

Readers Letters – 6 January 1985

ANTI-SEMITIC MANIFESTATIONS

To the Editor of The Jerusalem Post

Sir, – As the editors of *Time* magazine, Henry A. Grunwald and Ray Cave, have taken their case to *The New York Times* (December 23) and hence to *The Jerusalem Post* (December 24), some reply is called for at least on one point of general interest.

Their quotation from a *Jerusalem Post* attack is not exactly convincing. Mr. Sharon has for many years been a target of severe *Jerusalem Post* criticism. Similarly their quotation from Ezer Weizman. They might as well quote Mondale on Reagan or Reagan on Mondale. Much more relevant is the opinion on *Time* magazine to which *The Jerusalem Post* was once driven – with obvious reluctance, as newspapers usually try to avoid quarrels with each other. *The Jerusalem Post* published a sharp comment on *Time* in May 1977, encapsulated in a cartoon by Dry Bones. It said “Time rhymes with slime.”

This judgement was a reaction to the *Time* article on Mr. Begin’s first election victory that month. In the course of a vicious character assassination of Mr. Begin, a blatantly anti-Semitic note was introduced. “Begin,” the paper gratuitously informed its several million readers, “rhymes with Fagin.”

When at that time I went to the U.S. at Mr. Begin’s request to counter the horrendous propaganda campaign let loose against him in part of the American media, I met (together with Azaria Rappoport of our Consulate General) with the *Time* editors. There I went through their article passage by passage, adding to each passage its appropriate characterization – such as “mendacious” and “outrageous.” In reaction, one of the men present who was, I suspect, the author of the article, let slip, in his visibly boiling anger, a reaffirmation of anti-Semitic animus. “When I was invited to this meeting,” he said, “I did not expect to be subjected to a line-by-line *Talmudic* analysis of our article.” The use of “Talmudic” in a pejorative or derogatory sense has always been a signature of the Western anti-Semite.

The *Time* editors claim that Mr. Sharon’s assertion that *Time* is anti-Semitic and has a bias against Israel is “a totally baseless and contemptible charge.” I do not think their claim would be supported by most American Jewish readers of *Time*. My own experience in 1977, when the subject was much discussed, and on many later visits to the U.S., suggests that most Jews and many other readers would, if they were polled, affirm their belief that *Time* has a bias against Israel and cannot be acquitted of anti-Semitism.

An interesting phenomenon is that *Time*’s editors actually retract and apologise for some monstrous distortion or charges against Israel – in personal letters to readers who had complained, but do *not publish* in *Time* either those readers’ letters or the retraction, so that millions of *Time* readers are left with the original lie. One such case was reported only last week (December 28) in *Yediot Aharonot*, including a photocopy of such a *Time* letter.

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