

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## The Projection of Pain...

*The Projection of Pain is Propaganda*  
By Yonatan Hambourger and Tzali Reicher

**Echos from Sinai**  
"Torah for Everyone"  
Rabbi Yonatan Hambourger



As Israel's effort to uproot the Hamas terror organization, an Iranian proxy, from Gaza continues into its sixth month, the battle for public and world opinion rages online and in the media, with both sides vying for the moral high ground and international support.

For the most part, Hamas's plan to paint Israel as an indiscriminate aggressor seems to be working, most recently aided by the tragic incident during which a number of international humanitarian aid workers were killed. Despite Hamas's repeated rejection of negotiated ceasefires and mutually agreeable solutions that Israel agrees to, still Israel is facing condemnation and calls to bend over backwards to accommodate the whims of an irrational terrorist death cult that still holds hundreds of innocent hostages.

Despite facing a mountain of pressure, Israel remains undeterred. While the current administration of the United States waffles in its public support of our most dependable ally in the region because of domestic political concerns, there is broad consensus in Israel of what needs to happen next. An operation in Rafah - Hamas's last stronghold - will take place, in order to get rid of the genocidal threat on the borders in a way that no diplomatic solution can accomplish, and seek to rescue the hostages, including several American citizens. Israel will inevitably face backlash from countries inexplicably sympathetic to Hamas terrorists, yet it is a burden Israel will work through because sometimes, the right thing to do morally the right thing to do, despite what all the people who have morally twisted their thinking to the opposite position yell and scream.

However, there is one charge that cuts Israel, and by extension world Jewry, more than any other: the claim that Israel is committing genocide and "a Holocaust" on Palestinians.

Living in the modern world that we live in, when we can viscerally experience war on our phones from the comfort of our own homes thousands of miles away, reasonable people witnessing what is happening in Gaza because of Hamas's homicidal use of human shields and civilian infrastructure are deeply affected by the graphic images they see on their screens and baselessly, carelessly and, most importantly, harmfully, express their outrage by throwing around terms and historical comparisons that do not make sense and are belied by the evidence.

The genocide and Holocaust comparisons have been made by many public figures and online commentators, including the generally interesting Joe Rogan, who called Israel's war in Gaza a small scale Holocaust on a recent podcast episode, and more pernicious actors like the antisemitic UN Special Rapporteur (Appointee) on Occupied Palestinian Territories Francesca Albanese, who issued a report titled "Anatomy of a Genocide," concluding that there are "reasonable grounds to believe" that the threshold indicating the commission of the crime of genocide has been met.

There has been one Holocaust in history and is the one that Germany perpetrated on the Jewish people just 79 years ago. There have been many genocides and massacres in history, most notably and recently in Rwanda, Sudan, and the Uyghurs in China. When compared to actual historical equivalents, Israel's current operation against Hamas is self-evidently not a genocidal campaign, but a tragic necessary and defensive war, that many do not understand because of the peaceful and prosperous society we've been blessed to live in for the past seven decades, guaranteed by the valiant and brave efforts of the Allies who fought to defend those right in World War II.

Those offended at the images of the war or those who are already predisposed to think about Israel negatively ignore all the evidence of Israel's historically unprecedented work to minimize civilian casualties (recognizing tragic and deeply regrettable accidents have happened in the fog of war) and target only the terrorist actors destabilizing the region.

Those who perpetrate genocides systematically work to wipe out civilian populations, like the Khmer Rouge regime led by Pol Pot committed against the Cambodian people. They disappear millions of innocent men, women, and children, like Stalin's Russia and Xi's treatment of the Uyghurs. They seek to starve their victims of food and resources and break them down through terror with indiscriminate attacks. Quite clearly, Israel has done none of that: Israel's incredible civilian to terrorist target ratio - despite the dense environment they have been forced to operate in - has set a new standard for urban warfare, that no other country has come close to living up to. Israel's legal system ensures those convicted of terror-related offenses are imprisoned, and even get to benefit from all prison services (including Yahya Sinwar, who was educated and had lifesaving medical treatment in an Israeli jail), while the majority of Palestinians and Israeli Arabs live in peace. And for a country supposedly seeking out to erase a people, Israel has been surprisingly diligent in its efforts to inform the population where it is attacking and when, even sharing escape routes and aid, to avoid unnecessarily harming civilians, for the first time in the history of modern warfare.

Instead, those smearing Israel with these horrific charges are misinforming and falling for propaganda, or purposefully spreading misinformation. When asked for proof for her contention that Israel is committing genocide on the Palestinian people, Albanese arrogantly and sarcastically retorted that no evil government ever writes down their strategy to explain why there is no proof how Israel's war meets her absurd contention, ignoring actual genocidal regimes that did have a paper record laying out their horrific intent (see the Wannsee Conference).

