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Israel, Genocide, and the 'Logic' of Zionism

By Justin Raimondo

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History is full of ironies: World War I, marketed to Americans as a "war to end all wars," paved the way for an even more massive slaughter. The invasion and conquest of Iraq – which was supposed to augur what George W. Bush hailed as a "global democratic revolution" – instead ushered in a new era of chaos, bloodshed, and tyranny in the region. And in the year 2014, the state of Israel, founded in large part as a reaction to the Holocaust, has embarked on a policy of genocide in Gaza.

The Israelis and their international amen corner are increasingly open about this: a recent article in the *Times of Israel* – since taken down – was quite explicit in averring that Israel's "right of self-defense" includes the option of wiping out the entire population of Gaza:

" Hamas has stated forthrightly that it idealizes death as much as Israel celebrates life. What other way then is there to deal with an enemy of this nature other than obliterate them completely? ... [A]nyone who lives with rocket launchers installed or terror tunnels burrowed in or around the vicinity of their home cannot be considered an innocent civilian."

According to the author, Israeli-American Yochanon Gordon – a regular *Times of Israel* columnist – "the nature of this enemy" must "automatically cause the rules of standard warfare to be suspended." After arguing for a policy of genocide throughout the piece, Gordon poses a question to "humanitarians": "If political leaders and military experts determine that the only

way to achieve its goal of sustaining quiet is through genocide is it then permissible to achieve those responsible goals?"

Gordon's answer is clear enough, in spite of his insincere-sounding "apology," but hey – you might say – this is just an opinion piece by someone who lives in Cedarhurst, New York: it doesn't fairly reflect Israeli public opinion. Yet polls report most Israelis say the IDF isn't using enough force in Gaza, and as for the *Times of Israel*: although they took down Gordon's pro-genocide piece they published a very similar article that very day – which was not taken down – making essentially the same argument. Entitled "1 Samuel 15:18," the author – one Irwin Blank, another American with dual Israeli nationality – argues that the Jewish people have been pursued by "Amakelites" in one form or another throughout their history, and must finally take measures to eliminate their ancient nemesis. The title is a reference to this Biblical passage:

"And Samuel said to Saul, 'The Lord sent me to anoint you king over his people Israel; now therefore listen to the words of the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'I have noted what Amalek did to Israel in opposing them on the way when they came up out of Egypt. Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'"

Well, yes, but Mr. Blank is not Netanyahu. And the Israeli Prime Minister will never give voice to such opinions, of that we can be sure – yet others in the top Israeli leadership haven't been so circumspect. Moshe Feiglin, deputy speaker of the Knesset and chief of Bibi's Likud party leadership group, has a plan that implements the Gordon-Blank genocide policy in chillingly detailed terms.

"This is our country – our country exclusively," he says on his Facebook page, "including Gaza." Calling for the "conquest of the entire Gaza Strip, and annihilation of all fighting forces and their supporters," Feiglin rants that Israel must "turn Gaza into Jaffa, a flourishing Israeli city with a minimum number of hostile civilians."

Jaffa was ethnically cleansed of Palestinians by the Jewish terrorist group Irgun in an operation begun on May 13, 1948, the day before Israel declared statehood: most of the Arab population was driven from the city, and many were murdered in the streets, their homes looted. In another reprise of Clio's wicked sense of irony, the 4,000 remaining Arabs were forced into officially-designated ghettos – and the city was repopulated by Jews, who were granted "legal" title to what was formerly Palestinian property.

The Feiglin plan, presented in the form of an open letter to Netanyahu, calls on him to "designate certain open areas on the Sinai border, adjacent to the sea, in which the civilian population will be concentrated, far from the built-up areas that are used for launches and tunneling. In these areas, tent encampments will be established, until relevant emigration destinations are determined." Oh, and just to be clear: "The supply of electricity and water to the formerly populated areas will be disconnected," as the area is "shelled with maximum fire power. The entire civilian and military infrastructure of Hamas, its means of communication and of logistics, will be destroyed entirely, down to their foundations." Then the mopping up will begin as the IDF moves in to "exterminate nests of resistance, in the event that any should remain."

What will happen to those still left alive in the "tent encampments" (i.e. concentration camps)? Feiglin wants them expelled: "Israel will start searching for emigration destinations and quotas for the refugees from Gaza." As for "those who insist on staying" – and presumably living in a bombed-out ruin – "if they can be proven to have no affiliation with Hamas" they "will be required to publicly sign a declaration of loyalty to Israel, and receive a blue ID card similar to that of the Arabs of East Jerusalem."

Why not make them wear a blue "A" on their clothing, just so we can hear Clion's bitter laughter?

Feiglin's genocidal views aren't a minority "fringe" position in Israel: he represents the overwhelming majority. And government policy in the Gaza conflict reflects the spirit of Feiglinism, albeit without ever acknowledging it in Western venues: Israeli propaganda aimed at us has relentlessly depicted the IDF's attacks on purely civilian targets as either "tragic mistakes" or the result of a deliberate plan by Hamas to maximize civilian casualties in order to garner sympathy from the international community.

Yet facts, as Ronald Reagan would agree, are stubborn things, and the statistics coming out of this one-sided conflict are clear: an inordinate percentage of those killed and horribly maimed by Israeli strikes are children. There have been no less than seven attacks on UN schools in Gaza during "Operation 'Protective' Edge," three in the past ten days, according to the *Guardian*. The latest, which UN General Secretary Ban Ki-moon characterizes as "a criminal act," killed ten and wounded dozens of mostly women and children. According to Moon, the Israelis "have been repeatedly informed of the location of these sites," and yet these sanctuaries where children seek refuge from Israel's relentless assault have apparently been intentionally targeted.

