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L'Affaire Freeman

BY JAMES M. WALL

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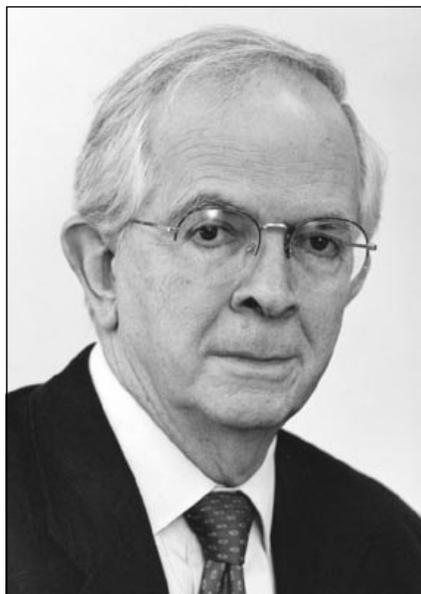
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About This Issue

The Freeman referred to on the cover of this issue is Charles "Chas" Freeman, Jr., former ambassador to Saudi Arabia and, until recently, president of the Middle East Policy Council (MEPC), a Washington, D.C. educational organization. [That's not his picture on the cover. That appears on page 11.]

The author of our feature article is James M. Wall, former editor, now contributing editor of *Christian Century*, a national publication headquartered in Chicago. [That's not him either on the cover. His photo is on this page.]

The person who does appear on our cover is Alfred Dreyfus, a French artillery officer who lived from 1859 to 1935. The link between Freeman and Dreyfus is the subject of Wall's article.



Author James M. Wall

But first, a disclosure. The editor of MEPC's publication, *Middle East Policy*, is Anne Joyce, a member of AMEU's board of directors. I note this with pride, because Anne's quarterly is one of the most scholarly, yet readable resources available. Hers is a preeminent institute—the president before Freeman was senator and presidential candidate

George McGovern. MEPC's website is www.mepc.org, and I encourage our readers to "check it out."

And a further word about Jim Wall. He, too, is a member of our board of directors. This is his third article for *The Link*. His first, "On the Jericho Road" (Sept.-Oct. 2000), recounted how he came to the Palestinian issue. His second, "When Legend Becomes Fact" (Dec. 2004), drew on his years as a film critic to show how the film industry has shaped the public's opinion of Zionism and the founding of Israel. Most recently, Jim has created his own blog called **Wallwritings**. In an interview with *The Link* on page 12, he looks at his postings and tells us why he does it—and why we might want to type in www.wallwritings.wordpress.com.

Our book offerings are found on pp. 13-14. Two of these entries will be of particular interest to *Link* readers:

Stephen Sniegowski is the author of "The Transparent Cabal." In Sept-Oct. 2004, the *Link* article "Timeline for War" traced the lead-up to the war in Iraq. Sniegowski's book puts flesh and blood on that skeletal outline, and does so with solid research and an engaging writing style.

Avraham Burg is the author of "The Holocaust is Over—We Must Rise from its Ashes." Our Oct.-Nov. 2007 *Link*, "Avraham Burg: Apostate or Avatar?" was based on the former speaker of the Israeli Knesset's book. Several readers requested copies of the book, but at the time it was not available in the U.S. Now it is, and Burg has had several interviews in the mainstream media. To my knowledge, though, no interviewer has queried him on the import of the last few pages of his book. If you decide to read Burg's book, I suggest you reread our *Link* article first.

Our video selections are listed on page 15.

John Mahoney
Executive Director

L'Affaire Freeman

By James M. Wall

L'Affaire Freeman was an internet fight between supporters of a veteran U.S. diplomat, Charles W. (Chas) Freeman, and the Israel Lobby. It began February 19, 2009; it ended 20 days later, March 11. The winner: the Israel Lobby; the loser: Charles Freeman, who gave up his appointment to chair President Barack Obama's National Intelligence Council (N.I.C.)—the same Council that provided President George W. Bush with the flawed intelligence he used to rationalize a decision he had already made to invade Iraq.

The choice of Charles Freeman as chair of the N.I.C. was made by the Director of National Intelligence, Admiral Dennis Blair. The position did not require Senate confirmation. The position is too sensitive not to have been initially approved by the Obama White House. After all, President Obama had appointed Samantha Power to his National Security Council and George Mitchell as his special emissary to the Middle East, both sensitive and important posts. And both of them were on record criticizing the failure of the U.S. to curb Israel's long-term military control over the Palestinian people. There were grumbles from the Israel Lobby, but not enough to derail the appointments.

The work of the N.I.C. is very important to American foreign policy, but because of the nature of its intelligence gathering assignment, it is not a high profile position. It is, rather, one of those groups in government that works behind the scenes to provide guidance to the president and his foreign policy team. The Council serves as a clearing station for intelligence collected by 16 U.S. intelligence-gathering agencies.

Of course, Freeman was not the real loser in the Israel Lobby v. Freeman battle. At stake in this struggle was Obama's ability to conduct his own foreign policy, and to change the pro-Israel pattern of both the Clinton and Bush administrations. The real losers in the L'Affaire Freeman are the Ameri-

can people, the vast majority of whom have never heard, nor will ever hear, the name Charles Freeman. Thanks to the collusion of the mainstream media (MSM) and the Israel Lobby, the public will never learn that an experienced, tough-minded foreign policy expert has been removed from a position in the U.S. government that was badly in need of a dose of honest realism.

