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Defamatory words become agents of change. Hamas's barbarism galvanized those who claim to be fighting against "white privilege" and the remnants of colonial exploitation. To these "activists," massacres have an almost messianic power to bring

them into the streets and campuses to defame and attack Jews. The "demonstrators" believe Hamas has proven that anything can be justified in a sacred cause.

Progressives now loathe Israel because they see it as the embodiment of all their enemies, including the state as a source of meaning for its citizens. The language progressives use, endlessly repeated in the classroom, in the media and on the streets sets the tone for critical policy considerations, even though this language is irrelevant to the situation of a pluralist, democratic society fighting for survival.

Zionism promised to uplift the citizens of a Jewish state; to give them the chance for a new kind of solidarity and moral development; to empower them to shape their own destiny. Everything that has happened since Oct. 7 has shown that all Israelis are willing to risk their lives to keep that promise. Let us hope that, enthralled by the language of lies and hate, America does not stop Israel from completing the mission for which it was founded. (JNS Apr 9)

The writer is the Morningstar Family Professor of Jewish Studies and Professor of Government Emerita at Smith College.

Commentary...

Oct. 7 is Apocalypse Now By Donna Robinson Devine

Nancy Pelosi's call for the suspension of arms deliveries to Israel made me stop for a moment in disbelief. There is a profound irony when someone who has quoted Israeli songwriter Ehud Manor's lyric "I have no other country" evinces no understanding that weakening Israel's military can destroy the Jewish state and inflict horrific damage on a people who actually do have "no other country."

I also wonder about the limits of the intellectual dexterity of progressives who worry about a climate apocalypse unfolding on a long timeline but are prepared to stop sending vital weapons that will help Israel stave off the threat of an apocalypse now. I wonder about the flattening of distinctions between Israel's military campaign and Hamas's atrocities, as in recent remarks by Secretary of State Antony Blinken. This not only holds the Jewish state to impossible standards in defending its citizens but also gives vigor to broader anti-Israel hostility, including blood libels. It washes away the kidnapping, hostage-taking, rape, torture, beheadings and more filmed and posted online by perpetrators proud of their savagery.

There are some possible explanations. As the IDF has dismantled Hamas brigade by brigade, it has uncovered something like Gaza's "zone of interest," composed of multi-layered ties between Hamas and the institutional structure of international humanitarian aid. This raises inevitable questions about the extent to which donors, distributors and recipients of this aid have created a system that depends financially on the perpetuation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Perhaps it is also dependent on specific outbreaks of violence.

Of course, the Oct. 7 atrocities risked the Palestinians' image as the ultimate victims. It is thus no surprise to see international leaders who initially rushed to condemn the atrocities now proclaiming that the moral test for Israel's military operations is the number of civilian casualties.

But let us be clear about what this means if it leaves Hamas in place: Oct. 7 thrust the Israeli-Palestinian conflict into an apocalyptic realm. It replaced the widely accepted policy of "two states for two peoples" with the genocidal slogan "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free." The possibility of coexistence has been jettisoned in favor of perpetual violence.

The current admonitions from the White House and the Democratic Party do not just work to delegitimize Israel's war effort. They aid and abet the Hamas supporters who celebrated the butchery as soon as it was reported. Let's remember the rapture of intellectuals on and off campus who adulated the barbarism as the dawn of liberation for the wretched of the earth.

Clearly, the Palestinians and their supporters' genocidal war has gone global. They no longer seek land or self-rule, but rather deliverance from a past in which the "wrong side of history" is said to have prevailed. Only a blood sacrifice can compensate for a history gone so horribly wrong. Such a view places absolutely no limits on what can be done to reverse what is seen not as the founding of a Jewish state in 1948 but rather as the release of a demonic force.

