

March 7, 2011.

The Editor,

Outlook.

Dear Editor,

The article [ "Jews, Israel, Nationalism and the Way Forward" Jan./Feb.issue] by Bennett Muraskin, includes some statements that call for comment. He states: "Jews experienced periods of both toleration and persecution under Muslim rule." There is some imbalance in this statement. The historic facts indicate that Muslims and Jews, basically, lived together in peace and friendship, until the recent introduction of Zionism. Testimony to this is manifold, and is confirmed by Jewish historians. In fact, Palestinian Jews, who lived in Palestine for centuries before the Zionist new immigration at the end of 19th. century, were happy and lived in friendly relations with their Arab neighbours and opposed the Balfour Declaration and the creation of a Jewish state.

Muslim tolerance to Christians and Jews goes back to the inception of Islam. The first Khalifah in Islam, Abu Bakr, in the year 634 A.D, ordered the commander, Usama Ibn Zayd, of the troops sent to Palestine and Syria : " Do not deceive or cheat and do not torture and do not kill a child or an elderly person or a woman and do not cut a tree or slay a cow or a sheep or a camel. **You will find people in their churches or their temples and places of worship; do not molest them or harm them**". These words were **The Fourth Geneva Convention**, written 1400 years ago. Similarly, Saladin, in his liberation of Jerusalem from the European Crusaders, went to great lengths to protect the Jews and allow them to return to live in Jerusalem. Jews and Muslims worked in peace together promoting momentous civilization in Spain [Andalusia], for over 800 years under Islamic rule

**Chaim Weizmann**, Israel's first president, who stated before The Anglo-American Commission of Enquiry, in 1946, in Jerusalem at the King David Hotel: "**I would not like to do any injustice. The Muslim World has treated the Jews with considerable tolerance. The Ottoman Empire [of which the Arabs were a major part] received the Jews with open arms when they were driven out of Spain and Europe, and the Jews should never forget that.**" Sadly, many Jews have forgotten Weizmann's advice.

Mr. Muraskin also states: " Another unrealizable demand is the "right to return....for dispossessed Palestinian refugees. ...." This is an extraordinary statement. The Palestinian refugees were systematically expelled from their homeland in accordance with a pre-determined and planned policy of ethnic cleansing

that was formulated and effected by various Zionist leaders, from Theodor Herzl and his followers to David Ben Gurion, amongst others. If this war crime of ethnic cleansing was realizable, why is the basic legitimate right of the dispossessed people to return to their homes, is not realizable?! The "right of return" for the Palestinian refugees is a fundamental basic human right, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the repeatedly-reaffirmed UN resolution #194 of Dec. 11, 1948. This resolution : "Resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for the loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the governments or authorities responsible ...." Sadly, this "earliest practicable date" has not yet arrived 63 years later, in the Zionist lexicon.

It is time that Israel is made to comply with international law, so that we may come to see Muslims, Christians and Jews living together in peace and security in this tortured Land.

Yours sincerely,

Ismail Zayid, MD.