

ry, one need only pick up Deborah Lipstadt's *The Eichmann Trial*, which provides the necessary background and perspective.⁴ The two books differ in emphasis but are short and readable. When read together, they complement each other very well.

NOTES

1. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eichmann>.
2. Michael Wildt, *Generation des Unbedingten: Das Führungskorps des Reichssicherheitshauptamtes* (Generation of the Unbound: The Leadership Corps of the Reich Security Main Office) (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition HIS, 2003). See Alexander Arndt's review of this title in the *JPSR*: <http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DBID=1&TMID=111&LNGID=1&FID=388&PID=0&IID=1690>.
3. See particularly Alexander Orlov, *The Secret History of Stalin's Crimes* (London: Jarrolds, 1954).
4. See Deborah E. Lipstadt, *The Eichmann Trial* (New York: Schocken Books, 2011).

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MASSACRING THE TRUTH

The Crisis of Zionism, by Peter Beinart, Times Books, 2012, 196 pp.

Reviewed by AMNON LORD

Aaron David Miller has written that "Obama isn't in love with the idea of Israel."¹ We can add, however, that Peter Beinart is in love with the idea of President Obama, and not only him. Many among American Jewry are enamored with the idea of Obama, whose presidency seems to resolve a complex of ideological problems as well as problems of identity and a sense of belonging. In *The Crisis of Zionism*, Peter Beinart reveals this confused intellectual state of mind. Indeed, at the core of this book, supposedly about the crisis of Zionism, is a long chapter about none other than "the Jewish president," Barack Obama. One may suspect that Beinart's writing reflects the crisis among a special stratum of the American Jewish intelligentsia. *The Crisis of Zionism* may be symptomatic of this state of mind.

Beinart's chapter on Obama is the part of his book that is really worth reading. It is informative and gives the impression of credible and reliable reporting. Reporting here is the key word, because there is not much of it in this much-talked-about book of some 196 pages. From this chapter, Obama emerges as the dream leader of

a core group of American Jewish leftists of “independent means,” so to speak. This group would include such individuals as the late Rabbi Arnold Wolf, Betty Lou Saltzman and her father the late Philip Klutznick, Avner Mikva, and others.

“[Obama] had come to Chicago not merely to find a black community, but to find a latter-day civil rights movement, and the movement, he believed, required whites and especially Jews,” writes Beinart quoting Obama’s biographer David Remnick. In fact, one gets the feeling that the main ideological and identity-driven motive behind Beinart’s intellectual effort is to revive the old Jewish-black alliance of the 1950s and 1960s civil rights movement. In that sense, his whole progressive vision is retrograde and in some ways even reactionary. This time around, Beinart calls on American Jews to throw Israel to this sacrificial Moloch so as to forge a new beginning with the American blacks and the political messiah who emerged from their numbers.

In order to achieve this end, Peter Beinart is ready to sell all the family silver—which includes his grandmother, Israeli history, Israel’s good standing among the nations, and the Israelis themselves. Beinart throws a lot of punches at “the Jewish establishment” in America. He even uses Yossi Beilin’s expression “Jewish plutocracy” in the process; but really—who cares? Trashing Malcolm Hoenlein is really no big deal. But rewriting Israeli history in a completely revisionist fashion, especially the immediate past of the last two decades, is something that exposes Beinart’s intellectual dishonesty. For him, history begins in 1967. The Holocaust is prehistory that every American Jewish intellectual may freely manipulate in order to derive “useful lessons” which conform with his (or her) preconceptions. “The Six Day War turned history’s trajectory upside down,” he writes (14). “... Israel conquered the West Bank of the Jordan River, among other territories and began to settle the land.... A year after it eliminated its most flagrant discrimination against its own Arab citizens, Israel made itself master of millions of Palestinian Arabs who enjoyed no citizenship at all.”

Beinart, the great liberal, wants to pack everything in: discrimination, conquest, mastery, settlement. Would it be correct to describe the American occupation of Germany, which lasted several decades, as “discrimination” against the Germans? And how many Palestinians were there exactly in 1967 in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza? The total number was somewhat more than one million people combined. The Israelis were no more masters than were the Jordanians who preceded them before 1967. And the canard about “settlements”? For a whole decade after the Six-Day War, the entire population of settlers in the occupied territories was no more than ten thousand, perhaps less. In Judea and Samaria there were almost none. In fact, a special government decision after the Six-Day War explicitly mentioned Israel’s readiness to withdraw from all territories in the framework of a peace treaty. Menachem Begin was a member of this unity government headed by Levi Eshkol. And this is where Beinart’s rewrite begins.