Having adopted this view, Israel's detractors are indifferent to evidence. They render their judgment according to their catechism. For example, a series of tragic mistakes on the hazy Gaza battlefield resulted in the deaths of seven aid workers. This was instantly transformed into a crime against humanity justifying a frenzy of deranged accusations. There was also the Palestinian Islamic Jihad rocket that killed scores of people in the parking lot of the Al-Ahli Hospital. It was instantly marketed by major Western media outlets as an Israeli atrocity that caused 500 casualties. Hamas and its supporters needed an Israeli war crime; so they invented one.

Life is now subordinate to fiction instead of the other way around.

When U.S. Troops Kill Aid Workers, it's 'Friendly Fire'. When Israel does, it's a 'War Crime'. The Double Standards are Nauseating

By Richard Littlejohn

The call came through as I was leaving Twickenham after an England rugby international in March 2003. My old friend Terry Lloyd, the brilliant ITN correspondent, had been killed in Iraq.

He was on the outskirts of Basra, travelling in a 4x4 clearly marked 'TV'. When the fog of war lifted, it was determined that the fatal shot had been fired by a U.S. soldier, who has never been identified. Terry's translator also died and his French cameraman was missing, presumed dead.

A subsequent inquest ruled that Terry had been unlawfully killed by American troops and his lawyer said he had been the victim of a 'very serious war crime'. No one was ever charged.

The shock of his death was as traumatic for his family and friends as for those of the three brave British aid workers killed by Israeli forces in Gaza this week.

But no one at the time demanded that the American-led Coalition — which included 46,000 British military personnel — withdraw immediately from Iraq, allow Saddam Hussein to remain in power and abandon the hunt for what turned out to be non-existent weapons of mass destruction.

An estimated 300,000 Iraqi civilians were killed after the 2003 Anglo-American invasion, and although there was widespread opposition to the war I don't recall anyone credibly accusing the British or U.S. governments of committing 'genocide'.

In 2011, a NATO-led bombing campaign in Libya, enthusiastically endorsed by then Prime Minister David Cameron, claimed countless innocent lives. After the fall of Colonel Gaddafi, Call Me Dave even went on a victory parade in Tripoli.

Yet today, the now Lord Cameron is condemning Israel over its actions in Gaza and demanding a 'full, transparent explanation'.

Joe Biden was first a senator, then Vice-President during the American war in Afghanistan, where the civilian death toll is officially put at over 45,000. He, too, says he's 'outraged' over the deaths of the aid workers in Gaza and is putting pressure on Israel to cease hostilities.

Both Cameron and Biden can legitimately be accused of self-serving hypocrisy, aimed at restoring their own, tarnished wartime reputations and, in the case of the U.S. President, seeking electoral advantage by sucking up to Muslim voters in swing states such as Michigan.

When British or U.S. troops accidentally kill innocent civilians, journalists or aid workers it's 'friendly fire' in the heat of battle. When Israel does likewise, it's a deliberate war crime. The double-standards are nauseating.

As is the virtue-signalling, round-robin letter to the Prime Minister from 600 lawyers, academics and retired senior judges, including Baroness Hale, of Boris The Spider brooch fame during the Brexit wars. Several of them were preening themselves on the airwaves yesterday, demanding that the Government halts arms sales to Israel.

One part of the letter calls for sanctions against 'individuals and entities who have made statements inciting genocide against Palestinians'.

What's that supposed to mean — that anyone who supports Israel's right to self-defence is guilty of inciting genocide? Sounds suspiciously to me like the ludicrous 'hate speech' law that came into force in Scotland this week. This is cost-free compassion, designed primarily to make the signatories feel good about themselves.

I've no doubt many of them are sincere, horrified — as we all are, supporters of Israel and Palestinians sympathisers alike — at the carnage unfolding in Gaza. But by concentrating their disdain on Israel, they are acting as Hamas's Useful Idiots.

In some ways they're giving succour to the 'River to the Sea' crowd peddling Jew-hatred on the streets of London and elsewhere every weekend.

By parroting Hamas propaganda, repeating uncorroborated claims about the number of civilians killed, they are doing the terrorists' dirty work for them. One of these distinguished lawyers turned up on Sky News yesterday claiming, without a shred of evidence, that Israeli troops were deliberately targeting children and had lined up doctors and nurses against a wall and shot them.

