synspunkt

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Resisting falsehood and protecting integrity

Omar Barghouti's call for an academic and cultural boycott, "Resisting Israeli apartheid: Why the academic and cultural boycott?", is a sustained attempt to demonize Israel, intended to bring about its destruction.

I shall reply to Mr. Barghouti's essay calling for an academic and cultural boycott of Israel. At the outset, let me grant him one important point. If, for a moment, I believed that Israel was as bad as he describes, I would support his call for a boycott. Unlike many of my colleagues, I do not believe that such boycotts are never justified. But I do believe that such boycotts are destructive of the trust upon which the scientific endeavor must be based, and may be used only in the most extreme cases and if there is some reasonable expectation that they will accomplish something positive. So, the question between us boils down to the following: is Israel the evil incarnate that Mr. Barghouti pretends it to be – or not?

Mr. Barghouti seeks to convince his readers that Israeli Jews are inveterate racists, and that Israel is an apartheid state. In the space allotted to me, I cannot possibly correct all of the deceptive falsehoods he uses – as the Hebrew expression has it, it is easier to throw mud than clean it up. By characterizing more accurately than Mr. Barghouti the true nature and history of the Israel-Palestine conflict, and then

addressing his two main charges, racism and apartheid, I will undermine his call for a boycott.

Academic life in Israel

Reading Omar Barghouti's essay brought to mind a series of experiences I had when serving as Dean of Students at the University of Haifa in the 1990's. I used to organize various sorts of Arab-Jewish dialogues and discussions. Conducted by persons of good will from both communities, the discussions invariably foundered on questions of perception and context. Arab students saw themselves as a beleaguered minority on a campus in which roughly 80% of the students were Jewish (about the same ratio as in the general population), at which the language of instruction was not their own, and in a country which seemed to them to field a huge and frightening army. The Jewish students saw themselves as a beleaguered and threatened minority in a Middle East in which the vast majority of states not only refused to recognize Israel's right to exist, but remained in a state of war with Israel, supported terror organizations which wrought death and

destruction on Israelis in school, on buses, and in cafés, and which drew upon the support of a billion or so Muslims around the world. Even then, a period of relative peace and optimism with the Oslo process in full swing, Jews and Arabs each saw themselves as victims of the other. Over the last seven years, since the late (unlamented by me) Yasir Arafat launched the so-called ‘al-Aksa Intifada’² the situation has grown markedly worse, and the conflict of perceptions has grown deeper. Over these same years, my own perception of the world has grown closer to that of those Jewish students whom only a decade ago I thought were paranoid.³ Unlike the Arab students at the University of Haifa who sincerely sought for an honorable and constructive *modus vivendi* with their Jewish colleagues, Mr. Barghouti seeks for the utter destruction of Israel and has put together a pastiche of distortions to generate support for that aim among readers of his article.⁴

Palestinian vs. Israel attitudes

Mr. Barghouti’s essay reflects the fundamental asymmetry of the Israel-Palestine conflict. I am not referring to the asymmetry of military power between Israel and the Palestinians, but to the asymmetry of objectives. Ever since the Camp David accords of 1978, Israeli governments and Israeli society have more and more come to accept the inevitability *and* rightness of there being two states west of the Jordan River, one predominantly Israeli-Jewish and one exclusively Palestinian-Arab.⁵ But, in contrast, ever since the year 2000, it has become painfully evident that Palestinian society has overwhelmingly rejected the right of Israel to exist at all.⁶ Thus, the ‘al-Aksa Intifada’ was not launched in order to

undo the results of the 1967, but to undo the results of 1948.⁷

This fundamental asymmetry is reflected in other ways. Every Israeli withdrawal from territory it had occupied has repeatedly been misconstrued by its enemies as a sign of weakness and has had devastating consequences for Israel. Israel under Sharon withdrew from the Gaza Strip, uprooting 8,000 Israelis and destroying two dozen towns and villages,⁸ and Hamas responded by increasing its daily shelling of Israeli settlements in the Western Negev.⁹ Earlier, Israel under Barak withdrew from Southern Lebanon and Hezbollah moved 10,000 katyusha rockets into the area, turning every resident of Lebanon into a hostage for its adventurism.

