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Box 45, Folder 7, Sharp, Frank, 1972.

AN ANALYSIS OF FRANK A. SHARP'S REPORTS FROM
THE MIDDLE EAST as found in the American Baptist
News Service of November 2 and 3, 1972

This report is in two parts. First, a discussion of Dr. Sharp's perception of the issues and the problems in the Middle East, and second, a ~~line by line~~^{brief} analysis of his choice of words to describe Israel and/or the Jewish people. It is my contention that Dr. Sharp presents a one sided, unbalanced view, a view that is often ignorant of certain historical facts at best, and a view that employs a "double standard" towards Israel of judgment

at worst. It is also my contention that Dr. Sharp has used a string of negative and pejorative terms, ^{in his report} to describe Israel. In sum, it is an unfair, ^{baised}, and inadequate report.

1. There is no mention anywhere of the fact that Arab refugees ^{are} ~~may be~~ a pawn on the Arab Governments' chess board, held in their camps for a quarter of a century without the possibility of resettlement, nor does Dr. Sharp anywhere write of the nearly 750,000 Jews from Arab lands who have ^{been integrated} ~~ssettled~~ ^{into Israeli life} ~~in Israel~~ since 1948. Although Dr. Sharp and his party visited Beirut, he does not describe the critical situation that affects those few Jews who still remain in Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq. The plight of the Syrian Jewish community ^{especially} ~~particularly~~ is ~~particularly~~ precarious.

It seems to me that Dr. Sharp misreads the origins and meaning of modern Zionism. It was not simply a response to ~~19th century~~ anti Semitism, but rather Zionism is deeply rooted in the Jewish religious, cultural, and historic tradition. It was conceived as a means of "self liberation", that is, as a positive good, ~~and~~ When he writes that Jews do not want "to live under the domination of any other ethnic majority", Dr. Sharp misses the point. Every group ~~na~~ should be entitled to one place where it can be the majority, free to shape and form its own culture, a place where it can create its own ethos, not as a dominating, arrogant majority, but as a group that acts out its own unique 'life style' with compassion and full rights for all minority

groups in its midst. ~~Even~~ Jews, like all other peoples including the Palestinian Arabs, must have this right of self determination, not merely as negative protection, but also as affirmative creativity. Dr. Sharp sees Israel in almost purely defensive, negative terms.

His dichotomy between Arab "justice" and Jewish "security" is a ~~unambiguously~~ false and misleading one. "Justice" is a "key word" ~~am~~ for both Jews and Arabs, as is "security". Sharp ~~unambiguously~~ compounds his error by stating that "The Jewish mind(sic!) is irrevocably dedicated to being safe from slaughter, persecution, and second class citizenship." ~~Are~~ ^{not} Are these qualities ~~not~~ universal ones? ~~Are~~ ^{Are} not all human beings so dedicated? Why the "Jewish mind" phrase? He then writes that "Israel wants the right to exist as a Jewish nation". Surely after the U.N. vote of 1947, ~~Israel's~~ ^{by} membership in the U.N., her recognition ~~in~~ ^{by} so many ~~the~~ nations, her three wars ~~for~~ for survival, her continued viability after 25 years, she has the ^{the} right. Her existence is both de facto and de jure.

When Dr. Sharp talks of Arabs occupying ~~a~~ ^{the} land for 13 centuries, he should also mention the very profound Jewish connection with the land stemming from Biblical times until our own day. He omits the continuing Jewish presence in Palestine that is unbroken (see especially the history of Peki'in village in northern Israel).

Everywhere lacking in Sharp's reports is any understanding of the role of Israel as a center of Jewish renewal and vitality. Although he berates Israel for wanting to be a "Jewish State", Sharp does not describe the extraordinary contribution Israel makes to Jewish religious and cultural life.

I also feel Sharp ~~needs~~ ^{causes} needs to describe ~~the~~ ^{the} 1967 War in more detail. It was, after all, not quite Israel "expanding" into "Arab land". More, much more background is needed.

Sharp presents two alternatives for Israel vis a vis "the non-Jews". One is

to "treat them as a colonial people", and the second is "to expel the Arabs". He fails to offer a third alternative, one that is actually being undertaken. It is to ^{improve} ~~maintain~~ the quality of life for the Arabs, ^{their} ~~the~~ economic and educational levels, ^{and} ~~the~~ housing, ~~the~~ medical care without making any political decisions about their future. This pragmatic approach sets aside the final political settlement until true peace comes, but it does not neglect the "human condition" of the Arabs. Thus, the Israelis are neither ~~the~~ colonialists nor expellers of people.

Sharp mentions that the "so called West Bank" belonged to Jordan prior to 1967. He neglects to mention that Jordan (Transjordan at the time) in 1948 and 1949 seized that area in a war. The West Bank until then was a part of Palestine, only Great Britain and Pakistan formally recognized Jordan's ^{occupation} ~~claim~~. Thus, Jordan has no special claim upon the area.