Also on Sky, a veteran journalist who should know better repeated the Hamas claim that Israel had killed 35,000 'mostly women and children'. No terrorists, then?

The latest calls for a ceasefire centre on the battle at the Al-Shifa hospital, used as a base by both Hamas and Islamic Jihad, the groups behind the October 7 massacre. Indeed, there's evidence some of the hostages had been dragged there.

The hospital lies in ruins after two weeks of intense fighting, or as Sky would have it: 'Israeli bombardment'. But who the hell does anyone think the Israelis have been fighting — cancer patients, maternity ward orderlies, orthopaedic surgeons?

It's as if Hamas has been written out of the script entirely and Israel has simply decided to slaughter as many sick Palestinians and innocent hospital staff as possible.

If Israel was hell-bent on 'genocide' there wouldn't be a single Palestinian left alive today. Instead, it has taken extraordinary steps to avoid civilian casualties, which are entirely the fault of Hamas.

Building tunnels under schools, mosques and hospitals, from which to launch missiles and cross-border attacks on Israel, demonstrates the terror group's callous disregard for human life.

The quickest way to end the carnage would be for Hamas to surrender and release all the hostages immediately. But there's no evidence of that happening, or any pressure from Arab states to make it happen.

Tentative peace talks always seem to hinge on a disproportionate ten-to-one prisoner swap in Hamas's favour, which Israel can't accept. A ceasefire would simply allow Hamas to re-group and re-arm in preparation for another October 7-style assault.

Hamas has made no secret of the fact it wants to slaughter Jews and wipe Israel off the face of the Earth. Yet, absurdly, it's Israel being accused of genocide.

To those demanding that Israel stands down and lets Hamas continue to occupy its tunnels, I say this: Imagine that the Islamist terrorist who attacked Manchester Arena, killing 22 and injuring 1017 more, hadn't strapped on a suicide vest but instead had planted his bombs before making a swift getaway.

Then after he had escaped, he decamped to Manchester Royal Infirmary, where he was holed up in the basement with a few dozen other jihadists and a deadly arsenal. Should the anti-terror squad just shrug and leave them to it, so that some time later they were free to emerge under the cover of darkness and blow up Old Trafford or go on a gun rampage in the Arndale Centre?

Look, I don't want to sound flippant but Israel is fighting for its very existence against a fanatical Islamist death cult.

It can do without posturing, point-scoring Western politicians, lawyers and activists inserting themselves into the narrative. This isn't about them it's about the very survival of a people and a democratic nation.

Hamas are our enemies, too, the kissing cousins of the nutjobs who blew up Manchester Arena, the London Transport network and have committed countless other terrorist atrocities in Europe. Supporting Israel is not, as m'learned friends pretended this week, 'inciting genocide'. Quite the opposite, in fact.

War is hell and there will always be, to use that horrible euphemism, 'collateral damage'.

Terry Lloyd and the courageous aid workers killed in Gaza this week understood that.

They knew the risks but were prepared to put their lives on the line in pursuit of, in Terry's case the truth, and on the part of the aid workers, bringing food and comfort to those in danger.

Their untimely deaths are undoubtedly tragic, but the aid workers would still be alive had it not been for the slaughter of 1,200 innocents on October 7.

Israel is being blamed, but Hamas has their blood on its hands. Sadly, despite the best efforts of brave journalists like Terry Lloyd and others over the years, the truth remains the first casualty of war.

(Daily Mail Apr 4)

Biden Shouldn't Get Away with Granting a Victory to Hamas

By Jonathan S. Tobin

Perhaps Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wasn't blowing smoke. After the announcement of a withdrawal of Israel Defense Forces troops from southern Gaza, he pledged that a date had been set for an offensive into Rafah to complete the job of destroying Hamas's last remaining active military units. If true, that would mean the assumption that the Israeli retreat from Gaza signaled the end for all intents and purposes of the war that Hamas began on Oct. 7 was, at best, premature.