But the most chilling asymmetry is that of ultimate ends: what would Israel do if Hezbollah disarmed? Turn its back on Lebanon. What would Hezbollah do were Israel to disarm? The repeated pronouncements of their leadership leave no doubt: those Jews who were not butchered would be drowned in the sea. This asymmetry finds expression in a chilling fact which never ceases to bother me: every kindergarten in Israel has and needs an armed guard to protect it from Palestinian terrorists. Not a single Palestinian school has or needs such a guard (unless it is to protect the children in the school from rival Palestinian factions).¹⁰

The Israeli view of the world has room for Lebanon, for Jordan, for Egypt, for Saudi Arabia, and even, for the majority of Israelis, for a free and independent Palestine. For more and more Palestinians, there is no room in the world for Israel.

Finding Israelis (Jews and Arabs) to criticize Israel is no problem for Mr. Barghouti

– Israel is indeed a lively democracy. In contrast, one can occasionally find a Palestinian who will admit that terror attacks against Israeli citizens are counter-productive but finding a Palestinian willing to condemn the out and out murder of children, when the murderers are Arabs and the children are Jewish, is next to impossible – another asymmetry.

Asymmetries exist in the way that outsiders view the conflict too. Israel is held to standards of behavior to which no other country in the world is held, and when it fails to live up to those standards, it is condemned in absolutist, Manichean terms as thoroughly depraved and corrupted. In the

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eyes of its enemies,¹¹ the Israeli cup must be brimming over with goodness; otherwise it is empty of all redeeming value. Palestinians, on the other hand, are consistently forgiven their excesses. Often this forgiveness is on the grounds that the Palestinians, being militarily inferior, have no choice but to use means which, if used by any other group in the world, would be condemned (and rightly so) as uncivilized war crimes and crimes against humanity. For all its faults, Israel is the only country in the Middle East in which Arab citizens are truly free and safe to criticize their government, being protected by law and by a court system well-known for forcing the government to back down when it infringes upon their rights. It is also the

only country in the Middle East in which Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims and Christians of every persuasion are free to worship without discrimination. The Palestinians, on the other hand, have created a form of government unique in the world, a kind of kleptocratic thuggocracy. In the eyes of those who support Mr. Barghouti, Israel gets no credit, Palestinians gets no blame.

Racism?

Mr. Barghouti's argument rests upon a number of incendiary claims, not one of which can stand examination. Barghouti opens by accusing the "overwhelming majority of Jewish-Israelis" of "unbridled racism." How does he know this? Because of their "fervent support" for recent IDF "atrocities" in "occupied Palestinian territory" and in Lebanon. It is rather rich for a man who gives at least tacit support for a truly racist organization (Hamas¹²), to accuse others of the same crime.¹³ Certainly horrible things have happened to innocent Palestinians in Gaza and to innocent Lebanese.¹⁴ But were the deaths in Kfar Kana¹⁵ last summer and in Khan Yunis last month tragic accidents of war or the result of callous calculation on the part of Israeli planners?¹⁶ To demonstrate the mendacity of the latter claim, let us start by examining the context in which these events took place. Barghouti ignores the fact that after Israel withdrew from every square centimeter of the Gaza Strip and announced its intention of making further withdrawals from the West Bank, Hamas continued its rocket and guerilla attacks on the Western Negev, culminating in the kidnapping of Gilad Shalit on June 25, 2006 and the murder of 2 of his comrades. Two weeks later, Hezbollah, in a wholly unprovoked assault,

