Chomsky-Shahak Story Ignores Opposition's Views

The article on Noam Chomsky and Shabtai Shahak about "IFAM's "Jewish Fundamentalism," Nov. 8, mentions strong opposition to their views, but fails to indicate or even acknowledge the existence of any other views.

Chomsky and Shahak seem to selectively ignore much of the history of the conflict in the Middle East. Instead, they claim that Israel does not give Palestinian equal rights because they are not Jews. It is as if they are suggesting that fighting against Arab armies because they were not Jewish.

There is ample evidence that Israel first took over the territories because the situation had become intolerable. Every few years Israel would be forced to defend itself against a number of much larger Arab armies, with the premise that if the Arabs win Israel is annihilated, while if Israel wins the international community steps in and stops the fighting as soon as Israel has demonstrated the ability to defend itself. Therefore Israel clearly armed at least King Hussein of Jordan that if he attacked again, he would lose territory.

Before 1967, the Palestinians in the territories had never行使ed their rights. Their rights and those of other Arab citizens were simply trampled, but the international community was unable to monitor the situation because of the non-democratic Arab governments.

When Israel took over, it decided to build housing and economic infrastructure in the territories, which to a certain extent did. But the Arabs were denied the right to Israeli citizenship, in an effort to prevent Israeli involvement, in increasingly violent terrorist attacks.

Therefore, when they resorted to humanitarian abuses in the territories often seem to forget how deadly a rock to the head can be. That is an issue for the Palestinians, not Israelis. Palestinian concerns were mentioned about Palestinian rights, or that those human rights violations have now occurred.

Let us hope that the peacemakers on both sides can overcome those conflicts to blame one side or the other for the history of the situation.

Remus Bar-Kana C

Chomsky, Shahak, and Story All Wrong

On Israel

It is unfortunate that the reporter lacked the necessary background to properly understand the latest in an opinion piece in the Chomsky-Shahak road show "Chomsky, Shahak Discuss Jewish Fundamentalism," Nov. 8.

Let me cite two simple examples: Not even Shahak would claim, as the article does, that Israel "does not have the right to live in the borders of the 1967 lines." The real number is around 17 percent.

Also, Jewish fundamentalists, those who believe in an unchanging and unchangeable faith, believe that a Jewish state cannot come into existence until it is established by the Messian. They avow any relationship with the government that makes any notion of Jewish fundamentalists run the country is an absurdity.

With a more appropriate background, the reporter might also have identified the following systematic errors in the approach taken that evening.

First, Israel-Shahak engages routinely in misanachristianism, asserting that something can happen when it is not yet possible. Let me cite an example held the non-democratic nature of Jewish communal governance in 17th century Poland. The reasoning demonizing governments anywhere at that time, the teleological bases for democracy were non-existent. It is hardly surprising that a minority community didn't have one. Yet Shahak regards this fail safe as permanence of a condition for a person so thoroughly secular.

Second, both Chomsky and Shahak engage from the beginning without bothering to determine whether those leaps are founded. For example, the United States has subsidized some dictators is enough to prove that anyone who receives a subsidy from the United States must be a dictator.

Shahak makes the same leap when he asserts Israel has become a theocracy because some Jewish religious laws have become laws of the state. These claims are not a type with an argument offered in a student year ago that sought to demonstrate that the people of all state forms of government is a gorilla was included in the futuristic picture book.

Third, Shahak's fixation on a bill passed by the Israeli Parliament that bars the import of non-Orthodox prayer shawls in whose name he claims to speak, actually works. This law is thus at odds with the constitution on the basis of the state. It is the result of log-rolling, a time-honored practice in any legislative body. It is a violation of democratic values, but it was produced by the normal workings of democracy.

For him, as for Chomsky, "democracy" is what he desires to achieve. In the case of Chomsky, he rebukes the course of time towards democracy, while Shahak denounces people for having values different from theirs. This is a very strange notion.

There are also some matters of fact. For example, most American aid to Israel was not for the purpose of developing the Israeli military out of the Sinai, an outcome we desired for our own reasons.

The amount pales in comparison to what we spend on NATO, which serves American interests in Western Europe in a similar fashion. Between 1989 and 1993, U.S. military aid plans for the region are not based, as Chomsky claims, on the desire to have an Israeli military that is "the locals one of the locals." Shahak maintains that Israel treat Palestinians as second-class citizens because if the Arabs win Israel is annihilated, which is simply not. Whether he knows this or not is another matter.

Palestinians have fared better under Israeli occupation than what Shahak claims. They would be better off under Palestinian rule. The treatment here does not have the right to live in the borders of the 1967 lines. If they had it, they would have the right to live in the borders of the 1967 lines. It is the right of all citizens to be unwilling or unable to deal constructively with the issues facing the state.

The great majority of citizens commit to this come than it is to ignore the border is their pursuit of a chance out of poverty. For this, the borders they leave behind their heritage and are done right to be full members of the society.

In the best case, they suffer the disdain of their neighbors and, in the worst, become the scapegoats for a country they have no voice in being made by Proposition 187. As Mexicans we have followed closely the workings of democracy.

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