As the six-month anniversary of the Hamas attacks on Israel was marked this past weekend with remembrances of the fallen, as well as prayers and demands for the release of the more than 100 hostages still held by Hamas, Israeli optimism about the ultimate outcome of the conflict was hard to maintain. Indeed, contrary to Netanyahu's words, the Biden administration's opposition to further efforts to defeat Hamas has forced Israel's government to back down and accept what appears to be a ceasefire with the current leadership of the terrorist organization without a single hostage being released, then the current situation must be judged to be an unprecedented disaster for the Jewish state.

While Israel's armed foes and their antisemitic allies throughout the world may have reason to celebrate these events, the outcome of this conflict is not yet decided. Israel's armed forces have already achieved a great deal in its effort to degrade Hamas's military capabilities and destroy much of its underground fortress system, and can, given more time, finish the job. Moreover, it's hard to believe that Netanyahu or anyone tasked with leading the Jewish state will accept an outcome in which it not only suffered the worst mass slaughter of Jews since the Holocaust but then allowed those pledged to its destruction to defeat it through international pressure and a propaganda campaign.

An honest assessment of events that have transpired these last six months must deem them among the most awful in modern Jewish history. And while it's easy to get lost in the details of military, political and diplomatic problems, the world should never lose sight of the one element that explains the virulence of Hamas's murder campaign and indifference to Israel's rights and security: antisemitism. If the first six months of the war have been filled with disappointments and mistakes, what follows need not be a disastrous conclusion to the conflict. The Israel-haters have hypocritically helped convince liberals in the United States to oppose the continuation of the war; however, efforts to counteract these lies and build support for Israeli victory loom greater than ever.

The war that began with the Hamas rampage of murder, rape,

torture, kidnapping and wanton destruction on Oct. 7 dealt a cruel blow to Israel's ability to deter its foes. Rather than inspiring sympathy from the rest of the world for the IDF's efforts to ensure that these crimes would never again be committed, the spectacle of Jewish suffering did the opposite. Even before the counteroffensive into Gaza to take down the Oct. 7 murderers began, worldwide media and the leftist-dominated chattering classes had flipped the script about the conflict to treat the Palestinians, who were the perpetrators of unspeakable crimes as the real victims of the war, and the Israeli victims as criminal violators of human rights. Hamas lies about "indiscriminate" and "disproportionate" Israeli bombings and Palestinian casualties being almost solely women and children were not just believed but treated as truthful by a biased press. It even turned around the Biden administration, members of which think that the president might lose his re-election chances in certain swing states because he was insufficiently hostile to the Jewish state.

Just as ominously, throughout the West—and most particularly, in the United States—antisemitic mobs in the streets of cities and on college campuses helped normalize calls for Israel's destruction and terrorism against Jews in public discourse. Even in a country where, in contrast to Europe, support for Israel is still strong and where official antisemitism has been unknown, Jews are starting to feel increasingly unsafe.

While hostage negotiations continue, President Joe Biden's pressure campaign has removed all incentive for Hamas to budge an inch from its ransom demands that not only include a massive release of terrorist prisoners held by Israel but also an end to the war. Moreover, should the conflict that began on Oct. 7 conclude with Hamas still in possession of any part of Gaza—and with an active, if heavily damaged, military force still intact—then Palestinians, their enablers and fellow travelers abroad, not to mention their Iranian funders, will rightly consider them to be the victors of the war.

The consequences of such a turn of events for Israel are unthinkable. Hamas's goals remain the destruction of Israel and the genocide of its population.

Ever since the massacres on that Black Shabbat, the prime minister has been telling his country and the world that Israel would not stop until the Islamist group was decisively and completely defeated. But six months into the conflict, that goal has not been achieved. It's now apparent that the United States—Israel's main ally, and principal source of the arms and ammunition — has no intention of letting Hamas be defeated.