crossed the internationally recognized border from Lebanon to attack Israeli reservists on routine patrol, killed eight and kidnapped two, *whose fate remains unknown to this day*. Hezbollah simultaneously launched deadly rocket attacks on Israeli towns near the Lebanese border. That is the context ignored by Mr. Barghouti, but without which one cannot judge Israeli reactions to subsequent events.¹⁷ Hamas and Hezbollah both like to place their rocket launchers in civilian areas,¹⁸ in the hope of either protecting them from Israeli attack, or, and this I take to be more likely, in the expectation that Israel's attempts to protect its citizens (my children among them) will result in Arab casualties, so that cynics can use this in their propaganda war against Israel.¹⁹ Terrible things happen in war-time. If Israelis are racists for deploring but failing to condemn unfortunate and unplanned tragedies, what does that make of Palestinians who enthusiastically enshrine as martyrs and national heroes people who calmly walk in to restaurants, pat little children sitting there with their families on their heads, and then blow them up?

Let us look at this a little more deeply. Mr. Barghouti claims that it is racist for Israelis not to condemn their army when it accidentally brings about the death of Palestinian civilians while in his view it is not racist for Palestinians publicly to applaud the purposeful murder of Jewish children. Underlying this claim is the assumption that while Palestinian nationalism is a legitimate expression of the national aspirations of the Palestinian people, Jewish nationalism must be racism.²⁰ One can applaud nationalism or deplore it, but for the life of me I cannot understand why

Palestinian nationalism is appropriate and Jewish nationalism is not. *That* smacks of racism!²¹

Apartheid?

Of course, Mr. Barghouti needs to claim that Israelis are racists, in order to justify his claim that Israel pursues a policy of apartheid. I always have to scratch my head over that one. I live in a city (Haifa) in which Jews and Arabs live in the same neighborhoods, in the same blocks of flats, frequent each other's businesses, and cheer the home town football team together. The week that I am writing this Haifa is celebrating "the festival of festivals," marking Hanukkah and Christmas.²² I live next door to an absorption center for black immigrants to Israel from Ethiopia. I swim every day in a pool at the Technion with, I assume, Arab colleagues and students. I often eat out in (kosher!) restaurants owned and operated by Arabs.²³ One of my physicians is an Arab and were I to be hospitalized it is likely that I would be treated by Arab physicians and nurses. The pharmacist at my local branch of an Israeli drugstore chain has an Arabic name. Last night on the tv news I watched the Vice-Speaker of the Knesset (Israel's parliament) commenting on recent events (Palestinians killing each other over political power and division of spoils in Gaza). Who was that Vice-Speaker? Dr. Ahmad Tibi, one-time personal advisor to and spokesman for Yasir Arafat. I teach at a university of about 17,000 students, over 20% of whom are Arabs (more than their relative population in the country as a whole). A quarter of the students in the university dorms are Arabs, and a similar percentage of the student body receiving student aid are Arabs. Until

recently, the chair of one of the most prestigious departments on our campus was an Arab, and now the most powerful Dean at our university (the person responsible for all research funds) is an Arab. Neither of these gentlemen, it hardly needs saying, is an enthusiastic Zionist; but they are both fair-minded individuals who earned their posts through distinguished academic work. All this in an “apartheid” state!²⁴

Pots seem to enjoy calling kettles black. If I were to look for truly apartheid societies in the world, it is not to Israel that I would look, but to many countries in the Arab world. The genocide in Darfur, the fact that not a single Jewish community exists in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, or Egypt, the fact that no Christians or Jews can be citizens in Saudi Arabia²⁵ (or even bring a bible into the country temporarily)²⁶, the persecution of Copts in Egypt, the persecution of Christians in Bethlehem²⁷,

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the list goes on and on, but of course, it is only Israel which is tarred with the apartheid brush.

In order to make his implausible charge look *prima facie* reasonable, Mr. Barghouti quotes anti-Zionist Israelis like Ilan Pappé and Tanya Reinhart. Ilan Pappé has made a career of ignoring evidence inconvenient to his theses, of promising but never actually providing evidence to back up his wild accusations, and of simply lying whenever

the spirit moves him.²⁸ Pappé has the gall to make reference to Israel’s “killing fields” – in one shot, both lying cynically about Israel and diminishing the horrors of Pol Pot’s regime.

Colonial wall?