For Dennis Blair, and for Freeman's supporters, it was a solid appointment. Stephen Zunes, writing in *Foreign Policy in Focus*, March 16, after Freeman's withdrawal, describes the man the country lost in not retaining Freeman as chair of the N.I.C.:

The N.I.C. chairmanship is structured to offer a skeptical view on U.S. intelligence. With his broad knowledge and experience in East Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and Latin America, Freeman would appear to be an ideal appointee. Fluent in both major dialects of Chinese, he accompanied President Richard Nixon on his historic 1972 trip to China. Later, he served as principal deputy assistant secretary of state for African affairs, assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs, and as ambassador to Saudi Arabia during the 1991 Gulf War. After retiring from the State Department, Freeman succeeded former senator and 1972 Democratic presidential nominee George McGovern as head of the Middle East Policy Council, a centrist Washington think tank.

The Surprise Firestorm

The internet brawl that led to the nation's loss of Charles Freeman in an important assignment began quietly, at midday on February 19, 2009. For 20 days it was waged fiercely by bloggers and writers for websites. When it ended, Charles Freeman withdrew.

Few in the MSM took note of his final statement on the matter, other than to point out that he had attacked the Israel Lobby for their slanderous attacks on him. Here is part of Freeman's understandably angry departing statement:

The libels on me and their easily traceable email trails show conclusively that there is a powerful lobby determined to prevent any view other than its own from being aired, still less to factor in American understanding of trends and events in the Middle East. The tactics of the Israel Lobby plumb the depths of dishonor and indecency and include character assassination, selective misquotation, the willful distortion of the record, the fabrication of falsehoods, and an utter disregard for the truth. The aim of this Lobby is control of the policy process through the exercise of a veto over the appointment of people who dispute the wisdom of its views, the substitution of political correctness for analysis, and the exclusion of any and all options for decision by Americans and our government other than those that it favors.

There is a special irony in having been accused of improper regard for the opinions of foreign governments and societies by a group so clearly intent on enforcing adherence to the policies of a foreign government—in this case, the government of Israel. I believe that the inability of the American public to discuss, or the government to consider, any option for U.S. policies in the Middle East opposed by the ruling faction in Israeli politics has allowed that faction to adopt and sustain policies that ultimately threaten the existence of the state of Israel. It is not permitted for anyone in the United States to say so. This is not just a tragedy for Israelis and their neighbors in the Middle East; it is doing widening

damage to the national security of the United States.

One blogger reported that New York Democratic Senator Chuck Schumer personally conveyed his disapproval of Freeman to Rahm Emanuel. When Freeman withdrew Schumer went public in a press release from his office: "Charles Freeman was the wrong guy for this position. His statements against Israel were way over the top and severely out of step with the administration. I repeatedly urged the White House to reject him, and I am glad they did the right thing."

Schumer was the highest profile Israel Lobby member to go public over the appointment. A request to AIPAC from the New York Times drew a denial that AIPAC had any involvement with the campaign against Freeman. The Israel Lobby did not go after Freeman with its entire army of Israel defenders. This was not a resolution to commend Israel's invasion of Gaza which AIPAC passed easily in Congress; it was not an effort to block arms sales to Saudi Arabia, which evoked a full court press against the first President Bush. This was a street fight against Freeman, led by a former AIPAC employee, Steve Rosen.

The Rosen story is an essential prologue to this drama. M.J. Rosenberg, the director of Policy Analysis for Israel Policy Forum, described Rosen's role in a blog he wrote for *Talking Points Memo*:

Steve Rosen, the AIPAC guy who the organization dismissed after he was indicted for espionage, is now working full-time to defeat Ambassador Charles E. Freeman's appointment as Chairman of the National Intelligence Council. . . . The neocon crazies are all beside themselves about Freeman's likely appointment. The rap on him ... is that he has spoken out against the occupation and is too close to the Saudis. ...

I just can't get over the idea that a guy on trial for espionage has the temerity to take on a lifelong public servant for not being loyal to the country that he, Steve Rosen, is accused by the United

States of being too loyal to. It is as if Rosen doesn't get the gravity of being accused of espionage.

Rosen now works for Daniel Pipes' Middle East Forum, a pro-Israel website. Pipes boasts of giving Rosen the "freedom" to attack Freeman. Like Schumer, he wants the world to know he deserves credit for this Lobby "victory."

The Middle East Forum, the organization I founded in 1994 and continue to serve as director, has just added a Washington policy dimension to its work—and can already boast a major success to its credit. Within days of joining the Forum, Steven J. Rosen was the first to blow the whistle on the questionable appointment of Charles Freeman to chair the National Intelligence Council. Hours after his "alarming appointment at the CIA" appeared, the word was out and others quickly joined him. Three weeks later, Freeman withdrew his name from consideration, blaming Rosen and me. Only someone with Steve's stature and credibility could have made this happen, and on the basis of a mere 445-word comment.

Actually, Freeman's appointment was not, as Rosen breathlessly reported, to the C.I.A., but to the N.I.C. Nor was Rosen the first to "blow the whistle." He was responding to a more straight-forward news blog written by Washington, D.C. reporter Laura Rozen, which she posted Feb. 19, at 11:36 a.m., on the *Foreign Policy* blog, *Cable*:

Sources tell The Cable that Chas W. Freeman, Jr., the former U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia, will become chairman of the National Intelligence Council, the intelligence community's primary big-think shop and the lead body in producing national intelligence estimates.

Freeman has told associates that in the job, he will occasionally accompany Director of National Intelligence

Adm. Dennis Blair to give the president his daily intelligence briefing. His predecessor, Thomas Fingar, wore a second hat as deputy director of national intelligence for analysis (a job held since December by Peter Lavoy); sources thought it unclear whether Freeman would have that title as well.

Four hours later, Steve Rosen posted his "Alarming Appointment at the CIA" to the Middle East Forum, which is run by Daniel Pipes:

Readers of this blog know that I have been generally quite positive about the appointments the new Administration is making for Middle East policy positions. Today's news is quite different. According to Laura Rozen at the Foreign Policy blog, Chas. W. Freeman, Jr., the former U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia, will become chairman of the National Intelligence Council, and may at times participate in daily intelligence briefings to President Obama. This is a profoundly disturbing appointment, if the report is correct. Freeman is a strident critic of Israel, and a textbook case of the old-line Arabism that afflicted American diplomacy at the time the state of Israel was born. His views of the region are what you would expect in the Saudi foreign ministry, with which he maintains an extremely close relationship, not the top C.I.A. position for analytic products going to the President of the United States. ...