While the current withdrawal of forces is being represented by Israel's government as merely an effort to regroup and prepare the IDF for the final battle in Gaza, it's impossible to ignore the underlying context. Biden's gradual pivot away from his position of strong support for Israel and for the elimination of Hamas after Oct. 7 culminated in the threats he issued to Netanyahu last week in a phone call. The administration let it be known that Biden said if Israel attacked Hamas in Rafah, then he would withhold further military aid. What's more, it soon became clear that Biden's foreign-policy team was also making it clear that it would not veto efforts in the U.N. Security Council to pass a binding ceasefire resolution or to grant recognition of Palestinian statehood.

These are not the sort of threats that any Israeli government can ignore or take lightly. Israel depends on U.S. arms to maintain its ability to deter or defeat the forces that seek its destruction. Most Israelis still ignore the United Nations as an irrelevant talking shop. But a binding ceasefire and formal recognition of Palestinian statehood would set in motion a series of events that could make the antisemitic fantasy of transforming the democratic Jewish state into a pariah state shunned and sanctioned by the entire world into reality.

There are reasons to believe that—after a pause of undetermined length—Netanyahu still hopes to make good on his promises. The IDF is reportedly preparing to provide a way for the Palestinians living in the remaining Hamas stronghold a path to escape the fighting and then resume the offensive. But for the moment, the achievement of Israel's post-Oct. 7 war aims—the total defeat of Hamas and the release of all of the Israeli hostages it holds—are beyond its reach.

There's plenty of blame to go around for the mistakes that led to this situation. Nevertheless, the main priority for friends of Israel now is to not succumb to recriminations or despair. The Israeli people will

ultimately decide whether and when Netanyahu as well as the country's military and establishment will be held accountable for Oct. 7. And history will determine whether or not Israel's post-Oct. 7 military campaign was conducted as well as it could have been.

But for now, the priority for both Israelis and Americans who care about the Jewish state must be to loudly and ceaselessly speak about the consequences of letting Hamas emerge triumphant from the fighting.

The chattering classes in the United States and their acceptance of the Hamas narrative about Palestinian suffering have helped generate the anger at Israel that pushed Biden to pressure Netanyahu. The influence of leftist woke ideologies on American discourse, which falsely brands Israel as a "white" oppressor populated by "settler/colonialists," played a key role in enabling this to happen.

Many in the pro-Israel community thought they could ward off such an outcome by speaking solely of the suffering of the Israeli hostages or trying to remind the world about the truth of what happened. The hostages shouldn't be forgotten and Biden's abandonment of them, including the Americans still held by Hamas, is disgraceful. So, too, is the willingness of the world to treat Oct. 7 as insufficient reason for Israel to no longer tolerate the existence of a genocidal terrorist state on its southern border.

By now, we should have learned that no matter how many Jews are slaughtered, the Jews can never win the victim game as long as they are also willing to defend themselves, as Israel must. An international community that already treats Israel as undeserving of the same respect and rights given every other nation on the planet just cannot tolerate Israeli military action, no matter how defensible.

Biden has shown that he cares more about appeasing antisemitic voters on the far left and bowing to the dictates of progressives who have made it clear that they will not tolerate an Israeli defeat of Hamas. Indeed, he appears to believe that he must defeat and/or topple Netanyahu before he can beat former president Donald Trump in November. Biden's supporters also claim that Hamas cannot be really vanquished because it is as much an idea as an organization.

Yet it's also obvious that the lingering belief on the part of his team of Obama administration alumni running U.S. foreign policy in the need for a rapprochement with Iran is behind this disingenuous conclusion. Ideas can be overcome if those who support them are militarily defeated and left with no choice. But at the moment, the problem is that Washington is refusing to allow one of Tehran's terrorist clients to be crushed. And it is the tolerance of that fundamentally antisemitic rogue regime and its genocidal allies that has generated this decision.

Supporters of Israel therefore should not merely plead for mercy for the hostages or sympathy for the Oct. 7 victims. They must point out that if the United States is going to let terror win this war, it's not just Israelis who will suffer. A world in which Islamist terrorists are permitted to invade a democratic nation but then be saved from the consequences of that decision is one in which no one in the West should consider themselves safe.

