

**January 8, 2002**

### **A TWIN FOR ARAFAT**

The left-wing fringe of worshipers at the Oslo shrine have found a new icon. He is Sari Nusseibeh, a Jerusalem-born Arab, an Oxford graduate with a doctorate from Harvard.

For almost 10 years after 1992 he was absent from the political arena, following a distinguished career in the PLO, and indeed as a leader of the 1987-1992 murder campaign called the 'intifada.' Now he is a member of Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat's 'cabinet,' and has replaced the late Faisal Husseini as PLO representative in Jerusalem.

The Osloites, meantime, have been suffering the tremendous turnaround in public opinion brought about by the revelation of the real lethal Arab designs on Israel. They saw the consequent downfall of former prime minister Ehud Barak, the rise to power of their arch enemy Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, and, not least, the discrediting of their Great White Hope, Arafat.

The Osloites were left with no place to which to direct their political talents, except the abuse of Sharon. They did pretend that they were in good political health, but were for months no more than a 'fainting dispirited race.'

Then Nusseibeh came on the scene; and the color returned to their cheeks. Indeed, their reaction to him has been a veritable whoop of triumph. They have found a new ally. A 'profile' interview in Ha'aretz describes him as being 'attached to the Meretz people and the doves of Labor.'

Nusseibeh evidently takes advantage of his academic background to speak his mind on the subjects that are controversial among the Palestinians, even criticizing Arafat himself. As part of the profile, it appears that his interviewer was treated to a visit together with Nusseibeh at a local meeting of Palestinians at Kfar Yassif. There, he was harshly attacked for his 'moderation': He has been preaching that the 'refugees,' implementing their 'right of return,' should not be brought to Israeli territory but to 'Palestinian territory,' that is, to a Palestinian state, whose creation he manifestly takes for granted, in Judea, Samaria, Gaza and 'half of Jerusalem.'

When Yossi Beilin heard that because of Nusseibeh's 'moderation' he was regarded as dangerous in Israeli security circles, he was delighted. 'Sure,' said Beilin, 'Sari is a real danger to the Right.' In other words, how will the Right now be able to make a case against such a paragon of moderation?

Nusseibeh has evidently convinced himself, or he has been convinced by his Jewish friends, that even they will not agree to any return of refugees to Israel. Beyond that

mythical 'concession,' Nusseibeh in fact seems to be just another unrestrained promoter of vicious Arab propaganda.

There are still Israeli politicians who believe in negotiations with the Palestinians. There are also Americans and others who do not yet understand that Israel is targeted for destruction by all the active anti-Israel Arab governments, whose schools preach to their pupils that Zionism must be extirpated, the Zionists killed, and Israel destroyed. They provide symbolic demonstration of their intentions by eliminating all mention of Israel in the maps of the region that they produce.

In return for his generous concession in agreeing that refugees be brought back not to Haifa, Jaffa, et. al., but to Judea, Samaria, Gaza and east Jerusalem, Israel, he says, must go back to the 1949 lines.

But that is not all. Israel, he says, must recognize its 'moral responsibility for the problem of the refugees and their plight, and must participate in compensating them and in their rehabilitation.'

In his interview, he spoke of the intifada - and overreached himself. He exposed his mendacity completely. The events of September 2000, he asserted, were a reaction of the Palestinians to Israel's provocation. He also revives the silly excuse that it was Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount that 'provoked' them, an excuse that the Palestinians themselves later dismissed, admitting, indeed boasting, that the intifada had been planned at least four months earlier.

In order to sustain his charge, Nusseibeh indeed had to tie himself into a knot. What happened, he pleaded, was not an intifada at all, but a mutual shedding of blood.

Nusseibeh is also pretentious: he says he believes that the 'heart of the problem' is that 'Israel was born in sin' - meaning that Israel was responsible for the 1948 invasion by the Arab states who ordered the Palestinians to flee - which most of them did.

Given the real opportunity of raising issues with a PLO leader in the presence of rank and file PLO supporters, the interviewer could have told them, even if briefly, a few home truths about Israel's 'sin.' For example: at the session of the United Nations Assembly in November 1947, which recommended partition, Jamal Husseini, the spokesman representing the Arab nation (there was no group calling itself Palestinian then) announced the utmost opposition to the creation of a Jewish State. If the state were declared, he went on, it would immediately be destroyed. It was set up, the Arab states attacked, causing the death and injury of many thousands, but they failed to destroy the state.

Nineteen years later, in 1967, Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, tried again. Nasser made the same threat of destruction, accompanied by 'rivers of blood' - and failed again. Arafat has repeatedly made the same threat of destruction, announcing a policy of 'phases' leading towards the goal.

But Ha'aretz would certainly not like to embarrass an ally of Beilin and Yossi Sarid by publishing such reminders.