

Operation Cast Lead--Zion Fascism at Its Best

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Abstract

Jews consider themselves to be the original inhabitants of Palestine. It has always been the official policy of Israel to occupy and populate the Palestinian territories. The victories in successive Arab-Israeli wars emboldened Israel to pursue its policy more vigorously. The Palestinians of occupied territories specially those living in West Bank and Gaza have to face the onslaught of Israeli atrocities. After breaking the truce entered into with Hamas, Israel attacked Gaza in December 2008, justifying the attacks as its right of self-defense. The Gazan operation named Operation Lead was not condemned by EU, US or European countries. To prepare the Israeli army for the Gaza offensive the troops were even religiously and politically brainwashed to successfully combat the Palestinians. The elections held after the Gaza offensive and extremist candidates returned to the Israeli parliament. Such extremist stance taken by Israeli public will go a long way in making the already biased Israeli society a more racist and fascist Israeli polity. In the absence of any criticism or condemnation of Israeli actions it pursues the murder and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians with impunity. Accumulation of latest weaponry and warring techniques have transformed Israel into a regional Sparta and religious extremism and fascism have come to assume an important place in today's Israel. This article has been prepared with the help of newspapers and answers certain questions as why is Palestine most coveted by Jews. Why is Israeli aggression increasing day by day. And what was the justification for 'Operation Cast Lead'.

Key Words: Arabs, Gaza, Holocaust, Israel, Jerusalem, Jews, Nazis, Palestine, West Bank, Zionism.

Introduction

At the end of the nineteenth century conditions became favorable for the Jews to return to Palestine. Jews consider themselves to be the original inhabitants of Palestine and dismiss the claims of Arabs who arrived just by chance having no history. This made it easier to justify the wars through which Jewish diaspora got hold of the sacred land. Zionist historians through constant efforts marginalized the complex origins of Jewish people and finally replaced it with extreme form of nationalism (Shlomo, 2008). Fundamentalist groups and factions have always been active in Israel. It is not a modern day phenomenon. Even during the time of

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British mandate *Irgun* was very active in waging war against the Palestinian Arabs. The activities of this Zionist militia led Albert Einstein to declare it fascist (Wheatcroft, 2009). Among its important exploits it boasted proudly of bombing King David Hotel in Jerusalem.

As religion is a necessary element of Israeli government and administration constituting the Israeli state, democracy is acceptable only as long as it operates within Zionist framework. Israel's policy has always been to not only occupy Palestinian territories but to populate them with Jews. Many of the occupied territories were homes of Jewish populations in the recent past hence populating the West Bank sites is not settlement but a return to their original land. It is a widely held belief among Israeli government and people that all the Arab states simply want to erase the State of Israel and the Palestinian State comprising West Bank and Gaza is the first step towards fulfilling that goal.

In 1967 war Israel inflicted a crushing defeat on Egypt, Syria and Jordan and with the conquest of East Jerusalem Israel succeeded in establishing its firm control on the whole of Jerusalem. This was implied as a sure sign of God's consent to justifiably occupy and inhabit the territories won recently. After that call for settlement on West Bank and other occupied territories gained momentum with the strengthening of extremist forces. Occupied territories will be difficult to concede once they become thickly populated. The settlers in the occupied territories do not live in tents or makeshift houses but have purpose built homes and even apartment complexes. Territorial negotiations would become very difficult in the face of well-populated regions.

Gaza Offensive

Between Egypt and Israel lies a tiny strip known to the world as Gaza, stretching twenty five miles by five miles. It is populated by 1.5 million people making it the most crowded area in the whole world. In 2006 Hamas was able to secure victory in the general elections by winning seventy six out of one hundred and thirty two seats in the Occupied Palestinian parliamentary elections. But Israel and its allies especially U.S.A refused to accept the mandate given by people, dubbing Hamas a terrorist organization and preferred to deal only with Fathah. Many Hamas MPs were also arrested by Israel while some were lucky to escape to Gaza. Israel imposed a blockade on Gaza and Palestinians were not allowed to cross into Egypt or West Bank through Rafah (Siddiqui, 2009).