Just as the accusation of apartheid bursts apart at the merest glance, so also the claims about “Israel’s colonial Wall, built mostly on occupied territory and condemned as illegal ... by the ICJ.” Mr. Barghouti is nothing if not a clever controversialist. Note the insertion of the word “colonial,”²⁹ the capitalization of the word “Wall,”³⁰ and the failure to mention that the ICJ ruling, rejected as politicized by many European states,³¹ was predicated upon the *prima facie* absurd notion that Israel has no right to defend itself against non-state actors.³²

Why is this barrier being built? Did the government of Israel simply decide one day to invest billions of dollars in the construction of a fence (97% of the barrier is chain linking fencing, not concrete walls) in order to make life difficult for Palestinians? Reading Mr. Barghouti, one would think so. Not a word about the endless stream of mass murderers flowing across the Green Line in order to wreak havoc and death among Israelis (Jews, Muslims, and Christians); it is to stem that tide that the barrier is being erected and so far, thank God, it seems to be working pretty well.³³

Refugees

An important element in Mr. Barghouti’s call for the academic and cultural boycott of Israel focuses on “Israel and Palestinian Refugee Rights.” No decent human being could fail to be moved by the plight of

Palestinians living in slums in Gaza. But the question which must be asked, and which Mr. Barghouti carefully ignores, is: why are they confined to those camps and slums? Palestinian spokespersons have found it useful to present themselves as the ultimate victims of the twentieth century – in this way they garner support from well-meaning people in the West who have an admirable tendency to support the weak and down-trodden. This strategy has been extraordinarily successful (and underlies the obscene use of Holocaust imagery by those Palestinian apologists who do not deny that it occurred). But it comes with a very high price: people who consistently present themselves as victims soon come to see themselves in that way alone. They take no responsibility for their own fates and blame all their misfortunes exclusively on others. Omar Barghouti appears to be a classic example of this unfortunate syndrome.

In order to understand this, it is necessary to present a quick survey of the history of the Palestinian refugees. In 1948 Israel was created by a UN decision; it was the Arab states which rejected that decision, invaded the nascent state, were defeated, and thus brought about the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem. Ilan Pappé and other propagandists to the contrary,³⁴ there is absolutely no real evidence that there was any general policy of expelling Arabs from their villages. Huge populations were displaced by and after World War II; in all cases but the 1948 Arab refugees those displaced were eventually resettled in new homes. These poor miserable people were forced by the very states which precipitated their catastrophe, and which were legally and morally respon-

sible for it, to fester in squalid refugee camps, without being granted equal rights as citizens, or even as residents, of these same countries whose invasion turned them into refugees. Their Arab brethren have manipulated them for decades as pawns in their ongoing war against Israel.

At the same time that Arab refugees were being cruelly and cynically abused by their supposed protectors, close to a million Jews, driven from their homes by government-inspired or tolerated pogroms, were being welcomed and resettled in Israel.³⁵ The majority of Israeli Jews today are the children and grandchildren of these refugees from Arab persecution.

Jordan illegally absorbed the West Bank (after 1948), consciously sabotaged the UN-mandated Palestinian Arab state, and kept its Palestinian majority subjugated to a Bedouin minority. In 1967 it was the decision of Jordan's King Hussein to join Egypt and Syria in their attempt to wipe Israel off the face of the map which led to Israel's occupation of the West Bank. It was the Arab states meeting in Khartoum after that war which rejected all negotiations with Israel, guaranteeing that Israel would continue its occupation, and condemning the local population to live under occupation. Had the Arab states been willing to negotiate with Israel after 1967, there would have been no occupation and no Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. It was the Palestinians in the 1970's who chose the route of murderous attacks aimed at civilian targets (such as airliners and Olympic athletes) as opposed to what would clearly have been a more effective route, namely civil disobedience – think of what Arafat as Gandhi could have accomplished! Repeated massacres of innocent

men, women and children invite armed responses and harden positions.

