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By SI FRUMKIN

## **WHEN FRANCE WAS ISRAEL'S GREATEST FRIEND** **or *Mon nom est Bond. Jacques Francois Bond!***

# This is a

tale of deception, of Great Power rivalry with the not-yet-existing Jewish state caught in the middle, of plot and counterplot, spies and secret agents and a cloak of secrecy that hid it for five decades.

My first reaction was doubt. So I checked with an expert - a retired general in the Israeli army, a veteran of the Haganah (the pre-state underground Jewish army) and the British Army's Jewish Brigade who now lives in Los Angeles.

He has excellent connections and contacts in both intelligence and high level politics going back to the 1940s. He was one of the organizers of smuggling Holocaust survivors from Europe to British-blockaded Palestine - I, a 14-year old refugee, might have been a passenger on one of the ships he commanded.

I told him of my doubts. He smiled, "It is true," he said. "All of it is true and I knew all this when it was happening."

On December 15, 1947, near Haifa, a British army truck was seized by about 20 Haganah fighters. The truck carried a ton of documents in eight sealed steel containers, and 12 sacks of diplomatic mail that were to be taken by ship to Britain.

British reaction was panic. A statement was released claiming that the documents were insignificant, that they concerned only minor economic matters at the British embassy in Beirut, but at the same time, the British authorities ordered a total blackout of all information of the incident in the English and Hebrew press.

There is no doubt that Britain, France and the Yishuv (pre-state Jewish community) considered the documents to be of greatest importance. Formerly classified records show that the attack was the result of information Haganah had received from French intelligence. Immediately after Haganah acquired the documents, a French intelligence officer, impersonating a reporter, was sent to Tel Aviv to examine them. In January 1948, the Yishuv office in Paris forwarded a request by France that the captured documents be immediately transferred to Paris rather than to the French consulate in Jerusalem.

The truck load seizure of secret docu-

ments was just one of the many examples of collaboration between France and the Yishuv. It involved not only the clandestine immigration of Jews and smuggling of weapons through France, but also an ongoing struggle against British Middle East policies and the French decision to support the Jews against the Arabs and their British patrons. .

The origins of the cooperation can be traced back to a 1945 letter to French President Charles de Gaulle by General Paul Beyner, head of the French Missions to Syria and Lebanon. It commented on Britain's secret plan to establish a Greater Syria by unifying Syria, Transjordan, Lebanon and Palestine in a single British-controlled political entity.

Beynet urged France to support the Jews in creating an independent Jewish state and oppose Britain in its pro-Arab policy calculated to minimize French influence. The French representative in Jerusalem was ordered to work for future cooperation and, as a result, Ben-Gurion and French officials met in Paris and formalized the sharing of intelligence between France and the Yishuv.

French intelligence had effective intelligence sources in Beirut's British embassy that gave France access to classified information from London and the Foreign Affairs minister in Cairo. The Embassy also housed three separate intelligence agencies that collected reports from British agents throughout the Middle East including names and code names of British agents, receipts for large bribes from Britain to Arab leaders and Arab pledges of cooperation with Britain. All of this secret British information was obtained by the French intelligence service and, according to notes in Ben-Gurion's di-

ary, was shared with the Haganah. Thus, the Yishuv was aware that Britain intended to continue its White Paper policy that drastically limited Jewish immigration.

In August 1945, when Charles de Gaulle visited the U.S., he was warmly received by Jewish organizations. There is evidence that, during his visit, de Gaulle briefed President Truman on British anti-French and anti-Jewish policy in the Middle East. Truman was informed that Britain had pressured Saudi Arabia to cut oil supplies to America in order to reduce Jewish immigration.

After Britain had pressured Syria's president Quwatli to ask Saudi King Abdul Aziz to limit oil deliveries to the U.S. if Jewish immigration continued, the Saudi King replied: "I will not be willing to consent to Jewish immigration to Palestine... Russia has reassured me that it will support us if we persist... As for the Americans, I am willing to threaten them with withdrawing the (oil) concessions I gave them." A copy of the Saudi reply was obtained by a French spy.

Truman was furious when informed of Britain's attempt to sabotage U.S. interests. Later that month he urged that 100,000 European Jews be admitted to Palestine.

In mid-November, Ben-Gurion met with French Foreign Minister Bidault in Paris. For the next two years Paris was Ben-Gurion's headquarters in the struggle against Britain and for a Jewish state.