Hijacking the Jewish people's history and experiences and misappropriating it for those who dream of perpetrating yet another genocide against the Jews is deeply hurtful and offensive. It is a way for those that seek to tar Israel to redirect blame from the perpetrators of the October 7 massacres, rapes, and kidnappings, onto a people they hate for one simple reason: the fact they are Jews. It is a deliberate and calculated attempt to dehumanize and delegitimize the Jewish experience, turning victims into aggressors through a dangerous and manipulative narrative, and too many are falling for it and spreading it further. By doing so, these individuals not only insult the memory of the actual victims of genocide by tying them in with bloodthirsty terrorists but cheapen and strip a powerful word and historical events of meaning and significance.

In this battle of good versus evil, all the information and supporting evidence of the party in the right and the party in the wrong is available for all to see. It's incumbent on us to inform ourselves of the facts before commenting about a conflict thousands of miles away, that is felt deeply by those here at home.

I would love to hear your thoughts. Feel free to reach out to me at [y@tasteoftorah.org](mailto:y@tasteoftorah.org).

Yonatan Hambourger is a rabbi with Chabad of Rural Georgia. Tzali Reicher is a rabbi and writer currently living in Florida.

## ECLIPSED



## A Tender Place For A Gentle Soul

This week we pause to consider the passing of a man I did not know. We never actually met, except to exchange a wave in passing. Neighbors are few and far between in our valley and most of us have a nodding acquaintance even if we rarely speak.

I do not know the family, or the history of the man, and while everyone has a right to an opinion, I am not entitled to speak of one beyond offering condolences to the ones he leaves behind.

I do know that the man and his wife had only recently finished building their home on the mountain. We put so much of ourselves into such an undertaking. We invest our dreams; we plan and anticipate and wait, sometimes for a lifetime, to make the dream a reality. It seems cruel that dreams, even memories, can be like pottery, beautifully painted, cherished, and in a moment broken beyond hope of repair.

I do not know the pain of losing a mate, but I have lost a father, and to the son who traveled here that day to spend time with his dad, unaware of his passing, I can tell you that your father was well thought of in the community. I've heard it said more than once that he was a gentle man, a gentle soul.

My understanding is that your dad was taken ill when he was on his tractor, and I can tell you from long acquaintance with tractor owners living and dead, there is seldom a moment in a man's life when he is happier and more content than when he is on his tractor.

When Tracey and I were newlyweds, my dad was in his late 70's. He was still very active well into his 80's and loved to come here and wander the woods or do chores around the farm. One day I came home from work to find Tracey upset. "I don't know where your dad is. He's been gone for over an hour."

I noticed that our German Shepherd was also absent. "Is Jenga with him?" "Yes," she replied, "But they should be back by now. He shouldn't be going out in the woods by himself at his age."

"He's not by himself," I told her. "Jenga is with him, and he's doing exactly what he loves to do and we can't take that from him."

I told her then about my agreement with my father. That agreement developed over many years as we lost grandparents and other family members through attrition, and some through long suffering and debilitating disease.

On a beautiful autumn day after a rain, as the sun warmed the ground and released that aroma of vitality which sleeps beneath the leaves during the cold months, Dad and I walked the steep slopes of the mountain while he showed me the property lines and spoke of the history of the land.

He was about 76 at the time, and spry as a mountain goat. We stopped to rest on top of a ridge with our backs against a big oak tree. We had a bite to eat and he sat carving himself a walking stick with his pocketknife.

"It's good to get out like this," he said. "Makes a man feel like a man. If your grandmother was alive she'd be walking the floor and wringing her hands if we were gone this long. Even your mother tells me to take it easy sometimes, but if it's my time to go I'd rather go doing something I love than laying in a hospital bed."

He inspected his walking stick, stood up and stretched, and we continued on without another word on the subject. I still have that walking stick, and the precious memory.

The loss of one among us diminishes us all. When a loved one departs prematurely, when a dream is ripped from our grasp and broken, there are no words that can put the pieces back together. Time alone offers solace, and the ache endures even after sorrow fades. It is a pain that is pure and just, a tender place for a gentle soul.

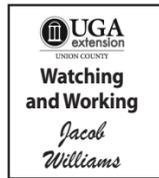
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## Towns County Community Calendar

- First Monday of each month:**  
School Board... HS/MS Media Center 6:45 pm
- Every Tuesday:**  
Storytime for Children... TC Library 10:30 am
- First Tuesday of each month:**  
Hiaw. City Council... City Hall 6 pm  
YH City Council... YH City Hall 6:30 pm
- Second Wednesday of each month:**  
Board of Elections... Elections Office 4 pm
- Third Monday of each month:**  
Planning Commission... Temporary Courthouse 6 pm
- Third Tuesday of each month:**  
Commissioner's Mtg... Courthouse 5:30 pm  
City of Young Harris Planning Commission... Meeting Room in City Hall 5 pm  
TC Water Authority Board Meeting 6 pm

## La Niña

The weather around us is always changing. Sometimes the things that cause the weather to change happened a long way away. Today I want to talk about a phenomenon called the La Niña, and how it affects the weather, and its anticipated impact this summer.