Freelance investigative journalist Robert Dreyfuss wrote a lengthy summary for Tomdispatch.com of what happened next. Over a period of nearly two weeks, Rosen posted 19 pieces on the Freeman story, focusing his criticism on the former ambassador's strongly worded critique of Israel, specifically its brutal oppression of the Palestinians and Washington's total identification with Jerusalem. Rosen, and those who followed his lead, then broadened their attacks to make unfounded or exaggerated claims,

taking quotes and emails out of context, and accusing Freeman of being a pro-Arab “lobbyist,” of being too closely identified with Saudi Arabia, and of being cavalier about China’s treatment of dissidents. They tried to paint the sober, conservative former U.S. official as a wild-eyed radical, an anti-Semite, and a pawn of the Saudi king.

Dreyfuss went on to trace the spread of Rosen’s anti-Freeman vitriol to other right-wing, Zionist, and neoconservative blogs, then to the websites of neocon mouthpieces like the *New Republic*, *Commentary*, *National Review*, and the *Weekly Standard*, which referred to Freeman as a “Saudi puppet.” From there, it would spread to the *Atlantic* magazine and then to the op-ed pages of the *Wall Street Journal*, where Gabriel Schoenfeld called Freeman a “China-coddling Israel basher,” then onto the *Washington Post*, where Jonathan Chait of the *New Republic* labeled Freeman a “fanatic.”

Defining the Israel Lobby

Since the term “Israel Lobby” is a contentious one, it is best to pause at this point and state how I use the term. I can think of no more succinct definition than the one that appears in the preface to the major volume on this topic, “The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy,” by University of Chicago professor John J. Mearsheimer and Harvard University professor Stephen M. Walt (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007).

Their book began as a magazine article commissioned by *The Atlantic* magazine. The two authors worked with the *Atlantic* editors, making changes and adjustments until January, 2005, when it appeared the article was ready for publication. Mearsheimer and Walt suddenly were informed by an *Atlantic* editor that the magazine “had decided not to run the piece and that he was not interested in our attempting to rescue it.” The authors have not blamed the Israel Lobby for orchestrating this abrupt decision, but it is difficult not to assume that pressure was applied to the *Atlantic* from some source, powerful enough to rupture the relationship that had developed between the two distinguished authors and a reputable magazine, which should have known that dropping the article could one day return and taint its reputation.

In October, 2005, a colleague of the two authors suggested they submit their article to a non-American publication, the *London Review of Books*. After some updating, the article was published on March 23, 2006 under the title “The Israel Lobby.” It described the remarkable level of material and diplomatic support that the United States provides to Israel, and argued that this support could not be fully explained on either strategic or moral grounds. Instead, the authors concluded, it was due largely to the political power of the Israel Lobby.

And what is the Israel Lobby? Their definition—which I use in this essay—is a loose coalition of individuals and groups that seeks to influence American foreign policy in ways that will benefit Israel by encouraging the United States to back Israel more or less unconditionally. These groups and individuals in the Lobby, according to Mearsheimer and Walt, played key roles in shaping American policy toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the ill-fated invasion of Iraq, and the ongoing confrontations with Syria and Iran. Moreover, the authors suggested that these policies were not in the U.S. national interest and were in fact harmful to Israel’s long-term interests as well.

In an interview after his withdrawal, Charles Freeman sought to narrow his definition of the Israel Lobby when he said that by the Israel Lobby he meant the far right wing in U.S. and Israel politics, which he called the “Avigdor Lieberman Lobby,” referring to the openly racist Israel party leader who is foreign minister in the new Netanyahu government. The problem with Freeman’s designation is that it excludes virtually the entire U.S. Congress and the almost unanimous leadership class of the U.S. media, most of whom are not congenial with Lieberman’s extreme views. Israel Lobby is the better term because it stands for all those individuals and groups who want to influence U.S. policy to benefit a foreign power, in this case, the State of Israel. Indeed, it is this coalition that shapes American policy on behalf of Israel in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

A good example of the coalition at work came during the 2008 Democratic primary fight between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, and also in the general election campaign between Obama and John McCain. At issue was the looming presence of the

Rev. Jeremiah Wright as the long-time Chicago pastor of the Obama family. Wright was well-known in Chicago and in the African-American community as a dynamic preacher with a passion for promoting, among other things, a religious pride in being black. He preached each week to his United Church of Christ Chicago congregation, employing a rhetorical style designed to evoke strong feelings. His sermons were regularly taped for local television broadcasts.

Opposition research on Obama, most likely conducted by candidate Hillary Clinton's campaign, combed through Wright's sermons, looking for material that would undermine the Obama campaign. Brief clips were easy to uncover that showed Wright condemning U.S. foreign policy in language from the pulpit common to many African American preachers, though rarely heard in white churches. One clip captures Wright shouting "Not God bless America, but goddamn America" for America's treatment of people in other lands.

Eventually, Obama had to admonish Wright for his use of such language after he was criticized for not having previously walked out on sermons during which Wright employed rhetoric unknown to most white congregations. The national media delighted in running the taped clips and quoting from Wright's sermons, all fodder for the 24-7 cable network news programs, and also, on occasion, the more sedate network and local stations.

It was well known in Chicago that Wright's sermons were frequently critical of Israel's treatment of the Palestinian people. (I know Wright personally, and I can testify that he feels strongly about that treatment.) Tapes of those anti-Israel sermons were available, but apparently left on the shelf, probably because the "goddamn America" tape worked so well in reaching the public. Plus the fact that, the day after he won his party's nomination, Obama assured an AIPAC gathering of his clear commitment to Israel, "our strongest ally in the region and its only established democracy."