Off and on Gazan Palestinians were denied access to food, fuel, water and electricity. UNWRA in its report highlighted the deplorable conditions of Palestinians who were even forced to scavenge due to Israel's blockade. Though Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005 but retained sea, air and land control. Since then Israel has imposed total or partial blockade on Gaza. Professor Jared Diamond, one of the best known Jewish scholars in the world today, in his best-selling book, *Collapse* says "It is morally wrong for a people to dispose subjugate or exterminate other people" (Polya, 2009).

On 19th June 2008 a truce was entered into by Hamas and Israel which was broken by Israel on 9th November 2008. Majority of Gazan residents are Palestinian refugees who fled their homes after the Israeli attack of 1948. Israel has denied the internationally recognized rights of refugees to Palestinians and still continues to tightly control Gaza's airspace, coast and borders (Bisharet, 2009).

On 27th December 2008 Israel launched an offensive on Gazan Concentration Camp which continued unabated for three weeks. Palestinian refugees were attacked with missiles and cluster bombs through land, air and sea. The lame excuse given by Israel was that of killing a single Israeli due to rockets fired from Gaza which was considered sufficient to attack the whole people.

Anti-Islam Conference Hosted

Before launching the Gaza Offensive Israel hosted an anti-Islam conference in Jerusalem on 14th December 2008. All leading Islamophobes such as Daniel Pipes, Aryeh Eldad and Greet Wilders participated in the conference. Daniel Pipes advocated "crushing of Palestinian hopes" for freedom, liberation and independence which according to him are "hopes for destroying Islam" (Amayreh, 2008).

At the conference Daniel Pipes asked Israel to expel all non-Jews from Israel or instead place restrictions on the civil liberties of the Palestinians. Pipes also incited all the European states to expel the Muslim immigrants living in their countries or deprive them of their separate identity by thoroughly merging them in the mainstream. Greet Wilders asked the west to target not only the Muslim extremist groups and organizations but the entire Muslim community to wipe out Muslims from the face of the earth. Eldad also spoke in favour of total annihilation of all non-Jews from Israel. Ismael Shindi, Professor of Islamic Studies at the university of Hebron analyzing the anti-Islam comments declared, "if the holocaust had targeted non-Jews, probably most Jews would have lauded Hitler" (Amayreh, 2008).

Attacks Justified in Self-Defense

Israel claimed the Gaza attacks as its right of self-defense but in fact Israel provided the provocation through her own violation. U.N resolution 95 declares aggression a crime against peace. An armed attack not justified by self-defense is defined as aggression. Pro-Zionist western leaders and powers were united in their unflinching support to Israel. The U.S Congress, a club of wealthy Zionists and pro-Israel lobbyists voted in favor of Israeli's slaughter of Palestinian children (Hassan, 2009). President Bush in a blatant show of uncritical support said, "Hamas's continued rocket attacks into Israel must cease if the violence is to stop. Hamas must end its terrorist activities if it wishes to play a role in the future of the Palestinian people" (Siddiqui, 2009).

West and American Support for Israel

Rubbing salt in the wounds Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State, held Hamas responsible for the renewal of hostilities. Taking hint from the USA and following in its footsteps, the west stood behind Israel which kept on bombing not only Gazans but the entire length of Gaza and Egypt's border. As Israel continued to act like a butcher, certain sane voices were heard in condemnation of Israeli atrocities. French President Nicolas Sarkozy strongly condemned the disproportionate use of force (The Nation, 2008).

EU called for deliveries of fuel and aid to be resumed as well as free access for journalists, diplomats and humanitarian groups blocked by Israel (The Nation, 2008). Russia's foreign ministry called on Israel to halt immediately the large scale acts of force against the Gaza Strip (The Nation, 2008). While Hamas accused Israel of committing a holocaust, Arab League and Organization of Islamic Conference condemned it for slaughtering innocent civilians. Russia stressed the immediate halt of Israeli aggression. Under immense pressure from US, UN Security Council in its belated resolution avoided any criticism of Israel.

In the meanwhile dead and wounded continued to arrive in hospitals which were left with no morgues to pile them and the corpses littered around the pavements. While the Gazans were busy in numbering their dead and wounded, Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak unashamedly declared *Operation Cast Lead*—name given to the Gaza offensive, to continue as long as it was felt necessary. Ehud Olmert, the Israeli Prime Minister defended the invasion “to regain a normal life for the citizens in the south who have suffered for many years from incessant rocket mortar and terror attacks” (The Nation, 2008).