In Mr. Barghouti's zeal to absolve Palestinians of all responsibility for their fate, and in his hatred for Israel, he ignores all this, and also fails to take up an interesting question. Many Palestinian Arabs live in festering refugee camps in areas from which Israel withdrew after Arafat's return to Palestine in 1994. For the following seven years, when the attacks of the 'al-Aksa Intifada' forced Israel to reoccupy much of the West Bank, these refugee camps were under an internationally recognized Palestinian government, showered with largesse by the world at large. Why were none of the billions of euros that were transferred to the Palestinian Authority used to ameliorate the lot of these people?³⁶ There is a simple answer. Just as Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt kept Arab refugees in camps instead of absorbing them into their countries, in order to use them as pawns against Israel, so also has Palestinian leadership kept its own population in conditions of misery to use them as pawns against Israel.³⁷ This is cynicism of the highest order; what can one say of Mr. Barghouti's purposeful failure to even take note of it?

Boycott Israel?

In closing, I would like to address those Europeans actively supporting Mr. Barghouti's call for an academic and cultural boycott of Israel. Such individuals have been convinced that Palestinians are passive victims, wholly innocent of any responsibility for their plight. This ultimately expresses disrespect for Palestinians, treating them like children. It encourages irresponsible behavior on their part – European support-

ers of the Palestinians have encouraged them to believe that political and military adventurism carries no price. No matter what Israel does (withdrawing from Gaza, uprooting 8,000 Jews from their homes, electing a government publicly committed to withdrawing from much of the West Bank), Palestinian supporters will condemn us in hysterical and outrageous terms and seek to demonize Israel and Israelis, turning us into pariahs; no matter what the Palestinians do excuses will be found for their behavior. Having been turned into entirely passive and innocent victims, with no accountability for their actions, the Palestinians behave as if they can do no wrong.

The only reason why there is no Palestinian state thriving next to Israel (to which Palestinians the world over would have the right of return) is because the Palestinians do not want such a state: they would rather destroy Israel than build Palestine - and often well-meaning Europeans encourage them in that *idée fixe*.

Palestinians are playing a zero-sum game while Israeli governments have finally become reconciled to the reality of Palestinian national aspirations and are thus not playing a similar game. That is the true asymmetry of the conflict here in the Middle East – not primitive kassam rockets vs. F-16's, but Israeli Jews willing to live with and next door to Palestinians vs. Palestinians unwilling to live with or next door to Israeli Jews. If I considered myself a friend of the Palestinians, as do those who support boycott calls, I would not encourage delusions of victimization by crudely misusing terms like "apartheid"; I would remind them that barriers and checkpoints are Israeli *responses* to a terror campaign

initiated on their behalf and with their overwhelming support; I would urge them to build rather than to destroy; I would remonstrate with them for creating a regime of unparalleled sleaze and violence in which billions of euros of aid money have been squandered on corruption and murder instead of on construction and education. I would treat them as equals.

Well-intentioned people often paint Israel in the darkest of colors (and, by implication white-wash every really mur-

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derous regime on the face of the planet), condemn us in the harshest of terms for every sin – real or imagined – which we commit, minimize anything right which we might do. What message does this behavior transmit? To myself, and people like me, this automatic response to Israel and to Israeli behavior, good or bad, squelches any tendency we might have to criticize our own faults and our own government more loudly. To the Palestinians it reinforces the message: be as corrupt and as murderous as you like, treat every Israeli withdrawal or peace overture as a sign of weakness – whatever you do, we will find ways to justify it while blaming Israel for it. Is this the behavior of a true friend of either side? I hardly think so.

Like many apologists for the Palestinians, Omar Barghouti argues as if the end justifies all means, and truth must be sac-

rificed; thus the Nazi analogy.³⁸ But beyond that, by telling Palestinians that Israeli Jews are Nazis, he tells them that the fight against Israel is a Manichean struggle against ultimate evil, a fight which justifies all means, and a fight against an enemy who must be destroyed before it destroys them; in other words, he tells Palestinians not to negotiate, not to compromise, not to seek to live with and next to Israeli Jews, but to kill and kill and kill. Just as he is no friend of truth, he is certainly no friend of the Palestinians. Indeed, for the reasons I have just outlined, he is a greater danger to the Palestinian people than any Israeli. It is a tragedy that he and his supporters abroad do not channel their considerable energies and talents into activities which might conceivably lead towards peace, rather than towards more war.

