

Stouffville Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper
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LETTERS

Eliminating Zionism will bring peace to Middle East

Re: Magazine reeks of anti-Semitism, May 23.

While it is standard fare for Israel's supporters to paint anyone opposing its brutal policies with the broad brush of "anti-Semitism", it is astonishing to note your paper has become their mouthpiece.

It is imperative for Canadians to understand what the Zionist state of Israel stands for. Since the end of apartheid in South Africa, Israel is the only country in the world that is based on a racist ideology: Zionism.

The Nobel Peace Prize winner, Bishop Desmond Tutu, referred to Israel's treatment of Palestinians as worse than that meted out to blacks by the apartheid regime.

Most Canadians have little idea of the brutality, suffering and humiliation inflicted on Palestinians.

A comparison of the two sides' casualties is revealing. In the past 20 months, more than 2,000 Palestinians have been shot dead, one third of them children; that is more than Israel's total casualties of around 450, the majority being soldiers.

In April, Israel perpetrated massacres in Jenin but refuses to allow an inquiry while claiming it has nothing to hide. If so, why not let an independent commission investigate it?

Israeli President Moshé Katsav is on record as saying Palestinians are less than human.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is an indicted war criminal, with a gory record of massacres from Qibya (October 1953) to Beirut (1982) and now Jenin.

It is important to understand the origins of political Zionism. It emerged in the peculiar environment of late 19th-century Europe, where discrimination against the Jewish people was widespread.

Theodor Hertzl came up with the ludicrous proposal that Jews could not live with non-Jews and must, therefore, have their own state.

Europe's problem was thus transferred to Palestine, courtesy of the British. While the Jewish people had suffered grievously in Europe, they became the perpetrators of similar crimes against the Palestinians.

Israel's policies are condemned, not only by Palestinians and Muslims, but also by many conscientious Jews. These include figures such as Noam Chomsky, Uri Davis, the late Israel Shahak and, in South Africa, Water

OPINION

JUNE 3 • 2002



Under-achieving millionaires?
A self-destructing pitching staff?
We're passing the Buck!

BUCK MARTINEZ BOBBLEHEAD DAY



Minister Ronnie Kasrils, whom I had the pleasure of meeting during my recent trip to that country.

The Holy Land will have peace only when the racist ideology of Zionism is removed and all people—Muslims, Christians and Jews—live as equal citizens under the law.

ZAFAR BANGASH
MARKHAM

Read Harry Potter books with child's delight, imagination

Re: Stores shouldn't be selling evil Harry Potter videos, letter to the editor, May 30.

A few years ago, I scanned through the first Harry Potter book. I was offended that a children's story should have the boy's parents dead. I was offended with the idea he went to a school to become a wizard.

Still, I thought I better read one of the Harry Potter books. After one, I couldn't stop reading and am now on my fourth.

Instead of being in an orphanage like L'il Orphan Annie, Harry has been raised by very mean relatives.

But like Annie, he is kind, helps others, and is a cheerful person.

There are bad people in the stories that Harry and his friends use their wits to overcome.

Where is the evil influence? Doesn't every child dream of flying or being able to get the better of a bully?

Kids play pretend games or use their great ability to imagine themselves in various realities. Too bad adults lose this.

Harry, like every child, is happy, sad,

afraid of being in trouble with his teacher, frightened, brave, clever and makes mistakes.

Children can relate to Harry. Please don't ban these novels. Read the stories with a child's delight of wonderful places, awesome animals and the ability to look after himself/herself.

There will still be time to read the Bible.

EV ELLIS
MARKHAM

York Regional Police provides high-quality service to citizens

Re: Shoddy practices give police bad name, editorial, May 30.

I was disappointed in both the content and the tone of this editorial. While judicial censure is necessarily based on the evidence presented to the court rather than all the facts of an investigation, it is always of concern to the police service.

My initial review indicates that the officers acted in good faith in the performance of their duties.

However, given the serious nature of the matter, a complete and independent review is being considered and, for that reason, I am unable to comment further on the specific incident.

I would, however, like to address some of the other uninformed and misleading aspects of your editorial.

The current operating budget for the York Regional Police is \$107 million, not the \$120 million you reported.

The police-to-citizen ratio quoted is only

a guideline, and does not take into account other specialized resources available to us, such as air support, canine and intelligence units.

York Region remains one of the safest communities of its size in this country in which to live, and the policing budget, as I have stated before, is adequate to meet our needs.

York Regional Police is committed to training, and devotes significant resources to that priority. We are known throughout the policing community for the extent and calibre of our training, and for the quality of our equipment and technology.

Since January 2001, about 350 officers have completed investigative courses. The major case management system recently implemented by the provincial government was piloted by this service and we are recognized as a leader in that field, with two of our officers training police personnel across the province.

York Regional Police is noted for its investigative expertise and is frequently sought after to conduct difficult investigations for other police services and for the Ontario Civilian Commission on Police Services (the oversight body for policing).

We are also involved in a number of joint forces initiatives as a valued member, and currently have 10 officers seconded as investigators to such projects.

RCMP Chief Supt. Ben Soave recently commented, "The York Regional Police are a strong partner with the RCMP and are often called upon because of their professionalism and expertise in criminal investigations".

York Regional Police seeks always to act in a professional manner and to provide a superior quality of service to the community. We are a learning organization, constantly reviewing our practices and procedures to ensure we meet that goal. This matter will be assessed in our quest for continuous improvement.

ROBERT MIDDAGH
CHIEF OF POLICE

Community Police Centre responds quickly to concerns

After talking with our wonderful crosswalk person of 13 years, Sharon Norton, I decided, as a concerned parent of three children attending Stouffville's Summitview Public School, to write a letter to the Community Police Centre about the safety issue at this crosswalk.

An ongoing frustration has been expressed about those who run the red light while children are walking to and from school. The peak periods are at 8 a.m. to 8:20 a.m., noon to 12:20 p.m. and 2:50 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

I was thrilled with the response from the C.P.C. In two weeks, my letter was responded to by police officers showing up during all three crosswalk periods.

Now I'm the first to admit I'm not the perfect driver, but we all need to be reminded to slow down at this intersection and consider the safety of our children.

The response from the C.P.C. is evidence that it is available to listen and respond to concerns we have in this community.

ISOLA WIDEMAN
STOUFFVILLE

LETTERS POLICY

Stouffville Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The newspaper reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

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