

"The World According to Carter"
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Sometimes you really can tell a book by its cover. President Jimmy Carter's decision to title his new anti-Israel screed "Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid" (Simon & Schuster, 288 pages, \$27) tells it all. His use of the loaded word "apartheid," suggesting an analogy to the hated policies of South Africa, is especially outrageous, considering his acknowledgment buried near the end of his shallow and superficial book that what is going on in Israel today "is unlike that in South Africa—not racism, but the acquisition of land." Nor does he explain that Israel's motivation for holding on to land it captured in a defensive war is the prevention of terrorism. Israel has tried, on several occasions, to exchange land for peace, and what it got instead was terrorism, rockets, and kidnappings launched from the returned land.

In fact, Palestinian-Arab terrorism is virtually missing from Mr. Carter's entire historical account, which blames nearly everything on Israel and almost nothing on the Palestinians. Incredibly, he asserts that the initial violence in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict occurred when "Jewish militants" attacked Arabs in 1939. The long history of Palestinian terrorism against Jews — which began in 1929, when the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem ordered the slaughter of more than 100 rabbis, students, and non-Zionist Sephardim whose families had lived in Hebron and other ancient Jewish cities for millennia — was motivated by religious bigotry. The Jews responded to this racist violence by establishing a defense force. There is no mention of the long history of Palestinian terrorism before the occupation, or of the Munich massacre and others inspired by Yasser Arafat. There is not even a reference to the Karine A, the boatful of terrorist weapons ordered by Arafat in January 2002.

Mr. Carter's book is so filled with simple mistakes of fact and deliberate omissions that were it a brief filed in a court of law, it would be struck and its author sanctioned for misleading the court. Mr. Carter too is guilty of misleading the court of public opinion. A mere listing of all of Mr. Carter's mistakes and omissions would fill a volume the size of his book. Here are just a few of the most egregious:

Mr. Carter emphasizes that "Christian and Muslim Arabs had continued to live in this same land since Roman times," but he ignores the fact that Jews have lived in Hebron, Tzfat, Jerusalem, and other cities for even longer. Nor does he discuss the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Jews from Arab countries since 1948.

Mr. Carter repeatedly claims that the Palestinian Arabs have long supported a two-state solution and the Israelis have always opposed it. Yet he makes no mention of the fact that in 1938 the Peel Commission proposed a two-state solution, with Israel receiving a mere sliver of its ancient homeland and the Palestinians receiving the bulk of the land. The Jews accepted and the Palestinians rejected this proposal because Arab leaders cared more about there being no Jewish state on Muslim holy land than about having a Palestinian state of their own. He barely mentions Israel's acceptance, and the Palestinian rejection, of the United Nation's division of the mandate in 1948.

He claims that in 1967 Israel launched a preemptive attack against Jordan. The fact is that Jordan attacked Israel first, Israel tried desperately to persuade Jordan to remain out of the war, and Israel counterattacked after the Jordanian army surrounded Jerusalem, firing missiles into the center of the city. Only then did Israel capture the West Bank, which it was willing to return in exchange for peace and recognition from Jordan.

Mr. Carter repeatedly mentions Security Council Resolution 242, which called for return of captured territories in exchange for peace, recognition, and secure boundaries, but he ignores that Israel accepted and all the Arab nations and the Palestinians rejected this resolution. The Arabs met in Khartoum and issued their three famous "no's": "No peace, no recognition, no negotiation." But you wouldn't know that from reading the history according to Mr. Carter. Mr. Carter faults Israel for its "air strike that destroyed an Iraqi nuclear reactor" without mentioning that Iraq had threatened to attack Israel with nuclear weapons if Iraq succeeded in building a bomb.