Mr. Barghouti wants to boycott Israeli academic institutions, institutions in which Jews and Arabs work together for the common good, and for the good of all humankind. There is one sanction already in place, to which Mr. Barghouti would rather not draw attention: upon entering any Israeli university campus, one must surrender one's bags for inspection (like at an airport) – for fear that someone influenced and supported by Mr. Barghouti might set off a bomb on campus.³⁹ To join in a boycott of these institutions is literally to add insult to injury.

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¹ My thanks to Paul Bogdanor, Harvey Chisick, Ofir Frankel, Linda Montag, Jonathan Rynhold, Wendy Sandler, Edwin Slonim, and especially Amy Rosenbaum.

² I write "launched" and not "broke out" because of the widely accepted Palestinian claim that Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount (the holiest site for Jews as well as the location of the Al-Aksa mosque, third holiest site for Muslims) on September 28, 2000 was deliberately

provocative, triggering the subsequent violence. Less well known is that Sharon's visit occurred after assurances were made by Yasir Arafat to then-Prime Minister Barak that the visit would go smoothly as long as Sharon did not attempt to enter the mosques. Further, in a speech made in December 2000 by Imad Falouji, PA Communications Minister, Falouji explains that the violence had been pre-planned since Arafat's return from Camp David in July, months before Sharon's visit. (The speech can be viewed at <http://youtube.com/watch?v=Qb5fIP-MfAc>.) The day before Sharon's visit, IDF Sgt. David Biri was killed, arguably the start of the Intifada. Further on this, see Barry Rubin and Judith Colp Rubin, *Yasir Arafat: A Political Biography*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 203-207.

