

## Editorial/comment

### Series documents UNRWA's anti-Israel bias

**U**nmasking UNRWA, a Jewish Telegraphic Agency series now running in The Jewish Post & News, is a superb example of investigative journalism. The series provides an in-depth look at the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), and how biased it is in favor of the Palestinian side in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

More disturbingly, the stories provide examples of Palestinian terrorists using those UN refugee camps as bases for planning and carrying out attacks against Israel during the latest Palestinian intifada, and then, sheltering themselves in the camps under the umbrella of UN "neutrality".

The UN created UNRWA in 1949, intending it as a "temporary agency" focused on "relief work" for Palestinian refugees.

But unlike the UN High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), which helps the other 19.2 million refugees around the globe, UNRWA was never assigned to find permanent solutions to the refugees' plight.

In contrast, UNRWA's definition of "refugee" counts even migrants who've lived in the area for as little as two years.

It further expanded that definition in the 1950s

when, in an unprecedented move, JTA reporter Michael Jordan writes, UNRWA included "descendants of the original refugees".

So a Palestinian "refugee" population that began in the late 1940s, when "hundreds of thousands" of Palestinians left their homes, has now expanded to "some 4.3 million today", about one-third of them in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In contrast, hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees that fled their homes in the Arab world after Israel became a state were "quickly resettled in Israel or the West."

The anti-Israel bias of UN refugee camps is partly due to the fact that "99 per cent" of the staffs are Palestinians, many of them fanatically anti-Israel.

As for changes to UNRWA's mandate to make it less biased and more responsible for anti-Israel violence camp residents commit, that will be virtually impossible, due to the Arab/Muslim "automatic majority" in the UN.

Read this "Unmasking UNRWA" series closely if you have a chance, including the story starting at the bottom left of page 1 in this week's issue. It's one of the most damning reports yet on the deeply anti-Israel bias of an agency that's supposed to have an "impartial" mandate.

### Dry Bones GIVING HAMAS A BIG BREAK



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## Water wars looming on the horizon in Middle East, other areas

British defence minister makes alarming forecast

**O**ne of the major priorities for a new Israeli government will be ensuring enough water for a growing population amid steadily decreasing water resources.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES



YORAM HAMZRACH/HEAST

The National Water Carrier, linking the Sea of Galilee to the nation's major urban and agricultural regions, was designed and launched at a time when the Israeli population was about half of its current number of



Israel's National Water Carrier completed in 1964.

**JOHN REID,** British defence minister: A pessimistic forecast.

over seven million.

Israeli water planning also includes the Palestinian Authority's (P.A.'s) needs and in the future, will be influenced by the P.A.'s own water development plans. Water will be at the core of any future Israeli-Syrian negotiations and is already a problem with Lebanon. Ensuring water supplies also concerns countries with no obvious and immediate water shortages.

In an address last week at the Chatham House Institute in London, Britain's Minister of Defence John Reid revealed he'd instructed his department and general staff to examine strategic aspects of energy and water resources, and the availability and situation of arable land worldwide.

A pessimistic forecast for the middle of the 21st century suggests future conflicts over vital resources will reach dangerous proportions as the limits of water, oil and gas reserves approach. Middle East strategists were not surprised by Reid's forecasts, or by a similar Pentagon review dated 2003, since water scarcity has been a growing problem for decades, and it's well known oil reserves are also declining rapidly.

At the basis of Reid's assumptions are climate changes directly affecting the geo-political future in certain regions of the world where water, more than any other resource, is in short supply. The British Ministry of Defence forecasts, therefore, that "water wars are looming on the horizon."

Water wars were fought between Israel and Syria decades ago, in what is known as the Syria-Jordan diversion plan, or Israel's Battle of the Water. The problem of who will control the Middle East faucet is constantly intensifying, with severe water shortages already haunting Israel and the P.A. Nowhere else in the world is the

lack of arable land causing such havoc as in the Gaza Strip, the world's most densely populated place.

The Nile River nourishing Egypt appears to be an ever-lasting resource. But Egypt is locked in a narrow arable land straight-jacket with no feasible future other than pushing south. With merely 2.87 percent of Egypt's total land area of 995,450 square kilometers being arable, it is easy to visualize the acute difficulty in feeding a constantly growing population, now 76 million.