There are many different methods that people have used over the years to try to predict the weather. People have used the length of the orange on woolly worms, and the shape of rosimmon seeds. The La Niña/El Niño finds its roots in a more scientific approach. La Niña means little girl in Spanish, El Niño means little boy.

El Niño is part of the El Niño Southern Oscillation, or ENSO. La Niña occurs when the Pacific Ocean water temperatures are lower than normal. El Niño means that the pacific waters are higher than normal. As waters temperatures go back and forth between high and low, it's called La Nada. Under normal conditions, trade winds blow west along the equator. This takes warm water from South America towards Asia. To replace that warm water cold water rises from the depths. La Niña/El Niño break these normal conditions. Under La Niña, the trade winds are stronger than normal, so more warm water is pushed towards Asia. This imbalance is fixed by more cold water rising from the depths. The result is that the jet stream moves northward and weakens over the eastern pacific. Scientists don't know why the trade winds that cause the movement of water ebb and flow as they do.

We have the names La Niña/El Niño because South American fishermen had observed the change in water temperature in the Pacific occurring around Christmas time for centuries. They started calling it El Niño after baby Jesus. In the 1980s, scientists discovered La Niña. NOAA tracks Pacific Ocean temperatures and will announce if there is going to be a La Niña/El Niño event. It also influences the severity of storms. La Niña usually means that there will be more hurricanes coming out of the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico.

The prediction currently is for us to have a La Niña summer. That means a warmer and drier summer than normal. Currently we are in an El Niño winter which means colder and wetter than normal. These predictions are for season long averages, so that doesn't mean that we won't have any gully washers come through, just fewer than we normally do. A warmer summer than normal doesn't mean we won't have cool spells, just fewer than normal. It's impossible to know exactly what is going to happen, these predictions just show us the likely trend that we are going to experience.

If you have a question about El Niño/La Niña contact your County Extension Office or email me at [Jacob.Williams@uga.edu](mailto:Jacob.Williams@uga.edu).

I am hosting a Master Naturalist training. This is an 8-week course that focuses on the natural resources around us. If you are interested in participating in that email me or call the Union County Extension Office at 706-439-6030.

## Letters To The Editor

### Towns County Senior Center

Dear Editor,

Senior Center Members of Towns County benefit from programs and services supported by Legacy Link in a cooperative effort with our county.

Our center is functioning superbly, operated by a very friendly, knowledgeable and pleasant staff consisting of a director, a wellness coordinator, a kitchen manager, a transportation leader and various, thoughtful, faithful volunteers. These serious leaders and steadfast workers are enthusiastic in planning many useful, quality activities! I will cite a few mentally and physically healthy actions which promote improved daily living.

Here are some examples that impress me greatly: fresh lunch daily, wellness seminars, fitness exercises four days every week, field trips, regular large variety of great fun and fellowship activities, etc., and a sincere acknowledgment to all of us that all staff members will give their attention to all members of possible unique subject activities desired and will most likely be able to schedule newly voiced activities within reason!

In closing, as a very recently new Senior Center member, my approaching 90 years of life is already improving with solid realizations of feeling better and of sleeping and eating more calmly and satisfyingly. And, best of all, it is with great joy to observe any senior member friends contented with their Senior Center attendances.

William Franklin Boulineau

### Easter at the White House

Dear Editor,

One of the fictions that the mainstream media promotes is that Biden is a man faith. It's a myth that they still try to perpetuate. Now, as bad as the Biden administration is, it is not quite so bad as to celebrate the "Transgender Day of Visibility" festivities on Easter Sunday. Frankly, I thought that every day was "Transgender Day of Visibility" because the LGBTQ never shuts up.

Easter is the holiest day of the year for Christians, and Biden choosing to celebrate the lunatic transgender "holiday" instead is pure evil. It was a display of contempt for all Christians.

To add insult to injury, the White House did not accept any decorated eggs in their annual Easter egg hunt that included religious symbols. Even more than Christmas, Easter is a sacred holiday that celebrates our Savior's willingness to suffer for others and his spiritual divinity through His death and resurrection - the very basis of our faith.

The Left makes no secret regarding its anti-Christian and antisemitic attitudes. The good news is that not everybody is buying what they're selling. A large percentage of Americans still believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I wonder how long it will take for the leftists to replace Christmas with another fictional holiday.

Tim Groza

## Guest Columns

From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear throughout the paper. If so, please write.

Please remember that publication of submitted editorials is not guaranteed.

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## Towns County Herald

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