Obama added to that reassurance by naming Hillary Clinton his secretary of State. Clinton had become an outspoken, pro-Israel backer once she launched her campaign for the U.S. Senate in the state of New York, where support for Israel is an absolute necessity for any politician seeking funds and

votes in the city of New York.

Obama's choice of former Illinois Congressman Rahm Emanuel as his chief of staff was a surprise to the foreign policy community, which had assumed the new President would install a more neutral figure in that highly influential position. It is no secret in Washington that Emanuel is a strong Zionist. He served as a summer volunteer in the Israeli army, and his father has returned to Israel to live after retiring from his medical practice in the United States. Emanuel's father holds dual citizenship; the son does not.

Still, with Emanuel vetting appointments, President Obama must have laid down priorities and goals to his chief of staff. The choices of Samantha Power and George Mitchell to influential posts indicated that the Israel Lobby was not going to win every Middle East appointment battle. The decision to keep Dennis Ross' hands away from the Israel portfolio was further reassurance that Obama was not being completely rolled by the Lobby. However, Ross did get an Iranian posting under Clinton and he is likely, at some point, to advance Israel's position that Iran's nuclear facilities should be attacked.

Of course, all lobbies work to influence members of Congress and all lobbies raise funds for candidates. Catholics lobby against abortion; Mormons lobby about gay rights and same sex marriages; gun owners lobby for their access to guns; progressive organizations lobby to end poverty, improve health care, feed the hungry and provide housing for the homeless; and human rights groups support suffering minorities throughout the world.

But the iron grip on American life held by the Israel Lobby coalition is unprecedented. That Lobby has extended its tentacles into media decision makers, owners, and public faces, virtually none of whom want to risk their positions of influence by confronting a lobby armed with two powerful weapons of emotional mass destruction, anti-Semitism and the Holocaust.

Colleges and universities are tempted by offers of academic chairs to teach courses on the Holocaust; cities build Holocaust memorials; and clergy men and women readily accept free trips to the see the "real" Israel, from which they return to engage in

earnest inter-faith discussions with their local rabbis.

The Lobby coalition includes those main stream church groups that have been lured on these trips and, lacking knowledge of the catastrophe that struck Palestinians when the State of Israel was established, have fallen into the warm embrace of the Lobby. National Protestant church bodies that seek to express even minimum support for Palestinian resistance to Occupation find themselves forced to make room in their national and jurisdictional meetings for “equal time” from Lobby supporters when they discuss resolutions on divestment from U.S. businesses that support the Occupation.

The more conservative Christian clergy and national organizations are themselves part of the Lobby, in the case of fundamentalist Christians, pushing Israel’s well-being as a prelude to the Second Coming of the Christ, or in more moderate evangelical circles, as a devotion to the “original inhabitants” of the Holy Land, the people of “the book” which is also part of Christian scriptures.

The Lobby does not need tentacles to reach into the military industrial complex of the U.S. There they find common cause with Israel, which receives a massive amount of U.S. produced military equipment, and indeed, is a major supplier of that same equipment to other nations via their own thriving arms industry.

The Jewish Dilemma

L’Affaire Freeman soon became a personal struggle for the soul of the American Jewish community. The majority of the bloggers and website authors who wrote on this issue for the 20 days the battle raged made it clear they were writing as Jews. Philip Weiss, who writes and edits the Mondoweiss.com blog, refers to himself as a non-Zionist Jew. He is a New York resident who grapples daily with the emotional conflicts within the tribe of which he considers himself to be a part.

Weiss is an experienced journalist with a background with the New York Observer. At one point in the conflict he testified in a March 3 blog on the intense emotional connection the majority of American Jews have to Israel, a connection that helps explain why the Israel Lobby is unlike other U.S. political

lobbies. Jews consider themselves, according to Weiss, to be a tribe under continual siege from outsiders. When we talk about the Israel Lobby, we have to talk about the emotional energy that binds it. We must talk about the fact that Americans for Peace Now, a good organization with fair ideas about Israel/Palestine, has remained on the board of AIPAC throughout the expansion of settlements over the last 20 years. How did that happen? It happened because Peace Now is bound by tribal loyalty. It could not step outside the Jewish family and challenge the family from a new spot, outside the tribe. So even as it worked against the settlements in noble public statements, it lent its weight to the Zionist Organization of America and AIPAC itself, which fostered the colonies.

Still, Weiss believes that the Lobby’s tribal grip on American Jewish moderates and progressives is beginning to slip. Certainly, many American Jews must have been ashamed when they heard the news of Israel’s barbarous assault on Gaza. Rabbis in the Israeli army were reported as telling battlefield troops that they were fighting a “religious war” against gentiles, who had to be expelled because God had given Jews the land.

Even the Lobby’s grip on politicians is loosening. Now there is a competing J Street Lobby, which raises money for political candidates who are willing to stray from the AIPAC line. It is high time, says J Street, for the United States to act like the big brother or the parent and to say “enough is enough and we’re going to take the car keys if you don’t stop driving drunk.”

On February 19, 2009, three Congressional Democrats traveled to Gaza in the first visits by American members of Congress since 2000. Think about it. Nine years have gone by as millions of dollars flowed each year to Israel to maintain the Occupation and attack the populations in Gaza without a single American politician visiting the area. With good reason commentator Pat Buchanan calls the U.S. Congress a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Lobby. The three who traveled to Gaza this year broke a barrier. The highest ranking official was Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, and former presidential candidate.