The cooperation between Israel and France grew with joint efforts to secure an independent Christian state in Lebanon, France's help with the development of Israeli nuclear capability and the supply of military hardware and training for the IDF.

The relationship ended abruptly after the 1967 6-Day War when Israel had ignored de Gaulle's advice not to engage Egypt.



# I AM THE SOLDIER WHO SLEPT IN YOUR HOME

Contd. from page 4

Still, I need you to understand me, us, and hope that you will channel your anger and criticism to the right places.

I decided to write you this letter specifically because I stayed in your home.

I can surmise that you are intelligent and educated and there are those in your household that are university students. Your children learn English, and you are connected to the Internet. You are not ignorant; you know what is going on around you. Therefore, I am sure you know that Qassam rockets were launched from your neighborhood into Israeli towns and cities. How could you see these weekly launches and not think that one day we would say "enough"?! Did you ever consider that it is perhaps wrong to launch rockets at innocent civilians trying to lead a normal life, much like you? How long did you think we would sit back without reacting?

I can hear you saying "it's not me, it's Hamas". My intuition tells me you are not their most avid supporter. If you look closely at the sad reality in which your people live, and you do not try to deceive yourself or make excuses about "occupation", you must certainly reach the conclusion that the Hamas is your real enemy.

The reality is so simple, even a seven year old can understand: Israel withdrew from the Gaza strip, removing military bases and its citizens from Gush Katif. Nonetheless, we continued to provide you with electricity, water, and goods (and this I know very well as during my reserve duty I guarded the border crossings more than once, and witnessed hundreds of trucks full of goods entering a blockade-free Gaza every day).

Despite all this, for reasons that cannot be understood and with a lack of any rational logic, Hamas launched missiles on Israeli towns. For three years we clenched our teeth and restrained ourselves. In the end, we could not take it anymore and entered the Gaza strip, into your neighborhood, in order to remove those who want to kill us. A reality that is painful but very easy to explain.

As soon as you agree with me that Hamas is your enemy and because of them, your people are miserable, you will also understand that the change must come from within. I am acutely aware of the fact that what I say is easier to write than to do, but I do not see any other way. You, who are connected to the world and concerned about your children's education, must lead, together with your friends, a civil uprising against Hamas.

I swear to you, that if the citizens of Gaza were busy paving roads, building schools, opening factories and cultural institutions instead of dwelling in self pity, arms smuggling and nurturing a hatred to your Israeli neighbors, your homes would not be in ruins right now. If your leaders were not corrupt and motivated by hatred, your home would not have been harmed.

If someone would have stood up and shouted that there is no point in launching missiles on innocent civilians, I would not have to stand in your kitchen as a soldier.

You don't have money, you tell me? You have more than you can imagine. Even before Hamas took control of Gaza, during the time of Yasser Arafat, millions if not billions of dollars donated by the world community to the Palestinians was used for purchasing arms or taken directly to your leaders bank accounts. Gulf States, the

emirates - your brothers, your flesh and blood, are some of the richest nations in the world. If there was even a small feeling of solidarity between Arab nations, if these nations had but the smallest interest in reconstructing the Palestinian people - your situation would be very different.

You must be familiar with Singapore. The land mass there is not much larger than the Gaza strip and it is considered to be the second most populated country in the world. Yet, Singapore is a successful, prospering, and well managed country. Why

not the same for you?

My friend, I would like to call you by name, but I will not do so publicly. I want you to know that I am 100% at peace with what my country did, what my army did, and what I did. However, I feel your pain. I am sorry for the destruction you are finding in your neighborhood at this moment. On a personal level, I did what I could to minimize the damage to your home as much as possible.

In my opinion, we have a lot more in common than you might imagine. I am a civilian, not a soldier, and in my private life I have nothing to do with the military. However, I have an obligation to leave my home, put on a uniform, and protect my family every time we are attacked. I have no desire to be in your home wearing a uniform again and I would be more than happy to sit with you as a guest on your beautiful balcony, drinking sweet tea seasoned with the sage growing in your garden.

The only person who could make that dream a reality is you. Take responsibility for yourself, your family, your people, and start to take control of your destiny. How? I do not know. Maybe there is something to be learned from the Jewish people who rose up from the most destructive human tragedy of the 20th century, and instead of sinking into self-pity, built a flourishing and prospering country. It is possible, and it is in your hands.

I am ready to be there to provide a shoulder of support and help to you.