The Jewish paper Haaretz in an article, *Disinformation, secrecy and lies: How the Gaza offensive came about*, stated: “Defense Minister Ehud Barak instructed the Israel defense forces to prepare for the operation over six months ago, even as Israel was beginning to negotiate a ceasefire agreement with Hamas”(Mustafa, The Nation, 12th January. 2009). Foreign minister Tzipi Livni said, “Hamas cannot continue to control Gaza.....In the long term Israel cannot tolerated an extreme Islamic state on its southern border.” (Mustafa, 2009).

The bombardment on Gaza considered the bloodiest in all Israel's history moved even Israel's leading human rights organization *B'Tselem* which said that the Israel army was intentionally targeting what appeared to be clear civilian objects that are not engrossed in military action against Israel (Barghouti, The Nation, 3rd January, 2009). In his article *The Neighborhood Bully Strikes Again*, Gideon Levy said, “once again Israel's violent responses, even if there is justification for them, exceed all proportion and cross every red line of humanness, morally, international law and wisdom” (Roberts, 2009).

Israel Emboldened by American Support

Gaza and West Bank present the outlook of ghettos in which Palestinians are kept like sheep and cattle. They pose no threat to the security of Israel. They are at the mercy of Israel for smooth flow of basic necessities like food, medicine and water. Still Israel through its propaganda has succeeded in projecting itself on the verge of destruction due to the *Palestinian terrorists* of Gaza.

Israeli propaganda was so effective that none of the Presidents of American colleges and universities who were so vociferous in denouncing British academic's boycott of Israeli universities in September 2007 raised their concern against Israeli atrocities. As the universities depend on Jewish money they are afraid of losing the financial resources in case of taking an anti-Israel stand and condemning it for the treatment meted out to Palestinians.

Power alone is effective force--the doctrine of Karl Marx is pursued relentlessly by Israel. The whole Gaza Strip was transformed into a funeral procession because the objective of "Operation Cast Lead" was "Terrorizing the civilian population, assuring maximal destruction of property and cultural resources--The daily life of the Palestinians must be rendered unbearable. This will encourage emigration and weaken the resistance to future expulsions" (Chossudovsky, 2009).

Dagan Plan

"Operation Cast Lead" was formulated after the success of *Dagan Plan* in June 2001 which was named after General retired Meir Dagan. It was codenamed as *Operation Justified Vengeance*. The important feature of 'Dagan Plan' consisted of removing Yasser Arafat out of the picture and cutting off West Bank and Gaza from each other permanently referred to as canonization of Palestinian territories. "Damage which will result from Arafat's disappearance is less than the damage caused by his existence" said an October document of 2000, prepared by security services for the then prime Minister Ehud Barak (Chossudovsky, 2009).

Operation Cast Lead

"Canonization" of different territories of Palestine was possible only after branding Hamas a terrorist organization in the eyes of the world. "Operation Cast Lead" was prepared with precision to avoid the Israeli disaster of 2006 Lebanon War. Israel's propaganda machinery and effective mobilizing techniques assured not only the silence and support of world leaders but also the accountability and responsibility of Hamas for the whole episode. White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe urged Hamas to end its terrorist activities if it wished to play a role in the future of Palestinian people (Mustafa, 2009).

Palestinian land is most coveted by Jews because of biblical importance and for this the Palestinians were forcibly removed to pave way for the Jewish State way back in 1948. While the Israelis consider the very denial of *Holocaust* a

criminal act, they had no qualms in perpetrating the same on Palestinians (Aziz, 2009). The Israeli State came into being with the motto of *Never forget the Holocaust*, conveniently forgetting that the innocent Palestinians had played no role in the 'Holocaust'. While responding to Hezbollah's provocation in 2006, Israel Chief of Staff Dan Houbitz threatened to turn back the clock in Lebanon by twenty years to the days of civil war when Israel had allegedly killed twenty thousand civilians (Aziz, 2009).

Israelis succeeded in presenting themselves as hapless victims of Nazi atrocities who were subjected to horror and bloodshed by modern day Nazis-- Hamas. Because of Israel's hectic diplomatic initiatives UN forums have always dismissed Israel-Palestine problem as between two sides in which the weaker side triggers violence and the mightier has to retaliate only for self-defense. Concerning the latest Gazan offensive UN discourse reduced half a million Palestinians not only to militants, radical fighters but condemned criminals deserving capital punishment meted out by Israel (Barghouti, *The Nation*, 3rd January, 2009). Emboldened by the world acting as silent spectator, Israel erected a three kilometer *Berlin Wall* to secure West Bank which was declared illegal by the ICJ (Aziz, 2009).