This "kill the kiddies" campaign was dramatized by the startling footage of those Palestinian kids playing on a Gaza beach who were blasted to bits by an offshore Israeli warship.

Well, that's one way to defuse the demographic time-bomb that will soon make the Israelis a minority in their own Jewish state.

There was some hope, before the 1967 war, that Israel and the Palestinians could coexist side by side: the Israeli occupation in the wake of Israel's stunning victory foreclosed that possibility for the foreseeable future. As the great libertarian Yeshayahu Leibowitz, one of the intellectual giants of Israel's founding generation, put it:

"A state ruling a hostile population of 1.5 million to 2 million foreigners would necessarily become a secret-police state, with all that implies for education, free speech and democratic institutions. The corruption characteristic of every colonial regime would also prevail in the State of Israel. The administration would have to suppress the Arab insurgency on the one hand and acquire Arab quislings on the other. There is also good reason to fear that the Israel Defense Force, which has been until now a people's army, would, as a result of being transformed into an army of occupation, degenerate, and its commanders, who will have become military governors, resemble their colleagues in other nations."

Post-1967 “unpartitioned Eretz Israel” would become irredeemably corrupted by the militarism, authoritarianism, and fanaticism engendered by Israel’s new role as conquistador. Racism would become the official state ideology, and the entire energies of the Jewish state would be devoted to “the specific tasks of government and administration of this strange system of political domination.” As the trends he abhorred gained ground in Israeli society Leibowitz’s dark vision of Israel’s future went pitch black. In the terminal phases of its utter degeneration – when “Israel would not deserve to exist, and it would not be worthwhile to preserve it” – Leibowitz predicted we would witness the appearance of Israeli “concentration camps” to which the remnants of the Palestinian nation would be consigned.

In short, Leibowitz saw Feiglin coming: he saw it in 1989, when this video was made, when he pointed to a creeping “Nazi-like mentality” which “you can see anywhere” – not only on the fringes but in the highest reaches of Israel’s political class. Israel, he said, essentially became a dictatorship the moment it decided to rule over millions of disenfranchised Palestinians who essentially became prisoners in their own land.

I would go further than Leibowitz, however: it is clear from the writings of Zionist leaders that they understood the implications of their own doctrine from the beginning. Theodore Herzl, the movement’s revered founder, confided in his diary that the indigenous Palestinians would have to be “spirited across the border discreetly and circumspectly.” David Ben-Gurion, Israel’s George Washington, was more explicit: “We must expel the Arabs and take their places,” he wrote in a letter to his son.

This was always the inevitable logic of Zionism, a form of religious nationalism that claims God promised the Jewish people the land “from the Nile to the Euphrates.” That accomplishing this goal necessitated a military campaign was disappeared by early promoters of the Zionist project, primarily leftists of various sorts, who painted a picture of a happy socialistic union of Jewish and native Arab cultures that would make the desert bloom.

It was, in short, the Zionist equivalent of the “they’ll shower us with rose petals” argument made by neoconservatives in the run up to the Iraq war. This soporific fantasy soon gave way to a more realistic assessment, however, as Arab hostility to their dispossession persisted – and the horrors of the Nakba were not forgotten.

Leibowitz’s line of demarcation is 1967: the year Israel crossed the Rubicon, became an occupier, and, in his view, ceased being a democracy and morphed, instead, into the only dictatorship in the so-called enlightened world. Yet the dictatorship he said was already accomplished, in principle, by the fact of occupation was in reality established much sooner – in the events of the original dispossession and slaughter which made the Jewish state possible in the first place.

The multicultural kibbutzim envisioned by early Zionist utopians *had* to evolve into the Israeli Sparta of today. Zionism is a form of religious nationalism predicated on a strategy of colonization, conquest, and expulsion of indigenous peoples. What Leibowitz rightly labeled “Judeo-Nazism” was festering at Israel’s core from day one. And as Leibowitz famously put it,

"Religious nationalism is to religion what national socialism is to socialism" – which is precisely what we are seeing emerge, full blown, in Israel today.

Roaring its obscene defiance at an outraged world – "Don't you ever second guess me!" barked Netanyahu at his American allies when they registered the mildest of protests at his murderous tactics – Israel continues its blitzkrieg with no end in sight but the one proffered by Feiglin.

While we have gotten quite used to the sight of Israel conducting a shooting-gallery "war" in the open air prison that is Gaza, there is something new about this latest exhibition of state terrorism. There is a kind of murderous glee in the Israeli leadership's inversion of all moral and international legal standards in its conduct of this "war," as if they take special delight in upending centuries of "just war" doctrine regarding proportionality and the killing of innocents, and are eager to replace it with their own ruthless nihilism that owes more to Nietzsche than to Thomas Aquinas.

Remember the genesis of this war. In the wake of the horrific murder of three Israeli boys by a rogue clan known for going against the Hamas leadership, a Facebook page calling for a war of "revenge" was set up by Israeli right-wingers: one photo shows a group of girls with a sign saying "Hating Palestinians isn't racism, it's values"!

Yes, the new values of the new Israel – or, perhaps, the old values finally realized.