

January 24, 1997

Letter To The Editor

ISRAEL BASHER

Sir, - You identify Neal Sher, whose lengthy diatribe, "A Jewish thought policeman," against ZOA President Morton Klein you published on January 10, as a "former director of the Office of Special Investigations in the US Justice Department." As an experienced special investigator, he must surely know that the key sentence in his attack on Klein is a gross untruth. He writes that "[Thomas] Friedman's views, according to Klein, have been unfair and hostile toward the present government of Israel" (my italics). Klein's clearly expressed views on Friedman have nothing to do with the present or any other government of Israel.

Mr Friedman has for years been a prominent "Israel basher," a vilifier of the Jewish State, and that was the reason (and it did not need a special investigator to discover it) for Klein's anger at the honor conferred on Thomas Friedman (of all people). Already 15 years ago, Friedman compounded his poison-pen record against Israel by the pretense that he had been a nice pro-Israel Jewish boy until he was "converted" by alleged unacceptable behavior of Israel in Lebanon. His mendacity and guilt were exposed some years ago in Commentary magazine by historian Professor Jerold Auerbach, who recalled that, while still a student in 1974, this tzaddik Friedman had (with others) criticized American Jews for protesting against Yasser Arafat's performance at the UN Assembly.

Arafat there delivered a characteristically vicious attack on Zionism and Israel. (This was a bare six months after Arafat's braves, as part of a series, massacred a crowd of schoolchildren on a hike at Ma'alot, and a second "minor" massacre at Kiryat Shmona (both in Galilee). Two years earlier, his men had killed 11 Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics.

According to Friedman's chronology, all these events occurred at the height of his period of undying love for Israel. It was thus as a champion defamer of Israel that Friedman had his record attacked by Mr Klein; and as a public figure himself, it was not only Klein's right, but his duty to denounce the disgraceful choice of Friedman - of all people - for an honor by (of all organizations) the Anti-Defamation League.

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