The height of irony is that those Israelis who had suffered at the hands of Nazis were in the forefront of perpetrating "Holocaust" on the Gazans. The magnitude of Israel's atrocities and massacres moved even the Israeli academic and author Ilan Pape to write the book, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. (Aziz, *The Nation*, 18th January, 2009). Uri Avery, a leading Israeli anti-war activist said that the recent Gaza war was sheer madness, "We are living through yet another great tragedy and tragedies have been the staple of world history for centuries. Now former victims and their descendants are executioners" (Kolko, 2009).

Israel's military today is equipped with latest and modern warfare due to which Israel has acquired the status of a regional Sparta. To justify military occupation the German Nazis forwarded the plea of 'self-defense' and used "gas chambers" to kill the civilian population which is still being investigated for its voracity. Conversely while claiming to act in self-defense Israel used all banned weaponry to incinerate people. "Our policy has been to attack civilians. The Palestinians must be hit and it must be very painful: we must cause them losses, victims, so they feel the heavy price," said former Israeli Prime Minister and war criminal Ariel Sharon in 2002 (Hassan, 2009). The principle of Israeli army is: "if you continue killing Palestinian civilians for long enough, the world will accept it" (Hassan, 2009).

According to Professor Richard Falk, a Jewish law scholar at Princeton University, Israel's Gaza aggression evoked memories of "Warsaw Ghetto" which led to starvation and then murder of innocent civilians by the Nazis. According to provisions of UN charter and international law, Israel cannot legally claim self-defense against defenseless people.

Theologisation of Israeli Army

Israeli army is gradually being taken over by extremist rabbis and their followers who are working on its rapid 'theologisation'. Religious combat soldiers second the views of hard-line rabbis for Greater Israel consisting of occupied territories of Palestine. Rabbis of Israeli army gave books and other material to prepare the soldiers for Gaza offensive. "The material contained messages bordering on racist incitement against the Palestinian people", Yesh Din an Israeli human rights group noted (Cook, 2009).

Shlomo Aviner who heads a religious seminary in the Muslim quarter of East Jerusalem provided the material. He equated Palestinians with Philistines--the Biblical enemy of Jews and quoted Biblical ban on surrendering even an inch of Greater Israel. Avnir's material was provided to the soldiers with the consent of Brigadier General Avichai Ronsky--chief rabbi of the Israeli army. Stories of religious and political brain washing of troops were also published by the newspapers.

Following instructions form part of Israeli army's Central Region Command training manual. When our forces come across civilians, so long as there is no certainty that those civilians are incapable of harming our forces, then according to Halakah they may and even should be killed. Under no circumstances should an Arab be trusted, even if he makes an impression of being civilized (Yousaf, 2009). Such vitriol is rooted in Talmudic attitudes towards non-Jewish: "For religious Jews, the blood of non-Jews has no intrinsic value because non-Jews have souls that come entirely from the female part of the satanic sphere. (Yousaf, 2009).

Zionism declares that even if pushed to the brink of destruction, non-Jews do not have the right to retaliate. Rabbi Israel Ariel, a leading fundamentalist used the Code of Maimonides to infer that a Jew who killed a non-Jew is exempt from human judgment and has not violated the religious prohibition of murder (Yousaf, 2009).

Mordechai Eliyahu the former grand rabbi, wrote a letter to Ehud Olmert in 2007 stating, "There is absolutely no moral prohibition against indiscriminate killing of civilians during a potential massive military offensive on Gaza aimed at stopping the rocket launching"(Hassan, 2009).

Extremist Candidates Successful in Elections

During the Gaza offensive Israelis were mobilized to such an extent that in the elections held after the Gaza episode extremist candidates were able to secure the vote and sympathy of people. "The results confirm that the Israeli public has voted for the most bellicose candidates, the most extremist in their rhetoric. How is it possible that a society aspiring to peace can give a fascist like this such broad support giving him the possibility of becoming the Prime Minister of Israel?"wrote *Al-Ahram* of Egypt (The Nation, 2009).