- 3 For an account of the changes in my thinking, see my essay, "Daniel Boyarin and the Herd of Independent Minds," in Edward Alexander and Paul Bogdanor (eds.), «The Jewish Divide Over Israel: Accusers and Defenders». New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2006, pp. 167-176. Other essays in this book refute charges brought against Israel by many of the people whom Mr. Barghouti cites as authorities, such as Ilan Pappé, Tanya Reinhart, and Noam Chomsky, among many others. See also: <http://www.paulbogdanor.com/chomskyquotes.html>
- 4 In what is arguably his most horrifically untrue statement, Mr. Barghouti avers that "Israel treated Palestinian children as dispensable creatures." And the horror of it is only exceeded by its hypocrisy. If any group has treated Palestinian children as dispensable creatures, it is Palestinians. USA Today correspondent Jack Kelley reported: "Children serve as infantry in the confrontations between Israeli and Palestinian soldiers. In scenes reminiscent of Iranian children sent to the Iraqi front equipped with plastic keys to heaven, Palestinian children are sent close to Israeli positions with rocks and Molotov cocktails, while the gunmen and snipers fire from positions hundreds of yards back" (10/23/00). The Jordanian newspaper Al-Rai (citing an interview with the Kuwaiti newspaper Al-Zaman on June 20, 2002), quotes Abu Mazen, then deputy chairman of the Palestinian authority, who spoke of how Palestinian children are being exploited into carrying out terror attacks: "at least 40 children from the city of Raphah have lost their arms as a result of the explosions of pipe bombs. They received five Israeli shekels (about one US dollar) for throwing them." The PA has provided children with military training. The New York Times reports that 25,000 children were trained in the summer of 2000 in PA camps in the use of firearms, the making of Molotov cocktails, the methods of kidnapping Israeli leaders, and conducting ambushes (New York Times, 8/3/00). For other corrections to many of Mr. Barghouti's incendiary claims, see the article by Amnon Rubinstein, cited below in note 24.
- 5 My language here reflects another important asymmetry: Israel is a Jewish state with a substantial minority of Arab citizens ever more assertive (and rightly so) of their rights as citizens. No one expects the Palestinian state when it comes to be to have a substantial Jewish minority, and only an inhabitant of Aristophanes' cloud-cuckoo land would believe that such a state would protect the lives, let alone rights, of a Jewish minority. Indeed, the Palestinian Authority has failed to protect the rights and security of the Palestinian Christian minority currently residing in PA-controlled territory. (See for example: "O, Muslim town of Bethlehem ...", Daily Mail, 6/16/06; "AP Reports on Arson Attacks by Muslims Against Palestinian Christians," Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA), 9/6/05; "Christians Under Cover," The Jerusalem Post, 2/23/06; "Small Christian group in Gaza threatened with elimination," www.worldtribune.com, 2/24/06; "YMCA warned to vacate Hamas town: After 6 years of operation, Christian organization being booted by terror group," WorldNetDaily.com, 4/21/06; "Christians Persecuted in the Holy Land," Christian Broadcast Network, Winter 2005; "Anti-Christian Pogrom in the West Bank," HonestReporting.com, 9/6/05, "Away from the manger – a Christian-Muslim divide," The Jerusalem Post, 10/21/05.)
- 6 As evidenced by Hamas' recent rise to power.
- 7 In 1967, Israel, in consequence of an unprovoked attack by Jordan – while already fighting a two-front war with Soviet-backed Egypt and Syria – occupied the West Bank of the Jordan River. In the 1948 conflict, Israel, called into being by the United Nations, survived an attack from all the neighboring Arab states and by local Arabs from within.
- 8 That there are no Israeli soldiers in Gaza does not stop Mr. Barghouti from talking about "innocent Palestinian civilians under occupation, particularly in the Gaza Strip" (emphasis added).
- 9 It is estimated that 1,000 Qassam rockets have been fired into Israel from Gaza since September 2005 when the last Israeli troops withdrew. ("AIPAC vs. Norman Finkelstein: A Debate on Israel's Assault on Gaza," www.democracynow.org)
- 10 In the week before I wrote these words, three Palestinian children in front of their school in Gaza were gunned down by other Palestinians seeking to murder their father.
- 11 Not all critics of Israel, obviously, are its enemies (or I and every Israeli I know would be counted among its enemies), but the level of criticism in many circles is such that it is clearly motivated by enmity, not honest differences.
- 12 See the Hamas charter at: <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/mideast/hamas.htm>
- 13 In the same vein, Barghouti claims that in the light of the events of last summer, "many Palestinians, particularly in Israel, feel a true existential threat looming over [their] heads." Given the present Iranian regime's threats to wipe Israel off the map, coupled with Iran's accelerated quest for nuclear arms, Palestinians should indeed feel a true existential threat looming over their heads.
- 14 And, I would add, as Mr. Barghouti does not, to innocent Israelis.
- 15 According to Orde Kittrie, who served in the office of the legal adviser at the US State Department from 1993-2003, "at Qana, Israeli aircraft fired toward a building to stop Hezbollah from shooting rockets at its cities. The aircraft did not deliberately target civilians; but Hezbollah rockets are targeted at civilians, a clear war crime. UN humanitarian chief Jan Egeland called on Hezbollah to stop its 'cowardly blending' among women and children. If Hezbollah used Lebanese civilians in Qana as 'human shields,' then Hezbollah, not Israel, is legally responsible for their deaths." ("A War Crime At Qana?" The Wall Street Journal, 8/6/06.)