In a separate delegation, Representative Brian Baird, Democrat of Washington, and Representative Keith Ellison, Democrat of Minnesota, also toured the same terrain covered by Senator Kerry. This included tours of destroyed areas and meetings with United Nations officials. It also included a visit to ruins of the American International School in Gaza, which was destroyed by an Israeli air attack in early January. It is instructive to note that Senator Kerry witnessed the suffering and destruction in Gaza and still called on Hamas to “change its ways” in order to end the invasion. So powerful is the Lobby’s grip on every politician’s psyche, that Kerry offered no criticism of Israel’s tactics. Still, he went to Gaza, which is progress.

The Dreyfus Affair

I titled my blog article on the aborted N.I.C. appointment, as we titled this *Link* article, “L’Affaire Freeman.” The reference is to the Dreyfus Affair. In 1894, Alfred Dreyfus, a French-Jewish army officer, was charged with selling military secrets to the Germans. He was tried, found guilty and deported in 1895. Two years later, the chief of French army intelligence, Col. George Picquart, himself an anti-Semite, determined that it was another officer, not Dreyfus, who had sold the secrets. The French army ignored Picquart’s evidence and refused to reverse Dreyfus’s deportation order.

In 1898, the novelist Emile Zola publicized the army’s cover-up. A series of legal battles followed that inflamed French public opinion. Dreyfus was pardoned in 1899, exonerated in 1906 and returned to the army, where he eventually rose to rank of lieutenant colonel and was named Officer in the Legion of Honor.

The Paris-based correspondent for an Austrian newspaper reporting on the Dreyfus trial was a Jew by the name of Theodor Herzl. A native of Budapest, Herzl had long believed that Jews should assimilate in the culture in which they lived. However, the anti-Jewish attacks that he witnessed during and after the trial convinced him that Jews could only be safe in their own state. Several locations were considered, including ones in South America and Africa. But Palestine was chosen. Jews would make Palestine their state. The title of Herzl’s classic blueprint for this

state is instructive: he called it “Der Judenstaat,” using the possessive case, meaning a state that belongs to Jews. Incorrectly, the English title has come down to us as “The Jewish State,” implying a state with Jewish culture, language, holidays, etc., much as the United States has been called a Christian country. Had Herzl intended this, though, he would have used the adjectival form: “Der Judische Staat,” not “Der Judenstaat.”

The problem, of course, is that at the time of Herzl’s writings, over 90% of Palestine was owned by Palestinians. This led the founding father of the Zionist state to conclude that Palestine could be acquired only by armed conquest, an echo of what we hear today in the rabbi’s exhortation to the Israeli troops in Gaza. How the actual expulsion of over 700,000 Palestinians was accomplished is well documented by Israeli historian Ilan Pappé in his most recent book “The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine.”

The Dreyfus Affair had three results. One, the treatment of Dreyfus exposed the world to the horrors of anti-Semitism. Two, it fostered what some historians call philo-Semitism, a passionate attachment to Jews, usually based on a belief in their special role in God’s redemptive plan for mankind. (Philo-Semitism, it should be pointed out, is but a sugar-coated form of anti-Semitism, in that many who hold it believe that over 97% of Jews will, in the end, suffer eternal damnation because of their refusal to accept Christ as their Savior.) The third result of the Dreyfus Affair is that it led to the colonization of Palestine and the founding of the State of Israel.

The Dreyfus Affair hit the mainstream newspapers of the day as an international cause célèbre. More than a hundred years later, L’Affaire Freeman took place in relative obscurity. Nonetheless, the Dreyfus Affair and L’Affaire Freeman serve as bookends to the history of two versions of anti-Semitic victimhood from 1894 through 2009. One bookend exposed the dark side of anti-Semitism to the world; the other showed the more subtle, yet no less corrosive bias of philo-Semitism, the belief that God blesses those who support Israel’s creeping annexation of Palestinian lands, and curses those who don’t.

So the question is: To what extent has the Freeman brouhaha affected the influence of the Israel

Lobby over the mainstream media? Reporter Robert Dreyfuss put it this way: Is the Israel lobby in Washington an all-powerful force? Or is it, perhaps, running scared? His answer: "Judging by the outcome of the ... Freeman affair this week, it might seem as if the Israeli lobby is fearsome indeed. Seen more broadly, however, the controversy over Freeman could be the Israel lobby's Waterloo..."

The Dreyfus Affair caught the public's attention because the vileness of anti-Semitism was directed against a clearly honorable man. Similarly, with Chas Freeman: an honorable man was condemned for daring to criticize Israel. The hope now is that more members of our MSM will be prepared to step beyond the red lines set by AIPAC and its coalition partners. That this might be happening is reflected in the following statements about the Freeman nomination by mainstream writers; they are presented here in no particular order:

Joe Klein of Time Magazine described the attack on Freeman as an "assassination," adding that the term "lobby" doesn't do justice to the methods of the various lobbying groups, individuals, and publications. Klein concludes: "He was the victim of a mob, not a lobby. The mob was composed primarily of Jewish neoconservatives."

Roger Cohen in his New York Times column for March 9, 2009 called the disqualification of Charles Freeman "scandalous."

Mark Shields on The NewsHour, March 13, 2009, commented: "I think for somebody to express as he did the very factual statement that the oppression and brutalization of the Palestinians was not only not right, but was not in the long-term interest of the state of Israel and of the United States of America was speaking very truthfully."

Andrew Sullivan, former editor of The New Republic, and a traditionally pro-Israel pundit, writing in The Sunday London Times of March 8, 2009, asked the question that underlies the Freeman affair, i.e., Did his appointment signal a subtle change in the U.S.'s relationship with Israel, even to the point of treating the state as a normal ally? Sullivan's take: Freeman's appointment might indeed imply a new balance in the relationship to the extent that "Israel might be asked — or even pressured — to take risks for

a broader peace that would benefit the U.S."

David Ignatius of the Washington Post publicly refuted the view of one of his paper's own editors, Fred Hiatt, who rejected out-of-hand as a "crackpot" theory Freeman's contention that opposition to his nomination had come mostly from the pro-Israel Lobby. Ignatius wrote in a March 11, 2009 article that it was his opinion that Freeman's contention was "probably true."

