

You deserve a factual look at ...

The "Bashing" of Israel

Who does it? What is behind it?

The Administration, the media, and spokespersons of all kinds are increasingly careful not to offend any minority, ethnic community or lifestyle groups. They do not dare make statements that would reflect negatively against Asiatics, blacks or homosexuals. Those who do make statements that are perceived to be offensive to any such groups are threatened with ostracism and severe damage to their careers. In contrast to other groups, however, American Jews are relatively apathetic and not inclined to "make waves". Partly for that reason and for others that need exploring, there seems to be now high season and ever-increasing volume in the "bashing" of Israel and thus, by indirection, of American Jews, for most of whom the well-being of Israel is of great importance.

What are the facts?

■ The casual newspaper reader can easily come to the conclusion that Israel is a super power. But Israel is a very small country, which, even including the fabled "West Bank", is less than half the size of San Bernardino County, California. Its Jewish population is approximately 3.5 million, about the population of Iowa. Compare that to the twenty-two Arab states, armed to the teeth, and virtually all of them (with the notable exception of Egypt) in a state of war with Israel. They have over 140 million inhabitants and a land area larger than that of the United States. Superpower indeed! The truth is that Israel is a country that from its founding had to fight every day for its survival, had to fight five major wars, and has been forced to convert itself into a virtual armed camp. Secretary Baker's admonition to this small country to face reality and to give up the dream of a "Greater Israel" is totally ludicrous.

■ Israel is constantly being hectorated and admonished by sanctimonious visitors, who lament Israel's "abuse" of its Arab population, in Israel proper and in the administered territories (usually described in the media as "occupied" territories). South Africa's Bishop Tutu used the occasion to make the false analogy between the condition of the blacks in South Africa and the status of the Arabs in Israel. This is totally unfair, of course, and one would expect that the Bishop knows it. The blacks in South Africa are disenfranchised and politically impotent. The Arabs in Israel, on the other hand, have the vote, have every civil right, are members of the Knesset (parliament), and members of Israel's diplomatic service. Nelson Mandela, who was generously supported by South African Jews in his struggle for freedom, had the bad taste physically to embrace that arch-terrorist Yassir Arafat, and to make the gratuitous statement that Zionism is a "unique form of colonialism". What a distortion! What a colossal lie! Zionism is the national liberation movement whose purpose has been for 2,000 years to restore Zion, the ancient land of Israel, to the Jewish people. One must marvel at the love affair of the South African black leadership with the Arabs. It is the Arabs who, even today, keep black slaves; it is the Arabs who continue to engage in genocide against blacks in such countries as Chad, the Sudan and Mauritania; it is the Arabs who for years have fueled apartheid by selling millions of barrels of oil to South Africa; it is the Arabs who by their extortionist pricing of oil have brought ruin, famine, and destruction to many of the countries of black Africa.

■ Ex-president Carter, in his recent swing through the Middle East, visited Syria, but did not have one word of unfavorable comment about that aggressor country and its regime. How strange! It is a country whose record of executions, torture, imprisonment, and utter abuse of even the most fundamental human rights is almost unsurpassed. A few years ago, its dictator Hafez Hassad put down a rebellion in the town of Hama. He had no compunction to kill over 20,000 of his own people and to flatten the town. Did President Carter talk about any of that? Of course not! He talked about "human rights violations" by the Israelis against the stone throwers, Molotov cocktails hurlers and arsonists in the administered territories. He did not mention that it is only because of Israel's respect for human rights and for human property that the so called "intifada" has been allowed to go on for so long. Any of the Arab rulers would have known how to handle such an uprising "efficiently" had it occurred in his own country.

■ Disconcertingly, our own Administration is beginning to "tilt" noticeably to the Arab cause. That is disturbing and totally astonishing. Israel is the *only* country in the Middle East where Western concepts of law, decency and human rights prevail. It is the only country that has free elections, a free press, unrestricted right of movement of its citizens and, of course, unlimited right of dissent. Besides, Israel is the staunchest ally of the United States—not just in the Middle East, but in the entire world. It is a priceless defensive asset of our country—where, in contrast to NATO or Japan/Korea, not a single American soldier needs to be stationed. President Reagan described Israel as "... perhaps the only remaining strategic asset in the (Middle East) region on which the United States can fully rely". How strange that our Administration would be so grimly fixed on imposing a PLO state on Israel and that it questions the legitimacy of Israel's possession of Jerusalem, its never-to-be-divided capital. And how strange that the Administration would constantly wish to strong-arm and to attack Israeli democracy—appearing totally oblivious to Israel's constant struggle for survival in a sea of implacable hostility, but at the same time remaining silent about the Arab tyrannies in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and all the others. Except for Israel, there is not a single freely elected government in the entire region. But we cosset these Arab states and appease them and sell them lethal weaponry that have only one purpose, namely the destruction of Israel.

Why is so much Israel bashing going on? Why do such obviously decent people as our President, Secretary of State, former president Carter and so many columnists, commentators, pundits, television personalities and "liberals" of all stripes identify with the tyrannical Arab regimes, with governments that have terror, kidnapping, torture, attacks on innocent civilians and assaults on commercial aircraft as their official policy? And why do they oppose and criticize Israel, a country that started from scratch, little more than 40 years ago, and which, despite being under constant attack, has built a prosperous nation and a thriving society that surely could be a model for all developing countries? Could the sad answer be that it is a reincarnation of good old-fashioned anti-Semitism, which for almost twenty centuries has been the curse of Western society? No longer tolerated in its cruder manifestations, it now seems to be acceptably sublimated in the bashing of the state of Israel which, deep down inside, so many do not really wish to survive.

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