But only you can move the wheels of history."

Regards,

Yishai, (Reserve Soldier)



# A LETTER FROM PRISON

By Si Frumkin and ????

I have been publishing my bi-weekly "Graffiti for Intellectuals" for almost eleven years. The readers are an eclectic mix of professions, geographic locations, ideologies and personal beliefs. The "Graffiti" goes to almost every state of the Union, Canada, Australia, Israel, Russia, New Zealand, Spain, Holland and much more. What they all have in common is intellectual curiosity, desire to see something they may not have seen elsewhere and a point of view that may not be popular or even widely known.

Among the readers there are high school students, PhD's, judges, policemen, physicians, actors, space scientists, politicians, a mix of activists of a variety of persuasions, convicts...

Wait a minute, you say, convicts? Well, yes. It started years ago when I put Jonathan Pollard on my mailing list and grew through requests by Jonathan's former cellmates and word of mouth as the inmates got transferred to other facilities and introduced friends to the publication. At this time we have about 50 inmates from a number of facilities in several states and just a few days ago I received a letter which I thought I should share with all of you.

I was moved by what the reader—who describes himself as "a wayward grandson" - had to say. I have eliminated the names, addresses and other identifying information.

I was pleased to get the letter. I am glad that the "Graffiti" serves a purpose and inspires thought—and once in a while, I hope, action.

If you know anyone who may enjoy getting "Graffiti" - send me his or her mailing address and I will take care of the rest. As you know, there is no charge—just a once a year reminder that a contribution to cover the cost of publication and our many other programs is more than welcome. This is not obligatory but it is tax-deductible.

Actually there is yet another reason why I publish "Graffiti": It saves me money. I often get very upset by this or that and when that happens, instead of going to a shrink, I write an article. Isn't this a much more frugal and satisfying solution? I think so.

Thanks for reading,

Si Frumkin

Dear Mr. Frumkin,  
Please take note of my new address:

2-5-09

[REDACTED]  
A.H.C.C.  
Unit R Cell #B 30 L  
P.O. Box 2049  
[REDACTED]

I have enjoyed Graffiti For Intellectuals for years.  
My grandfather, [REDACTED] (may he rest in peace), first brought your newsletter to my attention over ten years ago. On the subjects of Israeli security and prosperity, my grandfather and I were in lockstep with you. Many were the discussions we shared on subjects spurred by your newsletter. He finally died on September 21 of last year at the age of 93. A wayward grandson could not have asked for a better friend (he did mention having met you once but did not say where or when).

I look forward to reading your publication for many years to come.

Sincerely,  
Jenq [REDACTED]



# Graffiti for intellectuals

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## **I AM THE SOLDIER WHO SLEPT IN YOUR HOME**

### **An Open Letter to a citizen of Gaza— By Yishai G. (reserve soldier)**

Originally published in Hebrew in "Maariv"

# HELLO,

While the world watches the ruins in Gaza, you return to your home which remains standing. However, I am sure that it is clear to you that someone was in your home while you were away.

I am that someone.

I spent long hours imagining how you would react when you walked into your home. How you would feel when you understood that IDF soldiers had slept on your mattresses and used your blan-



kets to keep warm.

I knew that it would make you angry and sad and that you would feel this violation of the most intimate areas of your life by those defined as your enemies, with stinging humiliation. I am convinced that you hate me with unbridled hatred, and you do not have even the tiniest desire to hear what I have to say. At the same time, it is important for me to say the following in the hope that there is even the minutest chance that you will hear me.

I spent many days in your home. You and your family's presence

was felt in every corner. I saw your family portraits on the wall, and I thought of my family. I saw your wife's perfume bottles on the bureau, and I thought of my wife. I saw your children's toys and their English language schoolbooks. I saw your personal computer and how you set up the modem and wireless phone next to the screen, just as I do.

I wanted you to know that despite the immense disorder you found in your house that was created during a search for explosives and tunnels (which were indeed found in other homes), we did our best to treat your possessions with respect. When I moved the computer table, I disconnected the cables and lay them down neatly on the floor, as I would do with my own computer. I even covered the computer from dust with a piece of cloth. I tried to put back the clothes that fell when we moved the closet although not the same as you would have done, but at least in such a way that nothing would get lost.

I know that the devastation, the bullet holes in your walls and the destruction of those homes near you place my descriptions in a ridiculous light. **Please see "I AM THE SOLDIER..." page 2"**