Walter Pincus, also of the Washington Post, disagreed with his editor as well. In a March 11, 2009 article he wrote: "Only a few Jewish organizations came out publicly against Freeman's appointment, but a handful of pro-Israeli bloggers and employees of other organizations worked behind the scenes to raise concerns with members of Congress, their staffs and the media."

David Broder, in a March 11, 2009 syndicated column for the Washington Post, called Freeman's defeat a loss for the country of an able public servant—a fact, he added, that didn't matter much to lawmakers who joined the lobbyists in running him off.

Glen Greenwald, a New York Times bestselling author and former constitutional lawyer and civil rights litigator, wrote March 10, 2009 in Salon.com: "In the U.S. you can advocate torture, illegal spying, and completely optional though murderous wars and be approved to the highest positions. But you can't apparently criticize Israeli actions too much or question whether America's blind support for Israel should be reexamined."

Pat Buchanan, syndicated columnist and MSNBC political commentator, in a March 17, 2009 column, praised Freeman for saying aloud what few privately deny, that "reflexive support for Israel's repression of the Palestinian people is high among the reasons America is no longer seen as a beacon of liberation in the Arab and Muslim world." And he noted that the one who savaged Freeman, Steve Rosen, is presently facing federal criminal prosecution under the Espionage Act for transferring top-secret Pentagon documents to the Israeli embassy, while his accomplice, Larry Franklin, is serving a 12-year sentence.

David Rothkopf, former managing editor of Kissinger Associates and author of the authoritative work on the history of the National Security Council, wrote on the Foreign Policy website that the notion that there is no room in the U.S. government for people who are skeptical of Israeli policies is both absurd and dangerous. "This, among other reasons," added Rothkopf, "is why I, as a Jew with a memory, was so opposed to the attacks on Freeman."

James Fallows, national correspondent for The Atlantic, wrote in a March 10 article that he personally had not known Freeman prior to the controversial appointment, but that nearly 20 people he respected and trusted did know him. "Every one of them supported his nomination," Fallows noted, and "most of them are Jewish." He concluded: "We'll all think about this episode for a while."

Conclusion

In the early 1980s Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin reached out to conservative American evangelicals who were becoming politically powerful. He gave the Rev. Jerry Falwell, a staunch supporter of Israel's expropriation of Palestinian lands, the Jabotinsky Award, named for the militant Zionist leader who called for the establishment of a Jewish state on both sides of the Jordan River. Begin also gave Falwell a private jet. Israeli politicians ever since have courted evangelicals, knowing full well that their "love for Israel" comes with its own brand of anti-Semitism. The political clout engendered by this marriage of convenience between the Israel Lobby and the Christian Zionists was not lost on U.S. politicians.

Philo-Semitism remained strong through the 80's, 90's, and throughout George W. Bush's presidency. But, as the Freeman affair suggests, this may be changing. Stephen Walt, co-author of the previously mentioned "The Israel Lobby," put it this way in a March 12, 2009 article in Foreign Policy:

The silver lining in this story [the Freeman affair] is that it was abundantly clear to everyone what was going on and who was behind it. In the past, the lobby was able to derail appointments quietly—even preemptively—but this fight took place in

broad daylight. And Steve Rosen, one of Freeman's chief tormentors, once admitted: "A lobby is like a night flower. It thrives in the dark and dies in the sun." Slowly, the light is dawning and the lobby's negative influence is becoming more and more apparent, even if relatively few people have the guts to say so out loud.

Let us give the last word to Ambassador Freeman. In an interview with reporter Robert Dreyfuss, he noted the propensity of the Israel Lobby to deny the Lobby's existence, even while taking credit for having forced him out and simultaneously claiming they had nothing to do with it. "We're now at the ludicrous stage," said Freeman, "where those who boasted of having done it and who described how they did it are now denying what they did." And what effect will all this have on future appointments? Freeman sees his aborted nomination as "a nice way of, as the Chinese say, killing a chicken to scare the monkeys." Will the intimidation work? Time will tell, says Freeman, just how many "monkeys" are trembling.



Amb. Charles W. (Chas) Freeman

From **The Link's** Links

<http://wallwritings.wordpress.com/> 

AMEU: President Bob Norberg interviews Jim Wall, AMEU board member and author of "L'Affaire Freeman," about his blog, wallwritings.wordpress.com.

Q: Wikipedia defines a "blog" as a contraction of the term "weblog," noting that a blog appears on "a type of website," and that content—commentary, description of events, etc.—is provided by an individual. Does wallwritings.wordpress.com fit this description?

A: Yes, my blog is, with occasional exceptions, my own writing. I started my blog because I wanted a space where I could continue my writing on religion and culture, with a special focus on politics, the media, and foreign policy. I have a special interest in the Palestinian situation, having covered that area as editor of the Christian Century magazine since 1973.

Q: What led you to create Wallwritings?

A: I started the blog April 24, 2008, because after 29 years as editor of the Christian Century and for an additional 9 years as Senior Contributing Editor of the magazine, it was time for me to retire from the Century. But I did not want to give up writing.

Q: How frequently do you post a new commentary?

A: I post a minimum of two times a week, sometimes more when the news prompts me to say more. There are different blogging styles. Some bloggers will post a series of links to other sources with just a sentence or two of introduction. I was so geared to writing magazine columns that I carried that style into the internet format.

I see myself as an educator, calling attention to specific current topics through links, quotes and my own analysis. My own perspective guides what I write and what I choose to bring in with links to other websites, blogs and on-line magazines, television programs, and newspapers. Quoting other sources in this way is what an essayist would do in print.

I send out an alert email to a list each time a new posting is added to the blog. Anyone interested in receiving my alerts may write me at Jimwall65@aol.com.