Israel's wish for a peace treaty negotiated directly with the Arab states was thwarted by a powerful totalitarian alliance consisting of the Soviet Union and the three strongest Arab countries, Egypt, Syria, and Iraq. A most important component in this alliance, which vowed to continue the war against Israel, was the PLO, which waged guerrilla warfare and terrorism on a larger scale than today's Al-Qaeda. Israel fought this war of attrition alone. Israel's sons and daughters stood at the front line of the free and democratic world. But even the Americans, who supplied weapons and ammunition, betrayed Israel on the international level with the Rogers Plan. This plan proposed a complete Israeli withdrawal in exchange for nonbelligerency. It did not demand full recognition of Israel from the Arabs in exchange for full peace. It basically accepted the Arab rejectionist policy of Khartoum in 1967 with its three "no's": no recognition, no direct negotiations, no peace.

The War of Attrition—the war between the wars—was perhaps the toughest test of Israeli resilience ever, including the Yom Kippur War, which is also nonexistent in Beinart's book. There was never a small state that had to fight for itself in almost a complete winter of isolation. Beinart mentions Nahum Goldmann as a kind of mentor to the budding leftist reorientation of Ivy League Jews, but it might be helpful to note that Goldmann was the only Jewish political figure of international stature who accepted the Rogers Plan and the American approach which conformed with the Khartoum three "no's." The idea was to break the Israeli consensus in time of war. Israel was not cultivating victimhood but heroism; it was the continuation of the old Zionist tradition—not to appear as a victim but to opt for the heroic effort. It was the Breira organization of the 1970s, then Friends of Peace Now, and most recently the New Israel Fund and J Street that cultivated the automatic victim: that is, the great advent of the messianic Victim, the Palestinians.

It is the recent past that Beinart massacres with his sleight of hand. He carries on as if the Oslo accords never existed, as if the Palestinians after lengthy negotiations never received their autonomy in the form of the Palestinian Authority. Some critics of Beinart have suggested that he fights the old ideological war of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, in which Israelis debated the worthiness of direct negotiations with a terrorist organization such as the PLO and the grand formula of "land for peace." It turns out that in the Israeli mind the debate is over. There is a consensus in Israel that instead of "land for peace" we got a "land for terror" deal. Again, as in the time of the great Soviet-Arab axis of evil, Israel absorbed the full price of its Western allies' follies. No democratic country ever had to endure such a murderous offensive as did Israel during the period from the 1993 Oslo accords to the missile terror after the 2005 disengagement. Now Peter and his friends, in an attempt to convince the Israelis that they should not have expected peace to begin with, inflame political warfare against Israel. His line is: either you withdraw

completely, uprooting all the Israelis in colonialist Israel beyond the Green Line, or we will call you names.

As an Israeli, I'm tempted to ask, "So what?" At the same time, one should not completely dismiss this simplistic and shallow book. Peter is playing with fire but seems to ignore what George Orwell observed years ago: that fire is hot. In general, *The Crisis of Zionism* reflects a deterioration of American political writing, and Peter has good company. See Thomas Friedman's angry columns in the *New York Times*. In Israel we say, after Meir Ariel's great verse, "We outlived Pharaoh; we will outlive this one as well." It is this reviewer's considered judgment that Peter Beinart's book will not stand the test of time.

NOTE

1. Aaron David Miller, "Bibi and Barack," *Los Angeles Times*, January 2, 2012.

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THE MUSLIM LEGAL DILEMMA OF PEACE WITH ISRAEL

War, Peace and International Relations in Islam: Muslim Scholars on Peace Accords with Israel, by Yitzhak Reiter, Sussex Academic Press, 2011, 236 pp.

Reviewed by ARNON GROISS

It is always useful to have God on your side whenever you become engaged in a meaningful enterprise, especially when cardinal decisions related to peace and war are involved. In a religiously devoted society like the Muslim one, God's support is especially essential as well in political controversies such as the debate over the issue of peace with Israel. The present book unfolds a wonderful array of Islamic rulings (*fatawa*, singular *fatwa*) for and against such a move and analyzes their background and significance within the wider context of Islam and international relations.

Fatwa is a tool of guidance for the ordinary Muslim individual, especially in times of inner conflicts as a result of political and social changes. Since Islam, like Judaism, is an all-encompassing religion, it has relevance to most aspects of daily life and, therefore, a word of guidance from a respected religious authority (termed