The incident at the Allenby Bridge is somewhat ^{How} ~~meaning~~ ambiguous. ~~without~~ else does he expect Jordanian and Israeli authorities to behave? I had the same ~~kind~~ of photographic limitations placed upon me when I visited the truce area in Panmunjom, Korea, and at the border crossing between China and Hong Kong. ^{Fense} Areas of contact between nations always present problems for the well intentioned tourist.

Sharp's description of the Christian community of Nes Amin is ~~again~~ rather fair, but he again either misunderstands or misreads Jewish history. Some Jewish leaders were wary of Nes Amin in its earliest days, not, as Sharp indicates, because the "new state (Israel) is for Jews". ~~Reason~~ The wariness stemmed from the long and ~~often~~ tragic record of Christian missionary efforts directed to Jews. The Inquisition, the Crusades, the auto de fes, the forced baptisms---all are part of the record, and ~~cannot~~ the initial Jewish response to Nes Amin can not be understand without knowing ^{this} ~~that~~ ~~mean~~ history. Sharp indicates that he interviewed Dr. Johan Pilon, the leader of Nes Amin, but Dr. Pilon's views are nowhere quoted.

Dr. Sharp does not accurately describe the Israeli response to the November 22, 1967 resolution on the Middle East. Israel has officially accepted the provisions of this Resolution, but without prior conditions. Israel has not "Refused...the stipulation that (she) withdraw from occupied territories." The issue was and is that such a withdrawal must be negotiated between the contending ~~parties~~ parties. The Israelis have never "demanded" face to face negotiations, and indeed there has been movement towards "proximity talks" and other such arrangements.

Sharp dismisses the cry to "throw the Jews into the sea" as belonging to "Arab extremists". He indicates that this "allegation was formerly expressed". The historical record would indicate otherwise. (supply specific quotes, etc.)

Israel's right to exist as a Jewish State is not contradictory to a state "with equal rights for all." In fact, that is the goal of Israel today. Equal rights meaning the enhancement of Arab educational institutions, the official use of Arabic, the enrichment of Arab culture ~~along with voting~~ along with voting and employment rights. No nation has achieved such a lofty goal for its citizens but it can be argued that Israel is doing a better job than most (see Northern Ireland, India, South Africa, Nigeria, ^{Sudan} the United States, Etc.)

Sharp continues to make reference to the "Arab sector of Jerusalem". It became so when the Jordanians expelled every Jew from the ancient Jewish Quarter of the Old City in 1948, and by destroying Jewish schools, synagogues, and other institutions. The long and rich history of Jews in the Old City is not indicated in Sharp's reporting.

In his handling of the Berem-Ikrit affair, Sharp again is guilty of a critical omission. He quotes those who seek a return to the two villages, and quite correctly notes that many Jews oppose the Israeli Government's ~~no return~~ ^{full} no return policy. But we do not find a description of the Government's policy nor its reasons for such a policy. Balanced reporting should present both sides of an issue.

The headline of the Nov. 3 issue pictures Jerusalem's Mayor Teddy Kollek

as being opposed to an "open city." Jerusalem today is "open", but the real issue is "internationalization", something entirely different. The reader ~~wbhbbbb~~ does not discover this until he reads into the story.

Finally, the Bethlehem story raises a serious question. Sharp mentions that "not one Arab Christian family fled the city" in the 1967 war. He quotes the mayor of Bethlehem saying the city was "too big" for the Israel Army to destroy. It can be argued that just the opposite was true. No one fled precisely because the Bethlehemites sensed there was no danger from the Israeli Army. A fair account would indicate this possibility. People run when they are afraid no matter what the size of a city is (~~see Paris in 1940, etc.~~). People stay when they feel secure.

~~Evannnonnanahlyshhvhvhdhbe added, but these are a few examples~~
~~oBbDbbBsharpBsbshhhhd~~

These few examples could be enlarged, but they are sufficient to make the point that Dr. Sharp has been less than fair with Israel and ^{Jewish survival} ~~the Jewish~~ stake in the Middle East.

2. Dr. Sharp uses many negative phrases to describe Israel. We list only a few: "refugees have been displaced", "blind animosity", "unwillingness", "Jewish mind is irrevocably dedicated", "Israel expanded", "Israel demanded", "Israel would not accept", and "Israel would rule out". Teddy Kolley "bluntly rejected". These are terms that create a negative image in the reader's mind.

Nov. 7, 1972

Dear Mr. Y. Harmon- I write a Religion News Roundup column and frequently get material from your releases, as well as from various denominational releases.

I do not know whether you have seen this. If you would care to pen in comments and return to me I might be able to get a story on the Baptist trip which would be I think a little more objective than their account by itself.

Asserting that the Arabs are interested in "JUSTICE" a positive trait, and the Jews "SECURITY" a neutral at best but generally demeaning trait does not exactly appeal to me.