Q: You encourage feedback. I suspect, since you frequently comment on Israel and Palestine, that some of your responses will be quite hostile. How do you handle that?

A: I am able to edit, post, or delete comments as they are sent to me. I delete the nasty comments, which is a delight for me, since I often appear on talk radio and am subjected to ill-informed (from my perspective) observations that demand a response. No delete button in radio! When readers correct my errors, I post these changes.

Unlike print, a blog can be edited at any time of the day or night.

Q: Which commentaries have provoked the greatest response?

A: I wrote a series of postings on the Charles Freeman Affair, which led to the invitation to address the subject in this *Link*. I like to keep my postings at 1500 or fewer words, so the opportunity to write a longer essay for *The Link* allowed me to combine context, history and analysis on the Lobby's attacks on Freeman that led to his withdrawal. The combined Freeman postings represent some of my largest number of "hits," which are visits to a particular posting. [Note: To read these postings, go to Wallwritings and, under Archives, select March, 2009 (5 postings), and February, 2009 (4 postings).]

People tend to pass along my postings as links in their own blogs or to their mailing lists. Postings about Jimmy Carter, a personal friend, are always popular with people who share my appreciation for him and his work. But they also are the source of some of the most negative comments. [Under Archives, select issue of March 16.]

My commentary on the Hillary Clinton-Barack Obama primary battles was picked up by several feminist blogs and provoked a large number of negative responses—since I clearly favored Obama. Clinton's stand on Israel-Palestine was far too pro-Israel for my taste, far outweighing, in my view, the long overdue arrival of the first woman in the White House. Clinton supporters were outraged that I was more concerned about the Palestinian issue than electing Clinton.

Q: Print journalism is giving way to the internet. Cyberspace is replacing the printing press. Do you see this as a good or bad development?

A: There is a universal need for vibrant print journalism, where beat reporters and investigative journalists do the work on the ground, interviewing sources and explaining local context. Few bloggers have the resources, opportunity or training to present what is available today from print journalism. The internet needs to draw on professional journalists possessed of the standards of accuracy, fairness, and writing talent that provide reliable material. Internet websites are beginning to build staffs to do the work of print journalism, but we still need the traditional news gathering teams that newspapers have developed over the years.

I know things are changing, and newspapers are giving up or cutting back from the traditional format of the daily newspaper, replacing it with their own websites. But if these newspaper-internet sites will continue to fund a reporting and investigative staff for their new format, then journalism will thrive as a responsible source of news and analysis. ■

