

A Few Questions For Mahathir Mohamed (Part Three)

by Hugh Fitzgerald



Mahathir Mohamed may not know this. He reads the paper, about protests in Gaza, or tunnel-building by Hamas, or perhaps he pays too much attention to the U.N., which seems to spend half its time, and more than half of its resolutions, condemning the mighty empire of Israel. But Israel is not the only, and not even the main, source of troubles in the Middle East. Sunni-Shi'a rivalries, ethnic disputes, tribal conflicts, persecuted minorities (Copts, Chaldeans Assyrians, Yazidis), hugely corrupt rulers who continue to appropriate or steal so much of their nation's wealth – not just the grasping ayatollahs in Iran, and the ruling families in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the Emirates, Qatar, but also the leaders of oil-poor countries: Mubarak, Ben Ali, King Hussein, and even Mahmoud Abbas, who has diverted to himself and his sons \$400 million dollars in aid meant for the “poor Palestinians,” and we mustn't overlook the amazing multi-billion dollar fortunes of the leaders of Hamas, Khaled Meshlal, and Musa Abu Marzook, who have surpassed Abbas, each managing to put 2-3 billion dollars into his own pockets.

In every one of these conflicts (sectarian, ethnic, tribal, religious) and the colossal greed that despoils the Middle East, Israel has had no part. Take Israel out of the picture, hypothesize its non-existence, and what are we left with? The same conflicts, the same greed.

We might ask Mahathir Mohamed if he really thinks, as he appears to, that before Israel came into existence, the Middle East was a model of tranquillity. Has he forgotten the endless

battles in Arabia between rival tribes, and especially that between the Al-Saud and the Shammar tribe, finally won by the former who created "Saudi" Arabia? Does he remember how the Hashemites were driven out of the Hejaz? Or how long the Shia and Sunni tribes in Yemen have been fighting?

He can't have forgotten the mass killings of 1.5 million Armenians in Turkey, by both Turks and Kurds, in a jihad that began in the 1890s and then was renewed in 1915. What about the Christians killed in the Aleppo Massacre of 1850, the first of many, much larger massacres that were to come to Greater Syria? Did he ever learn about the massacre of Maronite Christians, by Muslims, Druze and Arabs – while Turkish troops largely looked on approvingly, not forgetting to take their share of the property of those Christian victims – that began in 1860 in Damascus and spread throughout Syria? He must have heard about the repeated massacres of the Assyrian Christians by Turks in northern Iraq and southern Anatolia, and by Arabs, too, as during the Simele Massacre of Assyrians by the Iraqi army, a massacre which took place in 1933, just one year after the British had pulled out of Iraq, after receiving assurances that the Assyrians would be safe. The Middle East has been a cauldron of old hatreds and ancient rivalries since long before the Jewish state was established.

Finally, there is one last question for Mahathir Mohamed, as he has repeatedly declared that "the Jews rule the world" or, in another variant, "the Jews rule the world by proxy." If that is so, please explain why those all-powerful Jews were obviously not powerful enough to prevent the murder of six million Jews by Hitler. If Jews are so powerful, why couldn't they have prevented the British from making all of Palestine east of the Jordan off-limits to Jewish settlement, despite the express terms of the Mandate for Palestine, by which that territory was originally meant to be included in the Jewish state, and assigning it instead to the Emirate of Transjordan? If the Jews rule the world, why were they unable to convince

any country in that world to take in more than a handful of Jewish refugees, with the single exception of the Dominican Republic, at the Evian Conference in 1938? If Jews rule the world, even if “by proxy,” Dr. Mohamed, why did the Israelis allow themselves to be pressured into surrendering the entire Sinai to Egypt, instead of holding onto it?

If Jews rule the world, how is it that Israel is the focus of so much hatred at the U.N General Assembly? Can't those world-rulers put an end to it? In the last two months of 2016, for example, 24 resolutions were passed by the General Assembly. Twenty of them either condemned Israel or promoted the Palestinian cause. No other country comes close to Israel in being vilified during the discussions at the General Assembly. Why can't the all-powerful Jews prevent that? If Jews are so powerful, why have they been unable to prevent you, Dr. Mahathir Mohamed, from repeatedly denigrating Jews?

We'll wait right here for your answers.

First published in