

Informed Comment

Thoughts on the Middle East, History, and Religion

Juan Cole is President of the Global Americana Institute

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Tzipi Livni Aboutface: Now Against Terrorism

Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, now grandstanding at the UN, is the daughter of Eitan Livni, the chief operations officer of the Irgun terrorist organization. Among Irgun's most spectacular operations was the blowing up of **the King David tourist hotel in Jerusalem**, which killed dozens of innocents (also some British intelligence officers). Just to give you an idea of how things change, the Irgun bombers disguised themselves as Arabs. Obviously, in 1946 Arabs could be presumed not to be dangerous, which explains the disguise; it was people who looked like they might be violent Zionists that would have attracted suspicion. Later generations of rightwing Zionists have attempted to convince the rest of the world that the Arab kaffiyah is an icon of terrorism; but their parents were perfectly willing to display it as a sign of innocence (and perhaps with the intention that the Arabs should take the fall).

Likud leader Benjamin "Bibi" **Netanyahu actually attended a celebratory commemoration** of this cruel act of terror in 2006 along with elder Irgun members!

Irgun also carried out the **infamous massacre of Palestinian civilians at Deir Yassin** in 1948. Note that this village had a peace agreement with the Haganah, which Irgun refused to honor.

Since she has never repudiated Irgun's actions, **she does not make a convincing poster child for the condemnation of terrorist groups that field candidates in elections, her current campaign.**

One wonders if Livni regrets her own father's having been elected to parliament as a member of the Likud Party, or if she thinks Netanyahu should be allowed to run for office. Or, um, there is the question of her own good self.

Her government **fired 1.2 million cluster bomblets into Lebanon** last summer, mainly in the last days of the war. Cluster bombs are anti-personnel weapons that are only useful on the battlefield if fired into massed troops. The Israelis did not use them that way. They spread them around on civilian farmland as the war was clearly ending. That is an act of naked terror fulfilling no war aim, and Lebanese children are still being killed by the bomblets. Israeli President Shimon Peres has called the action a mistake (as he has called the whole war a mistake.)

About Livni, **UK blogger and human rights activist Charlie**



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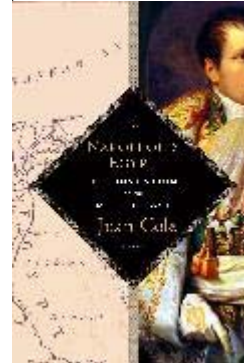
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' Livni, 47, first came to political notice as a teenager, taking part in violent demonstrations by right-wing Greater Israel nationalists against US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger when he tried to arrange territorial deals between Israel and Arab states with his shuttle diplomacy.

"My family is part of the founding history of Israel," she has boasted. Her father's gravestone bears the inscription, "Here lies the head of operations of the Irgun Z'vai Leumi" . The stone also bears a carved map of 'Greater Israel' extended to take in the opposite side of the Jordan river. in keeping with the old right-wing Zionist ditty that went "The River Jordan has two sides, and both of them are ours!" ' .

Livni's current campaign is not even a good idea. It was only after the Irish Republican Army fielded candidates from its political wing, Sinn Fein, that Britain and the US gradually had someone they could negotiate peace with. You can hardly hold talks with someone who is blowing you up. But you can talk to his colleague who is just doing ordinary politics. Over ten to fifteen years, such arrangements can create the political distance necessary to bring conflicts to a close. But then the Livnis only know one way to bring conflicts to a close.

Labels: **Israel/ Palestine**

posted by Juan Cole @ 9/24/2007 06:10:00 AM

5 COMMENTS:

At 9:39 AM, Yaacov said...

And your point is, Prof. Cole? That Livni cannot be trusted because her father was a terrorist more than a decade before she was born? Or because when she was a teenager she behaved like teenagers often do, and saw the world in black and white terms? Or that she must be something of a terrorist herself, because Netanyahu (head of another party, not hers), participated in a ceremony? Or that she can't be sincere in her wish for peace now, because the IDF last year did something wrong?

And yet, after having said all this, you add that the only way to reach peace is for Israel to engage with (the moderate wing) of Palestinian terror organizations; After all, within 15 years the IRF changed, didn't it?

I'm mystified by this entire post.

Yaacov Lozowick

At 11:10 AM, Christiane said...



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It is clearly a war crime. Speaking of a mistake is clearly minimizing the harm done to the Lebanese. At least Peres recognize there was something wrong with it.

At 9:53 PM, Anonymous said...

Livni and the rest of the leaders of Israel are a lot worse than terrorists. They are occupying and terrorizing a whole nation, and have been for decades.

They are baffled as to why they should give back the land and people they occupy, without a hefty price. That is correct. They are backed by a mighty evil empire and are fighting a people without even an army. But to turn back, at the same time, and scream they are civilized and should be treated like others is an obscenity.

At 6:15 AM, Juan Cole said...

Yaacov's comment is typical of the propaganda that passes for analysis on Arab-Israeli issues. It depends for its force on half-truths and ignoring the issue of moral standing.

First of all, Livni is not responsible for her father's crimes except if she is proud of them and declines to denounce them. If she won't denounce them, she has no standing to argue to the UN that it should prevent holding office. Her father held office despite having been the member of a violent terrorist group. That is called h-y-p-o-c-r-i-s-y

Then it is claimed that her participation in "violent" Greater Israel protests was just youthful indiscretion. She was advocating the ethnic cleansing of a whole country!! Some people spend their youths eating too many cookies. That's an indiscretion. This was a hate crime.

As Yaacov knows very well, Livni was a Likudnik all her life and only recently joined Kadima, which is Likud Lite. The question is whether she responded to British protests about the commemoration of the bombing of the King David Hotel by agreeing that it was a horrible act of terrorism, or whether she defends the bombing. Any evidence that she has **ever** denounced terrorism committed by Zionists would be welcome. I haven't seen any.

At 5:40 AM, Frank Mlynarczyk said...

On the issue of Deir Yassein, its true significance is that it was a message to the Palestinians: get out; we're coming! Why can this be a logical deduction? Because Deir Yassein was not even part of the original territory to be assigned to the Zionists! Go check Fred Khoury's chronology of Israel before the United Nations. Check the map of what territory was to go to the Zionists and what was to remain with the Palestinians. Deir Yassein was to be Palestinian territory. This was BEFORE the war. BEFORE the declaration of state. You can look it up.

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And Begin ends up as prime minister. And Shamir (Count Bernadotte). And Sharon (Qibya). And although Livni's daughter cannot be held responsible for her father's terrorist crimes, Prof. Cole is correct in his observation that if she does not repudiate his actions, her humanity is suspect.

And Netanyahu celebrates the 60th anniversary of the King David Hotel terrorist massacre!

Future generations of Israelis will ask of their parents and grandparents, What have we done as a people? How could we treat others as badly as we have been treated through history? Is our suffering a justification?

A people cannot be treated like Untermenschen, like Stuecke. A proud people will fight. That is what has happened for some sixty years. There will be no peace without a willingness to attain a full understanding of the other persons' points of view. Future generations of Israelis will hold their forbears accountable.

Yitzak Rabin was a giant. He persecuted the Palestinians until his heart reminded him that there was a time for war and a time for peace. If a right wing Jewish terrorist had not murdered him, the entire region would be a lot closer to peace today, if not already there.

Rabin understood Ecclesiastes.

And from Psalms "Lord, send forth thy light and thy truth ..." May the current and future Israeli leaders learn such understanding.

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