

NEWS REVIEW



24 SEPTEMBER 2009

6 TISHREI 5770

IN THIS ISSUE

Neither the best, nor the worst
Jerusalem Post

An insult to history that demands a response
Financial Times UK

The UN: pro Arab, pro Iranian, anti Israel
Newsreal

Keeping Israel on the defensive
History News Network

The Gaza Report is a disaster
Globe and Mail

Evangelicals: An appreciation
The Jerusalem Post

'Islamically correct conference
Assyrian News Agency

Yiddish is dead: long live Yiddish

Neither the best, nor the worst

Liat Collins | The Jerusalem Post | 17 September

Queen Elizabeth once described her year as an "*annus horribilis*," resorting to the Latin to avoid offending the sense of British understatement. This has not been, as Jews wish each other, a *shana tova* - a good year. Neither, thankfully, has it been the worst. As we mark 70 years since the outbreak of World War II, we know we have much to be grateful for. We are still alive. We have a sovereign state, often ordered around, but independent by nature and deed. [READ MORE](#)

An insult to history that demands a response

Simon Schama | Financial Times UK | 22 September

Not the least repellent aspect of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's reiteration, on the eve of the Rosh Hashanah Jewish holiday, that the Holocaust was a lie, was the muffled response to it by western media and governments. Statements were duly forthcoming in Berlin deploring the Iranian president's speech, while in Washington it was left to Robert Gibbs, the White House press secretary, to do the official tut-tutting.

But it was as though the moral atrocity of Mr Ahmadinejad's speech was barely worthy of comment being, in the first place, nothing new, and in the second place, incidental to the practical dilemma of how to "engage" with him during his visit to the United Nations this week. Well, one way would be to send Mr Ahmadi-Nejad copies of the 2005 General Assembly resolution repudiating Holocaust deniers and instituting a day of remembrance on January 26 encouraging all member nations to educate their people in the genocide so that future acts of comparable barbarity might not recur.

But then the mere facts of the matter are unlikely to make much impression on a man and a regime lost in paranoid derangement. The pressing issue is how to contain the consequences of anti-Semitic fantasy and recover the moral credentials of a General Assembly that will have listened to someone in such flagrant contradiction of its own resolution. Besides, there is a practical urgency for abhorrence.

Far from being some sort of antic sideshow to his regime's ambition to acquire nuclear weapons, the obsession with annihilating Israel, it ought generally to be acknowledged, is the prime reason for it. A nuclear Iran, the theocracy may calculate, would be in a position to terminate Israel's existence by merely threatening a strike unless its Jewish population departed forthwith for places the mullahs recommend as suitable for their deportation. Hence their creature's cheerful optimism that the days of the Zionist entity are numbered and his cheerfulness that Iran will be honoured in Islam as the heroic enabler of that happy outcome.

The cowardice of embarrassment; the pragmatic humming and hawing about what to do about the buffoon frontman of a tyranny that endures through brutality and torture, is itself a depressing sign of moral collapse. The victims of Mr Ahmadinejad's onslaught on truth include not just the outraged memory of the murdered millions but history itself, the integrity of which is at the heart of the western political tradition. The most absurd affront to reality in his remarks may have been

the Iranian president's complaint that research into the history of the Holocaust was being thwarted by a conspiracy of its purported victims. What he has in mind of course is the kind of history he wants to read.

It is the great glory of the project inaugurated by Thucydides that it endeavoured to disentangle fact from fable and to make history the instrument of honest self-criticism rather than idle self-congratulation. Thus sternly conceived, it was to be the torment of despotisms. This was something fresh and breathtaking in the world, the conviction that the authority of history based on an unflinching scrutiny of evidence would always prevail over fantasies derived from claims of revelation.

But then perhaps we have already abandoned history as the rough upbraider of moronic turpitude. Perhaps it is easier to digest history as costume pabulum, a stroll with Dame Vera Lynn down memory lane; endlessly rerunning the Good War and wallowing in harmless period romance courtesy of Jane Austen, while tough history gets thinned and thinned until it is finally put out of its misery and the age of national amnesia is enthroned.

"Facts are stubborn things," said one of the flintier Founding Fathers, John Adams, who well understood that democracy stands or falls with the courage of its history. His remark was made in defence of British soldiers accused of deliberately shooting down civilians in the streets of Boston. Prudence would have advised the young lawyer to look the other way in a city lit by hatred of the redcoats. But he did not. History beckoned him to be brave, eloquent and indignant on behalf of the imperishable truth.