- 16 <http://www.spme.net/cgi-bin/articles.cgi?ID=1617>.
- 17 Similarly, Mr. Barghouti makes reference to "the Nakba, a well-planned, and very well documented, Zionist campaign of terror that led to their [the Palestinians] ethnic cleansing around 1948." Every word of this sentence is false (see E. Karsh, "Nakbat Haifa: Collapse and Dispersion of a Major Palestinian Community," *Middle Eastern Studies* 37, 2001, pp. 25-70) but even were there some truth to it, to present the events of 1948 without any reference to the Arab League/Palestinian actual attempt at the ethnic cleansing of (not by!) Jews in the Land of Israel at that time takes amazing gall, and treats one's readers as either ignorant or gullible.
- 18 This positioning of military and guerrilla installations in residential areas is considered a war crime, as defined by protocol 1 (1977) to the Geneva Convention, article 51(7).
- 19 <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,205349,00.html>
- 20 Let it be noted that any number of European nations (e.g., Austria, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Russia, Slovakia and Slovenia) grant official status to ethnic kin abroad. See Amnon Rubinstein, "Zionism's Compatriots," *Azure* 16, 2004. http://www.azure.org.il/magazine/magazine.asp?id=168&search_text=
- 21 For instances of the deeply entrenched racism in PA radio, TV, and newspapers, see <http://www.pmw.org.il/murder.htm>
- 22 On years when the Muslim calendar makes it possible, Ramadan is also marked.
- 23 It is probably no accident that the two restaurants targeted by terrorist bombers in my home town of Haifa were under combined Jewish-Arab ownership.
- 24 I do not pretend that all is sweetness and light for Arabs in Israel, but by any measure their share of the national pie is consistently growing. The social gap between the two communities is narrowing at an ever accelerating pace (so much so that it is narrower today than in the UK and France, for example). Moreover, the reason for the continuation of the gap is not primarily Israeli "racist" policies but the lack of modernization among Muslim Israelis. Overall, Christian-Arab Israelis have done very well. See Amnon Rubinstein, "Israeli Arabs and Jews: Dispelling the Myths, Narrowing the Gaps." <http://www.ajc.org/site/apps/nl/content3.asp?c=ijIT12PHKoG&b=846567&ct=1043985>.
- 25 <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2005/51609.htm>
- 26 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2006/12/19/ubible119.xml>; see also: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1012.html under "standards of conduct and religious police."
- 27 http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/news/news.html?in_article_id=423126&in_page_id=1770
- 28 <http://www.meforum.org/article/897>
- 29 Enemies of Zionism love to present it as the last gasp of a dying Western colonialism, instead of as another expression of nationalism, one of the most powerful forces of the Twentieth Century (and, I might add, a force which called the Palestinian people into being).
- 30 A cunning if dishonest attempt to equate this barrier with the Berlin Wall. For the truth, see: <http://securityfence.mfa.gov.il/mfm/web/main/document.asp?SubjectID=45874&MissionID=45187&LanguageID=0&StatusID=0&DocumentID=-1>. The barrier becomes a wall in places where Palestinian snipers can (and have!) targeted Israeli motorists.
- 31 <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?c108:2:/temp/c108EE2BVC::>
- 32 http://www.icj-cij.org/icjwww/idocket/imwp/imwp_advisory_opinion_declaration_buergenthal.htm
- 33 http://www.camera.org/index.asp?x_context=2&x_outlet=36&x_article=752
- 34 Pappe denies the possibility of writing any history that is not the history of one side of a conflict or another; in simple English that is called propaganda. See his own words: http://www.camera.org/index.asp?x_print=1&x_context=2&x_outlet=55&x_article=994
- 35 See: <http://www.jimena.org/>
- 36 For details of the wealth squandered by the PA, see Michael Keating, Anne Le More and Robert Lowe [no particular friends of Israel] (eds.), «Aid, Diplomacy and Facts on the Ground: The Case of Palestine». London: Chatham House, 2006.
- 37 See: http://www.camera.org/index.asp?x_context=7&x_issue=52&x_article=960
- 38 Mr. Barghouti is nothing if not a clever controversialist. He introduces the Nazi analogy by quoting Ronnie Kasrils, a South African Jew, instead of making the claim himself; he introduces the fascism charge by quoting (wildly out of context) the former Israeli government minister Shulamit Aloni, and he introduces the "killing fields" charge by quoting the "historian" Ilan Pappé.
- 39 As happened in a cafeteria on the Mt. Scopus campus of the Hebrew University on July 31, 2002.