For the moment, the Palestinians—the vast majority of whom support Hamas and the atrocities they committed—have succeeded in portraying themselves as the victims of the conflict they began and which they see as just the latest battle in a century-old war to evict the Jews from their ancient homeland. Too many of those who claim to support Israel have foolishly accepted that it's possible to compromise with those who hold onto such genocidal and antisemitic fantasies. Even after the crimes of Oct. 7, many still think that the only reasonable outcome to this round of fighting is a willingness to coexist with Islamists pledged to kill the Jews or hold onto myths about their willingness to accept a world in which Israel still exists.

Now, more than ever, the case must be made that the only chance for peace in the Middle East and to stop Iranian-backed terror against the West is for Israel to win this war. The eradication of Hamas is the price not merely for the preservation of Israeli security and existence, but for halting an Islamist wave that Americans—who have tolerated a porous southern border for the past three years —would be foolish to think can't hurt them.

Biden's feckless politically motivated policies may have forced a pause in this existential war for both Israel and the West. Yet the surge in antisemitism in the United States created by apologists for

Palestinian murderers should be a warning sign that if this is allowed to stand, the consequences will be felt by more than just one Israeli politician. The war with Hamas is not just one for Jewish survival but also part of the battle to defend the West. Americans of goodwill—both Republicans and Democrats—must make it clear to the administration by one means or another that they oppose this misguided move and support letting Israel do what it must to wipe out Hamas. (JNS Apr 8)

The Indigenous Sovereignty Movement Called Zionism

By Joseph And Laralyn RiverWind

#Indigenous, #Zionism, #LandBack, #Decolonize, #Tribal are words thrown around (sometimes in different circles) as badges of pride, accusations, labels, and identifiers. In the Middle East and on college campuses, these words collide like atoms in a superconductor.

“The Jewish people are colonizers who have settled in Palestine.”

“The Jews are colonizers.”

“Israel is a land called Palestine.”

“The Jews are occupying the West Bank.”

For the moment, let us focus on that first buzzword: indigenous. One noteworthy definition of “indigenous” is given by Ateret Shmuel of Indigenous Bridges, a nonprofit organization that builds bridges between Jewish people and other indigenous cultures worldwide. She states: “We define an indigenous nation as a nation [that] has an ethnogenesis within a specific land space. So[,] they came into existence as a people within a specific land who have historical ties to that land that predate colonial contact.”

In a fact sheet released by the U.N. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, a key identifying item listed among the modern understanding of the term “indigenous” is that the indigenous people “Resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities.”

Empowering the Jewish people to dwell safely in their ancestral sovereign land—this is Zionism. This is the essence of being indigenous.

Few people-groups accomplish this at the level of observant Jews, whose indigenous history in tightknit communities spans thousands of years. History recorded in Jewish writings over the centuries, as well as in the continuous accounts from neighboring nations, both friend and foe, attest to the existence of the Jewish tribes, their ties to the land of Israel, their origin in ancient Judea, their international commerce dealings, the devastating chronicle of wars, diplomatic relationships between countries, stories of kings, scholars, historians, and the existence of a powerful kingdom.

Language, geography, politics, and beliefs are all intimately connected to culture. We, the writers of this article, also postulate that indigeneity is linked to an element of the Divine—a sense of tribal belonging and geographical destiny, if you will—with the land to which a people is tied. Indigenous cultures worldwide typically have creation stories and narratives about how the tribe came to be in its land.

The Jewish people have one such story, concerning the creation of the boundaries of all of the nations of the world:

When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the children of men, He set the borders of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel. (Deuteronomy 32:8) According to this, the number of Israelites defined not merely the borders of Israel; it was the determining factor for the boundaries of all the nations of the world.

However, if one subtracts the Divine from the equation of indigenous boundaries, then the Darwinian theory of the survival of the fittest can be plainly spotted in unbridled colonial imperialism. One culture looks at their neighbor’s land, covets it, assesses the neighbor as weaker, and decides to take it. Compound that with the prey tribe’s breach of treaty with their God, and there is a loss of land and freedom that comes as a result of a broken covenant.