Would that the same could be said of those who at this moment should confront the perversion of history with something less craven than a polite demur.

The United Nations: pro-Arab, pro-Iranian, anti-Israel

Claude Cartagine | Newsreal | 22 September



This is a [sic] very good news and a triumph of the oppressed nation of Palestine, that their voice was heard in the international community, in the IAEA, and action was made to let them know that they are not left alone, homeless, bombarded by Israelis, and being deprived from any basic rights.

Energy Agency [IAEA] safeguards."

The Iranian delegate went on to describe Israel's nuclear capabilities as "a potential threat to the peace and security of the world."

These statements, coming from Arab states (such as Syria and Libya) that have clandestine nuclear programs themselves, would be bad enough; but for Iran to be making such statements stretches credulity.

For years, Iran has ignored UN resolutions requiring it to open its nuclear program for inspection by the same IAEA it is now congratulating. Iranian leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who has called for Israel to be "wiped off the map" several times in the past, and who once again characterized the

Holocaust a “hoax” just this past weekend, has consistently defied that same IAEA in its requests for nuclear transparency, announcing that Iran would “never” halt work on its own nuclear program.

It is obvious to UN watchers that this is nothing more than a highly politicized, one-sided attack on Israel, a nation that is surrounded by countries determined to bring about its destruction by any means necessary. The UN has become nothing more than a forum where the nations of the so-called “Non-Aligned Movement” (NAM) can air their anti-Western and anti-Israel agendas. Said one NAM delegate: People and countries are bolder now, willing to call a spade a spade. You cannot hide or ignore the truth, the double standards, of Israel’s nuclear capability forever. Notably, the NAM delegate made no mention of any “double standards” vis à vis countries such as India, Pakistan and North Korea, which also have nuclear weapons programs and have not signed the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty.

Pakistan, for example, not only has an active nuclear weapons program, but it has been a major facilitator in the illegal proliferation of nuclear technology to countries such as Iran. When North Korea doesn’t get its way, it saber-rattles by threatening to detonate, or sometimes by actually detonating, a nuclear device. And yet, those countries were not targeted by the UNNC vote last week.

This is another indication that the IAEA and the United Nations do not possess even a scintilla of credibility.

Keeping Israel on the defensive as long as possible with lie after lie

Dr Alex Grobman | History News Network | 21 September

Opponents of Israel repeatedly accuse her of being an occupier, disenfranchising the Arabs and humiliating them in order to keep the government on the defensive. The objective of these alleged human rights violations is to pressure the international community to establish a separate Palestinian state according to Bar-Ilan professor Ron Schleifer.

One the most pernicious of these recurring lies is that Israel is an apartheid state. The dispute between Israel and the Arabs is not racial. Zionism is not a racial or a discriminatory movement any more than any other national liberation movement in Europe in the 19th century or in Africa and Asia in the 20th century. Jews do not constitute a separate race, even though Nazi pseudoscience branded them as such. Arabs are not a separate race and are not different than Jews. Zionism is less discriminatory and racist than most other movements, because it is defined in religious terms—not ethnic ones.

Israel was created in 1948 in one-sixth of the area allotted by the Balfour Declaration. The Allies had gained a vast area from the Turks during the war, and the British took one percent of the land the Great Powers acquired from the Turks to establish a Jewish Homeland. In appreciation for having liberated the Arabs from the “tyranny of a bestial conqueror,” and providing them with independent states, Lord Balfour hoped they would begrudge the Jews “that small notch in what are now Arab territories being given to the people who for all these hundreds of years have been separated from it.” The Arabs found even this small accommodation to the Jews unacceptable.

For Chaim Weizmann, Israel’s first president, “The real opponents of Zionism can never be placated by any diplomatic formula: their objection to the Jews is that the Jews exist, and in this particular case, they exist in Palestine.” [READ MORE](#)

The Gaza report is a disaster for human rights and peace

Barry Rubin | *Globe and Mail* | 23 September

The United Nations-sponsored Goldstone report, created for the purpose of bashing Israel over the Gaza war with phoney claims of “war crimes,” is possibly the most inaccurate document ever produced by that organisation.

