GlobalResearch
Center for Research on Globalization

Shooting and Crying Over Israel's Lost Moral Army

By Jonathan Cook
Global Research, July 29, 2014

Region: Middle East & North Africa
Theme: Media Disinformation
In-depth Report: PALESTINE

I really wonder what it says about the Guardian or its readers that it publishes an article like this one by Yuli Novak, a former Israeli air force officer. The discourse, even on the left, is still so degraded on the issue of Israel-Palestine that this seems to pass for progressive thought.

I am also appalled that I almost find myself pleased that this former soldier, an insider, is telling us that Israel is acting immorally in its current attack on Gaza. But in doing so she bolsters a patently ridiculous mythology that, for most of its history, Israel had a moral army – the most moral in the world, no less – and that only a decade ago the army agonised over every Palestinian death.

As someone who lived and reported through those years, at the start of the second intifada, I can say with certainty that that is utter nonsense. This was a time when the Israeli chief of staff, Moshe Yaalon, the current defence minister, spoke of "searing" defeat into the Palestinian consciousness.

Let's not forget that the Israeli army, far from once being driven by moral ideals, began life with an act of mass ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, in 1948. It has been maintaining and expanding the cleansed zone ever since.

What's so dangerous about these "shooting and crying" articles – I remember an equally silly one a few years back in the Observer by Will Hutton about the "once noble ideal" of the kibbutzim, the racially pure communities Israel built over the ruins of Palestine – is that they lay claim to a golden era, one that, of course, never existed, when Israel's mission was truly wholesome.

Writers like Novak want Israel to return to an imaginary recent past, ignoring the fact that the present is simply a logical extension of everything that went before. The seeds of the current rampage in Gaza were laid in the decades of Israel's dispossession of the native population, culminating in the Nakba of 1948. Most of the population of Gaza are refugees from that period – their grievances and rights unaddressed all these many years later.

It is some consolation that people like Novak are waking up to the ugliness of Israel's national mission: to subdue and displace the native Palestinian people. This is evidence of the self-destructive course Israel is set on. But Novak's moral high ground is undermined entirely if she wants to claim it was all much prettier a few years ago.

Jonathan Cook, based in Nazareth, Israel is a winner of the Martha Gellhorn Special Prize for Journalism. His latest books are Israel and the Clash of Civilisations: Iraq, Iran and the Plan to Remake the Middle East(Pluto Press) and Disappearing Palestine: Israel's Experiments in

Human Despair (Zed Books). Read other articles by Jonathan, or visit Jonathan's website.

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © Jonathan Cook, Global Research, 2014

Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page

Become a Member of Global Research

Articles by: Jonathan Cook

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca