

The Consistency of Inconsistency: The American G.A. and Israel

OCT 26, 2018, 10:27 PM



The underwear was showing. No one was embarrassed. Everyone complained. No one was happy. The General Assembly of American Jewish Federations met in Tel Aviv. Americans blamed Israelis and Israelis blamed Americans. The divide was moderated by those who held the purse. Nothing flowed comfortably.

Forty-five years earlier, the Yom Kippur War and any G.A. complaints became academic as Israel faced the destruction of the third Temple. It took an anti-Semitic U.S. President, Richard Nixon's, aggressive decision to rearm bleeding Israel over the wishes of his Jewish Secretary of State's objections, to save Israel. American Jews still hate Nixon. Today, the vast majority of American Jews hate Trump even more than Nixon.

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I stared out the window at the receding Israeli coastline as the BA jet climbed on its course to England.

My time as a lone soldier was over. Memories of many bitterly cold nights sitting over a machine gun in the Sinai freezing because we had no winter clothing, were still fresh in my mind. I knew why I was there, defending Israel, defending Jews everywhere. And a reality check, Egypt was in front of me and Tel Aviv was behind me.

Back then, lone soldiers were told bluntly. Israel would deny we existed if we were captured.

The older American woman sitting next to me fumed out loud, "those miserable, rude, ingrates."

"Excuse me," I asked.

"Israelis" she answered. "I have given them so much of my hard-earned money. They barely say thank you. Their policies are stupid. They use my money foolishly. I'm done with them."

She spoke to me because she thought I was a fellow American.

I kept my conflicted thoughts private. We had the newest weapons, but we froze. We froze because there was not enough money to supply us with winter clothing.

She had given her money for Israel. Others in the Sinai gave their lives...

I appreciated her money. I resented her money. She did not appreciate it was our blood.

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The 2018 Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) General Assembly was held in Tel Aviv recently. The Theme – Israel and Diaspora need to talk.

The G.A. convention posters raised differences between American and Israeli Jewry...

“The percentage of Jews who believe non-orthodox forms of Judaism could improve the quality of life in Israel – American Jews 43%, Israeli Jews 26%.

How many say their close friends are Jewish- American 32%, Israeli 98%.

How many believe religious issues are Israel’s most important problem?

American 18%, Israeli 14%.

How many believe security is Israel’s most important long-term problem?

American 66%, Israel 38%.

How many believe economic issues are Israel’s most important long-term problem?

American 1%, Israel 39%.

A thriving Diaspora is vital to the long-term future of the Jewish people.

American 69%, Israel 78%.”

It's been 73 years from the official end of the European Holocaust and 70 years from the official beginning of the continuing Arab efforts for a new Holocaust.

In 1948, 5,000 crucial, military skilled foreign volunteers came. They were known as Machal, volunteers from outside of Israel. Their soldiery provided the vital difference for victory. Over 1200 were North Americans, a very, very small percentage of the returning WWII Jewish American veterans. Most of Machal were Jewish, some were not. They came to fight, even die for Israel during the War of Independence. After the war, most returned home, to Ben Gurion's frustration and anger, without even a thank you.

Machal had to build their own memorial in Israel, December 2017, opposite Ammunition Hill in Jerusalem. Officially, they still do not exist. Repeated efforts to obtain an IDF citation, a piece of paper, an official thank you, has met with Israeli indifference. The one being sought through Prime Minister Netanyahu today is at the bottom of a disinterested bureaucrat's inbox.

The eternal hate, once again a reality for Diaspora Jews is rising, world anti-Semitism. The, it can't be happening again is happening. Most American Jewry support liberal, leftist political candidates as anti-Semitism, disguised as anti-Israel criticism, gets worse among leftist ranks. There are growing scores of leftist political leaders in Congress. More than a few are Jewish. The times are especially frightening to American Jews. They blame Trump instead. Without Trump, the American President who has done more for Israel than any President

in history... the majority of Federation leadership believes there will be a better future if only he were not President.

Liberal Jews supported Israel in 1948. Conservative American Jews did not. 2018, liberal American Jews question Israel, Israeli policy and even Israel's legal right to exist. Conservative American Jews support Israel.

Jews and Jewry are, as always, consistently inconsistent, confused, changing and blaming. Moses was frustrated for good reason.

Zionism's mission statement, enough with blame. Let us take control of our own future. Israel, imperfectly, has.

American Jewry, with Israel or without...?