have followed all the Post's reporting from and about that area, as well as what I can learn from other public sources. You then say, "I think intransigence like ~~this~~ that is also a reason for the absence of peace in the area." I do not disagree that the Israeli government is being stubborn on that issue but I call to your attention that there was the same absence of peace when that was not an issue, before Israel captured that territory from Jordan, which also had no right to occupy and hold it. About which there was no clamor at all, was there?

What I did not read in today's Post is what I heard on radio news yesterday, Mubarek's minimum terms for agreeing just to talk about getting to negotiations, Israeli agreement to give those territories up as a condition to just talking. What would be left to negotiate?

Mubarek is described by the Post and almost all others as the most moderate of the Arab leaders Baker wants to get to negotiating. At the other end is Syria, most agree.

I do not recall reading in the Post what Syria did this year, of all places, at a meeting of the U.N.'s Human Rights Commission. Nabila Shaalan, the second-ranking member of its delegation, accused Jews of killing Christians to use their blood in making Matzohs. In reporting this under the headline, "Scandal at the Human Rights Commission," La Tribune de Geneve noted the presence when she said this and much more of the Commission's chairman, Enrique Bernales, Jan Martenson, U.N. Secretary for Human Rights, and John Pace, the Commission's secretary-general, all of whom were silent.

The source she cited is Syrian Defense Minister Major General Mustafa Tlas, his book, "The Matzoh of Zion."

Syria has also been flooding the Muslim world with reprints of the Czarist fabrication, "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion."

Fabrications of this sort have for generations been used to incite extreme violence against Jews. I remember Henry Ford offering the Protocols free on his nationwide radio programs of the 1930s. The networks exercised no censorship and he did this regularly.

How much do you think this Syrian government wants real peace with any Jewish state? To say nothing about the Muslim multitudes inflamed by Arab leaders going back, in my recollection to the grand mufti of Jerusalem, who spent World War II working for and propagandizing for Hitler but was not held to be a war criminal by the Allies and was turned loose for continuing the efforts he made for and under Hitler.

I do hope you find time and have the interest to read the last chapter of Johnson's book and that it interests you enough to want to read the rest of it so that you may have a better understanding of the long and bloody history and of the enormous complexities of the present.

Two peoples can lay claim to the same land, Jews because Judea and Samaria is where they all come from and Arabs because Mohammed ~~because he~~ conquered it and drove out all the Jews he did not kill, making slaves of the surviving men and using the surviving women for sex as well as slavery. That holocaust marks the beginning of the religion of the Muslim world.

I wish I could see any reason to believe that meaningful peace there is possible today.

Or that any Arab leader could hope to survive recognizing the State of Israel. Not one has. And despite the interpretation of our government, uncritically accepted almost universally, Arafat did not recognize the right of the State of Israel to exist in peace. He used the word "peoples," not "state." ~~The~~ PLO's charter has not been changed and just before Arafat mumbled what our government interpreted as meaning what it does not mean, the Palestinian National Council had just met and refused to change its charter or to recognize the State of Israel's right to exist in any form or size.

Have you ever asked yourself what real choices any Israeli government has or what it confronts if it is to survive or how it can protect its people or why all the Muslim world has remained in a state of war with Israel from the day it was established, saved for ~~for~~ Sadat, who did not survive it?

The information the people of our country get from the major media does not give them a real understanding of the actualities and most of those who give them the information they have do not have the time to get a real understanding of all the many and conflicting realities and what underlies them.

I do hope you get a glimmer of this from that chapter of Johnson's.

Sincerely,



Harold Weisberg

Mention of Blood Libel Against Jews at U.N.

Israel, the WJC and the United States sought to generate the strongest possible condemnation of the ritual blood libel leveled against Jews by Syria at a session of the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva.

The polemic, by the second-ranking member of the Syrian delegation, Nabila Shaalan, so far has elicited neither dissent nor comment from the Commission's top officials.

The daily *La Tribune de Geneve* reported it under the headline "Scandal at the Human Rights Commission: A Tough and Purely Anti-Semitic Declaration."

Yitzhak Lior, Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, called on the Commission's Chairman, Enrique Bernales Ballesteros of Peru, to "denounce this statement publicly and unequivocally in order to preserve the credibility and honor of the Commission."

The U.S. Ambassador, Morris Abram, sent a letter to Jan Martenson, the U.N. Undersecretary for Human Rights, decrying the "absurd and patently false" statements made by the Syrian representative and the WJC told Martenson of "our unqualified condemnation of the revival of one of the worst anti-Semitic canards going back to medieval times."

It was revived by Shaalan during the February 8 debate over the agenda item on racism and racial discrimination.

She recommended that Commission members read "a valuable book which confirms the racist character of Zionism."

It is called *The Mattzah of Zion* and was published in 1985 by the Syrian Defense Minister, Maj. Gen. Mustafa Tlas. He justified the ritual murder charges brought against Jews in Damascus in 1840 for the death of a Catholic missionary.

The blood libel in various forms dates back to medieval Europe and has been one of the most potent incitements to physical violence against Jews. It accuses Jews of using the blood of Christians, usually young children, to make their Passover matzot.

In Damascus 151 years ago, leaders of the Jewish community were arrested and tortured until they would say they killed a Catholic friar, Father Tomaso, and used his blood for ritual purposes.

One of the accused died in prison; eight were condemned to death. They were saved only by the intervention of Adolphe Cremieux of France and Sir Moses Montefiore of Britain with the Egyptian ruler of Syria, Mehmet Ali.

Turkey in the meantime regained control of Syria, and Cremieux and Montefiore were able to obtain from Sultan Abd al-Majid a denunciation of the blood libel as a base falsehood.

The Syrian delegate claimed the book proved Jews engaged in ritual murder.

"According to this book, during the Middle Ages, Jews could kill and take your

blood to make his Zionist bread. I recommend to every member of this Commission to read this book, which is the story of Father Tomaso, who was sent to Damascus.

"At the time of his murder, he was 33 and practiced medicine. Whoever reads this book will be informed of the reason behind Father Tomaso's murder and will clearly discover the racist reality of Zionism," she added.

As *La Tribune de Geneve* pointed out, Shaalan made her provocative response in the presence of Bernales, Jan Martenson, director of the Human Rights Center, and John Pace, the Commission's secretary general, none of whom reacted. □

Survivors of Austrian Concentration Camps Sought

The United States Department of Justice has requested the assistance of the World Jewish Congress in locating survivors of two subcamps of the notorious Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria.

The Department's Office of Special Investigations, which is the government agency responsible for prosecuting Nazi criminals and their collaborators, is currently pursuing a case relating to the Mauthausen subcamps.

Specifically, the Department is seeking to locate persons who were imprisoned in Loibl-Pass during the period of the summer of 1944 to May 1945 as well as Gusen I during the period of June 1942 to August of 1944.

The Department points out that because there were a number of camps designated Gusen it seeks to identify Gusen I by noting that it contained several Austrian and German company plants including, Deutsche Erd- und Steinwerke, Steyr-Daimler-Puch, and Messerschmitt.

Individuals who can be of assistance in this investigation are asked to contact: Miss Bessy Pupko, World Jewish Congress, 501 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022. Tel (212) 755-5770.

Mary McGrory

April 12, 1991

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

Thank you for your letter. I'll try to read the material you sent. I hope you read the story in the morning paper about new Israeli settlements proposed for the occupied territories. I think intransigence like that is also a reason for the absence of peace in the area.

Sincerely,

Mary McGrory

The Washington Post 1150 15TH STREET, NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20071