Mr. Carter faults Israel for its administration of Christian and Muslim religious sites, when in fact Israel is scrupulous about ensuring those of every religion the right to worship as they please — consistent, of course, with security needs. He fails to mention that between 1948 and 1967, when Jordan occupied the West Bank and East Jerusalem, the Hashemites destroyed and desecrated Jewish religious sites and prevented Jews from praying at the Western Wall. He also never mentions Egypt's brutal occupation of Gaza between 1949 and 1967.

Mr. Carter blames Israel, and exonerates Arafat, for the Palestinian refusal to accept statehood on 95% of the West Bank and all of Gaza pursuant to the Clinton-Barak offers at Camp David and Taba in 2000–2001. He accepts the Palestinian revisionist history, rejects the eyewitness accounts of President Clinton and Dennis Ross, and ignores Saudi Prince Bandar's accusation that Arafat's rejection of the proposal was "a crime" and that Arafat's account "was not truthful" — except, apparently, to Mr. Carter. The fact that Mr. Carter chooses to believe Arafat over Mr. Clinton speaks volumes.

Mr. Carter's description of the recent Lebanon war is misleading. He begins by asserting that Hezbollah captured two Israeli soldiers. "Captured" suggests a military apprehension subject to the usual prisoner of war status. The soldiers were kidnapped, and have not been heard from — not even a sign of life. The rocket attacks that preceded Israel's invasion are largely ignored, as is the fact that Hezbollah fired its rockets from civilian population centers. Mr. Carter gives virtually no credit to Israel's superb legal system, falsely asserting (without any citation) that "confessions extracted through torture are admissible in Israeli courts," that prisoners are "executed," and that the "accusers" act "as judges." Even Israel's most severe critics acknowledge the fairness of the Israeli Supreme Court, but not Mr. Carter.

Mr. Carter even blames Israel for the "exodus of Christians from the Holy Land," totally ignoring the Islamization of the area by Hamas and the comparable exodus of Christian Arabs from Lebanon as a result of the increasing influence of Hezbollah and the repeated assassination of Christian leaders by Syria.

Mr. Carter also blames every American administration but his own for the Mideast stalemate with particular emphasis on "a submissive White House and U.S. Congress in recent years." He employs hyperbole and overstatement when he says that "dialogue on controversial issues is a privilege to be extended only as a reward for subservient behavior and withheld from those who reject U.S. demands." He confuses terrorist states, such as Iran and Syria, to which we do not extend dialogue, with states with whom we strongly disagree, such as France and China, but with whom we have constant dialogue.

And it's not just the facts; it's the tone as well. It's obvious that Mr. Carter just doesn't like Israel or Israelis. He lectured Golda Meir on Israeli's "secular" nature, warning her that "Israel was punished whenever its leaders turned away from devout worship of God." He admits that he did not like Menachem Begin. He has little good to say about any Israelis — except those few who agree with him. But he apparently got along swimmingly with the very secular Syrian mass-murderer Hafez al-Assad. Mr. Carter and his wife Rosalynn also had a fine time with the equally secular Arafat — a man who has the blood of hundreds of Americans and Israelis on his hands:

Rosalynn and I met with Yasir Arafat in Gaza City, where he was staying with his wife, Suha, and their little daughter. The baby, dressed in a beautiful pink suit, came readily to sit on my lap, where I practiced the same wiles that had been successful with our children and grandchildren. A lot of photographs were taken, and then the photographers asked that Arafat hold his daughter for a while. When he took her, the child screamed loudly and reached out her hands to me, bringing jovial admonitions to the presidential candidate to stay at home enough to become acquainted with his own child.

There is something quite disturbing about these pictures.

"Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid" is so biased that it inevitably raises the question of what would motivate a decent man like Jimmy Carter to write such an indecent book. Whatever Mr. Carter's motives may be, his authorship of this ahistorical, one-sided, and simplistic brief against Israel forever disqualifies him from playing any positive role in fairly resolving the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. That is a tragedy because the Carter Center

which has done much good in the world, could have been a force for peace if Jimmy Carter were as generous in spirit to the Israelis as he is to the Palestinians.