

GOD, LAND AND BELIEFS V

"My country tis of thee, sweet land of liberty. "We struggle with our open doors, our platitudes and our foibles, and a mixture of love and hatred towards us seems an anomaly. Little leaders, literally and actually abound in North Korea and Iran threatening nuclear confrontation. Ongoing strife between Hamas and Fatah Palestinians curtail accommodation with Israel sans a Roadmap to Peace. Iraq cries out for stability between Kurds, Sunnis and the Shiia among sectarian animosities, infiltrating terrorists, and the inability of the United States-led coalition to grab hold of the quasi-democracy as the cauldron smolders. Inherent and incisive is the historical clash between the Jew and the Arab and Christians see no turning of the cheek.

Balfour was a promise, and fabled Lawrence of Arabia aided Arab nationalism, hope, and freedom from Turkish Ottoman control and League Mandates provided a template for independence and raison d'etre--placing Arab Amirs in Iraq, Syria-Lebanon, Trans-Jordan and the Hijaz(Arabia)with Ibn Saud waiting in the wings. All of this emanating from WWI Armistice decisions which enabled France and Britain to remain in the Mideast inspired by Wilsonian rationale of self-determination. A League of Nations would oversee. Lawrence visualized 'a new nation for the Arabs and a restoration of lost influence'.

"State of Israel" these words were intoxicating to the Israelis...' and rolled around the lips like some enchanting nectar..a taste the like of which Jews had not known for nineteen centuries'...and relished by Prime Minister Ben-Gurion, President Chaim Weizmann, Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett, Abba Eban, representative at the UN, American Jews and the 'homecoming rush' of Jews from Europe and elsewhere....a morning-after maybe in denial.

Israel at the moment consisted of the Negev, coastal areas with Tel Aviv in the middle, a small abutment from the coast to Jerusalem, and a share therein. Daily hit with incursions and bombing by Syrian and Egyptian aircraft, seven Arab/Moslem states whetted for the kill poised ready to gobble-up this 'new' intruder. It was inconceivable that the Jew could prevail but they did. A need to survive during the mandated period when frequent clashes between the British and Palestinians was ingrained. Over the years- a Jewish Brigade fought with the British in Italy in WWII-self-protection units were set-up to protect Jewish settlements often separated from population centers. Embryonic were the para-military Haganah which was the nucleus of a military arm. Palmach became the shock troops for this arm. Essence was mobile brigade units which could move quickly to trouble spots and became the cornerstone of the Israel Defense Force. Additionally there existed two dissident Jewish units; the Irgun(under Menachem Begin); Levi-Stern an even-more extreme group. Neither took orders from Haganah and often operated as quasi-terrorist organizations. They were to be disbanded and/or absorbed in the new Israel Defense Force.

Surrounded by Arab armies, a tenuous relationship at the United Nations(not officially accepted)and shifting loyalties of the United States and the Soviets, Abba Eban and his staff danced like puppets on a string. Israel Statehood was in a vacuum with little, but questionable help. The War of Independence was on and 1948 found its climax in the Negev, the 'Faluja pocket' where a piecemeal onslaught by seven armies was repulsed and an Egyptian

Army surrendered. Arab Legion General John Bagot Glubb(Glubb Pasha) was ready to attempt its relief but Arab-rivalry surfaced and Jordan's Abdullah refused to aid the Egyptians. Major Gamal Nasser, future leader of the Egyptians was captured at Faluja...And remember!