In fact, several commission members declared the defendant guilty before being selected; sections of the report echoed previous ones by groups known for their bias; virtually all the data included are unverified claims by politically committed Palestinians who view Israel as an enemy to be destroyed; and scores of specific items can be shown to be false. [READ MORE](#)

Evangelicals: An appreciation

Isi Leibler | *The Jerusalem Post* | 16 August

A prominent American Jewish leader recently told me that the passionate standing ovation he received after addressing 4,000 participants at John Hagee's Christians United for Israel rally in Washington was reminiscent of the fervent Zionist gatherings he attended as a youngster. The two-day Evangelical Christian parley was designed to express support for Israel, receive updates on the current challenges facing the Jewish state and lobby congressmen in support of Israel. They heard addresses from Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu via satellite, Sen. Joe Lieberman, Ambassador Michael Oren, Malcolm Hoenlein of the Presidents' Conference and others.

At a time when much of global public opinion views Israel through the distorted lenses of Arab and anti-Semitic defamation, millions of Evangelicals have emerged as our most devoted supporters.

The evolution of this relationship is extraordinary and defies logic. It is only over the past three decades that support for Israel assumed such a high priority among this Christian denomination, which is rapidly expanding at a time when other churches are in dramatic decline.

Until recently, most Jews regarded Evangelicals as zealots obsessed with a desire to convert everyone. They also believed that their philo-Semitism was not "genuine" because it was based on an eschatology which predicted that the second coming of the messiah would only come after the Jewish people had returned to Israel and brought about the end of days.

In addition, the strongly liberal American Jewish community, obsessed with separation of church and state, gay rights and abortion, regarded Evangelicals as dangerous right-wing extremists and until recently were complaining that politicians like Netanyahu, who addressed their gatherings, embarrassed them.

Yet despite this hostility, the Evangelicals continued to upgrade support for Israel, to the point where it is now a central feature of their world outlook. [READ MORE](#)

Become a Member

Ensure that the voice of your community is heard by supporting the work of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies.

Join us in the work of strengthening Jewish life.

Contact the Board for more information:

New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies

Level 2

146 Darlinghurst Road
Darlinghurst 2010

T: 02 9360 1600

F: 02 9331 4712

E-mail:

pilman@nswjbd.com

We're on the net!

www.nswjbd.org

An 'Islamically Correct' Conference

Véronique Chemla | Assyrian International News Agency | 18 September

If there is a persistent myth about Muslim rule, it is the "golden age" myth of a "peaceful coexistence" between Jews, Christians and Muslims in Muslim-ruled "lands of Islam," in particular in "*al-Andalus*" (Medieval Muslim-rule Spain).

On March 27, 2009, in Paris, the Aladdin Project launch conference unanimously celebrated that myth. The French Jewish Foundation for the Memory of the Holocaust (FMS) has initiated the Project both to fight against revisionism and Holocaust denial in the Muslim world as well as to foster improved Jewish-Muslim relations.

Projetaladin.org provides "*objective information on the history of the Holocaust, an introduction to Jewish culture, history and religion and the history of Muslims and Jews throughout the ages across the Middle East, North Africa and Medieval Spain*".

That myth is an essential part of "Islamically correct" discourses. It induces perverse effects that will be presented later on in this article. [READ MORE](#)

Yiddish is dead, long live Yiddish

Josh Spiro | New Voices | 16 September

Call it the Harry Houdini of languages: like the great escapists of a century ago, Yiddish keeps eluding death. As the inscription outside the National Yiddish Book Center attests, "Yiddish is magic. It will outwit history."

In recent years, Yiddish has been especially successful at duping history, climbing to its feet after absorbing four punishing blows in the first half of the twentieth century: the Holocaust, Soviet persecution, increasing assimilation and the revival of Hebrew as a spoken language. According to Miriam Koral, professor of Yiddish at UCLA, "We've been observing what some of us consider to be a Yiddish Renaissance" during the past 20 years.

The evidence is undeniable. Dozens of American colleges and universities offer courses in Yiddish language and literature. A multitude of Yiddish summer programs, klezmer festivals, and theater revivals dot the map.

So why the Yiddish Renaissance? Here are four reasons for the revival of the *mame loshen*, the mother tongue of Ashkenazi Jews. [READ MORE](#)