Water shortage management will also have an effect on the rapid emergence of new superpowers like India, and China and on the re-awakening of Russia. The Amur River on the borders of Russia's Far East and China, or the Ganges in India will not be able to quench the thirst of these nations in the near future. Leading world powers, therefore, realize they might need to defend their own water resources or demand, through diplomacy or even with the use of military power, consistent and reliable supplies from neighboring, water-rich countries. This alone is one of the reasons for the renewal of a world arms race.

The writer, a Winnipeg journalist, was born and raised in Israel and served as a colonel in the Israel Defence Forces.

## Comment/letters

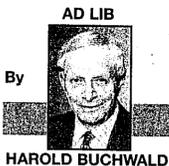
### On far left Jewish academics

Dershowitz takes on obsessive Israel bashers

**I**n a debate with Noam Chomsky at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government late last fall, human rights specialist and Israel advocate Alan Dershowitz called on academics to stop demonizing Israel.



ALAN DERSHOWITZ: Called on fellow academics to stop demonizing Israel.



HAROLD BUCHWALD

"At the moment, I am sad to report that many academics around the world are contributing to an atmosphere that makes peace more difficult to achieve," he said.

Dershowitz, of course, is a distinguished academic himself, an internationally-renowned professor of law at Harvard. Chomsky is the renowned and celebrated linguistics professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a leading voice of the academic far left which delights in and thrives on Israel-bashing. That so many academics in this vigorous and aggressive camp are Jewish is a matter of considerable distress and disappointment.

There are many bastions of Jewish radical anti-Israel advocacy, unfortunately. In the United States, the University of California at Berkeley, University of California at Irvine, Duke University, Columbia, Northwestern, Harvard and Georgetown are frequently described as the hot spots, although many others no doubt exist.

British and Australian universities have their share. In Canada, the major centers are the University of Toronto, Concordia, York and the University of British Columbia. A few are found at the universities of Winnipeg and Manitoba.

There are two principal rationales for the extreme anti-Israel postures of the radicals, including, of course, the Jewish radicals, both of which challenge the very legality or right to exist of the Jewish state.

The first suggests that, notwithstanding the United Nations Resolution which brought it into being, the creation of Israel was illegitimate and illegal. Israel is seen by these far left critics as the quintessential expression of U.S. corporate capitalistic imperialism. A foreign body (the state) and a foreign population (Diaspora Jews) have been unilaterally imposed in a territory (Palestine) and upon an indigenous people (the resident Palestinians) against their will, goes the argument.

As Jonathan Kay put it in a recent National Post column: "the [issue] goes to the heart of Marxism's lingering hold on the academy. The rea-

son generations of Western academics have embraced the doctrine and its many offshoots - anti-globalization, anti-Americanism, deconstructionism, etc. - is that it taps into the personally-felt sense that life is inherently unfair.

The other often-heard thesis is that Israel is an Apartheid (i.e. racist) state, because Jews are favored over everyone else, non-Jews being treated as second-class citizens. This proposition starts with the Law of Return, granting each immigrant Jew automatic citizenship, while denying others the same privilege. Other examples of preferential treatment of Jews are cited, no matter how superficial or inappropriate.

Of course, the term "apartheid" is an Afrikaner word which applied to the separated white and non-white societies in pre-Nelson Mandela South Africa. As a societal notion, it was outlawed by the United Nations. Ergo, the argument runs, Israel being an Apartheid state, it is illegal, as is Zionism. Therefore, it does not have the right to exist.

The radicals' answer to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, accordingly, is a one-state solution, one person-one vote, which, of course, demographically would soon cause Israel to lose its Jewish character.

Consequently, in the current dialogue, Israel is always wrong. The occupation is illegal; the separation wall violates international law; the administration of the territories is unduly cruel and oppressive; the operation of the checkpoints violates Palestinians' human rights; targeted reprisal killings offend the victims civil rights as do home demolitions; and on and on - an utterly unilateralist posture. The Palestinians' atrocities against Israel and Israelis are conveniently dismissed or ignored.