The fascist referred to was Avigdor Lieberman who heads *Yisrael Beiteinu*. *Al-Gomhuriya* while seconding the views of Al-Ahram wrote, "For those who don't know him, Benjamin Netanyahu feels the Arabs only understand the language of violence. If the peace process is facing obstacles at the moment, with Netanyahu it will be hundred several thousand times" (The Nation, ,2009). Lieberman who heads a relatively new party surprised all critics by winning sixteen seats in Knesset. Lieberman's election campaign was based on anti-Arab slogans which went a long way in winning him extra seats. He promised to treat Arab members of Knesset as "Collaborators" to be dealt with like collaborators with the Nazis (Rosenburg, 2009). It was in 1977 that extremist parties and candidates won their first election victory and Menachem Begin became the Prime Minister. After that with the passing of every year fundamentalists grew in strength and power. While promoting his election campaign, Netanyahu who belongs to Likud Party criticized the Gaza 'Holocaust' as *too little and too late*.

In 1996 Benjamin Netanyahu became Prime Minister. His election campaign concentrated on ending the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations going on. He out rightly rejected "land for peace" formula and instead favoured "security for peace" where security meant only Israeli security and the Palestinians were supposed to contend themselves with the promise of economic development. Ariel Sharon, his infrastructure minister, stressed upon the Israelis to seize as much land of West Bank as possible while supposedly carrying on peace talks with Palestinians. Netanyahu is on the same war path again. He has made it clear that he will "respect" prior agreements but is not bound to follow the terms therein. He again reiterated that there is no question of discussing "final status" issues such as Jerusalem and he will never consent to two states (Dr. Zogby, 2009).

A thousand percent increase in racist crime rates in 2008 as compared to 2007 was reported by the Mossawa Advocacy Centre for Arab Citizens as the after effect of Israel's Gaza Carnage and the subsequent Israeli elections. The areas that were specially targeted for such crimes were obviously the West Bank and Al-Quds (Western Jerusalem). While condemning the killing of almost thirteen hundred Palestinians during the Gaza War which lasted from December 27 to January 18, Mossawa held Rabbi Ovadia Yosef--founder of Shas Party and Avigdor Lieberman--Chairman of 'Yisrael Beitenu' responsible. The Rabbi himself of Arab race referred to Arabs as snakes, "The Arabs are like snakes and you should destroy the head of a snake" (The News, 23rd March 2009). Mossawa further warned that Lieberman's threats and sentiments are fast leading towards a racist Israeli society. The director of Mossawa said, "An extremist message by an Israeli parliamentarian permeates and leads to the involvement of more and more citizens" (The News 23rd March, 2009).

Support of Government for Extremist Organizations

Different groups and organizations engaged in promoting Zionism such as Gush Emunim and Jewish National Front have the full support of Israeli government and their views have been officially recognized in the government literature. In his article in Haaretz, Gideon Levy asks, "Does Zionism mean settlement in the territories and occupation? the legitimization of every act of violence and injustice?" Levy stresses that "it is possible to think that the Arabs of Israel also deserve the same cultural, social and political rights. It is permissible to raise questions about Israel Defense Forces as an occupation army and to want to talk to Hamas? This is essential and legitimate if we do not want to see Israel fall victim to the insanities of the Right" (Levy, *The Nation*, 15th February, 2009). Levi wants the taboo of criticizing Zionism to be broken. His belief is that it is possible to remain a Jew and still apologize for the events of 1948.

Conclusion

The influence of religion on the political process is increasing day by day in modern Israel. Instead of prohibiting or simply interfering in religiously motivated activities the Israeli government actively supports and encourages them. Religious extremism in Israel advocates the expulsion of not only the Arabs of occupied territories but all the non-Jew citizens of Israel in case of their non-compliance with strictly Jewish terms. Since it has been embedded in Israeli psyche that all the Arab States are out to destroy the State of Israel in its entirety, all the peace efforts are looked upon with disdain and suspicion. It is widely held that as the Arab leaders and States know very well that they would not be able to win the battles with swords they want to achieve victory through the pen. Israel and its leaders do not want peace as it is not in their interests. A peaceful solution of Palestine problem would end the problem itself which is not acceptable to Israel. Israeli society today is the most extremist and racist with Israel treading on the path of ethnic cleansing and murder of Palestinians.

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