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Abdul-Rauf, F.	What's Right with Islam	2004	314	\$23.95	\$12.00	Islam and modernity.
AMEU	Burning Issues	2007	439	\$16.95	\$5.00	Selected <i>Link</i> issues from the past 40 years.
Armstrong, K.	Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths	1999	474	\$17.50	\$16.50	Well written, critically acclaimed history.
Aziz, B.	Swimming up the Tigris	2007	314	\$24.95	\$19.95	Real life encounters with Iraqis.
Baltzer, A.	Witness in Palestine	2007	400	\$26.95	\$19.95	Jewish-American condemns Israel's occupation.
Baroud, R.	The Second Palestinian Intifada	2006	216	\$18.00	\$16.50	Palestinians respond to ethnocide against them.
Beit-Hallahmi, B.	Original Sins	1993	227	\$19.95	\$12.50	Reflections on Zionism and Israel.
Bennis, P.	Before & After	2003	264	\$17.95	\$9.50	U.S. policy and 9/11. Forward by Noam Chomsky.
Bennis, P.	Understanding the Pal.-Isr. Conflict	2007	196	\$10.00	\$9.00	An excellent primer.
Burg, A.	The Holocaust is Over	2008	253	\$26.95	\$19.50	Author was subject of <i>Link</i> issue "Apostate or Avatar?"
Burge, G.	What Land? Whose Promise?	2003	286	\$23.00	\$17.50	What Christians aren't told about Israel & Palestinians.
Carter, J.	Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid	2006	265	\$27.00	\$15.50	A critical analysis of Israel's occupation.
Chacour, E.	Blood Brothers	2003	240	\$12.95	\$10.95	Updated ed. with introduction by James Baker III.
Chapman, C.	Whose Promised Land	2002	329	\$17.99	\$12.75	Zionism and role of biblical promise; updated edition.
Chapman, C.	Whose Holy City?	2004	253	\$15.99	\$12.50	Jerusalem and the future of Middle East peace.
Cook, J.	Blood and Religion	2006	222	\$18.00	\$16.50	Can Israel be both a Jewish and a democratic state?
Cook, J.	Israel & the Clash of Civilizations	2008	204	\$24.95	\$17.50	Neocons, Israel, and the Bush Administration.
Cooley, J.	An Alliance Against Babylon	2005	258	\$26.95	\$17.95	Traces the Israeli factor in the US-led invasion of Iraq.
Eady & Mast	Sahmatah	1998	40	\$10.00	\$10.00	One-act play for 2 actors; see <i>The Link</i> , Feb. 1999
Eldar, A. & Zental	Lords of the Land	2007	531	\$29.95	\$15.50	Inside account of Israel's settlement policy.
Ennes, J.	Assault on the Liberty	2002	301	\$30.00	\$25.00	Updated edition.
Esposito, J.	The Oxford History of Islam	1999	749	\$49.95	\$35.00	Richly illustrated history of Islam's faith and culture.
Faber, S.	Radicals, Rabbis, and Peacemakers	2005	252	\$19.95	\$15.95	Conversations with Jews against the occupation.
Falk, R.	The Great Terror War	2003	203	\$17.95	\$12.95	International lawyer looks at post 9/11 world.
Fayez, J. ed.	The Colonization of Palestine	2007	56	\$9.95	\$3.00	Updated listing of 452 destroyed cities, towns, villages.
Findley, P.	Silent No More	2001	323	\$23.95	\$19.50	Confronts America's image of Islam.
Finkelstein, N.	Beyond Chutzpah	2005	332	\$22.50	\$17.50	The misuse of anti-semitism & the abuse of history.
Finkelstein, N.	The Holocaust Industry	2000	150	\$13.00	\$12.50	Reflections on the exploitation of Jewish suffering.
Finkelstein, N.	Image & Reality of Israel-Arab Conflict	1995	243	\$18.95	\$17.95	What the facts on the ground are telling us.
Fishbach, M.	Records of Dispossession	2003	467	\$39.50	\$28.50	New facts and figures about the land "swap" of 1947-48.
Giladi, Naeim	Ben-Gurion's Scandals	2003	340	\$18.95	\$15.50	Insider tells what happened to Iraqi Jews.
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Hrhub, K.	Hamas: A Beginner's Guide	2006	170	\$18.95	\$14.50	Good introductory history.
Jamail, D.	Beyond the Green Line	2007	313	\$20.00	\$18.75	Iraq through the eyes of an unembedded journalist.
Jayyusi, S.	Anthology	1996	754	\$22.00	\$17.50	Collection of modern Palestinian literature.
Kanaanah, H.	A Doctor in Galilee	2008	276	\$28.96	\$16.50	Struggle of a Palestinian doctor in Israel.
Karmi, G.	In Search of Fatima	2002	288	\$26.00	\$15.00	Poignant memory of Palestinian exile.
Karmi, G.	Married to Another Man	2007	350	\$29.95	\$22.50	Israel's dilemma in Palestine.
Khalidi, R.	The Iron Cage	2006	281	\$24.95	\$19.95	Why Palestinians don't have a state.
Khalidi, R.	Resurrecting Empire	2004	223	\$23.00	\$17.95	Analysis of the US role in the Middle East.
Laird, E.	A Little Piece of Ground	2006	216	\$9.95	\$8.50	A 12-yr.-old soccer-loving Pal. in occupied Ramallah.
Laird, E.	Oranges in No Man's Land	2008	99	\$9.95	\$7.50	Young adult novel of a girl in war-torn Beirut.
Makdasi, S.	Palestine Inside Out	2008	365	\$24.95	\$18.95	Why Arafat had to walk away from Camp David.
Masalha, N.	Expulsion of the Palestinians	1993	235	\$11.95	\$9.50	Examines Zionist notion of "Transfer." 1882-1948.
Nathan, S.	The Other Side of Israel	2005	310	\$25.00	\$17.50	How non-Jews are treated in the Jewish state.
Neff, D.	Warriors Against Israel	1988	372	\$19.95	\$7.00	How Israel won the battle to become US's ally.
Pappe, I.	The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine	2006	320	\$15.50	\$12.95	Author draws on recently disclosed state documents.
Petersen, E.	Israel and Palestine	2003	246	\$16.00	\$10.00	Good data for research and study.
Prior, M.	Zionism and the state of Israel	1999	304	\$75.00	\$35.00	A moral inquiry by a Catholic biblical scholar.
Prior, M. ed.	Speaking the Truth	2005	254	\$17.95	\$13.50	Ilan Pappé et al. on Zionism, Israel, and Palestine.
Ramadan, T.	In the Footsteps of the Prophet	2007	242	\$23.00	\$17.95	"By 1 of 100 top innovators of the century". -- Time
Reinhart, T.	The Road Map to Nowhere	2006	248	\$18.00	\$16.50	How Road Map is used to seize more occupied land.
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Thomas, A.	The Zoo in the Road to Nablus	2008	293	\$24.95	\$17.50	Extraordinary story of survival.
Warschawski, M.	On the Border	2005	228	\$17.00	\$15.50	An Israeli looks at the forces destroying his country.
Warschawski, M.	Toward an Open Tomb	2006	250	\$12.95	\$10.95	From West Bank massacres to The Wall
Winslow, P.	Victory for us is to see you suffer	2007	224	\$24.95	\$18.95	Personal account of Israel's disastrous occupation.

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- AJPME, **Beyond the Mirage: The Face of the Occupation** (2002, DVD, 47 minutes). Israeli and Palestinian human rights advocates challenge misconceptions about the Occupation and Palestinian resistance to it. **AMEU: \$25.00.**
- AJPME, **Imagine ...** (2005, DVD, 15 minutes). Palestinian education under Israeli occupation. Excellent for discussion groups. **AMEU: \$15.00.**
- Baltzer, Anna, **Life in Occupied Palestine** (2006, DVD, 61 minutes). By the American granddaughter of a Holocaust refugee. This is her powerful account of the occupation. **AMEU: \$20.00.**
- DMZ, **People and the Land** (2007, DVD, updated version of 1997 film, 57 minutes). This is the controversial documentary by Tom Hayes that appeared on over 40 PBS stations. **AMEU: \$25.00.**
- FMEP, **Searching for Peace in the Middle East** (2006, DVD, 30 minutes). A film by Landrum Bolling. **AMEU: \$10.00.**
- Mennonite Central Committee, **Children of the Nabkah (2005, DVD, 26 minutes)**. Why Palestinian refugees must be part of any peace settlement. Comes with study guide. **AMEU: \$15.00.**
- Munayyer, F. & H., **Palestinian Costumes and Embroidery: A Precious Legacy** (2008, DVD, 38 minutes). Rare collection of Palestinian dresses modeled against background of Palestinian music, with commentary tracing the designs back to Canaanite times. List: \$50.00. **AMEU: \$25.00.**
- NEF, **Peace, Propaganda & the Promised Land** (2004, DVD, 80 minutes). Excellent analysis of how the U.S. media slants its coverage of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. **AMEU: \$25.00.**
- Pilger, J., **Palestine Is Still the Issue** (2002, DVD, 53 minutes). Award-winning journalist tells why there has been no progress toward peace in the Middle East. **AMEU: \$25.00.**
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