The attack is also fought across U.S. society where vigorous initiatives have been mounted to have public institutions divest their portfolios of investments in corporations which have dealings with Israel. Their actions have been widespread. Action conferences have been mounted. While they have not been particularly successful with their universities, some major churches, particularly the American Presbyterian church, have succumbed.

As Alan Dershowitz wryly observed, "Thank G-d Israel has to make peace with the Palestinians, and not with the professors."

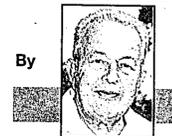
The writer is a Jewish Winnipeg lawyer, a longtime local and national Jewish community leader and a regular commentator in local media.

## 'Not one of us'

Many Israeli Ashkenazim won't vote for him

**A** particularly hilarious episode in the "Yes Prime Minister" TV series featured a

ISRAEL UPDATE



NECHEMIA MEYERS

By conversation between "Prime Minister" Jim Hacker and a thick-headed, crusty English aristocrat. Hacker tells the aristocrat that the

man's well-connected candidate for high office can't be appointed because he is actually a Communist spy. "Impossible," sputtered the aristocrat, "he is one of us and so he can't be one of them."

A similar problem faces Amir Peretz, the Labor Party's candidate for prime minister. Many of the Ashkenazim who have supported Labor election after election won't vote for Peretz, whom they regard as a loud-mouthed Moroccan from a dusty development town in the Negev, "one of them rather than one of us."

It is hard to determine the percentage of Israelis with this racist attitude. In any case, it doesn't prevent Jews of Middle Eastern origin from reaching the top in Israeli public life. Moshe Katzav, President of the State, was born in

Iran, as was Minister of Defence Shaul Mofaz. Then there is the Chief of Staff, Lt. General Dan Halutz, a Sabra whose parents likewise came here from Iran.

What then is the special problem of Amir Peretz? Why does he raise the hackles of European immigrants more than other politicians of Middle Eastern origin?

The social agenda of Peretz certainly bothers some people. He favors raising the minimum wage to \$1000 a month, an increase of nearly 50 per cent, the provision of pensions to all citizens, a steep increase in funds for medical care and a string of other social welfare measures that would improve the life of a million underprivileged Israelis. At the same time, his critics charge, they would



AMIR PERETZ, Labor Party leader: Many Ashkenazim consider him a loud-mouthed Moroccan from a dusty development town.

bankrupt the economy. Also making him unacceptable to some is the fondness he displays for socialist terminology that went out of fashion in Israel a generation ago. He, alone among the candidates, speaks about meeting the needs of the proletariat.

But then he has a right to do so. He spent his early years in relative poverty and hasn't forgotten it. This doesn't cut any ice, however, with the immigrants from the former Soviet Union, many of whom - especially the older ones - are living in poverty and would greatly benefit from the reforms favored by Peretz. Indeed, Russian immigrants generally will not even consider voting for "that Moroccan".

Thus when a Russian-language web site recently asked surfers to select their preferred candidates for prime minister, they listed three people: Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert (Kadima), MK Benjamin Netanyahu (Likud) and Avigdor Lieberman (Yisrael Beiteinu). They didn't bother to list Peretz.

With immigrants from the former Soviet Union making up perhaps 20 per cent of the electorate, their hostility is a very serious handicap. The writer lives in Rehovot, Israel.

## LETTERS

**I** get a lot of answering machines. But the people I talk to are very nice."

- Shoshana Kraut, a Jewish Federation of Winnipeg Young Adult Division volunteer, commenting on young adults she was phoning in one of YAD's "friendraising telethons" this month. See story on page 2.

**S**he said: 'He may be a communist, but she's doing God's work.'

- Ester Reiter, a York University professor, quoting a Winnipeg Jewish grandmother trying to raise bail in the early 1900s for her jailed grandson, Louis Guberman. See story on page 3.

**M**y character begins to take on his patients' symptoms."

- Jonas Chernick, a Jewish former Winnipegger, describing his role in "Lucid", his new film about a psychotherapist plagued with insomnia. See Myron Love's "Our Little Shtetl" feature on page 10.

**G**ym riot was the funnest thing ever done."

- Meirav Nepon, a Gray Academy of Jewish Education Grade 8 student, commenting on the post-Purim event in the Rady Jewish Community Centre gym March 15. See story on page 11.

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