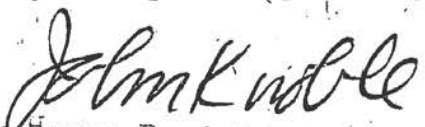
There is no notice taken of the plight of refugee Arabs from the standpoint of the question of why Arab countries do not offer them asylum and opportunity. Do they prefer to let them suffer so they can be used as pawns in a world opinion game? Maybe you could underline in blue pencil what you approve of this and in red pencil what you do not (?)

Or if you just want to keep it for your file, all right.

I would appreciate however some reaction from you to this trip, although I will not quote you except, if your wish, in specific words you authorize for quotation. This is mainly an off the cuff query for sake of my own orientation.

My previous impressions of Frank Sharp and what he has written are that he is a nice guy. But I don't exactly understand this. Maybe they tried too much without adequate back up data.

From other sources I have been advised that Israelis get along quite well with Palestinians, and would do better were it not for outsiders trying to louse up the situation (?) Any enlightening word you could give me would be appreciated.



JOHN KNOBLE-New Haven Register 367 Orange, New Haven, Conn.

RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE

DOMESTIC SERVICE

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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1972

On the basis of these observations, Dr. Sharp concluded that "the call for a special day and time in the Christian calendar for a 'Day of Repentance by Christians for What They Have Done to the Jews and Arabs' is not inappropriate."

In addition to Dr. Sharp, the other Americans participating in the symposium were Father Robert P. Kennedy, director of social action for Catholic Charities in Brooklyn; Dr. Norman F. Benson of the Unitarian Universalist Association; the Rev. William H. Harter, a Presbyterian pastor in Margaretville, N.Y., and co-director of a National Council of Churches committee on the Middle East; the Rev. James C. Miller, a Baptist pastor in Schenectady, N.Y.; Mrs. Connie A. Miller of Schenectady; Miss Pamela K. Newman of Church World Service.

Also, Dr. N. Michael Vapouris, a professor at the Greek Orthodox Hellenic College, Brookline, Mass.; Matthew R. Giuffrida and the Rev. Nicholas Salios of the American Baptist Convention; and James A. Christison, executive secretary of the American Baptist Home Mission Societies, Valley Forge, Pa.

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REFORMED CHURCH ASKS CANDIDATES
TO ACCEPT SEMINARY POSTS

By Religious News Service (11-7-72)

HOLLAND, Mich. (RNS) -- Two clergymen have been invited to become presidents of the theological seminaries of the Reformed Church in America.

Western Seminary here and New Brunswick (N.J.), Seminary have a common board of directors and in the past have shared a single president.

The board has offered the presidency of Western to Dr. I. John Hesselink, a member of the faculty at Tokyo Union Theological Seminary in Japan.

Dr. Howard G. Hageman, pastor of the North Reformed church of Newark, N.J., has been invited to head New Brunswick Seminary.

Separate presidents will not affect the cooperation which exists between programs at the geographically divided schools.

Dr. Lester J. Kuyper is current interim president of both seminaries.

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Suggestion Made By American Baptist Aide

CHRISTIAN 'DAY OF REPENTANCE' URGED
FOR WHAT WAS DONE TO ARABS AND JEWS

By Religious News Service (11-7-72)

VALLEY FORGE, Pa. (RNS) -- Dr. Frank A. Sharp, head of the American Baptist News Service, has called for a "Day of Repentance by Christians for What They Have Done to the Jews and the Arabs" to be added to the Christian calendar.

Commenting as an individual, he made the suggestion after returning from an ecumenical "Journey for Peace Symposium" of 11 Americans touring the Middle East and Europe. The three-week trip, which was organized by the American Baptist Convention, was conducted as an "ecumenical act to affirm the basis for reconciliation between Arabs and Jews in the Middle East, and between Christians and Jews in the U.S."

In his statement, Dr. Sharp pointed out that there is a building in Jerusalem, called Yad Vashem, which was constructed as a Memorial to the Holocaust (killing of 6 million Jews by the Nazis).

Outside the memorial, he said, there is a row of about 50 trees called the "Garden of the Righteous Gentiles," with each tree planted to the memory of a non-Jew who helped save Jewish lives during the Holocaust.

When the ecumenical group was conducted through the memorial, Dr. Sharp related, the Israeli guide commented, "Gentlemen, there are not very many trees planted there."

Dr. Sharp also pointed out that after the State of Israel was established in 1947, refugee camps for 1,500,000 Arabs were set up. "Some of the refugees have been living in these camps for 24 years with no immediate prospect of returning to their homeland," he said. "The Arab feels that the great powers established the State of Israel without regard for the inhabitants who had been living there for 13 centuries."

In a sense, Dr. Sharp asserted, the problem of Arab refugees and the creation of the State of Israel "are the result of Christian defection from their own faith and beliefs." He called anti-semitism by Christians and Christian nations "an historical horror."

Dr. Sharp related an incident in which a Jewish professor in Israel was asked what he felt should be done about the relationship of Jews and Christians. He said the professor's reply was "that in view of the past history of Christian-Jewish relationships it would be better not to have any relationships with Christians at all."