During King Rehoboam’s reign, Israel experienced civil war, splitting into two kingdoms (Israel and Judea), which were conquered by foreign nations and taken into slavery, thus losing their land. Similar conquering scenarios played out repeatedly in the history of indigenous peoples. Yet, a modern false narrative is spun that the very

victims of land theft are the perpetrators of colonialism. The irony is boundless.

Enemies of Israel purport that Jews are colonizers, not indigenous to the Holy Land. Our question is this: Where are the Jews indigenous to, if not Israel? This group of people worldwide holds commonalities in language, culture, beliefs, diet, traditional stories, sarcasm, talent, ingenuity, literature, and more. Did these all arise spontaneously and independently from within unrelated nations worldwide? Absurd.

Furthermore, another question: Does every people-group around the world have a place to which it is indigenous except the Jews? Of course not. The word Jew comes from Judah, son of Israel, a patriarch for whom the nation is named—long before Judea was renamed to “Palestine” in the fourth century by Roman conquerors.

A beautiful truth concerning the Jewish people is that a tenet of the founding principles (the Ten Words/Commandments) includes a command not to steal and not to covet what a neighbor owns. This includes property. By and large, the Jewish people have observed this principle, sticking to only wanting what their Deity entrusted to their nation. Jews do not lay claim to Iraq or Egypt. They do not engage in wars of conquest against their neighbors or seek to establish global empires.

Furthermore, the Jewish people—unlike some other groups—do not have a historical, worldwide effort to force-convert and proselytize the known universe into their faith, culture, fashion, and customs or to set up diaspora colonies in every possible country to force their Torah upon unassuming local indigenous tribes, overriding and usurping local legal law. To do so would have been to transgress into becoming colonizers.

We recognize the Jewish people as the indigenous people of Israel, Judea, Samaria, and Gaza. More than that, Israel is the prime example of hope for other displaced indigenous tribes worldwide. Here is why: Israel stands as the original land-back and decolonization model multiple times in history. The Jewish people have kept a fire burning deep within their hearts even through the historical traumas of forced removals, conversions, crusades, torture, inquisitions, assimilation, and colonization by multiple empires. That inner fire speaks of an eternal promise of returning to the land of their ancestors and never again being removed. Moreover, when given the opportunity, many have returned to the place of their indigenous inception—Israel.

An ancient tribal people, the Jews, an entire nation taken hostage, enslaved, and scattered to the four directions on countless trails of tears, have been restored to the place of their origin, to the locations of their sacred places, to the land that holds their ancestors’ bones. Even the soil responds, blossoming and springing to life when its original caretakers walk upon it once again. This is the dream of any indigenous person: to return home to the land of their ancestors, to the origin place of their traditions, customs, beliefs, and language.

Empowering the Jewish people to dwell safely in their ancestral sovereign land, allowing them to self-govern as they protect their borders and people, ensuring they have charge of their own holy sites—this is Zionism. This is the essence of being indigenous.

Six years ago, in 2018, we had the vision of an indigenous embassy in Israel. While we first applied the vision to First Nations of North America, our elders later told us to expand our vision to a worldwide indigenous embassy for people all over the earth to support Israel’s declaration of indigeneity.

Now, the Indigenous Embassy of Jerusalem is a reality. It will celebrate Israel as her people, in the words of Rabbi Pesach Stadlin, “re-indigenize.” As the first nation to be restored to the boundaries of its original covenant land with the Creator, Israel stands as a beacon of hope not just to Jews around the globe but to all indigenous people—worldwide. (Tablet Apr 1)

Chief Joseph RiverWind is the appointed Peace Chief and Ambassador for the Arawak Taino Tribe of Puerto Rico. Dr. Laralyn RiverWind is the Ambassador-at-Large for the Georgia Tribe of Eastern Cherokee. Together, they are co-founders of FireKeepers International, a U.S.-based charitable organization.
